



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on March 11, 2013

Afghan President Karzai Claims U.S. Colluding With Taliban Terrorists

Afghan President Hamid Karzai (shown) has accused the United States of secretly working with the Taliban to facilitate terrorist attacks, supposedly in order to demonstrate a need for U.S. troop presence in the war-torn country after the scheduled withdrawal of Western combat units at the end of next year.



The Associated Press [reported](#) Karzai's remarks, made Sunday during a nationally televised speech about the state of Afghan women. The Afghan president claimed that two suicide bombings that killed 19 people on Saturday — one outside the Afghan Defense Ministry and the other near a police checkpoint in eastern Khost province — show the insurgent group is conducting attacks to demonstrate that international forces will still be needed to keep the peace beyond 2014.

"The explosions in Kabul and Khost yesterday showed that they are at the service of America and at the service of this phrase: 2014. They are trying to frighten us into thinking that if the foreigners are not in Afghanistan, we would be facing these sorts of incidents," Karzai said.

The claim was promptly denounced as "categorically false" by U.S. and NATO forces commander Gen. Joseph Dunford, who, in a conciliatory note, said it was understandable that tensions would arise as the coalition balances the need to complete its mission and the Afghans' move to exercise more sovereignty.

"We have fought too hard over the past 12 years, we have shed too much blood over the last 12 years, to ever think that violence or instability would be to our advantage," Dunford told the A.P.

It is hardly the first time Karzai has vented his anger and frustration over the role of U.S. and NATO forces in his country. After a U.S. Army soldier reportedly went on a [shooting rampage](#), killing 17 civilians in a remote village in Afghanistan in the early morning hours of March 11, 2012, the Afghan leader called for the withdrawal of the foreign troops before the 2014 deadline. Karzai and members of the Afghan parliament were not only incensed over the killing of Afghan civilians by a member of the U.S. Army, but were indignant over the fact that the accused was whisked by American forces out of the country before he could be put on trial in Afghanistan.

Karzai has also called for U.S. troops to abandon their combat role and limit their activities to the defense of U.S. and NATO bases and to training Afghan security forces. Even the training of the Afghans has become a thorny issue because of the number of "insider attacks" on the Western troops, by Taliban and other insurgents who have infiltrated the ranks of army and police recruits.



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In previous speeches, Karzai has railed against the U.S. and NATO presence, calling it an occupation aimed at plundering Afghan's resources. He has even threatened to join the Taliban, the A.P. reported. The latest accusation not only displays once again the rift between the Western forces and the Afghan government they are trying to protect, but also comes as an embarrassment to newly confirmed U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, who was in Afghanistan at the time of the attacks and during Karzai's speech. Hours after the Karzai's address, a joint news conference to be held by Karzai and Hagel was cancelled due to what officials said were security reasons, though the two men still planned to meet privately.

The United States and Afghanistan are in the process of negotiating an agreement covering the anticipated long-term presence of U.S. forces in the country beyond the 2014 deadline for withdrawal of foreign combat troops. But a number of flash points have arisen recently to inflame tensions between the two nations. They are reported to be at odds, for example, over Karzai's demand that U.S. special operations forces withdraw from a province neighboring Kabul by Monday over allegations they participated in torture and extrajudicial killing. U.S. officials have denied the charge. Gen. Dunford told reporters he spoke to Karzai about the issue on Saturday and told him the U.S. is working on a plan to hand over security in the Wardak region to Afghan forces. He did not say whether the commandos would stay in Wardak when the deadline to leave comes on Monday.

Karzai also denounced what he claimed was the seizure of a student at Kandahar Saturday by Afghan forces his aide said were working for the CIA. Presidential spokesman Aimal Faizi said in an interview with The Associated Press that the CIA freed the student after Karzai's staff intervened, but that Karzai wants the alleged Afghan raiders arrested. The president issued a decree on Sunday banning all international forces and the Afghans working with them from entering universities and schools without Afghan government permission.

The CIA declined to comment. The A.P. reported NATO spokesman Lt. Col. Les Carroll said that no NATO forces "harassed a university student" as described by the president's office. Presidential spokesman Faizi said the raiders fired shots as they grabbed student Abdul Qayoum, and blindfolded him before taking him for interrogation at a CIA post that Taliban leader Mullah Omar once used as a home.

The A.P. report said the CIA has trained an Afghan counterterrorist force several thousand strong, known as the Counterterrorism Pursuit Team, which works mostly in insurgent strongholds in southern and eastern Afghanistan. U.S. officials say they work in concert with the Afghan intelligence service, but Karzai frequently complains he lacks oversight over their operations.

The bottom line to all these accusations and denials appears to be Karzai's statement in his speech to his nation on Sunday that any foreign powers that want to keep troops in Afghanistan need to do so under conditions set forth by Afghanistan.

He clearly left the impression that the continued presence of U.S. forces battling the Taliban and other insurgents in the land are a good deal less than welcomed by the Afghan president. While President Obama has boasted of having withdrawn American combat units from Iraq and having set a deadline for the same in Afghanistan, that overlooks the fact that the United States wanted to keep its units in Iraq longer, but the government in Baghdad would not agree to U.S. conditions. The main sticking point, according to numerous reports, was the U.S. insistence that American troops have immunity from prosecution by the Iraqi government for crimes allegedly committed in Iraq. It seems clear that the U.S.



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will continue to face similar difficulties in negotiating a post-2014 stay in Afghanistan.

The United States has its own security reasons for wanting to keep a military presence in Afghanistan, once a haven and site of training camps for al-Qaeda, the terrorist organization believed responsible for the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. But maintaining a troop presence in another country after that host country has expressed its preference for the exit of foreign troops raises the question of whether the foreign troops are liberators and defenders of the host country or an occupying force disregarding the rights of a sovereign nation. Forcing “protection” on clients who do not want it appears less an exercise in collective security than the perpetuation of an activity in organized, international crime.

Photo of Afghan President Hamid Karzai: AP Images



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