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## Taliban Leaves Kunduz to Focus on Fighting in Southern Afghanistan

By Jason Ditz  
October 13, 2015

The Taliban has announced today that they have withdrawn from the northern Afghan city of Kunduz, capping a 15-day seizure by destroying government buildings and taking all military hardware of value with them on the way out.

The statement claimed that Taliban left out of concern for the civilian population, and fighters said they believed clashing over the city would be a “waste of bullets,” but the reality seems to be a shift in priority to the southern city of Ghazni.

The Taliban has been making gains on Ghazni for awhile, and fighting picked up on the highway near the strategically important city, and it seems the forces who left Kunduz are making a beeline for that fight, with the highway likely even more important than the city itself.

Afghanistan's Highway 1 connects Kabul with Kandahar, and is one of only a handful of paved highways in Afghanistan. The Taliban's power bases are around Kandahar, and taking the highway at Ghazni would shore up their control over the nation's south.