The multifarious methods of oppression employed by an oppressor state would fill an encyclopedia. One general method is the control of language, of rhetorical devices. A specific figure is euphemism, one of many effective devices designed to hide the truth. For example, our government has rebranded US state assassination as “high value targeting.”

If any subject links these newsletters, it is violence, particularly US violence, its complexity, and how to reduce it. “Make World Less Violent, New UA Graduates Told.” (ADG 12-16-12).

Write or Call the White House
President Obama has declared his commitment to creating the most open and accessible administration in American history. That begins with taking comments and questions from you, the public, through our website.

Call the President

PHONE NUMBERS
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414

TTY/TTD
Comments: 202-456-6213
Visitor's Office: 202-456-2121
Write a letter to the President

Here are a few simple things you can do to make sure your message gets to the White House as quickly as possible.

1. If possible, email us! This is the fastest way to get your message to President Obama.

2. If you write a letter, please consider typing it on an 8 1/2 by 11 inch sheet of paper. If you hand-write your letter, please consider using pen and writing as neatly as possible.

3. Please include your return address on your letter as well as your envelope. If you have an email address, please consider including that as well.

4. And finally, be sure to include the full address of the White House to make sure your message gets to us as quickly and directly as possible:

   The White House  
   1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
   Washington, DC 20500

My blog: War Department/Peace Department
http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

My Newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/

Peace, Justice, Ecology National Days
Visit OMNI’s Library.

“Act in such a way that the principle according to which the action is performed can be accepted as a universal law.” Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative.

Nos. 7, 8 at end

Contents #9  2013

New Medal for Drone Pilots

Yemen: Drone Kills al-Qaeda and Innocents

Moyers and Co.: Drones vs. Democracy

Moyers and Co.: Innocents Murdered, Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize a Mistake

Washington Post’s Biased Reporting and Polling

PBS NOVA Drone Report Underwritten by Lockheed Martin, Maker of Drones (see #8)

   Dick’s Letter to PBS Ombudsman

Obama Creates Manual or “Playbook:” for the Killing Process

30,000 Drones Over US by 2020

Contents #10, May 11, 2013

PAKISTAN

Drone Strikes Illegal

Abbot, Strikes in Pakistan Violate International Law

Amnesty International Petition: Drones Not Above Law

VFP April Black Tuesdays Project, Take Action

Goodman: Drone, Obama, CIA Assassinations—from In These Times

Stop Drone Strikes in US, Take Action

Disclose Records of Drone Strikes (ADG from NYT)
Sirota, Language of Drone War

Court Opens Secrecy, a Little

Rassbach, Germans Against Combat Drones

Contents #11

Robert Greenwald Film Needs Our Help

Extra-Judicial Killing, UN Rapporteur

Medea Benjamin Challenges President Obama

Sprusansky on Muslimi and Obama Admin. Preference for Killing

BOOKS ON DRONES (in reverse chronological order)

    Scahill, Dirty Wars

    Benjamin, Drone Warfare

    Engelhart and Turse, Terminator Planet

    Cavallaro, Living Under Drones (a long report)

Contents #12

Resistance to Obama’s Drone Wars

United Nations: Put Drones Under International Law

Draft Drone Ban Treaty
Malala to Obama: Dones Cause Terrorism

Dirty War Film

Jeremy Scahill

Amnesty International

Palast, Drones, Missiles, Etc.

FAIR, Media Not Examining Drone Attacks Against Alleged “Terrorists” in Yemen

Savage and Baker, Obama Limits Targets and Shifts to Military Control

Amy Goodman, The Rising Resistance to Obama's Drone Wars
Amy Goodman, Truthdig 31 October 13 PM

Reader Supported News

Goodman writes: "Resistance to Obama's drone wars is growing. In upstate New York, in a surprise ruling, five anti-drone activists were acquitted after being tried for blocking the gate of Hancock Field Air National Guard Base near Syracuse."
Top Story

Ban: Armed drones are subject to international law
United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reiterated the UN's position that armed drones need to operate within international law in a speech today at the National University of Science and Technology in Islamabad. "This is a very clear position of the United Nations. Every effort should be made to avoid mistakes and civilian casualties," he said. . . . Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (8/13), LiveMint.com/The Wall Street Journal (India)/Press Trust of India (8/13), DAWN Media Group (Pakistan)/The Associated Press/Associated Press of Pakistan (8/13), PolicyMic (8/12), The Express Tribune (Pakistan) (8/13)
Flag for follow up. Start by Wednesday, August 07, 2013. Due by Wednesday, August 07, 2013.

Friends,

At our recent Global Network annual space organizing conference in Kiruna, Sweden we decided to submit a draft drone ban treaty to the public as a way to begin to create conversation about taking steps to ban these immoral and illegal killing weapons. Here is the draft submitted by one of our folks. Please share widely. We'd be happy to collect any comments and send out revised versions. globalnet@mindspring.com

First Draft

Agreement on banning the use of unmanned armed aerial vehicles against civilians, living and official quarters, transport, communication, energy and industrial infrastructure

The High Contracting Parties to this Agreement, hereinafter called as Parties to the Agreement,

being alarmed by the use of unmanned armed aerial vehicles against civilians, living and official quarters, transport, communication, energy and industrial infrastructure,

noting with regret that the number of unmanned armed aerial vehicles is increasing,

expressing concern that the use of such vehicles sometimes have indiscriminate effects and collateral damage inflicted upon civilians, living and official quarters, transport,
understanding the negative psychological effects in a form of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder among unmanned armed aerial vehicles’ operators stemming from using unmanned combat aerial vehicles against civilians, living and official quarters, transport, communication, energy and industrial infrastructure,

realizing that the use of such vehicles is a violation of humanitarian and the basic international law, including the inviolability of interstate borders and respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the states that became targets of such vehicles,

have agreed as follows:

1. Parties to the Agreement have agreed to freeze the number of unmanned armed aerial vehicles as it stands for the 1st September 2013.

2. Parties to the Agreement have agreed to exercise the total ban on the use of unmanned armed aerial vehicles against civilians, living and official quarters, transport, communication, energy and industrial infrastructure beginning from the 1st September 2013.

3. Parties to the Agreement have agreed not use unmanned armed aerial vehicles to carry nuclear and missile defense weapons on board and pledge not to use such vehicles for conducting nuclear strikes and fulfilling missile defense missions.

4. Parties to the Agreement have agreed to close from the 1st September 2013 all military bases and installations, including command and control centers that have been earlier constructed or leased on the territories of foreign states for the purpose of storing or using unmanned armed aerial vehicles that have been used to conduct remotely controlled operations.

5. Parties to the Agreement have agreed to cease all research, testing, training or manufacturer of such vehicles
from the 1st September 2013.

6. Parties to the Agreement have agreed to offer its territory to conduct international inspections for the purpose of verification of implementation of this Agreement.

7. This Agreement enters in force on the date of signature of at least of five independent and sovereign states.

Done in .......... on ................. 2013 in English (and other languages).

Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space
PO Box 652
Brunswick, ME 04011
(207) 443-9502
globalnet@mindspring.com
www.space4peace.org
http://space4peace.blogspot.com/ (blog)

12 October 13 Reader Supported News

Malala to Obama: "Drones Fueling Terrorism"
Philp Rucker, The Washington Post
Rucker reports: "Yousafzai, the 16-year-old Pakistani student who was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen for speaking out in support of the right of girls to go to school, met Friday with Obama and his wife, Michelle."
READ MORE

An Anti-War Blockbuster

There’s no end to the pro-war movies we're subjected to: countless celebrations of bombs, guns, and torture. They come in the form of cartoons, science-fiction, historical fiction, dramas, and reenactments.
pre–censored by the CIA. Movies show us the excitement without the suffering. War in our theaters resembles almost anything else more than it resembles war. Journalists appear in our movies too, usually as comic figures, talking–head air–heads, numskulls, and sycophants. In this case, the depiction is much more accurate, at least of much of what passes for journalism.

But, starting in June, a remarkable anti–war / pro–journalism film will be showing -- even more remarkably -- in big mainstream movie theaters. Dirty Wars (I've read the book and seen the movie and highly recommend both) may be one of the best educational outreach opportunities the peace movement has had in a long time. The film, starring Jeremy Scahill, is about secretive aspects of U.S. wars: imprisonment, torture, night raids, drone kills.

Dirty Wars won the Cinematography Award for U.S. Documentary at the Sundance Film Festival 2013 and, recently, the Grand Jury Prize at the Boston Independent Film Festival. Variety calls it "jaw–dropping ... [with] the power to pry open government lockboxes." The Sundance jury said it is "one of the most stunning looking documentaries [we've] ever seen." I agree.

Typically, information that does not support our government's war agenda appears only on the printed page, or perhaps in a power–point presented to the usual heroic crowd of aging white activists gathered outside the range of corporate radar. But stroll through an airport and you'll see hardcopies of Dirty Wars displayed at the front of the bookstores. Check out the movie listings in June and July, and you're likely to see Dirty Wars listed right alongside the latest super–hero, murderfest, sequel of a sequel of some predictable Hollywood hackery.

I wrote a review of the book some time back, after which I picked up a job helping to promote the film. But I'm promoting the film because it's a great film, which is different from calling it a great film because I'm paid to promote it. And my interest remains less in selling the film tickets than in recruiting those who see the film into an active movement to change the reality on which the film reports.

This is not Zero Dark Thirty. You can't walk into Dirty Wars supporting drone strikes, night raids, and cluster bombs and walk out with your beliefs reinforced. Most viewers of Dirty Wars will leave the theater believing that U.S. wars make the United States less safe. In that moment, when people who are usually otherwise engaged have come to realize that the Department of So–Called Defense endangers us (on top
of impoverishing us) is when we should sign those people up to take part in activities the following week and month and year.

The film opens by contrasting embedded war journalism -- the regurgitation of spoon-fed propaganda -- with what the viewer is about to see. And what we see is investigative journalism. The film begins by providing us with an understanding of night raids, including from the point of view of family members who have survived them. We see the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff tell Scahill that night raids that kills civilians should not be investigated. And then we see Scahill investigate them, his search leading him to secretive branches of the U.S. military involved in a variety of dirty tactics in various countries.

The film does have a failing. It doesn't tell people anything they can do about the horrors they're exposed to. But, of course, activism is possible and far more effective than any journalism -- good or bad -- will tell you.

One of the stories told in the film and the book of *Dirty Wars* is the story of the destruction of al Majala. On December 17, 2009, U.S. Tomahawk missiles and incendiary cluster bombs rained down on the tiny Yemeni village of al Majala, killing 21 children, 14 women, and 6 men, and burning all the homes and their contents. The government of Yemen falsely claimed responsibility. Yemeni journalist Abdulelah Haider Shaye disproved that claim. Shaye reported on the carnage, including photographing missile parts labeled "Made in the United States." He reported on subsequent U.S. strikes in Yemen, working with the *Washington Post*, ABC News, Al Jazeera, and other outlets. Shaye is in prison in Yemen for the crime of journalism, at the insistence of President Obama. A coalition has launched a petition today urging Obama and Yemen to set Shaye free. Fans of *Dirty Wars* who want to begin to do something to end the crimes committed in their names can be sent to RootsAction.org. While the United States was searching for its citizen Anwar Awlaki to kill him, Shaye repeatedly tracked him down and interviewed him. These were tough and serious interviews, with Shaye asking Awlaki how he could possibly support acts of violence. Awlaki’s image was not helped. But the U.S. government began warning media outlets not to work with Shaye, falsely accusing him of supporting al Qaeda. The Yemeni government kidnapped Shaye, threatened and released him, then snatched him again and gave him a one-sided "trial," universally denounced as a sham by
human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

On February 2, 2011, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, under public pressure, had drawn up, printed out, and was prepared to sign a pardon of Shaye. But Saleh received a phone call from President Barack Obama, who opposed release of the journalist. Saleh ripped up the pardon.

The White House is feeling a little pressure over recent revelations of government spying on and seeking the prosecution of U.S. journalists. It took the targeting of a U.S. journalist for prosecution to start people like Chuck Todd and Dana Milbank **chattering** about Obama treating journalism as a crime. But have you heard U.S. media outlets raising concerns over the imprisonment of a Yemeni journalist at the instruction of the U.S. president?

There is much else that we are not regularly told to be found in *Dirty Wars*. Organizations that would like to help promote this film and organize around it in U.S. cities should **contact me**. With any luck, **together we'll change the conversation to one aware of and unaccepting of acts of murder anywhere on earth**.

---

**From:** Zeke at [Amnesty International](mailto:alerts@takeaction.amnestyusa.org)

**Sent:** Thursday, June 06, 2013 5:10 PM

**To:** Sue Skidmore

**Subject:** Drones, Dirty Wars and the secret "global war"

---

**Watch and learn the truth for yourself.**
Shhh...we're not supposed to talk about it.

But you probably heard President Obama's recent speech where he acknowledged that the use of drones to kill people raises some pretty "profound questions."

However, the U.S. government continues its "global war" -- all carried out in the name of our security.

We are gravely concerned that the Obama administration is killing people outside the bounds of human rights and the law. Silence is not an option.

Investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill is chasing down the hidden truth.

In the documentary Dirty Wars opening in theaters tomorrow, Jeremy shines a light on the U.S. government's "global war" theory, used to justify killings around the world with drones and other weapons. Amnesty International USA is partnering with the filmmakers of Dirty War on a campaign to prevent extrajudicial executions by the U.S. government.

Watch the film | Learn more | Take action

When you watch the film, keep an eye out for mention of journalist Abdul Ilah Haydar Shayi', who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment after he reported on an alleged U.S. missile strike in Yemen. The former Yemeni President issued an order for his release, but it was not carried out after President Obama intervened. Stories like his deserve to be heard.

We're just beginning to peel back the layers. We'll keep you posted as we find out more.

Sincerely,

Zeke Johnson
Director, Security & Human Rights Program
Amnesty International USA

P.S. Be sure to take action to prevent extrajudicial killings with drones and other weapons.
round the time Barack Obama ordered the drone strike that killed Abdul-Rahman al-Awlaki, the 16-year-old American kid, Facebooked his second-rate choice of hip-hop favourites. I say "second-rate" because Abdul was my son's age, almost exactly, so I know the kind of crap they listen to.

Every Tuesday, President Obama personally checks off the names of people he wants killed. George Bush, a bit more squeamish than Obama, never did that; but Mr Obama felt those decisions were the president’s responsibility: he "want[s] to keep his own finger on the trigger", according to one report. A tidy, scheduled man, the President only picks his victims once a week, now called "Terror Tuesday".

On October the 14th, 2011, Abdul went out with his cousins and friends for a good old US-style barbecue, when Obama's drone fired a rocket, blowing the teenager to pieces. Or I should say "piece". All that was left of Abdul was a piece of skull with long curly hair that allowed his relatives to identify this hunk of his head by his US-style haircut.

Obama didn't order the killings (Abdul's friends and cousins died, too) as a random act of crazy. No-Drama Obama doesn't believe in random. Abdul's problem was that his father was Anwar al-Awlaki. Obama killed Abdul's dad as well. Daddy al-Awlaki, an American imam who voted for George Bush, had gone over to the side of the bad guys. And, after leaving the USA, broadcast pro-terrorism radio reports from Arabia.

We can argue until the cows come home about whether Daddy al-Awlaki was a legitimate kill target. It is, after all, right there in the US Constitution that the penalty for treason is death. I suppose that, before executing him, a jury trial would have been nice. But nice was not going to happen. So, OK, Barack, we'll let that one go.

But what about the 16-year-old? Obama didn't even pretend that the kid was a terrorist, or a terrorist in-the-making, nor adopting in any way his father's crazed kill-Americans crusade.

What could justify execution of Abdul? When asked, then-White House press spokesman, Robert Gibbs, said, "I would suggest that you should have a far more responsible father."

I guess he should have.

Obama's minions tried to cover up the hit on the teenagers. Attorney General Eric Holder informed Congress of the killings by writing that US drones had blown up Anwar al-Awlaki, the crazy cleric, and three other Americans who "were not specifically targeted".

Holder's comment makes it seem that Awlaki's son was blown up with him - a sad case of "collateral damage".

But are you ready for this? The teenager - along with his cousin and friends - was killed two weeks after and hundreds of miles away from the site where rockets killed his father.

(the trailer I had not yet seen for "Dirty Wars" was inserted here, can be viewed at the attached link)
Obama's Seal Team Sick

I was straightened out on the facts by Richard Rowley, America's most courageous investigative reporter. Rowley filmed, directed and edited the brilliant, horrific and brilliantly horrific documentary Dirty Wars, previewing this week in the US.

The film centres on Rowley’s reporting partner, the indefatigable Jeremy Scahill, whom Rowley follows from the scene of a massacre at a wedding party in Afghanistan to an interview with a warlord in Mogadishu (while under sniper fire).

You might know Rowley as Ricardo, the pathologically calm cameraman portrayed in my book Vultures' Picnic. In Iraq, Rowley covered the US Army assault on Fallujah "embedded" with the assaulted, the insurgents. That was insane. Insane but brilliant. (Our producer at the BBC warned Ricardo that he was one lucky cat, but he'd already used up seven of his nine lives.)

In Dirty Wars, Rowley and Scahill reveal that drones are just one toy in our Presidents' murderous toy-chest. And the kill list is far larger than even a smart dude like Obama can tick off on a Tuesday. Scahill calculates that the targeted kills in Afghanistan and Pakistan now total more than 17,000!

Drones can't kill them all. In 2009, a US cruise missile hit al Majala, a remote village of Bedouins in Yemen, killing a dozen herdsmen and three babies. Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh took responsibility, proudly, for killing supposed "terrorists".

However, a courageous Yemeni reporter, Abdulelah Haider Shaye, visited the site, photographed the remains of the US missile - and was promptly jailed.

The US is particularly shy about taking credit for the cruise missile kills, as it boosted al-Qaeda's recruitment drive in Yemen.

Rowley and Scahill are the only US reporters to have gone to the Bedouin village and filmed the missile casing; cold evidence confirming the US had entered a war without any legal declaration - indeed, in complete secrecy.

Scahill also revealed that, while Yemen's President Saleh was nervous about keeping the reporter imprisoned, Saleh withdrew his pardon at the personal request of Barack Obama. Obama wanted the journalist not just silenced, but punished.

WikiLeaks: Cleaning up Dirty Wars?

I was curious: Did Scahill and Rowley make use of WikiLeaks?

"WikiLeaks was absolutely indispensible," Rowley told me - a treasure trove of State Department confessions confirming what they found on the ground. It was through WikiLeaks that they discovered that President Saleh joked with US operatives about lying to his Congress about the US missile attack on al Majala.

And it was in WikiLeaks that Scahill found that the warlord Indha Adde - AKA "White Eyes" - was on the USA's payroll. I should say, General White Eyes - a rank he gave himself in the Somali Army by pinning three stars on his jacket. Where did the US military find this cutthroat? Previously, the WikiLeaks cables revealed, the US knew he was the protector of the al-Qaeda bombers who blew up the US Embassy in Nairobi.

Rowley captures the warlord/general on camera saying, "The USA is the master in war" - quite a compliment from a natural born killer like White Eyes.

And General "Eyes" is quite right. Obama’s secret war has now spread to 75 nations. It's all
under the command of General William H McRaven.

The US press is in love with McRaven, lauded as the man who planned the raid on Osama bin Laden's compound. But there's not one single US network or paper that would report on Scahill's discovery that McRaven was also the guy who planned the night raid on the Afghan wedding party that killed the bride, the groom and the groom's mother.

Maybe that was some horrible mistake. But McRaven's crew, called "The American Taliban" by Afghans, made sure that no one would finger the US: Rowley and Scahill obtained a secretly recorded video of McRaven's commandos slicing the bullets out of the bride's and groom's bodies to prevent their killers' identification.

McRaven's semi-private army, the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), is warring in our name in 75 nations - nations he won't name and Obama will arrest you for naming. Not even Orwell could have dreamed up that one.

I asked about the value of WikiLeaks to Rowley and Scahill because of the ongoing trial of Pvt Bradley Manning and the impending capture of Edward Snowden, the contractor willing to blow away his career and freedom to let you know that nice Mr Obama has been spying on you.

A rabbi from Nazareth once said, "The truth shall set you free." And that's exactly what Obama is afraid of: faced with the truths revealed in Dirty Wars, they know most Americans would cut themselves free of McRaven's Seal Team Sick.

I am convinced the hit on al-Awlaki's son was meant to teach a lesson; If you want to be a martyr, we'll make your son and your mum and daughter martyrs, too.

Such terror-for-terror can be, I'll admit, quite effective. During the Ronald Reagan years, that gutless faux-cowboy President sent weapons to Ayatollah Khomeini in return for the release of hostages taken by Hezbollah. The Russians got their hostages home another way. The USSR didn't accept an arms-for-hostage deal. Rather, the KGB systematically assassinated the hostage-takers' cousins, mothers and brothers one by one - until Hezbollah released all the Russian hostages.

By rocketing the children of those we fear, we are indeed teaching them a lesson. But what are they learning?

Next year, Malia Obama turns 16. I hope we never hear that harm has come to Malia while some chuckling spokesman for al-Qaeda says, "She should have had a far more responsible father."

Greg Palast's films with Richard "Ricardo" Rowley for BBC Television and Democracy Now! are available on the DVD, "Palast Investigates: From 8-Mile to the Amazon - On the Trail of Financial Marauders." This week, you can download it here without charge from the Palast Investigative Fund.

If you're in Canada or the States, click here to locate showings of Dirty Wars near you. And click here for Ricardo's story in Vultures' Picnic.

Defining Drone Deaths in Yemen

Media present dubious official claims as fact
The United States has reportedly carried out nine drone attacks in the last few weeks in Yemen, generating headlines about the targeting and killing of suspected Al-Qaeda militants in the impoverished country.

But how can media know for sure who is being killed?

The uptick in attacks is apparently related to the alleged terrorist chatter that prompted the U.S. government to close down embassies and diplomatic offices. To hear the media tell it, the U.S. is striking at terrorist fighters.

"An American drone delivers a deadly message to Al-Qaeda," announced the CBS Evening News (8/7/13). Correspondent Bob Orr reported, "For the fifth time in two weeks, U.S. drones fired on militants. Seven suspected operatives riding in two cars were killed by a barrage of missiles."

On August 8, when Evening News anchor Norah O'Donnell asked, "Who is being targeted by these drone strikes?," Orr answered:

Well, sources tell us that most of those killed so far had been terrorist foot soldiers.... It's worth noting, though, even the elimination of rank-and-file operatives does have value; it reduces the group's manpower, and, more importantly, it forces the other terrorists to keep an eye on the skies.

The New York Times ran an Associated Press story (8/9/13) that led, "Three American drone strikes in Yemen on Thursday killed a total of 12 people suspected of being members of Al-Qaeda, a Yemeni military official said." The piece went on to note that "since July 27, drone attacks have killed 34 suspected militants, according to a count provided by Yemeni security officials."

Two days later, the CBS Evening News (8/11/13) declared that "just this week, drone strikes in the country may have killed at least two dozen suspected Al-Qaeda militants, according to Yemeni officials."

And on ABC's This Week (8/11/13), correspondent Martha Raddatz said that those the government suspects of plotting a major attack "were not killed in those strikes in Yemen, but the dead are part of what they called the network of terrorists trying to kill Americans."

But how would anyone have any confidence about who is dying in the drone strikes in Yemen?

If the information about targets comes from the Yemeni government, journalists might consider the fact that it is also fighting the same group--Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula--and thus might have an interest in declaring victories over its foe, and a reluctance to admit that its U.S. allies are killing innocent citizens. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism estimates that U.S. drone strikes in Yemen may have killed more than a hundred civilians since 2002.

As the Washington Post (12/24/12) reported under the headline "When U.S. Drones Kill
Civilians, Yemen's Government Tries to Conceal It," the Yemeni government "has often tried to hide civilian casualties from the public, fearing repercussions in a nation where hostility toward U.S. policies is widespread."

Some outlets have expressed caution, like this McClatchy report (8/9/13):

While Western news reports have cast casualties of the next strike, on Aug. 1, as militants, locals in the area of Hadramawt where it took place have claimed that the dead had no links to the Al-Qaeda group and included a child.

As for the strikes dealing any sort of blow to the group, another report from the Post(5/30/12) noted that "an unintended consequence of the attacks has been a marked radicalization of the local population." The paper added:

In 2009, when President Obama was first known to have authorized a missile strike on Yemen, U.S. officials said there were no more than 300 core AQAP members. That number has grown in recent years to 700 or more, Yemeni officials and tribal leaders say.

And it appears that the United States has broadened its rules for who it considers a target. As the New York Times (8/12/13) reported, a "senior American official" acknowledged that the terrorist threat has "expanded the scope of people we could go after." The official explained:

Before, we couldn't necessarily go after a driver for the organization; it'd have to be an operations director.... Now that driver becomes fair game because he's providing direct support to the plot.

Given that the administration had previously defined militants as military-age males in the vicinity of a target (Salon, 5/29/12), one would hope reporters would take official claims--from U.S. or Yemeni officials--with a grain of salt.
Obama, in a Shift, to Limit Targets of Drone Strikes

This image, taken in February, shows the location of an American drone stroke that killed Abdulrahman al-Awlaki and six Qaeda militants on October 14, 2011. Abdulrahman al-Awlaki is the son of the cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed in a separate drone strike.

By CHARLIE SAVAGE and PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — President Obama plans to open a new phase in the nation’s long struggle with terrorism on Thursday by restricting the use of unmanned drone strikes that have been at the heart of his national security strategy and shifting control of them away from the C.I.A. to the military.
In his first major speech on counterterrorism of his second term, Mr. Obama hopes to refocus the epic conflict that has defined American priorities since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and even foresees an unspecified day when the so-called war on terror might all but end, according to people briefed on White House plans.

As part of the shift in approach, the administration on Wednesday formally acknowledged for the first time that **it had killed four American citizens in drone strikes outside the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq**, arguing that its actions were justified by the danger to the United States. Mr. Obama approved providing new information to Congress and the public about the rules governing his attacks on Al Qaeda and its allies.

A new classified policy guidance signed by Mr. Obama will sharply curtail the instances when unmanned aircraft can be used to attack in places that are not overt war zones, countries like Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. The rules will impose the same standard for strikes on foreign enemies now used only for American citizens deemed to be terrorists.

Lethal force will be used only against targets who pose “a continuing, imminent threat to Americans” and cannot feasibly be captured, Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said in a letter to Congress, suggesting that threats to a partner like Afghanistan or Yemen alone would not be enough to justify being targeted.

The standard could signal an end to “signature strikes,” or attacks on groups of unknown men based only on their presumed status as members of Al Qaeda or some other enemy group — an approach that administration critics say has resulted in many civilian casualties. In effect, this appears to be a step away from the less restricted use of force allowed in war zones and toward the more limited use of force for self-defense allowed outside of armed conflict.

In the speech he will give on Thursday at the National Defense University, Mr. Obama will also renew his long-stalled effort to close the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Officials
said they would make a fresh push to transfer detainees to home countries and lift the ban on sending some back to Yemen. The president plans to reappoint a high-level State Department official to oversee the effort to reduce the prison population.

The combined actions constitute a pivot point for a president who came to office highly critical of his predecessor, George W. Bush, yet who preserved and in some cases expanded on some of the counterterrorism policies he inherited. Much as Mr. Bush did in 2006 when he acknowledged and emptied secret overseas C.I.A. prisons, Mr. Obama appears intent on countering criticism of his most controversial policies by reorienting them to meet changing conditions.

In his speech, Mr. Obama is expected to reject the notion of a perpetual war with terrorists, envisioning a day when Al Qaeda has been so incapacitated that wartime authority will end. However, because he is also institutionalizing procedures for drone strikes, it does not appear that he thinks that day has come. A Pentagon official suggested last week that the current conflict could continue for 10 to 20 years.

Yet even as he moves the counterterrorism effort to a next stage, Mr. Obama plans to offer a robust defense of a continued role for targeted killings, a policy he has generally addressed only in passing or in interviews rather than in a comprehensive speech. A White House official said he “will discuss why the use of drone strikes is necessary, legal and just, while addressing the various issues raised by our use of targeted action.”

While Mr. Obama may not explicitly announce the shift in drones from the Central Intelligence Agency in his speech, since the agency’s operations remain formally classified, the change underscores a desire by the president and his advisers to balance them with other legal and diplomatic tools. The C.I.A., which has overseen the drone war in the tribal areas of Pakistan and elsewhere, will generally cede its role to the military after a six-month transition period as forces draw down in Afghanistan, officials said.

Drone strikes have already been decreasing in the past few years as targets have been killed and opposition has grown. John O. Brennan, the new C.I.A. director, has been eager to shift the agency more toward espionage, intelligence gathering and analysis and away from the paramilitary mission it has adopted since Sept. 11.

Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island, a top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, said that after more than a decade of war it was time to “rebalance” the missions of the Pentagon and C.I.A. “The policy is intended to refocus the activities of the intelligence community to collection, which is crucial,” he said.
But Mr. Obama’s moves may provoke criticism from some Republicans who say a law enforcement approach underestimates the continuing threat from terrorism. An aide to Representative Howard P. McKeon of California, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said his boss would insist on “concrete answers” about what Mr. Obama planned to do with “terrorists who are too dangerous to be released” from Guantánamo.

In his letter to Congressional leaders, Mr. Holder confirmed that the administration had deliberately killed Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical Muslim cleric who died in a drone strike in September 2011 in Yemen. Mr. Holder also wrote that United States forces had killed three other Americans who “were not specifically targeted.”

The American involvement in Mr. Awlaki’s death has been widely reported, but the administration until now had refused to confirm it. Likewise, Mr. Holder confirmed the government’s role in the deaths of Samir Khan, who was killed in the same strike, and Mr. Awlaki’s son, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, who died in another strike. The letter disclosed the death of a fourth American named Jude Kenan Mohammad but gave no further details.

Mr. Holder defended the actions, saying they were consistent with American law and taken only after careful consideration. “Based on generations-old legal principles and Supreme Court decisions handed down during World War II, as well as during the current conflict, it is clear and logical that United States citizenship alone does not make such individuals immune from being targeted,” he wrote.

Critics were not assuaged. “The Obama administration continues to claim authority to kill virtually anyone anywhere in the world under the ‘global battlefield’ legal theory and a radical redefinition of the concept of imminence,” said Zeke Johnson of Amnesty International. “President Obama should reject these concepts in his speech tomorrow and commit to upholding human rights, not just in word but in deed.”

The lifting of the veil of official secrecy over the Awlaki killing could have broad legal ramifications. The Justice Department on Wednesday afternoon dropped an effort to throw out a California lawsuit seeking documents related to the killing, while a judge here ordered the government to address the disclosure in a wrongful-death lawsuit brought by Mr. Awlaki’s family.

Mr. Holder, in a speech at Northwestern law school last year, laid out the administration’s basic legal thinking that it could target American citizens deemed to be operational terrorists who pose an “imminent threat of violent attack” and where capture is not feasible.

Mr. Holder’s letter expanded the rationale for the killing of Mr. Awlaki. Mr. Holder said Mr. Awlaki not only had “planned” the attempted bombing of a Detroit-bound airliner on Dec. 25,
2009, a claim that has been widely discussed in court documents and elsewhere, but had also “played a key role” in an October 2010 plot to blow up cargo planes bound for the United States, including taking “part in the development and testing” of the bombs. He added that Mr. Awlaki had also been involved in “the planning of numerous other plots.”

“The decision to target Anwar al-Awlaki was lawful, it was considered, and it was just,” Mr. Holder said.

A version of this article appeared in print on May 23, 2013, on page A1 of the New York edition with the headline: Obama, In A Shift, To Limit Targets Of Drone Strikes.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE OPINION

Editorial: Obama won't ground aerial strikes that kill terrorists. Good.
May 24, 2013

U.S. President Barack Obama listens to an audience member interrupting his speech on the administration's counterterrorism policy at the National Defense University at Ft. McNair in Washington, May 23, 2013. (LARRY DOWNING )

President Barack Obama has taken a lot of heat over America’s targeting of terrorists overseas with lethal drone strikes. Critics argue that the secret CIA-run program provokes political backlash in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, outweighing the value of the terrorists killed. That the attacks too often go awry and inadvertently kill innocents. That there's no effective oversight. And that Obama hasn't given Congress sufficient legal rationale for the aerial strikes.

Those complaints include kernels of validity but often have been exaggerated. Drone attacks also have exterminated many sworn enemies of this country without risking U.S. lives on the ground or
in the air.

Obama on Thursday answered his critics with a full-throated defense of drones:

"To do nothing in the face of terrorist networks would invite far more civilian casualties — not just in our cities at home and facilities abroad, but also in the very places — like Sanaa and Kabul and Mogadishu — where terrorists seek a foothold," Obama said in a speech at the National Defense University in Washington. "Let us remember that the terrorists we are after target civilians and the death toll from their acts of terrorism against Muslims dwarfs any estimate of civilian casualties from (U.S.) drone strikes."

He's right. The drone campaign has been extremely and surgically effective, targeting militants across Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and parts of Africa. It has killed wide swaths of al-Qaida leadership.

But the president also has suggested that he thinks the program has shortcomings. That's why Obama administration officials have indicated that the drone strike program will be narrowed and subjected to greater scrutiny: A new classified policy directive signed by Obama reportedly curtails when the unmanned aircraft can be used to attack in places that are not declared war zones. The president also is shifting more responsibility to the military from the CIA, an effort to provide more rigid accountability for the strikes.

Bottom line: This speech wasn't some dramatic new statement of policy. And none of these refinements means America's drone program will be significantly weakened. These adjustments mostly reflect changing reality on the ground in those countries where the U.S. targets terrorists: The number of reported U.S. drone attacks already has fallen sharply since 2010. One likely reason is the absence of high-value targets, those al-Qaida kingpins of yore. Many are dead or on the run.

Obama also promised more transparency for the drone program, something critics have long sought. One day before his speech, the administration acknowledged for the first time that it has killed four U.S. citizens in strikes in Yemen and Pakistan.

The president also mentioned the possibility of a secret court that would sign off on future strikes. That's an idea floated by Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California and others. We've said before that we'd like to hear a debate on that. However:

The United States risks losing the advantage of surprise if individual drone strikes become entangled in slow-motion bureaucracy back home. We fear U.S. warriors shrinking from what in effect are battlefield decisions because they have one eye on Congress, or judges, or some other overseer who is not their commander in chief. We don't want drone operators hoping their targeted terrorist will stay put in Pakistan while judges in Washington debate whether it's appropriate to fire the missile. Nor, we imagine, would the president.
United Nations Berate US Drone Policy


Pilkington and Devereaux report: "The US government has defended its use of drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and other countries in front of the UN, telling a chamber full of largely critical nations that in President Obama's view the deployment of unmanned aerial attacks against al-Qaida targets was 'necessary, legal and just.'"”


Contents of #7  Dec. 20, 2012

Obama Assassination President

Public Discussion of Drones; Stanford/NYU report

ACLU Sues CIA

Terrorizing Civilian Population

Rules for Drone Warfare

Restricting Protest

US Police Use Drones, Citizens Protest

Contents #8  Jan. 22, 2013

NOVA, “Rise of the Drones”
Greenwald, Stanford/NYU on Terrorized Civilians, *Living Under Drones*

Cavallaro, *Living Under Drones*

Bailey, *Assassination Drones*

Sprusansky, *Demand Truths of Drone War*

Glaser, *Drones, My Lai, Prosecution*

Stauffer, UN to Investigate Drone Killings

Kucinich Holds Congressional Briefing

**Contents #9  2013**

New Medal for Drone Pilots

Yemen: Drone Kills al-Qaeda and Innocents

Moyers and Co.: Drones vs. Democracy

Moyers and Co.: Innocents Murdered, Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize a Mistake

*Washington Post’s*  Biased Reporting and Polling

PBS *NOVA* Drone Report Underwritten by Lockheed Martin, Maker of Drones (see #8)

Dick’s Letter to PBS Ombudsman

Obama Creates Manual or “Playbook:” for the Killing Process

30,000 Drones Over US by 2020
--
Dick Bennett

Newsletters
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/

Index:
http://www.omnicenter.org/omni-newsletter-general-index/
National/International Days
MY NEW EMAIL ADDRESS
j.dick.bennett@gmail.com
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703