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Taliban-Claimed Blast Blow to Bush: Report

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KABUL, August 30 (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies) – At least 17 people, including three Americans, were killed in fresh two blasts in Afghanistan Sunday, August 29, a further setback to US President George W. Bush's presidential campaign.

Bush has sought to win over voters for the November presidential campaigns on claims the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq had moved for better after the US military campaigns that led to the ouster of both regimes.

But continued attacks in both countries cast a pall on these claims, as thousands of protesters are expected to mar the national Republican convention in New York Monday, August 30.

The attack Sunday security contractor DynCorp in Kabul was claimed by spokesman linked to the former Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda, and analysts said more attacks could be expected in the run-up to October 9 Afghan polls, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported.

A truck loaded with wood and packed with explosives was detonated outside DynCorp's office in the Shar-e-Naw district, home to many aid agencies and foreign firms.

DynCorp provides Afghan President Hamid Karzai's bodyguards and trains the fledgling police force.

Karzai's office said that seven people were confirmed dead -- two Americans, three Nepalese and two Afghan nationals, including a child. However independent witnesses at the scene said the death toll was likely to rise.

At least 28 people were wounded in the blast, including at least four Americans. The attack was the worst in Kabul since December 28 last year and the second major bomb attack in the country in as many days.

Ken McKillop, a spokesman for the NATO-led international peacekeeping force, told a press conference Monday that three US



The attack was claimed by spokesman linked to the former Taliban regime and Al-Qaeda (AFP)


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citizens and three Afghan nationals treated by the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) had died in the attack.

However, the spokesman said he could not comment about casualties who may have been taken to other medical facilities in the city and could not confirm the total death toll from the attack.

Early Monday, US troops patrolled the streets of the Wazir Akbar Khan district, home to US and many other foreign embassies. The streets were snarled with traffic caused by the many roadblocks.

Meanwhile in the Shar-e-Naw district, the streets leading to the blast site were blocked off and large numbers of NATO-led peacekeeping troops backed by tanks patrolled the streets.

Shar-e-Naw is packed with United Nations offices and the headquarters of many other aid agencies. Afghan police were stationed outside UN offices waving away vehicles and preventing them from stopping.

The US embassy and other Western governments have asked their staff to restrict their movements and avoid crowded shopping streets and restaurants popular with foreigners for fear of another attack.

More Attacks Expected

"This was a well-predicted attack and a well-chosen target. I think it's prudent to expect to see more. We anticipate possibly a series and a campaign of attacks," said Nick Downie, security coordinator for the Afghanistan NGO Security Organization.

The attack came after ten people, most of them youths, were killed and an unknown number were injured when a bomb went off overnight in a religious school in Afghanistan, the US military said.

"Four children, five teenagers and one adult were killed but we have no information on the number of injuries," Master Sergeant Ann Bennett told AFP.

The explosion occurred in Tatnak village of Zurmat district of southeastern Paktia province, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) from of Kabul, provincial police chief Hai Gull Selimankhail said.

There were conflicting reports about the number of dead, with Selimankhail saying up to eight children had been killed and 14 other people injured in the blast.

"Some seven to eight children were killed and 14 were injured in the bomb explosion," provincial police chief Hai Gull Selimankhail told AFP.

Bennett said the cause of the blast was still unknown and confirmed the investigation was ongoing.

As the elections have drawn closer, security across the country has worsened and a string of attacks on election workers has left 12 dead since May.

Reconstruction firms, the United Nations and aid workers have also been targeted in recent months.

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The Taliban, thrown out of power by a US-backed military campaign in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, have vowed to disrupt the polls, in which over 10 million people have registered to vote.

Taliban-led fighters have mounted a guerrilla war in the south and southeast as well as sporadic attacks in other parts of the country, while western Afghanistan has been the scene of fierce factional battles between rival militias this month.

Blow to Bush

The two blasts came as a fresh blow to incumbent Bush, repeatedly boasting about alleged prevailing security and stability in Afghanistan after the overthrow of Taliban as a win in the so-called war on terror.

Bush is expected to be greeted with thousands of protesters demonstrating against his foreign policy and the current Republican administration's use of the tragic 9/11 events for political gains, the Republican Party's Convention.

Since the September attacks, Bush has been [playing the tune of terror](#) to win support of US voters to stay in the White House for another four years.



Bush reportedly planned to use Afghanistan to prove war on terror is working

"We will stay on the offence. We will defeat them elsewhere so that we do not have to face them here," Bush repeatedly said.

Bush has bragged about the participation of what he termed "two more free countries", referring to Afghanistan and Iraq in the Olympic Games.

But he came under intense fire for using the sports event as a political card.

[The Iraqi Olympic soccer team](#), however, dealt Bush a severe blow by dismissing his using their stunning victories for political ends. They moreover called on him to withdraw his occupying forces and stop the destruction and killing in their country, with the players insisting they would have been fighting US troops had they not been playing football.

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