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Afghan Spy Agency Claims to Be Infiltrating Taliban

By Jason Ditz
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Afghanistan's main intelligence agency, the NDS, is loudly touting its new campaign to send "shadowy" spies to the Helmand Province to infiltrate the Taliban and try to exploit existing divisions among the insurgents.

Afghan special envoy Abdul Jabbar Qahraman bragged the whole thing was his idea, and that the spies are going to wear clothes just like locals in Helmand do, making them totally indistinguishable from the local population, and subsequently able to trick the Taliban.

Helmand officials familiar with the situation, say that there are some 300 NDS people involved in the operation, and that they've conducted unspecified operations in the past, which have proven a success. The intention appears to be to grow the operation.

The Taliban has been somewhat fractured since the Afghan government revealed its founder, Mullah Omar, had died. The insurgency, however, has negotiated a growing rapprochement among themselves.

It is bizarre for the NDS to not only openly reveal a supposedly successful secret program, but offer details that might enable the Taliban to uncover its infiltrators. That they are trying to exacerbate the Taliban split may ultimately encourage the Taliban to speed up their reunification efforts.