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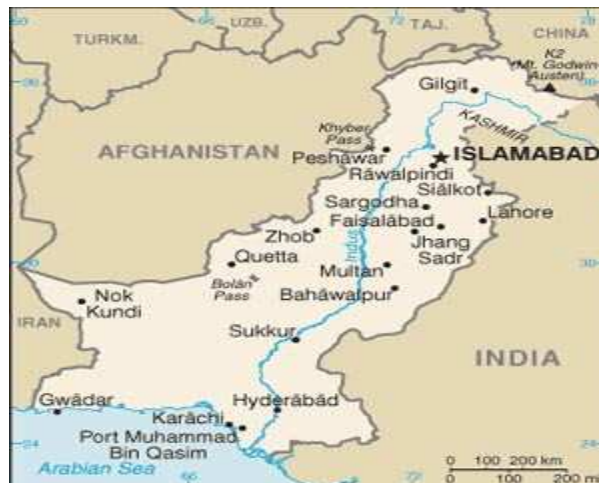
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## 3,000-Strong and Growing: The CIA's Army of Assassins in Afghanistan

By Jason Ditz

September 22, 2010

The fact that the CIA has been assembling a “secret Army” in Afghanistan has never been a particularly closely guarded secret. The fact that they are assassinating people in Afghanistan is no secret either. What is a secret, however, is just how big this group is.



Or at least it was a secret, until [Bob Woodward's book Obama's Wars](#) detailed it. According to Woodward the CIA's army has some [3,000 well-trained assassins carrying out attacks not only across Afghanistan but into neighboring Pakistan as well](#).

The program was detailed by former officials as part of the [“ramped up American counter-terror operations,”](#) and it was revealed that the CIA had brought some of its Afghan assassins to the United States for training.

The use of them inside Pakistani territory will likely be the most far-reaching of the revelations, however, despite Pakistani military denials that this had ever taken place. Pakistan's allowing of CIA drone attacks against its territory has been controversial, to say the least, but letting “boots on the ground” into the country is a much bigger issue.

Reports suggest that [Gen. David Petraeus, despite lack of public commentary, has privately approved of the use of the massive assassin army](#), likening it to the covert assassination campaign in Iraq.

And of course the CIA isn't the only one with assassination programs in Afghanistan. The [Pentagon's own assassination program was unveiled in late July as part of a massive leak of classified documents by WikiLeaks](#). The WikiLeaks docs revealed the Pentagon's version had killed a number of civilians in the course of its Afghan misadventures, the CIA's are still a mystery, however.