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US seeks permanent occupation of Afghanistan: Taliban

May 10, 2013



The Taliban militant group has said that the United States seeks permanent occupation of Afghanistan following its announcement to keep nine military bases in the war-torn country.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahed said in an e-mailed statement that the group would not allow the US and its allies to have a permanent presence in Afghanistan, despite an announcement by Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Thursday that Washington had demanded to keep nine military bases across the country.

Karzai's remarks showed that both Kabul and Washington are trying to deprive the Afghan nation of political independence, the spokesman said, adding, "Afghans want an independent Afghanistan. We will never make any deal on our independence."

The Taliban spokesman said that the presence of foreign troops had sustained the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the "longer the occupiers are here, the longer it will take to find peace."

Karzai's stated in his announcement that Washington planned to keep the nine bases in the main cities of Afghanistan including the capital, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, Jalalabad and Gardez near the eastern border with Pakistan.

In 2011, Karzai confirmed for the first time that the administration of US President Barack Obama had demanded the establishment of a system of permanent US military bases across Afghanistan.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but insecurity remains across the country despite the presence of thousands of foreign troops.