

HEKMATYAR TELLS PAKISTANI TALIBAN TO STAY OUT OF AFGHANISTAN

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a veteran Afghan rebel and leader of the Hezb-i-Islami Party, has issued a statement asking members of the Pakistani Taliban to refrain from crossing the border to join the jihad in Afghanistan. The statement was issued by fax on June 24 (Afghan Islamic Press, June 25).

While thanking the Pakistani mujahideen for their "compassion and kindness" and willingness to join Afghan efforts to expel the occupying Coalition, Hekmatyar suggests that cross-border insurgent activity is used as an excuse for continuing the foreign occupation of Afghanistan. According to Hekmatyar, the Pakistani Taliban could be far more useful to the Afghans by pursuing jihad within Pakistan and attacking Coalition supply-lines that carry military and logistical equipment through Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province to the Khyber Pass. "The entire nation of Afghanistan is ready to take part in the holy war against the U.S. occupiers, just the way they fought the Russians. If we have problems, it is only logistical problems."

After emphasizing that it is only Afghans rather than the Pakistani Taliban or al-Qaeda who are resisting the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, Hekmatyar compares the current occupation with that of the Soviets in the 1980s, suggesting: "The way the arrogant and ruthless Americans treat Afghans is far more violent and ruthless than that of the communists and Russian troops in Afghanistan... The Russian troops were invited by their puppet government, but the Americans first occupied Kabul, and then made a government in Bonn and brought it to Kabul!" Hekmatyar also accuses the Americans of selling "trucks full of weapons and military equipment" in a way the Russians never did. He also complains that the degree of financial corruption and embezzlement in the upper echelons of the "U.S. puppet government" far surpasses anything committed by the communists of the 1980s.

Hekmatyar's statement comes as the warlord is denying persistent rumors of secret negotiations with the government of President Hamid Karzai.