

Afghani factions are reverting to old rivalries

By Associated Press
INTERNATIONAL

KARNAI, Afghanistan — One valley, two militia factions and thousands upon thousands of weapons.

This explosive combination — which led to deadly clashes this week in Karnai village on the Balkh River — can be seen in various forms across northern Afghanistan as armed groups that united to help defeat the Taliban are apparently sliding back into their former rivalries.

The dozens of reported recent skirmishes, which could not all be confirmed independently, are still small compared with Afghanistan's legacy of brutal civil conflict.

But some people worry the clashes could be the opening act of another bloody drama. Such fears were stoked in eastern Afghanistan following heavy factional fighting in Gardez on Thursday.

Each new flashpoint also raises more questions about the northern warlords' commitment to disarm and whether stability is possible without a full-scale international peacekeeping mission that reaches well beyond the capital, Kabul.

"Foreign troops must come to take away the weapons. It's the only way to bring peace," said Gul Ahmad, a member of a volunteer security brigade in Karnai that negotiated a truce after battles Tuesday between forces aligned with the region's most powerful commanders: Gen. Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad. Two of Dostum's militiamen were killed.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The group claiming to hold kidnapped reporter Daniel Pearl extended a deadline for killing him until today, and vowed in its latest e-mail that this is only the beginning of a "real war" on Americans.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said

ap news capsules

Thursday that the U.S. and Pakistani governments are working to free the kidnapped Wall Street Journal reporter, but he ruled out bending to the group's demands that Pakistani prisoners from the Afghan campaign be returned.

In Washington, Powell told reporters he has spoken with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, "and I know that he is doing everything he can."

It was impossible to determine whether Thursday's unsigned e-mail, received by Western and Pakistani media, was actually sent by the kidnapers.

Pearl, 38, was abducted on Jan. 23 in Karachi while working to secure an interview with the founder of an obscure militant Muslim sect.

"We will give you one more day. If America will not meet our demands, we will kill Daniel. Then this cycle will continue and no American journalist could enter Pakistan," the message said.

It warned that unless the demands are met, "the Amrikans (Americans) will get what they deserve. Don't think this is will be the end. It is the beginning and it is a real war on Amrikans."

NATIONAL
NEW YORK — Giving up their usual lofty retreat in the Alps to come to terrorism-shattered New York, participants in the World Economic Forum pledged to turn their attention to the world's needs instead of its balance sheets.

The nearly 3,000 attendees — a who's who of business leaders, politicians and celebrities — kicked off the five-day meeting Thursday as hordes of police on Manhattan's streets braced for unrest that never materialized. Forum participants painted the Sept. 11 attacks as a global wake-up call and

encouraged efforts against poverty, the AIDS epidemic and other scourges that have bred frustration and anger toward wealthy countries.

"This is a defining moment in history," Irish rock star Bono said during an evening plenary session. "There is an emergency in the world, and I don't think that's hyperbole."

The forum, in its 32nd year, is being held somewhere other than the Swiss retreat of Davos for the first time since its founding.

The move was meant to show sympathy for New York — and to improve the image of the forum, often seen as a pricey retreat for rich businessmen.

"We are gathered here to exercise, more than ever, leadership in fragile times and to develop a vision for a shared future," Klaus Schwab, the forum's founder, said at the official opening ceremony.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The biggest storm so far of the winter season loped toward New England early today after leaving behind a blanket of snow and ice from Texas to New York.

Some Kansas City-area residents were forced to stock up on flashlights and cooking gas as they bundled up for a cold night without power, or heat, with temperatures in the teens.

The ice and snowstorms shuttered schools, flooded roads, brought down power lines, canceled airline flights and made for dangerous driving across the Plains and Great Lakes.

At least 15 deaths were blamed on slick roads or freezing temperatures.

Missouri Gov. Bob Holden declared a statewide state of emergency, Kansas Gov. Bill Graves declared a state of emergency for 21 counties and Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating declared 28 counties disaster areas.

At its peak, the storm left 270,000 customers without power in Kansas City and 36,000 had no electricity in Illinois. At least 185,000 were in the dark in parts of Michigan and Indiana.

WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON — Despite U.S. successes in Afghanistan, the Bush administration is cautioning that terrorists may be operating in the United States, requiring the nation to stay on high alert for perhaps years.

The call for vigilance came from a variety of officials Thursday, from Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to the head of the FBI and the White House where the president's national security adviser asserted that countries with links to terrorists have been "put on notice."

FBI Director Robert Mueller told reporters that " sleeper cells " of terrorists may well continue to operate in the United States, awaiting orders to attack.

While the al-Qaida terrorist network's ability to launch major attacks has been disrupted by more than three months of U.S. military action in Afghanistan, "we're still on a very high state of alert" for possible attacks by members that may already be in this country, Mueller said.

Documents found in Afghanistan and information obtained from captured al-Qaida members have indicated that the terrorist groups had an interest in U.S. nuclear power plants, dams and water systems, according to the FBI and CIA.

WASHINGTON — President Bush will ask Congress to revamp pension laws to give workers greater flexibility to diversify their company savings accounts, a response to the Enron Corp. bankruptcy that cost workers their life's savings and created a political problem for the White House.

The Bush proposal also would re-

quire companies to provide workers more frequent reports about their 401(k) plans and increase employer accountability when workers are barred from trading on the savings accounts.

"About 42 million American workers own 401(k) accounts with a total of \$2 trillion in assets," an outline of the plan provided by White House officials said.

"These workers need to have full confidence in the security of their pension plans."

Bush, long associated with Enron, was announcing the initiative today in a meeting with lawmakers, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Enron's bankruptcy is the subject of criminal and congressional investigations, in part because workers said they did not know the extent of the company's financial problems and were unable for a few weeks to remove their savings from Enron's 401(k) program.

Company stocks plunged after the bankruptcy, virtually wiping out workers' 401(k) savings and costing investors untold millions.

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration gave abortion opponents a victory on a question that has long divided America — when does life begin? — while insisting that its true interest was something far less contentious: the importance of prenatal care. It was another effort at burnishing President Bush's anti-abortion credentials while being mindful that moderate voters would be troubled by extreme positions.

On Thursday, the administration said it will make embryos and developing fetuses eligible for a government health care program, saying they qualify from the moment of conception.

But administration officials main-

tained that the decision had nothing to do with abortion or establishing the rights of a fetus. It was simply the fastest way to get more low-income women eligible for subsidized prenatal care, they said.

"All we're doing is providing care for poor mothers so their children are going to be born healthy,"

Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson said. "How anybody can now turn this into a pro-choice or pro-life argument, I can't understand it."

That's precisely what advocates on both sides of the abortion issue did, branding the decision a victory for the anti-abortion movement.

WASHINGTON — States and cities are getting more than \$1 billion in federal money to help their health officials prepare for bioterrorism, as well as less exotic epidemics or disasters.

The Department of Health and Human Services began telling all 50 governors how much their states are eligible for on Thursday, with part of the money coming right away.

HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson said after decades of failing to invest enough money in public health, the Sept. 11 attacks have forced change.

"We now have the opportunity to build a viable, vibrant, strong local and state public health system that will prepare and protect our citizens for any attack that may come," he told a news conference.

The money will help teach medical and emergency workers more about recognizing the early signs of any infectious disease outbreak, but especially a bioterrorist attack, such as the release of anthrax or smallpox germs.

It also will be used to improve labs, upgrade computers, prepare hospitals to treat a huge influx of sick or injured, and improve communications between local, state and federal health officials.

Senate panel approves \$158 per pupil budget cut

TOPEKA (AP) — A Senate panel voted Thursday to cut state aid to public schools by \$158 per pupil in the next fiscal year, but members said it was unlikely the reduction would become part of the final budget.

The subcommittee's action came as the state received more bad financial news.

Preliminary figures showed the state collected \$376 million in revenue in January, about \$41 million less than expected.

"What the education community

and others should concern themselves with is that without some additional revenues, there are some really difficult budget cuts coming up," State Budget Director Duane Goossen said.

The school-aid measure before the Senate Ways and Means subcommittee on education was part of the balanced-budget plan submitted by Gov. Bill Graves. By law, Graves had to outline a spending plan that assumed no new sources of revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1. However, Graves has also proposed increasing

taxes \$228 million to protect school districts from aid cuts.

Under Graves' balanced-budget plan, base state aid per pupil would fall \$158, to \$3,712 in the budget year that begins July 1. Total school aid would decline about \$128 million, or 5.5 percent, to about \$2.2 billion.

Senate President Dave Kerr, who chairs the education subcommittee, said the panel agreed to send the Graves plan to the full Ways and Means Committee because for now, it had no other proposal to work with.

"We just don't have any other numbers to use," said Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

Subcommittee member Jim Barone agreed, calling the action "a mechanical exercise."

"Any resemblance between the final school finance outcome and what is going on in the education subcommittee will be purely coincidental," said Barone, D-Frontenac.

The state's revenue collections have fallen short of expectations each month since November, when state officials and university economists

issued made their latest revenue forecast.

According to the preliminary figures, January's revenue collection puts the gap between the estimates and actual revenues at nearly \$97 million for the first seven months of this fiscal year — with collections of \$2.29 billion,

compared to an estimate of \$2.38 billion.

Goossen said weather could have played a role in January's shortfall. He noted that state government offices were closed Wednesday and workers came in late Thursday, giving them less time to process tax payments.

Power outage turns off heat, water in small town

BELLE PLAINE (AP) — Snow-encrusted streets in this small central Kansas community were nearly deserted Thursday morning. Downtown storefronts were dark.

The eerie silence was broken by crunching ice from a passing car pulling up to the local post office. Inside, two women filled post office mail boxes by the dim light from the front windows.

Jamie McMahan, 13, and her 11-year-old sister, Sarah, tugged at the locked door to the town's only grocery store. They wore old socks on their hands to keep them warm.

"We were just going to get some candy, talk to people ... just to keep us busy — there is nothing to do," Jamie said.

For the past 14 hours, Belle Plaine has been without electricity. The day before, power was on and off intermittently throughout the day. And now, with no power to run the pumps, the town's water tower just ran dry.

Don Holbrook came into town to pick up his mail. They are keeping warm at his house by putting on extra clothing, and he's about ready to go to his daughter's house in Rose Hill because she has power there.

Still open was Valley State Bank, where a skeleton crew huddled in their coats to stay warm. By law, the bank must do daily statements, said Mahlon Morley, chairman of the board.

"It was pretty difficult to operate without electricity," Morley said. "We don't have backup generators."

The bank leased one during the Y2K scare — that was a requirement by the government back then. But leasing a generator is costly, and Morley said in his 45 years of banking this is the longest his bank has been without electricity.

Power was off in Belle Plaine most

of Wednesday morning, coming back on for a few more hours before the lights flickered off again later that day around 7:45 p.m.

It would be at least 9:45 a.m. Thursday before power would be restored to much of the town.

City clerk Katherine Terry, bundled up in a coat, sat at her desk in the tiny city offices. Two oil-burning lamps provided the only light as she went through some paperwork.

Temperatures inside her house had dropped to 60 degrees overnight, and she was grateful for the warmer 66-degree temperatures inside City Hall.

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Saturday, February 9, 2002
10:00 a.m. MT (doors open @ 8 a.m. day of sale)
Auction Location: National Guard Armory - Goodland, KS

ANTIQUES: Sewing machine • Old cameras • Old irons • Topsy Stove • Silver Ware • Stone wheel • Records 78's & 45's • Grinder w/stand

APPLIANCES: Chest freezer • Refrigerator • Biesell carpet cleaner • Microwave • Misc.

FURNITURE : 2 Lane recliners (like new) • Love seat • Table w/4 chairs • 2 chest of drawers • 2 dressers • Beds • Trundle bed • Book shelves • Baby crib • Thomas Organ • TV (console) • Chairs • Old Stereo • Hutch • End tables • Coffee table • Tables • Little Desk • Couch and leather recliner

TOOLS: Small hand tools • Hammers • Hatchets

VEHICLE: 91 Chevy Caprice, 4 DR, White, one owner, loaded w/ 120,000 miles.

MISCELLANEOUS: Spurs • Stuffed animals • Toys (new and old) • Nut/Bolt bins • Old stereo equip. • Pressure cooker • Schwinn bike • counter top • Cargo top for car (looks new) • Lots of nick-nacks • and much more.

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