

## Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan unite

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Taliban leaders in Pakistan have united with their Afghan comrades to launch a new offensive in Afghanistan, Taliban fighters say.

Word of the move comes as the United States prepares to send 17,000 additional troops to Afghanistan this year, The New York Times reported Friday.

The newspaper says it learned through interviews with several Taliban fighters that Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar pressed for unity by sending his emissaries to persuade Pakistani Taliban leaders to bury their differences.

Several Pakistani officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirm that meetings took place between the two sides.

The Taliban fighters say preparations for the anticipated influx of U.S. troops are already in the works.

New, younger Taliban commanders are said to be planning to step up a campaign of roadside bombings and suicide attacks against the Americans.

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