

Jonathan Fox (106), 10/18/94

Updates

Jonathan Fox (106), 10/31/95

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Pashtuns (Pathans) in Afghanistan

Total **Area** of Afghanistan: 652,225 sq. km.

Capital: Kabul

Population (1998): 9,421,000 (This is 38% of Afghanistan's population of 24,782,000.) *Source:* US Census Bureau

Religion: Sunni Muslim.

Overview

The **Pashtuns** mostly speak **Pashtun** (although some residing in Kabul speak Dari) and are generally Sunni Muslims, but there are some Twelver Shi'i Muslims as well. They are divided into tribal and subtribal groups to which they remain loyal. These tribal divisions have been the source of conflict among **Pashtuns** throughout their history. Even today, the **Pashtun** parties (former resistance movements) are divided along tribal lines and, on occasion, have fought one another (see list of resistance movements and political parties below for details). The majority of **Pashtuns** make their living off of animal husbandry and agriculture as well as some trade (smuggling). In Afghanistan, **Pashtuns** have traditionally resided in a large semi-circular area following the Afghan border from north of the Darya-te Morgab east and southward to just north of the 35 latitude. Enclaves of **Pashtuns** live scattered among other ethnic groups in much of the rest of the country, especially in the northern regions and in the western interior due to the resettlement policies of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, who ruled Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901.

From its founding in 1747 by Ahmad Shah, Afghanistan has traditionally been dominated by the **Pashtuns**, who before 1978 (the date of the last reliable census in Afghanistan) constituted a 40% minority in the country. However, as a result of the 1979 Soviet invasion the population distribution in Afghanistan has changed. About 85% of the 3 to 5 million Afghani refugees who fled to Iran and Pakistan due to the invasion and the war that followed it are **Pashtuns**. This, accordingly, lowered the percentage of **Pashtuns** in Afghanistan's population to about 13% (in 1987) and raised the percentages of the country's other ethnic groups which has resulted in the **Pashtuns** no longer being the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. By the mid-1990s many of the refugees returned restoring the **Pashtuns** to their status of the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, constituting about 38% of the population in 1998.

The Soviet invasion of December 1979 has been the major determining factor in Afghanistan's ethnic relations since that point in time. From that time until mid-1991 the various factions of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, all dominated by **Pashtuns**, controlled the country's government. All other factions either opposed or aligned themselves with the PDPA (with most in the opposition), including several **Pashtun** factions. It is not within the scope of this chronology to document the constant shifts in alliances between various factions, both between the opposition and government camps and within them. However, it should be noted that most of the factions were ethnically homogeneous and were engaging in a constant shifting of alliances worthy of traditional balance of power theory and continue to do so today. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 has only affected the power relations among Afghanistan's various factions but has not changed the fact that they are in constant competition with each other. However, the population shift that occurred during the 1980s has weakened the **Pashtuns** and allowed other ethnic groups to become more involved in the country's government.

Islam is the one factor that unifies all of Afghanistan. With few exceptions, all Afghans belong to one of Islam's many sects.

General Chronology for Afghanistan

A Guide to Afghanistan's Political Parties and Resistance Movements

As noted above, most of Afghanistan's political parties and resistance movements are mostly ethnically homogeneous. Within ethnic groups, especially the **Pashtuns**, the various parties and resistance movements are divided along tribal and regional lines. It is unclear when many of these parties and movements were founded and unless it is otherwise noted, it can be assumed that they pre-date the 1979 Soviet invasion.

Pashtuns (or Pashtoos):

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) / Hizb-i-Watan (Homeland Party): This Marxist party was founded in 1965 and ruled Afghanistan from 1978 Until mid-1992. It is divided into 2 factions, the Parcham (Banner) faction and the Khalq (Masses) faction, both of which are dominated by **Pashtuns**. In June 1990, it renamed itself from the PDPA to the Hizb-i-Watan.

Hizb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar faction): Radical Sunni Islamists, led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. It is supported by the Saudi Arabian government and was probably the most influential and militarily powerful of the **Pashtun** opposition parties until it was displaced by the Taliban in 1995. Its recruits include those who were educated in the secular government schools and also some Ulama (Islamic Clergy) from the Kabul region. The party is 80-85% **Pashtun** and tends to transcend tribes among the **Pashtun**.

Hizb-i-Islami (Khalis faction): "Moderate" Sunni Islamists, led by Yunis Khalis. Its recruits include those educated in government schools and the Ulama of the Khugiani and Jadran tribes as well as in the region of Kabul and Kandahr. This faction split off from Hekmatyar's faction in 1979.

Itehad-i-Islami (Islamic Unity Party [IUP]): Fundamentalist Sunni Muslims, led by Sayuf, also known as Ahmudzey. They are backed by the Saudi government and are mostly **Pashtuns**.

Harakat-i-Inkilab-i-Islami (movement for Islamic Revolution [MIR]): Moderate Sunni Muslim clerical party, led by Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi. It gains recruits from the Ulama educated in private madrasa (Islamic seminaries). It is mainly **Pashtun**.

Jabha-i-Nejat-i-Milli (National Liberation Front [NLF]): A secular and "moderate" mostly **Pashtun** party led by Sebghatullah Mujaddidi. Its recruits come mainly from the tribes, the establishment of the old social order and the Naqshbandi in the south.

Mahazi-i-Islami (Islamic Front [IF]): Royalists, led by Pir Sayyad Ahmad Gaylani. Its recruits come from the old social order, the tribes and the qadiri in the south. Mostly **Pashtun**.

Taliban: Started by a group of Afghan refugee Islamic students studying in Pakistan. They officially oppose all other factions in Afghanistan as corrupt and as the sources of Afghanistan's current anarchic state. Originally, they sought to create an Islamic government in Afghanistan but did not wish to run that government. In areas under their control they have imposed strictly Islamic law. They also have cleared the roads of bandits, have ended the practice of extorting money from travelers at "checkpoints" and have disarmed the population in areas under their control. Despite some resentment over their imposition of Islamic law (which is especially repressive for women), they seem to be popular among **Pashtuns** because they have brought some order to previously anarchic regions. Exactly when they were formed is unclear but they emerged in the Kandahar province in mid-1994. Their spiritual leader is Muhammad Omar Akhund (also known as Mullah Muhammed Omar). Other leaders of the Taliban include Maulvi Muhammad Rabbani (no relation to the head of Jam'iyat-i-Islami) and Ihsanulla. In 1995, the Taliban displaced Hekmatyar's faction of the Hizb-i-Islami as the most powerful **Pashtun** faction and a major opposition party. In September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul and declared itself the legitimate government of Afghanistan. There are many accusations that the Taliban is controlled by the Pakistani intelligence service, a charge which Taliban officials deny. Mainly **Pashtun**.

Jehadi Shoorā: A militia formed in mid-1995 made up of commanders previously in control of the southern provinces now controlled by the Taliban that hoped to take control of southern Afghanistan back from the Taliban. Little information on its leadership and activities is available.

Tajiks:

Jam'iyat-i-Islami: "Moderate" Islamists, led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, who became president of Afghanistan in 1992. Ahmad Masood is also a prominent figure in the party and one of its most successful and famous military commanders, leading the militia called Shoorā-i-Nazaar. Its recruits come from amongst those educated in government schools (both religious and secular), the Ulama in the north and naqshbandi in the north. Mainly Tajik.

Hazaras:

Hizb-i-Wahdat / Wahdat al Islamiya (Islamic Coalition Council of Afghanistan): An alliance of 8 Shi'i Islamic fundamentalist parties formed in 1987 in Iran (the individual parties pre-date the coalition). The party receives considerable diplomatic, material and moral support from Iran. It is mostly Hazara and is led by Abdul Karim Khalee (or Khalili) and Abdul Ali Mazari.

Uzbeks:

General Dostam / Jambush-i-Milli (National Islamic Front): General Abdul Rashid Dostam is an Uzbek warlord who, in the early 1990s, was the effective ruler of northern Afghanistan. His followers are primarily Uzbek. Dostam supported the Communist government until March 1992 and, as a consequence, controls a considerable amount of heavy weaponry including tanks and airplanes, thus making his army one of the most powerful in the country. Dostam has close ties to Turkey.

Others (including alliances):

Harakat-i-Islam: Non-Hazara Shi'i Muslims led by Shaykh Asaf Muhensi Kandahari. Its recruits are educated Shi'i from all ethnic groups.

Ismaili (or Ismeali) Moslem Faction: Ismaili Shi'i Muslims headed by Sayed Mansoor Naderi and under the spiritual leadership of Agha Khan. It was formally aligned with Dostam's Jambush movement, but, in 1996, increasing tensions drove the Ismaeli faction from Dostam's movement. (AFP, March 4, 1996)

In May 1985 several of these movements formed the Ittehad-i-Islami Afghan Mujaheddin (The Afghan Interim Government - AIG). The parties in this alliance include: Harakat-i-Inkilaab-i-Islami, the National Liberation Front, the Islamic Front, both factions of the Hizb-i-Islami, the Islamic Unity Party and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami. All of these factions are Sunni Muslim parties and all but the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (which is Tajik) are **Pashtun**. This alliance, based in Pakistan, has not stopped fighting between the factions.

Supreme Coordination Council of the Islamic Revolution of Afghanistan (SCCIRA or SCC): An anti-Rabbani alliance formed in 1994, comprised of former premier Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami, the National Liberation Front (ANF) of former president Mujaddidi, General Dostam's National Islamic Front, and the Shiite Hizb-i-Wahdat faction. (AFP, February 28, 1996)

Ittehad-i-Islami: a faction aligned with Rabbani and led by Rasool Sayyaf (AFP, July 3, 1996)

Supreme Council for the Defense of Afghanistan (or the United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan [UIFSA] or the Northern Alliance): An anti-Taliban alliance formed after the Taliban took over Kabul in fall 1996, comprised of Jam'iyat-i-Islami, Jambush-i-Milli, Hizb-i-Wahdat, Harakat-i-Islami, and a few other small factions, later joined by ousted premier Hekmatyar.

Peace and National Unity Foundation Party: Founded in January 1999 by Sebghatullah Mujaddidi, formerly of NLF, and Pir Sayyad Ahmad Gaylani, formerly of IF. The goals of the new, impartial party were to secure a nationwide cease-fire and to establish a negotiated political settlement for the country. (AFP, January 5, 1999)

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Chronology

Note: Due to the number of factions within each ethnic group these factions will be marked in the chronology in the following manner for the sake of clarity:

P - **Pashtun**.

T - Tajik.

H - Hazara.

U - Uzbek.

0 - Other.

? - Unknown or unclear which group is responsible.

Note: Attempts at outside mediation of the disputes in Afghanistan occur throughout the period covered by this chronology. Those attempting to mediate the dispute include the US, the UN, Pakistan, Iran, the Soviet Union / Russia and the Organization of Islamic States, as well as several other countries and international organizations. Such attempts at mediation will not be noted here unless successful.

Note: For an alternative chronology of Afghanistan's history during the last 25 years, see Agence France Presse, international news, August 8, 1998 ("A Chronology of 25 Years of Afghan's History").

January 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) bomb Kabul and explode a car bomb in the city. Also, the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) rebels bomb a government garrison north of Kabul.

January 1, 1990: Hizb-i-Islami leader Hekmatyar (P) accuses Rabbani (T) of ordering the execution of 4 of his guerrillas. He further warns Rabbani to keep his fighters out of Hizb-i-Islami controlled territory.

January 2, 1990: The Afghan government claims that it has managed to bring an armed convoy through the Salang highway, Afghanistan's main land link to the USSR despite attempts by the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) to close the road.

January 7, 1990: Pakistani police arrest 4 members of the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) for firing rockets at the southwestern town of Quetta. One of the rebels also allegedly worked for the Afghan secret police and Pakistani intelligence.

January 12, 1990: Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) captures four representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

January 14, 1990: The official Iranian news agency, IRNA, reports that growing tension between the Parcham (P) and Khalq (P) factions of the PDPA had recently led Afghani President Najibullah to impose a 14-day emergency in Kabul.

January 14, 1990: A mujaheddin radio station reports intra-Parcham (a faction of the PDPA) (P) clashes in Kabul between supporters of Najibullah and Sultan Ali Keshtmand, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers.

January 17, 1990: Sayuf (P) prime minister of the AIG announces elections for a new broad-based rebel parliament will be completed by June. Hekmatyar (P) and Shi'i Muslim groups (H) refuse to take part on the grounds that the parliament will be non-representative.

January 24, 1990: A government spokesman claims that 70% of all rebels have stopped fighting against the government and that 100,000 former guerrillas now act as pro-government militias.

January 24, 1990: President Najibullah (P) rejects rebel demands that he resign and states that there should be no preconditions for peace talks. **Note:** President Najibullah makes frequent offers of peace talks and compromise until his government is overthrown in 1992. The rebels almost unanimously reject these offers stating that no negotiation with Najibullah's illegitimate communist government is possible. The peace offers and demands for Najibullah's resignation will not be included in this chronology unless there is something unusual or noteworthy about them.

January 30, 1990: Rebel leaders deny government reports that they produce, export and use opium.

February 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month 47 rebels (?) are killed in clashes within Kabul, the government raids a southern rebel (?) hideout and seizes 175 pounds of explosives, rebels (?) launch rockets into Kabul, down a military transport, kill the governor of the northern province of Takhar as well as 4 other government officials and Hizb-i-Islami (P) fighters capture a strategic ridge overlooking the government's Khost garrison which puts them within shooting distance of the garrison's airport.

February 1, 1990: 127 people, including 7 generals, many of them members of the Khalq faction of the PDPA (P) are arrested for trying to overthrow President Najibullah, head of the PDPA's Parcham (P) faction. Najibullah accuses them of having links with the rebels.

February 5, 1990: President Najibullah (P) claims that secret negotiations are going on with unidentified factions representing 40,000 rebels. There is no independent confirmation of this claim.

February 14, 1990: Rebels (?) claim that supplies of weapons to them from the US have slowed while the USSR continues to supply the government with 300 million dollars worth of military equipment a month.

February 15, 1990: Afghan rebels unanimously reject and the Afghan government welcomes a peace plan proposed by USSR Foreign Minister Sheverdnadze.

February 15, 1990: The US suspends its 30 million dollar food aid program to Afghan rebels due to problems in keeping track of where the food is going.

February 17, 1990: The Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) calls for the AIG (P & T) to dissolve into its 7 component parties and hold talks with Hizb-i-Wahdat about the upcoming AIG elections.

February 21, 1990: Khalis (P) rejects the polling formula for the upcoming AIG elections.

February 27 to March 1, 1990: Hekmatyar (P) supports elections in the rebel controlled eastern province of Kamar in defiance of the AIG. Rabbani (T) also supports these elections.

March 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month, rebels (?) bomb Kabul, capture the main government air base at Bagram and launch their spring offensive. Also the Hizb-i-Islami (P) takes advantage of the coup attempt and opens negotiations with the government's Khost garrison for the garrison's surrender as well as stepping up attacks upon the garrison.

March 6-9, 1990: President Najibullah, leader of the Parcham faction of the PDPA (P) survives a coup attempt led by Defense Minister, Lt. Gen. Shahnawaz Tanay, head of the Khalq faction of the PDPA (P). Tanay is dismissed as Defense minister on March 6, and several other Khalq members are subsequently dismissed from high governmental posts. There are reports that Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) support the coup attempt but Khalis, head of the other faction of the Hizb-i-Islami (P), calls for Tanay to be tried for his crimes against Afghans.

March 15, 1990: Coup leader Tanay (P) emerges from hiding and openly joins forces with Hekmatyar (P).

March 25, 1990: Gunmen (?) kill 3 commanders and three bodyguards who belong to the Harakat-i-Inkilab-i-Islami faction (P) in Pakistan.

April 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month, rebels (?) down or destroy 4 military aircraft. Government forces kill or wound 136 rebels (?) in clashes in the eastern provinces. The Hizb-i-Islami (P) continues its attack upon the Khost garrison. The Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) kills 2 government officials and wounds many in an attack upon a government "reconciliation ceremony."

April 14, 1990: Western diplomats claim that Moscow has increased its military aid to the Afghan government.

April 24, 1990: NLF leader Mujaddidi (P) hints that he might be willing to compromise with the Afghan government on a political settlement.

April 25, 1990: The US resumes food aid to the rebels. None of the aid will go through Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami faction (P).

May 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) launch rockets at Kabul. The government launches a major offensive near Jalalabad against the IUP (P). The fighting in Khost between the government and the Hizb-i-Islami (P) continues.

May 4, 1990: President Najibullah (P) lifts the national state of emergency imposed following the Soviet troop withdrawal in February 1989.

June 1990: The PDPA (P) renames itself the Hizb-i-Watan (Homeland Party).

June 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) launch rocket attacks on Kabul. The IUP (P) launches rocket attacks at Jalalabad.

June 3, 1990: A prominent member of the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) is shot and killed in Pakistan.

June 6, 1990: Hekmatyar (P) threatens to block UN and US aid into Afghanistan because they are "un-Islamic organizations" and their aid is meant to weaken the rebels.

June 13, 1990: The Afghan Foreign Minister claims to be holding secret peace talks with rebels in Pakistan and Iran.

June 24, 1990: The Afghan government reports that 3,500 refugees have returned from Pakistan to the

southern province of Hilmand in the past week as well as 15,000 to the Kumar valley in eastern Afghanistan, an area controlled by rebels (?).

July 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month Rebels (?) rocket Kabul and fight with government troops in the mountains of Pashman (west of Kabul).

July 5, 1990: Several recent attacks upon foreign aid workers, especially those projects that aid women, are attributed to Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P).

July 14, 1990: In a bid to get Afghan rebels to return Russian prisoners, Russian President Boris Yeltsin says his republic will halt all shipments of weapons produced in its territory to Afghanistan.

July 22, 1990: There are reports that Hekmatyar (P) is holding Russian prisoners in the northern province of Baghlan.

July 24, 1990: The UN reports that 1,200 refugees are returning daily from Pakistan due to material incentives by the UN.

September 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month Rebels (?) rocket Kabul and down several military aircraft. Also, the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) have been attacking the Salang highway, the main land route from the USSR. Their reluctance to attack civilian supply convoys has angered hardline guerrillas including Hekmatyar (P).

October 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) step up their attack on Qakt, the capital of the southern province of Zabel, explode a car bomb near the presidential palace and step up their attacks in the south putting pressure on a major national highway. The Hizb-i-Islami (P), in its first significant military success since the Soviet withdrawal in February 1979, conquers Tarin Kot, the capital of the central Afghanistan province of Urozgan. The government retaliates against a two-pronged attack upon Kabul launched by Hizb-i-Islami (P) by launching air and artillery strikes against Hizb-i-Islami positions west and southeast of the city. Seven commanders of Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) are killed in government rocket attacks in the eastern province of Nongarhor. Also, in a "mopping up operation" near Kabul, the government claims to have killed 45 rebels (?) and seized numerous armaments.

October 13, 1990: A rebel leader (?) who defected to the government is killed in the northern city of Herat.

October 14, 1990: A meeting of rebel leaders including Masood of the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) decides to oppose an outright assault on Kabul due to potential losses to rebels and civilians.

October 14, 1990: There are reports of strong connections between Hekmatyar and Pakistani intelligence.

October 21, 1990: During a meeting of the 7 member groups of the AIG (P & T) leaders agree to end a feud in which many guerrillas had been killed. This includes the ending of the feud between Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) in which over 300 guerrillas had been killed over the past year.

November 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month Rebels (?) shoot down several military aircraft and rocket Kabul. Hekmatyar (P) launches an attack upon Kabul's defensive ring about 20 miles south of the city and closes 2 major highways to the city.

November 3, 1990: There are reports of clashes between Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) despite a peace agreement between the two parties.

November 13, 1990: The AIG (P & T) announces that communist and secular parties will have no role in its upcoming elections. **Note:** This is part of the AIG's policy of advocating an Islamic government for Afghanistan.

November 21, 1990: President Najibullah (P) confirms that he has held talks with "prominent persons of the opposition side" on a "political solution" to end 12 years of civil conflict. Najibullah refuses to identify the opposition leaders he had met but it is believed that they included Pir Sayyad Ahmad Gaylani of the IF (P) Front, Mujaddidi of the NLF (P) and two men linked with ex-king Mohammed Zahir Shah (P).

December 1990: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) launch missile attacks in northeast Afghanistan. The IUP (P) captures a number of military posts near Jalalabad. Khalis (P) survives 2 air raids against him in eastern Afghanistan. Also, Hekmatyar (P) launches an offensive against Kabul.

December 2-3, 1990: The leaders of the 7 member parties of the AIG (P & T) announce that they have agreed to plans for elections. However Khalis (P) rejects any plan that will allow universal franchise in the elections and asserts that only elders and the Ulama (Islamic clergy) should be able to vote.

December 9, 1990: The Afghan government reports that clashes between Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) continue in the north despite a peace agreement between the two parties.

December 27, 1990: 15,000 people attend a rally for the AIG (P & T) in Pakistan. A large rally is also held by Hekmatyar (P).

January 3, 1991: Afghan troops (P) attack a convoy of arms and ammunition to a rebel (?) stronghold near Kabul killing a number of rebels and destroying many missiles and anti-personnel mines.

January 12, 1991: Hekmatyar's (P) rebels seize 4 Swiss Red Cross representatives. They are released about a month later.

January 14, 1991: The government (P) declares amnesty for prisoners held for up to 3 years. Rebel leaders reject the act of reconciliation and vow to overthrow what they call Kabul's communist government.

January 22, 1991: The AIG (P & T) lays off thousands of workers due to a lack of funds.

January 24, 1991: Rebels (?) accuse the government of killing children with a toy-like bomb in the southern town of Kandahar.

February 1991: AIG President Mujaddidi (P) and some other rebel leaders decide to send some rebels to aid Saudi Arabia in the Gulf conflict. However AIG Prime Minister Sayuf (P) and Hekmatyar (P) oppose the action despite the fact that they are supported by the Saudi government.

February 16, 1991: Rebels (?) hang 3 government soldiers on the orders of a rebel Islamic court.

February 17, 1991: Government (P) troops break a 2-year siege of Qalat, the capital of the southern

province of Zabul.

February 17, 1991: Rebels (?) kill 14 in an ambush of a convoy in the northern province of Samangan.

February 24, 1991: An international human rights group accuses the Afghan government (P) of summary executions, reprisal killings and the ill treatment of prisoners. It also accuses the rebels (?) of massacring surrendered government soldiers as well as torturing, imprisoning and murdering Afghan refugees, relief workers and exiled intellectuals.

March 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) bomb the western town of Herat and the northern town of Falzabad and down 2 helicopters.

March 5, 1991: Clashes between Hekmatyar (P) and Masood (T) continue.

March 22, 1991: A bomb kills a guard outside of Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) leader Rabbani's home.

March 31, 1991: A combined effort by both factions of Hizb-i-Islami (P) succeeds in capturing the government (P) garrison at Khost (south of Kabul near the border with Pakistan in the Paktia province). The garrison has little strategic value but is considered a major symbolic victory. The rebels reportedly received logistical support from the CIA and its Pakistani counterpart. The Afghan government claims that Pakistan's military was actually involved in the conflict.

April 6-7, 1991: Hekmatyar (P) and a local rebel leader (?) dispute over the spoils of the Khost garrison but eventually decide to share.

April 20, 1991: Rebels (?) and the government (P) blame each other for a missile attack that killed up to 400 in the eastern city of Asadabad.

May 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month A ground assault on a rebel (?) stronghold south of Kabul effectively destroys rebel plans for a May offensive (according to government officials) and government forces drive back an offensive in the central province of Gor. Rebels (?) shoot down a government transport plane and helicopter. Masood (T) captures a district in the northern Faryab province as well as the northern town of Khwajaghar. The IUP (P) launches an unsuccessful attack on a southern town. Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces are forced to flee from their base in the Zindajan district but capture a district in the northern province of Takhar.

May 5, 1991: Khalis (P) resigns his position as interior minister of the AIG (P & T) but does not withdraw from the coalition and accuses 2 AIG ministers of holding talks with President Najibullah (P).

May 13, 1991: The US administration announces that is seeking no new funding for the mujaheddin in its proposed budget for 1992.

May 23-28, 1991: Hekmatyar, head of the Hizb-i-Islami (P), rejects a UN peace plan saying that there is no question of accepting a settlement under the Najibullah regime (P). Sayuf, head of the IUP (P), and Mujaddidi, head of the NLF (P), also reject the peace plan. President Najibullah announces that the government would accept a cease-fire in order to implement the plan.

June 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month the government claims to have recaptures the

northern town of Khasa Ghar and rebels (?) cause an explosion in a hotel in Herat killing 2.

June 9, 1991: Rebels (?) claim that 700 government militiamen have defected to them in the northern province of Jozjan.

July 1991: Kabul radio reports that almost 200 people are killed during clashes between Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P), IUP (P) and Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T).

July 1991: Two US aid workers and one French worker are captured in mujaheddin territory and two workers for the international Committee of the Red Cross are killed in separate incidents. Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) is believed to be responsible for the incidents.

July 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month a rebel (?) attack on Kabul cuts off the city's electricity and rebels (?) besiege the eastern town of Jalalabad. Also, the Jam'iyat-i-Islami reports capturing a strategic town in the northern province of Badakhshan.

July 1, 1991: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) fails to reach an agreement with the AIG (P & T) over participation in a rebel coalition. Many of the Sunni AIG leaders do not want to give representation to the Shi'i Hizb-i-Wahdat party for religious reasons.

July 30, 1991: After a meeting held in Pakistan between mujaheddin leaders and ministers from Iran and Pakistan, several mujaheddin leaders agree to consider the UN peace plan "a possible basis for a settlement for the Afghanistan problem." Hizb-i-Islami (P) leaders Kalis and Hekmatyar and IUP (P) leader Sayuf boycott the meeting.

August 1991: A Swiss representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross is captured and released a week later by rebels in Kabul.

August 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month hundreds are killed when an arms depot explodes in Kabul. The explosion is thought to have been triggered by a rebel (?) rocket which is one of several rebel rocket attacks upon the city this month. Rebels (?) also bomb the eastern town of Mehtar. 100 Kabul militiamen are reportedly killed in heavy fighting with Rebels (?) in Mayden Shar. At least 100 are killed in intensive bombing by government forces (P) against the northern city of Raloqan held by the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) as well as several other rebel strongholds.

August 1991: The government releases 25 rebel (?) prisoners in exchange for the release of 1 Soviet prisoner. The released prisoners claim to have been tortured in captivity as well as refused medical aid.

August 28-28, 1991: A second round of talks is held between mujaheddin leaders and the Iranian and Pakistani governments to discuss the UN peace plan. Those who attend include: Harakat-i-Inkilab-i-Islami (P), The NLF (P), The Islamic Front (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T). Both factions of the Hizb-i-Islami (P) and the IUP (P) boycott the meeting.

September-October 1991: Mujaheddin forces, probably Hizb-i-Islami (P), intensify their efforts to capture Gardez, the capital of the southeastern Paktia province and home of President Najibullah (P), but are hampered by internal rivalries.

September 1991: In other rebel activity against the government this month Rebels (?) bomb Kabul and

other cities.

September 12, 1991: Mujaddidi (P) and Gaylani (P) meet with representatives of the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). Mujaddidi accuses Pakistan of supporting hardline guerrillas including Hekmatyar (P) in a plot to storm Kabul and announces that the time is right for a political compromise. Mujaddidi claims that Masood (T) backs his stand.

September 13, 1991: A US-Soviet agreement discontinuing "weapons deliveries to all Afghan sides" on January 1, 1992 is announced.

September 25, 1991: President Najibullah (P) proposed the formation of "a national unity government" including mujaheddin members.

September 28, 1991: Rebel chiefs name a delegation for peace talks at the UN led by Mujaddidi (P) but Hekmatyar (P), Khalis (P) and Sayuf (P) boycott.

September 30, 1991: President Najibullah (P) calls on the UN to supervise local elections.

October 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) launch an attack on the town of Qalat and shoot down a helicopter. Also Hizb-i-Islami (P) launches an attack on the eastern city of Jalalabad and Hekmatyar attacks the capital of the Mehtorlam province.

October 11-13, 1991: Mujaddidi (P) praises government Prime Minister Khaliqyar (P) and says that he will consult his more radical colleagues on sharing power with him in a transitional government. He later backs off from this pledge due to pressure from hard-liners.

November 21, 1991: Reuters reports that the areas of northern Afghanistan controlled by Masood (T) have evolved a civilian guerilla government.

December 1991: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) bomb Kabul and Herat.

December 1991: In 2 separate incidents commanders in Hekmatyar's (P) and Sayuf's (?) forces are gunned down in Pakistan.

January 1, 1992: The US and the former Soviet Union formally end weapons delivery to the rival Afghan factions.

January 9, 1992: Gunmen kill a commander in Hekmatyar's (P) forces.

February 1992: Hekmatyar (P) rejects a UN peace proposal and continues to refuse any direct talks with the Kabul government. Mujaddidi (P), Gaylani (P) and Muhammadi back the initiative. Rabbani (T) urges the UN to remove any links with the Afghan government.

February 24, 1992: Rebels (?) launch rockets into the southwestern town of Lashkargah.

February 26, 1992: Mujaheddin launch a rocket attack upon Kabul.

March 1992: In rebel activity against the government this month rebels (?) capture a strategic district in the

northern province of Samangan and rocket Kabul and Jalalabad.

March 4, 1992: A **Pashtun** general is removed from his command in northern Afghanistan due to ethnic tensions in the area. He is reinstated shortly thereafter.

March 1992: General Dostam (U) switches allegiance from the Homeland Party (P) to an alliance with the Jam'iyat-i-Islamiya (T).

March 18, 1992: President Najibullah (P) announces that he is prepared to resign "all powers and all executive authority" on the establishment of an interim government--a central part of a UN backed peace plan for Afghanistan.

March 19, 1992: Hekmatyar (P) calls for the immediate resignation of Najibullah.

Late March 1992: Local militias dominated by Uzbeks, Tajiks and Ismaili Shi'i Muslims unite to take control of the strategic northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif from the **Pashtuns**. A report calls this indicative of a wider split between **Pashtuns** and non-**Pashtuns** within both the government and the rebel camps.

April 8, 1992: A coalition headed by Dostam (U) forms an independent administration in the northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif.

April 15-20, 1992: President Najibullah (P) is removed from power by a coup within his own party supported by General Dostam (U). He is replaced by Abdorrahim Hatif (P) but real power falls to Gen. Mohammed Nabi (P). However, the real fate of the city lies in the hands of both factions of the Hizb-i-Islami (P). In the rest of the country local militias sever all links with the government and either surrender to or enter into power sharing agreements with local mujaheddin units. Ethnic fighting also breaks out in several areas.

April 24, 1992: The majority of Mujaheddin groups agree to a 3-stage plan for the transfer of power. The plan calls for the creation of the Islamic Jihad Council (IJC) to take power in Kabul for a 2-month period. An interim government, to be headed by Rabbani would then replace it. After 4 months, a permanent government would replace Rabbani's interim regime. Mujaddidi (P), head of the National Liberation Front, is elected leader of the IJC. Hekmatyar (P) refuses to endorse the plan. Hazaras and other Shi'i are excluded from the IJC.

April 25, 1992: Hizb-i-Islami (P) forces enter Kabul.

April 26, 1992: An Afghan diplomat claims that Hekmatyar has connections in Afghanistan's drug trade.

April 26-28, 1992: After heavy fighting between Hekmatyar's (P) forces and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T), Hekmatyar's forces are ejected from their final stronghold in Kabul. Hekmatyar then takes a more conciliatory stance toward the peace plan.

April 28, 1992: Power is passed from the Republic of Afghanistan government to the IJC.

April 29, 1992: The IJC declares an amnesty for all members of the former Afghan government except former president Najibullah (P).

Early May 1992: Hekmatyar's (P) forces continue to clash with those of Dostam (U) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) continue. Hekmatyar demands the expulsion of Dostam and his Uzbek militia as well as the Tajik Jam'iyat-i-Islami militiamen.

May 6, 1992: The structure of the former regime is officially abolished including its Cabinet, the National Assembly, the state security apparatus, the former ruling party (The Homeland Party (P)) and all laws and resolutions contrary to the Sharia (Islamic Law).

May 7, 1992: The sale and use of alcohol is banned and all "Muslim sisters" are called upon to dress according to Islamic law.

May 16, 1992: A commander in the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (P) dies of poison in Pakistan.

May 25, 1992: Hekmatyar (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) agree upon and sign a peace pact. But Hekmatyar still refuses to join the interim government and his forces still threaten Kabul from the south. He also continues to demand the expulsion of Dostam's (U) Uzbek forces and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami's (T) Tajik forces from Kabul.

May 27, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) which has thus far been left out of the governing coalition demands a 25% share of the power because it claims to represent 25% of Afghanistan's population.

May 29, 1992: An attack upon President Mujaddidi (P) is unsuccessful. Hekmatyar (P) is suspected to be behind the attack.

June 2-6, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and the IUP (P) clash in fierce street battles in Kabul.

June 8, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) is given a share in the interim government. It is given 8 out of 51 seats in the IJC and three government ministries including that of National Security. Ittehad-i-Islami is also given 5 seats on the IJC.

June 25, 1992: A refugee camp in Pakistan controlled jointly by both factions of the Hizb-i-Islami (P) is hit by rockets.

June 28, 1992: Rabbani (T) takes over the presidency of the interim government from Mujaddidi after threats by Mujaddidi (P) not to hand over power as mandated in the peace plan. Sayuf (P), Khalis (P) and Hekmatyar (P) all announce their backing of Rabbani with reservations. **Note:** from this point on, unless otherwise noted, the forces fighting for the government are generally Tajik forces controlled by the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) party.

July 4, 1992: Hekmatyar's (P) and Dostam's (U) forces clash in Kabul.

July 6, 1992: The appointment of Hekmatyar's (P) nominee for Prime Minister marks the apparent end of his boycott of the interim government.

July 11, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) expresses concerns that in the new regime it will lose its hard won status and revert to second class citizens. They complain that the promises made to them by former President Mujaddidi (P) have not been honored by his successor Rabbani (T).

Mid-July 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and the IUP (P) clash in fierce street battles in Kabul.

July 14, 1992: Both factions of the Hizb-i-Islami are intercepting shipments of food and fuel to Kabul from the north.

July 18, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) formally joins the governing coalition but pulls out shortly thereafter over a dispute over the number of ministries they are to control.

July 31, 1992: The UN High Commissioner on Refugees announces that 1,000,000 Afghan refugees had returned to their homes.

August 1, 1992: Pakistan bans new shipments of arms through its territory to any party in Afghanistan at the request of the Afghan government.

August 2, 1992: Khalis (P) suspends his groups' membership in the ruling leadership Council because the Shi'i Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) party had been included.

August 10-29, 1992: Hekmatyar's (P) forces attack Kabul with rockets, shells, cluster bombs and ground forces. Hekmatyar is expelled from the Leadership Council and the Prime Minister, a Hekmatyar supporter, is dismissed. At least 126,000 civilians flee Kabul. Despite Hekmatyar's public avowal that this war is with the Uzbek militia, analysts agree that he had stepped up military pressure against the government to prevent Rabbani (T) from consolidating his position and marginalizing the Hizb-i-Islami (P).

August 13, 1992: Pakistan publicly threatens to withdraw support from Hekmatyar because he is "undermining the territorial integrity of Afghanistan."

September 2, 1992: Pakistan announces that it will accept no more Afghan refugees.

September 2, 1992: The Afghan government orders various groups of Mujahideen fighters occupying the streets of Kabul to pull out of the capital.

September 4, 1992: The Afghan government begins a "clean-up" operation to force unauthorized fighters out of Kabul.

September 7, 1992: Hekmatyar (P) accuses the government of violating its truce agreement with him.

September 18, 1992: President Rabbani (T) and Hekmatyar (P) reach a peace accord.

September 18-21, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and the IUP (P) clash in fierce street battles in Kabul.

September 22, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) rejoins the government after resolving political differences.

Early October 1992: Hekmatyar (P) and government (T) forces clash in Kabul and in western Afghanistan.

October 1992: Hekmatyar's (P) forces clash with those of Dostam (U) in the northern provinces of Kapsia and Parwan.

October 31, 1992: A meeting of the Leadership council agrees to extend the term of interim President Rabbani (T) until December 15. Hekmatyar (P) is represented at the council but refuses to personally attend and opposes the term extension.

November 1992: Clashes between Hekmatyar's (P) forces and those of Dostam (U) continue.

November 5, 1992: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces clash with government (T) forces in Kabul.

December 1992: 40 to 50 thousand Tajik refugees fleeing Tajikistan cross over into Afghanistan. Many more (100,000?) remain massed on the other side of the border.

December 5-10, 1992: Government forces loyal to the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (P) and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces clash. Hekmatyar's (P) forces quickly join the fray against the government forces. Eventually fighting breaks out between the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and Dostam's (U) Uzbek militia.

December 29, 1992 to January 3, 1993: At the National Resolution Conference, Rabbani (T) is elected the first President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The conference also sets up an army and orders television and radio stations to conform to Islamic standards. Hekmatyar (P) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) party boycott the conference claiming it is rigged.

January 1993: Clashes just short of all out war between government forces (T) and those of Hekmatyar (P) continue in and around Kabul and in other provinces including Herat and Baghlan. Hekmatyar demands Rabbani's resignation in favor of the Leadership Council of Mujaheddin Parties and the release of all Hizb-i-Islami (P) prisoners of war.

January 5, 1993: Pakistan informs Afghanistan that all mujaheddin offices in Pakistan are to be closed by the end of January. The Mujaheddin comply.

January 10, 1993: A 205 member interim parliament is selected.

January 13, 1993: Dostam (U) gives Rabbani (T) one month to share power or lose support. However Dostam asserts that in any case he will not use force against the government.

January 18, 1993: A commander in the NLF is kidnapped.

January 25, 1993: Clashes between government forces (T) and those of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) are reported.

February 1993: Hekmatyar (P) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) join forces against forces loyal to President Rabbani (T) and continue their clashes with his forces. There are reports that Hekmatyar attempted to form an alliance with Dostam (U) but Dostam remains neutral. Afghans flee Kabul due to the fighting.

February 1993: The UN announces that more Afghans are fleeing Afghanistan than returning. This is the first time this has been true since July, 1990.

February 6, 1993: Dostam (U) is named Deputy Defense Minister (Masood (T) is the Defense Minister). However, Dostam says that he will not leave his stronghold in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif unless the government establishes a unified national army.

February 17, 1993: IRNA (the official Iranian news agency) accuses the IUP (P) of raping Shi'i (H) women and looting Shi'i houses in Kabul.

March 1993: Clashes between government forces (T) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) continue.

March 7, 1993: President Rabbani (T) and Hekmatyar (T) sign a peace accord. The accord is also signed by representatives of The Movement for Islamic Revolution (P), The National Liberation Front (P), The Islamic Unity Party (P), The Islamic Front (P) and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). The accord is also supported by Dostam (U) and signed by representatives of the Saudi and Pakistani governments. Kalis' faction of the Hizb-i-Islami (P) boycotts the accords.

March 8, 1993: Hekmatyar (P) is appointed Prime Minister.

Mid-March-May 1993: Tensions between Rabbani (T) and Hekmatyar (P) increase over Cabinet appointments, especially that of Defense Minister which is currently held by Masood (T) a member of Rabbani's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) party..

April 1, 1993: A peace accord is signed between the government and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H).

Mid-April 1993: The peace accord between the government and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) breaks down after intense fighting between the IUP (P) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat in Kabul.

April 19, 1993: Heavy fighting is reported between government forces and local guerrillas in the southern province of Kandahar.

Late April 1993: Fighting breaks out between Jam'iyat-i-Islam (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar (P) in Kabul.

May 12, 1993: After 6 days of low level clashes, Hekmatyar (P) launches a fierce bombardment on Kabul's western suburbs supported by Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). At least 1000 are killed.

May 13, 1993: Dostam's (U) forces join the fighting against government (T) forces in Kabul.

May 20, 1993: President Rabbani (T), Hekmatyar (P) and other mujaheddin leaders sign an accord agreeing that each of nine major factions will get 2 ministers in the Cabinet. In addition, 2 commissions would be formed to administer the defense and interior ministries, headed by Rabbani and Hekmatyar respectively. After 2 months the mujaheddin leaders will elect the interior and defense ministers. The fighting in Kabul continues despite the accord.

May 23, 1993: A cease-fire comes into force in Kabul as agreed upon in the accords.

Late May 1993: Sporadic artillery and gun fire between government (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar (P) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) breaks the cease-fire. Dostam's (U) forces try to act as a buffer between the two parties.

May 30, 1993: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces attack the defense ministry (T).

Summer 1993: An outbreak of cholera occurs in Kabul.

June 1993: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces clash with Government (T) forces. There are also less frequent reports of fighting between Rabbani's (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar (P). Dostam's (U) forces continue to act as a buffer.

June 17, 1993: The new Afghan government is sworn in. In his first executive decision, President Rabbani orders a halt to highway robbery by unemployed Mujaheddin.

August 25-29, 1993: Afghan sources in Pakistan report fighting in the southern province of Khandar between supporters of Rabbani (T) and Hekmatyar (P). More than 220 are killed.

September 1993: Dostam's (U) forces clash with Jam'iyat-i-Islam (T) forces near Dostam's stronghold in Mazar-i-Sharif.

September 13, 1993: A senior Jam'iyat-i-Islam (T) official is killed in a bombing.

September 14, 1993: Hekmatyar's (P) forces attack Kabul.

Late September 1993: A constitution committee finishes a draft on a new interim constitution for Afghanistan. Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) opposes it because it ignores the interests of the country's Shi'i population. Dostam supports the Shi'i position. The primary purpose of the document is to spell out the powers of the President (Rabbani (T)) and the Prime Minister (Hekmatyar (P)).

Late September to October 1993: The Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and the IUP (P) start fighting in Kabul.

October 1993: Hizb-i-Islami (P) and Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces fight in Kabul and in northern Afghanistan.

October 28, 1993: The Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and the IUP (P) sign a cease fire agreement.

November 1993: Hizb-i-Islami (P) and Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces fight in Kabul and in northern and eastern Afghanistan.

November 8, 1993: Hekmatyar's (P) forces seize two western reporters whom they free a few days later.

December 1993: Hizb-i-Islami (P) and Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces continue to fight in Kabul.

December 1993: Dostam's (U) forces clash with those of the IUP (P) in northern Afghanistan.

December 11, 1993: Hekmatyar (P) transfers his state powers as Prime Minister to his deputy in the Hizb-i-Islami party (P) Qazi Amin Waqad. Rabbani (T) approves the action.

December 28, 1993: Clashes between the forces of Hekmatyar (P) and Dostam (U) are reported in Kabul. However, Dostam claims that they were isolated incidents between unruly lower ranked forces.

December 29, 1993: Reuters reports that 10,000 have fled Kabul in the last 2 months and are being settled in refugee camps elsewhere in Afghanistan.

January 1994: Hekmatyar's (P) forces backed by those of Dostam (U) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) (which for the most part attempts to stay out of the fighting but does occasionally involve itself) attempt to wrest control of the government from President Rabbani (T). The government forces are aided by the IUP (P). This results in bloody clashes with over 1000 dead (and over 10,000 dead since April, 1992). By mid January 18,000 refugees cross over into Pakistan before it closes its borders and over 80,000 flee to the Afghani city of Jalalabad which is between Kabul and Pakistan. The conflict spreads to Dostam's (U) power base in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif where his militia clashes with Rabbani's forces. Rabbani's forces also attack those of Dostam in the provinces of Faryab and Kunduz. The clashes occurred due to mounting dissatisfaction among Dostam's Uzbek followers over their exclusion from the Tajik controlled government. There are several brief cease-fires during the fighting.

February 1994: The fighting and blockade of Kabul continues, except for a brief truce, causing a food crisis.

February 1994: The Afghan government accuses Uzbekistan of providing military aid to Dostam (U). Dostam and Uzbekistan deny the charges.

March 1994: Except for a few brief cease-fires, the fighting and blockade of Kabul continues.

March 4, 1994: According to the UN, the numbers of refugees in the eastern Afghan town of Jalalabad has reached 200,000 and they continue to arrive at the rate of 1,000 a day.

April 1994: Except for a few brief cease-fires, the fighting and blockade of Kabul continues. Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) becomes considerably more active in the fighting against the government (T). The death toll since the beginning of the year reaches 2,000.

April 27, 1994: According to the UN more than 440,000 have fled Kabul or been forced out of their homes this year.

May 1994: The fighting continues without any cease-fire.

June 1994: The fighting continues without any cease-fire and spreads to southern and eastern Afghanistan.

July 1994: The fighting continues without any cease-fire.

August 1994: The fighting continues without any cease-fire.

September 1994: The fighting continues without any cease-fire.

Late September 1994: Fighting flares up between the Harakat-i-Islam (O) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) in Kabul. Harakat-i-Islam sides with Rabbani (T) in the larger conflict going on in the city.

Update: 10/31/95

Note: Attempts at outside mediation of the disputes in Afghanistan occur throughout the period covered by this Update. Those attempting to mediate the dispute include the US, the UN, Pakistan, Iran, the Soviet Union / Russia and the Organization of Islamic States, as well as several other countries and international organizations. Such attempts at mediation will not be noted here unless successful.

October 1994: The fighting continues broken only by a 4-hour cease fire brokered by Iran.

October 13, 1994: A group of Islamic students called the Taliban (P) take control of the town of Spinboldak from Hekmatyar's (P) followers. The group was set up in August by Muhammad Omar Akhund, a senior Mullah from the town of Kandahar.

November 1994: The fighting continues without a cease fire.

November 5, 1994: The Taliban (P) captures the southern Afghanistan town of Kandahar from Hekmatyar's (P) forces. **Note:** The Taliban (P) is following a general policy of bringing peace to the region. They feel that the fighting has been going on long enough and are seeking to make the roads safe to travel and generally eliminate having to deal with the civil war from the day to day life of the average Afghani.

November 29, 1994: The Afghan government headed by Rabbani (T) announces its support for the Taliban's (P) efforts to end highway robbery and reopen the roads.

November 29 to December 6, 1994: Peace talks are held in Iran, but the discussions end without any official agreement, cease-fire or date to resume negotiations.

December 6, 1994: An unofficial cease fire begins in Kabul. The first of several International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) relief convoys arrive in Kabul for the first time in 3 months.

December 14, 1994: Amnesty International reports that mass murders, arbitrary detention, torture, and rape are being perpetrated by rival political groups in Afghanistan.

December 19, 1994: Reuters reports that a battle between President Rabbani (T) and Prime Minister Hekmatyar (P) over control over Afghanistan's currency. Rabbani, who controls the central bank has begun to issue 5,000 Afghani and 10,000 Afghani notes. Hekmatyar, however, refuses to recognize the new notes as valid currency in the areas under his control, creating widespread uncertainty over their worth.

December 23-24, 1994: The fighting in Kabul between President Rabbani's (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar (P) and General Dostam (U) resumes briefly. After this the unofficial cease fire continues.

1994 Sum-Up: About 7,000 died in the Afghani civil war in 1994. Estimates of total deaths since the fall of the Communist government 1992 range from 17,000 to 25,000.

January 4, 1995: A UN peace envoy arrives in Afghanistan and begins facilitating talks between Hekmatyar (P) and Rabbani (T). The purpose of the talks is to arrange a transfer of power from President Rabbani whose term ended January 3.

January 14, 1995: Fighting breaks out in northern Afghanistan between forces loyal to Rabbani (T) and General Dostam (U).

January 19, 1995: The fighting in Kabul between Rabbani's (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar (P), General Dostam (U) and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) resumes.

January 25, 1995: Reuters reports that the Taliban (P) has joined with government forces loyal to Rabbani (T) to help defend the eastern town of Ghanzi, south of Kabul, from attacking forces loyal to Hekmatyar (P). The current situation in Afghanistan has, at this point, reverted to all-out civil war between the various opposing factions.

January 29, 1995: General Dostam's (U) forces capture the northern town of Kunduz from forces loyal to President Rabbani (T).

February 1995: Fighting between Rabbani's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and those of Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P), General Dostam's Jambush-i-Milli (U) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) continues throughout the country.

February 4-10, 1995: Reuters reports that the Taliban (P) has captured most of the eastern province of Wardak and captured its capital from forces loyal to Hekmatyar (P). The Taliban now controls 6 of Afghanistan's 30 provinces.

February 10, 1995: Reuters reports that the Pakistani Islamic fundamentalist Jam'iyat-i-Islami party is supplying recruits for Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) forces.

February 11, 1995: Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) forces abandon their military base at Charasyab, near Kabul, retreating from the Taliban (P). Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces also capture most of Hekmatyar's other positions around Kabul. This has trapped the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces in southwestern Kabul, leading to heightened fighting between them and Jam'iyat-i-Islami forces.

February 14, 1995: Reuters reports that some commanders of the pro-government (controlled by Rabbani (T)) Ittehad-i-Islami (P) have defected to the Taliban (P).

February 15, 1995: Reuters reports that in Areas that have fallen to the Taliban (P), they have won acclaim by clearing the roads of checkpoints manned by guerillas who preyed on traffic, by disarming gunmen, and by opposing Afghanistan's booming opium and heroin business. Their success has, thus far, been limited to the **Pashtun** areas of Afghanistan and many question their ability to be successful in Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara areas.

March 9, 1995: The Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces in Kabul agree to withdraw from their front-line positions and give them to the Taliban (P).

March 11-12, 1995: Afghani government forces, consisting of Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces, launch an attack on the new Taliban (P) positions in southwestern Kabul. Government forces succeed in driving out both the Taliban and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces out of the city. This is the first time the Taliban has been defeated. Fighting continues outside of the city.

March 13, 1995: Hizb-i-Wahdat leader Abdul Ali Mazari dies in a helicopter crash while being held by the Taliban (P).

March 14, 1995: Iran tells all Afghan refugees living in Iran on temporary residence permits to go home or live in refugee camps in Iran. An estimated 540,000 of the 1.6 million Afghan refugees in Iran have temporary residence permits.

March 18, 1995: Thousands of followers of the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) leader Mazari begin a long march through central Afghanistan with his body which they want to bury in the north.

April 1995: The fighting continues, primarily between the Taliban (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami near Kabul.

May 1995: The fighting continues, primarily between the Taliban (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces near Kabul. The Jam'iyat-i-Islami forces make significant advances on retreating Taliban forces.

June 1995: Fighting continues between Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and Taliban (P) forces in the south until an unofficial cease fire goes into affect mid-month. Fighting between Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and those of General Dostam (U) resumes in the north after failed peace talks. There is also fighting between the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces near Kabul.

June 12, 1995: Reuters reports that a new militia, the Jehadi Shoora (P), made up of commanders previously in control of the southern provinces now controlled by the Taliban (P), has formed. They want to take control of southern Afghanistan back from the Taliban.

June 22, 1995: Iran begins to repatriate about 400,000 Afghani refugees.

July 1995: The fighting continues, primarily between the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) forces and those of General Dostam (U).

August 1995: The fighting continues. In the north the forces of General Dostam (U) and the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) fight the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (H). Fighting between the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) and the Taliban (P) resumes in the south and near Kabul.

August 26, 1995: Fighting between the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) and Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P) is reported near Kabul.

September 1995: The fighting continues. The Taliban (P) advances on the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) in the south, and General Dostam's (U) forces advance on the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) in the north.

September 5, 1995: Following the Taliban's (P) capture of the city of Herat, the UNHCR suspended its program of repatriating Afghans from Iran. (AFP)

September 8, 1995: Hizb-i-Islami leader Hekmatyar (P) proposes an alliance between his group and the Taliban (P) to oust the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani (T). Rumors also circulate that, given Taliban's recent successes Dostam's militia (U) may align with the Taliban fighters. By the end of the month, an alliance between the three former rivals has emerged to fight Rabbani's forces. (AFP; AFP, September 13; September 27)

September 13, 1995: The Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) holds a mass rally in Kabul accusing Pakistan of interfering with Afghanistan's internal affairs by using the Taliban (P) as a front group. **Note:** Throughout the period covered by this update, there is speculation as to the extent of official Pakistani support for the Taliban. The Taliban denies that any such support exists.

September 20, 1995: Mullah Mishr, a Taliban (P) leader, issued a five-day ultimatum against the government, demanding that Rabbani (T) and his backers resign or Taliban forces would attack the capital city of Kabul. The Taliban movement later agreed to postpone the attack following pleas from civilians in Kabul. (AFP)

October 1995: The fighting continues, mainly between the Taliban (P) and the Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) near Kabul.

UPDATE, JULY 1999

November 4, 1995: A UN mediator announced that Rabbani (T) had stated that he would announce soon his resignation as leader of Afghanistan. His resignation would make way for the implementation of a 28-man council, incorporating leaders from a variety of groups in the country, to rule Afghanistan. Despite assurances that the Taliban Islamic movement (P) would be included in the council, Taliban condemned this plan, ending hopes that this plan would succeed. (AFP; AFP, November 18)

November 10 through November 15, 1995: The Red Cross reported that at least 40 people in Kabul had been killed and another 70 were injured as a result of rocket attacks by Taliban (P) forces. (AFP, November 15)

November 14, 1995: Muhammed Umar, one of the leaders of the Taliban movement (P), died when his helicopter exploded in mid-air. It was unclear whether the explosion was an accident or a result of sabotage. (Kaleidoscope News)

November 16 through November 27, 1995: Fighting breaks out between militia forces of the Taliban (P) and government troops near Kabul. Spokesmen for the Taliban militia reported that it had captured over 100 government troops in the first four days of fighting. Taliban forces captured 3 government bases east of Kabul, but government troops were able to recapture the bases. This round of fighting ended with a government air raid on Taliban posts which left 39 people dead. (AFP; November 18, November 27)

More than 112 people were killed during air raids in and around Kabul during the month of November. (AFP, December 23)

December 3, 1995: Fighting resumes near Kabul, with government forces and the Taliban militia (P) exchanging artillery- and rocket-fire. Fifteen Taliban (P) fighters died, as did one Afghan soldier, in the attacks. (AFP)

December 17, 1995: Taliban forces (P) launch an air raid on Kabul, bombing a mosque in the city as well as a bus on its way to Kabul, killing 14 civilians.

General Dostam's (U) forces were also included in the last round of fighting near Kabul, offering confirmation of reports that Taliban (P) forces were now working with Dostam (U) as well as with Hekmatyar (P). The

alliance is now also reported to include Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces. (AFP)

December 19, 1995: The US-based watch group Freedom House listed Afghanistan as one of 18 countries receiving the lowest marks on civil and political liberties for its citizens. (AFP)

December 21 through December 23, 1995: More than 20 people in Kabul were killed as a result of Taliban air raids (P). (AFP; December 23)

December 28, 1995: In what was called an "unprecedented sign of flexibility," Rabanni (T) offered to send government officials to provinces around the country to work out a peace deal among all the factions within the country. (AFP)

December 30, 1995: Taliban (P) forces signaled their rejection of Rabanni's (T) peace overture by launching rocket and shell attacks on Kabul. The raids left 8 civilians dead and another 41 injured. (AFP)

December 31, 1995: A rocket attack on Kabul by the Taliban Islamic movement (P) left 4 children dead and 26 other civilians injured. (AFP, January 1)

At least 72 people died during December during such attacks, while another 200 received injuries. (AFP, January 1)

1996

January 7, 1996: As Taliban leaders announced their willingness to receive a peace delegation from President Rabanni, Taliban forces launch a shell and artillery attack on Kabul, killing at least six people. (AFP)

January 14, 1996: The Afghani government secured a peace agreement with Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). The agreement will result in the cessation of fighting between the forces led by Karim Khalee (or Khalili) (H) and the government, as well as the re-opening of a crucial road leading to a resource-starved Kabul.

The agreement was facilitated by Iranian efforts to settle divisions within the Hizb-i-Wahdat. (AFP)

January 21, 1996: The government of President Rabbani declared a unilateral cease-fire in its on-going conflict with the Taliban militia in and around Kabul. The announcement of the cease-fire coincided with the beginning of the month-long Moslem festival of Ramadan. (AFP, January 23)

Taliban forces rejected the cease-fire and continued to launch attacks on Kabul, including an attack on the presidential palace. (AFP, February 4)

January 28, 1996: Despite reports of progress in negotiations between the government and General Dostam (U), Dostam ruled out the chances of him signing any peace deal with the government in Kabul. (AFP)

February 6 through February 13, 1996: General Dostam (U), leader of the National Islamic Movement, met with former Afghan president Mojadeddi (P) of the National Liberation Front, as well as with leaders of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and Harakat-i-Islami (O) to discuss the potential of a broad-based government in Kabul. Former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hizb-i-Islami (P) also joined in part of the

discussions. The opposition groups agreed to drop their demand that President Rabanni resign before discussions of a new government structure could take place. The impact of the talks was lessened by the absence of any government representatives as well as any officials from the Taliban movement. (AFP, February 9, February 11, February 13)

February 23, 1996: Unofficial reports indicate that former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar of Hizb-i-Islami (P) could soon be arriving in Kabul to assume a top post in the wearied and battled Rabanni (T) government. (AFP, February 24)

March 1 through March 4, 1996: Following months of growing tensions in northern Afghanistan, clashes broke out between members of Hizb-i-Islami (P) and Ismaeli Moslem faction (O) along with troops loyal to General Dostam (U). Hundreds of refugees were forced to flee the town of Pul-i-Khumri in order to escape rockets and gunfire between the factions. (AFP, March 4; Kaleidoscope)

April 12, 1996: Rabbani's army (T) launched an offensive against the Taliban militia in an effort to recapture the city of Herat. (Kaleidoscope)

May 13, 1996: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (P), the former Prime Minister who violently broke from the government in 1993, returned to Kabul to assume a top position for he and his faction in the government. As part of an agreement securing an alliance between he and Rabanni, his Hizb-i-Islami is expected to receive the posts of prime minister, minister of defense, and minister of finance. Thousands of Hizb troops moved into the besieged capital in an effort to protect it from further Taliban advances. Analysts warned that this rapid shift in Hekmatyar's position could rekindle tensions in the country, as groups not included in the new coalition would feel increasingly vulnerable and could turn to violence. Residents of Kabul were skeptical about the alliance and were nervous about the immediate fate of their city. (AFP, April 27, May 13, May 14, May 19)

May 18, 1996: In an apparent response to the inclusion of Hizb (P) officials in Rabbani's (T) government, rocket attacks were launched on Kabul (apparently by Taliban forces). One rocket struck a bus shelter in the capital city, killing 6 civilians (including 2 children) and wounding 18 others. (AFP)

May 20 through May 26, 1996: A week of fighting in and around Kabul between Taliban (P) forces and Rabbani-Hekmatyar (T-P) troops left hundreds wounded. The government reported that its troops had killed 70 Taliban fighters, while suffering 10 fatalities. The Taliban disputed those numbers, stating that more than 50 government troops had been killed during the days of fighting. (AFP, May 26)

June 7, 1996: SCC (O) leaders suspended Hekmatyar's (P) membership in the alliance, stating that he could not be both a member of the government and part of the opposition. (AFP)

June 18, 1996: An Amnesty International annual report revealed that hundreds of cases of torture, including rape, had been reported in Afghanistan during 1995. Opposition groups in the country were found responsible for cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of people--including women, children, and the elderly--on a massive level. (AFP)

June 25, 1996: The bodyguards of General Dostam's (U) second-in-command, Rasool Pahalwan, shot Rasool to death near his Mazar-i-Sharif base in northern Afghanistan. Rasool was also considered to be a significant rival to Dostam. The murder raised anxiety among civilians in the region. (AFP, June 25, June 27)

June 26, 1996: More than 2 years after giving up the office, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (P) was sworn as the Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Nobody had assumed the position in his absence. Both Iran and Pakistan welcomed his return to the government.

As the inauguration ceremony occurred, rockets shook the city of Kabul. The Taliban rocket attacks claimed the lives of 64 civilians, including children and a pregnant woman, and wounded 138 others in what was the deadliest attack in more than a year. (AFP, June 26, June 27)

June 30, 1996: Another series of rocket and artillery attacks by the Taliban on Kabul left 2 people dead and 6 wounded. (AFP)

July 3, 1996: Hekmatyar and Rabbani announced the new Cabinet for Afghanistan. The cabinet is comprised of members of Rabbani's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) faction and Hekmatyar's Hizb-i-Islami (P), as well as representatives from Ittehad-i-Islami (a faction aligned with Rabbani and led by Rasool Sayyaf), Rabinni-allied Harakat-i-Islami (O), and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), another faction allied with the president. (AFP)

July 6, 1996: The Taliban militia (P) launched a shell attack on Kabul as the new government ministers prepared to take office. Eight people died in the attack, and another 26 were wounded. (AFP)

July 10, 1996: The new Afghani prime minister announced new government policies focused on limiting corruption by tightening religious and legal controls. Included among the measures was a policy requiring that all civil servants observe Islamic principles; Hekmatyar (P) warned that those who don't stop work to go to daily prayers would be fired. He also announced that although women would retain the right to work and own property, they would be required to obey the Islamic dress code, including wearing traditional black dresses and head covers and not wearing make-up outside of the home. In addition, cinemas in Kabul were forced to close down unless they could show "suitably Islamic" films, and radio stations were ordered to stop playing music.

In a sign that the newly expanded government might be divisive, Rabbani's military leader, Ahmeh Shah Masood (T), criticized Hekmatyar for not seeking approval from the rest of the governing coalition for these new measures.

In addition, women working in the state media sector publicly warned the government against enforcing the new restrictions. (AFP, July 10, July 15, July 22)

July 18, 1996: A Taliban rocket (P) attack on a market in Kabul left 18 people dead and another 25 injured. The almost daily attacks by the Taliban were seen to be a sign that the militia does not consider the expanded government an acceptable structure for the country.

Ten months of Taliban attacks, on top of four years of civil war, have destroyed about 75 percent of Kabul. The capital has been without electricity since January 1994. (AFP, July 18, July 31, August 11, September 17)

July 27 through July 31, 1996: For the first time in a year, fighting broke out in government-held pockets of Jambush-i-Milli-controlled (U) northern Afghanistan between the forces of President Rabbani (T) and those of General Dostam (U). The clashes began after Rabbani's military leader Masood allegedly tried to extend the government's political influence in the region. (AFP)

July 31, 1996: As the newly appointed UN envoy to Afghanistan visited Kabul for the first time, the Taliban militia launched a shell attack at the area in which the German diplomat was staying. (AFP)

August 13, 1996: Prime Minister Hekmatyar (P) announced the securing of a cease-fire between the government (P-T) and the forces of General Dostam (U) as negotiations between the two groups began. Dostam also agreed to reopen one of the main roads in Afghanistan to help end the isolation of Kabul. (AFP)

For the first time in four years, high-level negotiations occurred between officials from Afghanistan and from Pakistan. (AFP)

Mid-September 1996: The Taliban militia (P) made significant advances in eastern Afghanistan, capturing two more provincial capitals, including Jalalabad, in fierce battles with the government's army (T). Reports estimate that the Taliban (P) controls 60 percent of the country after this offensive.

The Kabul government sought help from General Dostam (U) to help stop the Taliban (P) push, as the prime minister 2000 additional Hizb (P) troops arrived from the north to battle Taliban (P) forces. (AFP, September 16, September 22)

September 26-27, 1996: Taliban (P) forces, led by Mullah Rabbani (no relation to the president), seized Kabul and formed a provisional six-man government to run the country. During the siege, Taliban forces hanged former Afghani President Najibullah (known as Najib), the former communist leader of Hizb-i-Watan (formerly PDPA) (P). Prime Minister Hekmatyar and President Rabbani both survived the arrival of the Taliban in Kabul and are reported to be hiding in Afghanistan in the provincial capital of Taloqan.

Residents of Kabul reportedly initially met the Taliban forces with both "welcome and fear." As expected, the Taliban imposed a strict interpretation of the Sharia, or Islamic, code, including banning women in Kabul from going to work. (AFP, September 27, September 28, September 30)

September 28, 1996 through the end of the year: Military exchanges:

Government troops (T) retreated to the north to establish a line of defense, but the Taliban (P) forces (P) overtake their position within 24 hours. The Taliban offensive continued into northeastern Afghanistan, where the militia fought the forces of Rabbani and Masood (T), who controlled three northern provinces (Sept. 28, Sept. 30). A stand off also followed between Taliban forces and General Dostam's (U) 60,000-person strong force at the Salang Tunnel, the gateway to the six northern provinces controlled by Dostam (Oct. 5).

The International Committee of the Red Cross reported that at least 800 people were wounded during fighting in just the first 2 weeks of October. (Oct. 16)

By October 14, after weeks of clashes, Dostam's forces (U) and those of the deposed government worked in tandem--and eventually together--to push the Taliban (P) forces back toward Kabul and to recapture airbases in the region (Oct. 9, Oct. 16). The allied Dostam-Rabbani (U-T) forces commenced bombing raids on Kabul in an effort to oust the Taliban (P) (Oct. 30).

An early November push by the allied forces to regain territory in eastern Afghanistan was thwarted by the Taliban (P) militia (Nov. 2). Clashes occur throughout the month, but neither side makes significant progress.

In the closing days of November Taliban (P) forces broke the deadlock around Kabul and launched a major offensive (Nov. 25). The new opposition (U-T) responded by ending a three-week reprieve for Kabul and resumed rocket attacks on the capital city. (Dec. 1).

After a snow-imposed delay in fighting, clashes resumed at the end of December when the Taliban recaptured Qarabagh, north of Kabul, killing between 50 and 60 opposition forces and taking over 200 prisoners (Dec. 28). The offensive was followed by a renewed anti-Taliban (U-T) air raid on Kabul (Dec. 29). The year ended with the bombing of the Kabul airport by opposition military forces (Dec. 31).

Throughout this period, Afghans trying to escape the fighting create massive internal refugee flows. The ICRC reported, for instance, that 20,000 new refugees had arrived in the city of Herat and were being housed in four overcrowded camps (Nov. 29). (all from AFP)

October 1, 1996: The top Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar arrived in Kabul to establish a new national government, promising a "complete cleansing" of the country, now called the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Little is known about this leader, who was previously involved in battles against the Soviets in the country. (AFP)

October 16, 1996: General Dostam (U) and Hazara leader Karim Khalili (H), as well as a leader of one other faction (?), announced that President Rabbani's ousted government (T) was the legitimate government of Afghanistan and formed an alliance with Rabbani called the Supreme Council for the Defense of Afghanistan. (AFP)

October 22, 1996: Leaders of the Taliban (P) reject a Pakistani-brokered deal to establish a power-sharing government for Afghanistan. (AFP)

November 4, 1996: Taliban (P) leaders reject General Dostam's (U) call for an Afghan peace forum. (AFP)

November 10, 1996: Kabuli residents report that the Taliban (P) militia has detained hundreds of civilians since taking control of the government in September. Most of those reportedly rounded up were men who were either Tajiks (T) or from the Panjshir valley north of Kabul. Reports indicate that the Taliban (P) is taking prisoners in order to offer the former government (T) a trade for the 700 or so Taliban (P) prisoners it has in custody. (AFP)

November 17, 1996: The Taliban (P) called upon the UN to recognize it as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. While some countries, including Pakistan, had been quick to encourage acceptance of the Taliban, others--notably Iran and Russia--refused to consider acknowledging the group as legitimate.

The United Nations has been working to secure a cease-fire in Afghanistan since the Taliban (P) took over Kabul but has been made little progress to date. (AFP; November 17, November 29)

December 2, 1996: Civilians (mostly **Pashtun**) near the northwest city of Herat allege that the allied opposition forces (T-U-H), especially those of General Dostam (U), were pillaging their villages, offering accounts of rape, arson, and looting. The reports could not be confirmed. (AFP)

December 4, 1996: Ousted Prime Minister Hekmatyar (P) joined the anti-Taliban alliance of Rabbani (T), Dostam (U), and Khalili's Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), although the premier's Hizb-i-Islami (P) remained aligned with

neither the Taliban nor the opposition alliance. (AFP)

December 21, 1996: The Taliban militia (P) announced a ban on Iranian television for western Afghanistan. Militia forces will search houses to enforce the ban and will destroy the televisions of anyone found watching the programming. Iran has continued to criticize the Taliban regime and recognize Rabbani as the leader of Afghanistan. (AFP)

December 24, 1996: Masood (T) called for the demilitarization of Kabul, stating that the capital city should become a buffer zone between rival factions in the north and south of the country. The Taliban militia (P) rejected this suggestion. (AFP)

1997

January 5, 1997: An air raid by anti-Taliban forces (T-U-H) left 12 people dead in Kabul and another 69 injured. (AFP; January 5, January 6)

January 13, 1997: The UN special mission to Afghanistan, led by Norbert Holl, arranged discussions between Taliban (P) and the opposition, which began in Islamabad. Talks stalled when Taliban leaders rejected the opposition's (T-U-H) condition that Kabul be transformed into a demilitarized region. The talks collapsed after two days. (AFP)

January 17, 1997: The Taliban (P) regained control of a key airbase north of Kabul. Analysts noted that the victory could be a sign of a fragile and fragmentary opposition (T-U-H).

The fighting near the town of Charikar resulted in a flood of refugees heading to Kabul to escape the violence. (AFP)

January 18, 1997: After capturing a province north of Kabul, the Taliban militia (P) continued north in the Panjshir valley, the stronghold of opposition forces (T-U-H). A brief deadlock between the forces followed. (AFP)

January 23, 1997: Opposition forces (T-U-H) retreated north as the Taliban militia (P) launched a two-pronged offensive and drove north into the Panjshir valley and near the vital Salang Pass, the sole access route to northern Afghanistan

January 26, 1997: The Taliban (P) militia reported that 2,000 opposition troops (T-U-H) had deserted the anti-Taliban movement, allowing the Taliban to continue its drive into northern Afghanistan. (AFP)

January 28, 1997: Dostam's force (U) launched an air attack on a town recently overtaken by the Taliban militia.

Masood's forces, known as the Shoora-i-Nazaar militia, (T) cut off the main access route to northern Afghanistan. Thousands of armed, ethnically **Pashtun** locals near the town of Ghorband reportedly worked with the Taliban militia (P) to establish a new access route, as the Taliban (P) vowed to overrun Dostam's territory. (AFP; January 28, January 31)

January 31, 1997: In its annual report on human rights abuses, the US State Department reported that the absence of civil institutions and the lack of the rule of law in Afghanistan have led to the continuation of

serious human rights violations and political killings. (AFP)

February 2, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) reported that the residents of two opposition-controlled areas in central Afghanistan revolted against Karim Khalili and his Hizb-i-Wahdat forces (H) in the towns. Independent confirmation of the report was not available. (AFP)

February 5, 1997: With the Taliban militia (P) poised to attack Karim Khalili's (H) stronghold of the Bamiyan province, leaders of the Taliban movement announced that they would negotiate with Khalili than fight his Hizb-i-Wahdat forces. (AFP)

February 15, 1997: Opposition forces (T-U-H) launched a 3-day air attack on a Taliban-held western province of Bagdhis, inflicting a large number of casualties. (AFP)

February 23, 1997: Three Kunar tribes staged a weeklong revolt against the Taliban militia (P) in a previously calm region of eastern Afghanistan. The Taliban militia eventually overran the stronghold town of the rebels and crushed the revolt. (AFP; February 15, February 23)

February 25, 1997: Officials from the Taliban militia (P) and from the Afghani opposition movement (T-U-H) met in Pakistan for the second round of UN-brokered peace talks. Key issues to be discussed were a cease-fire and an exchange of prisoners, but no resolutions were agreed upon. (AFP)

February 27, 1997: Independent reports confirmed that Taliban (P) forces had not yet been able to take the Shebar pass from anti-Taliban forces as Karim Khalili's Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) maintained control of the crucial piece of land. Analysts argue that the longer the opposition alliance (T-U-H) has to work together, the more likely it is that the alliance of convenience will disintegrate. (AFP; February 27, March 14)

March 25, 1997: Reports indicate that heavy fighting has resumed in the northwestern Afghan province of Bagdhis, which includes the city of Herat and is considered a gateway to the Taliban (P) base in southwestern Afghanistan. Although the Taliban militia denied any significant activity in the region, opposition forces led by General Dostam (U) apparently captured some Taliban outposts in the region and were continuing to push forward. (AFP)

March 27, 1997: A series of avalanches and freezing weather left at least 80--and perhaps as many as 100--people dead neat the Salang Pass near where the Taliban militia (P) and opposition forces (T-U-H) remained at a deadlock. (AFP)

March 30, 1997: Leaders of the Taliban militia (P) announced that its primary condition for moving forward with a peace settlement would be an exchange of POWs. Reports indicate that Masood (T) may have as many as 1000 Taliban prisoners. The Taliban leaders also re-stated their belief that Afghanistan would not be able to institute a stable government until all communists were eliminated from the system. According to the Taliban militia, General Dostam (U) was still to be considered a communist. (AFP)

April 5, 1997: Afghan Red Crescent Society made an appeal to the international community for assistance for the struggling country. It stated that 500,000 Afghan families were in urgent need of help, especially food aid. The organization argued that the situation in the country had worsened by about 50 percent recently, as prices for everything--especially food--skyrocketed in the country. (AFP)

April 7, 1997: Some 2,500 members of the Taliban militia (P) launched an attack against Dostam's forces

(U) near the province of Bagdhis. The fighting left 7 Taliban fighters and 17 opposition fighters dead, and the Taliban militia reported the capture of an additional 25 members of the opposition.

At the same time, Masood's guerillas (T) led an offensive against Taliban forces in the province of Laghman, east of Kabul. Taliban leaders stated that its forces had neutralized Masood's attack, but no independent confirmation was available.

The fighting broke a temporary, 6-day truce arranged by the WHO. The truce was a crucial part of the organization's effort to provide a vaccine against polio to 3.6 million children in the country. (AFP; April 7, April 8)

April 13, 1997: Ahmed Shah Masood (T) warned that the allied opposition would launch a multi-front attack against the Taliban militia throughout Afghanistan during the coming summer, planned and coordinated by Masood, Dostam (U), and Karim Khalili (H). (AFP)

April 15, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) announced that it had captured an opposition commander (?) in eastern Afghanistan. Commander Zahir, son of the ousted governor of one of the eastern provinces, had led raids against Taliban (P) forces in the region for more than two weeks in the **Pashtun**-populated region.

Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) leaders announced the capture of 60 Taliban fighters (P) in northern Afghanistan near Bamiyan. Included among the prisoners was Abdul Wahid, a top Taliban commander in the region. (AFP)

April 16, 1997: Demonstrating that he, in fact, had not been captured by Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), Abdul Wahid (P) addressed journalists in northern Afghanistan. He issued a warning to the 1.8 million Shiite Moslems in Afghanistan, ordering them to accept unconditionally the Taliban-imposed Sharia law, regardless of the fact that some Shiite traditions run counter to the Sunni Moslem rulings within the Taliban's code. (AFP)

Wahid also announced that the Taliban would destroy an ancient Buddhist relic--known as "Big Buddha"--in a region currently controlled by Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). Other Taliban leaders later recanted this threat to the historic landmark. (AFP, April 17, April 28)

April 18, 1997: The Taliban militia launched a "security and anti-vice drive" in the city of Kabul and searched residents throughout the city for guns as well as anything inconsistent with Sharia law. As the crackdown began, 8 women were punished for being improperly covered, and 9 men were punished for trimming their beards. Others were punished for possession of music cassettes. (AFP)

May 1997: The Kuchis, a group of thousands of **Pashtun** nomads in Afghanistan, report that the current ethnic division of the country--coupled with the lure of modernization and the littering of landmines throughout the country--could bring an end to the group's nomadic tradition. Kuchi (P) nomadic routes run through territory held by opposition groups (T-U-H) in which the Kuchi state they are unsafe. (AFP)

May 3, 1997: Taliban leaders reach an agreement with an Argentinean oil company to construct a gas pipeline through the embattled country. (AFP)

May 6 through May 7, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) repulsed a strong attack by opposition forces (T) north of Kabul, but opposition forces did gain some territory in a flurry of heavy fighting. (AFP; May 6, May 7)

May 9 through May 10, 1997: Opposition forces (T-U-H) launched a series of air raids against Taliban forces (P) along the Salang highway after capturing a series of posts along the highway in an early morning attack on Taliban bases. (AFP)

May 16, 1997: On the eve of the Shiite holy day of Ashura, leaders of the Taliban militia warned Shiites (mostly H) in Kabul that they faced punishment if they practiced any religious rituals in public, as is tradition on Ashura. (AFP)

May 19 through May 20, 1997: General Abdul Malik (U), a senior commander under General Dostam (U), led a revolt of pro-Taliban defectors against the Uzbeki leader in northern Afghanistan. The Taliban took advantage of the moment by launching significant offensive against opposition forces in northwest Afghanistan. The Taliban militia (P) took over all of Bagdhis, following a six-month standoff with Dostam around the province. The Taliban also was able to gain access to the province of Faryab, although they were not able to gain control of it. (AFP, May 20, May 21)

May 22, 1997: Independent reports indicate that opposition-defector Malik was preventing Taliban forces from entering Maimana, the capital of the Faryab province, but no explanation was given for Malik's actions. (AFP)

May 24, 1997: General Dostam's (U) northwestern base near Mazar-i-Sharif (the town of Sherberghan) fell to Abdul Malik's forces (U), fighting on behalf of the Taliban militia (P), as Malik is named a general deputy minister in the Taliban regime. (AFP)

Defections continued among Dostam's company (U), as three of Dostam's pilots defected to the Taliban militia (P), taking their jets with them.

The Islamic militia (P) has not yet been able to defeat Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) opposition forces in the Bamiyan province. (AFP)

May 25, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) continued its offensive campaign, capturing three more provinces east of Mazar-i-Sharif. The Taliban (P) later gained access to the crucial Salang Highway after a confidant of Masood (T) responsible for the area reached an agreement with the Taliban (P) to reopen the road which had been closed since Rabbani (T) had been ousted as president.

As the Taliban gained control of 80 percent of the country, Pakistan became the first country to recognize the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates later followed Pakistan and recognized the Taliban regime. (AFP, May 25; DPA, July 22)

Following the series of defeats, General Dostam (U) fled to Turkey but vowed to continue to battle the Taliban. Former President Rabbani (T) fled to Tajikistan. Masood remained in Afghanistan.

Anti-vice officials of the Taliban beat up five female employees of the international relief agency CARE in Kabul. Taliban officials have been outspoken about their desire for international organizations to not employ women in Afghanistan. (AFP)

May 28, 1997: Fighting broke out in Mazar-i-Sharif after the Taliban (P) attempted to disarm suspected members of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). Loyalists of Malik (U) reportedly fought alongside the Wahdat (H) after

Malik (U) and the Taliban (P) after significant disagreements between the two emerged when the Taliban (P) attempted to impose its strict Islamic code in the region.

Opposition forces (H-U) captured several key Taliban (P) officials, including the foreign minister, and drove the Taliban (P) from the region just four days after the Islamic militia had taken the northern Afghanistan capital. The ICRC that fighting here had left hundreds of people dead, with both sides suffering severe casualties. (AFP, Deutsche-Press Agentur)

May 29 through May 30, 1997: Masood (T) and his troops launched a surprise attack on the Taliban near the Tajik-dominated town of Jabul Siraj along the Salang Highway as the Taliban tried to get reinforcements to the north. After two days of fighting, Masood (T) succeeded in wresting control of the town. With the loss of control of this town, the Taliban lost access to 2000 members of its militia who were situated north of the town. (AFP, DPA)

In separate fighting, Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces overtook the Taliban-controlled Ghorband valley, northwest of Kabul. (AFP)

June 2, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) ordered the closure of Iran's assembly in Kabul, accusing the Iranian government of espionage and supporting the opposition (T-U-H) against the strict Sunni militia. (DPA)

June 3, 1997: Reports indicated that the Taliban militia (P) recaptured the town of Jabul Siraj from Masood (T). Some witnesses, however, claimed that Masood (T) maintained control of the region, and no independent confirmation was available. (DPA, June 3, June 4)

The International Committee of the Red Cross announced that it would suspend its operations in Afghanistan because of the "hazardous security conditions" in the country. (DPA)

June 4, 1997: Opposition forces (T-U-H) launched a counterattack against the Taliban, blowing up an ammunition depot in Kabul. Six people died in the blast. (DPA)

June 5, 1997: The leader of the Taliban (P) reportedly signed a peace agreement with the northern opposition alliance (T-U-H), giving the opposition control of the northern part of the country (Kaleidoscope). Either reports of this agreement were false, or the agreement was simply ignored

June 7, 1997: The Taliban militia retook the Tajik-dominated town of Jabul Siraj from Masood (T), a move that provided them with access to Taliban troops in the north of the country. (Earlier reports in the week prematurely announced this development.) (DPA)

June 10 through June 12, 1997: Opposition forces launched a joint, three-pronged attack against the Taliban in northern Afghanistan. Hizb-i-Wahdat fighters (H), members of General Abdul Malik's following (U), and followers of Ismaili General Jafar Naderi (O), launched the attacks on weakened Taliban forces (P) in northern Afghanistan. The opposition regained portions of the Bagdhis province during the extended offensive. (DPA, June 10, June 12)

June 15, 1997: In the wake of significant losses in northern Afghanistan, the Taliban militia fled its northeastern district headquarters as pressures on the group from the opposition (T-U-H) increased. (DPA)

June 17, 1997: Taliban forces (P) in the north regrouped and captured the northern provincial capital of Kunduz. (DPA, June 28)

June 20, 1997: The Taliban (P) retook control of its northeastern district headquarters in Asmar following a four-hour battle with a Masood-led opposition force (T-U-H). (DPA)

June 28, 1997: In an attack believed to be led by new warlord General Malik (U), unidentified planes bombed the Taliban-controlled city of Kunduz. Taliban sources claimed they had repulsed five attacks on the city since June 23rd. Each side reportedly lost 16 people in the battles, and hundreds of fighters were taken prisoner. (DPA)

July 2, 1997: Taliban forces (P) moved north and captured another provincial capital (Taloqan) following a swift attack against Masood's troops (T). Twenty-eight fighters died in the siege of the city, which seemed to be welcomed as white flags, symbolizing support for the Taliban, waved in the city. (DPA)

July 3, 1997: As a result of efforts by Pakistan (an ally of the Taliban) and Iran (an ally of the opposition), the Taliban (P) said that it would agree to a cease-fire with its opposition (T-U-H) if the dissidents agreed to release the two top Taliban leaders that Malik (U) is holding as prisoners. The UN Security Council encouraged the Pakistani-Iranian efforts at resolving this conflict. (DPA)

July 5 through July 6, 1997: The Taliban (P) and the opposition (T-U-H) engaged in heavy fighting as the Islamic militia tried to shore up its hold on Jabul Siraj and the surrounding towns. Thirty-one soldiers died in the fighting. (DPA)

July 8, 1997: The Taliban successfully resisted a four-pronged attack by opposition forces in Kunduz. (DPA)

July 14, 1997: Attacks led by Uzbeki warlord Malik (U) against the Taliban (P) in southwest and northern were successfully repulsed by the Taliban. Malik reportedly lost 30 soldiers in the unsuccessful attack, as the Taliban gathered enough momentum to move its frontline further north. (DPA, July 14, July 15)

July 20, 1997: Opposition forces led by Masood (T) captured a Taliban (P) airbase 50 kilometers north of Kabul as well as the provincial capital of Charikar. The opposition also launched air attacks on Kabul; the attacks--condemned by the UN's mission in Afghanistan--left 10 civilians dead.

The surprise offensive began a rapid and steady march by Masood's forces (T) toward Kabul. (DPA, July 21, July 24)

July 25, 1997: As opposition troops (T) approach Kabul, the Taliban reportedly arrested thousands of potential enemies of the regime in ethnic-minority neighborhoods in the capital city. (Kaleidoscope)

July 28, 1997: For the first time in a week, Taliban forces were able to push opposition forces (T-U-H) back from Kabul, after fighting which left 8 people dead and 20 wounded. After the Taliban advance, opposition troops were positioned about 30 kilometers from Kabul. (DPA)

August 1997: The Taliban (P) established a blockade against food supplies going into opposition-held areas

of Afghanistan. By November, 150,000 people in the north and west of the country are in danger of severe shortages because of the blockade, coupled with a disastrous harvest. (AFP, November 8)

August 3, 1997: Taliban leaders (P) told members of the UN's mission in Afghanistan that the capital city of Kabul could no longer cope with the flow of refugees arriving there from other places in Afghanistan where clashes between the opposition and the Taliban militia are occurring.

August 5, 1997: Taliban officials (P) complained to the ICRC and to the UN that opposition troops (T-U-H) have been abusing and killing Taliban soldiers taken as prisoners. (Kaleidoscope)

August 7, 1997: Taliban leaders (P) recanted their earlier offer to negotiate with the opposition (T-U-H) if the alliance released Taliban prisoners. Recently, two top Taliban leaders thought to have been captured by the opposition had re-appeared, stating that they had been hiding out in northern Afghanistan rather and were never captured. (DPA)

August 10, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) launched a significant offensive against opposition forces (T-U-H) north of Kabul, advancing the militia's frontline at least 2 kilometers to the north. (DPA)

August 21, 1997: One week after the creation of an opposition government (T-U-H) led by ousted president Rabbani (T) in northern Afghanistan, 12 opposition leaders died in plane crash over the Bamiyan province. The casualties included the appointed opposition prime minister Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai (P).

Masood's troops (T-U-H) launched an early-morning attack on Taliban troops (P) about 25 kilometers north of Kabul, but the Taliban repelled the attack after the opposition had moved forward 4 kilometers. Reportedly, 30 opposition fighters and 6 Taliban members were killed during the battle. (DPA, Kaleidoscope)

August 27 through August 28, 1997: Following the defection of Taliban commander Hazrat Ali (P) to the opposition, anti-Taliban forces (T-U-H) launched a sizable, three-pronged attack on Taliban territories in eastern Afghanistan, cutting off Taliban's access to the Kunar province. (DPA)

The Taliban militia rapidly poured reinforcements into the region and was able to recover key strategic territories within 24 hours. More than 50 fighters were killed or wounded in the eastern clashes. (DPA)

September 1, 1997: Following days of intense fighting, Taliban (P) forces were able to push into the Farza area north of Kabul as it marched toward the northern capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, the stronghold of General Malik (U). (DPA)

September 8, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) killed at least 70 members of opposition forces (T-U-H) and captured another 100 as it surrounded the city of Mazar-i-Sharif. Taliban forces were bolstered by the emergence of some 200 militia members who had been in hiding in the north since the Taliban's failed siege of the capital city in May.

Taliban called upon members of Hizb-i-Wahdat and Harakat-i-Islami (O) leaders in the opposition's capital city to disarm and surrender the city or they would face a major offensive. International aid workers were told to evacuate the city. (DPA, September 8, September 10,

September 12, 1997: The renewed fighting in Mazar-i-Sharif prompted General Abdul Rashid Dostam (U)

to return to Afghanistan after five months of self-imposed exile. The whereabouts of General Malik (U), however, remained unknown throughout the siege.

Street fights reportedly broke out in the city between anti-Taliban forces loyal to Dostam (U) and those who support Malik (U). (DPA, September 12, September 14)

September 13, 1997: As intense fighting continued around Mazar-i-Sharif, opposition forces (T-U-H) recaptured from the Taliban militia (P) the airport just east of the city. (DPA, September 13, September 14)

September 17, 1997: While fighting continued in the northern capital of Afghanistan, Ahmed Masood (T) led an opposition offensive in a Taliban-controlled region of southeastern Afghanistan. (DPA)

September 27 through October 4, 1997: Following the defection of an opposition leader (?) commanding 200 soldiers north of Mazar-i-Sharif, the Taliban militia (P) was able to rebuff opposition attacks on the outskirts of the city and tightened its circle around the city, eventually retaking from the opposition control of the regional airport. After regaining the airport, the Taliban (P) was able to launch repeated air raids and bombard the city.

The militia offered a general amnesty to members of the opposition within its encirclement but warned neighboring states to provide neither transit nor refuge to opposition leaders trying to flee the country. Opposition groups did not accept the amnesty offer, however. Notably, Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) reportedly put up "stiff resistance" against Taliban (P) efforts to gain access to the city from the east and south.

As it attempted to enter Mazar-i-Sharif, the Taliban (P) also conquered--with little resistance--border towns to the north of the capital city. In addition, unidentified jets bombed the central province of Bamiyan, under the control of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). (DPA, September 27, September 28, September 30, October 2)

October 5 through October 8, 1997: Momentum in the fighting in northern Afghanistan swung to the opposition (T-U-H). Under the leadership of Masood (T), it launched offensives at two new fronts in northern Afghanistan and forced the Taliban to retreat from the regional airport. The opposition also regained control of key towns to the north of Mazar-i-Sharif.

While the opposition (T-U-H) announced that it had conquered these territories, the Taliban (P) claimed that it had retreated from these posts for strategic reasons. (October 5, October 7, October 8)

October 10, 1997: Taliban forces (P) attacked opposition (T-U-H) posts at airbases north of Kabul, initiating heavy fighting between the militia (P) and the forces (T-U-H) led by Abdul Masood (T). (DPA)

October 13, 1997: The Taliban (P) executed by hanging four out of eight members of the militia who were arrested for breaking Islamic law after they confessed to killing their commander Abdul Malik (U) and accepting bribes from and spying on behalf of the opposition (T-U-H) (note: regardless of this report, Uzbeki warlord Abdul Malik is alive).

October 14, 1997: Leaders of the anti-Taliban alliance planned to meet to try to resolve a dispute between two members of the group. Leaders of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), which was instrumental in repelling the Taliban offensive on Mazar-i-Sharif, wanted sole control of the city, while Rabbani and Masood's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) and Dostam and Malik's Jambush-i-Milli want a power-sharing arrangement for the city. Wahdat leaders (H) did not attend the meeting planned to discuss the situation.

Tensions were also apparent within the Jambush-i-Milli group (U), as fighting is reported between the faction loyal to General Dostam (U) and followers of General Malik (U). Wahdat (H) leaders are apparently siding with Dostam (U), and Rabbani and Masood (T) with Malik (U), in this division. (DPA, October 14, October 16)

October 20, 1997: Unknown forces killed a commander loyal to General Dostam (U) in northern Afghanistan, amid continued rumors of tension within the Jambush (U) party. (DPA)

October 22, 1997: Uzbeki warlords Dostam and Malik, along with other opposition leaders (T-H), met in order to reconcile the differences and tensions which lingered from Malik's temporary defection from Jambush and from the opposition in May. The opposition leaders (T-U-H) also agreed to demilitarize the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. (DPA, October 22, October 24)

October 25, 1997: Opposition warlord Dostam (U) released 120 Taliban soldiers imprisoned in his stronghold town of Shibharghan. Taliban officials criticized the move, noting that none of those released were militia leaders or commanders. Later in the week, Dostam released an additional 100 prisoners. (DPA, October 25; AFP, November 2)

November 4, 1997: Fighting erupted between followers of General Dostam (U) and of General Malik (U) in northern Afghanistan after Dostam's men took control of a town within the Malik-controlled province of Faryab. About a dozen people died in the fighting and another 40 were injured. (AFP)

November 13, 1997: The multilateral Organization of the Islamic Conference reported that it had secured agreement for a cease-fire from all of the warring sides in Afghanistan. OIC officials said that peace negotiations would commence as soon as possible. (AFP)

The UN urged the Taliban (P) to lift a four-month blockade on food shipments to Hazarajat, a region of the country populated mainly by Shiite Moslems. Aid groups were unable to bring supplies to ease a food crisis in the region. The Taliban refused to lift the blockade. (AFP, November 13, November 14)

November 17, 1997: General Dostam's forces (U) discovered 30 mass graves of Taliban soldiers (P) near the town of Shiberghan. The graves reportedly contained the bodies of between 1,500 and 2,000 soldiers. The town was previously controlled by General Malik and his forces (U). UN officials are sent to Shiberghan to do a detailed analysis of the graves to determine who is responsible for the deaths. (AFP, November 17, December 17)

November 24, 1997: Dostam (U) called upon Iran to extradite to Afghanistan General Malik (U) after reports circulated that the warlord accused of massacring thousands of Taliban fighters had fled to Iran. Malik's forces in the north have since defected to Dostam's group. (AFP)

December 1, 1997: A peace conference for Afghanistan, sponsored by Iran, opened but the Taliban boycotted the meeting. As the conference closed, opposition leaders--including Rabbani, Dostam, Malik, and Hekmatyar--called for a truce in the country. (AFP)

December 3, 1997: General Dostam (U) released 48 Taliban prisoners, and Ahmed Masood (T) released an additional 51 prisoners of war. (AFP)

December 4 through December 5, 1997: Taliban forces (P) made their first significant advance in six months after clashing with Masood forces (T-U-H) near the northern town of Kunduz. Masood lost most than 30 soldiers in the fighting. (AFP, December 4, December 5)

December 7, 1997: Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) released 10 Taliban militia members as the opposition's unilateral prisoner release plan continued. (AFP)

December 13, 1997: The Taliban militia (P) clashed with Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) forces, under the leadership of Mohammed Qazim Jafari, in western Afghanistan. Wahdat forces reportedly are trying to break the Taliban's (P) blockade of food shipments to Shiite regions. (AFP, December 13, December 21)

December 16, 1997: The World Food Programme started an emergency airlift of food supplies to Afghans in the Bamiyan province, which has been blocked by the Taliban (P) since August. Bamiyan is a Shiite-dominated province. (AFP)

December 23, 1997: The Pakistani government, which has officially recognized the Taliban militia as the government of Afghanistan, welcomed the country's ousted president Rabbani (T) on a peace mission to Pakistan. (AFP)

December 23 through December 25, 1997: Fighting broke out between Masood's forces (T-U-H) and the Taliban (P) militia northeast of Kabul. Initial gains by Masood (T) were rebuffed when the Taliban (P) poured reinforcements into the region. (AFP)

December 26, 1997: The Shiite faction Harakat-i-Islami (O), led by Asif Mohseni, released 5 Taliban (P) prisoners, continuing a prisoner swap plan between the Taliban and the opposition (T-U-H). (AFP)

1998

January 2, 1998: After a week of sporadic fighting, Masood's forces (T) captured the town of Tagab northeast of Kabul from the Taliban (P), providing the opposition access to the town of Sarobi, home of the key Taliban power station. (AFP)

January 7, 1998: An opposition (T-U-H) spokesman accused the Taliban (P) militia of killing up to 600 civilians during a siege last week of the Faryab province. The Taliban denied the charges. Faryab is an Uzbek-dominated province. (AFP, January 7, January 8)

January 8, 1998: The Taliban militia released 28 Hizb-i-Wahdat prisoners as part of an ongoing prisoner swap. (AFP)

January 10, 1998: Despite a week of fighting, the Taliban was unable to push into the northern province of Faryab, as General Dostam (U) successfully repelled the offensive. (AFP)

January 27, 1998: The Taliban (P) released another 75 opposition prisoners, including members of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), Masood's forces (T), and Jambush (U). (AFP)

The Taliban militia chopped off the hands of two burglars arrested in Kabul for stealing. The militia issued this sentence based on a Sharia verdict. (AFP)

February 1, 1998: The ICRC reported that opposition leaders (T-U-H) released over 300 Taliban soldiers in honor of the Eid al-Fitr holiday. (AFP)

February 4, 1998: An earthquake hit the Tajik-dominated northern province of Takhar, leaving more than 4,000 people dead and another 15,000 homeless. The Taliban militia (P) and opposition leaders (T-U-H) called a truce and cooperated on rescue and relief missions in the region. Rescue operations were hindered by severe winter weather conditions and the death toll rose to 4,500. (AFP, February 6, February 8, February 11, February 12)

February 10, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) executed a bomber pilot in Kabul after he was accused of sabotage and treason. He was the fifth person executed by the regime since January for sabotage. (AFP)

February 13, 1998: Fighting resumed in northern Afghanistan as the Taliban militia (P) clashed with opposition forces (T-U-H) in the province of Kunduz. (AFP)

February 15, 1998: Turkey, a traditional supporter of General Dostam, announced that it would abandon its policy of dealing with opposition forces (T-U-H) in Afghanistan and would instead pursue talks with the Taliban militia (P). (AFP)

February 20, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) staged a public event in Kabul during which officials cut off the hand of a 22 year-old Kabul man accused of stealing goods worth a total of \$300. Reports indicate that the Taliban's severe and public punishments have been linked to significant security improvements for many in Kabul. (AFP, February 20, February 26)

A Dutch minister on a fact-finding mission in Afghanistan remarked that the West misunderstood the Taliban's regard for human rights, noting that some rights were being implemented "in a different way." This statement ran counter to the Dutch government's stance on the situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban. (AFP)

February 21 through February 23, 1998: Forces led by Abdul Masood (T) clashed with the Taliban militia (P) in towns northeast of Kabul in the Laghman province, making some advances toward Kabul while killing over 30 Taliban fighters. The opposition's attack was bolstered by the defection of a local Taliban commander (P) who defected after being offered a bribe by the opposition. (AFP)

February 25, 1998: Less than a month after a huge earthquake shook northern Afghanistan, severe floods hit Taliban-controlled southern Afghanistan, killing 20 people, leaving thousands homeless, and destroying miles of crops and orchards. These disasters significantly worsened conditions in what was already considered the world's poorest country with the highest mortality rates in Asia. (AFP, February 25, February 26)

February 26, 1998: A Sharia court sentenced three men to death in Kabul for participation in homosexual acts. The sentenced was carried out by officials pushing a mud wall on top of the three. (One man survived the punishment.)

Taliban officials announced that such public punishments--including amputations for thieves and lashings for women adulterers--would begin to be held on a regular, weekly basis in Kabul. Such events typically draw audiences of about 30,000 people in Kabul. (AFP, February 26, February 27)

February 27, 1998: The US announced that it would continue to withhold foreign aid to Afghanistan because of the country's failure to try to regulate its rampant flow of illegal drugs. (AFP)

March 8, 1998: International Women's Day events around the world focused on drawing attention to the plight of Afghan women who have been banned from working and from being educated since the Taliban's rise in 1996. Millions of war widows in the country, who are well-capable of working, have to rely on international assistance to survive because they are no longer allowed to work. Despite international pressures to reduce restrictions on women, the Taliban militia stated that women's rights would be curbed in accordance with Sharia law. (AFP, March 7, March 8)

March 14 through March 15, 1998: Heavy fighting broke out between members of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and supporters of General Dostam (U) in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, leaving dozens of people dead. Dostam (U) was reportedly trying to wrest control of the city from the Shiite Wahdat group (H). (AFP, March 15)

March 24, 1998: The UN withdrew its humanitarian-focused mission from southern Afghanistan after the Taliban militia (P) launched a series of physical assault against UN staff members. Taliban officials (P) noted that UN operations were not consistent with Islamic law and should not be operating in the country. (AFP)

The Taliban alleged that it was holding prisoner 16 Iranians, captured while fighting alongside the anti-Taliban opposition (T-U-H) in Afghanistan. For years, the Taliban (P) has accused Iran of fueling the Afghan opposition (T-U-H) movement, as the opposition has accused Pakistan of fueling the Taliban's rise. (AFP)

March 30, 1998: Ahmed Shah Masood (T) released 65 Taliban (P) prisoners who had been held in northern Afghanistan. Masood is believed to hold an additional 1,200 prisoners, and it is reported that the opposition (T-U-H) and the Taliban combined hold up to 7,000 prisoners in the country. (AFP)

April 12, 1998: As the UN increased efforts to broker a settlement between groups in Afghanistan, fighting broke out between the Taliban militia (P) and opposition forces (T-U-H) north of Kabul. (AFP)

April 17, 1998: During a visit to Afghanistan by Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, both the Taliban militia (P) and the opposition (T-U-H) agreed to a truce and to meet with rival officials for peace talks. The Taliban accused the opposition of violating the cease-fire after one day but no confirmation of the accusation was available. (AFP, April 17, April 19)

April 25, 1998: On the eve of peace talks, the Taliban militia launched an attack on opposition forces (T-U-H) positioned north of Kabul. The fighting was described as the heaviest of the year but the Taliban failed to advance its position in the area. (AFP)

April 26 through May 3, 1998: After some delays, delegations from the Taliban militia (P) and from the opposition alliance (T-U-H) met in Pakistan for peace talks, moderated by the UN's mission to Afghanistan and the OIC. Prior to the opening of the sessions, General Dostam's National Islamic Movement (U) and Karim Khalili's Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) settled differences that had led to clashes within the opposition alliance.

During the first day of discussions, the leader of the Taliban delegation called for Islamic scholars (known as Ulema) to settle 18 years of conflict in the country. Talks were suspended for a day after disagreement arose about the composition of a commission of Ulema scholars to work toward a settlement for the country. An

agreement was later reached that neither side would object to any individuals recommended for the commission, and a 40 scholars were named to a peace commission to meet later in the year. No decision on a cease-fire or on prisoner exchanges would be made until the commission met.

Talks stalled again for two days over the issue of whether the Taliban (P) would end its blockade of food aid headed to Hazarajat, a Shiite dominated region of Afghanistan in dire need of food supplies. After the two-day hiatus, officials from the Taliban returned to negotiations but refused to address the issue of the blockade, causing the talks to collapse and raising fears of intensified fighting within the country. (daily AFP reports)

May 5, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) launched a new offensive in the northern province of Takhar, the homebase of Rabbani's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) capturing 10 opposition (T-U-H) positions in fighting which inflicted heavy casualties on both sides. (AFP)

May 6, 1998: The Taliban announced that it would lift its blockade on food aid to opposition-held territories in the country, two days after peace talks collapsed because the militia refused to discuss this issue. Conditions were placed on the move however: Only a small shipment would be allowed and aid would also have to be provided by the World Food Programme to the Taliban-controlled region of Ghorband, where it is unclear whether aid is really needed.

A minimal amount of aid finally arrived in Hazarajat and in Ghorband on May 28. (AFP, May 6, May 8, May 28)

May 9 through May 10, 1998: Battle broke out between Masood's forces (T) and the Taliban militia (P) outside of Kabul and in northern Afghanistan. In the north, the opposition (only Tajik fighters) was able to recapture eight posts in Takhar, which had been seized by the Taliban (P) five days earlier. (AFP)

May 13, 1998: The Taliban (P) launched effective attacks on the opposition (T-U-H) in Takhar despite opposition reinforcements in the region and in Baghlan province. (AFP, May 13, May 14)

May 17, 1998: The Taliban launched (P) air strikes against Taluqan, the capital of Tekhar and Masood's military base (T), killing at least 31 Afghans in the Tajik-dominated city. (AFP)

May 20, 1998: The Taliban officially rejected the previously agreed-upon plan for an Ulema-determined peace settlement for Afghanistan, pursuing instead military gains in the north of the country. (AFP)

May 21, 1998: The Taliban (P) continued its air assault of the city Takhar as opposition forces (T-U-H) launched at least 5 rockets on the Taliban-controlled capital city of Kabul. (AFP)

May 26, 1998: Allied opposition forces (T-U-H) launched an attack on Kunduz, the sole northern stronghold of the Taliban, as reports indicated a resumption of inter-alliance fighting in Mazar-i-Sharif.

May 31, 1998: For the second time in four months, Afghanistan is rocked by a huge earthquake. This quake hit the northeastern provinces held by Rabbani and Masood's Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T) and left at least 5,000 people dead. (AFP, May 31, June 1)

June 1, 1998: Ending expectations that a temporary cease-fire would follow the Afghan earthquake, General Dostam (U) launched an successful attack on Taliban forces (P) in Bagdhis, amid efforts to get aid

to nearby earthquake victims. The Taliban responded by announcing it would focus on defending its positions rather than getting aid to the victims of the disaster. (AFP)

June 2, 1998: Fierce clashes continued between the Taliban (P) and Dostam's forces (U) both in the north, near Kunduz, and in Bagdhis. Masood's forces (T) also battled with the Taliban in Kudunz, as well as launching bombing attacks on Kabul. The Kabul rocket attacks left at least 6 civilians dead. (AFP, June 2, June 3)

June 25 through June 28, 1998: Steady fighting broke out between Taliban forces (P) and those of opposition warrior Masood (T) northeast of Kabul in the Tagab valley. Neither side made significant progress in the fighting. (AFP, June 28)

July 1, 1998: Opposition forces led by Masood (T) and by Khalili (H) launched two simultaneous offensives against the Taliban (P), one in the northern Baghlan province and another west of Kabul. (AFP)

July 4, 1998: In an effort to bolster their control of who is in the country, the Taliban (P) announced that foreign visitors in Afghanistan holding opposition-issued (T-U-H) visas would no longer be able to enter any territory controlled by the Taliban (P) (about 2/3 of the country's territory). (AFP)

July 8, 1998: A Taliban commander (P) with 200 troops and heavy weaponry in the province of Kudunz defected to opposition leader Ahmad Shah Masood (T). (AFP)

July 12, 1998: The Taliban (P) faced little opposition as they captured the capital city and military hub of the northern province of Faryeb in what was seen as a key step towards another Taliban (P) push towards Mazar-i-Sharif. General Dostam's (U) hold on Faryeb had weakened as a result of infighting among his own local commanders. (AFP)

July 14 through July 20, 1998: Amid rumors of high-level defections from the opposition (T-U-H), the opposition alliance engaged in heavy fighting with the Taliban militia (P) in Faryeb. After 4 days of intense fighting and the deaths of at least 30 soldiers, the opposition had recaptured one town (Juma Bazar) in the province, 25 kilometers north of the capital of the province, but the Taliban recaptured the town two days later after intense battles. Reports indicated that both sides were building up significantly their military forces in the area. (AFP, July 14, July 16, July 18, July 20, July 26)

July 17, 1998: As fighting continued in Faryeb, the opposition (T-U-H) launched a series of rocket attacks at Kabul's airport. (AFP)

July 26, 1998: The Taliban (P) repulsed another attempt by the opposition (T-U-H) to seize the Faryeb town of Juma Bazar. (AFP)

July 28, 1998: As the UN and the ICRC prepared to end a three-week suspension of flights into Kabul, three heavy rockets hit the airport--an attack alleged to be launched by Masood's opposition forces (T). The groups had suspended flights bringing aid and supplies to the earthquake-struck regions of the country because of security fears. (AFP)

August 2, 1998: Taliban (P) forces captured General Dostam's (U) of Shibharghan in the Jowzjan province of northern Afghanistan, greatly diminishing Dostam's power and increasing the likelihood of a Taliban (P) attack on Mazar-i-Sharif, the only Afghan city not in the militia's control. Dostam's forces scattered

throughout the north after the offensive, essentially eliminating one of the forces that comprise the northern alliance (T-U-H). (AFP, August 2, September 7)

August 7, 1998: Following a steady march on the city by Taliban forces (P) and intermittent clashes between the Taliban (P) and opposition forces (T-U-H) and a day-long standoff between that two sides about 100 kilometers west of Mazar-i-Sharif, heavy battles broke out between the two sides. More than 100 soldiers were reported to have died in the fighting. (AFP, August 4, August 5, August 6)

August 8, 1998: Following an intense early morning attack by the Taliban, the Islamic militia entered and gained control of the opposition stronghold and capital Mazar-i-Sharif in what was described as a "lightening attack" on the city. The Taliban occupied the Iranian mission there and arrested 11 Iranian diplomats. (The Sunni Taliban has long accused Shiite Iran of supporting the opposition (T-U-H) in Afghanistan.) Opposition forces (T-U-H) conceded the loss of the city but stated that a counterattack would soon follow. (AFP)

August 9, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) denied reports from Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) that the opposition alliance (T-U-H) had recaptured the Mazar-i-Sharif, while independent reports indicated that residents of the city were all trying to repel the Islamic militia (P). At the same time, Taliban forces launched an attack on Masood's forces (T) north of Kabul. (AFP)

August 11 through August 12, 1998: The Taliban captured another key northern town, Taloqan, which has served as a primary opposition supply-base. The militia captured two additional supply bases north of Taloqan and near the Afghan-Uzbek border on the following day. In each town, the Taliban (P) encountered little resistance. (AFP)

August 13, 1998: The Taliban launched massive air raids on the Hizb-i-Wahdat stronghold of the Bamiyan province in central Afghanistan. Thirteen people died in the attacks. (AFP)

August 15, 1998: As the Taliban (P) continued to capture opposition towns in northern Afghanistan, the leaders of the militia (P) continued to deny access to journalists and observers anxious to assess the conditions in the battled region; even nationals of states friendly to the regime were restricted from the region. Residents of the conquered towns apparently remain under virtual house arrest as the Taliban goes from house to house, searching for weapons. The greatest concern of the outside community is for the fate of Hazara community in the north. Unlike the Sunni Taliban militia (P), the Hazara are Shiite, and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), a Hazara faction, was the group which defeated the Taliban (P) in two previous sieges of Mazar-i-Sharif. (AFP)

August 16, 1998: Two commanders in the home province of opposition leader Rabbani (T) defected to the Taliban militia (P), providing the Islamic militia access to significant portions of the province as Rabbani's men reportedly fled the region. (AFP)

August 17, 1998: Masood and his forces (T) were able to push back against Taliban advances near Taloqan, taking 230 Taliban soldiers prisoner in the process. (AFP, August 18)

August 19, 1998: An unidentified Shiite member of Afghan's opposition accused the Sunni Taliban of committing atrocities--including executions--against the country's Shiite community in the territories it has captured during the last two weeks. (AFP)

August 21, 1998: The United States launched a rocket attack against suspected terrorist-training bases in

southern Afghanistan. The attack was part of a retaliatory attack by the US after two of the country's embassies in African countries were bombed. The mastermind behind the terrorist bombings is thought to be Osama bin Laden, who resides in Afghanistan as a guest of the Taliban regime (P). (AFP)

August 30 through August 31, 1998: Ahmed Masood (T) lost at least six bases to the Taliban (P), including once key opposition base in the northern Kapisa province. However, Masood and his forces (T) were able to recapture the Nejrab base within 24 hours. (AFP)

September 1, 1998: With a force of 2,000 men, the Taliban (P) launched an attack on military positions held by Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) in the Bamiyan province west of Kabul as Iran's elite forces began maneuvers on the Afghan-Iran border. (AFP)

September 3, 1998: Amnesty International issued a report accusing the Taliban of killing thousands of Shiite Hazara civilians during the first three days of its siege of Mazar-i-Sharif. AI based the report on eyewitness accounts from local residents who saw members of the Sunni militia (P) shoot women, children, and elderly as they tried to flee the city. The Taliban (P) strongly denied the allegations and released 5 Iranian prisoners in an effort to both quell accusations of the massacres and to ease tensions with Iran. (AFP)

September 4, 1998: Taliban forces (P) repulsed a major offensive launched by Masood (T) and his opposition troops north of Kabul. (AFP)

September 7, 1998: Severe fighting broke out in the middle of the night between Taliban forces (P) and those of Ahmed Masood (T) along deadlocked frontline north of Kabul. Masood's forces (T), which had launched a series of rockets at Kabul in previous days, captured a strategic hill top during the battles. (AFP)

September 10, 1998: The Taliban (P) launched a significant overnight offensive on the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) stronghold of the Bamiyan province, capturing several vital bases of the Shiite opposition faction. The defection of eight opposition commanders (H) facilitated the Taliban siege. (AFP)

September 11, 1998: The UN confirmed a previous report by Amnesty International that the Taliban militia (P) had killed thousands of Hazara civilians during its siege of Mazar-i-Sharif. Execution squads traveled from home to home in the city, murdering entire families. Taliban forces (P) also transported Hazaras out of the city in sealed containers; those who didn't suffocate to death during transport were executed once they reached neighboring regions. While the executions apparently had ended, Hazaras in Taliban-controlled (P) regions were still subject to arbitrary arrest, and Amnesty International warned that the Taliban could be planning to execute thousands more as it closes off the Bamiyan province. (AFP)

September 13, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) launched a two-pronged attack on Bamiyan city, the Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) stronghold. After intense fighting, the city fell to the Taliban forces. Following the capture of the city, Taliban leaders publicly ordered its militiamen to treat the Hazara residents of the Bamiyan well, in an effort to prevent a repeat of the massacre that accompanied the capture of Mazar-i-Sharif. Iran responded to this by sending 200,000 troops to the Afghan-Iran border and increasing its threats to attack the country. (AFP)

September 16, 1998: Taliban officials discovered three mass graves in Mazar-i-Sharif, containing the bodies of members of the Taliban militia. The grave apparently dates back to May 1997, when the Taliban momentarily seized control of the city, only to have General Malik (U) break his short alliance with the

Islamic militia. (AFP)

September 17, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) advanced on one of the few remaining opposition-held (T-U-H) territories as it captured a district in the province of Parwan, north of Kabul. On the same day, Masood's forces (T) completed an offensive on the Raq region of the northern province of Badakhshan.

September 20, 1998: A series of rocket attacks hit residential areas and markets in Kabul, killing 66 civilians (including six women from one family) and injuring 215. Attacks continued on the following day, killing 10 more civilians in the capital city. While the Taliban and residents of Kabul blamed Masood's opposition forces (T) for the attack, Masood denied opposition involvement in the attacks. (AFP, September 20, September 21)

September 23, 1998: Taliban officials claimed that the militia has taken over 1,000 Hizb-i-Wahdat soldiers prisoner in the Wardak province west of Kabul during the last three weeks. (AFP)

September 25 through September 26, 1998: The Taliban (P) extended its control in central Afghanistan near Bamiyan, as Hizb opposition troops (H) surrendered or fled after brief fighting with Taliban (P) forces. (AFP)

September 27 through September 29, 1998: As thousands of Afghan volunteers go to the Iran-Afghan border to repel a potential Iranian attack, the Taliban (P) took control of several towns in southwestern Afghanistan, facing little resistance from the Hizb (H) troops remaining the area. By the end of this sweep, the Taliban (P) controlled all of central Afghanistan and 90 percent of the country's territory. (AFP, September 27, September 29)

October 2, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) peacefully took over a portion of the southern province of Ghazni, previously controlled by Hizb-i-Wahdat (H). At this point, Taliban forces control about 90 percent of the country's territory. (AFP)

October 6, 1998: Taliban leaders (P) ordered the executions, by hanging, of 3 of its own soldiers. The militia fighters were accused of criminal behavior following the capture of Mazar-i-Sharif, including sexual offenses, extortion, and "abusing the name of the Taliban." (AFP)

October 8, 1998: Tensions remained high between Shiite-controlled Iran and the Taliban militia (P), and fighting broke out between the two sides along their countries' shared border. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards reported that they inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban (P) forces during three hours of fighting. The Taliban made an effort to ease tensions by returning to Iran the bodies of 3 Iranian diplomats killed after the siege of Mazar-i-Sharif and later released 26 Iranian prisoners from southern Afghanistan. The United Nations played an active role in trying to resolve tensions between Iran and the Taliban. (AFP, October 8, October 12, October 17, October 19)

October 10, 1998: In an anticipated move, the Taliban (P) launched an attack against Masood's Shoora-i-Nazaar militia (T) in and around Jabul Saraj, north of Kabul. Ten civilians died during the jet attacks by the Taliban (P). The attacks were considered to be a pre-emptive move, to stop Masood from attacking Kabul. (AFP)

October 12, 1998: As fighting continued north of Kabul, the Taliban (P) launched attacks on two more fronts near Masood (T) strongholds. A spokesman for Masood's force claimed that opposition forces (T)

repelled the attacks on all sides. (AFP)

October 12, 1998: Masood (T) countered the Taliban (P) attacks by launching air strikes at Taliban airport. (AFP)

October 17, 1998: Opposition forces (T) recaptured the previous Rabbani-stronghold of Taloqan in northeast Afghanistan from the Taliban (P). Taloqan is Tajik dominated but has sizable Uzbek and **Pashtun** communities within it. At the same time, Masood's forces launched air strikes on residential areas within Kabul; the attacks left at least three people dead. Reports emerges within 24 hours that the Taliban militia had retaken Taloqan, but those reports were not confirmed and were later proven to be untrue. Reports indicated that the Taliban arrested hundreds of opposition members, mainly Tajiks, before it fled the province. (AFP, October 17, October 18, October 23)

October 21, 1998: Masood's forces (T) continued to battle the Taliban (P) and recapture small tracts of territory in northern Afghanistan. Opposition officials claimed that Masood's troops (T) had injured or killed about 1,000 Taliban fighters (P) during clashes within the previous 10 days, as report supported by independent observers. (AFP, October 21, October 22)

October 23, 1998: The Taliban (P) arrested more than 40 people around the country whom it suspected of plotting a coup against the strict Sunni regime. Most of those arrested were members of the now-defunct communist party in the country. (AFP)

October 25, 1998: Masood's Shoora-i-Nazaar militia (T) continued to make progress in northeast Afghanistan, capturing towns in the province of Kunduz along the Tadjikistan border. Villagers in these communities alleged that the Taliban (P) took hundreds of civilians there as prisoners as the opposition advanced on the region. While the province is dominated by Uzbeks and **Pashtuns**, all of those taken prisoner were ethnic Tajiks. (AFP, October 25, October 28)

October 27, 1998: The Taliban militia (P) and the opposition alliance (T-U-H) in Afghanistan agreed to a weeklong cease-fire to coincide with negotiations between the two sides. The two sides also agreed to a series of prisoner exchanges, totaling 1,000 prisoners from each side. (AFP, October 27, October 29)

November 1, 1998: Despite reduced tensions between the two sides, Iran launched a series of massive war games along the Afghan border, as Iranian president Khatami declared the strict Sunni Taliban (P) regime a dangerous presence in the region. (AFP)

November 5, 1998: The UN issued a report documenting the "killing frenzy" which the Taliban launched after its August siege of Mazar-i-Sharif. The report confirmed that 10 Iranian diplomats and one Iranian journalist were killed on August 8. In addition, an estimated 3,000 ethnic-Hazaras were brutally executed in their homes or on the street during the first week of the Taliban occupation. The full death total was reported to be somewhere between 5,000 and 8,000 people. Taliban officials dismissed the findings of the report. (AFP)

November 11, 1998: Opposition sources (T-U-H) reported that Commander Masood's forces (T) had repelled heavy attacks by the Taliban militia (P) in Taloqan. Taliban forces (P) killed 38 civilians in the area before being pushed out by the Jami'yat-i-Islami force (T). A Taliban (P) air raid on the region killed 70 civilians and injured more than a hundred others. (AFP, November 11, November 12)

November 13, 1998: Mohammed Aqbari, the leader of a splinter faction of Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) formed in 1994, surrendered in Bamiyan to the Taliban militia (P), as cold weather and a lack of supplies had diminished the factions chances of survival, let alone victory. (AFP)

November 15, 1998: The anti-Taliban opposition (T-U-H) gained more territory within the province of Kunduz, as the Taliban (P) admitted that it had lost some ground against the opposition. (AFP)

November 22, 1998: Efforts by the Taliban to recapture territory in Baghlan and Faryab provinces were thwarted by opposition forces (T). (AFP)

November 23, 1998: Following his defection from the opposition, Shiite commander Aqbari (H) met with Taliban leaders to encourage them to include all ethnic groups in a multi-representative government structure. (AFP)

November 24, 1998: Heavy fighting continued in northern Afghanistan as opposition forces advanced further around the strategic Salang tunnel. (AFP)

November 28, 1998: Opposition sources (T-U-H) reported significant advances for the opposition in the northern province of Kunduz as a result of a three-pronged attack, as Masood (T) launched a series of rocket attacks on the Kabul airport.

November 30, 1998: Opposition forces of Commander Masood (T) were aided by an uprising by over 1,000 locals who revolted against Taliban control (P) in the Jauzjan province, near Mazar-i-Sharif. The uprising left forty Taliban fighters dead and opposition in control of the region. (AFP)

December 2, 1998: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan issued a report indicating limited chances for peace and a political resolution in Afghanistan. In the report, he noted that, aside from the force loyal to Commander Masood (T), opposition forces (T-U-H) had essentially been "eliminated as a viable fighting force" in the country. (AFP)

December 3, 1998: Local residents in northern Afghanistan launched a series of coordinated revolts against the Taliban (P) regime. The uprisings included not only Tajiks loyal to Masood, Rabbani, and Jami'yat-i-Islami, but former loyalists of General Dostam (U) and to Karim Khalili (H). The uprisings led the Taliban to send reportedly thousands of reinforcements to the region. (AFP)

December 5, 1998: At a summit of anti-Taliban opposition factions, leaders vowed to put aside their differences and create a single military command and a single political policy in order to oust the Taliban regime. Representatives of Jami'yat-i-Islami (T), Hizb-i-Wahdat (H), and Hizb-i-Islami--the party of former PM Hekmatyar-- (P) attended the summit. (AFP)

December 6, 1998: Fighting in northern Afghanistan began to ease after weeks of clashes, as the Taliban (P) released 118 opposition prisoners (T-U-H). (AFP)

December 10, 1998: The Taliban (P) launched an aerial attack on the opposition-held province of Taloqan, leaving four civilians dead and another four injured. (AFP)

December 13, 1998: The Shoora-i-Nazaar militia, led by Commander Masood (T), launched a three-

pronged attack on the provinces of Kunduz, Baghlan, and Parwan and fired rockets into the capital city of Kabul. At least 33 civilians died as a result of the rocket attacks. Forty-two Taliban soldiers died in clashes with the opposition, which left another 162 wounded. (AFP)

December 22, 1998: Despite the beginning of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, sporadic fighting between the Taliban (P) and the opposition (T-U-H) continued in northern and central provinces. Ten Taliban fighters were killed during fighting near the Salang Tunnel. (AFP)

1999

January 4, 1999: Two former moderate mujahadeen leaders (Sebghatullah Mujaddidi [P], formerly of NLF, and Pir Sayyad Ahmad Gaylani [P], formerly of IF) announced the creation of the Peace and National Unity Foundation Party. The goals of the new, impartial party are to secure a nationwide cease-fire and to establish a negotiated settlement between the Taliban (P) and Commander Masood (T). The opposition alliance cautiously welcomed the formation of the party, while the Taliban rejected its formation. (AFP, January 5, January 10)

January 7, 1999: In anticipation of the Islamic holiday of Eid-al-Fitr, the Taliban (P) released 264 opposition prisoners from a variety of different factions. (AFP)

January 13, 1999: Heavy fighting broke out between the Taliban (P) and Commander Masood's force (T) north of Kabul. The two sides had been at a standoff in this region for over a year. (AFP)

January 17, 1999: Heavy fighting resumed in northwestern Afghanistan as opposition troops cut off a major supply route to Taliban-held Mazar-i-Sharif. (AFP)

January 21, 1999: Troops once loyal to General Dostam (U) apparently joined with followers of Commander Masood (T) to increase pressure on Taliban forces in the northwest, especially near Mazar-i-Sharif.

January 24, 1999: Ethnic-Uzbeki Commander Makhtome, who had worked with the Taliban for years, defected to the opposition (T-U-H) in Faryab, facilitating opposition advances in the north. More than 400 Taliban soldiers were taken prisoner and another 62 fighters from both sides died as fighting escalated in the areas which provide access to Mazar-i-Sharif. (AFP)

February 2, 1999: Opposition leaders (T-U-H) encouraged outside investigation of the Taliban's treatment of POWs following reports that 181 prisoners of the Taliban had died in captivity during the previous 18 months.

February 11, 1999: Leaders of the Taliban (P) and the opposition (T) completed a first round of peace talks, arranged by the UN, during which they discussed prisoner exchanges and conditions for a cease-fire. (AFP)

February 15, 1999: The supreme leader of the Taliban (P) restated the militia's commitment to defeating Masood's force and driving the opposition from the country. (AFP)

February 26, 1999: Two days after losing part of the central province of Bamiyan to Masood's force (T), the Taliban militia recaptured the Shiite dominated territory. (AFP)

February 28, 1999: Opposition leaders (T-U-H) met and established a commission to set up a 40-member leadership council, to involve representatives of all opposition factions (including Tajiks, **Pashtuns**, Hazaras, and Uzbeks, and both men and women) and to be headed by ousted president Rabbani of Jam'iyat-i-Islami (T). The opposition government would be comprised of a 12-person cabinet and a 150-seat legislature for northern Afghanistan. Leaders of the Taliban (P) dismissed the move as irrelevant since the opposition holds only 10 percent of the national territory. (AFP, February 28, March 1, March 3)

March 10, 1999: Heavy fighting broke out between the Taliban militia (P) and Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) opposition forces in central Afghanistan just as officials of the Taliban and the opposition (T-U-H) were scheduled to meet for peace negotiations in Turkmenistan. The UN-sponsored peace talks began the following day. Reports of low-level fighting in the region continued throughout the peace talks. (AFP, March 10, March 11, March 15)

March 14, 1999: After three days of discussions, representatives from the Taliban (P) and from the Afghan opposition (T-U-H) agreed to share executive, legislative, and judicial power among all the groups in the country. Each side also stated that they would establish a formal truce in northern Afghanistan during the next round of discussion, likely to be held in April. Despite initial hope inspired by the announcement, great skepticism remained about the prospects for peace in the country, particularly after the Taliban media failed to report the breakthrough in the peace talks. (AFP, March 14, March 15, March 16)

March 18, 1999: While UN officials expressed optimism about the potential for peace in Afghanistan, a special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission reported a "horrendous" breakdown of living conditions in Kabul and the violation of human rights by the Taliban regime throughout the country. (AFP)

March 21, 1999: Fighting escalated in the Hazara-dominated Bamiyan province in central Afghanistan as a UN mediator arrived to hold meetings with leaders on both sides. (AFP)

April 8, 1999: As fighting continued between Taliban forces (P) and those of Hizb-i-Wahdat in Bamiyan City, Masood's Shoora-i-Nazaar militia (T), helped by local residents, pushed by Taliban soldiers (P) and advanced on the city. (AFP)

April 10, 1999: Taliban spiritual leader Mullah Mohammed Omar (P) announced that the Taliban (P) would not meet again with the opposition (T-U-H) to discuss power-sharing and peace arrangements because of the opposition's refusal to accept the idea of a unified Taliban command for the country. The announcement was followed by a series of rocket attacks on Kabul, apparently launched from Masood-held territory. (AFP, April 10, April 11)

April 16, 1999: The Taliban militia (P) launched a large-scale attack on one of Commander Masood's (T) positions in the north of the Baghlan province (north of Kabul), making some advances into opposition-held territory (T-U-H).

April 21, 1999: Independent reports confirmed that Hizb-i-Wahdat (H) and Harakat-i-Islami (O) had recaptured Bamiyan City from the Taliban militia (P) for the opposition alliance (T-U-H). (AFP)

April 26, 1999: Shiite Moslems in Afghanistan observed the holy day of Ashura. The Taliban ordered that rites traditionally practiced in public on the holy day, including chest-thumping and self-lashing, had to be restricted to Mosque grounds. (AFP)

April 27, 1999: The Taliban militia (P) launched bomb raids on opposition (T-U-H) held territory north of Kabul (Jabul Siraj) and in the province of Taloqan in northern Afghanistan. The attacks left at least 30 Afghan civilians and one ICRC worker dead. The bombings were followed by a ground attack near Bamiyan City. (AFP, April 27, April 28)

May 3, 1999: The Taliban greeted a peace initiative offered by exiled Afghan king Zahir Shah with ridicule.

Opposition forces led by Masood (T) regained territory in the Taliban-held (P) northern province of Kunduz. The militant Sunni group (P) responded by bombing the province of Takhar, killing 10 civilians.

May 9, 1999: Taliban forces (P) recaptured Bamiyan City, two weeks after losing the city to Hizb-i-Wahdat forces (H). Hazara fighters reportedly fled to surrounding mountains as the Taliban (P) advanced on the city. This fighting broke a UN-requested temporary truce, during which medical workers were scheduled to inoculate Afghan children against polio. (AFP, May 9, May 10, May 11)

May 18, 1999: Officials of Afghan's opposition alliance (T-U-H) claimed that the Taliban militia (P) massacred hundreds of civilian families in Shiite-dominated Bamiyan City after the militia recaptured control of the city. Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar (P) responded to the claim by accusing local Taliban supporters had razed the homes of alliance supporters in the region. This was done in retaliation for similar actions that took place when the opposition briefly recaptured the city. (AFP, May 18, May 25)

May 21, 1999: Leaders of the Shiite faction Harakat-i-Islami (O) accused the Taliban regime of conducting a systematic purge of Herat's Shiite community following heightened tensions between the regime and Iran. (AFP, May 28)

May 22, 1999: The Taliban (P) launched an attack on a strategic valley in the northern province of Samangan. An opposition spokesman said that alliance forces (T-U-H) had repelled the attack. (AFP)

May 27, 1999: An initial investigation by Amnesty International supported opposition (T-U-H) claims that the Taliban (P) systematically killed civilians and brutally beat opposition soldiers after the militia recaptured Bamiyan City.

May 30, 1999: The Taliban (P) denied opposition (T-U-H) reports that the militia had executed 27 members of the Shi'a community in the western city of Herat following an uprising against the Taliban regime (P). Taliban officials claim that only eight people were hanged following the uprising. (AFP)

June 15, 1999: For the first time in 3 years, rockets hit the eastern city of Jalalabad, killing at least 3 people. No group claimed responsibility for the attack on the Taliban-held (P) city. (AFP)

June 16, 1999: Amnesty International issued a report chronicling human rights abuses by the Taliban regime during 1998. Ethnic Hazaras, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Panjsheris (but not **Pashtuns**) were subject to arrest and execution in the country. Men and women, young and old, were all subject to harsh treatment by the strict regime. All prisoners of the militia reportedly were treated poorly. (AFP)

June 22, 1999: The leader of the Taliban regime (P) issued a decree that would send anyone guilty of committing a hostile act against an international aid worker to prison for five years. The decree followed the hijacking of an aid convoy in the country, during which aid workers were robbed and severely beaten.

(AFP)

June 23, 1999: Oppositions leaders (T-U-H) purged would-be defectors from its ranks in anticipation of a Taliban offensive. (AFP)

July 3, 1999: Opposition forces (T-U-H) made strategic gains in northern Afghanistan, capitalizing on defections within the Taliban force. (AFP)

July 7, 1999: The United States levied economic sanctions against the Taliban regime (P) in response for the regime's continued policy to provide a home to suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden. The Northern Alliance (T-U-H) welcomed the sanctions. (AFP)

July 19, 1999: Despite fears of a looming flare-up of hostilities, the Taliban regime (P) and the northern opposition alliance (T-U-H) both expressed interest in starting peace talks to end the country's civil war. (AFP)

July 21, 1999: A day after peace discussions began between the two sides in Afghanistan, heavy artillery battles between the Taliban (P) and the opposition (T-U-H) broke out in the northern province of Samangan. (AFP, July 21, July 22)

July 24, 1999: UN special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, criticized the country's neighbors for continuing to pour weapons into Afghanistan at the same time that they trying to establish a peace agreement to end the civil war.

Analysts expect a significant offensive to re-ignite wide spread fighting between the Taliban militia (P) and the opposition. (AFP)

Risk Assessment

The student-led Islamic group known as the Taliban movement has not only become the most important **Pashtun** group in the country but has become the most influential and powerful single force within Afghanistan. Afghans welcomed the Taliban mission of ending corruption in the country in the mid-1990s, but it is less clear whether Afghans--**Pashtuns** included--continue to support the regime, as questions have arisen regarding the means used by the Taliban to achieve its goal. The Taliban's strict interpretation of Islamic law has greatly restricted the rights and liberties of all people within Afghanistan, and **Pashtuns** are just as likely as members of any other ethnic group to face a regime-imposed severe public punishment (amputations, executions) for breaking Sharia law. This system of law has affected especially all Afghan women, as they are no longer able to work, socialize, or live in the manner to which they had grown accustomed.

While **Pashtuns** can worry less than others about bearing the brunt of the military force of the Taliban, the **Pashtun** community is vulnerable to the military force of the opposition. Tajik military leader Masood and his force have been positioned just north of Kabul for years and periodically rain rockets upon **Pashtuns** in Kabul.

The outcome of Afghanistan's civil war will affect all peoples in the country, but an opposition victory could

leave **Pashtuns** especially vulnerable to reprisals for events and atrocities committed by the Taliban regime. If the opposition prevails, it would be of vital importance to the **Pashtun** population that **Pashtun** and former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar would be included in a coalition government. He has maintained a leading (although sometimes silent) role in the opposition, and his inclusion could ensure safeguards for the population in the country. If the Taliban retains control of the country, the **Pashtun** community would likely have some level of protection from the government, but the rights and liberties of individual members of this community would be just as repressed as those of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, an Afghanistan led by the Taliban would find itself highly isolated in the world community. Only three countries have recognized the Taliban as the legitimate regime in the country, and the regime's decision to offer internationally sought terrorist Osama bin Laden refuge within the country have further marginalized the Taliban. If this group retains power, the international community likely will be slow to offer assistance or aid to the people of Afghanistan, especially those seen as the main supporters of the regime (**Pashtuns**).

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