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Associated Press

Attacker in Afghan uniform kills US service member

5/11/2012

A man wearing an Afghan army uniform shot dead a U.S. [service member](#) in the east of the country, one of two [NATO troops](#) killed on Friday, military officials said. [The Taliban](#) took credit for the attack.

It was the 20th incident this year in which Afghan soldiers or insurgents disguised in military uniforms have turned their weapons on foreign troops. The incidents have raised the level of mistrust between the U.S.-led coalition and its Afghan partners and raised questions about the readiness of local forces to take over from NATO ahead of a 2014 deadline for the withdrawal of foreign combat troops.

An Afghan defense official said the incident took place in Kunar province in northeast [Afghanistan](#). The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

NATO did not disclose the nationality of the trooper killed, but a senior U.S. defense official said the victim was an American service member. The coalition said an investigation was under way.

In a statement, Taliban spokesman [Zabiullah Mujahid](#) claimed the insurgent group was behind the attack. The Taliban regularly take credit for attacks in the country, even if they were not involved.

The insider threat in which Afghan soldiers or militants disguised in uniforms turn on NATO troops has existed for years but has grown more deadly. The 20 insider attacks so far this year

have killed 13 **soldiers**, compared to 21 attacks last year that killed 35 coalition service members, according to a NATO tally.

That compares with 11 fatal attacks and 20 deaths in 2010. And in 2007 and 2008 there were a combined total of four attacks and four deaths.

The U.S.-led coalition routinely reports each time an American or other foreign soldier is killed by an Afghan in uniform, but the military is underreporting the number of overall attacks. The Associated Press reported last month that the coalition does not report attacks in which an Afghan wounds — or misses — his U.S. or allied target. It also doesn't report the wounding of troops who were attacked alongside those who were killed.

U.S. officials say that in most cases the rogue soldiers are motivated not by sympathy for the Taliban or on orders from the insurgents, but rather act as a result of personal grievances against the coalition.

NATO said a second service member died following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan, but did not provide further details about the death.