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The News International

Taliban deny Haqqani's meeting with Karzai

By Mushtaq Yusufzai

06/27/2010

The Afghan Taliban have termed a report about the meeting of veteran Mujahideen leader and former Taliban minister, Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani with President Karzai in Kabul an attempt by the enemy to create rift among the Taliban.

“This is rubbish. There is not even one per cent truth in these reports, which said Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani went to Kabul and held a meeting with President Karzai. Why he would go to Kabul to meet the US puppet at a time when we have an upper hand in the battlefield,” explained a senior Taliban commander belonging to the strong Taliban faction led by Sirajuddin Haqqani, the elder son of Jalaluddin Haqqani.

Talking to The News from an undisclosed location, the Taliban commander, who is considered close to the elderly Haqqani, said on condition of anonymity they were astonished to hear media reports about the meeting between Jalaluddin Haqqani and Karzai. He claimed it was not the first time they had received an offer from Karzai for peace talks but they always turned down his offers.

He said the Taliban had a clear stance about the peace talks with Karzai. “We have made it clear several times that we would not sit for any dialogue until and unless foreign occupying forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan,” he stressed.

The Taliban commander said the Afghan government and their Western masters in the past had extended several offers to them to quit fighting and join the Karzai-led government.

“If we had any desire for power, we would have surrendered years ago and become a part of the ruling set-up in Afghanistan. The blood of our martyrs would not go waste and would one day bear fruit. The Taliban of today are different than those of yesteryears. Today, the Afghan people are standing behind us as we are fighting for the liberation of Afghanistan,” he said.

He said their “enemies” launched malicious propaganda whenever they suffered losses at Taliban’s hands in the battlefield. Also, he felt that through such reports, their enemies wanted to create a rift among the Taliban leadership.

“We are a part of the Taliban and would never take any decision without taking the Taliban leadership into confidence,” the Taliban commander said.

The Haqqani network is largely active in Afghanistan’s Khost, Paktia, Paktika and Logar provinces and in the capital.

Its leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, claimed to have organised several devastating attacks against the US-led forces in Afghanistan. The US government has announced \$5 million as head money on him.