NATO soldier killed in southern Afghanistan

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NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said the soldier, whose nationality was not revealed, "died following an improvised explosive device (IED) attack" on Wednesday. IEDs, the Taliban's weapon of choice, are crude bombs that are detonated by remote control or by pressure-plate mines, which explode when the device is stepped on or driven over.

An AFP tally based on that kept by theicasualties.org website puts the number of foreign troops to die in the Afghan war so far in 2010 at 219, the overwhelming majority of them American. On Wednesday, Britain's ministry of defence said one of its troops was shot dead in a firefight with Taliban-led insurgents in Helmand province, the sixth British soldier killed in Afghanistan this month. Fighting in Helmand and neighbouring Kandahar is intensifying as NATO, US and Afghan troops build up operations against the Taliban, which consider the region their fiefdom. The 130,000 foreign troops in the country are to be supplemented with another 20,000 in coming months, most of them deploying to Kandahar, military planners say.