

NATO airstrike kills 9 Afghan soldiers by mistake

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22/10/2008 13:31 KABUL, October 22 (RIA Novosti) – NATO warplanes mistakenly bombed an Afghan National Army checkpoint on Wednesday, killing nine soldiers and wounding three, an Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman said that the incident involving aircraft from NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) occurred at 2:00 a.m. local time (21:30 GMT Monday) in the eastern Afghan province of Khost and that a joint investigation was underway.

ISAF has about 53,000 troops in Afghanistan under a UN mandate to provide security support to the government and stop the flow of drugs from the Central Asian country.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Interior Ministry said that early on Wednesday more than 100 armed Taliban militants attempted to capture an administrative center of the country's southern Uruzgan province, but were repelled by local police fire.

A spokesman said 35 Taliban militants were killed during the armed clash, while three policemen died and six were wounded.

The Taliban radical Islamic group, ousted from power in Afghanistan after a U.S.-led military operation in 2001, has stepped up operations over the past year, with an increase in suicide bombings and other attacks.

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