


One of The Largest JailBreaks of Modern History By Taliban

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Unlocking Sarpoza

The June 13 jailbreak released hundreds of prisoners – some Taliban, some common criminals – from Afghanistan's notorious Sarpoza prison.



HOW IT HAPPENED:
Some events may have happened simultaneously and therefore not in the sequence given here.

- In the hours before the bombing, insurgents warn people to evacuate the area because of an impending attack.
- Minutes before the attack, rockets or rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) explode near Dand Chowk and Gendama police barracks.
- A fuel tanker drives up to the main gate of Sarpoza prison. Moments later, RPGs hit it, and the explosion knocks out windows a kilometre away.
- A metal chunk of the main gate lands in the criminal section, and other bits of debris shower down on the rest of the compound.
- Guard towers at each corner of the prison walls have been recently constructed with Canadian funding but are unfinished. Guards return fire against the Taliban only from the southwest tower.
- An office for the traffic police is partly destroyed by the blast.
- A guard is blasted into pieces by a rocket-propelled grenade as he's taking cover at this location.
- Three more guards are killed at these locations.
- Inmates open fire from a cell in the national-security wing that contains Taliban prisoners.
- Six guards in the main tower, which stands in the centre of the jail, take cover and survive.
- The Taliban go straight for the national-security wing and shoot the locks off the gates. A few go a distance inside and distribute weapons to comrades.
- This is the national-security wing, containing accused Taliban, murderers and kidnappers.
- After opening the national-security wing, the insurgents break open the criminal wing.
- There is damage in the rehabilitation wing of the prison.
- Taliban break down the door of the women's section.
- Most of the prisoners run across the ruins of the main gate and go south.

COURTESY: THE GLOBE AND MAIL. SOURCE: GENDAMA SHOTS

Sarpoza Prison: JailBreak Site in Kandahar

Taliban accomplished one of the largest jailbreaks in modern history, freeing at least 800 prisoners and rampaging into Kandahar without facing any serious resistance from Canadian troops or the other forces assigned to protect the city.

This is an excellent article from [the globe and mail](http://www.theglobeandmail.com) regarding this massive Taliban jailbreak. When one knows the details of the prison break, one is able to appreciate how Allah helps the believers in the most unique of ways as well as the intelligence of the Mujaahideen which Allah has blessed them with. The tactics employed by the Mujaahideen were very intelligent and one can get a sense that they were thoughtful of the circumstances that may or may not happen. Let this be a reminder to the Kuffaar and Murtadeen who are fighting us that the Army of Muhammad is coming to cut off their heads and blow them into pieces and make the word of Allah supreme.

AllahuAkbar!

May Allah allow the Mujaahideen to pull off more successful operations as such.

Inside The Taliban Jailbreak

by Graeme Smith

[Globe and Mail](#)

July 2, 2008

The prison cells that once held Taliban sit almost empty, with little remaining except rubbish: plates of rice ready for meals never eaten, and sandals discarded by fugitives who ran away in bare feet. Some of the debris inside Sarpoza prison offer hints about what happened amid the chaos last month when **the Taliban accomplished one of the largest jailbreaks in modern history, freeing at least 800 prisoners and rampaging into Kandahar without facing any serious resistance from Canadian troops or the other forces assigned to protect the city.**

A chunk of metal the size of a picnic table sits 125 meters away from the site where a truck bomb hit the gate, testifying to the force of the explosion. In a room where prison officials believe the inmates planned their escape, bullet casings on the floor suggest the prisoners had smuggled at least one handgun into the cells.

With those scattered bits of evidence, and a dozen interviews with witnesses, a picture emerges of the way security collapsed in the largest city in southern Afghanistan on the evening of Friday, June 13. Details of the attack show not only why the city defences fell apart; they also illustrate how the notorious problems of the Afghan mission – corruption, poor intelligence, a distrustful population, weak Afghan security forces, a lack of foreign troops – made the ingredients of a disaster.

The Canadian military has not escaped blame. In a private session two days after the attack, Kandahar's provincial council strongly criticized the foreign troops for arriving at Sarpoza roughly two hours after the jailbreak started. They demanded to know why Canadian soldiers watched the prisoners run away and failed to chase them. Witnesses say that hundreds of inmates spent their first night of freedom camping in the fields only a few kilometres south of the prison, within easy reach of the Canadian soldiers sent to investigate.

Brigadier-General Denis Thompson, the top Canadian commander in Kandahar, confirmed that NATO surveillance tracked the fugitives as they fled. But he said it's not Canada's job as part of the International Security Assistance Force to hunt down escaped prisoners.

Gen. Thompson said:

You can ask yourself the rhetorical question, what if we find 100 fugitives in the fields? What is ISAF's duty in that circumstance? Is it to go arrest people?

The commander continued:

We're not policing this country, right? It's not our role to police this country. Our role is to stand behind our Afghan partners and

assist them.

But the Afghan forces stationed nearby did not consider themselves capable of standing up to the Taliban that evening, as police in three outposts around the prison hunkered down behind their fortifications and refused to intervene.

Local and foreign intelligence agencies also failed to understand glaring signs of trouble at the jail in the weeks before the attack, including a mass poisoning of prison guards just eight days beforehand. Taliban fighters warned local shopkeepers about an impending battle in the hours before they struck, but nobody passed the warning to the correct authorities.

Corruption likely helped the Taliban that night, too, as some indications have implicated a senior Afghan official in the jailbreak planning.

Sifting through the rubble at Sarpoza prison, it's obvious that **the attack was not just a successful Taliban operation. It was a failure of the institutions that protect Kandahar city**, despite the Canadian money and lives expended to build a zone of security here in the past two years.

Three of the city's top Afghan security officials have been fired in the aftermath of the jailbreak, and the prison director has been arrested. A review by Afghanistan's intelligence service concluded that the prison needed more guards, better weapons and stronger fortifications. But the lessons of Sarpoza may prove more fundamental, pointing to the fragility of the international efforts in Afghanistan.

The last time residents of Kandahar city heard rumours about a possible jailbreak was two years ago, in the summer of 2006. Insurgents had been digging trenches and establishing bases in the village of Pashmul, 15 kilometers west of the city limits. The whispers among insurgents suggested plans for a Taliban inmate to fake an illness, allowing an ambulance full of gunmen to slip through the heavy black gates of the prison compound. With the insurgents already operating so close to the edge of the city, the threat seemed credible.

But the attack never happened, possibly because Canadian troops and their allies smashed the Taliban's bases in Pashmul with a massive offensive in September of 2006.

Two years later, however, the Taliban had again established a foothold 15 kilometers outside the city, this time directly south of the prison in a cluster of villages known as the Nakhonay triangle. Canadian troops had known for months that insurgents were massing in Nakhonay, with Taliban reportedly enforcing their own laws and using the area as a staging ground for operations. But the Canadians lacked the troops necessary to set up permanent security in those villages. The Taliban would exploit the security vacuum in the Nakhonay area on June 13, entering and leaving through the farmland south of the prison.

But the Canadians could not be accused of neglecting the prison itself. One of the key tenets of "*clear, hold, and build*," as a method of counterinsurgency is the idea that investing money and improving the lives in a particular spot will make the locals more likely to deliver useful intelligence. By that measure, the guards and prisoners at Sarpoza should have been excellent sources for the Canadians, who had been pouring money into the jail.

In the year before the prison break, the Canadians paid for new septic systems, solar-powered lighting, new doors and windows, an infirmary, landscaping, guard towers and washroom facilities, among other improvements. Painted walls replaced the rough stone surfaces; where chunks of masonry used to fall on prisoners as they slept, the ceilings now arched smoothly.

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The current budget for all prison upgrades stands at \$4-million, and Canadian officials visited the jail regularly to check on the progress.

Despite the Canadians' focus on the prison, however, they failed to understand the trouble brewing inside.

A report by the U.S. magazine Newsweek claimed that the planning started when a disgruntled prisoner telephoned insurgent leader Mullah Berader and complained about prison conditions, but that story was dismissed by Taliban spokesman Qari Yousef Ahmadi.

Mr. Ahmadi said:

The Taliban in jail were always calling us, asking us to release them. Especially our commanders who were sentenced to 20 years or execution.

Several sources say the planning started in earnest after accused Taliban prisoners launched a hunger strike in May, trying to obtain sentences in cases that remained undecided. Some suspected insurgents had languished in the prison for years without a conviction, and they described themselves as frustrated with a justice process that they claimed was designed to keep them in jail indefinitely.

They struck a committee of seven Taliban prisoners, who gathered every day inside one of the nicest cells of the national-security wing, a sunny room on the north side with a view of a garden.

They posted a sign on their door, saying: ***“No interruptions from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.”***

Prison officials say a few members of the prisoners' committee also held regular meetings, in private, with prison director Colonel Abdul Qadir. It's not known what they discussed; one of the prison officials who helped arrange the meetings was shot in the head during the jailbreak, and Col. Qadir was arrested soon afterward.

An insurgent who escaped, a 28-year-old father of two children who didn't want his name published, said the Taliban planners were helped by jail officials.

The fugitive said:

Important officials from the jail helped us bring in pistols and mobile phones, and we also bought some explosives for the bombing.

The same cell where prison officials believe the Taliban held their afternoon planning meetings contained an Arabic phrase recently painted on the wall: ***“Jihad is mandatory.”*** The accused Taliban in that cell sometimes imposed their religious fervor on fellow inmates, giving long speeches about Islam in the evenings, refusing to allow any disrespect toward Taliban supreme leader Mullah Muhammad Omar and enforcing early wake-up times for morning prayers.

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their room also had a view of the jail's central guard tower, and prison officials say they used at least one smuggled handgun to open fire on the tower during the jailbreak. Brass casings remain on the cell floor. None of the guards in the tower were killed or injured, but the gunfire coming from that corner of the prison may have resulted in the initial false reports that Taliban had breached the prison's north wall.

No matter how suspicious the behavior of the Taliban inmates at the time, Gen. Thompson said it would have been difficult for the Canadians to notice.

He said:

If there are Taliban holding little meetings and they've struck some kind of agreement with the warden, if that was in fact the case, I don't think we'd be aware of it unless the warden saw fit to share it with us.

The Canadian commander said he was also unaware, until informed by The Globe and Mail, that most of the prison staff had been poisoned in the week before the attack.

Rahim Bibi, 40, superintendent of the women's section, said one bite of the mutton stew was enough to tell her something was wrong when she sat down with other guards and a few prisoners for an evening meal on June 5. The meat tasted bitter, like tobacco. Soon at least 25 people at the dinner were vomiting. Some bled from the nose and mouth, and fell unconscious. Many were hospitalized and the rest staggered home, leaving only a few guards on duty that evening.

It's unclear why the poisoning happened, and prison officials say it was never properly investigated. Like the other staff, Ms. Bibi recovered from the poisoning and returned to work. She didn't notice anything else unusual, she said, until she had a puzzling conversation with the prison director on the day of the attack. She passed him outside his office, she said, and he smiled at her.

Ms. Bibi said:

He told me, 'Something might happen tonight,' He said, 'If any of the prisoners owes you money, collect it. If you owe them money, pay it'.

In the hours before the bombing, others in the neighbourhood also received warnings. Insurgents visited shops and a gas pump near the prison, telling people to evacuate the area because of an impending attack. The tactic was effective: Only one civilian, who worked at a bakery, was confirmed killed in the subsequent bombing. Apparently nobody passed the warning to police, or the information was never acted on.

Haji Ehsan, a provincial council member said:

Why didn't the people call the government? Because the people are afraid of the government.

The first explosions and gunfire erupted around 9:10 p.m., witnesses say, as insurgents attacked the Dand Chowk police checkpoint about 600 metres east of the prison and the Gendama police barracks about 2,200 metres to the west, hitting the two nearest positions held by Afghan forces and keeping them away from the prison for the next hour.

Sardar Mohammed, the police captain responsible for the eight officers at Dand Chowk, said his men were pinned down behind their sandbags for half an hour, and even after reinforcements arrived, they only managed to take up positions a dozen metres further toward the prison.

He said:

Mostly we fired our rifles in the dark

At the same time as the two checkpoint attacks, a fuel tanker rolled up to Sarpoza's main gate. The driver appeared nervous, and he ran away. Guards fired in the direction of the fleeing insurgent, but he escaped; the Taliban later claimed the suicide bomb had a defective switch.

Moments later, at about 9:18 or 9:19 p.m., two rocket-propelled grenades whistled out of the darkness. The first shot missed the tanker but the second ignited a massive explosion. Witnesses describe a shock wave so powerful that it knocked out windows a kilometre away, and a large ball of white light rose momentarily over the west side of Kandahar city. Four guards in the gate towers were killed instantly.

The remaining guards offered little resistance as the Taliban charged through the haze of dust and falling debris. Gunfire came from only one of five guard towers. A guard was blasted into pieces by a rocket-propelled grenade as he took cover underneath a water tower.

Three more were shot to death along the corridor that leads into the heart of the prison. The Taliban went straight for the national-security wing, shooting the locks off the prison gates with a belt-fed machine gun at close range.

A few insurgents went a short distance along the rows of Taliban cells and distributed weapons to comrades, shouting at them to escape quickly. Cell doors in the wing are required to be locked by nightfall, but the Taliban timed their strike just minutes before the guards made their evening rounds; one escaped insurgent said a group of ringleaders hiding in the bathroom had given precise timing to the jailbreakers using smuggled cellphones.

More contraband cellphones appeared in the hands of inmates after the first moments of the attack, witnesses said, describing a chorus of men shouting into their handsets: *"God is great!"*

An insurgent who participated in the jailbreak said the Taliban leaders had a short argument after opening the national-security wing, because they disagreed about whether to set free the jail's criminals, but eventually decided to open all the locks.

Meanwhile, outside the jail, other insurgents were distracting the security forces with several small gun battles inside the city. At one point, a Western observer counted six simultaneous gun battles in the downtown.

Dost Mohammed, a 23 year old policeman said:

They kept us busy, We could hear shooting in many places in town, and we were afraid.

The confusion was equally frightening for most of the prisoners. Bashir Ahmad, 19, said he followed the Taliban's orders to get out of the prison, and was confronted by an insurgent commander near the gate who wore a nakool hat and spoke with an accent that suggested he was not native to

and was welcomed by an insurgent commander near the gate who wore a pakol hat and spoke with an accent that suggested he was not native to Kandahar. The commander had a scarf wrapped around his entire head, he said, with only his left eye showing.

Mr. Ahmad said:

He gave us a choice: Fight along with the Taliban, or go home, Many of us wanted to go home, so they divided us into groups of 100 or 200. They appointed a Taliban commander for each group, and each group had a few Taliban guards.

The insurgents shepherded the groups of escapees down narrow alleyways, through vineyards, and across streams. When they heard aircraft, they took cover under trees or lay down in fields of wheat.

Mr. Ahmad's group spent the night camped in a village about 12 kilometres south of the prison, but others didn't go as far, flopping down to sleep one or two kilometres away from the scene of the jailbreak.

Many of them expected the government or foreign troops to chase them, and expressed amazement at the lack of pursuers. Canada's Quick Reaction Force, deployed from Camp Nathan Smith about six kilometres away, was seen by one Western observer arriving at Sarpoza around 11 p.m., after the shooting had stopped.

Roughly 400 Taliban escaped the national-security wing, and only three were recaptured.

A Taliban fighter, now enjoying freedom with his family in Kandahar city said:

I thought that there would be big fighting, aerial bombardments, and many Taliban would be killed some arrested, But when we reached our safe houses we were surprised, because there was no fighting, nothing.

He added:

I didn't think we would succeed like we did.

Courtesy: [The Ignored Puzzle Peaces of Knowledge](#)