Gath Valley Mission

NEW ALLIANCES FOR AFGHANISTAN AND AMERICA
Agenda

- Nuristani Tribes
- “Kafiristan”
- New Alliances
- Gaths and Gath Valley
Nuristani Tribes

- Do not have a formal tribal structure like the Pashtuns
- Six from the north-south valleys and 30 from the east-west valley
- Fiercely independent
- Descend from central Asian tribes and Greek invaders led by Alexander the Great
“Kafiristan”

- Region called “Kafiristan” during 19th-century British influence
- Kafirs (“unbelievers”): Pagan beliefs until forcibly converted to Islam in the late 1890s
- Hinduism and Zoroastrianism plus local gods and spirits
- Each village and each clan had its guardian deity
- Shamans advised the help-seekers and priests presiding at religious services
- Cults centered on the sacrifice of animals, mostly goats
“Kafiristan”

- Similar to the faith of the Kalash people of northwestern Pakistan
- Indo-European religion evolved into Greek and other famous pre-Christian religions of the region
New Alliances

- Marginalized tribes
- Likeliest to welcome aid against Taliban
- Coalition open even to the Gaths?
- Easier for other other disparate elements to get along
Gaths and Gath Valley

- Distinct ethnic group
- Long history of conflict with neighboring tribes and past invaders
- No one has ever succeeded in taking Gath Valley
Gath Valley Mission

- Mobile forces based in Gath Valley
- Clearly a defensible position
- Gaths have held it for centuries
- Harder for Taliban to sneak across Pakistan border