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Newsweek Magazine

# From the Heart of Harlem!

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## U.S. fights off Afghan rebels

By Mark Kennedy  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Hundreds of U.S. troops pressed toward rebel fighters in rugged mountain caves Tuesday, while warplanes bombed dug-in enemy positions in the fiercest battle in Afghanistan in nearly a year.

At least 18 rebels were killed in the assault. The U.S. military believes the fighters are loyal to renegade warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a powerful Pashtun strongman who has vowed to link his forces with remnants of al-Qaida and the ousted Taliban regime.

About 80 rebels were believed to be remaining in the southeastern cave network, under attack from 350 troops, including soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Special Forces and allied Afghan militia.

"It's the largest concentration of enemy forces since Operation Anaconda," military spokesman Col. Roger King said, referring to a very fierce eight-day battle in March against Taliban and al-Qaida holdouts in a different area

### Attacks on U.S.-led forces continue

Tuesday's fighting near Spinboldak is the latest in a series of attacks on U.S.-led coalition troops in Afghanistan.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI

of southeastern Afghanistan, about 250 miles northeast of the fighting.

While King said evidence pointed to Hekmatyar's military arm, the Hezb-e-Islami movement, he gave no further details, which a former high-ranking Taliban member questioned.

Obeidullah, who goes by only one name, told The Associated Press that the fighting was being led by two ex-Taliban — Hafiz Abdul Rahim,

the regime's former chief of border security, and Sirajuddin, former district chief of Shinwar in western Afghanistan.

The fighting, which started Monday, had ended by Tuesday evening, and coalition forces were searching the caves where the rebel forces had been hiding, said Lt. Col. Dave Lapan, Pentagon spokesman.

The battle marked an important shift in the challenges facing the U.S.-led coalition.

## Sharon's Likud Party wins elections

By Dan Perry  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has taken a hard line against the Palestinian uprising, won a crushing victory in Israel's election Tuesday, and TV projections showed his Likud and other hawkish parties easily winning most seats in parliament.

The prospect of progress on the Palestinian front now appears to depend on whether Sharon can form a coalition that will include the opposition Labor party, which campaigned on a pledge to restart peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Amram Mitzna, who led Labor to its worst defeat in history, ruled out joining a Sharon-led government.

Even without Labor, Sharon is expected to face difficulties in forming a stable government from the myriad political and religious factions, especially amid the turmoil of the Palestinian uprising.

Despite unrelenting violence with the Palestinians and a crippling economic crisis, Likud won 36 seats in the 120-member parliament — up from 19 seats in the outgoing Knesset, according to Israel TV's exit poll. The bloc of rightist and religious parties that support Sharon's tough stance against the Palestinians

won 70 seats overall, the TV said.

Perhaps the big winner was Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, a pugnacious journalist-turned-politician who heads the Shinui Party, which has vehemently opposed joining any coalition with religious parties. Shinui was projected to emerge as the third largest with 15 seats. The Yugoslav-born Lapid, 71, called on Mitzna and Sharon to join him in a "secular unity government" excluding religious parties.

Once-dominant Labor, which called for a speedy pullout from most of the West Bank and Gaza, won only 18 seats, compared to 26 in the outgoing parliament, the TV said — a reflection of Israelis' anger at the failure of a decade of peace efforts with the Palestinians which the party led.

The projections were greeted with dismay by Palestinians. Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekat said they show "Israelis are preparing themselves for more violence and escalation, not for a peace process."

The vote was Israel's fourth national election in seven years, and only 68.5 percent of the 4.7 million-strong electorate cast ballots. The campaign failed to ignite excitement, both because Sharon's victory was considered inevitable and because Israelis have despaired of a quick fix to the bloody and debilitating conflict.

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