Trump’s Afghan Strategy Fueling War, Regional Rivalries: Karzai

Former Afghan President, Hamid Karzai is continuing his criticism of the new U.S. strategy for Afghanistan, asserting it does not bring “a message of peace” but instead increases war and fuels regional rivalries over its strife-torn country.

KABUL - Addressing a news conference in Kabul, Karzai disclosed he has written a formal letter to President Ashraf Ghani, urging him to convene an emergency traditional grand assembly of elders, or Loya Jirga, for discussing Trump’s war plan and finding a way out of the conflict. The Jirga meeting is needed to prevent Afghanistan from again “becoming victim of rivalries between big powers,” insisted the former president.

Karzai added he has written a letter to the Taliban calling on the insurgent group to attend the meeting to help find a politically negotiated settlement to the war.

“America’s new strategy for Afghanistan does not bring a message of peace but a message of more hostilities and increases regional rivalries,” said Karzai, who himself is being accused of stoking rivalries between Muslims and the U.S. by issuing such statements.

Washington supported and installed Karzai as the head of the government in Kabul after a U.S.-led foreign military coalition ousted the Taliban from power in 2001 for sheltering al-Qaeda. He went on to rule Afghanistan until 2013, and he developed deep differences with his U.S. allies on a variety of issues toward the end of his tenure. The former president remained under fire for his intransigent stance on Trump’s war plan and finding a political solution to the war.

KABUL - Security officials in Badakhshan province, in the northeast of Afghanistan, said the army and police force members are ready to launch offensive operations to clear Yumgan and Wardook districts of Taliban but they have not received the permission from the central government.

“I repeat that we are always ready because we are on the front line of the battle. If the relevant organizations provide the equipment and also give the permission to us we are ready to save the people from operation and insecurity. The residents of Yumgan and Jum district (in Badakhshan) have no access to education and healthcare services — due to the presence of militants,” said Abdul Wahid Rashid, the police chief of Bajarak district – which shares border with the insecure district of Yumgan.

“I can assure you that the people will get rid of the problem of insecurity, if we are allowed to launch the military operations,” said Aminullah Ganda, the police chief of Wardooj district. He said “the people from the center of the district”.

A number of public uprising forces meanwhile said they were also ready to defend the country and join the military operations. “We have Army and Police.”

KABUL - Afghan elders visit Landikotal with peace message

PESHAWAR - Afghan elders and religious scholars have visited the northern border town of Landikotal, calling for peace and friendship between the two neighbours.

The visiting delegation, including influential figures, stressed the need for closer relations and greater cooperation on meeting common challenges, Pakistani media reported on Thursday.

The delegation included Maulvi Mohammad, the team was warmly received by political tribal leader Shamil Ahmad at the Durand Line on Wednesday morning.

The delegates also visited Mihani checkpoint, where Assistant Political Agent Nazr Muhammad and noted tribal elders welcomed them, according to The News International. Maulavi... [More on P4-12]

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