

## *An Unforgettable Saturday in Kabul*

*Wednesday, October 4, 2006*



*It's not easy getting around in Kabul. The metropolis is densely populated, hot, smoggy and nothing short of filthy.*

*The downtown area is particularly difficult to navigate, on foot or by vehicle, as the streets and sidewalks are choked with people and vehicles of all types.*

*Arezo, 4, right, looks at her mother Parwin, left, who grimaces in pain at Wazir Akbar Khan hospital, due to injuries suffered after a suicide bomber blew himself up in Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, Sept 30, 2006. A suicide bomber exploded next to Afghanistan's Interior Ministry on Saturday, killing at least 10 people and wounding 54, officials said.*

*Perhaps a good way to describe it would be to take New York City, downtown Manhattan, multiply the cars, busses and pedestrian traffic tenfold, and then take away all of the traffic lights and signs.*

*Mayhem.*

*On any given day, thick crowds of people congregate outside the government buildings that house the various Afghani Ministries and the office workers, assorted bureaucrats and government minions that work there.*

*Saturday past was typical of most days outside the Ministry of Interior building. The long queues to enter the buildings started forming a little bit earlier since business comes to a halt at midday during the Ramadan holiday.*

*The early morning bustle was abruptly shattered by the sound of a deafening explosion. A suicide bomber, thwarted in his attempt to enter the Ministry of Interior, detonated the explosives strapped to his body amidst the early morning crowd.*

*Flying rock, choking dust and debris filled the air. Nothing remained of the crowd of humanity that had been standing there just a few seconds before --*

*except a smoking crater, gouts of blood, body parts and pieces of shredded clothing.*

*For a moment there seemed to be a long moment of silence, but soon the morning air was filled with the cries of the wounded, followed by a seemingly collective moan, a shrill keening of grief and pain.*

*Panic and confusion filled the streets as police and civilians rushed to aid victims of the carnage and remove the lifeless, bloody heaps - all that remained of a score of innocent men, women and children.*

*One of them, a young child - her body obliterated, torn to pieces by the blast, her face somehow left intact, a look of shocked surprise, reflecting the last nanosecond of emotion of her brief life.*

*Soldiering and combat is understood. But this? So there was a day followed by a sleepless night for it all to settle in, to be able to absorb some of the madness and the savage butchery of the act. Shock was replaced by deep anger and then a pure unadulterated fury. That sense of fury has brought a new awareness and keen realization of what we are up against.*

*And yet there are the politically insensible who still choose to paint the war against terrorism in a rosy sort of light, who adopt and attach cosmetic names to the enemy like "insurgents" instead of naming them for what they truly are: murderous, cowardly, terrorists, butchers. The same naivety that leads them to believe we can negotiate or reason our way out of this fight against an enemy that exists simply to destroy, dominate and murder. If the enemy is so willing and eager to bring death and destruction to their own countrymen and brethren, than there's no doubt they will gladly deliver it to our own doorstep, since we are in their minds "the Great Satan" and "the land of the infidel".*

*— Jerry*