Pakistan Must Make Sincere Efforts to Curb Terrorism on Afghan Border: Mike Pompeo

WASHINGTON: - Talking to reporters on Tuesday at the State Department’s Foggy Bottom headquarters, Pompeo said he delivered this message to the Pakistan leadership when he traveled to Islamabad in September, after Imran Khan became Prime Minister.

“We had made clear that the US policy with respect to south-central Asia has not changed, that our expectation is that Pakistan will not provide safe harbor to terrorists on their western border,” he said in response to a question on AfPak.

On September 5, Pompeo met with Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan and then traveled to Kabul.

“Now, what the current regime has done is made it more” to rein in the terror groups operating from Pakistan’s soil, he added. “We couldn’t make that message any more clear and that Pakistan will be held accountable if they don’t see it. If they’re not serious in that effort, we won’t believe we can get to the place that everyone wants. Everyone wants reconstitution in Afghanistan, and to achieve that, we have to make sure the Afghan government.”

Minister Haqparast, Deputy Spokesman at the Afghan Ministry of Interior, said the Afghan government is working with the international community to ensure that the elections are free and fair. He also said that all parties should be committed to the democratic process.

U.S., Gulf States Blacklist Afghan Taliban, Iranian Officers for Terrorist Financing

WASHINGTON: - A seven-country group set up to combat the international financing of terrorists has blacklisted nine individuals associated with Afghanistan’s Taliban, including two Iranian military officers and several members of “facilitating Iranian support to bolster the terrorist group.”

The announcement by the U.S. Treasury Department on October 23 says the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center (TFAC) blacklisted the individuals in order to “halt the granting of entry to any of the Taliban and their Iranian sponsors that seek to undermine the security of the Afghan government.”

Other TFAC member countries joining the action include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement on October 23 that the blacklisted “Taliban members who are involved in suicide attacks, and other lethal activities,”

“We are also targeting key Iranian sponsors providing financial and material (SOMA) support to the Taliban.”

Regional IEC Chief to Face Legal Actions Over Poor Management in Elections

KABUL: - A regional chief of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) is expected to be referred to judiciary institutions over poor management in parliamentary elections that were held on Saturday this week.

More than four million people voted out of a total of 8.6 million registered voters in the voting which was ended on Sunday.

The voting process was extended for two days, following the security and technical issues as well as the closure of voting centers in some regions particularly in Kabul where some people didn’t get the opportunity to exercise their right and cast vote.

Following the issues, the IEC has come to the decision to refer its regional chief Avshal Rahim Rashid to judiciary institutions over his poor management in the voting process in Kabul.

“Currently, he (Rashid) is serving as IEC chief for Kabul, but the commission has the right to refer those who have neglected in his job,” said Mirza Mohammad Haydarzai, Deputy Spokesman of the IEC.

However, some lawyers based in Kabul considered the negligence of the IEC staff as an act against the people voted in the elections.

According to article 56 of the Criminal Code, he (Rashid) should be referred to judiciary institutions, especially to the Attorney General Office,” said a lawyer.

Some electoral commentators, meanwhile, said the IEC staff should be blamed for the mismanagement and shortcomings of the elections.

Helmand IECC Receive 350 Complaints During Elections

KABUL: - Helmand and shriveled, Afghan glassblower Ghulam Sakhi daintily blows and twirls molten glass into delicate blue and green goblets and vases — a craft passed down for generations but now at risk of dying out.

Sakhi is one of the last makers of Herat glassware in the eponymous western city where the once-booming industry has been shattered by decades of war, poverty, and quàm import.

Decades of War Shatter Afghanistan’s Glassblowing Craft

Sakhi sits on a low stool next to a brick and corrugated iron workshop where Sakhi worked with his father when he was seven.

“I don’t value art,” says Sakhi, who is in his mid-60s and looks much older.

He began working with his glass as the closure of voting centers in some regions particularly in Kabul where some people didn’t get the opportunity to exercise their right and cast vote.

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