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## Taliban denounce Kabul meeting as sign of failure

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The Taliban denounced this week's international conference on Afghanistan's future, saying the "vague and terrible agenda" shows that the U.S. and its allies intend to abandon the country and blame their ultimate defeat on the Afghan government.

Representatives of the U.S. and 60 other countries met Tuesday to endorse President Hamid Karzai's plan for Afghan police and soldiers to take charge of security nationwide by 2014. Karzai also urged his international backers to distribute more of their development aid through his government.

In a statement posted in English on their website, the Taliban said the conference showed that the U.S. "has lost the initiatives and is unable to resolve Afghanistan issue." The statement was distributed to news organizations by the SITE Intelligence Group that monitors extremist communications.

"Whatever actions are taken in this regard have already been doomed to a failure," the statement said. "It is evident from the vague and terrible agenda of the conference ... that America and the international community intend to pull out of Afghanistan" and blame "all the coming destruction's, humiliation and defeat on Kabul puppet regime," meaning the Karzai administration.

A massive security crackdown prevented the Taliban from launching any major attacks in the capital during the conference.

However, rockets fired at the Kabul airport Tuesday forced the plane carrying U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt to divert to Bagram Air Field north of the city.

The Taliban said the attack "turned the moments of peace and safety of the U.S. invaders into disaster" and left conference participants "scared to death."

Also Wednesday, NATO said insurgents beheaded six Afghan policemen after attacking their checkpoint in northern Afghanistan the day before. The coalition said militants attacked a number of government buildings and the checkpoint Tuesday in Baghlan province's Dahanah-ye Ghor district. The attackers overran the checkpoint and decapitated the six policemen, NATO said.

Elsewhere, NATO reported three more service member deaths in roadside bombings Wednesday in southern Afghanistan. The alliance did not report nationalities, but the Danish military said one of the dead was a Danish soldier. Another Dane was wounded, the Danish military said.

The deaths brought the number of NATO service members killed this month to 67.

Violence and casualties have surged in recent months as the U.S. and its allies have stepped up the fight against the Taliban. June was the deadliest month of the war for international troops with 103 deaths, including 60 Americans.

In Australia, the country's defense ministry said the main NATO base outside the southern city of Kandahar came under Taliban rocket fire late Monday, causing minor damage but no Australian casualties.

No further details were released. The NATO base at the Kandahar Air Field comes under rocket and mortar fire from time to time, usually without causing major damage or casualties.