OMNI
DRONE/ASSASSINATION NEWSLETTER # 21,
March 14, 2018


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.

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Contents Drone/Assassination Newsletter #21

HISTORY OF DRONES

(See No. 20: Terminator Planet: The First History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050 by Nick Turse and Tom Engelhardt; The Changing Face of Empire and Tomorrow’s Battlefield: by Nick Turse; “Transferring CIA Drone Strikes to the Pentagon” by Micah Zenko.)

History of Arkansas Air National Guard 188th Fighter Wing, Ft. Smith
Governors Request: Save the Warthogs, the Flying Razorbacks
Mottern, History from 1920s to 2018
Andrew Cockburn, Kill Chain. Inside Multibillion Dollar Military, CIA, Corporate Assassination Warfare
(For 21st c. see Drone Newsletter #20: Eye in the Sky feature Film starring Helen Mirren; The Good Kill feature Film by Andrew Niccol (Gattaca, Lord of War);
National Bird Documentary by Sonia Kennebeck, and Drone Newsletter #19.)

(BOOKS ON DRONES: #22 will contain an annotated list of some of the books.)
RESISTANCE, PROTESTS

Noam Chomsky on the US Terroristic Global War

Mottern, _Know Drones_

Des Moines
Volk Field, WI


Germany v. Armed Drones

Review of _Drone Warrior_

_Drone (2015)_ directed by Tonje Hessen Schei, 58 minutes.

HISTORY OF DRONES

EBBING AFB, FT. SMITH, AR

Some History of the Arkansas Air National Guard 188th Fighter Wing at Ebbing AFB, Ft. Smith, AR: From F-16s to A-10 Warthogs (2008) to Drones to not yet completed 2018.

“Letter Campaign Supports the 188th.” _ADG_ (Feb. 11, 2012). The Arkansas Air National Guard 188th Fighter Wing, composed of the A-10 Thunderbolt II, nicknamed the Warthog and known as “The Flying Razorbacks,” is being converted to unmanned drones, the MQ-1 and MQ-9 (that would be stationed elsewhere). The Ft. Smith Chamber of Commerce has started a letter-writing campaign to stop the conversion, “Save the Flying Razorbacks.”

Amy Schlesing. “_Governors: Return F-16s to 188th Wing._” _ADG_ (March 9, 2012). The Wing flew F-16s until four years ago, when they were replaced by the A-10 “Warthog.” The conversion (retraining crews and maintenance personnel) “is estimated by one Pentagon official to have cost more than $1 million.” Now the Council of Governors recommend the 188th return to F-16s. Governor Mike Beebe advocates the return. But the drones are part of the Pentagon’s effort to reduce the number of Air Force personnel, shrinking the 188th “by more than 26 percent.”
Investigation needed: What did the conversion from F-16s to Warthogs (2008) to drones (2012 but still not in full operation in 2018, and a new building being built to contain all units) cost? --Dick

HISTORY OF DRONES: FROM BRITISH BOMBING OF IRAQ IN 1920S TO DRONES
2017

KNOW DRONES, Edited by Nick Mottern, DRONE ORGANIZERS BULLETIN, 7-5-17

DRONES PART OF CURRENT U.S. AIR WAR ATROCITY BORN IN THE 1920s

In the 1920s Winston Churchill bombed Iraqis who were resisting British rule. The issue was oil. This established a policy that would lead to massive World War II bombing campaigns and now the vast aerial attack by the U.S. and its colonially-minded partners that is devastating the lives of millions of people across swathes of the Middle East and Afghanistan, and to a lesser degree Libya and Somalia.

This linked article provides an extremely important analysis of the thinking behind the racist, 1920s British air war and how this thinking lives today in drone war as well as the overall U.S. aerial killing policy.

In these remarkable - must watch - linked videos it is hard to see any difference between the ideas expressed by RAF pilots who bombed Iraqis in the 1920s and U.S. policy now. The reports of the Iraqi witnesses to the RAF attacks are almost identical to the comments of victims of drone attacks now.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rrSaFvRBFU&t=76s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx-QqSa6cLA
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKePRwarlXQ

It is impossible to know the full human and environmental cost of what can only be described as an atrocity of historic proportions, which includes bombing by B-52s, but information from Air Wars.org, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and other sources suggest that the U.S.-led air aerial assault campaign across Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia and Libya, including assisting Saudi Arabia’s air attacks in Yemen, has caused:

- At least 20,000 civilian deaths and tens of thousands more wounded.(My estimate based on information in the above sources; I think this is very conservative.)
- Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of refugees.
- Famine and cholera threatening more than 17 million in Yemen alone.
- Massive destruction of homes, communities and infrastructure. These photos of Mosul in Iraq can be taken in many, many places that are being subjected to “coalition” air attack.
U.S. drone operators have been a key part of this campaign, apparently involved in identifying targets for conventional bombers as well as undertaking their own attacks. This extremely informative linked article speaks of drone operators working to minimize civilian casualties, but given what is happening, one can only wonder at this kind of commentary.

These links give specifics on the more than 13 “coalition” nations involved in the bombing campaign, as well as Russia and Iran, and on specifics of U.S. aircraft involved and munitions dropped per type of aircraft, including drones.

However, these links do not provide specifics on U.S. air attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are likely increasing along with the invasion of more U.S. troops into Afghanistan and the likelihood of pursuit of Taliban fighters into Pakistan.

The expansion of the U.S. troop invasion in Afghanistan, of course, gives the lie to the notion that drones keep U.S. troops from having to put boots on the ground in war zones. The U.S. drone assassination campaign began in Afghanistan in 2001.

How did drone warfare emerge, who made it happen, and the real consequences of targeted killing

READ AN EXCERPT →

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.

Assassination by drone is a subject of deep and enduring fascination. Yet few understand how and why this has become our principal way of waging war. *Kill Chain* uncovers the real and extraordinary story; its origins in long-buried secret programs, the breakthroughs that made UAV operations possible, the ways in which the technology works and, despite official claims, does not work. Taking the reader inside the well-guarded world of national security, the book reveals the powerful interests - military, CIA and corporate - that have led the drive to kill individuals by remote control. Most importantly of all, the book describes what has really happened when the theories underpinning the strategy -- and the multi-billion dollar contracts they spawn -- have been put to the test. Drawing on sources deep in the military and intelligence establishments, Andrew Cockburn's *Kill Chain* unveils the true effects, as demonstrated by bloody experience, of assassination warfare, a revelation that readers will find surprising as well as shocking.

RESISTANCE, PROTESTS

NOAM CHOMSKY ON DRONES

“The target of Bush’s war was al-Qaeda. One hammer blow after another—Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and beyond—has succeeded in spreading jihadi terror from a small tribal area in Afghanistan to virtually the whole world, from West Africa through the Levant and on to Southeast Asia. One of history’s great policy triumphs. Meanwhile, al-Qaeda has been displaced by much more vicious and destructive elements.” Noam Chomsky, Optimism Over Despair, 18.

Chomsky and Drones, Google Search, 3-14-18

2013-17

MR Transcript: Dr. Noam Chomsky on Imperialism, Drones ...
mediaroots.org/mr-transcript-dr-noam-chomsky-on-imperialism-drones-propaganda/

Jun 4, 2013 - Abby Martin talks to professor, political critic, and author of over 100 books, about the Boston bombings, US terror inflicted abroad, drones, Obama’s re-branding of Bush administration policies, the National Defense Authorization Act & Holder v. Humanitarian Law, conventional wisdom, the evolution of ...
Noam Chomsky on the era of the drone | Noam Chomsky interviewed ... https://chomsky.info/201309__/
Noam Chomsky on the era of the drone. Noam Chomsky interviewed by Steven Garbas. Satellite, September 2013. NC: Just driving in this morning I was listening to NPR news. The program opened by announcing, very excitedly, that the drone industry is exploding so fast that colleges are trying to catch up and opening ...

Chomsky: US drone campaign is world's biggest terrorist action ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oedvLjaIwM
Oct 10, 2013 - Uploaded by RT
The United States is not the first superpower to act as if it's exceptional and will likely not be the last, although ...

Noam Chomsky 2014 The Drone Campaign Has Absolutely No ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m58scZ8g7k
Jul 14, 2015 - Uploaded by Ricardo Ruiz
Noam Chomsky 2014 The Drone Campaign Has Absolutely No Counterpart. Ricardo Ruiz. Loading ...

Mar 19, 2015
NOAM CHOMSKY: On international affairs, Obama's major step --contribution if you like-- was to launch the ...

Noam Chomsky: Obama's Drone Program 'The Most Extreme Terrorist ... https://www.commondreams.org/.../noam-chomsky-obamas-drone-program-most-extr...
Jan 19, 2015 - Famed linguist takes aim at western hypocrisy on terrorism.

Noam Chomsky Brilliant Speech On The Obama Drone Killings ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IWRNdIATKY
Nov 6, 2015 - Uploaded by The Great Work
If You Enjoyed This Video Like & Subscribe To My Channel
Noam Chomsky https://www.youtube.com/user ...

Noam Chomsky: Obama’s Drone Wars Are the Worst Terror ... readersupportednews.org/.../37250-noam-chomsky-obamas-drone-wars-are-the-worst...
Jun 4, 2016 - Excerpt: Washington DC based History Teacher Dan Falcone and New York City English Teacher Saul Isaacson sat down with Professor Noam Chomsky to discuss current issues in education and American domestic and foreign policy issues.

Noam Chomsky Discusses President Obama’s Drone Program ... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytex5sg_YiA
May 9, 2016 - Uploaded by Henry Holt

Populism and Terror: An Interview with Noam Chomsky | Harvard ... hir.harvard.edu/populism-terror-interview-noam-chomsky/
Jan 18, 2017 - Chomsky spoke with HIR editors Kenneth Palmer and Richard Yarrow about his reflections on politics in the West, and what issues he thinks it has failed to properly address. ... You've talked a lot about the use of drones and, especially during the Obama administration, have criticized their use. Do you think ...

NEWS FROM KNOW DRONES, Edited by Nick Mottern, DRONE ORGANIZERS BULLETIN

DES MOINES DRONE PROTEST BLOCKS TRAFFIC - SPECIAL – JUNE 29, 2017
nti-drone war organizers with a base in the Catholic Worker movement in Des Moines cranked up their protest on June 28, 2017, blocking a roadway near the local Air National Guard drone control base, with four of their number being arrested. On June 29, according to Catholic Worker organizer Frank Cordaro: "Before a reluctant Polk Co Jail Judge, Jesse Horne, Spencer Kaaz, Ruby Montoya and Jessica Reznicek all plead guilty to 2 misdemeanor charges, were give fines and let go! Don't see that very often........ this campaign has new life.... stay tuned."

KNOW DRONES 7-7-17
FOUR CITIZEN ACTIVISTS ARRESTED AT VOLK FIELD AS THEY ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THE BASE AS A CRIME SCENE, By Joy First

Wisconsin Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars has held monthly vigils against drones at the gates of Volk Field for over five years. Continue Reading


At dusk I stood on a residential street with trim lawns and watched planes approach a runway along the other side of a chain-link fence. Just a few dozen yards away, a JetBlue airliner landed. Then a United plane followed. But the next aircraft looked different. It was a bit smaller and had no markings or taillights. A propeller whirled at the back. And instead of the high-pitched screech of a jet, the sound was more like... a drone.

During the next half-hour I saw three touch-and-go swoops by drones, their wheels scarcely reaching the runway before climbing back above Syracuse’s commercial airport. Nearby, pilots were at the controls in front of Air Force computers, learning how to operate the MQ-9 Reaper drone that is now a key weapon of U.S. warfare from Afghanistan to the Middle East to Africa.

Since last summer the Defense Department has been using the runway and airspace at the Syracuse Hancock International Airport to train drone operators, who work at the adjoining
Air National Guard base. Officials say it’s the first time that the federal government has allowed military drones to utilize a commercial airport. It won’t be the last time.

No longer will the pilots who steer drones and fire missiles while staring at computer screens be confined to remote areas like the Nevada desert. With scant public information or debate, sizable American communities are becoming enmeshed in drone warfare on other continents. Along the way, how deeply will we understand — in human terms — what the drone war is doing to people far away? And to us? MORE https://exposefacts.org/killer-drones-in-the-empire-state/
But a widely publicized new memoir about America’s covert drone war fails to mention the “outflow increases,” as one internal Air Force memo calls it. *Drone Warrior: An Elite Soldier’s Inside Account of the Hunt for America’s Most Dangerous Enemies* chronicles the nearly 10 years that Brett Velicovich, a former special operations member, spent using drones to help special forces find and track terrorists. Conveniently, it also puts a hard sell on a program whose ranks the military is struggling to keep full.


For Whistleblowers, Journalism and Democracy

**CONTENTS: DRONE NEWSLETTER #20**


SPOTLIGHT ON ARKANSAS

Nick Mottern, Know Drones, Veterans for Peace against the Drones and Arkansas TV Spots against the Drone base at Ebbing ANG AFB and the C-130s at Little Rock AFB

HISTORY AND CONTEXTS OF DRONES


*The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare* by Nick Turse

*Tomorrow’s Battlefield: U.S. Proxy Wars and Secret Ops in Africa* by Nick Turse

“Transferring CIA Drone Strikes to the Pentagon” by Micah Zenko

“Murky Special Ops Have Become Corporate Bonanza” by Ryan Gallagher

Killing Civilians: “The Obama Administration’s Drone-Strike Dissembling” by Conor Friedersdorf

US Drone War Killing, Google Search

Ban Armed Drones, from Roots Action
A PLAY AND THREE FILMS

A Play and a Film about Women Drone Pilots:

May 14, 2017, at 21C Museum Hotel in Bentonville the a Performance of *Grounded*

   Letter from the Play’s Director Laura Shatkus

   Review of Play by Nick Brothers

   Letter from Nick Mottern, Veterans for Peace

*Eye in the Sky* Film

   *NYT* Review, “Helen Mirren, in one of her fiercest screen performances”

Two films showing additional realities of drone warfare:

*The Good Kill* Film, insider's view of 21st-century warfare, psychological toll drone pilots endure. Andrew Niccol (*Gattaca, Lord of War*) director.

*National Bird* Documentary, “three whistleblowers determined to break the silence” by Sonia Kennebeck

Drone Newsletter #19

END DRONE NEWSLETTER #21

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