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## US Concedes Claims of Taliban Attack Decrease Were False

By Jason Ditz

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The claim that Taliban attacks are dropping in Afghanistan, the single piece of data backing up NATO claims of “progress” in the protracted occupation and indeed the centerpiece of President Obama’s re-election campaign speeches related to foreign policy, has turned out to be completely false, Pentagon officials admitted today.

The data, which seems to have formed the basis for much of NATO’s occupation strategy, was ultimately the result of a “clerical error” that officials attributed to the Afghan military turning in certain forms late. Officials say that the revised data shows attacks approximately flat, but they have simply removed all the old reports based on the false data and haven’t replaced them with anything since then.

Officials repeatedly cited the false data as proof of improved security in Afghanistan, and indeed it remains the only piece of “proof” that ever existed. Despite it turning out to be fake, officials say their assessment that the situation is getting better has not changed. They just don’t have anything to back it up with anymore.

Pentagon spokesman George Little says they only finally learned of the error during a “quality control” check recently, and that it is “unhelpful to have inaccurate information in our systems.” That the inaccurate information was the basis for major policy decisions, and that officials are standing by those decisions seemingly as a face-saving measure, is the much bigger concern.