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**Editorial**

**Unwittingly troops' border-crossing  
no threat to neighbors**

A number of media have recently reported that some Afghan security personnel have crossed the border into Uzbekistan. Following growing insurgency, they said a number of Afghan security personnel may have tactically crossed the friendly neighboring countries borders.

Meanwhile, the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has recently said that it was seriously investigating media reports that some Afghan nationals have crossed into the border with Uzbekistan.

The ministry, releasing a statement, said that the Afghan government has received information that some Afghan security personnel have crossed into the Uzbek territory and this would seriously and comprehensively be investigated to make the reasons clear about all dimensions of the matter. According to media, following a fierce attack from a group of the armed Taliban militants on the border checkpoints in Kaldar district of Balkh province, a number of Afghan troops fled the area and crossed other sides of the country's border, according to Tajikistan's state news agency.

The agency reported that the troops entered Tajikistan through its Shahriz border outpost, a district in the very southwestern corner of the country, intersecting Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Following the incidents, some neighboring countries deployed more troops along their borders with Afghanistan, with also a fear of terrorist influence, a plan would be effective in preventing insurgency. But in the meantime, if correct, temporally crossing of some Afghan security personnel to other sides of border would pose no threat to the security of the neighboring countries. All neighboring, regional and even world countries should be grateful of the Afghans as they are at the front line of war against terrorism and Islamic extremism.

Over the last several decades of militancy in Afghanistan, the borders with the neighboring countries were safe and secure, thanks to the Afghan forces for dedicating themselves to prevent insurgency influence in other sides of borders.

A tactical withdrawal, tactical evacuation and tactical flee to other sides including other countries territories should not be interpreted violating international law of borders.

On the other, the country's ministry of foreign affairs has announced that it would seriously investigate the issue to see if the borders were violated by the country's security forces and why. So, the neighboring countries should join hand and stay alongside of the Afghans to fight any kind of terror, including ISIS, Taliban or other militant groups threatening security of the nations.

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**Will the Taliban leadership  
abandon its bases in Pakistan?**



With territory under its control in Afghanistan expanding rapidly, will the Afghan Taliban leadership, allegedly based in Pakistan, leave the country and return to Afghanistan? There are several reasons why it may not decide to do so in the foreseeable future.

For one, Pakistan offers the Taliban strategic depth and a safe back option, which it would like to preserve. For decades, sanctuaries in Pakistan offered the Taliban an insurance, which it has tapped into when in trouble in Afghanistan, or when under attack from the international community.

This has worked to the benefit of the Taliban leadership in the past, and some segments of the group will continue to find it useful in the coming years.

Pakistan will continue to remain a major supporter of the Taliban should the latter draw the ire of the international community and be ostracized again in the future.

The argument that the Taliban followed the United States' invasion of Afghanistan when the group needed safe havens outside the country, doesn't hold much weight. Prior to the U.S. invasion, the Taliban was getting deep support in Pakistan, ranging from financial support to training and arms.

Arguably, Pakistan still offers the Taliban the same financial and military safety.

"Transition to the Afghan Taliban are on the opening in Pakistan's border regions as the militant group intensifies attacks against Afghan forces ahead of the U.S. troop withdrawal." Voice of America (VOA) reported last week. "They [the Afghan Taliban] are coming on motorcycles and asking large sums for contributions. They say that they belong to the Taliban movement and that they are fighting in Allah's path," a Pakistani resident told VOA.

Over the years, the Afghan Taliban have been pushing to build reputation as an independent organization. It is widely believed the Pakistan's influence over the Taliban has waned over the years. It is because of this waning influence that the group has not paid much heed to Pakistan's pressure as it engages in peace talks, reduce violence, and focus on fundraising a negotiated settlement with other stakeholders.

Clearly, Pakistan is not happy with the Taliban. "We oppose any military takeover of Afghanistan, which will lead only to decades of civil war, as the Taliban cannot win over the will of the country, and yet must be included in any government for it to succeed," Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote in recent article in the Washington Post.

Notwithstanding the differences with Islamabad, the Taliban will not give up their bases in Pakistan just to prove their authority. The group will continue to remain attentive to Pakistan's security interests, and quietly do what is necessary to keep the relationship in a functional state.

The Taliban have already warned Afghanistan's neighboring countries against offering military bases to the United States. Pakistan, which appears to be the target of this warning, has categorically said that it will not do so, stressing that "terrorism" will target the country if Islamabad agrees to host the U.S. bases.

Last week, Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said that Pakistan has made a big decision to not give bases to the U.S. and now, Islamabad expects the Afghan Taliban to return the favor.

Other than a corridor for the Taliban, based in Lahore, Pakistan

