

Afghan's celebrate freedom

KABUL, Afghanistan – Afghans celebrated Asht-e-Sawr, the 14th anniversary of the Mujahideen rebels' victory over the country's former Soviet-backed government with a grand military parade Friday.

The parade, which highlighted the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, began with President Hamid Karzai inspecting the troops before taking his place alongside government ministers, former Mujahideen leaders and numerous foreign diplomats and military representatives.

Units of the ANA and ANP marched past the reviewing stands in neat formations, followed by a vast display of military equipment including tanks, helicopters, armored personnel carriers, artillery pieces and much more.

Addressing the crowd, Karzai expressed his confidence in the successful involvement of the ANA and ANP in Afghanistan's ongoing reconstruction, "We are determined to promote our national interests now that Afghanistan is no longer under the rule of others, but under the rule of Afghans."

The celebration is known to Afghans as Asht-e-Sawr because it falls on the eighth day of Sawr, the second month in the Afghan calendar.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mason T. Lowery



(Above) Afghan President Hamid Karzai salutes the crowd during Asht-e-Sawr, a parade honoring the 14th anniversary of the Mujahideen rebels' victory over the country's former Soviet-backed government. (Left) Afghans inspect a symbol of their country's military capability as it rumbles past. (Right) Buzkashi players representing the free spirit of Afghanistan ride in the parade. Buzkashi is the national sport of Afghanistan and dates back almost 1,000 years.



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(Above) Afghan President Hamid Karzai inspects the Afghan National Police during the Afghan Independence celebration. (Right) ANP officers salute as they drive past dignitaries. (Far right) Afghan National Army soldiers march in historic uniforms.



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– *President Hamid Karzai*

