

Summary of Complex Attack in Kabul on 13 September ~~(S//NF)~~

~~(S//NF)~~ On 13 September, Taliban insurgents with assistance from Haqqani Network (HQN) members conducted a series of coordinated attacks against various targets in the heart of Kabul, including the first ever direct assault on Embassy Kabul. The operation, which lasted 20 hours, caused minimal damage to the embassy compound but underscored the vulnerability of the capital to terrorist infiltration.

(b)(1)1.4c 16 civilians died in the day's events, including five children, five Afghan police officers, and nine insurgents (note: casualty counts vary by source). The Taliban claimed responsibility for the operation (b)(1)1.4d, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4c

(b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d

Timeline

~~(S//NF)~~ At approximately 1:24PM on 13 September, six insurgents traveling in a white Toyota Surf minivan containing supplies of weapons and ammunition were stopped at a checkpoint at Abdul Haq Circle, aka Freedom Circle, located about 800 meters east of Embassy Kabul. The insurgents, clad in black uniforms, green vests, and head scarves, disembarked from the vehicle and shot two Afghan National Police (ANP) officers, one fatally.

~~(S//NF)~~ The group then killed an unarmed guard stationed in front of a 14-story building under construction and entered the site, carrying with them a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launcher, a 82-mm recoilless rifle, a PKM medium machine gun, and hand grenades, amongst other weapons and ammunition. A police officer on the structure's first floor was subsequently killed by the insurgents, while a second guard located on the building's third floor reportedly escaped by jumping from a window.

~~(S//NF)~~ At 1:35PM, insurgents began firing RPGs and small arms at the US embassy East and West Compounds from perches on the third, fourth, and fifth floors of the unfinished structure. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) compound also came under attack almost simultaneously, as did surrounding buildings. The attack continued for hours. As late as 5:00PM, Embassy security officials reported RPG impacts at the facility. An estimated 15 RPG rounds in total were fired at the Embassy and ISAF headquarters, along with 15-17 82-mm rounds. Nine of the rounds hit the Embassy.

- RPG rounds impacted various parts of the Embassy, causing minimal damage to the Consular Waiting room on the West Compound, temporary living quarters to the southwest, and Embassy-provided Ministry of Interior (MOI) Security Force living quarters. On the East Compound, an RPG round impacted atop a storage container, another landed near a pedestrian gate entrance, and yet another crashed into the USAID building. Two RPG rounds also impacted to the north of the compound near the future site of the Marriott Hotel. ~~(S//NF)~~
- At least three RPGs impacted the northeast corner of ISAF headquarters. Another exploded at the National Directorate (NDS) of Security 90 compound located south of Freedom Circle, causing extensive damage to the building. Residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of the Embassy compound—Wazir Akbar Khan and Shash Darak—also received light damage from enemy fire. ~~(S//NF)~~

~~(S//NF)~~ At 5:05PM, MOI forces began a concerted floor-to-floor clearing operation on the building housing the five insurgents. Two Afghan MI-35 Hind attack helicopters provided air support. Afghan officials claimed that the last holdout was killed on the 12th floor of the building at 8:30AM on 14 September, and an all-clear was issued an hour later. Both the US Embassy and ISAF headquarters moved personnel to secure locations within their respective compounds, and the attack did not result in any fatalities at either facility, although several local nations were injured, at least one seriously.

Other Attacks

~~(S//NF)~~ All told, the operation on 13 September comprised four discrete attacks across the Afghan capital. The National Directorate of Security assessed that the varied attacks sought to confuse and scatter Afghan National Security Forces, complicating the response. Though the main assault took place at the Embassy and ISAF headquarters, the following three sites were hit by suicide bombers:

- **MOI National Targeting Exploitation Center in the Bib Mahro** - An insurgent shot and killed an ANP officer before being killed himself at approximately 2:30PM.
- **Near the Kabul Zoo in the De Mazang** - A suicide bomber fired on an ANP vehicle before detonating his explosive vest sometime between 2:00-3:00PM.
- **High school in the Darulaman** - Another suicide bomber detonated his vest after firing at an ANP officer, killing one of the policemen and injuring four civilians.

~~(S//NF)~~ Additionally, an unspecified munition impacted an ANA building in the Shash Darak neighborhood of Kabul, and at least one 82-mm mortar round landed in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood, hitting a private school vehicle. Approximately 12 students were injured in that incident, mostly from shattered glass.

(b)(1)1.4d, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4b

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(b)(1)1.4a, (b)(1)1.4b, (b)(1)1.4c, (b)(1)1.4d