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US Military Underreporting Fighting Between Afghan and NATO Troops

By John Glaser

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The U.S. military is concealing the frequency of incidents in which Afghan soldiers open fire on American and other NATO troops, [according to the Associated Press](#).

Afghan and American soldiers [have increasingly got into gun battles with each other](#), a signal of how much of a failure is one of the primary missions in the war in Afghanistan: training Afghan forces. American and NATO troops are frequently killed or injured in these clashes, but the Army only reports them some of the time.

“The U.S.-led coalition routinely reports each time an American or other foreign soldier is killed by an Afghan in uniform,” the Associated Press reports. But “it does not report insider attacks in which the 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.”

In 2011, 35 NATO troops were killed by their Afghan counterparts, according to figures provided by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), compared with 20 deaths in 2010. So far this year, 10 separate attacks have killed 19 ISAF service members, but the number of total attacks and the total number wounded have not been reported.

While unacceptable, the military’s systematic under-reporting of these incidents is not surprising. Support for the war – which has hit all-time lows in recent weeks – depends upon favorable information getting out. If the information doesn’t reflect well on the war, it is liable to be hidden from the people.

