

# U.S.-Taliban dialogue reaches delicate juncture

Ten months of secret talks between the U.S and Afghanistan's Taliban insurgents have reached a critical turning point, say senior officials



**Feb 18, 2011:**  
*U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton endorses attempt to see if Taliban are open to reconciliation.*

## ► STEPS TO DIALOGUE

**1 Feb onwards:** Officials hold several discreet meetings with contacts representing **Mullah Omar**, leader of Taliban's Quetta Shura

**2 Dec 19:** Unnamed senior U.S. officials disclose they are considering transfer of some Taliban prisoners from **Guantanamo Bay** into Afghan custody in return for gestures from Taliban, such as denunciation of international terrorism

**3 Future:** U.S. publicly supports Taliban political office outside Afghanistan, possibly in **Qatar**, to be used to aid future negotiations. *Indicating the fragility of discussions, Hamid Karzai last week recalled his Qatar ambassador in protest*