



18 June 2004

Flashpoints

Kabul (in particular, care should be taken in the vicinity of facilities associated with the election process and ISAF). Also the road north to Parwan. Kandahar Province, Khost, Qalat in Zabul Province, Char Chino (Uruzgan). Kunduz, Faizabad in Badakhshan Province and Ghor Province (particularly Chagcharan).

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 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, specifically in the Pashtun heartland but increasingly in the northern region. Personnel and facilities associated with the reconstruction effort will increasingly be at risk.

Small-scale attacks and ambushes are likely to continue against vehicles traveling along Afghanistan's main highways, as well as small-scale terrorist strikes against Afghan civilians. Such attacks are increasingly utilizing road-side IEDs – most 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.

Tensions, sporadically escalating into armed clashes, are also likely to increase between rival commanders throughout the country under pressure to disarm their supporters.

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. The death of four US Special Forces operatives over the last week has shown the intensity of some of the clashes. Six US soldiers were killed in action in May alone.











This year alone, at least 33 foreign and local humanitarian workers have been killed in attacks across the country, from the Pashtun heartland in the south and east as well as, increasingly, the north and north-west. Humanitarian personnel, particularly when in transit, are specifically at risk.

Voter registration is now open in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and in more than 1000 registration sites. Voter registration for September's election started some six weeks ago, but has only just been implemented across the country because of security concerns. According to official figures released by the US military, as of June 12th approximately 3.6 million Afghans has been registered to vote.

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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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