چاپ

Pakistan Asking Taleban to Expel Bin Laden

16/09/2001

Pakistan is dispatching an official mission to Afghanistan to try to persuade Taleban authorities to expel alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden -- the key suspect in Tuesday's attacks on the United States.

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Maleeha Lodhi, said the delegation could leave as early as Monday, if it can get needed permission from the U-N sanctions committee to fly to Afghanistan. The sanctions were imposed as part of earlier efforts to win the extradition of Mr. bin Laden.

Ambassador Lodhi told the Cable News Network that the delegation will urge Afghanistan's Taleban leadership to hand over the Saudi exile for trial on terrorism charges. The United States has pressed Pakistan to support American efforts to respond to the terror attacks, and on Saturday word came that Islamabad would cooperate fully.

The Pakistani attempt to defuse the situation came as worried residents of Kabul began fleeing the Afghan capital, fearing a U-S retaliatory attack.

In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell said the United States will be sending a team to Pakistan to collaborate in anti-terrorism measures. He said the team will leave - as he put it -as soon we have a better idea of what support will be needed. He said the determination could take several days.

Meanwhile, alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden denied any part in the attacks. In a statement released by the Afghan Islamic Press, he said the United States routinely accuses him of terrorist acts, but -- in his words -- "I say that I have not done it."

Senior officials of Afghanistan's ruling Taleban said today that Osama bin Laden will continue to have their protection. At the same time, the Taleban's spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, called Islamic clerics in the country together for a meeting Wednesday to discuss defenses against possible U-S military action.

Osama bin Laden has been on Washington's most-wanted list for allegedly planning the 1998 bombings of U-S embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Osama bin Laden also has been linked to last year's bombing of a U-S warship (the U-S-S Cole) in Yemen.

Washington has asked Pakistan for assistance in a number of areas, including the use of Pakistani airspace in case of a military strike on suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is taking what the sources in Islamabad describe as "extraordinary security measures" to counter an anticipated backlash from Muslim groups in Pakistan who support Osama bin Laden.

چاپ