

DEADLY FALLOUT FROM REOPENING OF PAKISTAN BORDER CROSSINGS: TALIBAN IED'S, US DRONE STRIKES ON FIRST RESPONDERS

Last week, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton apologized to Pakistan over the November attack on a Pakistan border post in which the US killed 24 Pakistani troops. The apology was delivered on Tuesday and the first supply trucks passed through the Chaman border crossing into Afghanistan on Thursday (who knew Pakistan took July 4th off?). I noted on Thursday that the Express Tribune was reporting that "protection money" would once again be flowing to the Taliban in Afghanistan to secure safe passage for the supply convoys. I asked if we would see an uptick in Taliban attacks on NATO due to the increased cash flow. Sadly, it did not take long for an answer to that question, as the Taliban today has claimed responsibility for an IED attack yesterday that killed six Americans. And just in case you were wondering whether the reopening of the border crossings meant that the US would curtail drone strikes inside Pakistan, the US struck on Friday, just one day after the crossings opened. This was a particularly brutal attack, with missiles striking initially and then in at least two follow-up strikes at the same site. It seems likely that at least some of those targeted in the follow-on strikes may have been rescue personnel.

Here is my question from Thursday on whether the Taliban will be able to step up attacks on NATO due to increased cash flow from protection money:

It will be very interesting to see whether the Afghan Taliban is suddenly able to bring more weapons and IED's into their attacks on NATO now that they have a renewed source of funding.

The Washington Post describes the IED attack that killed six Americans and the Taliban claiming responsibility:

All six troops killed in a weekend roadside bombing in eastern Afghanistan were Americans, NATO confirmed Monday.

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The Taliban on Monday claimed responsibility for the deaths of the six U.S. troops – the latest caused by bombs planted by insurgents along roads, paths or mountain tracks.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said in a statement the blast struck the U.S. troops in their armored vehicle around 8 p.m. Sunday in Wardak province, just south of Kabul.

But the Taliban were busy, as that was not their only attack:

Also in the east, authorities said gunmen assassinated a chief prosecutor in Ghazni province Monday morning as he drove to work. Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, the deputy provincial governor, said Sahar Gul was shot twice – once in the head and once in the chest.

The Taliban routinely target Afghan government officials to weaken support for President Hamid Karzai's administration.

It appears that despite Pakistan's continued protests over US drone strikes, the US did not slow drone strikes either just before or just

after the agreement that allowed the border crossings to reopen. There was a strike on July 1, just two days before Clinton issued her apology and then the strike on Friday, just one day after the first supply trucks in over six months crossed into Afghanistan.

More details on Friday's strike come from al Jazeera:

At least 21 people have been killed in drone strikes in Pakistan's North Waziristan days after the South Asian country agreed to reopen the NATO supply routes into Afghanistan.

According to official sources, six missiles were fired from a US drone at a compound in Gharlamay village of Datta Khel town near the border with neighbouring Afghanistan.

Security officials identified the dead as "militants".

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The initial strike on a house killed nine. Then three others were killed in a second attack when they drove to the site to recover dead bodies. And a third drone killed another three five minutes later, a senior security official in Peshawar told the AFP news agency.

So not only is the US continuing to send drones into Pakistan when Pakistan's citizens are demanding a stop to the practice, the worst aspects of those attacks are continuing. Even though it has been pointed out very clearly that it is US policy to send follow-on attacks on sites while rescuers are looking for victims of the attack and the UN has pointed out that this practice constitutes a war crime, the US continues the practice in the most offensive way possible by repeating it only one day after an event that could have been a major step forward in US-Pakistan relations.

Even though earlier in the year he may have been trying to dodge war crime accusations, John Brennan now has become a honey badger. He don't care about war crimes or demands from Pakistan's citizens and government.