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Twenty-five years after Soviet exit, Taliban says US will meet same fate

February 16, 2014

The Taliban called on Afghans to expel the United States from Afghanistan on Saturday just as they said Afghan mujahideen fighters had done to Soviet forces 25 years ago to the day. In a statement issued on the 25th anniversary of the final Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, a national holiday for Afghans, the Taliban sought to connect the steady departure of U.S. and NATO troops ahead of a year-end deadline to the end of the decade-long Soviet occupation. “Today America is facing the same fate as the former Soviets and trying to escape from our country,” the Taliban said in a statement emailed to reporters by Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a spokesman for the group.

“The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is calling on its people to deal with today’s invaders the same they did with the yesterday’s invaders,” he said, using the name the Taliban government used during its repressive 1996-2001 rule.

In line with the so-called Geneva accords, a last convoy of Soviet soldiers crossed a bridge connecting northern Afghanistan with the then-Soviet Union on Feb. 15, 1989. “We want to remind the Americans that we did not accept invaders with their sweet and nice slogans in the past. We eliminated them from the world map. God willing, your destiny will be the same,” the statement said.

While U.S. and NATO forces in recent years have pushed Taliban militants out of many areas of their southern homeland, they appear to be dug in across remote areas along the rugged Afghanistan-Pakistan border and insurgent violence continues.