Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace
(Newsletter #1, Dec. 29, 2010; #2 July 20, 2011; #3 Feb. 16, 2012; #4 May 3, 2012; #5 June 9, 2012.)
See Newsletters on Air War, Assassinations, CIA, Civil Liberties.

Geneva Conventions, International Law, Killing Civilians, Surveillance, Pakistan War, War Crimes, and more.

My blog: War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
My Newsletters:
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Peace, Justice, Ecology Birthdays
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Here is the link to all of OMNI’s topical newsletters: http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

The newsletters cover the fields of pje. KNOWLEDGE THEN ACTION

**david druding: drone blowback noted** - hi Did you happen to watch/listen to these reports below on democracy now yesterday, Oct 12, 2012 [Dick: See Chalmers Johnson’s “Blowback” tetralogy.]

hi

Did you happen to watch/listen to these reports below on democracy now yesterday, Oct 12, especially the 2nd one involving a drone or drones operated by Hezbollah, provided by Iran, that were shot down in Israeli air place. Certainly nothing that ought to surprise anyone but one of the first news reports I have seen that makes it clear that the technology of another US developed & expanded warfare genie is out of the bottle.

Don't you imagine that a large part of Iran's development of these drones came from dissecting a US unit that they shot down earlier? Is the US military & Obama admin, as seems to have been the problem with Obama's lack luster performance during his first debate recently, actually that myopic that they didn't see this as a logical extension of our prez's acceleration of this int'l recognized criminal activity? david d

---

**U.S. Drone Strikes Kill 16 in Pakistan**

U.S. drone strikes killed at least 16 people in a tribal area of northwestern Pakistan Thursday and wounded a dozen others. Anonymous officials said the targets were militants at a compound.

---

**Hezbollah Admits to Flying Drone over Israel**
The leader of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has admitted to launching an Iranian-made drone over Israel in a rare incursion into Israel’s carefully controlled airspace. The unmanned drone was shot down by Israel, which regularly sends its own fighter planes over

Take Action to Ban Weaponized Drones
Mon Oct 1, 2012 9:07 am (PDT) . Posted by: "Global Network" brucekgag
Sign the petition to ban weaponized drones......

Meticulous researchers have documented that U.S. drones are killing many innocent civilians in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere. Drones are making the world less stable and creating new enemies. Their remoteness provides those responsible with a sense of immunity.

Weaponized drones are no more acceptable than land mines, cluster bombs, or chemical weapons. The world must renounce and forbid their manufacture, possession, or use. Violators must be held accountable.

http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6180

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www.space4peace.org
http://space4peace.blogspot.com/ (blog)

Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth. ~Henry David Thoreau

A Drone-Eat-Drone World, With Its ‘Roadmap’ in Tatters, the Pentagon Detours to Terminator Planet,  May 31, 2012

Today’s post is in honor of (and the concluding chapter for) the new book Nick Turse and I have just
published, *Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050*. It reflects a several year commitment to covering the drone story, now regularly in the headlines. I hope you pay special attention to this one. I also hope you’ll consider reviewing or highlighting in some way our new book. You can visit the ebook version by clicking here or the print–on-demand paperback by clicking here. We can’t get you the ebook (though it’s cheap enough to pick up) but if you have some use for the paperback, please let us know. Love, Tom

**From TomDispatch this morning:** A devastating look at a weapons system that’s failing to perform as promised, but ever more disastrously embedded in our world

By Nick Turse

TomDispatch Associate Editor Nick Turse’s latest post is the ultimate nitty-gritty tale of our planetary drone future. It includes both the military’s fantasy version of drone-on–drone combat in 2030 and beyond, and the increasingly grim reality of drones malfunctioning, going astray, or simply crashing-and-burning.

The drone has been a remarkable fantasy weapon -- our version of Terminator planet -- and a blood-stained one as well. Increasingly, however, its reality is proving grimly mundane and far less like that of a sci-fi movie. As Turse writes, drones remain the weak sisters of the weapons world, “little more than expensive, error-prone, overgrown model airplanes remotely ‘flown’ by all-too-human pilots. They tend to crash at an alarming rate due to weather, mechanical failures, and computer glitches, leaving shattered silver-screen techno-dreams of cheap, error-free, futuristic warfare in the dust.”

The Holy Grail of drone ops, the ability of an aircraft to linger over suspected target areas for long durations, has similarly proven disappointingly limited.

In other words, reports Turse, despite the great press they get and the Obama administration’s powerful commitment to them, drones are quickly turning from can-do into can’t-do weapons. And yet, they are also proliferating and, he adds, “drone warfare is here to stay. Count on drones to be an essential part of the American way of war for a long time to come.” In fact, he concludes, “Tomorrow’s drone warfare will likely mean ‘more’ in one other area: more dead civilians. We’ve left behind the fiction of Hollywood for a less high-tech but distinctly dystopian reality. It isn’t quite the movies and it isn’t what the Pentagon mapped out, but it indisputably provides a clear path to a grim and grimy Terminator Planet.”

This is a remarkable piece on the drone of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. It is also the concluding chapter of the new book Turse and I have just published: *Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050*.

“*Terminator Planet: How America Became an Empire of Drones*”

"*Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare,*" *by Tom Engelhardt and Nick Turse, chronicles the rise of drone warfare.*

*June 17, 2012 |*

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Lord knows, I should'a been gone

And I wouldn't've been here, down on the killin' floor

- Howlin' Wolf, Killing Floor

As convenient as it is for someone in a cubicle in the Nevada desert to press a button and incinerate a Pashtun wedding party in North Waziristan, now, with only a click, anyone can download a 359 KB file available on Amazon for only $8.99 - including free wireless delivery - and learn everything there is to learn about All Things Drone.

It's fitting that Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050 has been put together by Tom Engelhardt - editor, MC of the TomDispatch website and "a national treasure", in the correct appraisal of University of Michigan professor Juan Cole - and TomDispatch's associate editor Nick Turse, author of the seminal 2008 study The Complex: How the Military Invades Our Everyday Lives.

This is essentially Tom and Nick's revised and updated body of work detailing the uber-dystopian Dronescape over the past few years - spanning everything from secret Drone Empire bases to offshore droning; a Philip Dick-style exercise on a more than plausible drone-on-drone war off East Africa in 2050; and a postscript inimitably titled, "America as a Shining Drone Upon a Hill". It does beat fiction because it's all fact-based. An MQ-1 Predator or an MQ-9 Reaper to go?

This digital file becomes even more crucial now that US and world public opinion knows US President Barack Obama is the certified Droner-in-Chief; the final judge, jury and digital Grand Inquisitor on which suspicious Muslim (for the moment, at least, they are all Muslims) will get his paradise virgins via targeted assassination.

Obama owns his newspeak-drenched "kill list". He decides on a "personality strike" (a single suspect) or a "signature strike" (a group). "Nominations" are scrutinized by Obama and his
associate producer, counter-terrorism czar John Brennan. The logic is straight from Kafka; anyone lurking around an alleged "terrorist" is a terrorist. The only way to know for sure is after he's dead.

And the winner of the Humanitarian Oscar for Best Targeted Assassination with No Collateral Damage goes to… the Barack Obama White House death squad.

Targeted - and dissolved - throughout this grim process are also a pile of outdated concepts such as national sovereignty, set-in-stone principles of US and international law, and any category which until the collapse of the Soviet Union used to define what is war and what is peace. Anyway, those categories started to be dissolved for good already during the Bush administration - which "legalized" widespread CIA and Special Ops torture sessions and death squads.

Any self-respecting jurist would have to draw the inevitable conclusion; the United States of America is now outside international law - as rogue a state as they come, with The Drone Empire enshrined as the ultimate expression of shadow war.

**Incinerate the faithful**

Reading Terminator Planet inevitably evokes the incestuous interaction between Hollywood and the Pentagon. Even discounting the trademark wacky paranoia of Hollywood screenwriters and producers, a simple re-run of both the Robocop and Terminator series reveals this may end up badly.

And we're not even talking about a Revolt of the Drones - yet. In 2010 there was already a hint of juicy possibilities to come, when a RQ-170 Sentinel crash-landed in Western Iran via sophisticated jamming, and was duly reverse-engineered, to the delight of Iranians, Russians and the Chinese. The Pentagon hysterically denied it had been outmaneuvered.

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**Nick Turse, “A Drone-Eat-Drone World:**

**Details**

Category: **HuffPost**

Published on Thursday, 31 May 2012 09:09
With Its “Roadmap” in Tatters, The Pentagon Detours to Terminator Planet” [This essay has appeared in several magazines. I encountered it first in Z Magazine. It provides a summary of drone technology, its strengths and weaknesses, and offers some future possibilities. Dick]

U.S. military documents tell the story vividly. In the Gulf of Guinea, off the coast of West Africa, an unmanned mini-submarine deployed from the USS Freedom detects an “anomaly”: another small remotely-operated sub with welding capabilities tampering with a major undersea oil pipeline. The American submarine’s “smart software” classifies the action as a possible threat and transmits the information to an unmanned drone flying overhead. The robot plane begins collecting intelligence data and is soon circling over a nearby vessel, a possible mother ship, suspected of being involved with the “remote welder.”

At a hush-hush “joint maritime operations center” onshore, analysts pour over digital images captured by the unmanned sub and, according to a Pentagon report, recognize the welding robot “as one recently stolen and acquired by rebel antigovernment forces.” An elite quick-reaction force is assembled at a nearby airfield and dispatched to the scene, while a second unmanned drone is deployed to provide persistent surveillance of the area of operations.

And with that, the drone war is on.

At the joint maritime operations

Read more at originating website...
Kucinich/Conyers: Ensure Transparency and Accountability In The U.S. Combat Drone Program

Twenty-five Members of Congress are pressing the Administration to come clean with Congress and the American people about civilian deaths resulting from drone strikes and about so-called "signature strikes" that target unknown people.


http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/node/1219

UP FRONT

Drones in U.S. Flight Paths: What Could Go Wrong?

by: David Swanson

Published in the July / August 2012 Humanist

On February 14, President Obama signed the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 into law, authorizing the Federal Aviation Administration to integrate unmanned aerial vehicles (known as drones) into the national airspace system by 2015. The first order of business under the act is to establish six sites within a year where the military and others can fly unmanned aircraft in the vicinity of regular air traffic in order to demonstrate that it can be done safely.

On March 9 the FAA requested public comment in the form of questions regarding requirements and oversight of such test sites. Responses were provided on May 8 by an activist group called Not 1 More Acre!, which has long fought the Pentagon’s efforts (and those of private contractors) to claim fragile prairie lands
in Colorado and New Mexico for drone testing—efforts the group says have been in violation of environmental and cultural protection laws.

While the FAA asked all the wrong questions in the March 9 edition of the Federal Register, Not 1 More Acre! provided a lot of the right answers. (When the drone accidents start and you’re told “nobody could have known,” refer them to my own and this group’s comments.)

One of the questions posed by the FAA was this:

The Congressional language asks the FAA to consult with and leverage the resources of the Department of Defense and NASA in this effort. Since many public operators already have access to test ranges and control the management and use of those ranges, should the management of these new test ranges be held by local governments or should private entity [sic] schedule and manage the airspace?

Not 1 More Acre! replied:

Neither. Although the pilot UAS [Unmanned Aircraft System] program is a congressional mandate, and the timelines are accelerated, the complexities and potential dangers of integration of UAS into civilian airspace must not be delegated to local governments or private organizations in the name of expediency, entrepreneurship, or profit. ... The wording of Question A suggests that the FAA is contemplating abdicating its inherent authority to manage the NAS [National Airspace System] by ceding broad discretion over UAS flight operations.

... The primary driver of the move to integration has clearly been contractors funded by the DOD [Department of Defense], working in concert with the secretive Joint Special Forces Operation Command, the Department of Homeland Security, and the CIA, among others. ... Private defense contractors increasingly woo local law enforcement agencies and other community groups with grants to help fund the purchase of new UAS. The FAA should not allow any other federal agency to usurp its authority over the NAS or circumvent the pre-decisional public disclosure requirements of NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] including agencies like the CIA, NASA, and JSOC which are not transparent or accountable to the public.

In response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the FAA released a list in April of sixty-three entities nationwide—including branches of the military, police forces, corporations, universities, and city and county governments—that have been authorized to test-fly drones within the United States. (Which begs the question of whether they’re already doing so in national airspace or if they’re waiting for the six test sites to be selected.) Uses of drones (along with their size) vary, from farmers looking to count cows and monitor crops, to law enforcement agents on the lookout for drug smugglers, to search-and-rescue efforts. Even the media seek the use of such surveillance technology in their reporting.

Toward these and other ends, Congress has authorized putting up to 30,000 drones in U.S. skies within the next eight years. That is to say, Congress passed the bill. Lobbyists from the Association for Unmanned
Domestic drones have civil liberties groups in an uproar. But the potential for the strongest resistance probably lies in forming partnerships with peace groups already outraged that drones are being used to murder large numbers of people abroad.

As political activist and Code Pink co-founder Medea Benjamin documents in her new book, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, the United States has avoided detaining people, only to murder them with a drone days later. The president has even authorized using drones to kill Americans in Yemen, including a drone strike on Anwar al-Awlaki, and a later strike that killed his teenage son.

And using drones for warfare isn’t always as expedient as billed either. In February 2002 a drone pilot thought he’d killed Osama bin Laden, but the victim turned out to be an innocent man. Expert observers, including Shahzad Akbar, a Pakistani lawyer representing drone victims, believe the vast majority of drone victims are not the individuals who were targeted—which is not to suggest any moral or legal case for killing those who are targeted. Often victims are not counted as “civilians” because they were carrying guns, but in some areas all men carry guns. Noor Behram, who photographs drone victims, says, “For every ten to fifteen people, maybe they get one militant.”

Benjamin tells of families shattered by drones and the hatred created by the constant buzzing sound the unmanned aerial vehicles make in the skies above as civilians go about their business, knowing that at any instant they can be killed. When the drones strike in Pakistan, local death squads swoop into the area to grab anyone whom they suspect of having collaborated with the Americans, and so families live in fear of both the drones and the raids that follow. Over a million people, by Amnesty International’s estimate, have fled the areas of heavy drone bombing.

Afghans have killed CIA drone pilots and other U.S. officials inside their offices. Drones have even killed Americans in “friendly fire,” including on April 6, 2011, in Afghanistan. And there have been cases of drone “pilots” working in the United States committing suicide. They are suffering extremely high rates of stress and burnout, according to the Air Force, because while pilots who actually fly in planes often don’t see who they kill, drone pilots may watch a family for days and come to know their faces, only to blow them all up and watch the suffering. A Pakistani who tried to detonate a car bomb in Times Square in 2010 said it was revenge for drone attacks. In the fall of 2011, a Massachusetts man, Rezwan Ferdaus, was arrested and accused of plotting to attack the Pentagon and the U.S. Capitol with drones that would crash themselves into the buildings. The Obama administration claims to have limited its drone strikes in Somalia so as to avoid turning a regional threat into a group with the determination to attack the United States—even while expanding drone use in Yemen, creating the same risk.
Drones have also been falsely marketed as a financially affordable way to make war. While initially cheaper than manned planes, unmanned drones of the sort used now tend to require many more personnel: according to Benjamin’s book, 168 people are needed to keep a Predator drone in the air for twenty-four hours, plus nineteen analysts to process the videos created by a drone. And to make matters worse, they tend to crash. They can even “go rogue,” losing contact with their operators and flying off on their own. And, reports Benjamin, the U.S. Navy has a drone that self-destructs if you accidentally touch the space bar on the computer keyboard. Drones also tend to supply so-called enemies with information, including the endless hours of video they record, and to infect U.S. military computers with viruses.

But these are the sorts of SNAFUs that come with any project lacking oversight, accountability, or cost controls. One has to suspect that the companies with the biggest drone contracts, military or civilian, haven’t invested in developing the best technologies but in paying off the most Congress members.

So while I’d like to ask the FAA how domestic surveillance drones possibly comply with the Fourth Amendment, the bigger question really is: what could go wrong?

David Swanson is the author of War Is A Lie and Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union.

1. Turnstyle » Opinon: Drone Technology Eases the Slide Into War
   turnstylenews.com/.../opinon-drone-technology-eases-the-slide-into-... Cached
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   Posted by Adam Hudson on June 21, 2012 ... Under the Bush administration, the U.S. launched 52 drone strikes in Pakistan. ... People can pilot a drone from miles away without putting their lives in danger. ... Given the difficulty of counting civilian deaths and the Obama administration's broad definition of “combatant”, it is ...

2. Living Under Drones: Death, Injury, and Trauma to
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The aftermaths of drone warfare. ... live under drones, and on armed non-state actors and military forces in northwest ... and enable the US to kill from afar without immediate risk to American lives. ..... [75] The clash resulted in over 100 deaths. ..... [36] Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens & Matt Flannes, Drone Warfare: Blowback ...