

BAD WEEKEND IN AFGANISTAN: ATTACKS BY AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE, AFGHAN LOCAL POLICE AND TALIBAN IN US UNIFORMS

It has been a horrific weekend for NATO forces in Afghanistan. Friday, insurgents infiltrated the air base where Britain's Prince Harry is stationed and destroyed a large number of aircraft and facilities. The infiltration was aided by the attackers wearing US uniforms. Saturday, two British troops were killed by a member of the Afghan Local Police and today four US soldiers were killed by a group of Afghan National Police. The six green on blue deaths bring the total for this year to 51.

Here is the latest information from ISAF on Friday's attack:

Following the 14 September attack at Camp Bastion, in which two Coalition service members were killed when insurgents attacked the base's airfield, the International Security Assistance Force provides the following additional details. Because it is still early in the investigation of this attack, this information is subject to change as new details become available:

The attack commenced just after 10 p.m. when approximately 15 insurgents executed a well-coordinated attack against the airfield on Camp Bastion. The insurgents, organized into three teams, penetrated at one point of the perimeter fence.

The insurgents appeared to be well equipped, trained and rehearsed.

Dressed in U.S. Army uniforms and armed with automatic rifles, rocket propelled grenade launchers and suicide vests, the insurgents attacked Coalition fixed and rotary wing aircraft parked on the flight line, aircraft hangars and other buildings.

Six Coalition AV-8B Harrier jets were destroyed and two were significantly damaged. Three Coalition refueling stations were also destroyed. Six soft-skin aircraft hangars were damaged to some degree.

Coalition forces engaged the insurgents, killing 14 and wounding one who was taken into custody. In addition to the two Coalition service members that were killed, nine Coalition personnel – eight military and one civilian contractor – were wounded in the attack. None of their injuries are considered life-threatening.

Danger Room provides some perspective on the issue of insurgents having access to US uniforms:

Nor is Friday's attack the first perpetrated by insurgents disguised as U.S. troops. In 2010, following a spate of such attacks, the Pentagon ordered the Army to begin treating stocks of uniforms as "sensitive" and remove them from "pilferable" ground resupply convoys moving through Pakistan. "There is evidence that the enemy is using pilfered out-garment uniform items to gain a tactical advantage," the Pentagon warned.

The unanswered question from Friday's attack is did the insurgents hang on to uniforms obtained in 2010 or were the steps taken to secure the supply of uniforms breached recently? How many

more uniforms do the insurgents have?

Danger Room also points out there there is a high-profile target at Camp Bastion and that there have been other recent attacks aimed at high-profile NATO targets:

The attack on Camp Bastion, in restive Helmand province, came after the Taliban vowed to take revenge for the release by a mysterious U.S. filmmaker of an inflammatory, albeit amateurish, movie mocking the Muslim prophet Muhammad. The insurgent group had also threatened to kill or capture the U.K.'s Prince Harry, who recently deployed to Camp Bastion as an Apache helicopter pilot. The prince "was never in any danger," NATO's International Security Assistance Force stated.

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The Bastion attack is not the first time insurgents have targeted NATO aircraft. Last month a rocket damaged an Air Force C-17 cargo plane assigned to carry Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey on his Afghanistan tour.

Saturday's attack by a member of the Afghan Local Police suggests that the decision to suspend training of the ALP by Special Forces comes too late, and after too many insurgents have been provided access:

The [Helmand] province's deputy police chief, Ismail Hotak, identified the dead troops as British and said four other troops were wounded.

The Afghan shooter was killed by another soldier at the scene in the town of Gereshk, Hotak said. Since 2007, when the insider- attack phenomenon began, about 105 international troops have been killed by rogue Afghan security forces.

The perpetrator was believed to be a member of the 16,000-member Afghan Local Police, the smallest component of the 352,000-strong Afghan national forces. The police are based in towns and villages and act as a sort of militia, partnered with U.S. Special Forces.

Today's attack left four US troops and one Afghan National Police member dead at a scene from which five more ANP had fled by the time aid from a checkpoint arrived:

Four U.S. troops fighting with the NATO-led alliance were killed in another suspected "insider" attack in southern Afghanistan on Sunday, bringing the total number of deaths this weekend caused by Afghans turning on their allies to six.

Four troops were found dead and two wounded when a response team arrived at the scene from a nearby checkpoint, a spokesman for the coalition said. A Pentagon spokesman confirmed that the four dead were Americans.

One of the six members of the Afghan National Police (ANP) operating the observation post with six coalition troops was also found dead, while the other five had disappeared.

"The fighting had stopped by the time the responders arrived," said Major Adam Wojack, a spokesman for the NATO-led coalition.

Presumably, the US soldiers who were wounded will be able to provide information on how the ANP were able to kill four and wound two US personnel while only losing one of the six members of their part of the team in what appears to be an observation point that was staffed with six US troops and six ANP.

Six green on blue deaths over a weekend is a large number, even for the rapidly increasing rate of these attacks seen this year. If the manufactured outrage over the intentionally provocative video produced by a shady group of agitators in the US results in an even bigger increase in the rate of green on blue attacks the Obama administration will be placed in the very difficult situation of continuing to defend their policy in Afghanistan during the final weeks of the election campaign in the face of clear evidence that the policy is a failure.