

US ANNOUNCES “GUARDIAN ANGEL” PROGRAM TO PROTECT SLEEPING TROOPS DAY BEFORE SLEEPING AFGHANS KILLED

It was announced on Thursday that among a number of changes General John Allen, Commander of US troops in Afghanistan, put into place is a program to provide additional security over US troops as they sleep. Remarkably, on the very next day, nine Afghan policemen were gunned down by an apparent Taliban infiltrator. Perhaps Afghan security personnel are even more in need of guardian angels.

Here is the description of the “Guardian Angel” program from The Telegraph:

US military commanders in Afghanistan have assigned “guardian angels” to watch over troops as they sleep, among a series of other increased security measures, in the wake of rogue Afghan soldiers targeting Nato forces.

The added protections are part of a directive issued in recent weeks by Gen John Allen, the top US commander in Afghanistan, to guard against insider threats, according to a senior military official.

The so-called guardian angels provide an extra layer of security, watching over the troops as they sleep, when they are exercising, and going about their day.

Among the new measures introduced, Americans are now allowed to carry weapons in several Afghan ministries. They have also been told to rearrange

their office desks so they face the door.

As described, these security measures are an acknowledgment that green on blue killings of US and other NATO forces by Afghans are an increasing problem. Further complicating the prospects for Afghan security personnel to take over as NATO troops withdraw, however, is an incident today in which an Afghan police officer drugged and then killed nine of his colleagues before apparently collecting all their weapons and then speeding off in a truck to rejoin the Taliban. This is the third green on green attack this month and could turn out to be a huge deterrent to recruiting an Afghan security force of the size needed under the current plan for NATO withdrawal and handoff of security.

From the New York Times:

A member of an Afghan militia promoted by the American military to protect rural villages drugged his colleagues and killed at least nine of them as they slept on Friday, the third deadly incident involving the irregular guard force in March.

The killings added to concerns about the militia, known as the Afghan Local Police. Touted by American military commanders as a way to give Afghans a larger stake in battling the insurgency, the local police program has been assailed by rights advocates and many Afghans for bringing former Taliban and criminal elements into positions of armed authority.

Reuters documents the shooter rejoining the Taliban:

An Afghan policeman killed nine colleagues in an attack in eastern province Paktika, the governor's office said on Friday, the latest in a string

of rogue shootings that has also targeted foreign forces.

Two policemen have been detained after the attack on Thursday night in Yahya Khil district, while a third officer was missing. It was not clear if the assailant was among the pair detained, said Mukhlis Afghan, the provincial governor's spokesman.

The Taliban said that soon after the attack, the assailant came over to the group, bringing a vehicle and weapons taken from the dead policemen. "He has joined our mujahideen," spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a text message to reporters that arrived as news of the shooting emerged.

More details come from Dawn:

Bawal Khan, chief of Yayakhil district, identified the gunman as Asadullah, who goes by one name. He said the gunman was assigned to a small command post when he woke up at 3 am for guard duty. He then used his assault rifle to kill the nine men sleeping inside the post, took their weapons and piled them in a pickup truck.

According to Khan, Asadullah then sped away in the truck.

Khan said the victims included one of his brothers and the commander of the post, identified as Mohammad Ramazan. He said two of the dead were Ramazan's sons.

The motive for the killing was not known, but police in the area blamed the Taliban for the attack. Paktika is a stronghold of the Haqqani network with ties to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Although they mostly attack US-led coalition forces, they have often

carried out assaults and bombings
against the Afghan army and police.

It's hard to imagine how a large Afghan security force "trained" by NATO can be recruited and maintained if incidents such as this one occur with any frequency.

It is even harder to imagine how the Obama administration can continue to insist that there is no reason for a strategic review on Afghanistan until after the November election.