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Afghan official: Pakistan and Iran are providing aid to the Taliban

1/23/2017



In this May 27, 2016 file photo, Taliban fighters react to a speech by their senior leader in the Shindand district of Herat province, Afghanistan. Associated Press/Allauddin Khan

The governor of Afghanistan's volatile Helmand Province said Iranians and Pakistanis have recently met with Taliban insurgents involved in fighting Afghan forces.

Governor Hayatullah Hayat told Radio Free Afghanistan on January 22 that "Iranian interference [in Afghan affairs] has increased" recently, noting the meeting with Taliban fighters in Helmand's Garmsir district that he said also involved Pakistanis.

He said the Afghan intelligence agency has confirmed the meeting and he has ordered a further investigation into foreign interference in Helmand.

Hayat said rockets with Iranian markings were also found after a Taliban attack on the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah.

He added that the Pakistani military is also involved in "mobilizing insurgents" in Helmand.

Afghanistan has long accused Pakistan of aiding insurgents fighting Afghan forces, charges that Pakistan has denied.