



13 August 2004

### **Flashpoints**

**Kabul (in particular, care should be taken in the vicinity of facilities associated with the election process and ISAF). Also, sites popular among foreign and particularly Western personnel for socializing such as restaurants and hotels. Kandahar, Laghman, Konar and Ghazni Provinces. Also Uruzgan, Ghor and Tahar.**

### **Areas of continued concern**

**The southern provinces bordering Pakistan including Paktika, Nangarhar, Zabul and Kandahar provinces. Also ISAF, United Nations and NGO facilities throughout the country, though the greatest risk is to those located in Pashtun areas.**

**The roads from Kabul to Kandahar and Herat (both northern and southern routes, as well as checkpoints on routes throughout the country, continue to be a serious security hazard).**

**There is a countrywide threat to voter registration stations, although those in the Pashtun heartland should be considered at somewhat greater risk to those in the increasingly destabilized North and West.**

### **Projections**

Attacks by Taliban insurgents and al-Qaeda elements are likely to continue to escalate during the registration and polling process, taking place in advance of the presidential elections now scheduled for October. Militants are likely to continue to target government facilities and aid organizations in order to disrupt reconstruction and development efforts. Following events of the last week, it is possible that the decision by Medecins Sans Frontieres to pull out of Afghanistan will be viewed as a victory by anti-government elements, prompting further attacks against NGO workers and aid staff.

Small-scale attacks and ambushes are likely to continue against vehicles travelling along Afghanistan's main highways, as well as small-scale terrorist strikes against Afghan civilians. Such attacks are increasingly utilizing roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs) – most recently involving remote detonation devices. Particular care should thus be taken when in transit throughout the country. It is likely that attacks will occur against ISAF forces – the predominant supplier of stability in the capital – ahead of October's election.

### **Summary**











Militant elements are now attacking isolated Afghan government posts at least twice a week, resulting in a high number of casualties among Afghan soldiers and police officers. Attacks over the last week have also specifically targeted sites and personnel associated with the election process and the US military.

While Islamic and Taliban-associated militancy continues countrywide and is set to escalate over the coming months, it should be remembered that acts of violence are not solely attributable to such groups. Factional and tribal conflict is a feature across Afghanistan and can result in small-scale engagements and escalations of violence.

Afghan election officials have approved 18 candidates for the presidential elections scheduled to take place on 9 October. Incumbent Hamid Karzai remains the favourite but faces opposition from three main contenders: Uzbek general Abdul Rashid Dostum, former education minister Yunus Qanuni and Hazara leader Mohammed Mohaqiq. A lone woman candidate, Dr Massouda Jalal, was also approved.

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	1-9	Generally stable and secure
	10-19	Instability
	20-29	Hostile
	30-39	Highly unstable
	40-49	Widespread militancy
	50-59	Low intensity conflict
	60-69	Advanced guerrilla war/civil war
	70-79	Limited conventional war
	80-89	Regional war
	90-100	Total war (sub-nuclear)

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