

The United States military since 2004 has used broad, secret authority to carry out nearly a dozen previously undisclosed attacks against Al Qaeda and other militants in Syria, Pakistan and elsewhere, according to senior American officials.

These military raids, typically carried out by Special Operations forces, were authorized by a classified order that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld signed in the spring of 2004 with the approval of President Bush, the officials said. The secret order gave the military new authority to attack the Qaeda terrorist network anywhere in the world, and a more sweeping mandate to conduct operations in countries not at war with the United States.

TVNL Comment: Nowhere is "Al Qaeda" defined.

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