

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

Reuters

Western embassies edgy as Muslim anger at film simmers

By Robin Pomeroy

9/17/2012

Western embassies across the Muslim world remained on high alert on Sunday and the United States urged vigilance after days of anti-American violence provoked by a video mocking the Prophet Mohammad.

The head of Libya's national assembly said an attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans last Tuesday looked like a planned assault by a "group with an agenda" rather than a spontaneous reaction to the video posted online.

With protests against the film continuing from London to Lahore on Sunday, Western diplomatic missions were on edge. Germany followed the U.S. lead and withdrew some staff from its embassy in Sudan, which was stormed on Friday.

Washington ordered non-essential staff and family members to leave its embassy on Saturday after the Khartoum government turned down a U.S. request to send Marines to bolster security.

Non-essential U.S. personnel have also been withdrawn from Tunisia, and Washington urged U.S. citizens to leave the capital Tunis after the embassy there was targeted on Friday.

The protests peaked on Friday and abated over the weekend. Around 350 people chanted slogans at a rally outside the U.S. embassy in London on Sunday. A small group of protesters burned a U.S. flag outside the embassy in the Turkish capital, and in Pakistan there were protests in more than a dozen cities.

One person was killed when unidentified people opened fire at a protest in the southern city of Hyderabad, and five people were injured in clashes with police in Karachi as around 1,000 protesters tried to reach the U.S. consulate, police said.

The head of Shi'ite militant group Hezbollah called for protests in Beirut on Sunday and nationwide later in the week.

"Those responsible for the film, starting with the U.S., must be held accountable," Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said.

"All these developments are being orchestrated by U.S. intelligence."

"AGENDA FOR REVENGE"

The violence is the most serious wave of anti-American protests in the Muslim world since the start of the Arab Spring revolts last year. At least nine people were killed in protests in several countries on Friday.

It was fanned by public anger over a video, posted on the Internet under several titles including "Innocence of Muslims", that mocked the Prophet Mohammad and portrayed him as a womanizer and a fool.

The crisis presents U.S. President Barack Obama with a foreign policy headache as November elections approach.

Some U.S. officials have suggested the Benghazi attack was planned by Islamist militants using the video as a pretext, a hypothesis endorsed by Mohammed Magarief, the president of Libya's national assembly.

"Call it whatever you want, al Qaeda or not, what happened was an act by a group with an agenda for revenge. They chose a specific time, technique and certain victims. This is what it was all about," Magarief told Reuters in an interview.

However, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, said on Sunday talk shows that preliminary information indicated that the attack was not pre-meditated.

"There's no question, as we've seen in the past with things like 'The Satanic Verses', with the cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad, there have been such things that have sparked outrage and anger and this has been the proximate cause of what we've seen," she said.

Magarief told CBS News that about 50 people had been arrested in connection with the attack. Some were from abroad.

U.S. FORCES DEPLOYED

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said he hoped the worst of the violence was over but U.S. missions must remain on guard.

"It would appear that there is some leveling off on the violence that we thought might take place," he told reporters on his plane en route to Asia on Saturday.

"Having said that, these demonstrations are likely to continue over the next few days, if not longer."

The United States has deployed a significant force in the Middle East to deal with any contingencies and rapid deployment teams were ready to respond to incidents, he said.

The foreign minister of Egypt, where hundreds of people were arrested in four days of clashes, assured Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that U.S. diplomatic grounds would be protected.

Mohamed Kamel Amr told Clinton in a telephone call that the film was designed to incite racial hatred and was therefore "contradictory with laws aimed at developing relationships of peace and mutual understanding between nations and states".

In Los Angeles on Saturday, a California man convicted of bank fraud was taken in for questioning by officers investigating possible probation violations stemming from the making of the video. He has denied involvement in the film.

The furor prompted an Iranian organization to increase the reward for anyone killing Salman Rushdie, the British author condemned to death for blasphemy in 1989 by [Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini](#), founder of the Islamic Republic.

"Surely if the sentence of the Imam (Khomeini) had been carried out, the later insults in the form of caricatures, articles and the making of movies would not have occurred," said Hassan Sanei, head of the religious foundation offering \$3.3 million for Rushdie's death.

In Lebanon, where one protester was killed in violence on Friday, Pope Benedict urged Arab leaders to work for peace.

"In a world where violence constantly leaves behind its grim trail of death and destruction, to serve justice and peace is urgently necessary," Benedict said at a mass on Beirut's Mediterranean seafront attended by 350,000 worshippers and leaders of Lebanon's Christian and Muslim communities.