

Chronology of Events in Afghanistan, September 2002*

September 1

Governor of Khost: Al-Qaeda and Taliban still a potential threat (UN Integrated Regional Network / IRIN)

Hakim Taniwal, the governor of Khost, warned that Al-Qaeda and Taliban continued to be a threat to security in southeastern Afghanistan. Despite rebel commander Padshah Khan Zadran openly contesting his authority, he expressed hope about restoring stability to the volatile region very soon. However, he said, Al-Qaeda and Taliban are a potential threat, because they are present across the border in Pakistan's tribal areas. They may try to infiltrate or engage in sabotage activities, but they are certainly not strong enough to overthrow the government.

September 2

Southeastern tribal leaders pledge support for transitional government (Iranian radio Voice of the Islamic Republic)

[Deputy Prime Minister of the Afghan Transitional Government] Defence Minister Marshal Mohammad Qasem Fahim met a number of tribal elders of Paktia, Paktika and Khost Provinces. The Afghan defence minister praised tribal elders' support for the Afghan transitional government and the national army, and emphasized that they should consolidate national accord between all ethnic tribes of Afghanistan. Then Haji Abdorrahman expressed his support for the Afghan transitional government. He said the representatives of the Afghan people will never allow any forces, including Padshah Khan Zadran or any other group to undermine the peace and security in the region.

Three still held after mass arrest in Kandahar (Reuters)

Afghan authorities in the southern city of Kandahar arrested 170 renegade soldiers in a major swoop this week but have since released all but three of them, a spokesman for Kandahar governor Gul Agha Sherzai said. Khalid Pashtun stated that the arrested men were originally from local Afghan militia brigade 503 before they formed a breakaway unit based outside Kandahar. The unit refused to answer orders and arrest wanted suspects, and had harboured local bandits and low-level members of the ousted Taliban regime. "Initially 170 people were held, but 75 were released on the same day," he said. "Of the remaining 95, 92 have now been released and three are still detained." He said the three men in detention were refusing to cooperate with the authorities and hand over weapons they owned. He denied media reports that local

* *Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara.*

houses had been searched and that some captives were beaten. He added that there were no senior Taliban or al Qaeda suspects among the group.

September 3

Tajik-Hazara fighting in Mazar (Reuters)

Afghans in Mazar-i-Sharif fled a skirmish between forces of two commanders who were discussing security in the area with a visiting central government team. At least one fighter was killed and another wounded during the brief clash between groups loyal to Tajik commander Ustad Atta Mohammad and the Shi'ite faction of Hezb-i-Wahdat. Soon after the clash started, dozens of shops in Mazar closed down and people began to flee. UN has voiced its concern that a series of deadly clashes in recent weeks across the northern regions could escalate. The skirmish broke out while a ministerial-led team from Kabul was visiting the city to discuss security in the north with Atta, Wahdat and the Uzbek commander general Abdur Rashid Dostum. The issues included the safe return of the Pashtuns to the north, where they are a minority.

Hekmatyar calls for jihad against Americans in Afghanistan (Middle East News Agency / MENA)

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Islamic Party, called on the Afghani people to wage *jihad* against the American forces in Afghanistan. Hekmatyar was quoted as saying, in a voice recording, that Afghans who side with the Americans "have sold themselves for a handful of dollars." He said that the war being waged by the US in Afghanistan was not a war against Al Qaida and Taliban but a war against the Afghani people and all Muslims - a Crusade. Hekmatyar asked the Afghani people to teach the Americans a lesson as they did when they forced Soviet forces to flee from Afghanistan.

September 4

Taleban, Al-Qa'idah, Hezb-e Eslami allegedly to set up new alliance (Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency / AIP)

A spokesman for Military Corps No 3, in Gardez [capital of eastern Paktia Province], Mohammad Ismail Zazi said that the Taleban, Hekmatyar [leader of the Hezb-e Islami], Usamah Bin-Ladin and some foreign intelligence agencies are working to set up a new alliance. He said: "It was reported before that Hekmatyar was hiding in the southeastern areas but according to our reports he and other Taleban leaders have left Afghanistan and are based in the tribal areas of Pakistan."

Reuters report on the same news: Hekmatyar, in response to the same allegations raised by the commander of the ISAF, denied any ties with Al-Qaidah or the Taliban.

September 5

Assassination attempt against Afghan President in Kandahar (Japanese news agency Kyodo, IRIN, Associated Press / AP)

The president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai escaped unhurt, but the governor of Kandahar was wounded when a gunman opened fire on their car in the former stronghold of Taliban. Three people, including the suspected attacker, were killed in the assassination attempt. The assassination attempt occurred soon after Karzai, who

was in his hometown of Kandahar for the wedding of his youngest brother, finished evening prayers at the city's historic Khalqa Sharif mosque. After the prayers, Karzai and his party were given a tour of the governor's mansion, located across the street from the mosque. Karzai's motorcade was preparing to leave the governor's compound as hundreds of well-wishers were pressing against the gates to catch a glimpse of the president. Eyewitnesses reported that the assassin was one of the guards. US military bodyguards immediately opened fire, killing the assailant and two other people. The other two were armed, like many people in Kandahar, but it was unclear whether they were bystanders or involved in the attack.

At least 26 persons killed in car bomb blast in Kabul (AP, IRIN, Afghan news agency Bakhtar)

Kabul Police Chief Basir Salangi said that 26 people were killed and 150 wounded in blast in Kabul. The blast in Said Jafar street in the Pole-Baghe Omomi shopping center - an area opposite the Ministry of Culture and Information - occurred in a taxi, minutes after a smaller device on a bicycle exploded, drawing hundreds of people to it with curiosity. "As long as al-Qaeda is around, we expect attacks to continue," an Afghan security official stated. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast that follows a series of smaller bomb explosions in the capital. The government offered no immediate evidence of bin Laden's involvement, and others blamed the rising anger of the Pashtun majority toward a government controlled by Americans and dominated by rival Tajiks from the north.

Afghan northern factions want armed groups out of Mazar (Reuters)

The three main Afghan factions in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif issued a 24-hour ultimatum to armed groups to withdraw from the volatile city. The move came a day after ethnic Uzbek commander general Abdul Rashid Dostum, ethnic Tajik commander Ustad Atta Mohammad and a the Hezb-i-Wahdat Shiite group agreed that the city should be de-militarised. Dostum has proposed that a detachment of about 1,000 troops drawn from all three factions should be formed to force "irresponsible armed men" from Mazar if they failed to meet the deadline. Thousands of men from the factions armed with assault rifles and light machine guns have been roaming the streets of Mazar, where faction commanders have been vying for power since the fall of the Taliban regime last year. The order for the demilitarisation of the key city follows several rounds of clashes between the three factions in recent weeks around the city and in other parts of northern Afghanistan.

Afghan tribal chiefs urge release of clan leader (Pakistan-based publication Wahdat)

Many tribal chiefs from eastern Afghanistan have asked UN to play a role in the release of Haji Ruhollah [local-tribal politician arrested on 22 August]. In their meeting with the UN envoy for Afghanistan's eastern provinces, they said that Ruhollah was a tribal leader and the US forces had arrested him merely on suspicion. They said that Ruhollah had been the "enemy" of the Taleban and Al-Qa'idah and his house was also attacked with rockets during the Taleban era. In response, the UN envoy said that he personally knew Ruhollah and that he had written a letter about his arrest to the UN office. The 1,000-member delegation of the tribal chiefs from Konar Province which met the UN envoy is staying at the directorate of tribal affairs in Jalalabad for the past several days, trying to secure the release of Ruhollah.

September 6

Herat Friday prayers warn against watching films (Afghan Herat TV)

In the Friday prayer in Herat great mosque the preacher gave a speech advising the youth not to watch the movies "which are not allowed in Islam". In another part of his speech, he emphasized the role of the religious authorities to preach to the people, in particular the heads of families, "to be strict to their sons and members of their families in terms of watching unlawful movies and pictures".

September 7

Tribal fighting in Khost province, 16 killed (AIP)

Heavy fighting has been continuing between two tribes, Sabari and Belkhel, in an area situated 50 km to the north of Khost city; and at least seven people have killed so far and over 20 others have been wounded. The eyewitnesses say that some 500 families have left the area from both sides and a number of the people are about to leave the area. The people of Khost also complain that the government has not taken any action regarding the current fighting in Khost.

Reuters report on the same news on September 8: At least 16 people have been killed in fighting between two rival Afghan tribes in the southeastern province of Khost. The clash was part of an old feud over land between rival tribes north of the city of Khost.

September 8

Bomb blast, fighting between governor's and Zadran forces in Khost, 15 killed (BBC)

The battle erupted on [September 7] shortly after a bomb attack in the city injured at least a dozen people. The bomb went off in a video store in a shopping district of Khost. Hours later reports came in of heavy street fighting around the governor's residence. Hakim Taniwal, the official governor, stated that a local faction had launched an attack. The governor's troops later cleared fighters loyal to commander Padshah Khan Zadran out of the governor's building but they were still occupying the mayor's office. A spokesman for Taniwal said that at least 15 people had been killed and more than 50 wounded in the fighting.

September 12

EU agrees that force can be used to repatriate Afghan refugees (AP)

The European Union stated that the repatriation of Afghan refugees, with force if necessary, was the top priority of its asylum policy. The 15-member bloc is favoring voluntary return programs with financial incitements. "There are tens of thousands of Afghans who will not get asylum. We need to get them back," said Interior Minister Bertel Haarder of Denmark, who chaired a meeting of the 15 interior ministers. "No country rules out the use of force," he added, without elaborating. Getting them back to a country which is now considered largely safe "is the first top priority," said EU Asylum Commissioner Antonio Vitorino. Denmark, which holds the EU's presidency through December, offers financial incentives of some 2,500 euros per adult to return. The Afghan repatriation had resulted "in a reduced pressure on asylum system in

Europe," said Ruud Lubbers, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who attended the meeting in Copenhagen.

September 13

Afghan government forces carry out military operations against Zadran forces in Khost (AIP)

Clearing up operations have been carried out by Gardez's Military Corps No 3 along the road linking Gardez to Khost against Padshah Khan Zadran's forces [starting from September 10]. Mohammad Ismael Zazi, a spokesman for the Military Corps No 3, said that the regions of Kondu, Nenuzu and Merajan and Golgai have been cleared. The spokesman further said: "No clashes took place in the course of mopping up operations and Padshah Khan's forces cooperated with us."

September 14

Afghan general survives bomb attack (Afghan news agency Hindokosh)

[Commander of Military Corps No 3] Atiqollah Lodin survived unhurt when a bomb attack was made on his vehicle in the area of Tirah [Paktia Province]. It was reported that the remote-controlled bomb was detonated on a bridge after two cars carrying Lodin's bodyguards had passed through but did not harm him. General Lodin has been named as a rival and regional adversary of Pashah Khan Zadran and has survived several similar attacks in the past.

September 16

Eight killed in Mazar-i-Sharif fighting (Reuters)

At least eight people were reportedly killed when fighting erupted between forces loyal to rival commanders in northern Afghanistan. The clashes in the Qalaye Shahr area of Sari Pul province and the Chamtal district of Mazar-i-Sharif involved fighters loyal to Uzbek commander General Abdul Rashid Dostum and his Tajik rival Ustad Atta Mohammad. It was reported that five unidentified people were killed and 11 wounded in Qalaye Shahr and three more were killed in Chamtal. General Abdul Saboor, a commander of Atta's Jamiat-i-Islami faction, confirmed there had been fighting between the factions. He said local authorities had forced an end to the fighting in Chamtal, about 10 km west of Mazar-i-Sharif, but intense fighting was continuing in Qalaye Shahr. He said some 200 local fighters from both factions had been sent from Mazar to Qalaye Shahr to try to end the conflict. Saboor said he did not know the reason for the clashes in Chamtal but that in Qalaye Shahr was the result of "an old feud" between two local commanders. UN warned that the clashes could spread to other areas of the north.

Khost governor says Zadran defeated (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

The governor of Khost [Hakim Taniwal] has announced the dominance of government forces in that Province. Taniwal said that Padshah Khan has been completely defeated. The governor of Khost said that all heavy weapons are being collected as part of general disarmament.

Reuters report on the same news: Hundreds of fighters formerly loyal to Padshah Khan Zadran who had refused to recognise the transitional authority in Kabul had

switched sides and joined government forces. But a brother of Padshah Khan, a volatile commander involved in fierce fighting against government appointees in Khost in the last two weeks, denied there had been any change of sides.

Women in central Afghan area warned not to go to school, work (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

Leaflets have been dropped in the city of Qalat, the capital of the central Zabol Province, asking women and girls to restrain from going to school and madrasa [religious schools]. According to another report, unidentified people burned a tent a few days ago in which women, girls and young boys were receiving lessons.

Herat governor releases 32 prisoners (Afghan Herat TV)

Based on an order by Alhaj Emir Ismail Khan, head of southwestern zone, 32 male and female prisoners were released from prison in Herat. The prisoners included three categories: Those aged over 60 years, the youth under 18 years and those prisoners who served three quarters of their prison term.

September 17

Afghans deported from Tajikistan (UNHCR)

It was reported that nine Afghan refugees in Tajikistan were separated from their families and detained by the Tajik authorities. The nine, all men, were deported to Afghanistan. UNHCR helped more than 9,200 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriate from Tajikistan in regular return movements. UNHCR reported that some 3,000 refugees remained in Tajikistan. Without a status determination procedure, Afghan refugees in Tajikistan find themselves in a legal limbo.

Rockets hit UNICEF office (Reuters)

Two rockets were fired at the UNICEF office in Jalalabad, wounding a security guard.

Fighting subsides in Mazar (Reuters)

A combined force dispatched by rival commanders succeeded in persuading two of their local commanders to halt a bloody factional battle in Qalaye Shahr region, Mazar-i Sharif. The ceasefire report followed a day of bitter clashes between forces of Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum and those of his old Tajik foe, Ustad Atta Mohammad, in Sari Pul, in which five people were killed and 11 wounded. Homayoun Fawzi, one of Dostum's key generals, said that efforts were under way to disarm the forces of both Dostum commander Hassan and his rival, Ibrahim, in Qalaye Shahr.

Human rights researcher arrested in Herat (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan / UNAMA)

An international consultant with HRW together with a translator, driver and a civilian were arrested by Herat police near Puli Pashtu bridge of Herat city. The consultant, his translator and driver were released after investigation, while the civilian was detained and sent to the intelligence department for further investigation, then released the next day.

September 18

Assassination attempt on Junbish commander in Samangan (UNHCR Mazar Situation report)

There was an assassination attempt on the life of General Ahmed Khan, a Junbish-i Islam local commander and officially the commander of Samangan. Unknown assailants planted two anti-tank mines in close proximity to his vehicle. Both mines detonated killing one of his bodyguards. Ahmed Khan was not at the scene of this incident.

UN says huge influx of returning refugees may exacerbate humanitarian crisis (Associated Press / AP)

Lakhdar Brahimi, UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Afghanistan called on Iran and Pakistan to discourage Afghan refugees from returning home ahead of the winter, saying the huge influx may exacerbate the country's humanitarian crisis. Since the fall of the Taliban regime last autumn, about 1.6 million Afghans have returned from neighboring countries - mainly Iran and Pakistan. Afghanistan can barely manage to feed and clothe the people already living there, said Brahimi. Brahimi said the colossal emergency was forcing the country's transitional government to use up funds meant for longer-term development. He said 400,000 refugees had flocked to Kabul alone. "That is a huge burden on a city that has no services to speak of. And a lot of people are in houses that have been totally destroyed."

Five killed in tribal clash in Khost (Reuters)

Five people, including two women, were killed in clashes between two rival tribes over land in Khost. The Balkhel and Sabari tribes used artillery to pound each other's positions. Local people said five people were killed in the shelling and hundreds of families had fled since the fighting broke out. It was reported that 23 people have been killed and 50 wounded from both sides in the past two weeks and several attempts by the provincial government to end the fighting had failed.

One wounded, one killed in two separate attacks in Helmand province (AIP)

Unknown people attacked the head district of Sangin, Helmand. Amer Dadu, head of Sangin District, was wounded in the attack and was sent to Kandahar for treatment. Amer Dadu was a well-known commander of the mojahedin during the war against the Russians. He was also the head of military section of Prof Borhanoddin Rabbani's party in the province. He was anti-Taleban and fled to Iran during the rule of the Taleban. He was appointed as the head of Sangin District and was a very powerful military figure.

Haji Sayd Mohammad, a well-known regional leader in Musa Qala District, Helmand Province, was killed last night by unknown people. He was attacked while he was going to attend Asha [evening] prayers.

Assassination attempt on Ghazni governor (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

Unidentified people opened fire on the car of the governor of Ghazni Province. As a result, two bodyguards of the governor were killed but he, himself, survived the assassination attempt.

Government arrests seven Islamic Party commanders (Voice of the Islamic Republic)

In Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province, the government forces have arrested seven prominent commanders of Hezb-e Islami, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The commanders have been arrested in Dara-e Nur, Kotal and Safar Qala areas on charges of being members of the Al-Qa'idah network and smuggling arms and ammunition. They are now under investigation.

Afghan forces arrest 400 people after fire on provincial intelligence chief (AP)

Afghan security forces arrested 400 people in Helmand after unidentified attackers shot and wounded a provincial intelligence chief. The attackers hid in a field in Helmand province and ambushed local intelligence chief Dahd Mohammed Khan, slightly wounding him and a colleague, said Governor Sher Mohammed Akhund. In retaliation the authorities launched a massive sweep, surrounding Sangine district and rounding up 400 men. They seized 60 kalashnikov assault rifles and ammunition.

September 20

Head of intelligence department replaced in Nangarhar (AIP)

Regional authorities in Nangarhar Province have appointed Major-General Mohammad Ibrahim as head of intelligence department in Nangarhar to replace Pir Bakhsh. Observers in Jalalabad say that a number of communists belonging to former KHAD [secret police under communist regimes] work for Nangarhar's intelligence service and it is possible that the change is based on this.

September 23

Warring tribes in Khost agree cease-fire (AIP)

After three weeks of fighting a cease-fire came into force between two tribes in Khost. Mohammad Khan Gorboz, a spokesman for Khost governor, said that elders and representatives of Sabri and Balkhel tribes discussed in detail the current fighting with elders and representatives of all tribes in Khost and with Mohammad Hakim Taniwal, the governor of Khost Province. Gorboz added: "The tribal jerga [assembly] immediately agreed a cease-fire which has come into force this evening." He added: "Another jerga was also appointed to hold talks with both sides and discuss other topics in order to fully resolve the issue."

September 24

Afghan president warns military officials not to interfere in legal issues (Afghan news agency Bakhtar)

The head of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, Hamed Karzai, has issued an order to prevent the influence of the armed forces on the resolution of legal issues. To prevent the impact of armed forces on deciding legal issues, claims in courts and solving accountancy matters, the following [decrees] have been issued:

- The military officials should seriously avoid exerting influence on claims regarding shops, houses and other movable and immovable properties.

- Apart from their jobs, no military official has the right to get involved in the setting up of claims or using their influence to support the claims of the complainant or the defendant.
- The Ministry of Defence notifies its staff: If despite our emphasis on this and the order, any interference, using power or position [in the legal issues] are noticed, the violators will be punished.
- People are asked not to allow the violators to influence claims about movable and immovable properties and if they notice such cases, they are asked to let the military bodies know.

September 26

Herat governor accused of stealing humanitarian aid (Reuters)

The secretary general of the Afghan Red Crescent Society accused the powerful governor of Afghanistan's southern province of Kandahar of seizing a convoy of food aid at gunpoint. Qara Beg Izedyar said Gul Agha Sherzai distributed the aid, which amounted to 1,000 metric tonnes, to military units in Kandahar.

Abdullah Shah jailed, first Afghan war criminal convicted (UK newspaper *The Independent*)

The first war criminal to go on trial in Afghanistan, Abdullah Shah, has been convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison. His crimes included rape, extortion and burning to death 50 people in the war between the mujahadeen factions for Kabul in the 1990s.

Reuters report on the same news: Afghanistan's chief justice [Mowlana Fazl Hadi Shinwari] proposed that one of the country's most notorious commanders should face public execution after being convicted on dozens of counts of murder. Shinwari has written to Afghan President Hamid Karzai recommending that Abdullah Shah - known as "Zardad's dog" after his even more notorious boss - should face the death penalty. Shah, 43, has already been sentenced to 20 years in prison by a primary court for a series of murders, including of three wives and five of his children. Zardad, who is believed to be hiding in Britain under a false name, is himself wanted for robbing and killing travellers passing through his stronghold at Sarobi, a blackspot on the main road from Kabul to Pakistan. Both men served in the Hezb-i Islami faction of Hekmatyar, although Shah later joined the faction of Abdur Rab Rasoul Sayaf.

Herat governor bans economists from holding seminar (Afghan newspaper *Anis*)

The security authorities of Herat Province prevented the convention of a seminar organised by Herat's Council of Professionals on the role of the new currency in the banking system of the country. Mohammad Rafiq Shahir, chairman of the Council of Professionals, said that, after warned by security officers not to hold the seminar, they visited the governor, and he had verbally instructed the association not to hold it. Armed men were deployed at the place of the seminar on the instructions of officials to turn back anyone coming to participate in the seminar.

September 27

Fresh fighting in Samangan kills 17, rising tension in parts of Mazar (Reuters)

At least 17 people have been killed and another 23 wounded in a fresh outbreak of fighting between forces of rival commanders in volatile northern Afghanistan. Fighting broke out at dawn on September 26 and was continuing late on September 27 morning in the Dara-i-Suf region of Samangan province about 100 km south of Mazar-i-Sharif. The fighting was between the forces of two Uzbek commanders loyal to Uzbek commander General Abdul Rashid Dostum and those of ethnic Tajik Ustad Atta Mohammad. It was reported that Baba Beg, Atta's top commander - had captured three villages from his rival Almas in the twisting valley of Dara-i-Suf that lies on a dirt road from Mazar city. Authorities in Mazar confirmed that there was fighting in Dara-i-Suf but declined to give details.

The fighting comes amid rising tensions between Dostum and Atta's men in the Alberz area near Mazar-i-Sharif's military and civil airport. Officials from both sides have refused to comment about the tension, which has been caused by a disagreement over a demilitarisation plan for Mazar city. After several rounds of skirmishes in the past three weeks, Mazar had appeared more relaxed after Atta and Dostum reached an agreement to demilitarise the city. After the agreement, several hundred armed men in civilian clothes left the city's government buildings, but they have since been replaced by armed soldiers in uniform from both factions.

UNAMA comment on this news [September 29]: No troops have returned to vacated government buildings. In general, un-uniformed troops have not been replaced by uniformed ones except in one area where there was a change of unit in the officially recognized Jumbesh Base where LIWA 749 was replaced by a Jumbesh guard unit. Where troops have left buildings they have not been replaced by others.

Afghan women banned from parks and from working with male colleagues in the city of Herat (Reuters)

Religious authorities in Herat have banned women from visiting parks at night and from wearing colourful clothing in public. An edict from the city's Council of Scholars and Clerics broadcast also said that women should work in separate offices from men and hold work-related meetings separately from them. The edict said "Some women are seen not to be observing Islamic rules. Violations will be treated seriously in accordance with Sharia law." The edict did not specify what punishments women would receive for violations.

The 60-member Council of Scholars meets regularly at the Blue Mosque of Herat. The Council has the final say in decisions made by authorities in the city. A Western aid worker said the edict appeared to be part of steady tightening of restrictions on women in Herat. She said Afghan women working for foreign aid agencies in the city had been called to a meeting about two months ago at which local officials recommended they should give up their jobs and warned them against associating with foreigners.

September 28

Bomb blast in video shop in Gardez (Afghan newspaper *Arman-e Melli*)

A bomb explosion in Gardez, Paktia, left four video shops destroyed and eight others with minor damage. According to eye witnesses, the explosion, which occurred in a

video shop, damaged many others; but no-one was injured. A security official in Gardez said that a bomb was discovered and defused in a video shop three days ago.

Bomb blast in Kabul women's bakery injures five (*Arman-e Melli*)

A big explosion occurred behind the eastern wall of the military security department in front of Block no 101, Microrayan 2, which left two women, two men and a child due to the windows shattering. The bomb was placed in a bakery run by women.

Fighting between pro-government commanders in Paktia (Agence France Press / AFP)

Heavy fighting erupted between two pro-government commanders in the province of Paktia, leaving nine people dead including a former commander of rebel commander Padshah Khan. Fighting between the forces of commander Abdul Mateen and Raz Mohammad in the town of Sayed Karam, 20 kilometers east of Gardez, broke out early in the morning and continued late into the evening. Both sides were using machine-guns, rockets and cannons. Raz Mohammad was reportedly killed in the fighting. The exact cause of fighting was not immediately clear. Raz Mohammad had been a Khan loyalist but he switched sides last month and joined forces loyal to the provincial government. The move gave him control of Syed Karam district.

Reuters report on the same: Pro-government forces said they had overrun an important base of Padshah Khan Zadran after nearly a day of bitter clashes which left more than 12 fighters dead. Infantry backed by heavy artillery, rocket and mortar-fire seized the base at Sayed Karam. It was reported that at last 20 fighters had been killed in the clashes. Sources say that government troops had taken control of Sayed Karam but said fighting was still going on five km away at Shakeen.

*UNHCR Ankara
Country of Origin Information Team
Revised September 2004*