



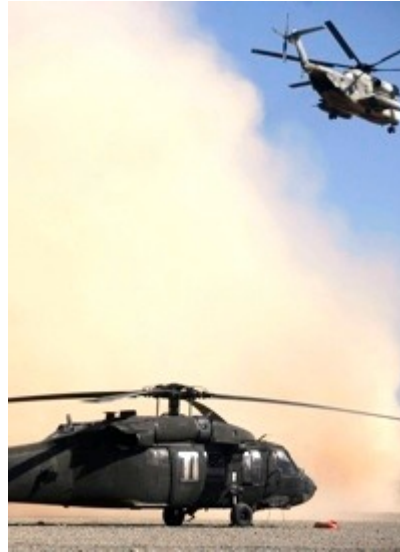
Written by on October 26, 2009

## 14 U.S. Deaths in Afghan Helicopter Crashes

NATO officials in Afghanistan have reported that three International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) helicopters crashed on October 26 in two separate incidents, killing 11 U.S. troops and three American civilians.

The officials said that one helicopter crashed in western Afghanistan killing seven U.S. troops and three U.S. civilian workers. Coalition spokespersons attributed the crash to "unconfirmed reasons" adding the cause was "not believed to be from enemy action."

The *New York Times* quoted a military spokeswoman, Capt. Elizabeth Mathias, who did not specify the exact location of the western Afghanistan crash, although she did identify the craft as a large Chinook helicopter and said the military was "98 percent sure that insurgent activity was not involved."



A [news release](#) posted on NATO's ISAF website noted that: "a joint, international security force searched a suspected compound believed to harbor insurgents conducting activities related to narcotics trafficking in western Afghanistan. During the operation, insurgent forces engaged the joint force and more than a dozen enemy fighters were killed in the ensuing fire fight."

CNN cited a "law enforcement source" in a report that said three Drug Enforcement Administration personnel were the 14 Americans killed in the helicopter crashes.

The report continued: "As the joint force was departing the area, one helicopter went down due to unconfirmed reasons. Military casualties are reported and a recovery operation is underway."

The crash occurred following a combined U.S. and Afghan raid on what was identified as a militant hideout. Earlier in the day, two coalition helicopters collided and crashed in southern Afghanistan, killing four military personnel. The British *Telegraph* cited a Taliban spokesman who claimed his group had shot down the helicopter in Badghis province.

The *Telegraph* quoted Colonel Wayne Shanks, a spokesman for the US army, who said that investigations into both incidents were being hampered by "combat conditions."

The U.S. Embassy statement on the helicopter crash in Western Afghanistan release on October 26 read, in part:

Today the U.S. Embassy mourns the loss of three civilian members of our Embassy community and seven members of the U.S. military, who were killed in a helicopter crash in Western Afghanistan. The helicopter, carrying Afghan security forces, U.S. military and U.S. civilians, crashed for unknown reasons. Fourteen Afghan security personnel, 11 U.S. military personnel, and one American civilian were also injured in this crash.



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After meeting with his national security team in Washington, President Obama flew to Jacksonville, Florida, on the afternoon of October 26 to address servicemen and women at Naval Air Station Jacksonville. During his address, Obama remembered those killed in the helicopter crashes earlier in the day, saying "they gave their lives to protect ours."

According to an AP report, the president said the 14 Americans, which included three federal DEA agents, were willing to risk their lives to keep Afghanistan from again becoming a safe haven for al-Qaida and its terrorist allies.

Obama said he hoped that the friends and loved ones of those who died would take comfort in knowing that those killed were "doing their duty and they were doing this nation proud."

Certainly, no patriotic American can disagree with the president's latter statement that the military and civilian service members who died were doing their duty and that this nation should be proud of them. The members of our armed forces are almost universally motivated by a sense of duty, honor, and country.

However, with all due respect for those who gave their lives, it is debatable as to whether "they gave their lives to protect ours." Probably not a single American has ever had his life or property threatened by an Afghan warrior, whether affiliated with the Taliban, al Qaeda, or otherwise.

"What about 9/11?" some may ask.

Though the attacks of September 11, 2001 were probably the most traumatic event occurring in the United States since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, they should rightfully be regarded not as a military attack, but as a failure of U.S. intelligence. As such, the answer to averting future terrorist attacks is found not in engaging in never-ending overseas wars, but in remedying the failures in our intelligence system. A few citations will serve to illustrate this past failure.

In the article "[Foreknowledge and Failure](#)" in *The New American* magazine for June 17, 2002, journalist William Norman Grigg observes:

In a memo written and hand-delivered to FBI Director Robert Mueller in May, whistleblower Coleen Rowley, chief attorney for the Minneapolis FBI office, described how the Bureau's headquarters worked to "deliberately sabotage" the investigation of Zacarias Moussaoui, a suspected conspirator ... in the September 11th attack. According to Rowley, "HQ personnel never disclosed to the Minneapolis agents that the Phoenix division had, only approximately three weeks earlier, warned of al-Qaeda operatives in flight schools seeking flight training for terrorist purposes!"

In a previous report in *The New American* for March 11, 2002 entitled "Did We Know What Was Coming?" Grigg concluded: "[T]he feds knew no later than June [2001] that an attack from bin Laden was coming. By August it had identified several key co-conspirators, and had one in custody."

An active counter-intelligence agent told Grigg that detailed information about the planned attack "came from some of [the Bureau's] most experienced guys.... In some cases, these field agents predicted, almost precisely, what happened on September 11th. So we were all holding our breath hoping that the situation would be remedied."

In another article in *The New American* for Oct. 31, 2005 entitled "'Able Danger' and 9/11 Foreknowledge," journalist William F. Jasper unveiled a top-secret Pentagon operation, known as "Able Danger," that was tracking and monitoring al-Qaeda. Notes Jasper:



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According to Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), in September 2000 the Able Danger team initiated at least three separate efforts to get its information on the hijackers to the FBI “so they could bring that cell in and take out the terrorists.” That was one year before 9/11. Army Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Schaffer, one of the principal members of Able Danger, has stated in interviews given this past August that Able Danger had identified five al-Qaeda cells, including two of the three cells that ultimately would be used to pull off the 9/11 terror attacks. Lt. Col. Schaffer set up one Able Danger/FBI meeting in the fall of 2000. It was canceled — as were all other efforts to inform the FBI — per orders from higher-ups in the Department of Defense.

An exhaustive amount of additional information documenting the catastrophic failure of our intelligence systems to thwart 9/11 exists, much of it found in the two articles we have just cited.

If we accept the view that 9/11 was preventable, then our subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been redundant wastes of our nation’s resources in human lives and vast amounts of money. It is completely unnecessary — and unconscionable — that U.S. troops be sent overseas to give “their lives to protect ours.”

Furthermore, since no declaration of war has ever been passed by Congress, these operations violate our Constitution as well.

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