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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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Taliban step up attacks

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Amid Afghan government's efforts to convene Loya Jirga or traditional grand assembly to get national endorsement for inking the possible strategic partnership with the United States, the Taliban militants have intensified attacks to spoil the step. The armed outfit fighting Afghan government and some 130,000 strong-NATO-led troops with nearly 100,000 of them Americans, in the latest attacks, targeted a logistic company providing assistance to the NATO-led forces in Herat province killing two people and injuring three others. Afghan government is going to convene a Loya Jirga within weeks, probably by the end of November to discuss the proposed Afghan-U.S. strategic partnership and the possible establishment of the U.S. military bases in the militancy-plagued Afghanistan. As a sign of strong opposition to the possible formation of U.S. permanent military bases in Afghanistan, the Taliban outfit, in a statement released to media outlets days ago, termed the upcoming Loya Jirga as a trick to legalize the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and vowed to disrupt it, says a news analysis by the Xinhua agency. "Under the orders of its masters, the Kabul administration wants to abuse a much respected custom of our country (Loya Jirga) and try to give a legal face to the establishment of permanent bases for the American occupying forces on the Islamic soil of Afghanistan," the Taliban statement, sent to media last week said. "For its long term goal of permanently staying in Afghanistan, the Americans want to once again abuse this tradition through its stooge regime to call a supposed Loya Jirga in which faces of its preference will be gathered, food will be eaten and once again, games will be played with the fate and future of its nation," the English statement of the Taliban outfit read out. Although the authenticity of the statement has yet to be verified, the inflexible outfit warned of dire consequence to anyone attends the traditional Loya Jirga or grand assembly including tribal elders, chieftains, parliamentarians and functionaries. To oppose the presence of NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

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in the post-Taliban Afghanistan and lash at government-initiated Loya Jirga, the militants have intensified their attacks recently. On Oct. 31, the Taliban militants stormed a guesthouse in their former stronghold Kandahar 450 km south of Afghan capital Kabul leaving six people including three UN employees, dead. Similarly, two days earlier of Kandahar offensive, on Oct. 29, the Taliban fighters, in a brazen attack, carried out a deadly suicide bombing against NATO-led troops in the fortified capital city Kabul killing 16 people including 13 American