

Taliban insurgents take Kandahar, Herat as US plans to evacuate Americans from embassy in Kabul

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Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan on Friday seized Kandahar and Herat—the country’s second and third largest cities, hours after Fox News confirmed that the U.S. military will help evacuate Americans from the embassy in Kabul.

The insurgents have taken more than a dozen provincial capitals in recent days and now control more than two-thirds of the country just weeks before the U.S. plans to withdraw its last troops.

The New York Times reported that just three major cities in the country are still under the government’s control and Taliban fighters are “well-positioned to attack Kabul.” The paper also pointed out that the capture of Kandahar is a symbolic victory for the Taliban because it is where the insurgency started back in the 1990s.

Thousands of Afghans have fled their homes amid fears the Taliban will again impose a brutal, repressive government, all but eliminating women’s rights and conducting public executions.



The plans to evacuate the Americans were briefed to President Biden earlier Thursday in order to get his approval, one official added. The military will evacuate “thousands” of American citizens and Afghan interpreters from Kabul.

“Things are moving,” one official said.

The Taliban’s advance has attracted the attention of the United Kingdom.

Ben Wallace, the U.K. defense minister, said in an interview Friday that his forces could make a return to Afghanistan if there is a resurgence of Al Qaeda and the country becomes a hotbed for terrorism that threatens the West, a report said.

“I’m going to leave every option open. If the Taliban have a message from last time, you start hosting Al Qaeda, you start attacking the West, or countries like that, we could come back.”

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The Taliban have captured another three provincial capitals in southern Afghanistan, including in Helmand, the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in the past two decades, as the insurgents press a lightning offensive that is gradually encircling the capital.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

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