

EXHIBIT BB

Pakistan intelligence helping Taliban: NATO general

(AFP) – Aug 10, 2008

KABUL (AFP) — Pakistan's intelligence agency is helping the Taliban to pursue an insurgency in Afghanistan that has seen a 50 percent hike in attacks in some areas this year, the NATO commander here told AFP.

The number of foreign fighters, including Europeans, is also increasing here while NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) still lacks the soldiers it needs, US General David D. McKiernan said in a weekend interview.

"There certainly is a level of ISI complicity in the militant areas in Pakistan and organisations such as the Taliban," the four-star general said, echoing allegations by Afghan President Hamid Karzai and others.

"I can't say to what level of leadership that goes to but there are indications of complicity on the part of ISI... to the extent that they are facilitating these militant groups that come out of the tribal areas in Pakistan."

Karzai has directly accused the ISI of fuelling the unrest in Afghanistan, which sees near daily militant attacks, but Pakistan has rejected the claim.

McKiernan, who took command of the 53,000-strong ISAF force in June and who led US troops into Iraq in 2003, said the increase in unrest in Afghanistan is in part because Afghan and international troops have pushed into new areas.

Insurgents have also changed their tactics to operate in smaller groups carrying out more attacks while militant sanctuaries in Pakistan have been allowed to grow and are sending more fighters across the porous border.

These include men who are not from the Pashtun tribe that straddles the border and from which the Taliban, who were in government in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, are largely drawn.

"Unfortunately we see a higher number of non-Pashtun, non-Afghanistan fighters this year than this time last year," McKiernan said.

"They are really from a variety of ethnic groupings: some are from areas in Pakistan, some are from places like Uzbekistan, or Chechnya, some are from Europe and some are from other Arab countries," the general said.

If Afghanistan's borders were secured and it were up to the Afghan people, the insurgency could be dealt with "rather quickly," McKiernan said.

"But when you have a problem of porous borders and fighters and weapons and resources and command and control and logistics being brought in from outside of Afghanistan, that adds a complicating context to the insurgency," he said.

McKiernan said it was likely insurgents would try to disrupt presidential elections due in Afghanistan next year and he could ask for extra troops during this time.

ISAF needs more soldiers for its task of providing security and to train the Afghan security forces, he said. McKiernan refused to give a figure but German NATO general Egon Ramms said in June that ISAF needs up to 6,000 more soldiers.

The restrictions that some ISAF nations impose on their soldiers meanwhile has curbed the force's battle effectiveness, he said.

Countries operating in Afghanistan have their own caveats: Germany for example will not send its soldiers from the relatively calm north to the more volatile south.

"We come with militaries that have advantages in command and control, in speed, in lethality, in logistics, in intelligence, in all those things," McKiernan said.

"If nations provide forces with restrictions, what it does is it decreases those advantages."

The length of the ISAF mission depends on when war-torn Afghanistan can take charge of its own security, the US general said.

"How fast we can get there, I don't know, but it is important that the international community remain committed to Afghanistan," he said.

There are, however, some provinces and districts where Afghan forces should be able to take over within the next few years with the international forces still available as back-up, McKiernan added.

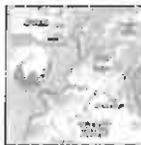
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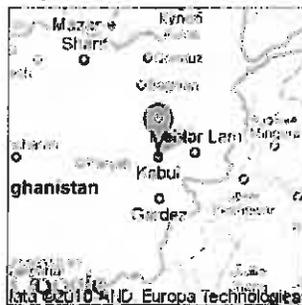
Photo 1 of 3



A Pakistani policeman reads a slogan on a wall against Afghan President Hamid Karzai



Map



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