

Overview: February and March 2013 saw a considerable abatement in drone attacks in Waziristan and in the Yemen. The topic continues to gather media attention throughout the world, reports Elaybe Jude for Great North News Services. The New York Times reported in early March that the two February strikes in Waziristan were not carried out by the US. The report was based on interviews with "three American officials with knowledge of the program." The officials claimed one of the strikes was likely a Pakistani operation, and that the other may have been infighting within the Taliban. US intelligence officials involved with the drone programme in Pakistan told The Long War Journal that the two February strikes were US operations. Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations claimed The New York Times report was a "distortion of the facts and seems to be aimed at diluting Pakistan's stance on drone strikes."

A report released 26th March by Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) indicated that 55 per cent of the British public would support the UK Government assisting in a drone missile strike to kill a known terrorist overseas. Support drops substantially if innocent casualties are likely. The joint study was carried out by University of Surrey's Centre for International Intervention and RUSI, in collaboration with YouGov. The report is here:

http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Hitting_the_Target.pdf.

Stanford Law School's report, 'Living Under Drones', details the psychological damage to those people living in the regions most subject to UAV surveillance and strikes. The report's co-author, Jennifer Gibson, stressed at a meeting in the UK Parliament in March 2013 that the study had not expected or set out to explore specifically any psychological impact, but that the evidence of trauma they had been presented with, and its implications for the future health and cultural integrity of its subjects, was extremely strong and disturbing. Read the executive summary and download the full report here:

<http://www.livingunderdrones.org/>

Details of individual strikes on the next page

February 6 - North Waziristan. Five 'militants' killed in Pakistan. Six missiles were fired at a compound in the Spin Wam area. The compound was levelled, and five people were killed. Several more were wounded.

The target of the strike has not been identified, and no senior Taliban or al Qaeda commanders have been reported killed.

The area is close to the tribal agency of Kurram, host to the Taliban and other Pakistani and foreign groups. A least one other strike has occurred here, on Oct. 27, 2010. Two "militants" were killed.

Today's strike was the first in 26 days in Pakistan; the last strike was on Jan. 10. There have been eight strikes in Pakistan so far in 2013.

February 8 - South Waziristan. Seven 'militants' killed, including two foreign al Qaeda fighters, one an explosives expert. The strike is the second in Pakistan in three days.

Two missiles were fired at a compound in the Babarghar area of South Waziristan. The strike destroyed the compound, killing seven "militants," including two Arab AQ operatives and four Uzbeks, and wounding five more.

The two Arabs were identified as Sheikh Abu Waqas, a Yemeni explosives expert, and Abu Majid al Iraqi. The four Uzbeks, who were likely from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, an al Qaeda ally, were not identified. The compound was attacked during dinner.

March 10 - North Waziristan. Two "militants," including a "foreign national," killed. Missiles were fired as the pair rode on horseback in the village of Degan in Datta Khel . The strike today is the first reported by the US in Pakistan in 29 days.

The identities and affiliation of those killed have not been disclosed. The horses were also killed.

The Datta Khel area is administered by Hafiz Gul Bahadar, the Taliban commander for North Waziristan.

March 21 - North Waziristan. Four "militants" killed in Datta Khel district. The exact target of the strike has not been revealed. No senior al Qaeda or Taliban commanders or operatives are reported to have been killed.

Today's strike is the second and final in March. The last strike, on March 10, also took place in the Datta Khel district.