

U.S. favors Afghan-moderate Taliban talks

by UPI

THE HAGUE, Netherlands -- U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Tuesday she backs Afghanistan's plans to conduct reconciliation talks with moderate Taliban members.

In an address during an Afghan summit at The Hague, Netherlands, Clinton said, "(We) must support efforts by the government of Afghanistan to separate the extremists of al-Qaida and the Taliban from those who joined their ranks not out of conviction, but out of desperation."

More than 80 countries and international organizations attended the summit aimed at stabilizing Afghanistan and reinvigorating political support, CNN reported.

Moderate Taliban members "should be offered an honorable form of reconciliation and reintegration into a peaceful society, if they are willing to abandon violence, break with al-Qaida, and support the constitution," Clinton said.

Last week, Obama announced his decision to send an additional 4,000 troops to Afghanistan to increase training for the Afghan army and police. In addition, he called for hundreds of civilian specialists, such as agricultural experts, educators and engineers, to go to Afghanistan to help in non-military development.

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