

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 6, 2012 7:30 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Parliament No Confidence Vote on Ministers

Fyi

From: Llorens, Hugo
Sent: Monday, August 06, 2012 07:21 AM
To: Cunningham, James B; Grossman, Marc I; Pearce, David D; Feldman, Daniel F; Sullivan, Jacob J
Cc: DeHart, James P; Popal, Mustafa M; Blome, Donald A; Heg, James T
Subject: Parliament No Confidence Vote on Ministers

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

There has not been any significant changes in the situation regarding the “no confidence” votes against W and M. Karzai and the Palace have been internally debating whether to keep W and M in place until a successor is appointed. Parliamentary leaders have publicly demanded that K move immediately to remove both ministers. (Note: The law allows K to keep the ministers as caretakers for a 30-day period.) In past cases of “no confidence” votes against cabinet officers, K has chosen to ignore the will of Parliament. This was the case with Spanta when he lost a no confidence vote in 2007, and K kept him on as caretaker Foreign Minister until 2010. Most observers believe that a politically weakened K, combined with reports of Palace insiders targeting W and M, suggest that K will comply relatively soon with the Parliamentary action.

We’ve heard that W turned down an offer from K of a senior ambassadorship. -- W says he wants to stay in Afghanistan. K is also considering M for another cabinet appointment (stay tuned).

K will have to consider ethnic balance in appointing new ministers. The rumor mill has been churning in Kabul on possible replacements in Defense and Interior. CN Minister Osmani (Tajik) has been mentioned for Interior, and Education Minister Wardak (Pashtun), and former Afghan Ambassador to the U.S. Jawad Tayab (Pashtun) for Defense.

There are other sources reporting that Karzai may leverage the current situation to reshuffle the Cabinet. Zakhilwal is one minister who’s head appears to be on the block based on news leaks of significant financial transfers to his personal bank accounts. The evidence suggests he is being targeted by government insiders (see high side).

Parliament's timing for the removal of these two key ministers was bad to say the least. W and M were, from our perspective, two of the most effective ministers in the cabinet. Both were working closely with us on the ongoing military campaign and the security transition. Nevertheless Parliament's are fickle and the passion of the Pakistani border attacks provided the sword used against W and M. We are reaching out to key GIRA officials to stress the critical importance that K appoint competent and credible officials to head both of these two ministries. We'll have a chance to discuss this issue directly with K this coming Wednesday.

Hugo