

World

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THE BATTALION

Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Bodies of four slain journalists recovered by Afghan rebels

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (AP) — Anti-Taliban militiamen recovered the bodies Tuesday of four international journalists who were ambushed in a narrow mountain pass as they headed for the Afghan capital.

The journalists were attacked Monday as they traveled in a convoy of about eight cars from the eastern city of Jalalabad to Kabul. An anti-Taliban leader in the area said the attackers were bandits, but witnesses said they shouted pro-Taliban slogans.

Militiamen loyal to the new administration in Jalalabad set out early Tuesday to search for the missing journalists, and they reached the spot of the ambush around 8 a.m., encountering no resistance as they retrieved the bodies. They brought the bodies to a Jalalabad hospital, where colleagues identified them.

The journalists were Australian television cameraman Harry Burton and Azizullah Haidari, an Afghan photographer, both of the Reuters news agency; Maria Grazia Cutuli of Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera; and Julio Fuentes of the Spanish daily El Mundo.

Cutuli and Fuentes filed reports Monday about finding what they believed were capsules of deadly sarin nerve gas at an abandoned al-Qaida camp in the Jalalabad region.

Fuentes's story said he discovered a cardboard box with Russian labeling that said SARIN/V-Gas. His report said the box contained 300 vials of a yellowish liquid.

A Japanese terrorist organization used sarin in March 1995 in the Tokyo subway killing 12 people.

A Pentagon duty officer said the U.S. military had no information on the reports.

Colleagues and the Red Cross were working to take the bodies to Pakistan on Wednesday.

The area of the ambush recently came under the control of anti-Taliban forces. However, some Taliban stragglers and Arab fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden are still believed to be in the area, and there had been earlier reports of armed robberies on the road.

The convoy set out Monday morning. Because the road was dusty, the cars in the convoy spread out, and their occupants often lost sight of one another.

Near the town of Serobi, 35 miles east of Kabul, six gunmen on the roadside waved the first three cars in the convoy to stop. One car sped ahead, while two stopped, said Ashiquallah, who was driving the car carrying the Reuters journalists. He uses only one name.

He said the gunmen, wearing long robes, beards and turbans, warned them not to go any farther because there was fighting ahead with the Taliban. At that moment, a bus from Kabul came by and said the road was safe. The cars' drivers thought the gunmen were thieves and tried to speed away, but the gunmen stopped them.

The gunmen then ordered all the passengers out of the cars and tried to force them to climb the mountain. When they refused, the gunmen beat them and threw stones, Ashiquallah said.

"They said, 'What, you think you're finished? We are still in power, we will have our revenge,'" Ashiquallah said.

The gunmen then shot the Italian and one of the men, he said. The other three men also had been shot.

The drivers fled back toward Jalalabad, he said, leaving behind the Afghan translator, a man named Homun. His whereabouts were unknown Tuesday.

Ashiquallah's account was confirmed by another translator and driver who escaped in the other car.

Haji Shershah, an anti-Taliban commander in Jalalabad, said villages in the area reported numerous other attacks involving gunfire on vehicles on the road during the day.

A French journalist was robbed in the area the day before, and his car was damaged in Monday's assault on the journalists, he said.

An Afghan car arrived in Jalalabad with bullet holes after being attacked. Shershah said the attackers were not Taliban or his own fighters.

"They're not Taliban, they are not Taliban," Shershah said. "They just want to blame on the Taliban. ... They were lots of people."

Tight security on high seas in wake of terrorist attacks, strikes on Taliban

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Beneath the blackjack tables and bulging all-you-can-eat buffets, divers search cruise ship hulls for explosives. At the docks, workers screen passengers for weapons and contraband.

In the wake of the Sept. 11 suicide hijackings, security has been tightened aboard the giant vessels that can stretch nearly a quarter of a mile long and carry thousands of passengers.

In the United States, Coast Guard boats have been escorting cruise ships into port since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and cruise companies have been submitting crew and passengers' names to the FBI and immigration officials for checks.

"We have always had security measures in place," said Tim Gallagher, spokesman for Carnival Cruises. "But since the attacks, we've gone to level three security, the highest security level there is."

Still, security experts say that with attention focused on air safety, cruise ships could be enticing targets for terrorists.

"When you protect air, land and other targets, terrorists are going to look for soft targets," said Rohan Gunaratna, a research fellow at the Center for Study of Terrorism and

Political Violence at Scotland's University of St. Andrews. "Cruise ships are considered prestigious because there is a perception that they are filled with wealthy Americans."

Gunaratna, who has been asked by various governments to work as a consultant and question terrorists from the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, said groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaida are being trained for maritime attacks.

In Sri Lanka, divers have planted explosives on commercial ships and suicide bombers have sunk navy vessels. In the South China Sea, pirates have attacked commercial vessels. And in Yemen, suicide bombers attacked the destroyer USS Cole in October 2000, killing 17 U.S. sailors.

Cruise ship officials say that since Sept. 11 they have added security personnel and increased staff, making their ships far less vulnerable than planes. They also point to the industry's safety record — only one large cruise ship has been hijacked since 1985 — and say modern construction with watertight compartments makes ships difficult to sink.

Kim Petersen, chief executive officer of SeaSecure LLC, a maritime security consultant in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., said armed

passengers would be hard-pressed to board a ship, and if terrorists boarded a hull, casualties would be low.

"The cruise industry has, for years, active anti-terrorism programs to prevent an array of potential attacks," Petersen said. "Those programs, coupled with stringent security, make taking a cruise one of the safest options Americans have."

Governments forced the industry to implement minimum security measures after terrorists, hoping to smuggle weapons into Israel, hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in 1985 and killed an American passenger.

Gunaratna said that attack had severe ramifications. "Only one American was aboard the Achille Lauro yet it took years for the industry to recover," he said. "It would be unlikely that terrorists would inflict damage on a cruise ship but even if they managed to kill 10 to 15 people, it would have a huge impact and people, especially Americans, would stop taking cruises."

Already, fewer passengers are taking high seas. Shortly after Sept. 11, Florida Renaissance Cruises filed for bankruptcy, saying it was a victim of tourism fallout.

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Acct 209*	FSA Prob. Sun Nov 25 8pm-12am	FSA Prob. Mon Nov 26 5pm-9pm		*Monday's session for FSA Prob. will be sold-out! Come Sunday to avoid crowds!
Acct 229 Cassidy	Tset Review Sun Nov 25 5pm-8pm			You can now buy tickets online at our website and avoid standing in ticket lines
Acct 229 Chevis	Test Review Thu Nov 29 3pm-6pm			
Acct 229 Shomaker	Part I Sun Nov 25 5pm-8pm	Part II Thu Nov 29 9pm-12am		
Chem 101	Chap 12 Mon Nov 26 7pm-9pm	Chap 13 Tue Nov 27 7pm-10pm	Soriaga Review Wed Nov 28 7pm-10pm	
Econ 202 Dr. Allen	Part I Tues Nov 27 5pm-8pm	Part II Wed Nov 28 5pm-8pm		
Econ 203 Edwardson	Part I Wed Nov 28 3pm-5pm	Part I Wed Nov 28 12am-2am	Part II Thu Nov 29 6pm-9pm	
Math 151	Part IV & Review Sun Nov 25 6pm-9pm	Part IV & Review Mon Nov 26 9pm-12am		
Math 152	Part IV & Review Sun Nov 25 9pm-12am	Part IV & Review Mon Nov 26 6pm-9pm		*Evening sessions for Mgmt will be sold-out! Come to early sessions to avoid crowds!
Mgmt 211*	Part I Mon Nov 26 1pm-5pm	Part I Mon Nov 26 9pm-1am	Part II Tue Nov 27 1pm-5pm	Part II Tue Nov 27 8pm-12am
Mgmt 209	Part I Mon Nov 26 1pm-5pm	Part I Mon Nov 26 9pm-1am	Part II Tue Nov 27 1pm-5pm	Part II Tue Nov 27 8pm-12am
Phys 201	Part I Sun Nov 25 8pm-11pm	Part II Tue Nov 27 8pm-11pm	Part III Wed Nov 28 8pm-11pm	

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