



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on July 13, 2011

Afghan President Karzai's Brother, a CIA Asset and Drug Boss, Killed

Taliban forces are reportedly taking credit for the assassination of Ahmad Wali Karzai (left), Afghan President Hamid Karzai's half-brother, who was shot in the head by the long-time chief of his own security detail on July 12. Police are still investigating and said an internal dispute, not politics, could have been the motive. The BBC suggested rival criminals could have been to blame. But the Taliban resistance sent a message to Al Jazeera boasting of their role in the murder and warning all government officials to resign or be killed – anywhere at any time.



Ahmad was an extraordinarily influential figure in Afghan politics, especially in the volatile Southern region. Among other duties, he served as the chairman of Kandahar's provincial council. While the position is technically not extremely powerful, news reports [said](#) Ahmad wielded far more authority than even the province's governor.

Ahmad also controlled a massive business empire that included several private-security firms with paramilitary wings, hotels, car dealerships and real-estate interests. How his death will affect the legitimate commercial enterprises he was involved with remains unclear.

But there was also a more shadowy side to the notoriously corrupt powerbroker. The *New York Times* [reported](#) in 2009 that he was on the payroll of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which course, has a long and sordid history of involvement in drug trafficking — from South American cocaine in the 1980s to Southeast Asian heroin during the Vietnam war.

And Ahmad, like his alleged paymasters at the CIA, has also been implicated in the international drug trade. For example, a 2009 U.S. embassy cable released by WikiLeaks [stated](#) that much of the real ruling of Kandahar “takes place out of public sight, where Ahmed Wali Karzai operates, parallel to formal government structures, through a network of political clans that use state institutions to protect and enable licit and illicit enterprises.”

For years, Ahmad has allegedly been serving as a kingpin in the multi-billion dollar heroin business that has flourishing in Afghanistan since the Western invasion — a charge he denied after it was [reported](#) by the *New York Times* and other publications. The U.K. Telegraph [suggested](#) the drug smuggling operations he established in the region would not likely be “fractured” by his murder.

The assassination will have effects on the public consciousness, however. Top officials in Afghanistan, as well as their Western backers, are reportedly panicking over how to ensure security for their own people following the most recent high-profile slaying — one of many supposedly carried out by Taliban fighters in recent years.

Analysts also [said](#) the assassination was likely to further underscore the fact that the Afghan regime and its NATO supporters could never provide real security for the nation. If the West and its regime in



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Afghanistan are unable to protect their own top officials, experts say the local population is unlikely to believe their leaders could offer them security either.

That was clear at Ahmad's funeral, where security forces were ubiquitous even as chaos raged all around. News reports [said](#) helicopters were circling overhead as armed agents formed a perimeter around the area. But still, multiple explosions were heard all around the graveyard. A governor of another province narrowly escaped an explosion while driving away from the funeral. And some of his bodyguards were [reportedly](#) at least injured in the blast.

Amid the turmoil, Afghan President Hamid Karzai spoke at the burial and mourned the loss of his brother, saying he had been "martyred." He also urged the Taliban to end the violence.

"My message for [the Taliban] is that my countryman, my brother, stop killing your own people," President Karzai [said](#) at the burial on Wednesday. "It's easy to kill and everyone can do it, but the real man is the one who can save people's lives."

According to the Taliban's [claim](#) of responsibility, Karzai's killer was a "sleeper agent." The alleged assassin was killed by other bodyguards immediately after shooting Karzai in the head and chest.

Analysts say it is possible that the Taliban could be claiming to be behind the attack for "propaganda" purposes, but for now the truth remains unclear. It is known, however, that the Taliban have made several other attempts on Ahmad's life.

In the U.S., officials were quick to condemn Karzai's murder while acknowledging uncertainty about the identity of the perpetrators. White House Press Secretary Jay Carney said the Obama administration would work with Afghan authorities to determine exactly who was responsible.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also issued a statement after speaking with President Karzai over the phone. "For too long, the people of Afghanistan have suffered under the threat of violence, intolerance, and extremism," she [said](#), condemning the killing. "We join President Karzai in his prayer for peace and stability in Afghanistan and remain committed to supporting the government and people of Afghanistan in their struggle for peace."

It was unclear if the assassination would have any immediate effects on the NATO occupation. The Obama administration has been [desperately attempting to negotiate an agreement with the Taliban](#) that could eventually see it [restored to power](#).

But the Taliban, former U.S. allies for the most part, have so far balked at negotiations. "We are winning, why should we negotiate?" [wondered](#) a high-ranking Taliban official late last year.

Photo: The late Ahmad Wali Karzai, brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, speaking during a meeting with elders in Kandahar province south of Kabul, Afghanistan: AP Images



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