-- IMPORTANT EVENTS

JANUARY 15, FILM ABOUT DRONE WAR
JANUARY 25, LOCAL AND NATIONAL RALLY AGAINST IRAN WAR
PORTALS FOR PEACE FILMS ABOUT WAR

The OMNI Center for Peace, Justice, and Ecology is presenting a series of films about war entitled *Portals for Peace*, curated by Gerry Sloan. The next film, *National Bird*, will be shown at the OMNI Center on Wednesday, January 15th at 7 p.m.

*National Bird* follows the dramatic journey of three whistleblowers who are determined to break the silence around one of the most controversial current affairs issues of our time: the secret U.S. drone war. At the center of the film are three U.S. military veterans. Plagued by guilt over participating in the killing of civilians in foreign countries, they decide to speak out publicly, despite the possible consequences.

Their stories take dramatic turns, leading one of the protagonists to Afghanistan where she learns about a horrendous incident. But her journey also gives hope for peace and redemption. *National Bird* gives rare insight into the U.S. drone program through the eyes of veterans and survivors, connecting their stories as never seen before in a documentary. Its images haunt the audience and bring a faraway issue close to home.

OMNI is located at 3274 Lee Ave. For more information call 966-5515 or 442-4600.

No Iran War! - Global Day of Protest Update
Abel Tomlinson

Dear Friends,
2. We've now finalized many details for the event, received our permits, and prepared a flyer (attached). The protest march will begin at 1 P.M. on January 25th at the intersection of Dickson & West Streets. We'll then march up to a rally at the Fayetteville Town Center at approximately 2 P.M. The rally will feature the keynote speaker and Middle East expert Dr. Shirin Saeidi, Afghanistan war veteran Nathan Hudson, students and other justice and peace activists. There will be music by Still on the Hill, Guy Ames, Jori Costello and Adam Cox. We've also gained endorsements from several local and state justice and peace organizations, which are listed on the attached flyer. I also added just a few of the many prominent national organizations that are planning or endorsing this Global Day of Protest. There is significant potential for millions of people to rise up on this day, to make history and more.

3. Now, we really need all the help we can get in spreading the word!  
   A. Please forward this email to your friends!  
   B. Please print the attached flyer and put on bulletin boards everywhere! Please let me know if you need a 4/page handbill version, and I'll send it out soon.  
   C. If you're on Facebook, please share this event page to your personal timeline and directly invite your friends: https://www.facebook.com/events/2188280314811911/

Let's STOP this catastrophic war & more!

Toward Peace,

OMNI
US DRONE/ASSASSINATION, WAR OF TERROR NEWSLETTER # 23, SPECIAL NO. ON BOOKS AND FILMS
JANUARY 15, 2020


Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace, Justice, and Ecology.
TABLE OF CONTENTS: OMNI DRONE NEWSLETTER #23

One function of these newsletters is to offer an alternative to Facebook and Twitter and all other sources of US sciolism, which has allowed the peace, justice, and ecology movement to be dominated by War and Warming.

FILMS
Interfaith Network
Bourque, Drone
Eye in the Sky
The Good Kill
Grounded
Schei, Drone Warrior

30 BOOKS
4 Books Reviewed
Cohn, Woods, Mazzetti, Singer
2 Articles
   Comprehensive Psychological Analysis
   Obama Administration.

Recent OMNI Drone Newsletters

TEXTS FOR NO. 23
FILMS ABOUT US DRONE WAR

Interfaith Network’s Shortened Versions of 3 Films:

DRONE, NATIONAL BIRD, and UNMANNED, and two films about ethics, religion, and drones.  https://www.interfaithdronenetwork.org/

Film Trailers:

“Drone” Trailer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UqxCUrT5-Y

“National Bird” Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8hPK7G-5bw

“Unmanned: America’s Drone War OFFICIAL TRAILER

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3SRRobDasw

Full “Unmanned” film free online:
https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/unmanned-americas-drone-wars/

- DRONE, Film, Directed by Jason Bourque.  Premiered in Vancouver in 2017.  “A mild-mannered family guy whose job involves guiding drones on deadly covert missions around the world is suddenly discovered and cornered by a Pakistani businessman intent on revenge.”

Review: In 'Drone,' Confronting Sins and a Vengeful Visitor ...
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/24/movies/drone-review.html
May 24, 2017 - Jason Bourque’s modest, proficient thriller “Drone” scrutinizes the ethics of warfare by remote control,

Drone Warrior.  From book by Brett Velicovich and Christopher S. Stewart.  Pro-drone and war.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwiOq-dJgDM

Eye in the Sky feature film starring Helen Mirren;(see Drone Newsletter #20)
EYE IN THE SKY. NYT Critic’s Pick Directed by Gavin Hood. 1h 42m


The Good Kill feature Film by Andrew Niccol (Gattaca, Lord of War);


A Play and a Film about Women Drone Pilots:


Directed by Laura Shatkus.


Drone is a 2014 English-language documentary film directed by Norwegian director Tonje Hessen Schei. The film explores the use of drones in warfare. Drone ...

Release date: April 15, 2014 (Arte); February 2...

Release  · Theatrical screenings  · Critical reception


BOOKS

2017

Drones and Targeted Killing (2nd ed): Legal, Moral and Geopolitical Issues,
edited by Marjorie Cohn.


2016

The Assassination Complex: Inside the Government’s Secret Drone Warfare Program.


2015.


2014


Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issue. Marjorie Cohn. 2014. (See review below.).

The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, from Flying Fortresses to Drones. 2014.

Drone Wars: Transforming Conflict, Law, and Policy. 2014


2013


2012


Tomorrow's Battlefield. Nick Turse.; 2012. (“Transferring CIA Drone Strikes to the Pentagon” by Micah Zenko.)


Predator: The Remote-Control Air War Over Iraq and Afghanistan: A Pilot’s Story.

The Way of the Knife, by Mark Mazzetti. 2012. (See review below.)

2010

2009
Wired for War. P. W. Singer, 2009. (See review below.)

REVIEWS
2017 Cohn
2015 Woods
2012 Mazzetti
2009 Singer

Drones and Targeted Killing (2nd ed)
Legal, Moral and Geopolitical Issues

“This book provides much-needed analysis of why America’s targeted killing program is illegal, immoral, and unwise.”
—from the foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

More Reviews »

“Very important book… In a few months we will commemorate the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, which, despite the limits of the day, established the founding principle of modern law: presumption of innocence. Today that principle has been rescinded. Guilty verdicts are no longer to be rendered by a jury of peers, but by a White House session deciding who we are going to kill today—along with whatever unfortunates happen to be in the vicinity of the drone attack. As these valuable essays show, Obama’s global terror
The Bush administration detained and torturer suspected terrorists; the Obama administration assassinated them; and the Trump administration will likely do both.

Assassination, or targeted killing, off the battlefield not only causes more resentment against the United States, it is also illegal. In this interdisciplinary collection, human rights and political activists, policy analysts, lawyers and legal scholars, a philosopher, a journalist and a sociologist examine different aspects of the U.S. policy of targeted killing with drones and other methods. It explores the legality, morality, and geopolitical considerations of targeted killing and resulting civilian casualties, and evaluates the impact on relations between the United States and affected countries.

The book includes the documentation of civilian casualties by the leading non-governmental organization in this area; stories of civilians victimized by drones; an analysis of the first U.S. targeted killing lawsuit by the lawyer who brought the case; a discussion of the targeted killing cases in Israel by the director of PCATI which filed one of the lawsuits; the domestic use of drones; and the immorality of drones using Just War principles.

Marjorie Cohn is a professor emerita at Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego, former president of the National Lawyers Guild, and deputy secretary general of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers. Her books include Cowboy Republic: Six Ways the Bush Gang Has Defied the Law; Rules of Disengagement: The Politics and Honor of Military Dissent (with Kathleen Gilberd); and the edited volume, The United States and Torture: Interrogation, Incarceration and Abuse. Cohn is a recipient of the Peace Scholar of the Year Award from the Peace and Justice Studies Association. She testified before Congress about the Bush torture policy.
Sudden Justice: America’s Secret Drone Wars, a new book by London-based investigative journalist Chris Woods, traces the intertwined technological, legal and political history of drones as they evolved on the battlefield in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the covert U.S. targeted killing campaign.

Woods is especially thorough on the issue of civilian casualties, arguing that in pursuit of the short-term goal of eliminating suspected terrorists or militants on the battlefield, both the military and CIA were slow to grasp the strategic damage done by civilian deaths. Woods also argues that the controversy over the number of civilians killed by drones stemmed from the United States’ elastic definition of who could be targeted, an issue not just in the CIA’s secret strikes, but also across the military.

U.S. drones have now fired on Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya and Syria, and are a feature of war that is here to stay. Their global use by the United States has set precedents “pushing hard at the boundaries of international law,” and the challenge, Woods writes, will be in “convincing others not to follow Washington’s own recent rulebook.”

The book is densely informative and includes interviews with drone operators and intelligence officials, a notable number of them on the record. Here are six new details that Woods unearthed in his reporting:

1. No one is exactly sure who ordered the very first drone strike in Afghanistan, in October 2001. The failed attempt to kill Taliban leader Mullah Omar was a collision of orders between the CIA, Air Force, Central Command and the White House. Retired Air Force Lieutenant General Dave Deptula says that when he saw the drone’s missile hit, he exclaimed, “Who the fuck did that?” (The story of the Mullah Omar strike is also in Richard Whittle’s book, Predator: The Secret Origins of the Drone Revolution, which was published last fall. You can read Whittle’s account in Politico, and Woods’ was recently excerpted in The Atlantic.)
2. There was a secret presidential order in 2002 signed by President George W. Bush that explicitly related to targeted killings by drone, former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told Woods. “It was loosening the [Executive Order] 12333 against assassinations,” Armitage said. It has long been understood that a September 2001 memo signed by George Bush had paved the way for the CIA’s terrorist assassination campaign, with authorities bolstered by the Authorization for Use of Military Force passed by Congress that same month. But Armitage recalls a subsequent “draft executive order or a finding.”

3. “Could have been us,” a senior U.S. intelligence official said of a reported drone strike that killed up to 80 civilians in 2006. The Pakistani military originally claimed responsibility for the bombing, but then later insisted it was Washington. The United States never confirmed or denied a role in the attack, in keeping with how it would handle almost all future drone strikes.

4. The CIA generally runs the drone war in Pakistan, but there have been longstanding questions about the role played by the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). Woods’ sources tell him that in fact, “much of the mundane surveillance for CIA targets in Pakistan” was carried out by JSOC, because the CIA’s regular Air Force pilots were overwhelmed. Those missions were so sensitive that one of Woods’ sources told him that he had “no intention of wearing an orange jumpsuit for the next 20 years by talking about this.” The missions provided essential intelligence for the CIA’s “signature strikes,” which killed people based on their behaviors without necessarily knowing their identities.

5. As the CIA began its most intense bombing campaigns between 2008 and 2010 in Pakistan, it ignored lessons about minimizing civilian casualties that were becoming critical parts of counterinsurgency doctrine during the same period in Afghanistan. A WikiLeaks cable unearthed by Woods notes that U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke waved off concerns about drone strikes in
Pakistan, as “drones were more targeted than bombs.” It took until 2012 for the number of civilian deaths documented by outside groups to dip significantly.

6. Bored drone pilots sometimes smuggled simple computer games onto the drone operating systems — chess, solitaire, Battleship. That stopped in 2011, after a computer virus got into the drones’ operating systems, likely from the games, former pilots told Woods.

*Sudden Justice* is the latest in a slew of books about the drone war published in the past year. To round out your drone war bookshelf we’d also recommend *Predator*, by Richard Whittle — a detailed look at the military contracting and technology behind the most iconic drone — and *Kill Chain*, by Andrew Cockburn, which focuses on how high-tech killing evolved from Vietnam to the drug war to drones. Earlier books on the drone war include *The Way of the Knife* by Mark Mazzetti, *Kill or Capture* by Daniel Klaidman and *Dirty Wars* by The Intercept’s Jeremy Scahill.

**Two Reviews of The Way of the Knife:**


U.S. drones targeting rescuers and mourners.  A new amply documented report demonstrates the use of American tactics that are almost certainly war crimes

GLENN GREENWALD  02.05.2012•8:51 AM

https://www.salon.com/2012/02/05/u_s_drones_targeting_rescuers_and_mourners/

(updated below - Update II - Update III)

On December 30 of last year, *ABC News* reported on a 16-year-old Pakistani boy, Tariq Khan, who was killed with his 12-year-old cousin when a car in which he was riding was hit with a missile fired by a U.S. drone. As I noted at the time, the report contained this extraordinary passage buried in the middle: Asked for documentation of Tariq and Waheed’s deaths, Akbar did not provide pictures of the missile strike scene. Virtually none exist, since drones often target people who show up at the scene of an attack.
What made that sentence so amazing was that it basically amounts to a report that the U.S. first kills people with drones, then fires on the rescuers and others who arrive at the scene where the new corpses and injured victims lie.

In a just-released, richly documented report, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, on behalf of the Sunday Times, documents that this is exactly what the U.S. is doing -- and worse: The CIA's drone campaign in Pakistan has killed dozens of civilians who had gone to help rescue victims or were attending funerals, an investigation by the Bureau for the Sunday Times has revealed.

The findings are published just days after President Obama claimed that the drone campaign in Pakistan was a "targeted, focused effort" that "has not caused a huge number of civilian casualties".

A three month investigation including eye witness reports has found evidence that at least 50 civilians were killed in follow-up strikes when they had gone to help victims. More than 20 civilians have also been attacked in deliberate strikes on funerals and mourners. The tactics have been condemned by leading legal experts.

Although the drone attacks were started under the Bush administration in 2004, they have been stepped up enormously under Obama. There have been 260 attacks by unmanned Predators or Reapers in Pakistan by Obama’s administration – averaging one every four days.

As I indicated, there have been scattered, mostly buried indications in the American media that drones have been targeting and killing rescuers. As the Bureau put it: "Between May 2009 and June 2011, at least fifteen attacks on rescuers were reported by credible news media, including the New York Times, CNN, Associated Press, ABC News and Al Jazeera." Killing civilians attending the funerals of drone victims is also well-documented by the Bureau's new report:…

(continued: https://www.salon.com/2012/02/05/u_s_drones_targeting_rescuers_and_mourners/)

Unmanned Killers, and the Men Behind Them, Review of

The Way of the Knife, by Mark Mazzetti.

By JAMES MANN APRIL 24, 2013

Over the last couple of years, numerous authors have reported on specific aspects of America's counterterrorism effort, including the Navy SEAL team operations, the bin Laden raid, other targeted killings and the drone strikes.

The virtue of Mark Mazzetti’s new book, “The Way of the Knife,” is the way in which it perceptively ties all these events together and paints the larger picture: Since the Sept. 11 attacks, America has gradually developed a new way of war, one that thoroughly relies on secret operations by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon. It “is now easier,” Mr. Mazzetti writes, “for the United States to carry out killing operations at the ends of the earth than at any time in its history.”
Such actions are not unprecedented, as Mr. Mazzetti, a national security correspondent for The New York Times, acknowledges in his book. The C.I.A. carried out large-scale paramilitary operations in Vietnam and supported them in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Pentagon has long engaged in spying.

But Mr. Mazzetti focuses on the distinctive, modern-day practice of targeted killing, particularly through the use of drone strikes. He explores the set of forces — political, legal and technological — that gave rise to America’s increasing reliance on this tactic as a response to terrorism.

In the immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks, seeking to gather intelligence on Al Qaeda and its leaders the Bush administration pushed the C.I.A. to develop the extensive program that intelligence officials called R.D.I. — rendition, detention and interrogation. “The Way of the Knife” trenchantly analyzes how this program, which on occasion included torture, gave way under the Obama administration to an emphasis on drone attacks and targeted killing, which have so far attracted less controversy.

“Armed drones, and targeted killing in general, offered a new direction for a spy agency that had begun to feel burned by its years in the detention-and-interrogation business,” Mr. Mazzetti writes. “Killing by remote control was the antithesis of the dry, intimate work of interrogation. It somehow seemed cleaner, less personal.”…


Rev. Frankie Sturm. Edited by John Feffer, February 13, 2009. Is the future of war a game of Russian roulette with a cyborg?
http://fpif.org/book_review_wired_for_war/

I wanted to be a fighter pilot when I was in sixth grade. Fresh off my first viewing of Top Gun, I decided to serve my country by learning to fly an F-14. Fifteen years later, I’m a civilian with no flight experience whatsoever. This is hardly surprising. Childhood dreams don’t always become adulthood realities. What’s truly astonishing is that even if I had joined the military, and even if I were an accomplished pilot today, I might still lack any meaningful flight experience.

That is, unless flying an unmanned aerial drone via remote control counts as flight experience. But does it? Such is one of the many themes Peter W. Singer explores in his new book, Wired for War (Penguin Press, 2009). In a wide-ranging study that moves seamlessly from science fiction and pop culture to engineering and entrepreneurship, Singer immerses
the reader in a world in which robots are revolutionizing our military and changing the nature of conflict in the 21st century.

As the ground shifts beneath our feet, far too many important thinkers — from national security experts to human rights activists — have failed to recognize the implications of the robotics revolution. Yet in the words of military roboticist Robert Finkelstein, who is featured prominently in the book, the rise of military robots “could end up causing the end of humanity, or it could end war forever.” Our future is a game of Russian roulette with a cyborg.

More pressing than eschatological speculation is the near-term effect of military robots on warfare. Analysts from widely divergent backgrounds agree that handing off military tasks to robots will lower the perceived cost of conflict and make war more likely. This not only threatens the lives of civilians the world over, it could actually make the United States less safe. To some, the use of robots is an admission of cowardice, an unwillingness to fight with honor. This could embolden extremists, alienate restive populations, and convince terrorists that one more 9/11 is needed to drive the cowardly Americans into retreat.

Singer illuminates these problems with great clarity. What’s less clear is what we can do about it. America may be wired for war, but are we wired for weighing the consequences? The military is by far the most respected institution in American culture. As long as politicians — whether plausibly or cynically — can claim that robots will save the lives of U.S. soldiers, they’ll favor leaping without looking.

On the bright side, Wired for War is selling well and Singer recently appeared on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, so word is getting out and Americans are starting to think the issue through. And therein lays the book’s greatest accomplishment. Written in highly accessible prose, it may not give us all the answers, but it certainly gets us asking the right questions. And that’s at least half the battle.

[US was thoroughly militarized, “wired for war,” in 2009? Are we any less in 2020?

2 RECENT ARTICLES LOOKING BACK

A 2016 wide-ranging study forwarded by the UN.

A 2012 study of the Obama admin. reminding us that US drone terrorism is bipartisan. In brutal imperialist domination the US has One Party. --D
By: Mark Leon Goldberg on January 22, 2016

Drone strikes are an increasingly common feature of modern warfare; and there have been numerous discussions in the academic literature and beyond about the effectiveness of drones strikes, the morality of the policy, and the larger implications of the United States' growing reliance on drone strikes as part of a broader counter-terrorism strategy.

But for all this debate, there has been very little research into the psychology that surrounds drone strikes. Now, two academics out of George Washington University are compiling some exceedingly interesting and politically relevant research into the psychological forces that are shaping America’s drone policy.

Julia McDonald and Jacqueline Schneider recently published a fascinating paper in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* that examines the relationship between a president's tolerance for risk and his (or possibly her) preference for using drones. They are also in the midst of research into why soldiers in combat prefer, or not, manned vs unmanned air support; and the conditions under which the general American public is more or less likely to support drone strikes.

It’s cutting edge and cross disciplinary research and just fascinating stuff. On the line with me to discuss this research and its broader implications is the co-author of these studies, Jacqueline Schneider, a Ph.D candidate in residence at the Institute for Conflict and Security Studies at George Washington University. Enjoy!

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New Stanford/NYU study documents the civilian terror from Obama's drones

Glenn Greenwald

New research shows the terrorizing impact of drones in Pakistan, false statements from US officials, and how it increases the terror threat

Glenn Greenwald: "A one-day attack on US soil eleven years ago unleashed a never-ending campaign of violence around the world from the target and its allies." Photograph: Massoud Hossaini/AFP/Getty

Tuesday 25 September 2012

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

Avitally important and thoroughly documented new report on the impact of Obama's drone campaign has just been released by researchers at NYU School of Law and Stanford University Law School. Entitled "Living Under Drones: Death, Injury and
Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan", the report details the terrorizing effects of Obama's drone assaults as well as the numerous, highly misleading public statements from administration officials about that campaign. The study's purpose was to conduct an "independent investigations into whether, and to what extent, drone strikes in Pakistan conformed to international law and caused harm and/or injury to civilians".

DRONE NEWSLETTERS

Contents of Drone/Assassination Newsletter #22, March 25, 2018


Newspaper Reports on the 188th ANG USAF Drone Base at Ft. Smith

2016 NADG Newspaper Report  Read by Dick Bennett

2018 New Operations Construction Begins

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Veterans for Peace

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Drone Organizers Bulletin

Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare

World Beyond War

The Nuclear Resister

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Cohn, Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues

FILMS
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https://www.interfaithdronenetwork.org/

INDIVIDUAL PROTESTERS: WHISTLEBLOWER

Cian Westmoreland

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END US DRONE/ASSASSINATION WAR OF TERROR NEWSLETTER #23

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