

12 April 2023

Fellow Risk Watchers,

The Commonwealth Government has recently lowered the National Alert Level for terrorism from Probable to Possible (November 2022). The reduction in alert status is based on an assessment of a diminished terrorism threat in Australia.

I'm concerned with this reduction and the publicly stated assessment behind the reduction. Religious fundamental terrorism is slowly beginning to raise its head in our wider region (Southeast Asia, south Asia, and the Middle East). In particular, Afghanistan has become the home of a number of terrorist groups that are under the careful oversight and perhaps as time passes, control of Islamic State Khorasan (ISK). These groups include the Haqqani Network, and Al-Qaeda.

The modus operandi of jihadist terrorist groups and lone attackers continue to evolve. With additional training, the influx of terrorists released by the Taliban (in late 2021) from Bagram Air Base and Kandahar Airfield prisons into jihadist terrorist organisations in Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia, and command, control and direction from ISK senior leadership, morale is high, and confidence is returned. A natural consequence of this growing confidence is increased numbers of attacks and growing linkages with likeminded individuals throughout our region: and perhaps even here in Australia.

I think this is food for thought and sober analysis.