Beat: Miscellaneous

Afghan Taliban declare spring offensive again coalition troops

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USPA News - The Taliban on Saturday announced the beginning of its so-called spring offensive against coalition forces in Afghanistan, vowing to carry out deadly bombings at military bases and to continue insider attacks while attempting to avoid civilian casualties. A statement from the Leadership Council of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the official name of the Taliban, said this year`s spring offensive will be called "Khalid bin Waleed," a reference to a famous Arab general of the Muslim army during the Muslim conquests of the 7th century.

"The Afghan Mujahid nation, in defense of their religion and country, has occupied the trenches of Jihad and resistance for the past eleven years against the invading crusaders and their spineless backers," the council said in a statement e-mailed by Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid. "During this lengthy period, with the Grace of Allah Almighty, the Jihadi determination and patience has only increased in perseverance by the day and, with the divine help of Allah Almighty, has handed the world a memorable defeat in every field." The insurgent group said the offensive will begin across the country on Sunday and aims to defeat the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The Taliban each year announces spring offensives against coalition forces, with an offensive called "al-Farooq" in 2012 and "Badar" in 2011. "This year`s spring operation, in accordance with its combat nature, will consist of special military tactics quantity and quality wise while successful insider attacks, to eliminate foreign invaders, will be carried out by infiltrating Mujahideen (Taliban fighters) inside enemy bases in a systematic and coordinated manner," the council said. The statement added: "Similarly, collective martyrdom operations on bases of foreign invaders, their diplomatic centers and military airbases will be even further structured while every possible tactic will be utilized in order to detain or inflict heavy casualties on the foreign transgressors." The insurgent group further called on Afghan civilians to stay away from military bases or areas frequented by foreign troops to avoid civilian casualties. It also called on Afghan officials to abandon the government of President Hamid Karzai to "conform to Islamic commands, national interests and protection of yourselves." Previous spring offensives have been largely described as failures as the number of coalition deaths has continued to drop in recent years. Offensives "Badar" and "al-Farooq" were both considered to be failures as, with the exception of mostly low-profile attacks, they resulted only in hundreds of highly exaggerated and false statements from the Taliban. A total of 39 coalition troops have been killed in Afghanistan so far this year, according to official figures. A total of 402 ISAF troops were killed in Afghanistan in 2012, down from 566 fatalities in 2011 and 711 in 2010. A majority of the fallen troops were American and were killed in the country`s south, which is plagued by IED attacks on troops and civilians. There are currently more than 100,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 68,000 U.S. troops and 9,000 British soldiers. Approximately 3,800 British soldiers are expected to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2013, with all foreign combat troops due to leave by the end of 2014.

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