



The US Central Intelligence Agency has been operating a secret airbase for unmanned drones in Saudi Arabia for the past two years.

The facility was established to hunt for members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is based in Yemen.

A drone flown from there was used in September 2011 to kill Anwar al-Awlaki, a US-born cleric who was alleged to be AQAP's external operations chief. US media have known of its existence since then, but have not reported it.

Senior government officials had said they were concerned that disclosure would undermine operations against AQAP, as well as potentially damage counter-terrorism collaboration with Saudi Arabia.

'High-value targets'

The US military pulled out virtually all of its troops from Saudi Arabia in 2003, having stationed between 5,000 and 10,000 troops in the Gulf kingdom after the 1991 Gulf war. Only personnel from the United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) officially remain.

TVNL Comment:☐ NOTE: "US media have known of its existence since then, but have not reported it." What a shock!!!!

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