

Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour's death a 'milestone' for Afghan peace: Obama

23/05/2016 22:14 by admin

Hanoi: President Barack Obama said that the death of Taliban chief Mullah Mohammed Akhtar Mansour marks an "important milestone" in the longstanding effort to bring peace to Afghanistan.

Barack Obama

Obama said that his death removes the leader of an organization that has continued to plot and unleash attacks on U.S. and coalition forces and that has waged war against the Afghan people.

In a written statement issued as he traveled in Vietnam, Obama says the U.S. will continue to take action against extremist networks that target the United States.

"We have removed the leader of an organisation that has continued to plot against and unleash attacks on American and Coalition forces, to wage war against the Afghan people, and align itself with extremist groups like al Qa'ida," the US President said.

Mansour was killed when a U.S. drone fired on his vehicle in the southwestern Pakistan province of Baluchistan. He had emerged as the successor to Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, whose 2013 death was only revealed last summer.

Pakistan had late on Sunday confirmed that two people were killed in a US drone strike on Saturday in its remote area along the Pakistan-Afghan border, but remained vague about the Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Mansoor's death in the strike.

A statement issued by Pakistan's Foreign Office said that the US informed the Pakistani Prime Minister and the Pakistani Army Chief about the drone strike late Saturday after the strike was carried out. It confirmed two people were killed in the strike. However, the statement did not confirm Mullah Mansoor's death.

A driver named Muhammad Azam and a man named Wali Muhammad were killed in the strike, said the statement, adding that the identity of the driver has been confirmed and his body has been collected by his relatives while the identity of the second body was still being verified.

In the statement, the Pakistan Foreign Office also protested against the US drone strike on its territory as it violated its sovereignty. It also called on the Taliban to give up violence and join the peace talks.

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