



## Three Americans Shot and Killed at Afghanistan Hospital

Three American medical workers, including a doctor, were shot and killed by an Afghan police security guard at a Kabul, Afghanistan, hospital on April 24. District Police Chief Hafiz Khan told reporters that a police guard suddenly fired on the staff he was assigned to protect at Kabul's Cure International Hospital, reported *USA Today*. The hospital's specialties include maternal and child health, general surgery, and family health.



"Five doctors had entered the compound of the hospital and were walking toward the building when the guard opened fire on them," said Kanishka Bektash Torkystani, a Ministry of Health spokesman. "Three foreign doctors were killed."

*USA Today* also reported a statement from Sediq Sediqi, a spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior, who in turn cited information provided by Afghanistan's Criminal Investigation Department.

Sediqi said that the gunman, whom eyewitnesses identified as a policeman, is alive and at a military hospital after being shot in the stomach by other police officers inside the hospital. "We will find out the motive because he's alive," Sediqi said.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul released a statement reading, in part:

The U.S. Embassy condemns the deplorable act of violence at the CURE International Hospital of Kabul today, which resulted in the deaths of three American citizens. Those killed in the attack were humanitarian workers dedicated to improving the lives of Afghans by providing a full range of medical services including reconstructive surgery to children with physical disabilities and pre- and post-natal care for mothers. This act of terror has deprived the citizens of Afghanistan of valuable medical expertise.

CNN identified the slain doctor as Dr. Jerry Umanos, a senior pediatrician at Cure, who had previously practiced medicine in inner-city Chicago. Afghan Minister of Public Health Suraya Dalil told CNN Newsroom that Umanos was at the hospital's gate to allow the other victims, who were his guests, into the building, when the guard opened fire. The two Americans killed with Umanos, though not identified, were medical staffers.

"He loved the country, he loved the people, he loved to teach," one of Umanos' former colleagues told CNN. "As much as we love and miss him, all of us have a certain level of respect and contentment knowing Jerry died doing what he loved most."

In addition to his regular medical practice, Umanos helped train Afghan doctors at the hospital and at community health center.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid would neither confirm nor deny his organization's involvement in the shooting, telling the *New York Times*: "We are aware of this shooting at the CURE hospital and our investigation is ongoing, but we do not know if it was carried out by our men."



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However, Mujahid has previously admitted the Taliban's role in terrorist attacks. Among these was a suicide bomb attack on the Roots of Peace landmine charity in Kabul on March 28 in which a child and a driver were killed and five people were injured. After the explosion, four gunmen stormed the charity's office.

Afterwards, the Taliban, which releases its statements through Mujahid, claimed blame for the attack, saying they had targeted a church — although Roots of Peace does not have any religious affiliations.

A reporter for the British *Guardian* noted after the bombing:

The Taliban have denounced the [presidential and provincial elections of April 5] as a sham and said anyone who works on it or goes to vote is risking their lives, and have been stepping up violence around the country, although most of the targets have not been linked to the election.

A bomb at a market place, a shooting in a luxury Kabul hotel and an attack on a bank are some of the latest bloody incidents around the country to claim hundreds of lives. A suicide squad also hit the Kabul provincial headquarters of the election organizers this week, just a few kilometres from Friday's attack.

The violence in Afghanistan perpetrated by the Taliban or their sympathizers has continued ceaselessly. On April 4, the eve of the national elections, Anja Niedringhaus, a German photojournalist working for the Associated Press, was shot and killed by an Afghan policeman. Her colleague, Kathy Gannon, a Canadian AP reporter, was shot twice and seriously wounded. The two journalists had been traveling with election workers in eastern Khost province in a convoy protected by Afghan soldiers and police officers.

As the women sat in the car waiting for the convoy to move, a police unit commander named Naqibullah approached them, yelled "Allahu Akbar" ("God is great"), and opened fire on them with his Kalashnikov AK-47. Naqibullah then surrendered to other police and was arrested. A report in the British *Guardian* on April 9 said that his fellow officers described Naqibullah as "a calm, pious man who may have come under the influence of Islamic extremists calling for vengeance against foreigners over drone strikes."

Another report in the *Guardian* on April 10 noted:

Past insider killings have raised concern about the infiltration of the Taliban and allied militants in the government security forces, although other motives have ranged from personal disputes to traumatic stress.

An April 10 report posted at Military.com quoted Gul Mohammad, the counterterrorism director in Khost, who said Naqibullah had claimed he was inspired by a lawmaker and a cleric who encouraged holy war against Americans and other foreigners. "He said, 'Thank God I didn't kill any Muslims.' "

Writing for *Time*, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Mark Thompson opined that the killing of the U.S. medical personnel in Kabul "raises anew questions about the wisdom of a continued U.S. presence there, in uniform, scrubs or any other kind of garb."

Thompson, looking ahead to the time when the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan will be officially ended on December 31 (though it is likely that a small force will remain afterwards) pointed to our experience in Iraq to predict what the likely outcome will be. To make his case, Thompson quotes two veteran reporters. The first, Dexter Filkins, writing in the *New Yorker*, observed of Iraq: "Two years after the last American soldiers departed, it's hard to find any evidence that they were ever there." Filkins noted that the United States started pushing for the election of Nouri al-Maliki as Iraq's prime



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minister in 2006, after a CIA officer recommended him to U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. “Among many Iraqis, the concern is that their country is falling again into civil war,” notes Filkins, “and that it is Maliki who has driven it to the edge.”

We might add that since Khalilzad is a member of the internationalist Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), his role in pressuring the Iraqis to install Maliki squares with the ongoing trend among internationalists to destabilize Middle East countries and replace their authoritarian governments with weak, inept puppets who cower before radical Islamic terrorists.

Thompson also quotes Drew Brooks of the *Fayetteville Observer*, who wrote about the recent return to Afghanistan, after two years, of a unit from the 82nd Airborne Division who came “looking for a fight.” “Although they’re still preparing for the worse, the soldiers are discovering that the Afghanistan they left in 2012 isn’t the same country they returned to,” wrote Brooks. “The job of fighting off insurgents now falls to Afghan national security forces.”

We initially took Thompson’s next statement — “It was a member of those forces who killed the three Americans earlier today” — with a grain of salt, wondering if a policeman guarding a hospital should count as a member of the nation’s national security forces. However, an article in Wikipedia states: “All the law enforcement agencies of Afghanistan are set up and trained by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states, mainly by the United States.” The article linked to a U.S. Defense Department news release of May 23, 2011 stating:

Jack Kem, deputy to the commander of NATO Training Mission Afghanistan and Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan, briefed Pentagon reporters about his duties in the Afghan capital of Kabul, where he is responsible for the NATO training mission’s literacy, gender, integrity building and rule of law programs.

“The size of the Afghan National Army has increased from 97,000 in November 2009 to over 164,000 today,” Kem said, and will grow to 171,600 by summer’s end. The Afghan National Police has grown from just under 95,000 in November 2009 to 126,000 today, and will reach 134,000 by fall.

This DOD statement confirms both that Afghanistan has a national police force and that the force was trained by NATO — mainly the United States. In that light, Thompson’s point, that the same Afghan security forces that we have helped train are responsible for killing American medical personnel is not only logical, but underscores the continued irony of U.S. involvement in the nation.

Lest we miss that irony, Thompson also notes that a total of 4,486 U.S. troops died in Iraq and a total of 2,317 U.S. troops have died in Afghanistan. He concludes: “Two countries, one lesson: there is more than one way to win, or lose, a war.”

To which we might add: Strict adherence to our Constitution’s grant of the power to declare war to Congress as well as following the admonitions of our nation’s Founders to avoid “entangling alliances” (as in Jefferson’s inaugural address on March 4, 1801) is the only way to avoid unconstitutional wars, and to win those that we wage constitutionally.

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