

# Afghanistan to review security plan for Kabul after attacks

JONATHON BURCH  
REUTERS

**KABUL** – The Afghan government is to review its plan for securing Kabul a day after militants launched a series of commando-style attacks in the

heart of the capital, the president's palace said yesterday.

Taliban gunmen launched a brazen assault on Monday in the centre of the capital, with suicide bombers blowing themselves up at several locations and militants bat-

tlung security forces from inside a shopping centre engulfed in flames.

It was the most high-profile attack inside the capital for almost a year and came as President Hamid Karzai was swearing in cabinet members

at his palace only a few hundred metres away. Karzai met the ministers of interior, defence and national security yesterday to discuss the raids.

"In this meeting ... all parts of yesterday's events were studied and it was agreed that

the plan for Kabul's security should be reviewed and submitted to the president for approval," Karzai's palace said in a statement. The palace did not provide any more details.

While the raids were dramatic and well coordinated,

casualty figures were relatively low.

The NATO-led force in Afghanistan said it had troops on the ground during the raids, but that the Afghan army and police had been leading the operation against the insurgents.

## Big bangs, little damage in raids

Brazen Taliban attacks show military limits, fail to take key locations

JONATHON BURCH  
and HAMID SHALIZI  
REUTERS

**KABUL** – The Taliban scored a strategic and political victory with brazen, well-timed attacks in the heart of Kabul on Monday, but the failed assaults on key government buildings also showed the limits to their military capacity.

The raids carried out by at least 10 gunmen, including suicide bombers, were well coordinated and bold even for Afghanistan and paralyzed the capital for several hours.

However, while the militants spread out across a strategic area near government ministries and a luxury hotel, they failed to seize any of their declared targets and instead holed up in a poorly defended shopping centre.

"They just want to show their power, it was an 'attack show' from the Taliban, not a military-based action. I think there was not a military goal," said Wahid Mudjah, a Kabul-based writer and political analyst.

"They just wanted a show for the international community."

The attacks were perfectly timed. They came as Afghan President Hamid Karzai was swearing in cabinet members inside the presidential palace only hundreds of metres away, and after days of media chatter about a new "reintegration" drive to lure insurgents away from the battlefield.

They were also dramatic, with an exploding ambulance adding to compelling images of a city under siege. Gunfire and loud explosions shook Kabul as black smoke billowed from the shopping centre where fighters battled security forces for hours.

Headlines in newspapers and television stations around the world talked of "terror in Kabul" and shattered confidence.

The overall casualty toll, however, was relatively low. And government forces never lost control of their key buildings.

Three members of the Afghan security forces and two civilians were killed and 71 people were wounded. Twenty people died last February in a similar commando-style attack.

"The attack was both a success and a failure for the Taliban. It was a psychological success, but a failure in that they weren't able to cause a lot of casualties to Afghan security forces," said Abdul Halim Achakzai at the Kabul-based Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies.

Capital cities are always vulnerable – in Britain the Irish Republican Army managed to strike regularly at the heart of London, a far more modern, less chaotic capital, during their violent campaign against British control of Northern Ireland. "For all the chaos, the damage was not that bad. This was not 1996 where the Taliban basically rolled into Kabul," Kamran Bokhari, regional director for Middle East and South Asia at international think-tank Stratfor, told Reuters.

That the Taliban were able to smuggle in weapons and explosives was in some measure a reminder of the government's policy in keeping Kabul a relatively open city.

Creating a barricaded fortress risks hurting the economy and cutting off the government.

But the raid also highlighted some of the more thorny problems Karzai and his Western backers face in winning over a country as sick of official corruption as it is of violence.

Some of the shopkeepers sifting through the scorched remains of their stock blamed not the attackers but the Taliban's foes.

"The (foreign) and Afghan troops acted very inhumanely by using flammable materials and completely destroyed our properties," said shopkeeper Abdul Rasheed. ISAF said they had troops in the area, but had not torched any shops.

The Taliban seem as keen to bolster what support they have among ordinary Afghans as they are to intimidate the government and foreign and domestic security forces.

They recently issued orders to fighters to protect civilians, and during the raid the Taliban did not target shoppers or shopkeepers, instead shooting at walls and ceilings and ordering them to leave, said centre manager Abdul Fatah Feroz.

"Clearly, the Taliban cannot allow for a sizeable amount of collateral damage, they cannot stomach that. This is an insurgency, it relies on public support," Bokhari said.

But the Taliban did succeed in spreading fear in an already weary and war-sick population.

"If the Taliban are strong enough to launch attacks just outside the presidential palace, how can we expect better security in the future?" said Feroz, as a crowd of around 30 shopkeepers sifted through the torched remains of their stock.

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### Turning Tragedy Into Hope

## MUHC surgeons give the gift of life at Quebec's only multi-organ transplant centre

IT WAS THE MOST SHOCKING NEWS ROSA SHIELDS HAD EVER RECEIVED. While awaiting her second kidney transplant in 12 years, Shields was told by doctors that, as a result of a blood transfusion that had given her Hepatitis C, her liver was also failing.

"It was devastating," she says. "I was diagnosed with nephritis in 1976, and had already been through one donor kidney. But to hear that I also needed a new liver... I had never felt so frightened in my life."

Fortunately for Shields, she was placed in the expert hands of the Multi-Organ Transplant Team at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC): the only centre in Quebec where kidney, liver, heart and pancreas transplants can all be performed in the same place.

In fact, "first" and "only" are words that come up a lot with reference to the MUHC's transplant programme. Just ask Dr. Peter Metrakos, the programme's Division Chief.

"The Royal Victoria Hospital was the site of the first kidney transplant in the Commonwealth, just over 50 years ago," he says. "Since then we've stayed at the head of the field, and are now the only centre in the province to be

Nephrology Fellowship accredited by the American Transplant Society. We also performed the first pancreas-alone transplant in Canada, and are the only programme in the country to use an ex-vivo perfusion system to select and improve the function of donor kidneys before transplant."

Performing about 140-160 solid organ transplants every year, the MUHC is also one of Canada's busiest transplant centres. This gives its experts a large enough patient base to conduct leading-edge clinical research into new transplant techniques, and to train fellows from around the world.

According to Metrakos, the key to keeping the MUHC at the forefront

can be performed with ease. "The MUHC's wide range of multidisciplinary expertise is what has made us such a success. Bringing all of our surgeons, nephrologists, hepatologists, nurses, researchers and support staff together in new facilities at the Glen Campus will let us do what we do even better." State-of-the-art operating suites, dedicated teaching spaces and one of the finest new research centres

in the country are just some of the advantages the transplant team will enjoy at the Glen.

Helping Metrakos and his colleagues realize their vision for the future is something Peter Duffield, Chairman of the Royal Victoria Hospital Foundation, feels passionately about. "The Royal Victoria Hospital's storied history as a transplant leader is a testament to our community's support. By giving to the

Best Care for Life campaign and helping build the new Royal Victoria at the Glen Campus, we can make sure that the future is just as impressive as the past."

For Rosa Shields, the proof of the MUHC's transplant excellence is literally written on her body. "It looks like a map of the world down there, but every scar reminds me of how blessed I am." With a smile, she says, "Every day is a good day now—I get up and say, 'let's go at it!'"



The MUHC's renowned transplant team performs almost 150 kidney, heart, lung and pancreas transplants every year.

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Bringing all of our surgeons, nephrologists, hepatologists, nurses, researchers and support staff together in new facilities at the Glen Campus will let us do what we do even better."

— Dr. Peter Metrakos,  
MUHC Transplant Programme Division Chief

have our Transplant Surgery Fellowship accredited by the American Society of Transplant Surgery and our Transplant

of the transplant field is teamwork, and having new, world-class facilities where the latest surgical techniques

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