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US Wipes Out Afghan Security Forces Unit in Major Friendly Fire Incident

Second major friendly fire incident by US in Afghanistan in a monthJason Ditz Posted onJune 12, 2019CategoriesNewsTagsAfghanistan, Pentagon

For the second time in less than a month, US forces carried out airstrikes "in self defense" in Afghanistan, only to discover that they were actually attacking Afghan security forces. The Wednesday strike ended up wiping out an entire unit, though officials have yet to disclose the exact number of deaths, beyond it apparently being everyone present.

The previous attack saw US ground troops believing they were under fire, and the warplanes attacking police, killing 18. In this case, too, US officials said they believed the troops came under fire, and the airstrikes targeted the Afghan forces, who had been firing machine guns.

Despite all the talk of self defense and US troops being "under effective fire," officials insist not a single US casualty occurred. US officials expressed "regret" for the deaths of Afghan partners.

Interestingly, however, US spokesman Col. David Butler praised the operation as "extensively planned and coordinated" with the Afghan forces, with an eye toward preventing exactly what ended up happening.

An investigation is promised, but all too often the investigations into incidents like these, where the result was particularly embarrassing, never really publicly end, and the day of the attack ends up the last we hear about it.