OMNI, OBAMA’S NEWSLETTER #1, December 12, 2013. Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Caring, Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

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

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

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

Write or Call the White House
President Obama is committed 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
Introduction

Three main groups seek to characterize President Obama: 1) the Democratic Party, 2) the Republican Party, and 3) the wide variety of individuals and groups (the Green Party) who want the President to be more idealistic, utopian, and more vigorous regarding nonviolence, world peace, social and economic justice, human rights, democracy, and protection of the earth and species. The Democrats present the good things the President has achieved, and the Republicans present the bad; both Parties have the money to present their perceptions amply to the public. The third group lacks Party and Money ((the Green comparatively very poor and therefore unheard). This collection of essays, a tiny sample, criticizes the president for failing to live up to certain ideals and practices, including the inconsistency between what he says and what he does. All three groups, if they wish to understand President Obama and thereby perhaps to see their own positions prevail, would be wise to read the arguments by their opponents.

I have arranged the essays and one book roughly from general critiques to specific, single topics, and then at the end to a broad coverage again.

Contents

Six General Essays

Conniff, Obama Likes Bush

Scheer, Obama Close to Financial Power

Davies, Obama Serves Ruling Class

Madsen, Obama and CIA

Rothschild, Five of Obama’s Broken Promises

Friedersdo, Biggest Scandals Ignored

Three on Censorship of Whistleblowers and Journalists

Greenwald on Whistleblowers
Solomon on Journalism

Editors of The Nation

Totten, No Aid to Nuba People

Three on Middle East

Swanson, Failed Peace

Ruebner, Shattered Hopes

Cynthia McKinney, Illegal War on Libya

Four on Drones

Yemen

Moyers

Sanders, Pathology of Presidential Power

Monbiot, Children Killed

Marshall, War on Terror (War of Terror) in 3 Parts

Two on Revoking Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize
OBAMA, FRIEND OF CORRUPT BANKS, BUDDY OF JAMIE DIMON

Wednesday, September 25, 2013

OBAMA’S FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

by Robert Scheer

That Barack Obama is such a kidder. No matter how awkward the moment, he’s got just the right quip to purchase some wiggle room. Remember when his old Chicago banking buddy Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JPMorgan Chase, first ran into that bit of trouble over his bank’s “London Whale” derivative scam? That scheme has already lost $6 billion with close to another $1 billion piled on by the SEC in fines last week after JPMorgan
admitted it broke the law. Well of course, being Obama, when the scandal first broke last year, the president picked a women’s daytime talk show, ABC’s “The View,” to deal with the scams of his leading Wall Street backer. “JPMorgan is one of the best-managed banks there is,” he told the “View” audience. “Jamie Dimon, the head of it, is one of the smartest bankers we got, and they still lost $2 billion and counting.”

Yes, counting; that $2 billion is now likely to end up around $16 billion given the future legal fees and possible payouts allotted to countering the myriad lawsuits connected with this admission of illegal activity. That’s aside from the mortgage fraud, Libor rate rigging and energy manipulation cases still confronting the beleaguered bank. Thursday, on the same day that Dimon’s bank got slapped with the SEC fine, federal regulators revealed that JPMorgan had agreed to pay $389 million in penalties and refunds to compensate for a credit card identity theft protection scam after $309 million already paid out in that case.

It should be remembered that this same Dimon, who appeared before a Senate committee wearing presidential cufflinks, once worked with Sanford Weill in engineering the reversal of the Glass-Steagall law to make Citigroup, a previously illegal merger of investment and commercial banks, possible. But despite his record as a leader in the radical deregulation of banking that caused all of the trouble, Obama turned to Dimon for direction on fixing the economy.

If you still require to be disabused of Obama’s pretend populism, consider his decision to select William M. Daley, JPMorgan’s representative in Washington, to be his White House chief of staff. It gave Dimon the key White House connection to accompany the passkey he already had at Treasury with his pal Timothy Geithner as secretary.

It was a real cozy arrangement; Dimon was still a governor of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, where he had served during Geithner’s presidency overseeing the banking meltdown. Geithner had been instrumental in arranging Fed financing for JPMorgan’s acquisition of troubled Bear Stearns through a $55 billion loan and later an additional $25 billion in TARP funds.

Once appointed Treasury secretary, Geithner made himself very accessible to Dimon. As an Associated Press investigation reported, Dimon had numerous personal meetings and phone calls with Geithner while the White House was calibrating its response to the Wall Street crisis.
Why are we not surprised that Obama has done nothing to break up the too-big-to-fail banks, the biggest now being Dimon’s? Don’t be fooled by the occasional fines; the banks have used the interest-free money to grow ever larger and more unaccountable in their behavior.

Even the recent SEC settlement, while mentioning the despicable behavior of JPMorgan’s chief executive, fails to utter Dimon’s name, and as Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., who did much to unravel this scam, noted, “the whole issue of misinforming investors and the public is conspicuously absent from the SEC findings and settlement.”

After the SEC condemnation of JPMorgan’s “egregious breakdowns in controls” and conclusion that “senior management broke a cardinal rule of corporate management” to honestly inform the board of directors, top senior manager Dimon made all the right noises. JPMorgan announced that $4 billion and a staff of 5,000 employees would be devoted to compliance with the law.

This was just the sort of commitment Dimon made in 2006 when he hired Stephen M. Cutler, who had been head of the SEC Division of Enforcement, to be JPMorgan’s general counsel. Once a committed regulator who urged corporations “to create a culture of compliance,” Cutler clearly drank the Kool-Aid at JPMorgan, for he was in charge of legal and compliance activities worldwide at the time of the London Whale fiasco. So much for trusting corporate compliance.

As Donald Langevoort, an expert on compliance issues at Georgetown University School of Law, told The New York Times on Friday, “JPMorgan is by no means unique. None of these big banks really want compliance people causing traders and investment bankers to second-guess themselves too much because that gets in the way of making money. No one will say this, but it’s more effective to run the risk of noncompliance and pay a few fines, which is just a cost of doing business.”

Exactly the reason that too-big-to-fail banks can’t be trusted to do the right thing and why Obama shouldn’t have been guided by Dimon in the first place.

Robert Scheer is editor of Truthdig.com and a regular columnist for The San Francisco Chronicle.
NICOLAS J. S. DAVIES, “FROM OHLENDORF TO OBAMA.” Z MAGAZINE (September 2013). The US political and economic system of legalized bribery and inverted totalitarianism promotes leaders who can win the votes of the public while serving the interests of the wealthy.

GET THE ARTICLE

The Manufacturing of a President
By Wayne Madsen

View this Author's Spotlight

Paperback, 395 Pages

This book covers Barack H. Obama, Jr’s rapid rise in American politics and the role that the CIA played in propelling him into the White House. Research is based on formerly classified CIA and State Department files, personal interviews, and international investigations. Obama's birth certificate has never been the issue. The real issue, which affects his eligibility to serve as President of the United States, is his past and likely current Indonesian citizenship. The reader will be taken through the labyrinth of covert CIA operations in Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and other regions. The real history of President Obama, his family, and the CIA quickly emerges as the reader wades into the murky waters of America's covert foreign operations.
Obama Gets Slippery on Killing U.S. Citizens
By Matthew Rothschild, May 23, 2013

[A slightly different version of the following essay, entitled “Obama’s Hollow Words,” was published in The Progressive (July 2013). This analysis of Obama’s speech at the National Defense University on May 23, 2013 highlights five topics of Obama’s “hollow words” in which the president says one thing but does another:]

1) Says he wants to close Guantanamo but doesn’t even though he can.

2) Praises investigative reporting but allows his Justice Department to steal phone records of AP reporters, and

3) His JD to accuse reporter James Rosen of violating the Espionage Act of 1917.

4) Assaults whistleblowers more than any preceding president.

5) Ordered killing of four US citizens after declaring extra-judicial killing unconstitutional.
That’s the first half of the essay. The last half examines his misuse of language and sophistry—backpedaling, doubletalk—and habit of saying one thing and doing another, while “his policies remain essentially unchanged.” --Dick]

President Obama has an eerie and alarming ability to detach himself from his own dubious actions.

This character trait was on full display in his speech on Thursday at the National Defense University.

When he talked about the need to shut down Guantanamo, he said: “Look at the current situation, where we are force-feeding detainees who are holding a hunger strike. Is that something that our Founders foresaw? Is that the America we want to leave to our children?”

Wise words, but hollow ones.

Hollow, because he could have closed Guantanamo on day one in his first term, as he promised.

Hollow, because even today he could be releasing those prisoners himself, rather than overseeing their force-feeding.

As the great constitutional scholar David Cole notes in the New York Review of Books, “Current law permits the executive branch to waive some of the requirements when the transfer ‘is in the national security interests of the United States.’ Moreover, eighty-six detainees have been ‘cleared for release’ but remain in detention. Fifty-six of them are Yemeni citizens, and it was President Obama, not Congress, who placed their release on hold.”

Similarly, Obama tried to detach himself from his own Justice Department’s grabbing of the phone records of more than 100 AP reporters and the claim by the Justice Department that Fox News’s James Rosen was a “co-conspirator” in violating the Espionage Act of 1917.

“I am troubled by the possibility that leak investigations may chill the investigative journalism that holds governments accountable,” Obama said.

Then fire Eric Holder, for God’s sake.

But Obama really doesn’t want to do that. Nor does he want to step back from the harsh assault on whistleblowers that he’s had Holder wage, again using the Espionage Act. Obama admitted in his speech that he believes it is necessary “to enforce consequences for those who break the law and breach their
commitment to protect classified information.”

Most slippery was Obama on the subject of killing U.S. citizens.

“For the record,” he said, “I do not believe it would be constitutional for the government to target and kill any U.S. citizen—with a drone, or a shotgun—without due process.”

But then he justified the assassination of Anwar Al-Awlaki, without acknowledging that Al-Awlaki received no due process.

Even more shabbily, he neglected to even mention by name the three other American citizens his administration has rubbed out.

Samir Khan, a young editor of a magazine allegedly affiliated with Al Qaeda, was killed by the same drone that struck down Al-Awlaki

A few weeks after they got Al-Awlaki and Khan, they bumped off Al-Awlaki’s 16-year-old American-born son, Abdulrahman Al-Awlaki. Obama’s former press secretary, said Abdulrahman should have had “a far more responsible father.”

And now it comes out that they also bumped off Jude Kenan Mohammed, a 23-year-old American citizen who had been radicalized and who had gone to Pakistan.

The Obama Administration doesn’t want to admit that they intentionally killed any U.S. citizen other than Anwar Al-Awlaki because by their own standards, they’re only supposed to kill Al Qaeda members who pose an “imminent” threat.

Now I don't care how much exercise President Obama wants to get by backpedaling on this issue, the facts remain that he has acted like Tony Soprano in the Oval Office.

And he cannot whisk the corpses of Abdulrahman Al-Awlaki, Samir Khan, and Jude Kenan Mohammed under the Oval Office rug.

By the way, these three never received due process, either. So by Obama’s own standard, his Administration violated the Constitution by killing them.
Obama did say some things that were a relief to hear.

It was good of him to say, “This war, like all wars, must end. That’s what history advises. That’s what our democracy demands.”

It was good of him to say that we are not fighting “a boundless ‘global war on terror’ ” but “specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America.”

It was good of him to say that “we have faced down dangers far greater than Al Qaeda.”

It was good of him to say that he wants to “ultimately repeal” the Authorization for Use of Military Force of September 2001.

It was good of him to say that he is “haunted” by the civilian deaths of non-American citizens who fell victim to our drones, that he understands some of the civil liberties issues that are at stake here at home, and that he is wary of vesting permanent wartime powers in the hands of the President.

All these things are good, as far as they go.

But they don’t go very far.

Not when his policies remain essentially unchanged.

If you liked this story by Matthew Rothschild, the editor of The Progressive magazine, check out his story Obama Should Fire Holder over the AP Scandal.

Follow Matthew Rothschild @mattrothschild on Twitter

The Biggest Obama Scandals Are Proven and Ignored - Conor Friedersdo
THREE ON OBAMA’S SUPPRESSION OF THE PRESS AND WHISTLEBLOWERS

GOOGLE SEARCH, GREENWALD, “WAR ON WHISTLEBLOWERS”

Part 2: Robert Greenwald on Film "War on Whistleblowers: Free ..."
Democracy Now (blog)-Apr 18, 2013

The film, *War on Whistleblowers*, profiles Michael DeKort, a Lockheed Martin project manager who posted a whistleblowing video on YouTube.

1.

2.

Filmmaker Robert Greenwald on "War on Whistleblowers: Free ..."
Truth-Out-Apr 19, 2013

A new film directed by Robert Greenwald looks at four whistleblowers who had their lives practically destroyed after they went to the press with ...
The part of the First Amendment that prohibits "abridging the freedom ... of the press" is now up against the wall, as the Obama administration continues to assault the kind of journalism that can expose government secrets.

Last Friday the administration got what it wanted -- an ice-cold chilling effect -- from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled on the case of New York Times reporter James Risen. The court "delivered a blow to investigative journalism in America by ruling that reporters have no First Amendment protection that would safeguard the confidentiality of their sources in the event of a criminal trial," the Guardian reported.

The Executive Branch fought for that ruling -- and is now celebrating. "We agree with the decision," said a Justice Department spokesman. "We are examining the next steps in the prosecution of this case." The Risen case, and potentially many others, are now under the ominous shadow of the Appeals Court’s pronouncement: "There is no First Amendment testimonial privilege, absolute or qualified, that protects a reporter from being compelled to testify ... in criminal proceedings."

At the Freedom of the Press Foundation, co-founder Trevor Timm calls the court ruling "the most significant reporter's privilege decision in decades" and asserts that the court "eviscerated that privilege." He's not exaggerating. Press freedom is at stake.

Journalists who can be compelled to violate the confidentiality of their sources, or otherwise go to prison, are reduced to doing little more than providing stenographic services to pass along the official story. That's what the White House wants.
The federal Fourth Circuit covers the geographical area where most of the U.S. government's intelligence, surveillance and top-level military agencies -- including the NSA and CIA -- are headquartered. The ruling "pretty much guts national security journalism in the states in which it matters," Marcy Wheeler writes.

That court decision came seven days after the Justice Department released its "News Media Policies" report announcing "significant revisions to the Department's policies regarding investigations that involve members of the news media." The report offered assurances that "members of the news media will not be subject to prosecution based solely on newsgathering activities." (Hey thanks!) But the document quickly added that the government will take such action "as a last resort" when seeking information that is "essential to a successful investigation or prosecution."

Translation: We won't prosecute journalists for doing their jobs unless we really want to.

Over the weekend, some news accounts described Friday's court decision as bad timing for Attorney General Eric Holder, who has scrambled in recent weeks to soothe the anger at the Justice Department's surveillance of journalists. "The ruling was awkwardly timed for the Obama administration," the New York Times reported. But the ruling wasn't just "awkwardly timed" -- it was revealing, and it underscored just how hostile the Obama White House has become toward freedom of the press.

News broke in May that the Justice Department had seized records of calls on more than 20 phone lines used by Associated Press reporters over a two-month period and had also done intensive surveillance of a Fox News reporter that included obtaining phone records and reading his emails. Since then, the Obama administration tried to defuse the explosive reaction without actually retreating from its offensive against press freedom.

At a news conference two months ago, when President Obama refused to say a critical word about his Justice Department's targeted surveillance of reporters, he touted plans to reintroduce a bill for a federal shield law so journalists can protect their sources. But Obama didn't mention that he has insisted on a "national security exception" that would make such a law approximately worthless for reporters doing the kind of reporting that has resulted in government surveillance -- and has sometimes landed them in federal court.

Obama's current notion of a potential shield law would leave his administration fully able to block protection of journalistic sources. In a mid-May article -- headlined "White House Shield Bill Could Actually Make It Easier for the Government to Get Journalists' Sources" -- the Freedom of the Press Foundation shed light on the duplicity: As a supposed concession to press freedom, the president was calling for reintroduction of a 2009 Senate bill that "would not have helped the Associated Press in this case, and worse, it would actually make it easier for the Justice Department to subpoena journalists covering national security issues."
Whether hyping a scenario for a shield law or citing new Justice Department guidelines for news media policies, the cranked-up spin from the administration’s PR machinery does not change the fact that Obama is doubling down on a commitment to routine surveillance of everyone, along with extreme measures specifically aimed at journalists -- and whistleblowers.

The administration’s efforts to quash press freedom are in sync with its unrelenting persecution of whistleblowers. The purpose is to further choke off the flow of crucial information to the public, making informed "consent of the governed" impossible while imposing massive surveillance and other violations of the First, Fourth and Fifth Amendments. Behind the assault on civil liberties is maintenance of a warfare state with huge corporate military contracts and endless war. The whole agenda is repugnant and completely unacceptable.

Obama's Assault on the Press

Prosecution of whistleblowers, dragnet seizure of phone records, the threatened criminalization of basic news-gathering—it’s dangerous for the media, and dangerous for democracy.

The Editors

May 22, 2013  |  This article appeared in the June 10-17, 2013 edition of The Nation.

When Democrats nominated Barack Obama and Joseph Biden in 2008, there was relief that —after eight years of Bush/Cheney abuses—a major party was running, for the first time in our history, a pair of constitutional law instructors for president and vice president. With the Obama/Biden victory, many assumed that surely the new administration would respect the First Amendment, including the essential democratic role of a free press.

Not so. Bush and Cheney set a bad example, but Obama and Biden have compounded the damage. Truth-telling has suffered an all-out assault—sometimes literally, as in the case of Pfc. Bradley Manning, who has been detained in appalling conditions and now faces extreme charges that should be dropped.

The current administration knows better, but it has not done better. During Obama’s 2008 campaign, he accurately called whistleblowers “the best source of information about waste, fraud and abuse in government” and said that their “acts of courage and patriotism…should be encouraged rather than stifled.” Yet his administration has invoked the Espionage Act a record six times since 2009—twice as many as in the previous ninety years.

Americans understand that there are times when law enforcement agencies must strike a balance between First Amendment guarantees and national-security needs. But when the Justice Department secretly obtained two months’ worth of phone records of Associated
Press reporters in at least four bureaus as part of an attempt to track a leak, that was overreach on a dramatic scale. Even more disturbing was the department’s investigation of the reporting activities of Fox News’s chief Washington correspondent as a potential crime—which it described as “solicitation” of leaks. This raises the specter of criminalizing one of the basic tasks of newsgathering: encouraging people in the know to answer questions about important issues. In seeking a warrant to review James Rosen’s private e-mails, the department called the reporter “an aider and abettor and/or co-conspirator” in the leaking of classified materials. “Criminalizing or threatening to criminalize the news-gathering process is a direct assault on the First Amendment and press freedom,” says Trevor Timm, executive director of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, who points out that talk of “conspiracy to commit espionage” is dangerous for reporters.

It’s even more dangerous for democracy. Freedom of the press was protected in the First Amendment because the founders understood that democracy is impossible without journalism. “A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both,” warned James Madison, who added that “a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”

Practically, this means reporters must be able to engage in candid conversations with government officials. Associated Press president Gary Pruitt says that the reports of Justice Department crackdowns have made sources more reluctant to talk to reporters. If the pattern continues, the Washington press corps, already too prone to act as stenographers to power, will rely even more on official sources and official stories.

This is an urgent concern. President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder claim to respect press freedom, yet they make “no apologies” for the aggressive pursuit of leaks. They must reverse course, and Congress has to prod them by passing a shield law for journalists and specific legislation to guarantee privacy rights for all. A bipartisan group of House members—libertarian Republicans and progressive Democrats—has proposed a Telephone Records Protection Act, which would require that the government obtain court approval to get telephone records from service providers. That’s a baseline standard for protecting the privacy of every American, including the reporters, imperfect as they may be, who arm the citizenry with the power which knowledge gives.

Take Action: Demand that Congress Protect Press Freedoms

The Editors May 22, 2013 | This article appeared in the June 10-17, 2013 edition of The Nation.

Please support our journalism. Get a digital subscription for just $9.50!
OBAMA’S FAILURE TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN AID TO PEOPLE FACING EXTREME HARDSHIPS

Obama Panel Sits Silent As People Perish

THOUSANDS IN NUBA MOUNTAINS GOING WITHOUT FOOD, FACE DAILY BOMBINGS BY GOVERNMENT

By SAMUEL TOTTEN  Sunday, June 16, 2013

Over the past 20 months, the government of Sudan has carried out daily bombings against the unarmed civilians of the Nuba Mountains. Fleeing their villages, hundreds of thousands without access to their farms are suffering the entire spectrum of hunger: from daily hunger to malnutrition to severe malnutrition to starvation.

And as they do, the Obama Administration’s Atrocities Prevention Board is absolutely silent.

Curious about what the board was doing in regard to the crisis in the Nuba Mountains, 50-plus scholars of genocide studies and human rights activists from across the globe sent a letter to Samantha Power, then-chairwoman of the board, in December. Power never responded. A second letter was sent in January.

Again, she neglected to reply. In late February a letter was sent to Steven Pomper, senior assistant director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, who is also a member of the Atrocities Prevention Board. He, too, never replied. On March 28, a letter was sent to another member of the board, Donald Steinberg, deputy administrator, USAID. And once again, there was no reply.

During the course of a speech at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum on April 23, 2012, when he announced the establishment of the board, President Obama spoke of the Holocaust. In doing so, he said: “We must tell our children about how this evil was allowed to happen - because so many people succumbed to their darkest instincts, and because so many others stood silent.” Ironically, and unconscionably, it is Obama’s very mechanism to fight genocide, the Atrocities Prevention Board, that is silent today. Why?

And why has he allowed that to happen?

In that same speech, Obama said: “Last year, in the first-ever presidential directive on this challenge, I made it clear that preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States of America. Now we’re doing something more. We’re making sure that the United States government has the structures, the mechanisms to better prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

So I created the first White House position dedicated to this task.

It’s why I created a new Atrocities Prevention Board, to bring together senior officials from across our government to focus on this critical mission. This is not an afterthought. This is not a sideline in our foreign policy.”

Sadly, Obama’s board seems to be even less than an afterthought and a sideline to his foreign policy efforts, at least when it comes to the ongoing tragedy in Sudan. More aptly, it appears stillborn.
About three weeks ago, an aide to an U.S. senator, who wishes to remain unnamed, stated in an email to me that “apparently, the APB has not been active for at least several months. Currently, it does not have a chairperson.” So much for Mr. Obama’s genuine dedication to genocide prevention.

There is another issue at hand besides empty promises, and that is the issue of transparency.

Time and again, President Obama has promised that his administration would be the most transparent presidency in the history of the United States. In part, he asserted that “my administration is committed to creating an unprecedented level of openness in government.

We will work together to ensure the public trust and establish a system of transparency, public participation, and collaboration. Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in government.” Powerful words. A grand promise.

But when the rubber hits the road, both the words and promise seem hollow, at least when it comes to the Atrocities Prevention Board.

Not only does the board refuse to respond to legitimate correspondence raising key issues, but it does not have a website, does not have a Twitter account, and does not list email addresses for its main office or individual members.

All of this is, quite obviously, totally antithetical to the concept of transparency.

While the board sits in silence, hundreds of thousands of people in the Nuba Mountains go without food and face daily bombings by the government of Sudan’s aircraft. That is unconscionable, but President Obama seems oblivious both to the tragedy and the shame besmirching his administration’s callous and cavalier behavior.

Shame on you, Mr. Obama.

SAMUEL TOTTEN IS PROFESSOR EMERITUS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLE. HE IS AUTHOR OF “GENOCIDE BY ATTRITION: NUBA MOUNTAINS, SUDAN.”

Opinion, Pages 11 on 06/16/2013


**OBAMA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

**An Endless "Peace Process" for Palestine**

By David Swanson

Mon May 27, 2013 7:56 am (PDT) . Posted by: "Shelly Rockett", Veterans for Peace
The United States balances its endless war of terrorism with the institution of an endless "peace process" for Palestine, a process valuable for its peaceyness and interminability.

Josh Ruebner's new book, *Shattered Hopes: The Failure of Obama's Middle East Peace Process,* could just as easily have been called "Fulfilled Expectations: The Success of Obama's Middle East Peace Process," depending on one's perspective. Its story could be summarized: Obama's performance in this area has been of a piece with his performance in every other. Some people became very hopeful about his rhetoric and then very dejected about his actions.

In this case, among those getting hopeful were Palestinian negotiators. But they didn't just grow depressed and despondent. They felt no obligation to behave like Democratic voters. They swore off the Hopium and went to work on an international approach through the United Nations that has begun to pay off.

Obama began his "peace process" efforts "naively unprepared for the intensity of the pushback from Israel and its supporters in the United States to its demand that Israel freeze settlements," Ruebner writes. But evidence of Obama's mental state is hard to pin down, and I'm not sure of the relevance. Whether Obama began with naive good intentions or the same cynicism that he was, by all accounts, fully immersed in by his second or third year in office, the important point remains the same. As Ruebner explains, Obama employs an all-carrots / no-sticks approach with Israel that is doomed to failure.

In fact, suggesting that the White House cease providing Israel with ever more weaponry and/or cease providing Israel with ever more protection from justice following its crimes is liable to get Ruebner himself denounced as naive, along with the rest of us who think he's right. Obama's fundamental problem is not one of naiveté, but of "seriousness," of upholding the solemn seriousness of willful belief in a respectable but doomed approach. If Obama was surprised that Palestinian negotiators didn't play along with
this the way U.S. "journalists" do, that would suggest he had internalized the official point of view. Whether that is naiveté or deep cynicism may be in the eye of the beholder.

Ruebner provides the chronological play-by-play from Obama's first happy shiny moves in office to his familiar flailing about in search of propaganda that would continue to hold up year after year. And Ruebner includes analysis of what activists were up to along the way.

In fact, Ruebner begins with Obama's campaign promises, which -- upon close inspection -- prove, as with every other issue, to have been much closer to the President's abysmal performance than to the glowing image people recall of his early hope-and-changey self. Obama campaigned placing all blame on Palestinians, supporting Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital, backing resolutions and legislation in the Senate imposing sanctions on Palestinians as punishment for having held an open election, and supporting Israel during its wars on Lebanon and Gaza. Obama's speeches and his website made his position clear to those inclined to see it. Boycott campaigns against the Israeli government were, according to him, "bigoted."

As with every other area, on peace in Palestine, Obama's disastrous approach could also have been read clearly from his selection of individuals to run his foreign policy team. During the transition period prior to his inauguration, Obama took positions on many foreign policy matters, but when it came to the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza, he declared himself unable to speak prior to becoming president.

Watching the sequence of events play out post-inauguration is painful. Obama urges an end to Israel's expansion of settlements. Netanyahu suggests that Obama, with all due respect, stick his proposals where the sun don't shine. But Netanyahu backs "statehood"; (someday, with no rights or power or independence or actual -- you know -- "statehood") for Palestinians, but proceeds to rapidly expand settlements, effectively eliminating territory on which to create any state. Obama announces that victory has come and help is on the way!

Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave up on freezing settlements and announced that slowing the pace of the expansion would be an "unprecedented" accomplishment -- a claim that was less credible to people who had lived and suffered through many such claims before. As reward for the same lawless abuses as always, Israel received from the Obama administration more weaponry than ever, and a veto of a resolution at the United Nations opposing more Israeli settlements.

Ruebner rightly concludes:

"Obama's failure to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace resulted not only from his unwillingness to go to the mat with the Israel lobby over the issue of fully freezing Israeli settlements, not only from the scattershot,
frenetic lurching of his policy initiatives thereafter. Obama also foundered because his approach relied solely on providing Israel with carrots. With the trivial exceptions of denying Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu photo-ops at the White House on a few occasions and reportedly forcing him to wait for several hours before a meeting, Obama never brandished the proverbial stick. But these personal insults did nothing to create incentives for Israel to cease openly and brazenly defying U.S. policy objectives."

Hope is so much more popular than reality. But Ruebner is full of hope. He holds it out there in front of us. All that's required is a little actually useful action:

"[I]f the United States were to pull its backing for Israel's oppression of the Palestinians, then Israeli intransigence would melt away in the historical blink of an eye, as it did when President Dwight Eisenhower terminated all U.S. aid programs to Israel after it invaded and occupied the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula in 1956."

How do we get there? Part of the answer, Ruebner persuasively suggests is Boycott-Divestment-and-Sanctions (BDS), a movement that is making great strides, including in changing the public discourse, altering the sorts of things that even U.S. politicians can get away with claiming with a straight face.

TWO ON REVOKING OBAMA’S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Norman Soloman | The Growing Campaign to Revoke Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize

Op-Ed, NationofChange, April 3, 2013: The Nobel Peace Prize that President Obama received was an appalling Orwellian award of this century. No, war is not peace. But humor is of the gallows sort when we consider the absurdity and tragedy of the world’s most important peace prize honoring the world’s top war maker. This week, a challenge has been made to the Norwegian Nobel Committee to revoke Obama’s Peace Prize. By midnight of the first day, nearly 10,000 people signed a petition urging the committee to withdraw the prize.
Revoke Obama’s Nobel Peace Prize

RootsAction Team [info@rootsaction.org]

To: James R. Bennett

Forty months after President Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize, it’s time for us to urge that the award be withdrawn.

In December 2009, the top Nobel honor went to Obama amid high hopes that he would engage in pursuit of peace rather than war. But today, there are more U.S. troops in Afghanistan than when Obama took office. His presidency has widened the use of drones and other instruments of remote killing in several countries; perpetual war seems more perpetual than war.

Please click here to join in urging the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

From Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Middle East, Africa and beyond, the U.S. stepped up air attacks and support for military assaults, undermining — in the hopeful words of the Nobel committee as it awarded his Peace Prize — “efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between nations.”

In light of subsequent events, the Nobel Peace Prize was unwisely bestowed in sharp contrast to how wisely it was bestowed in 1964, when Martin Luther King Jr. received the Peace Prize.

Speaking in Oslo, Dr. King said: “I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into the hell of thermonuclear destruction.” He asserted that humanity must evolve “a method which rejects revenge, aggression and war.”

War ≠ Peace

Share this action on Facebook

Share this action on Twitter
By clicking here, you can respectfully let the Nobel committee know that the Nobel Peace Prize should honor peace-making, not war-making.

After signing the petition, please share this email with like-minded friends.

-- The RootsAction.org

P.S. Our small staff is supported by contributions from people like you; your donations are greatly appreciated.

P.P.S. RootsAction is an independent online force endorsed by Jim Hightower, Barbara Ehrenreich, Cornel West, Daniel Ellsberg, Glenn Greenwald, Naomi Klein, Bill Fletcher Jr., Laura Flanders, former U.S. Senator James Abourezk, Coleen Rowley, Frances Fox Piven, and many others.

Background:
Video of Cornel West Explaining the Problem
Glenn Greenwald: Celebrating Our Warrior
Tomgram: David Swanson: The More Things Change
SYNOPSIS

This volume offers both analysis and eyewitness accounts of the NATO assault on a helpless civilian population it had a UN mandate to protect, and the massive propaganda campaign that made it possible.

It responds to the many questions left unanswered by a complicit mainstream media, such as: Why Libya, not Bahrain, Yemen or Egypt? What was life in Libya like under Gadhafi? What is the truth about the so-called “Black Mercenaries”? What about Africom’s Plans for Africa?

Cynthia McKinney and other contributors to this volume were in Libya during the period of the NATO assault on Libyan cities, among the few independent voices to report on the tragedy.
ABOUT CYNTHIA McKinney

Cynthia McKinney is an internationally renowned peace advocate and human rights activist. She began this important work on day one of her political life and hasn’t looked back. With her opinions, actions, and even her sense of style, McKinney has inspired both admiration and controversy.

In 1988, McKinney won a House seat in the Georgia Legislature against all odds. She was the first African-American woman to represent Atlanta and Fulton County in an at-large district in Georgia’s history. She became a household name when she challenged the state’s leadership to abide by the Voting Rights Act and grant fair representation to all of Georgia’s residents, including the more than 30% who are of African descent. She appealed directly to the United States Justice Department and won.

In 1991, speaking from the “well” of the Georgia House of Representatives, she made national headlines when she challenged President George Herbert Walker Bush’s decision to make war against Iraq. Despite the vilification by the state’s pro-war establishment, her voice for justice and peace was heard by the people.

In 1992, McKinney won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in a newly created district, drawn from Atlanta to Savannah. Again, Cynthia made history by becoming the first African-American woman to represent Georgia in the U.S. Congress. Cynthia voted against every war-funding bill put before her. During her tenure, her district was re-drawn several times and re-numbered. McKinney protested the new boundaries, but was still reelected to the seat until the pro-Israel Lobby targeted her because of her support for peace in Palestine. She was a supporter of a Palestinian State in Israel-occupied territory; she sparked controversy by criticizing American
policy in the region at a time when few dared to speak out. After 11 September 2001, McKinney stated that based on her readings, the President had received warnings and that the matter deserved independent investigation. The criticism she received as a result, combined with being targeted by the pro-Israel lobby, contributed to her defeat in the 2002 election; however, she ran for the seat again and was re-elected in 2004.

Once again in Congress, McKinney was a vocal critic of the government's response to Hurricane Katrina. Cynthia pressed for government transparency and accountability and introduced legislation to release the documents related to the murders of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Tupac Shakur. She was the first Member of Congress to file Articles of Impeachment against President George W. Bush and Cynthia was forced out of Congress once more in 2007 when she was targeted for defeat, again, by donations from pro-Israel contributors that flooded into her opponent's campaign coffers. Late in 2007, Cynthia became a Green Party Presidential Candidate. Cynthia won the Green Party nomination for U.S. President and in 2008 ran for President.

In December 2008, Cynthia made international headlines when the Free Gaza boat she was aboard was rammed by the Israeli military as she was attempting to deliver medical supplies to the people of Gaza during Israel's Operation Cast Lead. Cynthia and her fellow humanitarian activists, rescued by Lebanon, never made it to Gaza. In 2009, Cynthia attempted to reach Gaza again, this time armed with crayons, coloring books, and school supplies for the children. She and her fellow human rights workers became the Free Gaza 21 after their boat was overtaken in international waters by the Israeli military and they were kidnapped to Israel. Cynthia spent 7 days in an Israeli prison. Finally, Cynthia entered Gaza by land in July 2009 with George Galloway's 250-volunteer-strong Viva Palestina, USA.
As a rider and a member of the support team, Cynthia completed a cross-country bicycle ride with five other Bike4Peace 2010 cyclists who started in California and ended in Washington, D.C., speaking to the American people about the possibility of more peaceful US policies if enough of us are willing to participate in our own positive, personal transformations. Cynthia had not been on a bicycle in twenty years and faced many personal obstacles along the way. However, she met this challenge with her usual good humor and determination and by the last day of the ride was able to complete over 65 miles on her bicycle.

In 2011, Cynthia led a DIGNITY Delegation of alternative and independent journalists to Libya while US and NATO bombs, laced with poisons including depleted uranium, targeted civilian populations. Afterward, she completed a successful 29-city peace tour in the United States and Canada to promote a more peaceful U.S. foreign policy. Cynthia now travels the world speaking out on human rights, nature’s rights, and peace while she completes her studies toward a Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor’s Note
Cynthia McKinney

Introduction
Bob Fitrakis

ON THE GROUND IN LIBYA DURING “HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION”

NATO’S Feast of Blood
Cynthia McKinney
Living Through a Full-Blown Media War
Lizzie Phelan

Anatomy of a Murder
Cynthia McKinney

Dispatches from Tripoli
Wayne Madsen

NATO Bombs the Great Man-Made River
Mark Metcalfe

America's Black Pharoah and Black Genocide in Libya
T West

NATO’s Libya War: A Nuremberg Level Crime
Stephen Lendman

WHY QADDAFI? WHY LIBYA?

Muammar Qaddafi: Mad Dog or Brother Leader?
Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

Why Libya Was Attacked
Stephen Lendman
US/NATO War in Libya: A Continuation of Past Crimes
Sara Flounders

Qaddafi Lynched by US-NATO: A Blow Aimed at All of Africa
Abayomi Azikiwe

ORCHESTRATING CONSENT TO REGIME CHANGE

The Big Lie and Libya:
Using Human Rights Organizations to Launch the War
Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

Was the Case for R2P Based on Fraud?
The Universal Periodic Review of Libya
Julien Teil

Pacifica Radio’s Descent: From Voice of the Voiceless to Partner in the Imperial Information War
Don DeBar

THE IMPERIALIST PLAN FOR AFRICA
Neo-Colonialism, Subversion in Africa and Global Conflict
Dr. Christof Lehman

Petroleum and Empire in North Africa:
NATO Propaganda and the Betrayal of Muammar Gaddafi
Keith Harmon Snow

The Racialization of the War:
Libya and the “Clash of Civilizations”
Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya

POSTSCRIPT
Muammar Qaddafí’s Speech to the United Nations
General Assembly, September 23, 2009

Chronology of the NATO-led Assault on the Great
Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya:
A Crime Against Humanity and a Crime Against Peace
Mike Raffauf

Contributors
Index

CONTRIBUTORS

Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of the Pan-African News Wire, an international electronic press service designed to foster intelligent discussion on the affairs of African people throughout the continent and the world. The press agency was founded in January of 1998 and has published thousands of articles and dispatches in
newspapers, magazines, journals, research reports, blogs and websites throughout the world. The PANW represents the only daily international news source on pan-African and global affairs.

**Don DeBar** is a New York journalist and and host of The Morning Show, airing daily on CPRmetro.org.

**Bob Fitrakis** is a Professor of Political Science at Columbus State Community College and Executive Director of the Columbus Institute for Contemporary Journalism (CICJ) /CICJ Books as well as the Editor of The Free Press since 1993. As an investigative journalist, he has won 11 major awards. He is the author of six Fitrakis Files books, inter alia Full Spectrum Dominance, and Cops, Cover-ups and Corruption. Fitrakis and Wasserman won a 2005 Project Censored Award, for an article that was listed as number three of the Top 25 Censored Stories, “How a Republican Election Supervisor Manipulated the 2004 Central Ohio Vote: In Black and White”. His articles have appeared on other national and local websites and publications including Huffington Post, Common Dreams, motherjones.com, thenation.com, Z magazine, RagBlog, Scoop.co, Bradblog, Salon.com, OpEdNews, Counterpunch, Truthout, tompaine.com, Hustler, larryflynt.com, Alternet, Buzzflash, progressive.org, and smirkingchimp. In 2012, Fitrakis is running for Congress in the 3rd district, central Ohio, in the Green Party primary Match 6, 2012. He serves on the Central Committee of the Franklin County Green Party and is Co-Chair of the Ohio Green Party. He also serves as legal counsel for Occupy Columbus. Fitrakis has a Ph.D in political science from Wayne State University and a J.D. from the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

**Sara Flounders**, a leader of the International Action Center, has edited and co-authored ten books on U.S. wars. In 1992, Sara Flounders
coordinated the International War Crimes Tribunal on U.S. War Crimes in Iraq, which held mass hearings in 30 US cities and 20 countries. She helped coordinate the major anti-war demonstrations that drew hundreds of thousands of people into the streets in 2003 before the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Currently she is working with the United National Antiwar Coalition – UNAC. Flounders organized delegations to Iraq during the years of starvation sanctions, visited Sudan after a U.S. missile barrage destroyed a pharmaceutical complex there and Yugoslavia during 78 days of NATO bombing. She has visited Syria, Iran Egypt, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza during times of crisis. Focused on growing racism, incarceration, political repression and austerity, Ms. Flounders has spoken at numerous campus and community forums in the US and internationally and been interviewed by many national and international media. Through the creative use of video, internet, mass meetings, major antiwar rallies and international campaigns, she has worked with other committed activists to build confidence in the potential of powerful grassroots movements to make historic change.

Overthrow a Fascist Regime on $15 a Day. (Trine Day); and author of the forthcoming book, The Manufacturing of a President: The CIA’s Insertion of Barack H. Obama, Jr. into the White House. Madsen has been a regular contributor on RT. He has also been a frequent political and national security commentator on Fox News and has also appeared on ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and MS-NBC. Madsen has taken on Bill O’Reilly and Sean Hannity on their television shows. He has been invited to testify as a witness before the US House of Representatives, the UN Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and a terrorism investigation panel of the French government.

Dr. Christoff Lehman is a clinical psychologist, psycho-traumatologist and political consultant. His work with victims of conflict has inspired him to also pursue political work. He has been working as political advisor and consultant for 29 years. Among his former clients were several progressive heads of state and he continues his independent work for peace and justice. He is a life time peace activist, human rights advocate, active at establishing international institutions for the prosecution of war crimes, including the war crimes of privileged nations, and he is a life long advocate for Palestinians right to life, dignity, the right to return, sovereignty and peace within it’s own borders. He is editing the blogg nsnbc-no spin news, where he is regularly publishing his own and others articles that are denied sufficient exposure on corporate and state controlled media.

Stephen Lendman was awarded the Mexican Press Club Award for International Investigative Journalism in 2011. A writer and broadcaster. His work is exceedingly widely distributed online, with his articles carried on numerous listservs and websites such as Information Clearing House, Countercurrents, Rense, AltNews, Uruknet, Global Research, Counterpunch, and more. In early 2007, he
began regular radio hosting, now The Progressive Radio News Hour on The Progressive Radio Network. He is author of How Wall Street Fleeces America (Chinese edition forthcoming), and co-author with J.J. Asongu of The Iraq Quagmire: The Price of Imperial Arrogance. He holds a BA from Harvard and an MBA from Wharton.

**Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya** was awarded the Mexican Press Club Award for International Investigative Journalism in 2011. He is a sociologist and noted geopolitical analyst and researcher at the Centre for Research on Globalization in Montreal, Quebec. He is also an geopolitical expert at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF) in Moscow, Russia. His texts have been translated into more than twenty languages including German, Russian, Turkish, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. His work on Libya was archived by NATO’s Multimedia Library under the “NATO and Libya—Special Focus” annals, a collection of articles by leading experts with their analysis on the war in Libya. He reported from Tripoli on the NATO bombings as the special correspondent of Flashpoints. While in Libya, he was with the international press corps when they were trapped in the Rixos Al Nasr Hotel during the fall of Tripoli to NATO and the rebels. Nazemroaya is the author of The Globalization of NATO (2012) and The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa (2012). He works at Carleton University, where his teaching duties have included Latin American studies at the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies (IIS) and African history at the Department of History.

**Lizzie Phelan** is a 25 year old independent journalist who was in Libya during the NATO bombing campaign and later blitzkrieg of Tripoli. She was one of the few people that reported on the daily crimes being committed by NATO and the widespread resistance by the Libyan people to the NATO aggression. She also visited
Syria in January where she similarly sought to expose the media fabrications about events in Syria. Ms Phelan through her reporting seeks to represent the stories of victims of those who violate international law with western powers such as the US and Britain being the worst offenders historically. As well as having worked for Press TV and Russia Today, Ms Phelan has written in a number of publications and produces independent written work via her blog www.lizzie-phelan.blogspot.co.uk and videos on her youtube channels theliberatedzone and theliberatedzonetv.

Keith Harmon Snow is a war correspondent, photographer and independent investigator, and a four time (2003, 2006, 2007, 2010) Project Censored award winner. He is the 2009 Regent’s Lecturer in Law & Society at the University of California Santa Barbara, recognized for over a decade of work, outside of academia, contesting official narratives on war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide while also working as a genocide investigator for the United Nations and other bodies. He has worked at the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda and testified on war crimes and crimes against humanity in Central Africa before the high court in Spain.

Julien Teil is Senior Associate at the Centre for the Study of Interventionism, a Paris-based think-tank devoted to studying the legal and factual aspects of interventionism, both political and military. Previously he worked as an independent French journalist and videographer. He also formerly worked for a company specializing in fundraising for NGOs. He was in Libya during the conflict and revealed the lies of the so-called human rights NGOS to expel Libya from the United Nations Human Rights Council which launched the war-process.

T West is a professional in the Information Technology field but also works as a reporter, videographer and musician. He founded and
facilitated the CART (Collective Action Round Table) Forums to bring together the various Black ethnic groups to leverage that into investment and business partnerships with upstream industry control. In 2007, he started AfriSynergy Production with an internet presence on YouTube and a blog viewed and engaged by tens of thousands each month with an average viewership between 5 and 6 thousand daily. He works extensively with Pan African and African immigrant groups. He has also spoken at various colleges and universities.

1. 
2. OBAMA’S ILLEGAL WAR VS. LIBYA
   Jun 20, 2011 – The legal acrobatics President Obama has used to justify war without Congressional consent set a dangerous precedent.
4. [The US must end its illegal war in Libya now | Dennis Kucinich ...](www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/.../libya-nato1)
   Jul 6, 2011 – Dennis Kucinich: President Obama has ripped up the US constitution for Nato’s ill-considered Libyan adventure. Congress must restore sense.
5. [THE ILLEGAL WAR ON LIBYA edited by Cynthia McKinney](www.claritypress.com/McKinney.html)

This volume offers both analysis and eyewitness accounts of the NATO assault on a helpless civilian population it had a UN mandate to protect, and the massive ...
THREE ON DRONES

DRONE KILLINGS IN YEMEN (see Drone Newsletters or Blog)

MOYERS AND CO. FEB. 10, 2013. Recounts a NYT story of a drone attack that killed several al-Qaeda members in Yemen meeting with their opponents to negotiate their conflict. Bill Moyers expresses his belief that Obama should never have received the Nobel Prize for Peace.

Elizabeth Sanders. “Executor-in-Chief: Drone Attacks and the Pathology of Presidential Power.” In These Times (January 2013), 27-29. “No issue cuts more deeply into the American soul than the Obama administration’s enthusiastic embrace of ‘targeted’ extrajudicial killing of suspect ‘terroriststs’ or ‘militants’”. This small article is packed with facts of the history of drone assassinations.
Some dead children are mourned; others are dehumanised.

By George Monbiot, published in the Guardian 17th December 2012

“Mere words cannot match the depths of your sorrow, nor can they heal your wounded hearts ... These tragedies must end. And to end them, we must change.”(1) Every parent can connect with what Barack Obama said about the murder of 20 children in Newtown, Connecticut. There can scarcely be a person on earth with access to the media who is untouched by the grief of the people of that town.

It must follow that what applies to the children murdered there by a deranged young man also applies to the children murdered in Pakistan by a sombre American president. These children are just as important, just as real, just as deserving of the world’s concern. Yet there are no presidential speeches or presidential tears for them; no pictures on the front pages of the world’s newspapers; no interviews with grieving relatives; no minute analysis of what happened and why.

If the victims of Mr Obama’s drone strikes are mentioned by the state at all, they are discussed in terms which suggest that they are less than human. The people who operate the drones, Rolling Stone magazine reports, describe their casualties as “bug splats”, “since viewing the body through a grainy-green video image gives the sense of an insect being crushed.”(2) Or they are reduced to vegetation: justifying the drone war, Obama’s counterterrorism adviser Bruce Riedel explained that “you’ve got to mow the lawn all the time. The minute you stop mowing, the grass is going to grow back.”(3)

Like Bush’s government in Iraq, Barack Obama’s administration neither documents nor acknowledges the civilian casualties of the CIA’s drone strikes in north-west Pakistan. But a report by the law schools at Stanford and New York universities suggests that during the first three years of his time in office, the 259 strikes for which he is ultimately responsible killed between 297 and 569 civilians, of whom 64 were children(4). These are figures extracted from credible reports: there may be more which have not been fully documented.

The wider effects on the children of the region have been devastating. Many have been withdrawn from school because of fears that large gatherings of any kind are being targeted. There have been several strikes on schools since George W Bush launched the drone programme that Obama has expanded so enthusiastically: one of Bush’s blunders killed 69 children(5).

The study reports that children scream in terror when they hear the sound of a drone. A local psychologist says that their fear and the horrors they witness is causing permanent mental scarring. Children wounded in drone attacks told the
researchers that they are too traumatised to go back to school and have abandoned hopes of the careers they might have had: their dreams as well as their bodies have been broken(6).

Obama does not kill children deliberately. But their deaths are an inevitable outcome of the way his drones are deployed. We don’t know what emotional effect these deaths might have on him, as neither he nor his officials will discuss the matter: almost everything to do with the CIA’s extrajudicial killings in Pakistan is kept secret. But you get the impression that no one in the administration is losing much sleep over it.

Two days before the murders in Newtown, Obama’s press secretary was asked about women and children being killed by drones in Yemen and Pakistan. He refused to answer, on the grounds that such matters are “classified”(7). Instead, he directed the journalist to a speech by John Brennan, Obama’s counterterrorism assistant. Brennan insists that “al-Qaida’s killing of innocents, mostly Muslim men, women and children, has badly tarnished its appeal and image in the eyes of Muslims”(8). He appears unable to see that the drone war has done the same for the United States. To Brennan the people of north-west Pakistan are neither insects nor grass: his targets are a “cancerous tumour”, the rest of society “the tissue around it”. Beware of anyone who describes a human being as something other than a human being.

Yes, he conceded, there is occasionally a little “collateral damage”, but the US takes “extraordinary care [to] ensure precision and avoid the loss of innocent life.” It will act only if there’s “an actual ongoing threat” to American lives(9). This is cock and bull with bells on.

The “signature strike” doctrine developed under Obama, which has no discernable basis in law, merely looks for patterns(10). A pattern could consist of a party of unknown men carrying guns (which scarcely distinguishes them from the rest of the male population of north-west Pakistan), or a group of unknown people who look as if they might be plotting something. This is how wedding and funeral parties get wiped out; this is why 40 elders discussing royalties from a chromite mine were blown up in March last year(11). It is one of the reasons why children continue to be killed.

Obama has scarcely mentioned the drone programme and has said nothing about its killing of children. The only statement I can find is a brief and vague response during a videoconference last January(12). The killings have been left to others to justify. In October the Democratic cheerleader Joe Klein claimed on MSNBC that “the bottom line in the end is whose 4 year-old get killed? What we’re doing is limiting the possibility that 4 year-olds here will get killed by indiscriminate acts of terror.”(13) As the estimable Glenn Greenwald has pointed out, killing 4 year-olds is what terrorists do(14). It doesn’t prevent retaliatory murders; it encourages them, as grief and revenge are often accomplices.

Most of the world’s media, which has rightly commemorated the children of Newtown, either ignores Obama’s murders or accepts the official version that all
those killed are “militants”. The children of north-west Pakistan, it seems, are not like our children. They have no names, no pictures, no memorials of candles and flowers and teddy bears. They belong to the other: to the non-human world of bugs and grass and tissue.

“Are we,” Obama asked on Sunday, “prepared to say that such violence visited on our children year after year after year is somehow the price of our freedom?”(15) It’s a valid question. He should apply it to the violence he is visiting on the children of Pakistan.

www.monbiot.com

References:

1. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/dec/17/obama-speech-newtown-school-shooting


6. International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School and Global Justice Clinic at NYU School Of Law, September 2012, as above.


9. John Brennan, as above.

10. International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic at Stanford Law School and Global Justice Clinic at NYU School Of Law, September 2012, as above.

ARTICLE OBAMA’S WAR OF TERROR BY ANDREW GAVIN MARSHALL IN 3 PARTS 2013

Empire Under Obama: Barack Obama's Global Terror Campaign

Under the administration of Barack Obama, America is waging a global terror campaign through the use of drones, killing thousands of people, committing endless war crimes, creating fear and terror in a program expected to last several more decades. Welcome to Obama's War OF Terror.

By Andrew Gavin Marshall

Part 1: Political Language and the 'Mafia Principles' of International Relations

October 14, 2013 "Information Clearing House" - When Obama became President in 2009, he faced a monumental challenge for the extension of American and Western imperial interests. The effects of eight years under the overt ruthless and reckless behaviour of the Bush administration had taken a toll on the world. With two massive ground wars and occupations under way in Iraq and Afghanistan, Western military forces were stretched thin, while the world's populations had grown increasingly wary and critical of the use of military force, both at home and abroad. Just as Brzezinski had articulated: "while the lethality of their military might is greater than ever, their capacity
to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low."[1]

When it came to the 'War on Terror,' Obama implemented his electoral visions of "hope" and "change" in the only way he knows: change the rhetoric, not the substance, and hope to hell that the Empire can continue extending its influence around the world. As such, Obama quickly implemented a policy change, dropping the term "war on terror" and replacing it with the equally - if not more - meaningless term, "overseas contingency operations."[2]

A major facet of Obama's foreign policy strategy has been the implementation of an unprecedented global terror war with flying killer robots ("drones") operated by remote control. By 2011, the Washington Post reported that no president in U.S. history "has ever relied so extensively on the secret killing of individuals to advance the nation's security goals."[3]

Every Tuesday, a counterterrorism meeting takes place in the White House Situation Room among two dozen security officials where they decide who - around the world - they are going to illegally bomb and kill that week, drawing up the weekly "kill list" (as it is called).[4]

By October of 2012, Obama's "kill list" had evolved into a "next-generation targeting list" now officially referred to as the "disposition matrix," in yet another effort to demean the English language. [5] The "disposition matrix"/kill list establishes the names of "terror suspects" who the Obama administration wants to 'dispose' of, without trial, beyond the rule of law, in contravention of all established international law, and in blatant war crimes that kill innocent civilians.

Obama administration officials believe that the use of global drone terror warfare and "kill lists" are likely to last at least another decade, with one top official commenting, "We can't possibly kill everyone who wants to harm us... It's a necessary part of what we do... We're not going to wind up in 10 years in a world of everybody holding hands and saying, 'We love America'."[6] Indeed, quite true. That's one of the actual repercussions - believe it or not - of waging a massive global assassination program against people around the world: they tend to not "love" the country bombing them.

But the Obama administration warned the world that as of 2012, the U.S. had only reached the "mid-point" in the global war on [read: of] terror, with Obama's assassination program having already killed more than 3,000 people around the world, more than the number of people killed on 9/11.[7] As Glenn Greenwald noted, this represented "concerted efforts by the Obama administration to fully institutionalize - to make officially permanent - the most extremist powers it has exercised in the name of the war on terror."[8]

But in case you had any moral 'qualms' about bombing and murdering hundreds of innocent children in multiple countries around the world with flying robots, don't worry: as Joe Klein of Time Magazine noted, "the bottom line in the end is - whose 4-year-old gets killed? What we're doing is limiting the possibility that 4-year-olds here will get killed by indiscriminate acts of terror."[9]

Quite right. After all, "indiscriminate acts of terror" are only okay when the United States - or the "international community" - does it. But when the U.S. spreads terror, death and destruction around the world, this is referred to as a "war on terror," instead of the more accurate "war of terror." It could be argued that as a rule of thumb, whenever the United States declares a "war on" something, simply remove the word 'on' and replace it with 'of', and suddenly, everything starts to make more sense. After all, whenever the U.S. declares a war "on" something (drugs, poverty, terror), the result is that there is a
great deal more of whatever it is being 'targeted', and that U.S. policies themselves facilitate the exponential growth of these so-called 'targets.' Hence, the "war on terror" is truly more accurately described as a "war of terror," since that is the result of the actual policies undertaken in the name of such a war.

A major NYU School of Law and Stanford University Law School research report was published in September of 2012 documenting the civilian terror inflicted by Obama's global assassination-terror campaign. While the Obama administration has claimed that drones are "surgically precise" and "makes the US safer," the report countered that this was completely "false." The report noted that Obama's drone war often uses the strategy of hitting the same target multiple times, thus killing rescuers and humanitarian workers who go to help the injured.[10]

This is referred to as a "double-tap" strategy, and according to the FBI and Homeland Security, this is a tactic which is regularly used in "terrorist attacks" to target "first responders as well as the general population." Obama's drones not only target rescuers, but also frequently bomb the funerals of previous drone victims. According to the United Nations, such tactics "are a war crime."[11] Even the NYU/Stanford Law School report identified the drone program as a terror campaign when it noted that the effects of the drone program are that it "terrorizes men, women, and children."[12]

John O. Brennan, who served as Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser (and is now the director of the CIA), was the main advocate of the drone program inside the Obama administration. In 2011, he reassured the American people that, "in the last year, there hasn't been a single collateral death because of the exceptional proficiency, [and] precision of the capabilities that we've been able to develop," and added that, "if there are terrorists who are within an area where there are women and children or others, you know, we do not take such action that might put those innocent men, women and children in danger."[13] That sounds pretty impressive, though unfortunately, it's an absurd lie.

The New York Times noted that Obama's method for counting civilian deaths caused by drone strikes was "disputed" (to say the least), because it "counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants," thus radically underreporting the level of civilian deaths. The "logic" of this view that that "people in an area of known terrorist activity, or found with a top Qaeda operative, are probably up to no good." This "counting method," noted the NYT, "may partly explain the official claims of extraordinarily low collateral deaths." Some administration officials outside the CIA have complained about this method, referring to it as "guilty by association" which results in "deceptive" estimates. One official commented, "It bothers me when they say there were seven guys, so they must all be militants... They count the corpses and they're not really sure who they are."[14]

In 2011, it was reported that drone strikes in Pakistan had killed 168 children, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism.[15] In Afghanistan, officials note that civilians are killed not only by Taliban attacks but also increasingly by drone attacks, with Afghan president Hamid Karzai condemning the attacks which kill women and children as being "against all international norms."[16] Afghanistan was in fact the epicenter of the U.S. drone war, even more so than Pakistan, with the CIA having launched upwards of 333 drone strikes in the country over the course of 2012, the highest total ever.[17] The U.S. strategy in Afghanistan has evolved into "a new and as yet only partially understood doctrine of secret, unaccountable and illegal warfare," which is "destroying the West's reputation," noted the Telegraph in 2012.[18] And considering the already-existing "reputation" of the West in the rest of the world, that's quite an impressive feat.

From 2004 to 2012, between 2,400 and 3,100 people were reported to have been killed by U.S. drone
strikes, including at least 800 innocent civilians (as a low estimate). As Seumas Milne reported in the *Guardian*, the drone strikes "are, in reality, summary executions and widely regarded as potential war crimes by international lawyers."[19]

The UN warned in June of 2012 that drone strikes may constitute "war crimes," and that the use of drone strikes and "targeted killings" has been found to be "immensely attractive" to other states in the world, and thus, such practices "weaken the rule of law," as they "fall outside the scope of accountability." A Pakistani Ambassador declared that, "We find the use of drones to be totally counterproductive in terms of succeeding in the war against terror. It leads to greater levels of terror rather than reducing them." Ian Seiderman, the director of the International Commission of Jurists noted that as a result of the global drone war, "immense damage was being done to the fabric of international law."[20]

Robert Grenier, former head of the CIA's counter-terrorism center from 2004 to 2006, commented that the United States was "creating a situation where we are creating more enemies than we are removing from the battlefield," adding that, "If you strike them indiscriminately you are running the risk of creating a terrific amount of popular anger," and that the strikes could even create "terrorist safe havens."[21]

In testimony before the U.S. Congress in April of 2013, a Yemeni man who had studied in the United States explained that his community in Yemen - a small village - knew about the United States primarily through stories of his own experiences living there (which were positive), but their positive association with America changed following U.S. drone strikes, commenting: "Now... when they think of America, they think of the fear they feel at the drones over their heads. What the violent militants had failed to achieve, one drone strike accomplished in an instant."[22]

U.S. drone bases operate out of multiple countries, including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Turkey, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Seychelles, and Saudi Arabia. Drones have conducted "surveillance missions" in Libya, Iran, Turkey, Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, and North Korea. Drone strikes have taken place in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia,[23] and there have even been reports of drone strikes taking place in the Philippines.[24] The U.S. has also considered undertaking drone strikes in the African country of Mali.[25]

In February of 2013, the United States sent 100 U.S. troops to Mali to set up a drone base for operations in Western Africa.[26] The U.S. began operating drones out of Mali right away, as "north and west Africa [were] rapidly emerging as yet another front in the long-running US war against terrorist networks," giving the Pentagon "a strategic foothold in West Africa," with Niger bordering Mali, Nigeria and Libya, which was already the target of a French-British-American war in 2011.[27]

In September of 2011, Anwar al-Awlaki, an American "suspected terrorist" in Yemen had his name added to Obama's "kill list" and was murdered in a drone bombing, with Obama reportedly saying that making the decision to kill him was "an easy one."[28] Two weeks later, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, the 16-year-old son of Anwar, also born in America but at the time living in Yemen, was then killed with a drone strike. Obama's former White House Press Secretary and then-reelection campaign adviser Robert Gibbs was asked how the U.S. justified killing the 16-year-old boy, with the journalist commenting, "It's an American citizen that is being targeted without due process, without trial. And, he's underage. He's a minor." Gibbs replied that the boy "should have [had] a far more responsible father." Gibbs also noted, "When there are people who are trying to harm us, and have pledged to bring terror to these shores, we've taken that fight to them."[29] Pretty simple: America has decided to take
the "terror" to "them."

At his first inaugural address as President in 2009, Barack Obama said: "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect." Less than two-and-a-half years later, favourable views of the United States in the Middle East had "plummeted... to levels lower than they were during the last year of the Bush administration." A 2013 Gallup poll found that 92% of Pakistanis disapproved of U.S. leadership, with only 4% approving, "the lowest approval rating Pakistanis have ever given." While there was "substantial affection" for American culture and people in the Muslim world, according to the poll, the problem was U.S. policies. Even a Pentagon study undertaken during the Bush administration noted: "Muslims do not 'hate our freedom,' but rather, they hate our policies," specifically, "American direct intervention in the Muslim world," which, the Pentagon noted, "paradoxically elevate[s] stature of and support for Islamic radicals.[30]

A June 2012 poll of public opinion sought to gauge the level of support for U.S. drone strikes among 20 countries: the U.S., Britain, Germany, Poland, France, India, Italy, Czech Republic, China, Lebanon, Mexico, Spain, Japan, Brazil, Russia, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Greece. The poll found that 17 of the countries had a "clear majority" opposed to drone strikes, while only the U.S. had a "clear majority" (62%) in support.[31]

In May of 2013, Michael Sheehan, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee where he was asked how long the 'war on terrorism' will last, to which he replied: "At least 10 to 20 years," with a Pentagon spokesperson later clarifying that he meant that, "the conflict is likely to last 10 to 20 more years from today - atop the 12 years that the conflict has already lasted."[32] In other words, according to the Pentagon, the world has at least one-to-two more decades of America's global terror war to look forward to.

So, if America was actually waging a war on terror which sought to reduce the threat of terror, then why would it be undertaking policies that actively - and knowingly - increase the threat and levels of terrorism? Well the answer is perhaps shockingly simple: America is not attempting to reduce terror. Quite the contrary, America is not only increasing the threat of terror, but is doing so by waging terror against much of the world. So this begs the question: what is the actual purpose of Obama's drone terror campaign?

Akbar Ahmed, the Islamic Studies chair at American University and former Pakistani high commissioner to Britain, explained in a May 2013 op-ed in the New York Times that the drone war in Pakistan was producing "chaos and rage" as it was "destroying already weak tribal structures and throwing communities into disarray," threatening the Pakistani government and fueling hatred of America, and that this was also occurring in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen, other major target nations of Obama's terror campaign.[33]

Many of these tribal societies had struggled for autonomy under colonial governments (usually run by the British), and then struggled against the central governments left by the British and other colonial powers. These tribal societies have subsequently come under attack by the Taliban and al-Qaeda (whose growth was developed by the US in cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the Pakistani state), and then they continued to suffer under foreign occupations led by the United States, Britain and other NATO powers in Afghanistan and Iraq, destabilizing the entire Middle East and Central Asia.[34]
Now, these tribal societies are being subjected to Obama's drone campaign of terror, "causing ferocious backlashes against central governments while destroying any positive image of the United States that may have once existed," noted Ahmed. In his op-ed, he concluded: "Those at the receiving end of the strikes see them as unjust, immoral and dishonorable - killing innocent people who have never themselves harmed Americans while the drone operators sit safely halfway across the world, terrorizing and killing by remote control."[35]

So why would the United States knowingly do this, and why target these specific groups? The answer may be that the U.S. is simply targeting so-called "lawless" and "stateless" regions and peoples. In a world where states, corporations, and international organizations rule the day, with the United States perched atop the global hierarchy, the imperial concept of "order" reigns supreme, where the word 'order' is defined as control. In a world experiencing increased unrest, protests, rebellions, revolutions and uprisings, "order" is under threat across the globe.

For the American 'Mafia Godfather' Empire, control must be established, through whatever means necessary. For, as the 'Mafia Principles' of international relations dictate: if one state, region, or people are able to "successfully defy" the Godfather/Empire, then other states and people might try to do the same. This could potentially set off a "domino effect" in which the U.S. and its Mafia capo Western allies rapidly lose control of the world. Thus, we have witnessed the United States and the West intimately involved in attempting to manage the 'transitions' taking place as a result of the Arab Spring, desperately seeking to not lose control of the incredibly important strategic region of the Arab world.

Meanwhile, the technological capacity of American military force has reached new heights, with the global drone warfare as a major example. It allows the U.S. to reduce its use of large military forces being sent into combat, and thus reduces the domestic political pressure against foreign aggression and warfare. The drone program fits perfectly into Zbigniew Brzezinski's description in 2009 of how the major state powers of the world are at a stage where "the lethality of their military might is greater than ever." Yet, as Brzezinski elaborated, and as is evident in the case of the Arab Spring, the monumental political changes in Latin America over the past decade and a half, and the increased unrest of people around the world, the "capacity to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low. To put it bluntly: in earlier times, it was easier to control one million people than to physically kill one million people; today, it is infinitely easier to kill one million people than to control one million people"[36]

Thus, we attempt a logical reasoning as to why the U.S. is targeting stateless tribal societies with its global terror campaign: if you can't control them, kill them. Such a strategy obviously could not be publicly articulated to the population of a self-declared "democratic" society which congratulates itself on being a beacon for "freedom and liberty." Thus, political language is applied. As George Orwell wrote, political language "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind."

When it comes to Obama's drone terror campaign against stateless tribal societies, the political language is firmly rooted in the "war on terror." These people are deemed to be "terror suspects," and so they are bombed and killed, their families and communities terrorized, and as a result, they become increasingly resentful and hateful toward the United States, thus leading to increased recruitment into terrorist organizations and an increased terror threat to the United States itself. Thus, the policy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: in terrorizing and bombing impoverished, stateless, tribal societies in the name of "fighting terror," the U.S. creates the terror threat that it uses to justify continued bombing. And thus, the war of terror wages on.
Some may find my use of the term "terror campaign" to refer to Obama's drone program as hyperbolic or emotive. But what else are we supposed to call a program that produces "chaos and rage" around the world, creating "more enemies than we are removing" as it "terrorizes men, women and children," so that when people think of America, "they think of the fear they feel at the drones over their heads"? What do you call this when it has been launched against at least seven different countries in the past four years, killing thousands of people - including hundreds of innocent children - and targeting first responders, humanitarian workers, and funerals?

By definition, this is terrorism. Obama's global flying-killer-robot-campaign is the implementation of the most technologically advanced terror campaign in history. The fact that Obama's terror war can continue holding any public support - let alone a majority of public support - is simply evidence of a public with little knowledge of the reality of the campaign, or the terror being inflicted upon people all over the world in their name.

If the objective of U.S. policies were to counter or reduce the threat of terror, one would think that the U.S. would then stop participating in terror. Obviously, that is not the case. Therefore, the objective is different from that which is articulated. As Orwell noted, "political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible," and that committing such horrific atrocities - such as dropping atomic bombs on cities, supporting genocide, civil wars or, in this case, waging a global campaign of terror - "can indeed be defended," added Orwell, "but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face." Thus, "political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness."

As Obama sought to justify his global terror campaign, he claimed that it has "saved lives" (except, presumably, for the thousands of lives it has claimed), that "America's actions are legal," and that, "this is a just war - a war wage proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defense." Perhaps the most poignant statement Obama made during his May 2013 speech was thus: "the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation - and world - that we leave to our children."

So the question for Americans then, should be this: do you want to live in a nation - and world - which is defined by the decision to wage a global campaign of terror upon multiple nations and regions, and tens of thousands of people around the world? Obama clearly has no problem with it, nor does the American foreign policy establishment, nor the media talking heads. But... do you?

Andrew Gavin Marshall is a 26-year old researcher and writer based in Montreal, Canada. He is Project Manager of The People's Book Project, chair of the Geopolitics Division of The Hampton Institute, research director for Occupy.com's Global Power Project, and hosts a weekly podcast show with BoilingFrogsPost.

Notes


http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html


[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Glenn Greenwald, "Obama moves to make the War on Terror permanent," The Guardian, 24 October 2012:

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/24/obama-terrorism-kill-list


http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/25/study-obama-drone-deaths


http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/25/study-obama-drone-deaths


http://www.salon.com/2011/07/19/drones/


[15] Rob Crilly, "168 children killed in drone strikes in Pakistan since start of campaign," The Telegraph, 11 August 2011:

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/8695679/168-children-killed-in-drone-strikes-in-Pakistan-since-
[16] Azam Ahmed, "Drone and Taliban Attacks Hit Civilians, Afghans Say," 8 September 2013:

http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/11/drones-afghan-air-war/

[18] Peter Osborne, "It may seem painless, but drone war in Afghanistan is destroying the West's reputation," The Telegraph, 30 May 2012:

[19] Seumas Milne, "America's murderous drone campaign is fuelling terror," The Guardian, 29 May 2012:
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/may/29/americas-drone-campaign-terror

[20] Owen Bowcott, "Drone strikes threaten 50 years of international law, says UN rapporteur," The Guardian, 21 June 2012:
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/21/drone-strikes-international-law-un

[21] Paul Harris, "Drone attacks create terrorist safe havens, warns former CIA official," The Guardian, 5 June 2012:
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/05/al-qaeda-drone-attacks-too-broad


[23] Elspeth Reeve, "The Scope of America's World War Drone," The Atlantic Wire, 6 February 2013:
http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2013/02/world-war-drone-map/61873/

http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/03/05-drones-philippines-ahmed

[25] Raf Sanchez, "US 'to deploy drones to launch air strikes against al-Qaeda in Mali'," The Telegraph, 2 October 2012:

[26] Craig Whitlock, "U.S. troops arrive in Niger to set up drone base," The Washington Post, 22 February 2013:
http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-02-22/world/37233792_1_drone-base-drone-flights-qaeda

[27] Craig Whitlock, "Drone warfare: Niger becomes latest frontline in US war on terror," The Guardian, 26 March 2013:
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/26/niger-africa-drones-us-terror

[29] Conor Friedersdorf, "How Team Obama Justifies the Killing of a 16-Year-Old American," The Atlantic, 24 October 2012:

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/us-obama-muslims-animosity-deepens

[31] Glenn Greenwald, "Obama, the US and the Muslim world: the animosity deepens," The Guardian, 15 February 2013:
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/us-obama-muslims-animosity-deepens

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/17/endless-war-on-terror-obama

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/31/opinion/the-drone-war-is-far-from-over.html

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.


http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2013/05/23/prepared-text-obamas-speech-on-terrorism/

What's your response? - Scroll down to add / read comments
ANDREW GAVIN MARSHALL
SEE THE WORLD THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

search
Empire Under Obama, Part 2: Barack Obama’s Global Terror Campaign

By: Andrew Gavin Marshall

Originally posted at The Hampton Institute

Part 1: Political Language and the ‘Mafia Principles’ of International Relations

Under the administration of Barack Obama, America is waging a global terror campaign through the use of drones, killing thousands of people, committing endless war crimes, creating fear and terror in a program expected to last several more decades. Welcome to Obama’s War OF Terror.

When Obama became President in 2009, he faced a monumental challenge for the extension of American and Western imperial interests. The effects of eight years under the overt ruthless and reckless behaviour of the Bush administration had taken a toll on the world. With two massive ground wars and occupations under way in Iraq and Afghanistan, Western military forces were stretched thin, while the world’s populations had grown increasingly wary and critical of the use of military force, both at home and abroad. Just as Brzezinski had articulated: “while the lethality of their military might is greater than ever, their capacity to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low.”[1]

When it came to the ‘War on Terror,’ Obama implemented his electoral visions of “hope” and “change” in the only way he knows: change the rhetoric, not the substance, and hope to hell that the Empire can continue extending its influence around the world. As such, Obama quickly implemented a policy change, dropping the term “war on terror” and replacing it with the equally – if not more – meaningless term, “overseas contingency operations.”[2]
A major facet of Obama’s foreign policy strategy has been the implementation of an unprecedented global terror war with flying killer robots (“drones”) operated by remote control. By 2011, the Washington Post reported that no president in U.S. history “has ever relied so extensively on the secret killing of individuals to advance the nation’s security goals.”[3]

Every Tuesday, a counterterrorism meeting takes place in the White House Situation Room among two dozen security officials where they decide who – around the world – they are going to illegally bomb and kill that week, drawing up the weekly “kill list” (as it is called).[4]

By October of 2012, Obama’s “kill list” had evolved into a “next-generation targeting list” now officially referred to as the “disposition matrix,” in yet another effort to demean the English language.[5] The “disposition matrix”/kill list establishes the names of “terror suspects” who the Obama administration wants to ‘dispose’ of, without trial, beyond the rule of law, in contravention of all established international law, and in blatant war crimes that kill innocent civilians.

Obama administration officials believe that the use of global drone terror warfare and “kill lists” are likely to last at least another decade, with one top official commenting, “We can’t possibly kill everyone who wants to harm us... It’s a necessary part of what we do... We’re not going to wind up in 10 years in a world of everybody holding hands and saying, ‘We love America’.”[6] Indeed, quite true. That’s one of the actual repercussions – believe it or not – of waging a massive global assassination program against people around the world: they tend to not “love” the country bombing them.

But the Obama administration warned the world that as of 2012, the U.S. had only reached the “mid-point” in the global war on [read: of] terror, with Obama’s assassination program having already killed more than 3,000 people around the world, more than the number of people killed on 9/11.[7] As Glenn Greenwald noted, this represented “concerted efforts by the Obama administration to fully institutionalize – to make officially permanent – the most extremist powers it has exercised in the name of the war on terror.”[8]

But in case you had any moral ‘qualms’ about bombing and murdering hundreds of innocent children in multiple countries around the world with flying robots, don’t worry: as Joe Klein of Time Magazine noted, “the bottom line in the end is – whose 4-year-old gets killed? What we’re doing is limiting the possibility that 4-year-olds here will get killed by indiscriminate acts of terror.”[9]

Quite right. After all, “indiscriminate acts of terror” are only okay when the United States – or the “international community” – does it. But when the U.S. spreads terror, death and destruction around the world, this is referred to as a “war on terror,” instead of the more accurate “war of terror.” It could be argued that as a rule of thumb, whenever the United States declares a “war” ON something, simply remove the word ‘on’ and replace it with ‘of’, and suddenly, everything starts to make more sense. After all, whenever the U.S. declares a war “on” something (drugs, poverty, terror), the result is that there is a great deal more of whatever it is being ‘targeted’, and that U.S. policies themselves facilitate the exponential growth of these so-called ‘targets.’ Hence, the “war on terror” is truly more accurately described as a “war of terror,” since that is the result of the actual policies undertaken in the name of such a war.

A major NYU School of Law and Stanford University Law School research report was published in September of 2012 documenting the civilian terror inflicted by Obama’s global assassination-terror campaign. While the Obama administration has claimed that drones are...
“surgically precise” and “makes the US safer,” the report countered that this was completely “false.” The report noted that Obama’s drone war often uses the strategy of hitting the same target multiple times, thus killing rescuers and humanitarian workers who go to help the injured.[10]

This is referred to as a “double-tap” strategy, and according to the FBI and Homeland Security, this is a tactic which is regularly used in “terrorist attacks” to target “first responders as well as the general population.” Obama’s drones not only target rescuers, but also frequently bomb the funerals of previous drone victims. According to the United Nations, such tactics “are a war crime.”[11] Even the NYU/Stanford Law School report identified the drone program as a terror campaign when it noted that the effects of the drone program are that it “terrorizes men, women, and children.”[12]

John O. Brennan, who served as Obama’s chief counterterrorism adviser (and is now the director of the CIA), was the main advocate of the drone program inside the Obama administration. In 2011, he reassured the American people that, “in the last year, there hasn’t been a single collateral death because of the exceptional proficiency, [and] precision of the capabilities that we’ve been able to develop,” and added that, “if there are terrorists who are within an area where there are women and children or others, you know, we do not take such action that might put those innocent men, women and children in danger.”[13] That sounds pretty impressive, though unfortunately, it’s an absurd lie.

The New York Times noted that Obama’s method for counting civilian deaths caused by drone strikes was “disputed” (to say the least), because it “counts all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants,” thus radically underreporting the level of civilian deaths. The “logic” of this view that that “people in an area of known terrorist activity, or found with a top Qaeda operative, are probably up to no good.” This “counting method,” noted the NYT, “may partly explain the official claims of extraordinarily low collateral deaths.” Some administration officials outside the CIA have complained about this method, referring to it as “guilty by association” which results in “deceptive” estimates. One official commented, “It bothers me when they say there were seven guys, so they must all be militants… They count the corpses and they’re not really sure who they are.”[14]

In 2011, it was reported that drone strikes in Pakistan had killed 168 children, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism.[15] In Afghanistan, officials note that civilians are killed not only by Taliban attacks but also increasingly by drone attacks, with Afghan president Hamid Karzai condemning the attacks which kill women and children as being “against all international norms.”[16] Afghanistan was in fact the epicenter of the U.S. drone war, even more so than Pakistan, with the CIA having launched upwards of 333 drone strikes in the country over the course of 2012, the highest total ever.[17] The U.S. strategy in Afghanistan has evolved into “a new and as yet only partially understood doctrine of secret, unaccountable and illegal warfare,” which is “destroying the West’s reputation,” noted the Telegraph in 2012. [18] And considering the already-existing “reputation” of the West in the rest of the world, that’s quite an impressive feat.

From 2004 to 2012, between 2,400 and 3,100 people were reported to have been killed by U.S. drone strikes, including at least 800 innocent civilians (as a low estimate). As Seumas Milne reported in the Guardian, the drone strikes “are, in reality, summary executions and widely regarded as potential war crimes by international lawyers.”[19]

The UN warned in June of 2012 that drone strikes may constitute “war crimes,” and that the
use of drone strikes and “targeted killings” has been found to be “immensely attractive” to other states in the world, and thus, such practices “weaken the rule of law,” as they “fall outside the scope of accountability.” A Pakistani Ambassador declared that, “We find the use of drones to be totally counterproductive in terms of succeeding in the war against terror. It leads to greater levels of terror rather than reducing them.” Ian Seiderman, the director of the International Commission of Jurists noted that as a result of the global drone war, “immense damage was being done to the fabric of international law.”[20]

Robert Grenier, former head of the CIA’s counter-terrorism center from 2004 to 2006, commented that the United States was “creating a situation where we are creating more enemies than we are removing from the battlefield,” adding that, “If you strike them indiscriminately you are running the risk of creating a terrific amount of popular anger,” and that the strikes could even create “terrorist safe havens.”[21]

In testimony before the U.S. Congress in April of 2013, a Yemeni man who had studied in the United States explained that his community in Yemen – a small village – knew about the United States primarily through stories of his own experiences living there (which were positive), but their positive association with America changed following U.S. drone strikes, commenting: “Now… when they think of America, they think of the fear they feel at the drones over their heads. What the violent militants had failed to achieve, one drone strike accomplished in an instant.”[22]

U.S. drone bases operate out of multiple countries, including Afghanistan, Djibouti, Turkey, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Seychelles, and Saudi Arabia. Drones have conducted “surveillance missions” in Libya, Iran, Turkey, Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, and North Korea. Drone strikes have taken place in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia,[23] and there have even been reports of drone strikes taking place in the Philippines.[24] The U.S. has also considered undertaking drone strikes in the African country of Mali.[25]

In February of 2013, the United States sent 100 U.S. troops to Mali to set up a drone base for operations in Western Africa.[26] The U.S. began operating drones out of Mali right away, as “north and west Africa [were] rapidly emerging as yet another front in the long-running US war against terrorist networks,” giving the Pentagon “a strategic foothold in West Africa,” with Niger bordering Mali, Nigeria and Libya, which was already the target of a French-British-American war in 2011.[27]

In September of 2011, Anwar al-Awlaki, an American “suspected terrorist” in Yemen had his name added to Obama’s “kill list” and was murdered in a drone bombing, with Obama reportedly saying that making the decision to kill him was “an easy one.”[28] Two weeks later, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, the 16-year-old son of Anwar, also born in America but at the time living in Yemen, was then killed with a drone strike. Obama’s former White House Press Secretary and then-reelection campaign adviser Robert Gibbs was asked how the U.S. justified killing the 16-year-old boy, with the journalist commenting, “It’s an American citizen that is being targeted without due process, without trial. And, he’s underage. He’s a minor.” Gibbs replied that the boy “should have [had] a far more responsible father.” Gibbs also noted, “When there are people who are trying to harm us, and have pledged to bring terror to these shores, we’ve taken that fight to them.”[29] Pretty simple: America has decided to take the “terror” to “them.”

At his first inaugural address as President in 2009, Barack Obama said: “To the Muslim world,
we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect.” Less than two-and-a-half years later, favourable views of the United States in the Middle East had “plummeted… to levels lower than they were during the last year of the Bush administration.” A 2013 Gallup poll found that 92% of Pakistanis disapproved of U.S. leadership, with only 4% approving, “the lowest approval rating Pakistanis have ever given.” While there was “substantial affection” for American culture and people in the Muslim world, according to the poll, the problem was U.S. policies. Even a Pentagon study undertaken during the Bush administration noted: “Muslims do not ‘hate our freedom,’ but rather, they hate our policies,” specifically, “American direct intervention in the Muslim world,” which, the Pentagon noted, “paradoxically elevate[s] stature of and support for Islamic radicals.”[30]

A June 2012 poll of public opinion sought to gauge the level of support for U.S. drone strikes among 20 countries: the U.S., Britain, Germany, Poland, France, India, Italy, Czech Republic, China, Lebanon, Mexico, Spain, Japan, Brazil, Russia, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Greece. The poll found that 17 of the countries had a “clear majority” opposed to drone strikes, while only the U.S. had a “clear majority” (62%) in support.[31]

In May of 2013, Michael Sheehan, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee where he was asked how long the ‘war on terrorism’ will last, to which he replied: “At least 10 to 20 years,” with a Pentagon spokesperson later clarifying that he meant that, “the conflict is likely to last 10 to 20 more years from today – atop the 12 years that the conflict has already lasted.”[32] In other words, according to the Pentagon, the world has at least one-to-two more decades of America’s global terror war to look forward to.

So, if America was actually waging a war on terror which sought to reduce the threat of terror, then why would it be undertaking policies that actively – and knowingly – increase the threat and levels of terrorism? Well the answer is perhaps shockingly simple: America is not attempting to reduce terror. Quite the contrary, America is not only increasing the threat of terror, but is doing so by waging terror against much of the world. So this begs the question: what is the actual purpose of Obama’s drone terror campaign?

Akbar Ahmed, the Islamic Studies chair at American University and former Pakistani high commissioner to Britain, explained in a May 2013 op-ed in the New York Times that the drone war in Pakistan was producing “chaos and rage” as it was “destroying already weak tribal structures and throwing communities into disarray,” threatening the Pakistani government and fueling hatred of America, and that this was also occurring in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen, other major target nations of Obama’s terror campaign.[33]

Many of these tribal societies had struggled for autonomy under colonial governments (usually run by the British), and then struggled against the central governments left by the British and other colonial powers. These tribal societies have subsequently come under attack by the Taliban and al-Qaeda (whose growth was developed by the US in cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the Pakistani state), and then they continued to suffer under foreign occupations led by the United States, Britain and other NATO powers in Afghanistan and Iraq, destabilizing the entire Middle East and Central Asia.[34]

Now, these tribal societies are being subjected to Obama’s drone campaign of terror, “causing ferocious backlashes against central governments while destroying any positive image of the United States that may have once existed,” noted Ahmed. In his op-ed, he concluded: “Those at the receiving end of the strikes see them as unjust, immoral and dishonorable – killing
innocent people who have never themselves harmed Americans while the drone operators sit safely halfway across the world, terrorizing and killing by remote control.”[35]

So why would the United States knowingly do this, and why target these specific groups? The answer may be that the U.S. is simply targeting so-called “lawless” and “stateless” regions and peoples. In a world where states, corporations, and international organizations rule the day, with the United States perched atop the global hierarchy, the imperial concept of “order” reigns supreme, where the word ‘order’ is defined as control. In a world experiencing increased unrest, protests, rebellions, revolutions and uprisings, “order” is under threat across the globe.

For the American ‘Mafia Godfather’ Empire, control must be established, through whatever means necessary. For, as the ‘Mafia Principles’ of international relations dictate: if one state, region, or people are able to “successfully defy” the Godfather/Empire, then other states and people might try to do the same. This could potentially set off a “domino effect” in which the U.S. and its Mafia capo Western allies rapidly lose control of the world. Thus, we have witnessed the United States and the West intimately involved in attempting to manage the ‘transitions’ taking place as a result of the Arab Spring, desperately seeking to not lose control of the incredibly important strategic region of the Arab world.

Meanwhile, the technological capacity of American military force has reached new heights, with the global drone warfare as a major example. It allows the U.S. to reduce its use of large military forces being sent into combat, and thus reduces the domestic political pressure against foreign aggression and warfare. The drone program fits perfectly into Zbigniew Brzezinski’s description in 2009 of how the major state powers of the world are at a stage where “the lethality of their military might is greater than ever.” Yet, as Brzezinski elaborated, and as is evident in the case of the Arab Spring, the monumental political changes in Latin America over the past decade and a half, and the increased unrest of people around the world, the “capacity to impose control over the politically awakened masses of the world is at a historic low. To put it bluntly: in earlier times, it was easier to control one million people than to physically kill one million people; today, it is infinitely easier to kill one million people than to control one million people”[36]

Thus, we attempt a logical reasoning as to why the U.S. is targeting stateless tribal societies with its global terror campaign: if you can’t control them, kill them. Such a strategy obviously could not be publicly articulated to the population of a self-declared “democratic” society which congratulates itself on being a beacon for “freedom and liberty.” Thus, political language is applied. As George Orwell wrote, political language “is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.”

When it comes to Obama’s drone terror campaign against stateless tribal societies, the political language is firmly rooted in the “war on terror.” These people are deemed to be “terror suspects,” and so they are bombed and killed, their families and communities terrorized, and as a result, they become increasingly resentful and hateful toward the United States, thus leading to increased recruitment into terrorist organizations and an increased terror threat to the United States itself. Thus, the policy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: in terrorizing and bombing impoverished, stateless, tribal societies in the name of “fighting terror,” the U.S. creates the terror threat that it uses to justify continued bombing. And thus, the war of terror wages on.

Some may find my use of the term “terror campaign” to refer to Obama’s drone program as
hyperbolic or emotive. But what else are we supposed to call a program that produces “chaos and rage” around the world, creating “more enemies than we are removing” as it “terrorizes men, women and children,” so that when people think of America, “they think of the fear they feel at the drones over their heads”? What do you call this when it has been launched against at least seven different countries in the past four years, killing thousands of people – including hundreds of innocent children – and targeting first responders, humanitarian workers, and funerals?

By definition, this is terrorism. Obama’s global flying-killer-robot-campaign is the implementation of the most technologically advanced terror campaign in history. The fact that Obama’s terror war can continue holding any public support – let alone a majority of public support – is simply evidence of a public with little knowledge of the reality of the campaign, or the terror being inflicted upon people all over the world in their name.

If the objective of U.S. policies were to counter or reduce the threat of terror, one would think that the U.S. would then stop participating in terror. Obviously, that is not the case. Therefore, the objective is different from that which is articulated. As Orwell noted, “political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible,” and that committing such horrific atrocities – such as dropping atomic bombs on cities, supporting genocide, civil wars or, in this case, waging a global campaign of terror – “can indeed be defended,” added Orwell, “but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face.” Thus, “political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness.”

As Obama sought to justify his global terror campaign, he claimed that it has “saved lives” (except, presumably, for the thousands of lives it has claimed), that “America’s actions are legal,” and that, “this is a just war – a war wage proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defense.” Perhaps the most poignant statement Obama made during his May 2013 speech was thus: “the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation – and world – that we leave to our children.”[37]

So the question for Americans then, should be this: do you want to live in a nation – and world – which is defined by the decision to wage a global campaign of terror upon multiple nations and regions, and tens of thousands of people around the world? Obama clearly has no problem with it, nor does the American foreign policy establishment, nor the media talking heads. But... do you?

Andrew Gavin Marshall is a 26-year old researcher and writer based in Montreal, Canada. He is Project Manager of The People’s Book Project, chair of the Geopolitics Division of The Hampton Institute, research director for Occupy.com’s Global Power Project, and hosts a weekly podcast show with BoilingFrogsPost.

Notes
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402818.html
http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-27/national/35285416_1_drone-program-drone-campaign-lethal-
operations


[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/oct/24/obama-terrorism-kill-list


http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/25/study-obama-drone-deaths


http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/sep/25/study-obama-drone-deaths

http://www.salon.com/2011/07/19/drones/


[16] Azam Ahmed, “Drone and Taliban Attacks Hit Civilians, Afghans Say,” 8 September 2013:

http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/11/drones-afghan-air-war/

[18] Peter Osborne, “It may seem painless, but drone war in Afghanistan is destroying the West’s reputation,” The Telegraph, 30 May 2012:

[19] Seumas Milne, “America’s murderous drone campaign is fuelling terror,” The Guardian, 29 May 2012:
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/may/29/americas-drone-campaign-terror

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/21/drone-strikes-international-law-un

[21] Paul Harris, “Drone attacks create terrorist safe havens, warns former CIA official,” The Guardian, 5 June 2012:
http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/05/al-qaida-drone-attacks-too-broad


[23] Elspeth Reeve, “The Scope of America’s World War Drone,” The Atlantic Wire, 6 February 2013:
http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2013/02/world-war-drone-map/61873/

http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2012/03/05-drones-philippines-ahmed

[25] Raf Sanchez, “US ‘to deploy drones to launch air strikes against al-Qaeda in Mali’,” The Telegraph, 2 October 2012:

http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-02-22/world/37233792_1_drone-base-drone-flights-qaeda

http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/26/niger-africa-drones-us-terror


http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/us-obama-muslims-animosity-deepens

http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/15/us-obama-muslims-animosity-deepens

Empire Under Obama, Part 3: America's "Secret Wars" in Over 100 Countries Around the World
Andrew Gavin Marshall | Geopolitics | Policy & Research | October 17th, 2013

Part 1: Political Language and the 'Mafia Principles' of International Relations

Part 2: Barack Obama's Global Terror Campaign

Obama's global terror campaign is not only dependent upon his drone assassination program, but increasingly it has come to rely upon the deployment of Special Operations forces in countries all over the world, reportedly between 70 and 120 countries at any one time. As Obama has sought to draw down the large-scale ground invasions of countries (as Bush pursued in Afghanistan and Iraq), he has escalated the world of 'covert warfare,' largely outside the oversight of Congress and the public. One of the most important agencies in this global "secret war" is the Joint Special Operations Command, or JSOC for short.

JSOC was established in 1980 following the failed rescue of American hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Iran as "an obscure and secretive corner of the military's hierarchy," noted the Atlantic. It experienced a "rapid expansion" under the Bush administration, and since
Obama came to power, "appears to be playing an increasingly prominent role in national security" and "counterterrorism," in areas which were "traditionally covered by the CIA."[1] One of the most important differences between these covert warfare operations being conducted by JSOC instead of the CIA is that the CIA has to report to Congress, whereas JSOC only reports its most important activities to the President's National Security Council.[2]

During the Bush administration, JSOC "reported directly" to Vice President Dick Cheney, according to award-winning investigative journalist Seymour Hersh (of the New Yorker), who explained that, "It's an executive assassination ring essentially, and it's been going on and on and on." He added: "Under President Bush's authority, they've been going into countries, not talking to the ambassador or the CIA station chief, and finding people on a list and executing them and leaving. That's been going on, in the name of all of us."[3]

In 2005, Dick Cheney referred to U.S. Special Forces as "the silent professionals" representing "the kind of force we want to build for the future... a force that is lighter, more adaptable, more agile, and more lethal in action." And without a hint of irony, Cheney stated: "None of us wants to turn over the future of mankind to tiny groups of fanatics committing indiscriminate murder and plotting large-scale terror."[4] Not unless those "fanatics" happen to be wearing U.S. military uniforms, of course, in which case "committing indiscriminate murder and plotting large-scale terror" is not an issue.

The commander of JSOC during the Bush administration - when it served as Cheney's "executive assassination ring" - was General Stanley McChrystal, whom Obama appointed as the top military commander in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, JSOC began to play a much larger role in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.[5] In early 2009, the new head of JSOC, Vice Admiral William H. McRaven ordered a two-week 'halt' to Special Operations missions inside Afghanistan, after several JSOC raids in previous months killed several women and children, adding to the growing "outrage" within Afghanistan about civilian deaths caused by US raids and airstrikes, which contributed to a surge in civilian deaths over 2008.[6]

JSOC has also been involved in running a "secret war" inside of Pakistan, beginning in 2006 but accelerating rapidly under the Obama administration. The "secret war" was waged in cooperation with the CIA and the infamous private military contractor, Blackwater, made infamous for its massacre of Iraqi civilians, after which it was banned from operating in the country.[7]

Blackwater's founder, Erik Prince, was recruited as a CIA asset in 2004, and in subsequent years acquired over $1.5 billion in contracts from the Pentagon and CIA, and included among its leadership several former top-level CIA officials. Blackwater, which primarily hires former Special Forces soldiers, has largely functioned "as an overseas Praetorian guard for the CIA and State Department officials," who were also "helping to craft, fund, and execute operations," including "assembling hit teams," all outside of any Congressional or public oversight (since it was technically a private corporation).[8]
The CIA hired Blackwater to aid in a secret assassination program which was hidden from Congress for seven years. These operations would be overseen by the CIA or Special Forces personnel. Blackwater has also been contracted to arm drones at secret bases in Afghanistan and Pakistan for Obama's assassination program, overseen by the CIA. The lines dividing the military, the CIA and Blackwater had become "blurred," as one former CIA official commented, "It became a very brotherly relationship... There was a feeling that Blackwater eventually become an extension of the agency."

The "secret war" in Pakistan may have begun under Bush, but it had rapidly expanded in the following years of the Obama administration. Wikileaks cables confirmed the operation of JSOC forces inside of Pakistan, with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani telling the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson (who would later be appointed as ambassador to Egypt), that, "I don't care if they do it as long as they get the right people. We'll protest in the National Assembly and then ignore it."

Within the first five months of Obama's presidency in 2009, he authorized "a massive expansion of clandestine military and intelligence operations worldwide," granting the Pentagon's regional combatant commanders "significant new authority" over such covert operations. The directive came from General Petraeus, commander of CENTCOM, authorizing Special Forces soldiers to be sent into "both friendly and hostile nations in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Horn of Africa." The deployment of highly trained killers into dozens of countries was to become "systemic and long term," designed to "penetrate, disrupt, defeat or destroy" enemies of the State, beyond the rule of law, no trial or pretenses of accountability. They also "prepare the environment" for larger attacks that the U.S. or NATO countries may have planned. Unlike with the CIA, these operations do not report to Congress, or even need "the President's approval." But for the big operations, they get the approval of the National Security Council (NSC), which includes the president, as well as most other major cabinet heads, of the Pentagon, CIA, State Department, etc.

The new orders gave regional commanders - such as Petraeus who headed CENTCOM, or General Ward of the newly-created Africa Command (AFRICOM) - authority over special operations forces in the area of their command, institutionalizing the authority to send trained killers into dozens of countries around the world to conduct secret operations with no oversight whatsoever; and this new 'authority' is given to multiple top military officials, who have risen to the top of an institution with absolutely no 'democratic' pretenses. Regardless of who is president, this "authority" remains institutionalized in the "combatant commands."

The combatant commands include: AFRICOM over Africa (est. 2007), CENTCOM over the Middle East and Central Asia (est. 1983), EUCOM over Europe (est. 1947), NORTHCOM over North America (est. 2002), PACOM over the Pacific rim and Asia (est. 1947), SOUTHCOM over Central and South America and the Caribbean (est. 1963), SOCOM as Special Operations Command (est. 1987), STRATCOM as Strategic Command over military operations to do with outer space, intelligence, and weapons (est. 1992), and TRANSCOM
handling all transportation for the Department of Defense. The State Department was given "oversight" to clear the operations from each embassy,[17] just to make sure everyone was 'in the loop,' unlike during the Bush years when it was run out of Cheney's office without telling anyone else.

In 2010, it was reported by the *Washington Post* that the U.S. has expanded the operations of its Special Forces around the world, from being deployed in roughly 60 countries under Bush to about 75 countries in 2010 under Obama, operating in notable spots such as the Philippines and Colombia, as well as Yemen, across the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. The global deployment of Special Forces - alongside the CIA's global drone warfare program - were two facets of Obama's "national security doctrine of global engagement and domestic values," in the words of the *Washington Post*, though the article was unclear on which aspect of waging "secret wars" in 75 countries constituted Obama's "values." Commanders for Special Operations forces have become "a far more regular presence at the White House" under Obama than George Bush, with one such commander commenting, "We have a lot more access... They are talking publicly much less but they are acting more. They are willing to get aggressive much more quickly." Such Special Operations forces deployments "go beyond unilateral strikes and include the training of local counterterrorism forces and joint operations with them."[18]

So not only are U.S. forces conducting secret wars within dozens of countries around the world, but they are training the domestic military forces of many of these countries to undertake secret wars internally, and in the interests of the United States Mafia empire.

One military official even "set up a network" of private military corporations that hired former Special Forces and CIA operations to gather intelligence and conduct secret operations in foreign countries to support "lethal action": publicly subsidized, privatized 'accountability.' Such a network was "generally considered illegal" and was "improperly financed."[19] When the news of these networks emerged, the Pentagon said it shut them down and opened a "criminal investigation." Turns out, they found nothing "criminal," because two months later, the operations were continuing and had "become an important source of intelligence." The networks of covert-ops corporations were being "managed" by Lockheed Martin, one of the largest military contractors in the world, while being "supervised" by the Pentagon's Special Operations Command.[20]

Admiral Eric T. Olson had been the head of Special Operations Command from 2007 to 2011, and in that year, Olson led a successful initiative - endorsed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Mike Mullen and Defense Secretary Robert Gates - to encourage the promotion of top special operations officials to higher positions in the whole military command structure. The "trend" was to continue under the following Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, who previously headed the CIA from 2009 to 2011.[21] When Olson left his position as head of Special Operations Command, he was replaced with Admiral William McRaven, who served as the head of JSOC from 2008 to 2011, having followed Stanley McChrystal.
By January of 2012, Obama was continuing with seeking to move further away from large-scale ground wars such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, and refocus on "a smaller, more agile force across Asia, the Pacific and the Middle East." Surrounded by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in full uniforms adorned with medals, along with other top Pentagon officials, President Obama delivered a rare press briefing at the Pentagon where he said that, "our military will be leaner, but the world must know the United States is going to maintain our military superiority." The priorities in this strategy would be "financing for defense and offense in cyberspace, for Special Operations forces and for the broad area of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance."[22]

In February of 2012, Admiral William H. McRaven, the head of the Special Operations Command, was "pushing for a larger role for his elite units who have traditionally operated in the dark corners of American foreign policy," advocating a plan that "would give him more autonomy to position his forces and their war-fighting equipment where intelligence and global events indicate they are most needed," notably with expansions in mind for Asia, Africa and Latin America. McRaven stated that, "It's not really about Socom [Special Operations Command] running the global war on terrorism... I don't think we're ready to do that. What it's about is how do I better support" the major regional military command structures.[23]

In the previous decade, roughly 80% of US Special Operations forces were deployed in the Middle East, but McRaven wanted them to spread to other regions, as well as to be able to "quickly move his units to potential hot spots without going through the standard Pentagon process governing overseas deployments." The Special Operations Command numbered around 66,000 people, double the number since 2001, and its budget had reached $10.5 billion, from $4.2 billion in 2001.[24]

In March of 2012, a Special Forces commander, Admiral William H. McRaven, developed plans to expand special operations units, making them "the force of choice" against "emerging threats" over the following decade. McRaven's Special Operations Command oversees more than 60,000 military personnel and civilians, saying in a draft paper circulated at the Pentagon that: "We are in a generational struggle... For the foreseeable future, the United States will have to deal with various manifestations of inflamed violent extremism. In order to conduct sustained operations around the globe, our special operations must adapt." McRaven stated that Special Forces were operating in over 71 countries around the world.[25]

The expansion of global special forces operations was largely in reaction to the increasingly difficult challenge of positioning large military forces around the world, and carrying out large scale wars and occupations, for which there is very little public support at home or abroad. In 2013, the Special Operations Command had forces operating in 92 different countries around the world, with one Congressional critic accusing McRaven of engaging in "empire building."[26] The expanded presence of these operations is a major factor contributing to "destabilization" around the world, especially in major war zones like Pakistan.[27]

In 2013, McRaven's Special Operations Command gained new authorities and an expanded
budget, with McRaven testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee that, "On any day of the year you will find special operations forces [in] somewhere between 70 and 90 countries around the world."[28] In 2012, it was reported that such forces would be operating in 120 different countries by the end of the year.[29]

In December of 2012, it was announced that the U.S. was sending 4,000 soldiers to 35 different African countries as "part of an intensifying Pentagon effort to train countries to battle extremists and give the U.S. a ready and trained force to dispatch to Africa if crises requiring the U.S. military emerge," operating under the Pentagon's newest regional command, AFRICOM, established in 2007.[30]

By September of 2013, the U.S. military had been involved in various activities in Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde Islands, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia, among others, constructing bases, undertaking "security cooperation engagements, training exercises, advisory deployments, special operations missions, and a growing logistics network."[31]

In short, Obama's global 'war of terror' has expanded to roughly 100 countries around the world, winding down the large-scale military invasions and occupations such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, and increasing the "small-scale" warfare operations of Special Forces, beyond the rule of law, outside Congressional and public oversight, conducting "snatch and grab" operations, training domestic repressive military forces in nations largely run by dictatorships to undertake their own operations on behalf of the 'Global Godfather.'

Make no mistake: this is global warfare. Imagine for a moment the international outcry that would result from news of China or Russia conducting secret warfare operations in roughly 100 countries around the world. But when America does it, there's barely a mention, save for the passing comments in the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* portraying an unprecedented global campaign of terror as representative of Obama's "values." Well, indeed it is representative of Obama's values, by virtue of the fact that he doesn't have any.

Indeed, America has long been the Global Godfather applying the 'Mafia Principles' of international relations, lock-in-step with its Western lackey organized crime 'Capo' states such as Great Britain and France. Yet, under Obama, the president who had won public relations industry awards for his well-managed presidential advertising campaign promising "hope" and "change," the empire has found itself waging war in roughly one hundred nations, conducting an unprecedented global terror campaign, increasing its abuses of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity, all under the aegis of the Nobel Peace Prize-winner Barack Obama.

Whether the president is Clinton, Bush, or Obama, the Empire of Terror wages on its global campaign of domination and subjugation, to the detriment of all humanity, save those interests that sit atop the constructed global hierarchy. It is in the interests of the ruling elite that America protects and projects its global imperial designs. It is in the interests of all
humanity, then, that the Empire be opposed - and ultimately, deconstructed - no matter who sits in office, no matter who holds the title of the 'high priest of hypocrisy' (aka: President of the United States). It is the Empire that rules, and the Empire that destroys, and the Empire that must, in turn, be demolished.

The world at large - across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Latin America - suffers the greatest hardships of the Western Mafia imperial system: entrenched poverty, exploitation, environmental degradation, war and destruction. The struggle against the Empire cannot we waged and won from the outside alone. The rest of the world has been struggling to survive against the Western Empire for decades, and, in truth, hundreds of years. For the struggle to succeed (and it can succeed), a strong anti-Empire movement must develop within the imperial powers themselves, and most especially within the United States. The future of humanity depends upon it.

Or... we could all just keep shopping and watching TV, blissfully blind to the global campaign of terror and war being waged in our names around the world. Certainly, such an option may be appealing, but ultimately, wars abroad come home to roost. As George Orwell once wrote: "The war is not meant to be won, it is meant to be continuous. Hierarchical society is only possible on the basis of poverty and ignorance. This new version is the past and no different past can ever have existed. In principle the war effort is always planned to keep society on the brink of starvation. The war is waged by the ruling group against its own subjects and its object is not the victory over either Eurasia or East Asia, but to keep the very structure of society intact."

Andrew Gavin Marshall is a 26-year old researcher and writer based in Montreal, Canada. He is Project Manager of The People's Book Project, chair of the Geopolitics Division of The Hampton Institute, research director for Occupy.com's Global Power Project, and hosts a weekly podcast show with BoilingFrogsPost.

References


Service, 11 June 2005:


http://www.thenation.com/doc/20091207/scahill

[8] Adam Ciralsky, "Tycoon, Contractor, Soldier, Spy," Vanity Fair, January 2010:
http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2010/01/blackwater-201001


http://www.thenation.com/blog/156765/not-so-secret-anymore-us-war-pakistan#

http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2010/05/obama-gives-commanders-wide-berth-for-secret-warfare/57202/


http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2010/05/obama-gives-commanders-wide-berth-for-secret-

[18] Karen DeYoung and Greg Jaffe, "U.S. 'secret war' expands globally as Special Operations forces take larger role," The Washington Post, 4 June 2010: 
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/03/AR2010060304965.html

[19] Dexter Filkins and Mark Mazzetti, "Contractors Tied to Effort to Track and Kill Militants," The New York Times, 14 March 2010: 

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/16/world/16contractors.html?pagewanted=all


[24] Ibid.

[25] David S. Cloud, "U.S. special forces commander seeks to expand operations," Los Angeles Times, 4 May 2012: 
http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/04/world/la-fg-special-forces-20120505


[27] Nick Turse, "How Obama's destabilizing the world," Salon, 19 September 2011: 
http://www.salon.com/2011/09/19/obama_global_destablization/

http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-04-11/world/38448541_1_mcraven-socom-special-forces
http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/05/the-globalisation-of-u-s-special-operations-forces/


Lolita C. Baldor, "Army teams going to Africa as terror threat grows," Yahoo! News, 24 December 2012:

[31] Nick Turse, "The Startling Size of US Military Operations in Africa," Mother Jones, 6 September 2013:
http://www.motherjones.com/

DAVID DRUDING’S SHORT LIST OF OBAMA FAILURES AND PREFERENCE FOR GREEN PARTY CANDIDATE  9-30-12

I know that a Mittwit - Lyin' Ryan ticket is indeed scary but the expansion and misguided (in more ways that one) support for drone warfare, the savior of wall st at main st's expense, the frontal attack on heroic whistle blowing about many important issues including Assange and Manning's exposure of int'l war crimes by our military, the development & final signing of the hideous ndaa, the waffling on crucial issues including global climate change, attempting to push gmo's and monsanto hegemony in that field on the planet, (shall I continue ?) by our present commander-in-chief Obama makes it pretty easy for me to pull the lever for Dr. Jill Stein, Green Party presidential candidate, rather than hold my nose and vote for Mr Hope&Change after the past 3.5+yrs of disappointments.

END OBAMA’S FAILURES NEWSLETTER #1 from Peace, Justice Perspective

--
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