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bbc news

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## CIA 'killed al-Qaeda suspects' in Yemen



The explosion happened in a tribal stronghold

America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) carried out an attack in Yemen that killed six suspected members of Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, according to US officials.

The men died when the jeep they were travelling in was hit by a missile fired from an unmanned CIA plane - believed to be a Predator drone, the US sources said.

Yemeni sources said those killed included Ali Qaed Senyan al-Harhi, whom the US has linked to the attack on the warship USS Cole off Aden in October 2000.

The Yemeni Government has not yet confirmed Harhi's death, but Yemeni officials said he had been under surveillance for months and intelligence had been passed on to the Americans.



The wrecked jeep was taken away for inspection

[Click here to see details of the drone](#)

A BBC correspondent in Washington says this would be the first time the US had carried out such an attack outside Afghanistan.

The six men were killed on Sunday in the oil-producing northern province of Marib, about 160 kilometres (100 miles) east of the capital Sana'a.

A Yemeni Interior Ministry official said arms, traces of explosives and communications equipment were found in the wrecked car.

### Pursuing al-Qaeda

"As I understand it, it was an agency drone," a US official told the Reuters news agency.

“  
Harhi] were out of  
business  
”

It was reportedly a Hellfire missile that was used to target Harthi, also known as Abu Ali.

Donald Rumsfeld

The CIA would not comment publicly on the reports.

Neither would President George W Bush.

But during campaigning for US Congressional elections he told voters of his continued determination to destroy al-Qaeda.

"The only way to treat them is [for] what they are - international killers.

"And the only way to find them is to be patient, and steadfast, and hunt them down. And the United States of America is doing just that."

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld refused to say whether American forces had any role in the attack on Harthi's car, but he congratulated Yemen on its cooperation with the US in the fight against al-Qaeda.



"The arrangement has been a good one and it is on-going," he said.

"It would be a very good thing if he were out of business," he added, referring to the reports of Harthi's death, while declining to confirm them.

The BBC's security correspondent Frank Gardner says it is believed the men targeted may have been planning an attack on Western interests.

### On the run

"Authorities have been monitoring this particular car for a while and we believe those men belonged to the al-Qaeda terror network," an official told the Associated Press.



Harthi: Said to be al-Qaeda's top operative in Yemen

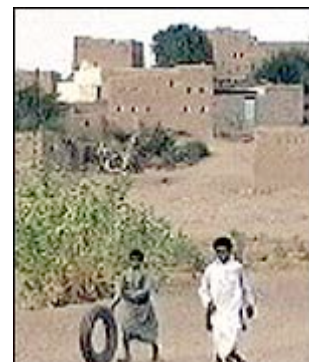
Harthi was wanted by the FBI for his alleged links to al-Qaeda.

He has been on the run in Yemen, pursued by security forces which have been looking for him and another suspect in the USS Cole bombing case, Muhammad Hamdi al-Ahdal, for the past year.

Harthi had been moving between locations and hiding amongst the well-armed tribes.

When Yemeni Government forces came looking for him in al-Hosun, a tribal village in Marib, last December they were driven back by a hail of gunfire.

Eighteen Yemeni soldiers and three villagers died in the incident, but Harthi was not found.



Harthi is said to have been sheltering in this village




Yemen remains keen to shed its image as a haven for al-Qaeda militants and says it is holding 85 members of the organisation arrested after a manhunt.

US military personnel were deployed there earlier this year, also to co-ordinate a crackdown on militants.

On Sunday two people were injured when a helicopter carrying employees from an American oil company to Marib came under gunfire just after take-off and was forced to make an emergency landing at Sana'a airport.

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**RQ1 PREDATOR**



The RQ1 Predator is an unmanned aircraft used for surveillance and reconnaissance missions

<b>LENGTH:</b> 27ft (8.22m)	<b>MAX SPEED:</b> 140mph
<b>HEIGHT:</b> 6.9ft (2.1m)	<b>RANGE:</b> up to 400 nautical miles
<b>WEIGHT:</b> 950 pounds (430kg) empty	<b>FUEL CAPACITY:</b> 665 pounds (100 gallons)
<b>WINGSPAN:</b> 48.7ft (14.8m)	<b>COST:</b> \$25million

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