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## UN envoy fears 'spectacular attacks' in Afghanistan

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UNITED NATIONS — The UN envoy to Afghanistan on Wednesday warned that the war was likely to get worse in the short-term and that Taliban insurgents may attempt "spectacular attacks."

"We are detecting from the anti-government elements an attempt to show, on their side, spectacular attacks," Staffan de Mistura said at the United Nations.

"I'm afraid for the next few months for a tense security environment... Our assessment is before it gets better it may get worse," he added.

He went on to say that the best hope for lasting stability in the war-torn country was a political settlement between the Western-backed government of Afghan President Hamid Karzai and insurgents bent on overthrowing him.

"Everyone recognizes there is no military solution. Frankly, even the Taliban do, even if they will not say this publicly," de Mistura said.

The Afghan ambassador to the UN meanwhile insisted that Western-backed Afghan forces were starting to roll back insurgents.

"Despite isolated incidents of attacks and suicide bombings by the Taliban and other extremists, overall security has improved," Zahir Tanin said.

"The latest assessments show that Afghan forces for the first time in the last two years have begun to regain the military initiative."

Their remarks came a day after an independent website said international troop deaths in Afghanistan had topped 700 in 2010.

The Taliban were ousted from power by a US-led invasion after the September 11 attacks, which Washington linked to Al-Qaeda militants being harbored by the hardline Afghan Islamists.