

WHEN MILITARIES CONSPIRE TO IGNORE THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

The story of the day is from Michael Hastings, fresh off winning a Polk Award for his reporting on the insubordination of key members of Stanley McChrystal's staff. In today's story, he describes how Lieutenant General William Caldwell ordered a PsyOp unit to manipulate Senators—including John McCain, Carl Levin, Jack Reed, and Al Franken—to support increased troops and funding for training Afghan soldiers. When the commander of that unit objected, he was investigated and disciplined. (See Jim White's post on it [here](#).)

It's a troubling picture of the extent to which individual members of our military will push the war in Afghanistan, knowing how unpopular it is in the States.

But there's an equally troubling story reporting on the disdain with which our military treats public opinion. Josh Rogin reports on a regularly scheduled meeting between the Pakistani and American military in Oman that took place on Tuesday; because of the Raymond Davis affair, the meeting had heightened importance. The US was represented by, among others, Admiral Mullen and Generals Petraeus, Olson (SOCOM) and Mattis (CENTCOM).

As Rogin describes it, the Americans, whose views were represented in a written summary from General Jehangir Karamat with confirmation from another Pakistani participant, believed the two militaries had to restore the Pakistani-American relationship before it got completely destroyed by the press and the public.

“The US had to point out that **once beyond a tipping point the situation would be taken over by political forces**

that could not be controlled,” Karamat wrote about the meeting, referring to the **reported split** between the CIA and the Pakistani Inter-services Intelligence (ISI) that erupted following the Davis shooting.

[snip]

“[T]he US did not want the US-Pakistan relationship to go into a free fall under media and domestic pressures,” Karamat wrote. “These considerations drove it to ask the [Pakistani] Generals to step in and do what the governments were failing to do-especially because the US military was at a critical stage in Afghanistan and Pakistan was the key to control and resolution.”

“The militaries will now brief and guide their civilian masters and hopefully bring about a qualitative change in the US-Pakistan Relationship by arresting the downhill descent and moving it in the right direction.” [my emphasis]

In short, the US military wants to make sure that military intervenes to counteract the fury of the people and the press over the Davis affair.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'd rather have the military ensure close relations with this nuclear-armed unstable state. I'm cognizant of how, in different situations (notably the Egyptian uprising), close ties between our military and others' have helped to foster greater democracy. As Dana Priest's *The Mission* makes clear our military has increasingly become the best functioning “diplomatic” service we've got. And though I think a great deal of stupidity and arrogance got Davis into the pickle he's in, I certainly back our government's efforts to get him returned to our country (Rogin also provides details of the plan to do that).

But particularly coming as it does in the same theater and on the same day as news of PsyOps being waged against my Senator, I'm troubled that our military isn't more concerned with reining in the behavior that has rightly ticked off so many Pakistanis, rather than coordinating with the Pakistani military to make sure the people of Pakistan's concerns are ignored.