

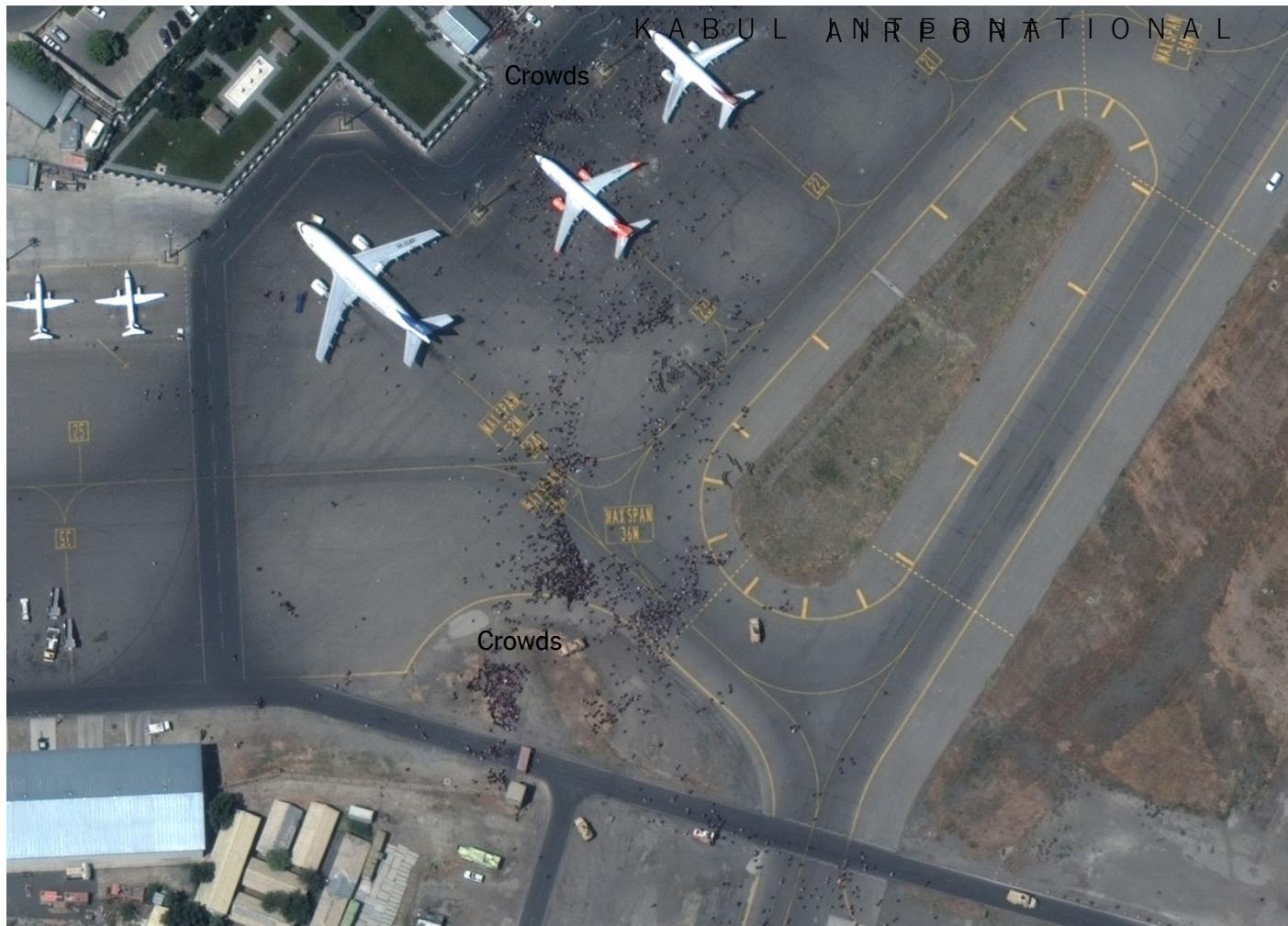


# Chaos and Desperation at the Kabul Airport

By Lazaro Gamio, Karen Yourish, Lauren Leatherby and Sarah Kerr Aug. 16, 2021

Some Afghans tried to cling onto departing planes. Others crowded the tarmac after security lines were breached. By nightfall, all flights from the Kabul airport were suspended.





The tarmac on Monday morning. Source: Maxar Technologies

The U.S. military, which had been evacuating thousands of Americans and other foreign citizens, controls the military side of the airport. But it stopped all flights and tried to gain control of the civilian side after days of chaos and lax security. As panic and sadness intensified about a return to the Taliban's rule, many Afghans wept, recognizing their chance to escape was slim.





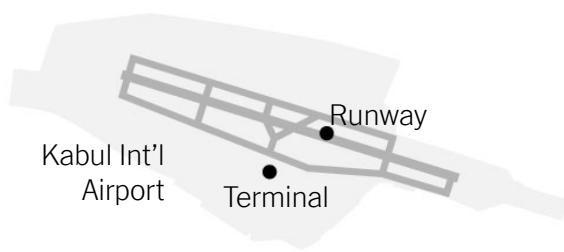
Source: Maxar Technologies

Satellite images taken earlier on Monday showed large crowds of Afghans breaking out of the terminals and across the tarmac, and videos showed some civilians trying to climb into the jet bridge leading to a Kam Air jet.



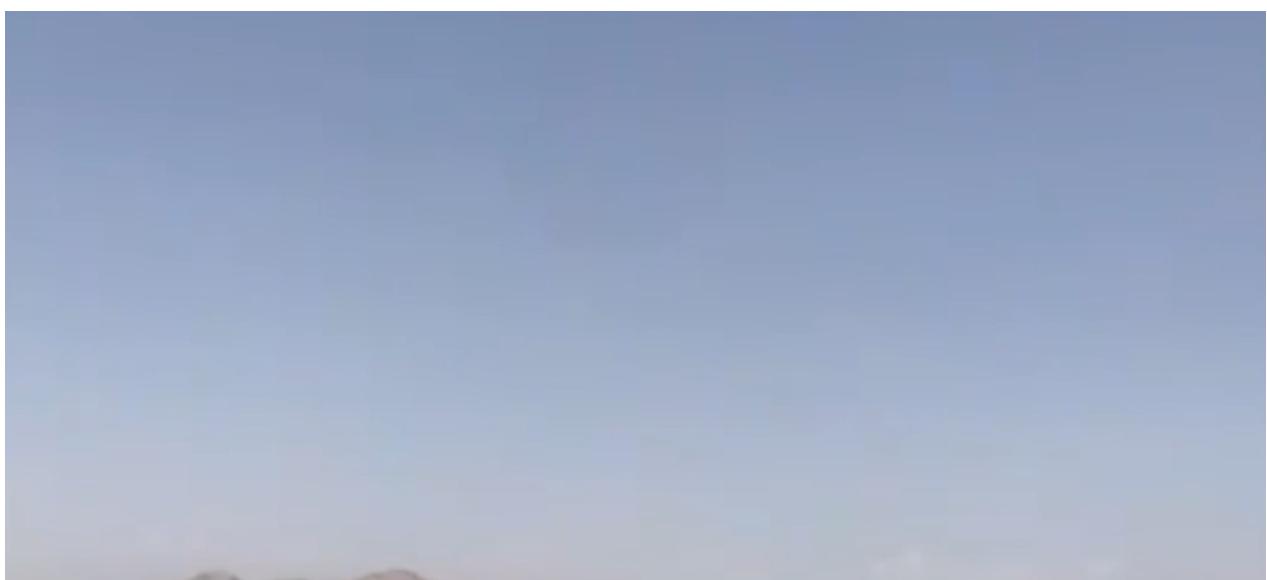


Source: Associated Press



Source: Maxar Technologies

U.S. forces flew helicopters low over the crowd in a bid to clear the tarmac for planes to take off.





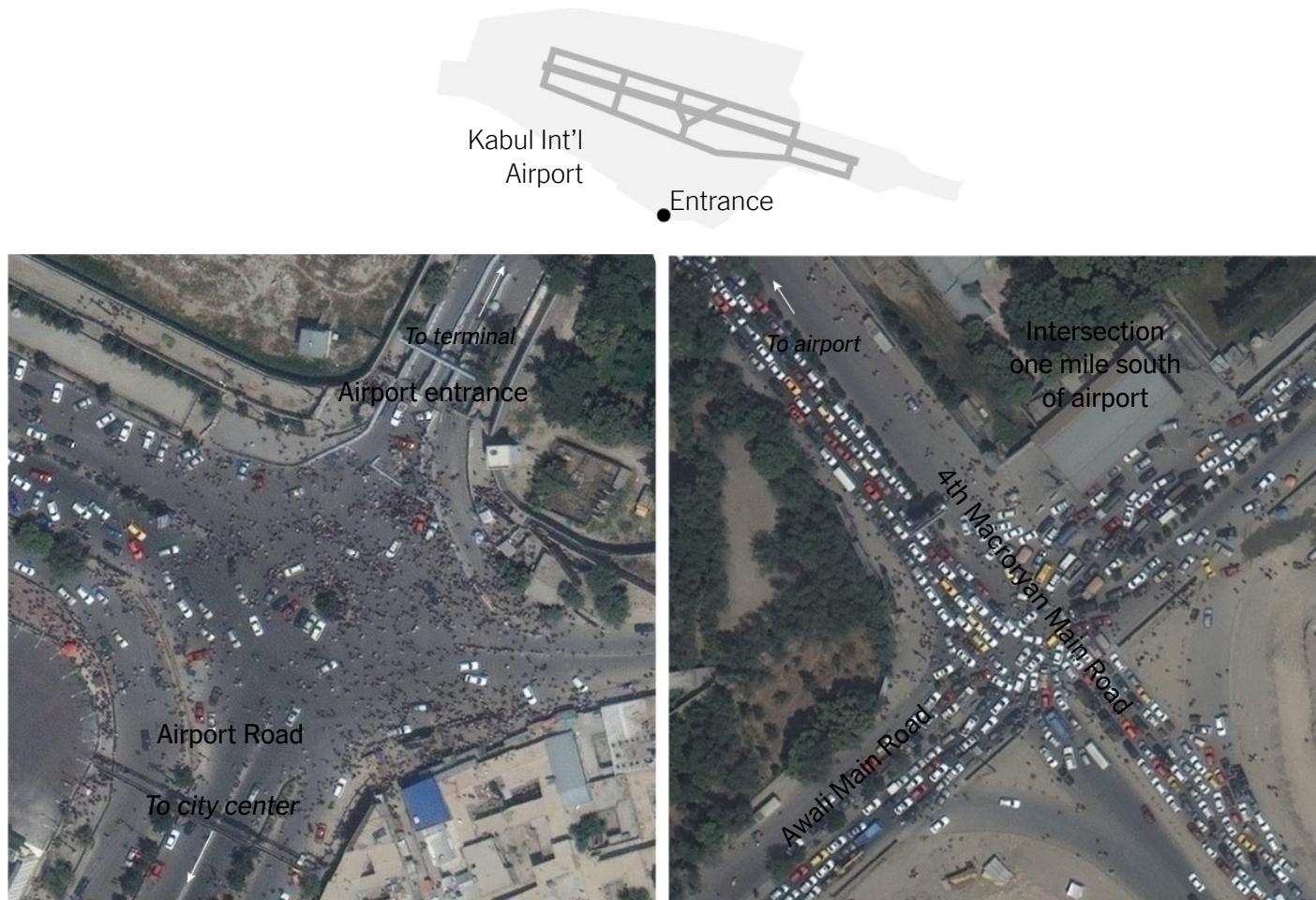
Crowds desperate to flee the country also amassed outside the airport's gates.





Source: Mattheiu Aikins, via Storyful

Several witnesses said the Taliban were now controlling access to entrances on the civilian side of the airport, preventing people and vehicles from getting in. Satellite imagery showed massive traffic jams near the entrance to the airport. One European worker was told that no one would be allowed to leave the country without permission from the “new government.”



Source: Maxar Technologies

Top video: Mukhtar Wafayee, via Twitter