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<http://news.antiwar.com/2013/02/24/us-drone-strikes-soaring-in-afghanistan/print/>

## US Drone Strikes Soaring in Afghanistan

By Jason Ditz

February 24, 2013

As US troop levels are reduced and troops are actually now banned from at least one province, the occupation of Afghanistan is said to be “transitioning.” But to what, exactly?

The figures on 2012 attacks suggest that increasingly, Afghanistan is becoming a “drone war,” with a 72 percent increase in the number of drone strikes inside Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012, meaning drones now account for 12 percent of all air strikes in the occupied nation.

Officials attributed the growth in the number of drone strikes to an increase in the number of armed drones in Afghanistan, which suggests that so long as they have the weapons they’re going to find a way to use them. Though still a small number overall, drone strikes are killing several times more civilian bystanders than in recent years as well.

Which is probably to be expected. As US ground troops are engaged in less and less combat, and as night raids are gradually phased out, the US is going to rely more on its air power in regions it doesn’t directly control, and that is going to mean more and more drone strikes, with all of the same problems seen in Pakistan and Yemen.