

Elayne Jude, Research Associate, U K Defence Forum, rounds up events.

As previously reported in Drone Wars, mid-January saw the first drone strike for two months in North Waziristan, ending an "undeclared halt" by the CIA's UAV campaign in the area. Since then, there have been eight strikes by US drones in Pakistan's tribal area of North and South Waziristan, some happening jointly; four in Yemen; and one in Somalia.

March 30 - North Waziristan. Four 'militants' killed and two wounded. A pair of missiles were fired at a house in the bazaar in Miramshah, the main town in North Waziristan, in the middle of the night. No senior al Qaeda or Taliban leaders or fighters have been reported killed in today's attack.

Al Qaeda's external operations network has been a prime target of the covert US air campaign in Pakistan's tribal areas. The US has targeted al Qaeda and Taliban camps designated to train operatives holding foreign passports, while the leadership of the external operations branch has also been hit hard.

March 15 - Yemen. Vehicle struck as it travelled in Al Baydah province yesterday, killing four al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula fighters. The strike took place just two hours after an AQAP suicide bomber killed four Republican Guards in an attack in the city of Al Baydah. No senior AQAP leaders or operatives were reported killed in the strike.

March 13 - South Waziristan. 15 Taliban fighters, including two commanders of a faction considered to be "good Taliban" by the Pakistani government, killed during a pair of strikes in South Waziristan today. In the first strike, four missiles were fired at a vehicle travelling in the Drey Nishtar area of South Waziristan, near the Afghan border, killing two Taliban commanders and six fighters loyal to Mullah Nazir. In the second strike, Predators fired several missiles at a vehicle travelling in the Shawal area of South Waziristan, killing seven Taliban. No senior terrorist commanders or operatives have been reported killed in the second strike.

Mullah Nazir has openly supported Taliban emir Mullah Omar and al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and wages jihad in Afghanistan. Pakistan's military and intelligence services consider Nazir and his followers "good Taliban" as they do not openly seek the overthrow of the Pakistani state.

In the summer of 2009, the military signed a peace agreement with Nazir stipulating that he would not shelter al Qaeda or members of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, which were based in the Mehsud tribal areas of South Waziristan. The Pakistani government launched a military operation against the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan in October 2009, but left Nazir's areas untouched. Nazir has continued to allow the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, al Qaeda, and other terror groups safe haven in his tribal areas.

Significantly, more senior al Qaeda leaders have been killed in Nazir's tribal areas by the US air campaign than in those of any other Taliban leader in Pakistan. Nazir also shelters the Mehsuds

from the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, in violation of the peace agreement with the Pakistani government.

March 11 - Yemen. Three Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) fighters killed during a raid in the AQ.-controlled city of Jaar. A weapons storage depot was struck in Jabal Khanfar, a hill that overlooks the city of Jaar in Abyan province. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula fighters are said to have moved weapons seized in last week's assault on a military base in Al Koud to the location.

No senior terrorist leaders or operatives have been reported killed.

March 10 - Yemen. Dozens of AQAP fighters were killed in two airstrikes in the southern Yemeni cities of Jaar and Al Baydah over the past 24 hours. In the first strike, warplanes hit an AQAP hideout in a rural area near Al Baydah, a city in the southern part of Baydah province near Abyan province.

Abdulwahhab al-Homaiqani, an AQAP commander in the city, and 16 of his fighters were reported to have been killed in the strike. Yemeni tribesmen said the attacks were "carried out by US drone airplanes."

In the second strike, strike aircraft hit AQAP "hideouts" in Jaar, one of several cities and towns under the terror group's control in Abyan province. Twenty AQAP fighters were killed in the airstrikes.

The CIA and the US military's Joint Special Operations Command are known to have carried out at least 18 air and missile strikes inside Yemen since December 2009. Other recent airstrikes are believed to have been carried out by the US also, but little evidence has emerged to directly link the attacks to the US.

March 9 - South Waziristan. 13 "militants" killed in the Makeen area of Pakistan's Taliban-controlled tribal agency of South Waziristan. The US has struck targets in Makeen four other times in 2008 and 2009. One strike in June 2009 killed Khwaz Ali Mehsud, a top aide to Baitullah Mehsud, the former leader of the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, who also was killed in a drone strike in August 2009 in nearby Ladha. The exact target of today's strike was not disclosed. No senior AQ or Taliban commanders have been reported killed.

February 16 - North Waziristan. 19 "militants," including foreign fighters, killed in a double strike in the Miramshah and Mir Ali areas of Pakistan's Taliban-controlled tribal agency of North Waziristan.

In the first strike, a pair of missiles were fired at a compound used by "militants" in the village of Spalga near Miramshah. Seven people were killed and seven more were wounded. The exact target of that strike has not been disclosed, and the identity of those killed is not known.

In the second strike, drones fired missiles at a pickup truck that was traveling near the town of Mir Ali. A Pakistani intelligence official told AFP that 12 Uzbek fighters, likely from the AQ-linked Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, were killed.

February 8 - North Waziristan. 10 'militants' dead. A pair of missiles were fired at a compound in the town of Tappi near Miramshah, according to Pakistani officials. The Taliban have cordoned off the site and conducted recovery operations, often a sign that a senior operative or leader was present.

Those killed were later said to be Haqqani Network operatives and fighters from Central Asian countries.

Terrorists are known to have sheltered in the village of Tappi in the past. The US has struck at targets in the village five other times since the beginning of 2008, according to data on the strikes that has been compiled by The Long War Journal.

January 31- Yemen. 11 AQ affiliates killed. Missiles were fired at two vehicles travelling near the city of Lawder in Abyan province, South Yemen. Abdel-Monem al-Fathani, an AQ operative involved in the October 2000 suicide attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden that killed 17 US sailors, is said to have been among the dead. No civilians were killed or wounded.

The US is thought to have carried out at least 17 air and missile strikes inside Yemen since December 2009. Other recent airstrikes are believed to have been carried out by the US also, but little evidence has emerged to directly link the attacks to the US. The CIA has taken control of the strikes against AQAP in Yemen from the US military. Previously, the US military has targeted AQAP in Yemen using cruise missiles and fixed-wing strike aircraft

January 23 - North Waziristan. Four militants killed in Pakistan's tribal area. A pair of missiles were fired at a vehicle travelling in the town of Degan near Miramshah, a stronghold of the Haqqani network. The operatives are said to be from Turkmenistan.

The exact target of the strike has not been disclosed, and the identity of those killed is not known. The Turkmen fighters may be members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan or one of the smaller Central Asian terrorists groups, such as Jund al Khilafa, that operate in Pakistan's tribal areas.

January 21 - Somalia. A British national who was a senior AQ operative was killed today. US officials told the Associated Press that Bilal al Berjawi, of Lebanese origin, was killed near Mogadishu. The exact location of the strike was not reported. Kenyan and Ethiopian aircraft have been conducting airstrikes in Somalia.

The US military's Joint Special Operations Command and the CIA are known to operate the armed Predators and Reapers from bases in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, Arba Minch in Ethiopia, the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, and a base in an unnamed country on the Arabian Peninsula. The bases are to be used to attack al Qaeda affiliates Shabaab, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Principal source of data ; the Long war Journal