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Top US commander warns Karzai on Afghanistan's future

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The top US General in Afghanistan has warned that president Hamid Karzai's refusal to promptly sign the bilateral security agreement with Washington could endanger the political, economic and security situation of the country.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said that the international confidence in Afghanistan has been undermined by president Karzai's push to delay the security pact with US.

"I don't know if he fully realizes the risks," Gen. Dunford told The Wall Street Journal while pointing towards the risks which could weaken the Afghan economy, embolden the country's powerful neighbors and ultimately lead to the collapse of the country's security forces.

Gen. Dunford said, "He certainly understands it from an Afghan perspective. I don't know if he fully appreciates what the implications are for the United States."

“The uncertainty and the lack of confidence about the post-2014 environment has had an adverse effect on the people in some very real ways, whether it be the flight of young people who try to leave the country, whether it be plunging real-estate prices, the rate of the afghani currency,” Gen. Dunford added.

The Afghan elders approved the bilateral security agreement between Afghanistan and United States during the consultative Loya Jirga on Sunday and urged president Karzai to sign the pact without any further delay.

However, Karzai has refused to sign the pact promptly and demanded an immediate end to military raids on Afghan homes and demonstrate its commitment to peace talks before the bilateral security agreement is signed.

The White House in response to Karzai’s demands has warned that further delay in signing the pact would trigger planning for complete withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan.