

Aggressive Taliban bog down NATO mission

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KABUL, Afghanistan, Feb. 26 (UPI) -- NATO troops in Afghanistan say they are seeing increased activity by the Taliban in southern areas of the country.

The aggressive Taliban have been trying to undermine reconstruction activities, which means NATO soldiers are now finding themselves in combat roles rather than solely performing good works in quiet areas.

"There are no quick wins in Afghanistan," Col. Richard van Harskamp, commander of Dutch forces in Uruzgan, told *The Washington Post* Tuesday. "People who want to have quick wins better know how to deal with disappointments."

Some of the blame has been laid at the feet of faulty intelligence that has failed to locate Taliban units.

As a result, the *Post* said, the Taliban have been leaning on local leaders to erode support for NATO and the beleaguered Afghan police and army. In addition, support for the Afghan mission has been fading in Europe where leaders have urged less reliance on military force and more on economic and political development.

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