



CBS/AP/ May 30, 2013, 4:40 PM

State Dept.: Iran support for global terror surged in 2012

WASHINGTON Iran last year boosted its support for global terrorism to levels not seen for two decades, the Obama administration said Thursday as it released its annual report on international trends in extremist violence. The report said the core elements of al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan are headed for defeat but stressed that the network's various affiliates remain severe threats to the U.S.

The State Department's "Country Reports on Terrorism" for 2012 left unchanged the U.S. list of "state sponsors of terrorism." Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria remain on that blacklist, although Iran was singled out as the worst offender and Syria was taken to task for the ongoing brutal crackdown on opponents of President Bashar Assad's regime.

- [U.N. atomic agency: Iran expands nuclear technology](#)
- [Report raises new Iran, Hezbollah terror fears](#)

The report said 2012 was "notable in demonstrating a marked resurgence of Iran's state sponsorship of terrorism." That sponsorship has been largely carried out through the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and the militant Shiite Hezbollah movement, Iran's ally and proxy in Lebanon, it said.

"Iran and Hezbollah's terrorist activity has reached a tempo unseen since the 1990s, with attacks plotted in Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa," it said. Those included an attack on a bus carrying Israeli tourists in Bulgaria that killed six, as well as thwarted strikes in India, Thailand, Georgia and Kenya.

The report's "strategic assessment" said core al Qaeda continues to weaken as its leaders increasingly fight for survival. But it said that leadership losses with the core have driven al Qaeda affiliates to become more independent by setting their own agendas and targets and raising money on their own, primarily through kidnapping and other crimes.

Because of this, the assessment noted that the U.S. must defend itself from a "more decentralized and geographically dispersed terrorist threat" that has made it more difficult to successfully disrupt plots in some places.

"Though the (al Qaeda) core is on a path to defeat, and its two most dangerous affiliates have suffered serious setbacks, tumultuous events in the Middle East and North Africa have complicated the counterterrorism picture," it said, pointing out Libya and Yemen in particular.

In Libya, it said a security vacuum in the wake of the 2011 revolution that toppled Moammar Gadhafi combined with weak security institutions "allowed violent extremists to act, as we saw too clearly on September 11 in Benghazi." The U.S. ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens, and three other Americans were killed in attacks that day on the American diplomatic mission and a nearby CIA outpost.

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-250_162-57586946/state-dept.-iran-support-for-global-terror-surged-in-2012/