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US Pullback in Afghanistan Hints at Failing Strategy

By John Glaser

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The US decision to scale back joint operations with Afghan security forces was said to be aimed at avoiding more insider attacks, but many wonder whether it is [the beginning of the end](#) of President Obama's main strategy in Afghanistan.



Insider attacks, in which Afghan security forces turn their guns on their US-NATO counterparts, have dramatically increased this year, with more than 50 troops, mostly American, killed in 2012. The US expected these incidents [to rise following unrest caused by](#) an insulting anti-Muslim film that caused anti-US protests across the Muslim world.

In response, NATO pulled back its cooperation with Afghan forces. Officials claim it is only partial and temporary, but this isn't the first time it has happened and the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan is making the failure of the war more blatant than ever.

Former US Ambassador to Afghanistan Ryan Crocker [said on Tuesday](#) that the Taliban has infiltrated the US-backed Afghan security forces to a much more extensive degree than US officials have been willing to admit.

President Obama's entire counter-insurgency strategy in Afghanistan rested on building up, arming, and training Afghan police and military to serve as a bulwark against the Taliban. If that tactic has failed, then the war mission itself has conclusively failed.