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US Commander: Afghan Troops Suffer Heavy Losses

By Jason Ditz

June 5, 2013

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the US commander for occupied Afghanistan, is warning that Afghan troops are suffering “heavy losses” as the Taliban’s offensive picks up steam, adding that the Taliban “are doing exactly what they said they would do.”

Dunford reported that Afghanistan lost 104 troops in a single week of intense fighting, and that more “high-profile” Taliban attacks are to be expected going forward.

Which all sounds like a really bad thing, but Gen. Dunford, ever the optimist, presented it as proof that the Afghan troops are able to “confront” the Taliban, adding that they’ve exceeded his expectations.

Which if taken on face value would mean Dunford was setting up the Afghan military to get absolutely thrashed, and now that they’re only getting sort of thrashed he sees that as progress. The reality, of course, is that the war continues to go poorly, the Afghan military is struggling mightily with recruitment issues due to poor pay and severe danger, and it is only that every Pentagon official has to be nominally optimistic that is leading Dunford to praise objectively serious losses as “progress.”