



## **ABC Online**

### **The World Today - US says terrorism across Pakistan is on the rise**

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**Reporter: Simon Santow**

PETER CAVE: The US State Department's annual assessment of global terrorism has pinpointed a dramatic surge in terrorism across Pakistan.

The increase there stands in contrast to the overall levels of terrorist attacks.

According to the State Department's figures, they've dropped more than 20 per cent in the last year.

Simon Santow reports.

SIMON SANTOW: Pakistan is fast gaining an unenviable reputation for lawlessness and as a safe haven for terrorist groups.

RUSSELL TRAVERS: Pakistan, as you've heard many times over the last several weeks, we've seen the greatest growth... In the case of the light blue, that's largely Baluch insurgency; that's been going on for a very long time.

The significant growth has occurred in the Sunni extremist attacks over the last couple of years in particular. Those are largely in the north-western part of Pakistan; I'll show you in a map here in a second.

SIMON SANTOW: Russell Travers from the US State Department's National Counterterrorism Center was briefing the world media this morning on a more than doubling of the number of attacks in Pakistan in the last 12 months.

And he's pessimistic about the changing methods used by terrorists to make their point.

RUSSELL TRAVERS: The continued adaptation, the tactical adaptation by terrorist groups is of note. Whereas they may try to use suicide bombers in vehicles, as the security protocols get more difficult to get around, they may switch to bicycles or they may switch to pedestrians with suicide belts.

If adult males can't get through security, then they may switch to children or women. We saw almost 10 per cent of the global attacks were by women last year, large numbers in Iraq.

SIMON SANTOW: The State Department's acting director for counter terrorism is Ronald

Schlicher.

RONALD SCHLICHER: Since September 11th Al Qaeda and its allies have moved across the border to the remote areas of the Pakistani frontier.

And they're using, of course, that mountainous terrain as a safe haven where they can hide, where they can train, where they can communicate with their followers, where they can plot attacks, and where they can make plans to send fighters to support the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Therefore, Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas, FATA for shorthand, are providing Al Qaeda with many of the benefits that it once derived from the base that it had across the border in Afghanistan.

SIMON SANTOW: Pakistan's Government is under pressure from the West to re-establish control over the Swat Valley and other regions where the Taliban and extremist elements are exercising influence.

There's been fighting this week in the Buner District, a region only about 100 kilometres from Pakistan's capital Islamabad.

This man says its ordinary residents caught in the middle.

VOX POP (translated): The situation is very tense in the area. There is bombing from the Government as well as from the Taliban.

We cannot stay in. Our Government should bring a man with whom we stand together.

We will welcome all the positive things, whether it is from the Government, or from the Taliban side.

Why they are causing problems for our women and kids? What for?

We want peace, whether it comes through the Government or the Taliban.

SIMON SANTOW: Analysts say the situation in Pakistan is very delicately balanced.

Malou Innocent works in foreign policy at the Washington-based think tank, the Cato Institute.

MALOU INNOCENT: Really, the context of the conflict is a knock-on effect of the war in Afghanistan.

There what you see are the command headquarters of Mohammed Omar, Gobodan Haqmentiar (phoenetic), Jalalludin Haqani and many of these high-level commanders that are directing the insurgency within Afghanistan.

Now, of course there are blowback effects to this, and there has been a spawning of militants who are now attacking the very Pakistani state that has been assisting these militants since the early 1980s.

Really what we see now, through the State Department's assessment, is that these very groups that the Pakistanis once assisted are now, sort of having a blowback effect and have

boomeranged essentially against Pakistan's own interests.

So it's not too surprising - what really is just troubling is what the end state will be.

PETER CAVE: Malou Innocent, a foreign policy analyst at the Cato Institute in Washington ending Simon Santow's report.

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