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Flashpoints

Kabul (in particular, care should be taken in the vicinity of facilities associated with the election process). The Dwarski, Daud Laysa, Tani and Jaji Maydan districts of Khost Province. The Mizan, Daichupan and Waza Khaw districts of Zabul province. The Khogiani District of Nangarhar Province and the Kajaki region of Helmand Province. The Kabul-Jalalabad highway, Meymena (Faryab), Logar Province and the road between Shindand and Farah City.

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 country-wide threat to voter registration stations, although those in the Pashtun heartland should be considered at greater risk.

Projections

Attacks by Taliban insurgents and al-Qaeda elements are likely to continue to escalate during the registration process, taking place in advance of the presidential and parliamentary elections now scheduled for September. Militants are likely to continue to target government facilities and aid organisations in order to disrupt reconstruction and development efforts.

Small-scale attacks 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 road-side IEDs, recently involving remote detonation devices. It is likely that attacks will occur against ISAF forces - the predominant supplier of stability in the capital - ahead of September's election.

It is also possible that over the summer tensions will increase between rival commanders throughout the country under pressure to disarm their supporters, escalating into armed clashes.

Summary

Over the past few weeks attacks in the south and east of the country have escalated, especially those targeted against election facilities and personnel involved in the registration process. While these have recently been isolated to the south and east of the country, this week has also seen an attack in the usually well-policed western province of Herat. Attacks against Ministry of Defence and Afghan National Army troops continue, particularly on outlying stations and checkpoints. Adding to this, there are signs that tension and violence between local warlords in the North of the country is increasing.

A specified threat persists against international aid organisations, particularly in the southern provinces of Nangarhar, Khost and Kandahar. Between 15 and 20 NGO employees have been killed in Afghanistan this year alone. All except two have been locally employed Afghans since aid organisations are unwilling in the majority of cases to risk their international employees.

In response to the scandal involving the mistreatment of prisoners of war both in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US government has announced it is to hold a "top-to-bottom" review of its detention centres in the country. The US military currently maintains some 20 holding facilities in Afghanistan. The investigation was sparked by the claims of a former police colonel, Sayed Nabi Siddiqui, that he was subjected to sexual abuse, sleep deprivation and humiliation while detained in Gardez. It is yet to be seen whether, as further allegations emerge, anti-American sentiment will manifest itself in acts of civil unrest or violence.











Risk Mitigation

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	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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