

MCCLATCHY EXPOSES NATO LIES ON AFGHAN FORCE CAPABILITY



According to ISAF, Geunter Katz has been their spokesman only since June, 2012. He appears to be off to quite a start on spinning falsehoods.

Back in April, I noted that it appeared that NATO was engaged in an effort to bolster the image of Afghan forces by overstating their role in repelling insurgent attacks, assigning capabilities to them that seemed suddenly much higher than seen in previous descriptions. Yesterday, Jon Stephenson of McClatchy confirmed that NATO is indeed overstating the capabilities of Afghan forces, providing both direct observation of an event in which NATO lied about the role of Afghan forces and interviews with Afghan commanders who confirm that NATO is lying about their capabilities.

Here is how I described the sudden change in NATO behavior in April, in a post titled "NATO Response to Taliban Attacks: Pump Up Image of Afghan Forces":

Because it is clear that the Obama administration steadfastly refuses to address its rapidly failing Afghanistan strategy prior to November's elections, NATO is forced to labor under the increasingly difficult prospect of handing over security responsibility to Afghan forces as the surge of NATO troops is drawn down this summer and then remaining combat troops are withdrawn over the next two years. In a desperate attempt to make that process less ludicrous, NATO chose to respond to this weekend's coordinated attacks by the Taliban by burnishing the image of Afghan security forces. After suffering greatly from repeated "isolated incidents" of Afghan forces killing NATO forces and with the devastating reports of the ineptitude and duplicity of Afghan forces from Lt. Col. Daniel Davis, the tarnished image of Afghan forces threatens to derail the planned "victory" scenario of departing Afghanistan by handing over security to Afghan forces.

The McClatchy article published yesterday confirms my suspicions from April. First, Stephenson demonstrates that NATO is lying about public perceptions in Afghanistan on Afghan force capabilities:

Despite the recent spike in violence, and ongoing questions about the readiness and reliability of Afghan forces, Gen. Katz said that the war in Afghanistan was going according to plan and that Afghan forces were becoming "more and more capable."

However, Afghans interviewed by McClatchy over the weekend were deeply skeptical about the ability of their country's forces to protect them once foreign forces leave. On Monday, Katz told McClatchy that the coalition's own

research showed that many Afghans were positive about the Afghan National Security Forces.

“When we go out and ask the people on the street . . . they’re saying they have confidence in the ANSF,” Katz said. “They are confident that, by the end of 2014, they will be capable of doing the job.”

Particularly important is how McClatchy exposed a direct lie from NATO on an operation to repel an insurgent attack:

Afghan security officials have told McClatchy that ISAF and the Afghan government frequently overstate the capability and role of Afghan forces in operations, including the ability of some elite local units. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Last month, a McClatchy reporter observed Norwegian special forces taking a lead role in ending an insurgent siege of a restaurant near Kabul, even though the ISAF commander, U.S. Marine Gen. John R. Allen, credited the Afghan police commandos the Norwegians train. Allen described ISAF’s role in the fight as “minimal.” Afghan government officials claimed only “two or three” Norwegian “advisers” were involved in resolving the siege, but reporters counted around a dozen.

A Norwegian Defense Ministry spokesman also confirmed that the Norwegian special forces had played an active role in operations with the Afghan police commandos they are mentoring.

One more point from the article stands out. Here is Katz ([link to Katz’s bio is here](#)) continuing on

his propaganda that Afghan forces are on course for taking over full responsibility for security operations when NATO forces are gone:

Katz said that the complete transfer of responsibility of security in Afghanistan would take place as scheduled by the end of 2014.

"We've still got 29 months to go, which is quite a long time, actually," Katz said.

He said that Afghan security forces would grow to the target of 352,000 service members by the end of summer and that 40 percent of all operations are being planned and led by Afghan forces.

Note that Katz says that 40% percent of all operations are led by Afghan forces. Yet, if you go to the ISAF website and read the daily operational updates, a very different story is painted by ISAF's language. The updates for July 9 and July 10 combine to describe a total of eleven independent operations, and in their descriptions of ten of those eleven, the language used is "Afghan and coalition security forces". In only one case was the action described as being by "Coalition forces" without reference to Afghans being present. Even though Katz only claims that 40% of operations are Afghan-led, ISAF lists Afghans first in all ten of the descriptions of joint operations in their attempt to present a

false image of the capabilities of
Afghan forces.