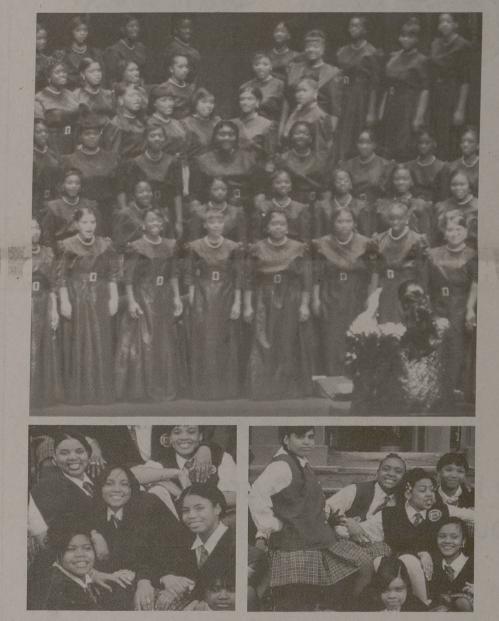
"A religious experience... the girls are ready." Al Roker, NBC's Today Show

"The girls sound like angels." Newsweek Magazine

# From the Heart of Harlem!

Let's Hear It For The Girls!



6

Wednesday, January 29, 2003

WOR

THE BATTAL

### U.S. fights off Afghan rebel

#### 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.

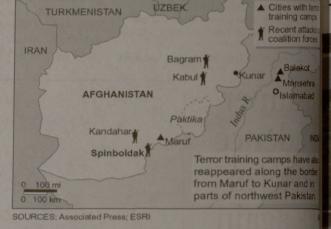
At least 18 rebels were killed in the assault. The U.S. military believes the fighters are loyal to renegade warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a powerful Pashtun strongman who has vowed to link his forces with remnants of al-Qaida and the ousted Taliban regime.

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 attac on U.S.-led coalition troops in Afghanistan.



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

The fighting, which st Monday, had ended by Tus evening, and coalition for were searching the caves wh the rebel forces had been hit said Lt. Col. Dave Lapan Pentagon spokesman.

The battle marked an imp tant shift in the challenges far the U.S.-led coalition. Taliban — Hafiz Abdul Rahim,

### Sharon's Likud Party wins election Aggies

of southeastern Afghanistan,

about 250 miles northeast of the

pointed to Hekmatyar's military

arm, the Hezb-e-Islami move-

ment, he gave no further details,

which a former high-ranking

Obeidullah, who goes by

only one name, told The Associated Press that the fight-

ing was being led by two ex-

Taliban member questioned.

While King said evidence

#### By Dan Perry THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

- Prime Minister Ariel JERUSALEM 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 "Tom Lapid, a pugnacious journalist-turned-politi who heads the Shinui Party, which has vehen ly opposed joining any coalition with religi parties. Shinui was projected to emerge # third largest with 15 seats. The Yugoslavia Lapid, 71, called on Mitzna and Sharon wa him in a "secular unity government" exclud religious parties.

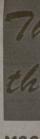
Once-dominant Labor, which called for speedy pullout from most of the West Bat Gaza, won only 18 seats, compared to 26ite outgoing parliament, the TV said - a reliant of Israelis' anger at the failure of a loss peace efforts with the Palestinians which party led.

The projections were greeted with dismay Palestinians. Cabinet Minister Saeb Erekats they show "Israelis are preparing themselves more violence and escalation, not for a pea process.'

The vote was Israel's fourth national election seven years, and only 68.5 percent of the 4.71 lion-strong electorate cast ballots. The campa failed to ignite excitement, both because Shar victory was considered inevitable and bec Israelis have despaired of a quick fix to the bloo and debilitating conflict.

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