Contents Drone Watch Newsletter #19

EYE IN THE SKY film to be shown Wednesday, July 20, 7pm, at OMNI. A commercial, feature film about drone warfare starring Helen Mirren. Read the following and ask: How accurate is the film? How does the film help to explain the general public acceptance of drone warfare and the “war on/of terror”? What are our next possible actions? Plenty of extra parking in the middle of the parking area west of Liquor World.

Drone Information, History, Contexts

Kersley: Mass Surveillance

Cockburn’s Kill Chain: History of Drone Warfare

Kricorian, Israeli Drones Against Gaza
Drone Information and Contexts

- openDemocracy
  - About us

Drones, drugs and death by ESTHER KERSLEY 17 March 2016.

The war on terror’s methods of mass surveillance and remote warfare are not unique. The US is also addicted to covert tools in its ‘war on
drugs’, with disastrous consequences.

In April 2015, USA TODAY broke a story with the headline: “US secretly tracked billions of calls for decades”. At first glance, it appeared to be yet another Edward Snowden revelation implicating the National Security Agency (NSA), mass surveillance and the ‘war on terror’. But it actually concerned a mass surveillance operation that had taken place a decade earlier, not by the NSA, but by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). It was not aimed at identifying terrorists, but rather the detection of drug traffickers.

"It's very hard to see [the DEA operation] as anything other than the precursor to the NSA's terrorist surveillance", former NSA general counsel Stewart Baker said of the similarities between the two operations. The now-discontinued DEA operation that began in 1992, was the government's first known effort to gather data on Americans in bulk, sweeping up records of telephone calls made by millions of US citizens, regardless of whether they were suspected of a crime. For over two decades, the Justice Department and the DEA amassed logs of virtually all telephone calls from the USA to as many as 116 countries linked to drug trafficking in order to track drug cartels' distribution networks in the US.

Like the NSA's mass surveillance programme, the operation has been criticised for its threat to privacy and its lack of independent oversight. It was halted in September 2013 amid the fallout from the Snowden revelations. The DEA mass surveillance programme, however, serves as a reminder of how methods associated with the 'war on terror' are not unique to it. Running almost parallel to it, and at times borrowing from it, the US is increasingly dependent on covert methods of warfare in its other long-standing war, its ‘war on drugs’.

**A new method of warfare**

‘Remote control’ warfare describes the global trend towards countering threats at a distance without the need to deploy large military force. Pervasive, yet largely unseen, it minimises its engagement and risk while extending its reach beyond conflict zones. Remote warfare includes not only mass surveillance techniques, but also the use of drones, ‘special forces’ and private military and security companies (PMSCs).
In the long-running ‘war on terror’, remote warfare is the growing and dominant method of choice. Both armed and reconnaissance drones have been used by the US to target terrorists in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq for over a decade. Moreover, the start of the millennium has seen a sharp increase in the use of special forces. In 2015, US special operations forces were deployed to 135 countries, a large amount in counter-terrorism missions across the Middle East, north and west Africa. Added to the mix are private military and security companies (PMSCs), which are playing an increasingly important role in both Afghanistan and Iraq, with over 5,000 contractors employed in Iraq in 2014. Finally, Edward Snowden’s mass surveillance revelations reveal the extent to which modern warfare is increasingly looking to infer knowledge from ‘phenomena’, rather than through traditional intelligence-gathering techniques.

These methods, in particular, mass surveillance, PMSCs and drones, have also been increasingly used in the last decade in the global ‘war on drugs’, for similar reasons. The appeal of remote warfare is in its perception as a cost-free form of warfare that plays to the west’s technological strengths, increasingly attractive to a war-weary general public hostile to ‘boots on the ground’. However, concerns over the transparency and accountability of these methods of warfare, as well as the human cost, long-term impact and their ability to achieve long-term security are being increasingly challenged. MORE

https://www.opendemocracy.net/drugpolicy/esther-kersley/drones-drugs-and-death

Recommended Reading from The American Empire Project

Andrew Cockburn, Kill Chain: The Rise of the High-Tech Assassins

An essential and page-turning narrative on the history of drone warfare by the acclaimed author of Rumsfeld, exploring how this practice emerged, who made it happen, and the real consequences of targeted killing

About the Book
ISRAELI DRONES AGAINST GAZA


Cites Judith Butler’s book, Frames of War, When Is Life Grievable?, describing war as time when one side is human and deserving of grief, and the other side is neither. “…mainstream U.S. media narratives have relegated Palestinian lives to the category of the ungrievable. “The antidote to this kind of dehumanization is a voice of witness,” which social media provide —e.g. Voices from Gaza. A collection of the daily journal kept by Atef Abu Saif in Gaza has been published: The Drone Eats With Me. You become intimately acquainted with Saif and his family during the Israel bombings. “Characters of almost equal importance are the faceless drones that hover above…and the nameless drone operators who sit at a safe distance deciding whom to target for death.” --Dick

FEATURES
POLITICS
28 NOVEMBER 2013

Gaza: Life and death under Israel's drones by

Jonathan Cook

Drones buzzing overhead are a source of daily trauma for Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Drones killed an estimated 36 of the 162 Palestinians who lost their lives during operation Pillar of Defence [AP]

Jerusalem - There are many things to fear in Gaza: Attacks from Israel's Apache helicopters and F-16 fighter jets, the coastal enclave's growing isolation, the regular blackouts from power shortages, increasingly polluted drinking water and rivers of sewage flooding the streets.
Meanwhile, for most Palestinians in Gaza the anxiety-inducing soundtrack to their lives is the constant buzz of the remotely piloted aircraft - better known as "drones" - that hover in the skies above.

Drones are increasingly being used for surveillance and extra-judicial execution in parts of the Middle East, especially by the US, but in nowhere more than Gaza has the drone become a permanent fixture of life. More than 1.7 million Palestinians, confined by Israel to a small territory in one of the most densely populated areas in the world, are subject to near continual surveillance and intermittent death raining down from the sky. MORE

Welcome to "Little America": Hub for the US Military's Global Drone War by
Ramstein Air Base in southwest Germany "is a preparation center for the next world war."

Maggie Michael. “Drone Strike Got al-Qaida’s No. 2. Ex-bin Laden aide commanded network’s Yemen branch.” NAD-G (June 17, 2016). Killing Nasir al-Wahishi “…dealing the global network its biggest blow since the killing of Osama bin Laden.” He "is the latest in a series of senior figures from al-Qaida’s Yemen branch who have been killed by U.S. drone strikes the past five months.” At end a paragraph reported an “airstrike” on a “passenger bus carrying families fleeing the violence” that “killed more than two dozen civilians,” apparently from the Saudi-led coalition. For the complete report:

Organizations and Action
ACLU DRONE WARFARE AND DUE PROCESS Google Search June 12, 2016, page one
Death Without Due Process | American Civil Liberties Union

https://www.aclu.org/.../death-without-du...

American Civil Liberties Union

Mar 3, 2014 - By Hina Shamsi, Director, ACLU National Security Project ... When Americans hear of a drone strike, many think of a terrorist threat neutralized. ... That's why the Founders included due process in our Bill of Rights. ..... An absolute declaration of war declares war absolutely due to the failure of negotiations ...

Targeted Killing | American Civil Liberties Union

https://www.aclu.org/.../targeted-killing

American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU has litigated numerous lawsuits and regularly advocates with Congress and the ... ICE and Border Patrol Abuses · Road to Citizenship · Deportation and Due Process ... Regardless of the context, whenever the government uses lethal force, it must take all possible steps to avoid ... The Next President's Drone War ...

Targeted Killing: Death Without Due Process | American Civil Liberties ...

https://www.aclu.org/.../targeted-killing-d...

American Civil Liberties Union

Aug 30, 2010 - Today, the ACLU and Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a lawsuit ... Currently, the U.S. is at war in Afghanistan and Iraq. ... has attempted to assassinate him as many as a dozen times using armed drones. ... Due process requires, at a minimum, that citizens be put on notice of what may cause ...

ACLU & CCR Lawsuit: American Boy Killed By U.S. Drone Strike ...

https://www.aclu.org/.../aclu-ccr-lawsuit-a...

American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU and CCR have filed a lawsuit challenging the government's targeted ... fundamental guarantee against the deprivation of life without due process of law.

Frequently Asked Questions About Targeting Killing | American Civil ...

https://www.aclu.org/frequently-asked-qu...

American Civil Liberties Union

Why is targeted killing a civil liberties issue for the ACLU? ... far from any battlefield, without charge or trial, violates the constitutional guarantee of due process.

Al-Aulaqi v. Panetta - Constitutional Challenge to Killing of Three U.S. ...

https://www.aclu.org/.../al-aulaqi-v-panett...

American Civil Liberties Union

Jun 4, 2014 - Panetta) the ACLU and CCR charge that the U.S. government's killings of U.S. ... fundamental guarantee against the deprivation of life without due process of law.
The War on Drugs · Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice · Privatization .... In Court Today: Challenging the Drone Killings of Three Americans.

In Court Today: Challenging the Drone Killings of Three Americans ... 

[https://www.aclu.org/.../court-today-chall...](https://www.aclu.org/.../court-today-chall...)

American Civil Liberties Union

Jul 19, 2013 - In Court Today: Challenging the Drone Killings of Three Americans. By Josh Bell, Media Strategist, ACLU Center for Democracy ... deprive citizens of their "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. ... The Supreme Court agreed, reaffirming that an asserted "state of war is not a blank check" for the ... 

ACLU History: Due Process: Freedom from Unconstitutional Detention ...

[https://www.aclu.org/aclu-history-due-pr...](https://www.aclu.org/aclu-history-due-pr...)

American Civil Liberties Union

Few rights are more fundamental to human liberty than freedom from unconstitutional or arbitrary detention; yet the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act ...

Relative of Americans Killed by Drone Strikes: No Justice in US Courts

[https://www.aclu.org/.../relative-american...](https://www.aclu.org/.../relative-american...)

American Civil Liberties Union

Jun 4, 2014 - Relative of Americans Killed by Drone Strikes: No Justice in U.S. Courts. By Hina Shamsi, Director, ACLU National Security Project ... remedy for extrajudicial killings when the government claims to be at war, even far from ... these American citizens violated the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of due process.

ACLU Calls Bullshit on Obama's Drone 'Due Process' Promises - Hit ...

[reason.com/blog/2013/.../aclu-calls-bullshit-on-obamas-drone-spe...](reason.com/blog/2013/.../aclu-calls-bullshit-on-obamas-drone-spe...)

Reason

May 24, 2013 - As Ed Krayewski noted yesterday, not everybody was impressed by President Obama’s national security speech, in which he vowed to make ...

Searches related to ACLU drone warfare and due process

targeted killing drones

targeted killing statistics

targeted killing pros and cons

targeted killing vs assassination

targeted killing international law

drone strikes on american soil
	targeted killing is morally permissible
TO ACLU ARK CHAPTER FAYETTEVILLE 6-12-16

If you look for an educational and fund-raising program, perhaps you couldn't do better than to tackle the legality of drone assassinations, especially since a new base is being organized at Ebbing AFB at Ft. Smith, to add to the over 60 we already have. Please forward as you see appropriate. Are you or do you know anyone else in AR and OK working on drone killing?

Thanks, Dick

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Citizen Resistance
Whistleblowers, Leakers, Army and Airmen Resistance

Published on Friday, July 01, 2016 By Common Dreams

**Former US Drone Techs Condemn Inhumanity of Secretive Kill Program**

Whistleblowers Cian Westmoreland and Lisa Ling criticized the bombing campaign for what they say was a lack of recognition for human life

By Nadia Prupis, staff writer

"Humanity has been taken out of the decision," one of the whistleblowers said. (Photo: Annette Dubois/flickr/cc)

In Brussels this week, two former U.S. drone technicians are speaking out against the aerial bombing program as the European Parliament gears up for a hearing on unmanned warfare and the U.S. prepares to confront its own legacy on drone strikes.

At an event with campaigners on Thursday, Cian Westmoreland and Lisa Ling, who worked on the military's drone technology systems, criticized the bombing program for what they say was a lack of recognition for human life.

Westmoreland first spoke out against the program in 2015 along with three other Air Force pilots, who published a letter accusing the Obama administration of "lying publicly" about the program and warning that "the innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism and groups like ISIS."
On Thursday, he said he was compelled to come forward after being given an award for helping build a station in Kandahar, Afghanistan that contributed to 2,400 missions and 2,000 "enemy kills."

That made him feel "horrible," he told the Guardian.

"The connection needs to be made that if strategic and military goals are to be fulfilled, civilian lives must be respected," he said.

The Guardian notes that Britain is currently the only European country to use drones, but that the European Parliament believes that may change as more nations come under increasing pressure to support U.S. warfare.

The two whistleblowers also attended a parliamentary hearing on Thursday to discuss the impacts of drone warfare on civilian communities. Westmoreland said he noticed a "total disconnect" among many of the Members of European Parliament (MEPs) during the hearing, including during videotaped testimony from the brother of a cleric killed during a strike who talked about the impact it had on his family. "One of them was playing on their cellphone while this was going on," Westmoreland said.

Thursday's hearing also took place just a day before President Barack Obama is expected to announce the number of civilian casualties caused by U.S. drone strikes in nontraditional battlegrounds like Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya since 2009, leaving out figures for active war zones like Iraq and Afghanistan.

A report released Thursday by the international human rights group Reprieve exposes the administration's misleading—and rare—public statements on civilian casualties from drone strikes.

Ling said the hearing felt like a first step toward "exploring issues of what does participation in the drone war or extrajudicial killing actually look like."

She added that she had been shocked by "how little the public knew" about the program. "As citizens we need to have some conversation about the things that are in the dark.... The people who are out of the picture are the people who are on the ground within the drone program, and the victims," she said.

"Humanity has been taken out of the decision: there has been a lot of talk about the plane itself and how cool the technology is," she added, "but not a lot of conversation about the people who are affected."

To support drone whistleblower Cian Westmoreland, click here.
With great humility but great hope, I’m writing to you from a hostel room somewhere in Berlin, attempting to reach out to tell you something that I and others like me know -- but governments and weapons companies would prefer you didn’t question.

My name is Cian Westmoreland, and I am a former U.S. Air Force communications technician who built the signals relay station for receiving and transmitting data -- used in airstrikes -- obtained over 240,000 square miles of Afghanistan.

I discovered that in the time I served there, my system was a key component used in bombings from drones and other aircraft that killed at least 359 innocent civilians. This was a number derived from a UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan report for the year 2009.

Knowledge of my "life’s work" at that time took me down a painful path of tremendous guilt, hopelessness, isolation, and nightmares to what ultimately culminated in me looking over a bridge at the Rio Grande, with the plan of taking my own life in October 2015. It was news of a bombing -- using my equipment -- of an MSF hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, that brought me there that day.

I committed myself to the VA to protect me from harming myself. Less than a month later, on November 18, 2015, I decided to join fellow drone whistleblowers Brandon Bryant, Michael Haas, and Stephen Lewis in speaking out as a group for the first time.

We drafted a letter to President Obama, General Michael Hayden, and CIA Director John Brennan urging them to stop the extrajudicial bombings, reminding them that this policy is creating more terrorists than it is eliminating. For all of us, there is no turning back.

In the past month, I have been connecting with people around the globe, touring with drone surveillance whistleblower Lisa Ling with a film she is in called "National Bird," directed by Sonia Kennebeck, to educate the public about what the drone program really is, and to represent those people who have been psychologically and physically traumatized by drones on all sides of these strikes.

As the recipient of the first Drone Whistleblower Fellowship of the RootsAction Education Fund, I ask that you consider supporting my work through this fellowship. If you donate, your tax-deductible contribution will help to strengthen my efforts for peace.

Sincerely,
Cian Westmoreland
Here is what I found about “National Bird” which apparently will be released this fall in theaters:

FilmRise has acquired the North American distribution rights for Sonia Kennebeck’s drone warfare documentary “National Bird,” which will have its North American premiere this week at the Tribeca Film Festival.

“National Bird,” which debuted at the Berlin Film Festival, is exec produced by documentarian Errol Morris (“The Fog of War”) and Wim Wenders (“Buena Vista Social Club”). The film will have a theatrical release in the fall.

“National Bird” follows three Air Force whistle-blowers who have been distressed over their participation in the killing of faceless people in foreign countries. The film includes footage of one veteran going to Afghanistan to investigate and an interview with defense attorney Jesselyn Radack, best known for representing Edward Snowden.

NATIONAL BIRD Google Search, July 1, 2016, page one.

National Bird / a film by Sonia Kennebeck nationalbirdfilm.com/ Its images haunt the audience and bring a faraway issue close to home. Production Team. Sonia Kennebeck Director & Producer.

National Bird | 2016 Tribeca Film Festival


Tribeca Film Festival

Directed by Sonia Kennebeck FEATURE DOCUMENTARY 92 Minutes North American Premiere ... Filmmaker Sonia Kennebeck takes on the controversial tactic of drone ... Executive produced by Wim Wenders and Errol Morris, National Bird ...

National Bird - International Documentary Film Distributor, ro*co films ...

www.rocofilms.com/film.php?code=BIRD

Sonia Kennebeck and Ines Hofmann Kanna [92 minutes] ... National Bird follows the dramatic journey of three whistleblowers who are determined to break the ...
Five Questions for National Bird Director Sonia Kennebeck

filmmakermagazine.com/98176-tribeca-2016-five-questions-f...

Filmmaker

Apr 20, 2016 - “Detached, inhuman and unreal” — that’s how Sonia Kennebeck describes the act of killing via Predator drones. An emblem of American ...

National Bird review – chilling film reveals truths about drones | Film ...

www.theguardian.com › ... › Movies › Tribeca film festival  The Guardian

Rating: 4 - Review by Alex Needham

Apr 17, 2016 - Directed by Sonia Kennebeck and executive-produced by Wim Wenders, National Bird weaves together the stories of the air force veterans ...

Sonia Kennebeck - IMDb

www.imdb.com/name/nm4807418/  IMDb

Jump to Director - Director (2 credits). 2016 National Bird (Documentary). 2013 Sex: Made in Germany (Documentary). Hide Hide Show Show.

Wim Wenders, Sonia Kennebeck talk drone doc 'National Bird ...

www.screendaily.com/...sonia-kennebeck...national-...  Screen International

Feb 13, 2016 - Wim Wenders, Sonia Kennebeck talk drone doc 'National Bird' ... has this cloud of secrecy around the drone program," says the director.

'National Bird' Review: Wim Wenders, Errol Morris Present Drone Doc ...

variety.com/2016/film/.../national-bird-film-review-1201706281/  Variety

Feb 15, 2016 - Sonia Kennebeck interviews three U.S. drone veterans about the ... Berlin Film Review: 'National Bird' .... Directed by Sonia Kennebeck.

National Bird (film) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia


National Bird is a 2016 documentary film directed by Sonia Kennebeck. The film focuses on three whistleblowers who talk about unmanned aerial vehicles.

Meet Sonia Kennebeck – 'National Bird' - IndieWire

www.indiewire.com/.../tribeca-2016-women-directors-meet-so...  IndieWire

Apr 14, 2016 - Tribeca 2016 Women Directors: Meet Sonia Kennebeck - 'National Bird' ... (Press materials). "National Bird" will premiere at the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival on April 16. ... W&H: Name your favorite woman-directed film and why.
On UUA Chaplain Chris Antal

"'I Refuse to Serve as an Empire Chaplain': U.S. Army Minister Resigns over Drone Program"

JUNE 03, 2016

HTTP://WWW.DEMOCRACYNOW.ORG/2016/6/3/I_REFUSE_TO_SERVE_AS_AN

SCROLL TO END FOR CLINTON AND SANDERS: THEY SUPPORT DRONE WARFARE.

STORY

"I Refuse to Support U.S. Armed Drone Policy": Army Chaplain Reads Resignation Letter to Obama

TOPICS

- Drones
- Drone Attacks

GUESTS

REV. CHRIS ANTAL

minister for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern, New York, and a founder of the Hudson Valley, New York, chapter of Veterans for Peace. He served as a U.S. Army chaplain in Afghanistan before publicly resigning over the Obama administration’s drone warfare program.

This is viewer supported news

DONATE

An unlikely voice has emerged challenging the drone warfare program: former U.S. Army Reserve Chaplain Captain Chris Antal, who spent time based in Afghanistan. In April, he wrote an open letter to President Obama detailing his reasons for leaving the U.S. Army Reserves, citing his opposition to the administration’s use of drone strikes, its policy on nuclear proliferation, and what he calls the executive branch’s claim of "extraconstitutional authority and impunity for international law."
AMY GOODMAN: During a commencement speech on Thursday, President Obama defended his foreign policy, including targeted assassinations and drone warfare. Obama made the remarks at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: As commander-in-chief, I have not hesitated to use force unilaterally where necessary to protect the American people. Thanks to our military, intelligence and counterterrorism professionals, bin Laden is gone. Anwar Awlaki, a leader of the al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen, is gone. Ahmed Abdi Godane, the al-Qaeda leader in Somalia, he's gone. Ahmed Abu Khattala, accused in the attacks in Benghazi, captured. Mohammad Mansour, the leader of the Taliban, gone. Leader after leader in ISIL—Haji Mutazz, their number two; Mohammed Emwazi, who brutally murdered Americans; Abu Nabil, the ISIL leader in Libya—all gone. Abu Dawud, a leader of their chemical weapons program, captured. The list goes on, because if you target Americans, we will find you, and justice will be done, and we will defend our nation.

AMY GOODMAN: That was President Obama delivering the commencement speech at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs on Thursday. With only a small number of U.S. Special Forces on the ground, Iraq and Syria have become new fronts in the global drone war that has launched thousands of strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia. The exact number of civilians killed by drones is unknown, because the program operates in secret.

We turn now to an unlikely voice challenging the drone warfare program: former U.S. Army Reserve Chaplain Chris Antal, who recently resigned his post in protest. In April, Reverend Antal wrote a letter to President Obama detailing his reasons for leaving the U.S. Army Reserves, citing his opposition to the administration’s use of drone strikes, its policy on nuclear proliferation, and what he calls the executive branch’s claim of "extraconstitutional authority and impunity for international law," unquote.
This is not the first time Reverend Antal has voiced his concerns. In 2012, he delivered a sermon in Afghanistan and anonymously [sic] posted the text on a Unitarian Universalist website. At the time, he identified himself only as an Army chaplain in Afghanistan. The sermon read in part, quote, "We have sanitized killing and condoned extrajudicial assassinations: ... war made easy without due process, protecting ourselves from the human cost of war. We have deceived ourselves, ... denying the colossal misery our wars inflict on the innocent." Reverend Antal’s superiors discovered the sermon, and he was reprimanded, nearly losing his job. Then, mid-April, he decided to voluntarily resign over his continued concerns about drone warfare. In doing so, Reverend Antal forfeits benefits that otherwise would have accrued to him through his eight years of service in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Reverend Chris Antal joins us now in our New York studio. He is a minister for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Tavern, New York, and a founder of the Hudson Valley, New York, chapter of Veterans for Peace.

Reverend Chris Antal, welcome to Democracy Now!

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Amy, thank you. I'm glad to be here.

AMY GOODMAN: You're still in the Army, is that right?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: I'm on my way out, but the paperwork hasn't been completed yet.

AMY GOODMAN: But you have resigned.

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: I've submitted my resignation, but the Army is a big bureaucracy, and it takes time to get all the signatures.

AMY GOODMAN: So, really, you're still a U.S. Army chaplain.

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: I am. I can't speak from that capacity on this program, but on paper, yes.

AMY GOODMAN: So talk about your decision. How long did you serve as an Army chaplain, and where did you serve?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Sure. I served for five years—eight years in the
Reserve, five years as a chaplain, and most of that time was as a Reserve chaplain. I did spend about two years on active duty, and altogether, about six months in Afghanistan.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about your decision to leave.

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Sure. Well, before I can talk about my decision to leave, I need to say why I got in in the first place. As a minister, I was driven by compassion to care for the wounded; and as a citizen, driven by a sense of civic duty to carry my fair share in our nation’s wars. I think I did both of those things during my time in service, but eventually began to feel a role conflict between my role as a military officer and my role as an ordained minister. And I couldn’t reconcile that role conflict, so I decided to resign.

AMY GOODMAN: Talk about the speech I just quoted from. Where did you give that speech?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Sure. Well, it was a sermon. And it was never anonymous, as you said. When I posted it, I identified myself. I gave that sermon on Veterans Day, which was on a Sunday in 2012, at Kandahar Airfield to a gathered—a community gathered for worship in my tradition, a Unitarian Universalist service. And that was about six weeks into my deployment. When I had witnessed drones, I had learned about practices that violate my sense of what is right. And I decided it was my prerogative as a religious leader to address that in the context of a religious service, a form of lamentation, a confession. And that is what I did in my sermon. And because I think the issues I raise are of concern for a larger audience, for the whole nation, I made that available through a church website that is sponsored by my denomination.

AMY GOODMAN: And talk about what happened then. How was it discovered, and what was the response by the military?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Well, two days after it appeared online, I was contacted by an Army lawyer who had read the post. He forwarded it to my commander. I was summoned to the commander’s office. He told me that my message doesn’t support the mission. He told me that I make us look like the bad guys.
He asked me to take it down, which I did, and immediately. Nevertheless, I was subjected to an investigation. It’s called an Article 15-6 investigation. I had to get a trial defense lawyer in Afghanistan, that was provided to me by the Army. And that process drew out for about two months, and it ended with what’s called a general officer memorandum of reprimand. I was handed an official reprimand that said I had made politically inflammatory statements, and I was, on that basis, released from active duty in Afghanistan, sent home with a "do not promote" evaluation, which is really a career killer in the military.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You quit in a very public way, with a letter to President Obama, your letter of resignation. And in it, you said, "I resign because I refuse to serve as an empire chaplain." Explain.

**REV. CHRIS ANTAL:** Well, sure. For me, democracy is about checks and balances. Democracy is about due process. These drone wars have blown due process up in smoke. They’ve blown checks and balances up in smoke. And democracy is also about no establishment and free exercise of religion. We have in our nation an established religion. It’s not Christianity. Jeremy Gunn calls it **American National Religion.** It has—consists of the unholy trinity of governmental theism, military supremacy and an understanding of capitalism as freedom. And as a religious leader, I feel it’s my prerogative to differentiate myself from this state-sanctioned religion and speak from my authentic tradition in a way that resists these national policies. And that’s what I’ve done in offering my resignation and stating quite clearly that I will not serve as an empire chaplain. I will not lend religious legitimacy to this state-sanctioned violence.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Have you received a response from President Obama, since that’s who you wrote your resignation letter to?

**REV. CHRIS ANTAL:** I have not.

**AMY GOODMAN:** You also have become a shareholder of Honeywell?

**REV. CHRIS ANTAL:** I am a shareholder of Honeywell, yes.

**AMY GOODMAN:** Is this how you plan to support yourself now?
REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Well, I’ve never been a shareholder before of anything, and I only own one share. And the reason why I became a shareholder is because I was frustrated with the lack of progress through legislative advocacy, and I believe what we are facing in our country is not just a military-industrial complex, that Eisenhower wrote about, it’s a military-industrial-congressional complex. And we cannot do legislative advocacy without doing shareholder advocacy and confronting some of the corporations that are profiting and that are lobbying our elected officials in order to influence the militarization of U.S. foreign policy.

AMY GOODMAN: Can you talk about attending the Honeywell shareholders’ meeting and what you did?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Sure. I’ve been to two shareholder meetings now, the first one in 2015, where I addressed the CEO, David Cote, on their profiting from armed drones proliferation. This year, I went, as I did last year, with my fellow veteran, Nick Mottern, and he addressed the drone profiting, and I chose to address Honeywell’s profiting from nuclear weapons. So I asked Mr. Cote how much Honeywell is profiting from the administration’s investment of trillions of dollars in the modernization of our nuclear arsenal. I asked him how much Honeywell is profiting from the administration’s decision to launch a new airdropped nuclear cruise missile. And I asked Mr. Cote if he’d ever been to Hiroshima, because I’ve been there twice, and whether he had faced the horror that this technology produces.

AMY GOODMAN: Your wife of 18 years is Japanese?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Yes, I’ve been married 18 years, and we have five children.

AMY GOODMAN: And what was your response to President Obama just last week going to Hiroshima?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Well, I was glad and proud of our president for visiting Hiroshima; however, I am disappointed that although he talks the talk of nuclear abolition, the actions of his administration are not consistent with what he’s saying. I agree that Hiroshima calls for a moral revolution, a
revolution of consciousness, and an awakening of America. And I hope, and I remain hopeful, that the administration will cancel plans for the new airdropped nuclear cruise missile and take the thousand nuclear warheads off launch-on-warning status.

AMY GOODMAN: Reverend Chris Antal, can you talk about how those you’ve ministered to have responded to your resignation? Who did you serve in Afghanistan?

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Well, I served as an Army chaplain. And as an Army chaplain, I’m responsible for the soldiers in my assigned unit, but also soldiers in my area of operations, as well as contractors and servicemembers from all branches. And I served all of those people during my deployment to Afghanistan. I can say that when I preached the sermon that led to my reprimand, I had the full support of the community of faith that attended that service. When I appealed the letter of reprimand, I appealed with more than 30 letters of support from everyone in that congregation, as well as concerned clergy, chaplains and citizens across America. So I have had a lot of support.

[I excised section on Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, both of whom supported drones. Scroll down to next section for their statements. –Dick]

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Yeah, what they’re not saying is the numbers. And the Bureau of Investigative Journalism released just two days ago that there have been 7,142 people killed with U.S. drone strikes, most of those in Pakistan. Now, my question is: Where is the necessity? Where is the imminent threat to my family, to our families here in the United States, when we kill people halfway around the world with a drone strike?

ALSO READ ABOUT CHAPLAIN ANTAL

Branko Marcetic. “The Army Chaplain Who Said No to Drones.” In These Times (August 2016). Marcetic interviews Chris Antal. “We have morally disengaged, outsourcing our killing, forgetting that the bloodshed is on our hands too.”

Support for Drones: Clinton and Sanders from Democracy Now (interview of Rev. Antal)

AMY GOODMAN: I wanted to get your response to this presidential election. I want to turn to Democratic presidential candidate former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. In 2014, The Guardian columnist Owen Jones questioned her about the use of drone warfare.

OWEN JONES: You’re a loving parent. What would you say to the loving parents of up to 202 children who have been killed by drones in Pakistan in a program which you escalated as secretary of state?

HILLARY CLINTON: Well, I would argue with the premise, because, clearly, the efforts that were made by the United States, in cooperation with our allies in Afghanistan and certainly with the Afghan government, to prevent the threat that was in Pakistan from crossing the border, killing Afghans, killing Americans, Brits and others, was aimed at targets that had been identified and were considered to be threats. The numbers about potential civilian casualties, I take with a somewhat big grain of salt, because there has been other studies which have proven there not to have been the number of civilian casualties.

AMY GOODMAN: And last October on NBC’s Meet the Press, Chuck Todd asked Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders about his position on drones.

CHUCK TODD: What does counterterrorism look like in a Sanders administration? Drones? Special Forces? Or what does it look like?

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: Well, all of that and more.

CHUCK TODD: You would—you’re OK with the drone, using drones as—

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: Look, drone is a weapon. When it works badly, it is terrible and it is counterproductive. When you blow up a facility or a building
which kills women and children—

CHUCK TODD: Sure.

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: —you know what? It not only doesn’t do us—it’s terrible.

CHUCK TODD: But you’re comfortable with the idea of using drones if you think you’ve isolated an important terrorist?

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: Well, yes, yes, yes.

CHUCK TODD: So, that continues in a Sanders administration.

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS: Yes. And look, look, we all know, you know, that there are people, as of this moment, plotting against the United States. We have got to be vigorous in protecting our country, no question about it.

AMY GOODMAN: That’s Senator Bernie Sanders and, before that, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

REV. CHRIS ANTAL: Yeah, what they’re not saying is the numbers. And the Bureau of Investigative Journalism released just two days ago that there have been 7,142 people killed with U.S. drone strikes, most of those in Pakistan. Now, my question is: Where is the necessity? Where is the imminent threat to my family, to our families here in the United States, when we kill people halfway around the world with a drone strike?

Some of the BOOKS AND FILMS CITED IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Andrew Cockburn, *Kill Chain: The Rise of High-Tech Assassinations*


Alef Abu Saif, *The Drone Eats with Me*

Films

*Eye in the Sky*

Sonia Kennebeck, *National Bird*
Contents of #17  http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/2016/05/drone-newsletter-17.html

Contents:  OMNI Drone Watch Newsletter #18


Drone Information

Contacting the 188th Wing of the Arkansas Air National Guard

Drone Strike Kills Somalia Shabab Leader (Is it murder by our president without Declaration of War?)

Drone Crashes (no problem, a grim Reaper costs only $14 mil)

Turse, Bases Worldwide (there were 60 bases when Turse wrote, an unknown number under construction, as in Ft. Smite, AR; btw, Turse wrote the book on mass killing in Vietnam War)

Bureau of Investigative Journalism (up to date data)

Gusterson, Remote Control Warfare (the nooks and crannies and many points of view)

Citizen Resistance

Mennonites (reflect at their high school then demonstrate at the drone command center

Chomsky, Drone Terrorism (C. possesses almost supernatural x-ray detection of cant)

Opposing Drones in the Arts:  A Poem, Books, Some Quilts, a Film

Poem by Gerry Sloan
VFP: Drones Quilt Project

Feature Film about Drone Pilots and PTSD

Books

*The Assassination Complex* by Jeremy Scahill & Glenn Greenwald


Derber and Magrass, *Bully Nation*

**More Organizations and Actions**

Know Drones: Las Vegas Symposium, April 2016

Nick Mottern, Know Drones (looks like a good international drone watch)

*Nuclear Resister* June 2, 2016 (includes half a dozen articles on drones)

Former Drone Pilots Speak Out (revelations from inside damning)

Retirees urge Refuse to Fly, get another job, this one’s illegal

*Democracy Now*, Bacevich: President Obama’s Drone War and Middle East War

*Moyers & Co.*, Bacevich: Drone War Unconstitutional

National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance (NCNR), DC Rally Against Drones

**Civil Disobedience** (see *Nuclear Resister* above)

VFP Members Arrested at Creech April 1, 2016


END DRONE WATCH #19
Dick Bennett

Blog: http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/

For research purposes, specific subjects can be located in the following alphabetized index, and searched on the blog using the search box. The search box is located in the upper left corner of the webpage.

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