



VETERANS FOR PEACE
HUMBOLDT BAY
CHAPTER 56

THE FOGHORN

NOVEMBER
2015

“Cutting Through the Fog of War”

Leaked Documents: Vast Majority of Those Killed in US Drone Strikes not Intended Target

*By Niles Williamson
17 October 2015*

Secret US government documents published by The Intercept have shed new light on the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the American government's international drone murder operation.

The documents, a series of secret Pentagon briefing slides and internal reports outlining details of their drone killing programs in Africa and the Middle East, were leaked to The Intercept by an anonymous source within the intelligence community who has worked on drone killing operations.

Under the guise of the “war on terror” that began in 2001, two separate but parallel drone assassination operations, one overseen by the Pentagon and the other by the CIA, have been developed to carry out regular drone strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and Iraq. These operations have now been extended to Syria.

One selection of documents given to The Intercept provides a summary of a military campaign in Afghanistan, codenamed Operation Haymaker, carried out in Kunar and Nuristan provinces between January 2012 and February 2013 that highlights the chaos and death produced by drone assassination attempts.

The internal documents reveal that during a five-month period, ninety percent of those people killed by drone strikes in the operation were not direct targets. Out of the 235 people killed in Operation Haymaker only 35 were direct targets; the other 200 were bystanders. The operation had targeted not only alleged members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban for death, but also members of local Salafist militia groups that were actively resisting the US occupation.

The number of civilians and other unintended targets killed in drone strikes over the last decade has not impacted the rapid growth of the bureaucratic mechanisms used to target and kill. Over the next four years, the military is planning to expand its drone capability by 50 percent.

The latest leaks about the American drone program also reveal the disturbingly sanitized jargon that government officials use when engaged in plotting assassinations.

The documents refer to a person who has been marked for assassination as an “objective”; in many of the documents this is abbreviated to simply “obj.” The process of hunting down an individual who has been targeted for death is denoted as “find, fix, finish.” The act of murder by drone is referred to as a “kinetic action” or “targeted killing.”

One of the slides provides an overview of the “kill chain” process that is used for approving targeted individuals for death. The process involves two distinct steps, moving from “developing a target” to the “authorization of a target.”

After President Obama gives his assent, an authorized target is moved into a “targeting cycle,” a two-month period in which the military has the authority kill them. Once the military feels they have a fix on their target, they move to the final step, “actioning,” i.e. murder.

When a drone missile is fired and kills its intended target, this is declared to be a “jackpot.” A drone strike that successfully destroys a cell phone sim card that was used to locate and target suspects is referred to as “touchdown.”

....continued on next page



...continued from previous page

If a missile is fired and it does not kill its intended target but instead kills other people, these are reported as “EKIA,” enemies killed in action. Military-aged men killed in drone strikes are routinely declared by the US military to have been an “enemy.”

Detailed dossiers known as “baseball cards” are drawn up by the US military on targeted individuals with information on their location, day-to-day activity, and any connections to other people that have been targeted for death.

While the first drone missile assassination took place in 2002 under the administration of President George W. Bush, it was only after President Barack Obama took office that the use of drones for killing those designated as terrorists and enemies of the United States was dramatically expanded.

According to a conservative estimate by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, nearly 2,500 people, including at least 314 civilians, have been killed in drone strikes outside the declared war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan since Obama took office in 2009.

Due to the secretive nature of the drone program, along with its use in Iraq and Afghanistan, the actual total number of people killed is certainly much higher. By September 2010, the list of people in Afghanistan targeted to be killed or captured had grown to 744.

Glenn Carle, a former senior CIA officer in the clandestine services, defended the drone program in an interview with The Intercept, stating, “The Obama administration has been quite ruthless in its pursuit of terrorists. If there are people who we, in our best efforts, assess to be trying to kill us, we can make their life as short as possible. And we do it.”

Speaking to The Intercept, the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, made clear that the entire focus under Obama has been and will continue to be on assassination. “The drone campaign right now really is only about killing. When you hear the phrase ‘capture/kill,’ capture is actually a misnomer. In the drone strategy that we have, ‘capture’ is a lower case ‘c.’ We don’t capture people anymore,” Flynn said.

The Narrative That we’re Leaving Afghanistan is Self-defeating

By: Andrew J. Bacevich

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced last week, in justifying the latest course change in U.S. policy toward that country. “We’re not, we can’t, and to do so would not be to take advantage of the success we’ve had to date.”

Set aside the Defense secretary’s dubious reference to the “success” that the United States has achieved in Afghanistan since our intervention there began 14 years ago. The real question is what Carter means when he says the U.S. “can’t” leave.

Members of the national security establishment ... have a common interest in diverting attention from just how badly they have screwed up.

The U.S. is a great power, priding itself in particular on its putative preeminence in the military realm. Power enables a nation to act or to refrain from acting as its interests and its values may require. As Thucydides famously put it, “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” In short, power confers — or should confer — choice.

Americans should wonder how it is that the United States today acts from an absence of choice, as Carter acknowledges in his revealing remark. Why is it that we “can’t” leave?

Answering that question requires appreciating the fix in which the United States finds itself, not only in Afghanistan but also in Iraq, where a war once said to have ended has resumed with a vengeance. In both countries, U.S. military policy has met with profound failure. After overthrowing the established order, U.S. forces attempted in each to restore stability while vowing to create a flourishing new order advertised as both humane and democratic. Yet in Afghanistan and Iraq alike, despite vast expenditures and very considerable sacrifice, those efforts never came close to fruition, even as they exhausted the willingness of the American people to do more.

Even today, however, few in Washington will own up to the magnitude and implications of those twin failures. The fact that senior officials from both parties, along with a succession of high-ranking military officers, share in responsibility for the various misjudgments and miscalculations made along the way helps to sustain an atmosphere of collective denial. Members of the national security establishment to which Carter belongs — he is the fifth Defense secretary to have presided over these ongoing conflicts — have a common interest in diverting attention from just how badly they have screwed up.

So the decision to retain 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan beyond the Obama administration’s previously announced deadline for withdrawal qualifies less as a noteworthy shift in policy than as an attempt to conceal the utter absence of any policy worthy of the name. Does anyone seriously think that what President Obama describes as a “modest but meaningful extension of our presence” will bring hostilities in Afghanistan to a favorable conclusion, when years of effort by a much larger contingent could not accomplish that goal?

What we have here is temporizing dressed up in policy drag. It is a gesture designed to convey an appearance of purposefulness to
...continued on next page



...continued from previous page

an enterprise whose actual purpose has long since vanished in the mists of time.

Having inherited from his predecessor two wars begun in 2001 and 2003, respectively, Obama will bequeath those same two wars to the person who will succeed him as president in 2017. It is incumbent upon Americans to contemplate the implications of this disturbing fact. By their very endlessness, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq constitute a judgment on American statecraft, one further compounded by the chaos now enveloping large swaths of the Islamic world. Here are the consequences that stem from misunderstanding military power and misusing a military instrument once deemed unstoppable.

Only by owning up to the mindless failure of U.S. military efforts since 9/11 does it become possible to restore real choice. Alternatives to open-ended war waged on the other side of the globe do exist. Contrary to Carter's lame insistence, the United States can leave Afghanistan. Protecting Americans from the relatively modest threat posed by the Taliban or Al Qaeda or Islamic State — or all three combined for that matter — does not require the permanent stationing of U.S. forces in the Islamic world, especially given the evidence that the presence of American troops there serves less to pacify than to provoke.

In the end, it comes down to interests and values. The primary U.S. interest at stake is self-defense, which in this instance can be best achieved by erecting effective barriers against terrorism here at home. And should our values dictate that we attempt to alleviate the suffering of Afghans (and Iraqis), then honesty requires an admission that our efforts have succeeded only in making matters worse. When it comes to philanthropy, military might tends to be of negligible utility.

Carter is dead wrong. What's self-defeating is the fraudulent narrative of no choice that he insists on perpetuating.

Andrew J. Bacevich is the author, most recently, of "America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History," to be published in the spring.

Agent Orange Coordinator

Paul Cox, paulcox890@comcast.net

Visit the project website

Mission

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign is an initiative of U.S. veterans, Vietnamese Americans, and all concerned about peace and justice. We insist our government honor its moral and legal responsibility to provide as-

sistance to all AO victims--Vietnamese, U.S. veterans and our children, and others—and to the mitigate the environmental damage in Vietnam.

VFP's Work

Veterans For Peace has adopted the Campaign as a national project, and provides fiscal sponsorship for the campaign in support of justice for Agent Orange victims. The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign was formed on February 28, 2005, and Veterans For Peace members are participants in this coalition of U.S. veterans, Vietnamese Americans, and other activists.

Background and History

The U.S. government used 15 different herbicides, collectively known as Agent Orange, from 1962 to 1971, as part of its war in Vietnam to deny the enemy forces jungle cover and to destroy crops to drive the peasantry into refugee camps or cities. Agent Orange contained a contaminant, dioxin, one of the deadliest substances known, that continues to kill and sicken and estimated three million Vietnamese and many U.S. veterans of the Vietnam War. Some children of exposed U.S. veterans, Vietnamese, and Vietnamese Americans have been born with birth defects due to their parents' exposures. Moreover, even several decades after the war, Agent Orange remains in the land and water of Vietnam, causing illness within the Vietnamese population and sometimes horrific birth defects to several generations of children.

Initially, the Campaign supported the Vietnamese Agent Orange survivors, represented by the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin in their class-action lawsuit against the U.S. chemical companies.

....continued on next page

Next VFP56 meeting will be held
on Thursday, November 5th at
7:00 PM.
Meeting will be held at 24 Uni-
tarian Fellowship Way, Bayside,
Jacoby Creek Road. Veterans and
non-veterans are more than wel-
come to come and help us dialogue
about what we together can do to
bring about peace in this complex
world.



...continued from previous page

by Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange to achieve compensation from the manufacturers who profited from this chemical warfare. However, the lawsuit was dismissed by the federal court and, after appeals, the US Supreme Court in 2009 refused to reinstate it, effectively ending any chance that either Vietnamese or U.S. veterans and affected offspring will ever achieve justice through U.S. courts.

Subsequently, the Campaign shifted its focus to legislation in 2011. We helped draft and worked for passage of legislation to assist U.S. and Vietnamese victims. The third version of bill is H.R. 2114, Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015, introduced April 30, 2015, by Congresswoman Barbara Lee. We are currently working to get cosponsors for the bill, and urge anyone interested in this effort to call on us.

We call upon our government to meet its responsibility to assist the more than three million Vietnamese people suffering from the effects of Agent Orange, and the hundreds of thousands of U.S. veterans and our affected children. The U.S. government has a moral and legal obligation to heal the wounds of its wars; mitigation of the effects of Agent Orange is but one of those obligations.

Veterans Peace Team Statement of Purpose

People of color, immigrants, and working-class communities in the United States of America have long been on the receiving end of police brutality. The violence of the system, however, can and will target anyone who stands up for justice and opposes the exploitation of the 99 percent by the 1 percent.

The Veterans For Peace Statement of Purpose states that we pledge to work for the elimination of war—the ultimate violence. As veterans of conscience, we are compelled to take a stand against police violence toward the national Occupy movement and others seeking a more just system.

Veterans Peace Team, a national project of Veterans For Peace, will be made available as we can to Occupy and other protest sites where the local general assemblies or decision-making bodies request our participation.

These Veterans Peace Teams will act as an unarmed, non-violent presence standing with peaceful protesters, taking a front line if necessary, nonviolently confronting, documenting, and opposing any and all use of force by police, national guard, regular military, or private contractors against peace-

ful protesters exercising their right to assemble and seek redress of grievances.

As veterans with non-veteran citizen allies standing in solidarity with us, we implore individual officers, police agencies, elected officials, and government agencies to use restraint, negotiation, and common sense when dealing with peaceful protesters.

We realize that those employed in law enforcement are part of the 99 percent, and we call upon all police personnel not to be a domestic front line force for the 1 percent, but rather to honor and perform their duty to serve and protect the people.

The Veterans Peace Team mission as veterans and allies is to nonviolently confront, document, and thereby expose the inherent or actual violence of those institutions that use force to impose their will on others.

Four Hospitals Bombed Since Russian Airstrikes Began, Doctors Say

Latest attack on Idlib hospital left at least 12 people dead and comes less than two weeks after a US attack on Kunduz hospital, Afghanistan

At least four hospitals have been bombed by fighter jets in north-western Syria since Russia's intervention in the war began in late September, doctors and international observers claim.

The latest attack, on Tuesday, killed at least 12 people at Sarmin hospital in Idlib province. At least three of the victims were believed to be medical staff. Survivors and witnesses said the hospital was hit by two airstrikes at about 1pm.

Dr Mohamed Tennari, director of Sarmin hospital, said the facility appeared to have been directly targeted and could no longer serve patients on one of the fiercest frontlines in the war.



...continued on next page

...continued from previous page

He said the hospital had been the target of at least 10 other airstrikes earlier in the conflict. Throughout the war, international medical organisations have repeatedly claimed that medical facilities in opposition areas have been systematically targeted.

Physicians for Human Rights said it had documented 313 attacks on medical facilities and the deaths of 679 medical personnel in Syria since protests against the regime of Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011 until the end of August 2015. "Syrian government forces have been responsible for more than 90% of these attacks," the organisation said. "Each of which constitutes a war crime."

The latest attack comes less than two weeks after a US attack on a hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, which killed at least 22 people – 12 of them medical professionals and the rest patients. That attack was widely condemned and has forced an apology from senior US officials, as well as several international investigations.

Kunduz hospital attack: how a US military 'mistake' left 22 dead

Khaled Almilaji, the country director of Medical Relief in Syria, said: "The whole world has to be just as angry as they were with what happened in Afghanistan. Their anger must not just be directed at Bashar, who has been inhuman with us, but also at the Russians, who are just as bad, but more accurate in their targeting."

Since early October, Russia has closed the airspace over north-western Syria as its air force has embarked on an extensive campaign to target the armed opposition to the Syrian leader. Airstrikes have been especially intense around Hama and Idlib, where some US- and Gulf-backed groups had been making gains against Syrian forces in recent months.

Russia's claims that its attacks have targeted Isis have been at odds with evidence on the ground in areas that have been heavily bombed but have no Isis presence.

Who backs whom in the Syrian conflict

Video shot during the attack shows massive explosions, then dust clouds and screams. "Until now, 12 people have been killed," said Dr Tennari, adding that another 20 had been injured. Among the dead were two hospital staff, who he named

as physiotherapist Hassan Taj al Deen and a security guard Khaldoun Abu Din, both in their 20s.

In mid-March Sarmin hospital was the lead treatment centre in the aftermath of a massive chlorine attack. At the time Syrian regime helicopters dropped barrel bombs filled with chlorine, which left six dead and 50 injured and prompted further claims that Damascus had continued to use banned chemicals as instruments of war. Last month the hospital treated between 5,000-7,000 patients and undertook 100 surgeries, Tennari said.

"I think it was Russian," he said. "When we were targeted by the Syrian regime airstrikes, it was different from this time."

The head of the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organisations, Zedoun al-Zoubi, said Sarmin was one of three medical facilities targeted in the past week. The other two allegedly hit al-Harb and al-Eis clinics in Aleppo province. This month, a field clinic in Kfar Zeita in Idlib and another in Latamneh were also reportedly hit.

Physicians for Human Rights said Hraytan hospital in northern Aleppo had also been hit by Russian jets on 13 October. "Missiles landed directly outside the hospital's entrance and on nearby buildings, damaging the hospital and injuring three civilians," it said. "Syrian government forces previously attacked this hospital on September 1."

"In the last three four weeks the airstrikes have become very accurate, very precise and very intense," he said. "(In the past) four weeks we know the situation has become really horrible and the number of displaced people are far more than before and we are talking about people who are used to war."

The director of programmes at Physicians for Human Rights, Widney Brown, said Russia was following in the footsteps of the Assad regime. "These attacks are inexcusable. Claiming that the fight is against terrorists does not give any government the right to tear up the laws of war, which specifically protect health workers and facilities. With these actions, Russia is damaging hospitals, putting patients and medical staff at risk, and depriving civilians of life-saving access to healthcare."



2015 STAND-DOWN

The Humboldt County 2015 Stand-Down was held in Ferndale on October 2nd through 4th. VFP56 members Peter Aronson, Rob Hepburn, Dave Goggins and Jim Sorter represented VFP56 chapter. Free dental, medical, haircuts, massages, and many more services were offered to our county homeless vets. Everyone participating in the event praised the efforts of the organizers in offering such quality services to our needy veterans.



Jim Sorter and Peter Aronson talking to a military vet at Stand Down

DRONES

The following is obtained from the Veterans For Peace Nat'l website. It was collated by Peter Aronson, Co-Chair of DU/WMD Committee of Chapter 56. Here's the link: <http://www.veteransforpeace.org/our-work/join-working-group/drones-robots-and-future-weapons-working-group/>

It is the plan of our governments, the military, and industry, to use drones and robots as weapons of choice as well as tools for increased domestic surveillance.

The number of drones being designed, manufactured*, and purchased increases the number of installations and, potentially, the fatalities and injuries of the innocent. As the government pursues its plans to fully open US airspace to drone traffic, these stealth weapons, undetectable by design, will also compromise the safety of those in private and commercial planes.

Under the Obama administration, the use of drones as weapons has increased dramatically, with serious legal, moral, and philosophical implications.

Surveillance drones, which could become weaponized, create

concern for our privacy and freedoms when deployed in US airspace.

The Veterans for Peace working group on drones has been established to:

- Become knowledgeable about drones and related weapons.
- Educate ourselves and the public about the issues created by the use of drones and robots as weapons and surveillance tools. We can do this through publications, press releases, vigils, marches and direct actions at home and abroad.
- End the development, production and use of these weapons through coordinated efforts with other like-minded groups and individuals by conducting actions at drone facilities, research sites, and drone manufacturers.
- End targeted assassinations.
- Defend our right to privacy and freedom by banning information-gathering of citizens and others, by drones, and advanced surveillance systems.

....continued on next page



...continued from previous page

* General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), an affiliate of General Atomics, provides unmanned aerial vehicles and radar solutions for the U.S. military and commercial applications worldwide. General Atomics is a defense contractor headquartered in San Diego, California specializing in nuclear physics. The General Atomics MQ-1 Predator is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) built by General Atomics and used primarily by the United States Air Force (USAF) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Websites

1. www.knowdrones.org. This is one of the most comprehensive anti-drone sites available. Contains a lot of great information and resources.
2. www.droneswatch.org. Another excellent website for anti-drone activists, this website is monitored by Code Pink, which has been a lead organization for anti-drone work.
3. www.livingunderdrones.org. This website supports and expands on the “Living Under Drones” report and research done by Stanford and NYU.
4. www.banweaponizeddrones.org. Relatively new website devoted to the abolishment of weaponized drones.
5. www.hrw.org. Human Rights Watch-working with Amnesty International on drones reports.
6. www.nodronesnetwork.blogspot.com

Books & Publications

1. Drone Warfare, Killing by Remote Control, by Medea Benjamin
2. Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues, Edited by Marjorie Cohn
3. Drones and Targeted Killings—Ethics, Law and Politics, by Sarah Knuckey
4. “Living Under Drones,” report by Stanford and New York Universities, available on-line at: www.livingunderdrones.org
5. Will I be Next? Comprehensive drone report by Amnesty International www.amnestyusa.org

Videos and Films

1. 7-minute video describing highlights of the “Living Under Drones” report, produced by Brave New Films <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yMOzvmgVhc>
2. Datta Khel Signature Strike Investigation, produced by Brave New Films http://www.bravenewfoundation.org/datta_khel_signature_strike_investigation

3. 4-minute video with Pakistani drone survivors, produced by Vocativ <http://voc.tv/19xBfSu>

4. Know Drones “Education Series” interviews, www.knowdrones.com

5. “Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars,” www.unmanned.warcosts.com. Full length documentary by Brave New Films, available to show for free.

6. “Wounds of Waziristan,” www.woundsofwaziristan.com. A short documentary by Madiha Tahir.

7. Powerful Anti-Drone Documentary on SHUTDOWNCREECH: 25 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enRbp51pVSI>
Drones Working Group Update

VFP members all over the country (and the UK!) have been heavily involved in anti-drone activities for some time now, and the working group will attempt to better coordinate and publicize the work that is being done.

If you would like to be a part of the Drones Working Group, or if you are doing anti-drone work that you want us to know about, please contact Leah Bolger (leahbolger@comcast.net) who has recently taken the reins as the chair of the Drones WG.

Thanks to Leah Bolger for her great work !
PA.

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Bill Gates, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.





**Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56**

Phone 707-826-7124
Email: VFP56@aol.com
WE'RE ON THE WEB:
<http://www.vfp56.org>

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**Rob Hepburn, Steve Stamnes
Steve Sottong, Jim Sorter,
John Schaefer, Peter Aronson,
Ernie Behm**

**EDITOR OF FOGHORN
Jim Sorter**

STANDING COMMITTEES

**DU/WMD: Peter Aronson, Rich Gilchrist
General Store: Ernie Behm
FEM: Mashaw McGuinnis
VEOP: Carl Stancil, Jon Reisdorf
VSC: Ernie Behm, John Mulloy**

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to turtldncer@aol.com, in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.



877-447-4487

**GIs —
Know
Your
Rights
FROM OVERSEAS
202-483-2220**

The GI Rights Hotline

girightshotline.org girights@girightshotline.org

Discharges/DEP/Hazing/Discrimination/Gay

**Call for information from a network of nonprofit
non-governmental organizations.**

The service is free. The call is confidential.

**You have the right to keep one copy of this or any other
information at any time (DOD Directive 1325.6).**

Veterans For Peace
Chapter 56
P.O. Box 532
Bayside, CA
95524