Secret panel can put Americans on "kill list"
Mark Hosenball, Reuters, Wed, Oct 5 2011
http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/05/us-cia-killlist-idUSTRE79475C20111005

Washington - American militants like Anwar al-Awlaki are placed on a kill or capture list by a secretive panel of senior government officials, which then informs the president of its decisions, according to officials.

There is no public record of the operations or decisions of the panel, which is a subset of the White House's National Security Council, several current and former officials said. Neither is there any law establishing its existence or setting out the rules by which it is supposed to operate.

The panel was behind the decision to add Awlaki, a U.S.-born militant preacher with alleged al Qaeda connections, to the target list. He was killed by a CIA drone strike in Yemen late last month.

The role of the president in ordering or ratifying a decision to target a citizen is fuzzy. White House spokesman Tommy Vietor declined to discuss anything about the process.

[...]
The White House is portraying the killing of Awlaki as a demonstration of President Barack Obama's toughness toward militants who threaten the United States. But the process that led to Awlaki's killing has drawn fierce criticism from both the political left and right.

In an ironic turn, Obama, who ran for president denouncing predecessor George W. Bush's expansive use of executive power in his "war on terrorism," is being attacked in some quarters for using similar tactics. They include secret legal justifications and undisclosed intelligence assessments.

Liberals criticized the drone attack on an American citizen as extra-judicial murder. Conservatives criticized Obama for refusing to release a Justice Department legal opinion that reportedly justified killing Awlaki. They accuse Obama of hypocrisy, noting his administration insisted on publishing Bush-era administration legal memos justifying the use of interrogation techniques many equate with torture, but refused to make public its rationale for killing a citizen without due process.

Some details about how the administration went about targeting Awlaki emerged on Tuesday when the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Representative Dutch Ruppersberger, was asked by reporters about the killing.
The process involves "going through the National Security Council, then it eventually goes to the president, but the National Security Council does the investigation, they have lawyers, they review, they look at the situation, you have input from the military, and also, we make sure that we follow international law," Ruppersberger said.

Other officials said the role of the president in the process was murkier than what Ruppersberger described.

They said targeting recommendations are drawn up by a committee of mid-level National Security Council and agency officials. Their recommendations are then sent to the panel of NSC "principals," meaning Cabinet secretaries and intelligence unit chiefs, for approval. The panel of principals could have different memberships when considering different operational issues, they said.

Several officials said that when Awlaki became the first American put on the target list, Obama was not required personally to approve the targeting of a person. But one official said Obama would be notified of the principals' decision. If he objected, the decision would be nullified, the official said.

When the name of a foreign, rather than American, militant is added to targeting lists, the decision is made within the intelligence community and normally does not require approval by high-level NSC officials.

The Obama administration has not made public an accounting of the classified evidence that Awlaki was operationally involved in planning terrorist attacks.

But officials acknowledged that some of the intelligence purporting to show Awlaki's hands-on role in plotting attacks was patchy.

**Is the CIA Assassination Order of a US Citizen Legal?**

[http://www.democracynow.org/2010/4/8/is_the_cia_assassination_order_of](http://www.democracynow.org/2010/4/8/is_the_cia_assassination_order_of) US officials have confirmed a Yemen-based Muslim cleric has become the first US citizen added to a CIA list of targets for capture or killing. Anwar al-Awlaki is a US-born cleric accused of having ties to the failed Christmas Day airline bombing and the shooting at Fort Hood. Many legal experts have questioned the legality of the assassination order under US and international law. We speak with Philip Alston, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions.

**WARRIOR OBAMA: DRONES**

Rahma Muhammad Mian. “Remote-Controlled Reporting on Remote-Controlled War.” *Extra!* (October 2011). Obama increased drone attacks in Pakistan—in his first year in office “more attacks than in eight years under George W. Bush.”
U.S. Defends Right to Assassinate U.S. Citizens

The Obama administration argued Monday that the White House should have unreviewable authority to target and assassinate American citizens anywhere in the world if they pose a threat to the United States. The argument was made in federal court in response to a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Constitutional Rights. The groups are representing Nasser al-Awlaki, who brought a lawsuit in connection with the government’s decision to authorize the targeted killing of his son, Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born Muslim cleric now living in Yemen. Jameel Jaffer of the ACLU said, "If the Constitution means anything, it surely means that the president does not have unreviewable authority to summarily execute any American whom he concludes is an enemy of the state."

Obama Invokes "State Secrets" to Defend Assassination Program

The Obama administration has urged a federal judge to throw out a lawsuit challenging the administration’s assertion that it can assassinate US citizens anywhere in the world. Earlier this year the Obama administration authorized the CIA to capture or kill Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born cleric who is believed to be in hiding in Yemen. With the help of the American Civil Liberties Union and Center for Constitutional Rights, al-Awlaki’s father asked a federal judge to issue an injunction and force the administration to publicly reveal its criteria for determining who can be assassinated. In court papers filed on Friday, the Obama administration asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit without hearing the merits of the claims, citing state secrets. The ACLU and Center for Constitutional Rights criticized the Obama administration’s stance. In a statement, the groups said, "The idea that courts should have no role whatsoever in determining the criteria by which the executive branch can kill its own citizens is unacceptable in a democracy." Democracy Now (9-27-10)

State Secrets Cited in Effort by White House to Block Suit Against Targeted Killing

-Carl


9-5-10 Sent to OMNI Board. AT OMNI’S TABLE SATURDAY MORNINGS ON THE SQUARE we have a petition denouncing state terror through state assassination. Come help us tell people and acquire signatures. Tell our representatives how much you deplore their acceptance of such illegal and immoral practices. We'll have paper for individual notes in addition to the petition. Best of all, phone their offices: we'll have phones there. (And call earlier: Pryor: 202-224-2353; Lincoln: 202-224-4843. Talk to their staff until their ears ring.) See you Saturday. Forward this to friends. Dick (for John, Carl, Barbara)
1. **Why General Petraeus' Assassination Inc. Threatens Us All**  
   Aug 27, 2010... Special Operations soldiers are based in Iraq and Afghanistan alone) as well as ... Philip Alston, the United Nations special representative on ... not an entitlement which the United States or other states can have ...  
   [www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=20794 - Cached]

2. **Leaving Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan: our education by ...**  
   Apr 20, 2010 ... No-one is safe in Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan now. United States crimes have no boundaries. How can one adequately express revulsion that ...  
   [www.redress.cc/global/cking20100420 - Cached]

3. **Counter-Insurgency: From Latin America to Afghanistan - Middle ...**  
   Aug 19, 2010 ... The authority in Iraq and more so now in Afghanistan is none other than the US ... Except Vietnam, but that was a war the United States lost. ... paramilitary elements organized political assassinations via death squads; ...  
   [www.middle-east-online.com/english/opinion/?id=40715 - Cached]

4. **TomDispatch**  
   Aug 26, 2010 ... A single great power, the United States, continues to develop new ... be termed assassination missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. ...  
   [www.tomdispatch.com/ - Cached - Similar]

5. **The Secret Killers: Assassination in Afghanistan and Task Force ...**  
   Aug 25, 2010 ... (498 reads); The Nazification of the United States(497 reads) ..... as other Special Forces “capture/kill” programs in Afghanistan and Iraq, ...  
   [mostlywater.org/secret_killers_assassination_afghanistan_and_task_force_373 - Cached]

6. **Afghanistan-Pakistan: America's Private Assassination Company ...**  
   Mar 15, 2010 ... Mr. Jordan said that he had gone to the United States military because ... including secret raids in Iraq and an assassinations program that ...  
   [enduringamerica.com/.../afghanistan-pakistan-americas-private-assassination-company/ - Cached]

7. **US military created private spy and murder squad in Afghanistan**  
   Mar 16, 2010 ... US military created private spy and murder squad in Afghanistan ... government in the United States that threatened the democratic rights of the ... and ran the assassination squads in Iraq which played an enormous role ...  

8. **Al-Qaeda - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**  
   Because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States is unable to pay ... The university's students have allegedly been linked to assassinations, ...  
   [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Qaeda - Cached - Similar]

9. **Iraq-Afghanistan: Illegal Bush Wars**
May 22, 2004 37 Died In American Custody In Iraq, Afghanistan, ..... To those familiar with the CIA's Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam, .... The United States had devised and developed this illegal policy over a period of ...

www.the7thfire.com/.../iraq_%20afghanistan.htm - Cached

10. Digg - Can Assassinations Turn the Tide in Afghanistan?
But I’ll go ahead and call it by its everyday name: assassination. ... Taliban (a creation of the CIA) has ever done anything to harm the United States. .... Iraq and Afghanistan were major land invasions. Not on the same scale as WWII, ...
digg.com/news/.../Can_Assassinations_Turn_the_Tide_in_Afghanistan - Cached

Ron Paul’s Right to Reject Assassinating Americans
John Nichols, Op-Ed, NationofChange, October 1, 2011: “President Obama’s authorization of the assassination of an American citizen, New Mexico–born Anwar al-Awlaki—in a drone attack that also killed American citizen Samir Khan, who was raised in New York City and North Carolina—drew high praise from execution-enthusiast Rick Perry, who congratulated Obama by name for “getting another key terrorist.” But the bipartisan disregard for the Constitution and the rule of law stopped when Texas Congressman Ron Paul was asked about the air strike that on Friday killed the two Americans in Yemen.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/obama-goes-abroad-searching-monsters-destroy-ron-pauls-right-reject-assassinating-americans-1317534

“Awlaki's Death Deprives Al-Qaida of Key Recruiting Voice
Adam Baron, Jonathan S. Landay and Lesley Clark, News Analysis, NationofChange, Oct. 1, 2011: "The death of U.S.-born Muslim preacher Anwar al Awlaki in a barrage of missiles fired by U.S. drones over Yemen on Friday dealt a sharp blow to Al Qaida's recruiting efforts, but it's likely to do little to crimp the group's ability to carry out attacks. President Barack Obama, who authorized the killing of the American-born Awlaki last year, hailed his death as 'another significant milestone in the broader effort to defeat al Qaida and its affiliates.'"
READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/awlakis-death-deprives-al-qaida-key-recruiting-voice-1317484279

From Gerry Sloan
Yes, our government has been assassinating (usually through the vehicle of the CIA or FBI) troublesome people for decades now, both at home and abroad, but we faithfully preserve the pretense (of being fair and democratic) like a flock of ostriches. As Jeremy Scahill recently put it: "If there are 35 people in a building and one is an Al Qaeda suspect, 35 people will die, even though 34 are innocent." Such tactics only fuel the fire for future insurgency, which means the "war on terror" is eternal, just as Orwell predicted. I am disappointed in Obama for playing into the hands of the power elite who profit from such tactics. As Eisenhower predicted, the Pentagon now dictates foreign policy. God help us! Peace,Gerry

ASSASSINATION AT HOME
HAMPTON, FRED
Haas, Jeffrey. *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther*. Lawrence Hill, 2009. A “shocking tale of government iniquity.” Interv. Grit TV (12-4-09, the 40TH anniv. of the murder). Nobody was ever prosecuted.. The subsequent investigations led to the discovery of the FBI’s COINTELPRO.

END OF ASSASSINATIONS NEWSLETTER #1