

Pakistan says many militants killed

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistan's claims that its forces killed 35 militants in weekend battles in its tribal region have been challenged by residents and news reporters. The fighting was reported by Pakistan in its federally administered North Waziristan tribal region bordering Afghanistan, where al-Qaida is believed to have set up a sanctuary. The New York Times reported Tuesday the Pakistani military claimed 35 insurgents were killed in fighting since Sunday night. The government said it lost two soldiers and another 12 were wounded. The reports come as the United States may be considering a military option to combat the growing radical violence in Pakistan's tribal areas. The Times report quoted Frances Townsend, the White House adviser on Homeland Security, as telling Fox Television Sunday the United States would consider military strikes against al-Qaida hideouts in Pakistan. Objecting to the statement, Pakistan says such action would be resented in the tribal areas. Violence in the tribal areas has escalated in recent days after the Taliban reportedly scrapped a 10-month truce in the wake of a Pakistani military assault on an Islamabad mosque to drive out pro-Taliban radicals who had occupied the complex.

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