



Report

Afghanistan -- Taliban Propaganda Video Capitalizes on 'Capture' of US Base

A video posted on the Taliban website Voice of Jihad on 18 November showcases what it describes as the "capture" of a US military base in the Kamdesh district of Noorestan Province. The video, titled "Noorestan: A Message of Success," offers scenes of what appear to be the beginning of the Taliban attack on the base and weapons and ammunitions captured by the Taliban. Occasional Koranic verses in the video offer religious justification and proclaim the righteousness of the Taliban cause. The video also glorifies the Taliban victory by highlighting the group's triumphant entry into the "captured base," the symbolic burning of an American flag, and the Taliban governor of Noorestan Province, identified as Sheikh Dost Mohammad, touring the area.

The video, attributed to the Alemarah Jihadi Studio operating under the Audio and Video Branch of the Islamic Emirate's Cultural Commission, shows what it calls the beginning of the Taliban attack on the US base.

- A caption reading "Attack on the American Base in Noorestan Province" appears, followed by a voice ordering fighters to "recite 'God is great' and start the attack." The following caption says: "The beginning of operations on the US military base in Kamdesh district of Noorestan Province."
- The next scene offers sounds of gunfire and smoke rising from the buildings and Taliban occasionally shouting "God is great." The caption appearing on the right side of the screen says "camera 2," then it changes to "camera 1," indicating that the Taliban may have prepositioned two cameras to capture the operation.
- The video continues to show gunfire and rising smoke from the buildings, as a helicopter appears flying overhead and the Taliban aim and fire an antiaircraft gun.

Occasional recitation of Koranic verses offers religious justification and underlines the righteousness of the Taliban cause. Following the Koranic verses, the video shows war booty - weapons and ammunition claimed to have been captured from the "invading crusaders." Booty is an important part of the Taliban's philosophy of jihad (holy war), as seen by the dedication of an entire chapter of the Taliban Code of Conduct to the definition of and rules for the distribution of booty (Taliban Code of Conduct, Chapter 5, May).

- In the following scene, a Koranic verse appears on the screen followed by an announcer reading a translation in Pashto: "There is no doubt that infidels spend their wealth to distract people from God's path, and that after spending so much, they are [ultimately] disappointed and defeated."
- Following the Koranic verse, the announcer continues: "This is a big American base in Kamdesh district, which was captured by the mujahiddin, with the help of God and as a result of continuous attacks by the brave mujahiddin." The announcer adds that "a

large amount of booty also fell into mujahiddin hands," adding: "We ask God to help mujahiddin to liberate other parts of the country and get rid of invaders."

In the next scene, a title appears on the screen saying "Weapons Captured From the Invading Crusaders," followed by scenes showing weapons and ammunition.

The next scene shows the title "The Islamic Emirate's Mujahiddin Burning the 'Crusaders' Flag," followed by scenes showing Taliban fighters burning an American flag, while in the background Taliban chant.

The next scenes, titled "The American Invaders' Base, Captured by the Islamic Emirate's Mujahiddin" and "Sheikh Dost Mohammad Hefzullah, God Protect Him [as written in the caption], Tours the Captured US Base in Kamdesh," glorifies the Taliban victory by highlighting the group's triumphant entry into the "captured base" and the Taliban governor of the Noorestan Province, identified as Sheikh Dost Mohammad, touring the area.

- The scene following the title, "The American Invaders' Base, Captured by the Islamic Emirate's Mujahiddin," shows a group of Taliban fighters, in a truck and on foot, entering the base and shouting "long live [Taliban]."
- The following video shows a man, who later is introduced as Sheikh Dost Mohammad, the Taliban governor of Noorestan, greeting Taliban fighters.
- The next caption says "Sheikh Dost Mohammad Hefzullah, God Protect Him, Tours the Captured US Base in Kamdesh," followed by another caption saying: "The Commander of Kamdesh Distinct Offers Information about the Captured US Base." The unnamed commander says: "You and the entire world know that a big field gun was placed here. The Americans were forced to flee, after continuous attacks by the mujahiddin, and as far as you can see here, all fell into mujahiddin hands."

The video continues with a question and answer session on details of the operation.

- An unidentified person asks: "How many days did your operation continue?"
- The commander answers: "This was not a one- or two-day operation, it was a continuous operation."
- Question: "You finally won?"
- Answer: "Yes, we finally won because we have God on our side."
- Question: "In your opinion, would you be able to capture other bases as well?"
- Answer: "We are positive that other bases will be captured in the same way."

In the next scene the commander points to a round metal piece, saying "the Americans left this here."

Next, a scene titled "Mujahiddin of the Islamic Emirate Praying in Captured Base" shows a group of Taliban praying.

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In the following scene, the Taliban governor of Noorestan tries an abandoned elliptical. Someone says "this is their exercise place," and another one explains "Americans eat a lot and then exercise."

The next scene shows the Taliban governor firing from an automatic weapon.

To view the 7-minute 38-second video, double-click on the following icon:

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