Shooting Ourselves in the Foot: The Case for Ending Yemen Drone Strikes

By Vance Trefethen

OBSERVATION 1.Our DEFINITIONS 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY: the policies of the Status Quo. 3

FACT 1. Current US policies toward Yemen: Supporting the Yemeni government in its fight against terrorism, and drone strikes against suspected terrorist targets. 3

FACT 2. The Yemen Parliament begs us to stop, and we escalate instead. Despite their request, the CIA escalates drone strikes even blowing up people when we’re not sure who they are 3

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS 4

HARM 1. Innocent civilians killed 4

HARM 2. Recruits Terrorists. Collateral damage generates 40 to 60 new enemies for every bad guy killed 4

HARM 3. Blocks cooperation. We see this in 2 sub-points 4

A. The Link: Drones reduce foreign cooperation with the US against terrorism 4

B. The Impact: Yemen’s cooperation is key to the American fight against terrorism 4

HARM 4. We blow up our friends. Some drone strikes kill allies and friends in the fight against Al Qaeda 5

OBSERVATION 4. The PLAN, to be implemented by Congress and the President 5

OBSERVATION 5. The ADVANTAGES. 5

ADVANTAGE 1. Uphold democracy. We respect the sovereignty and democratic will of the Yemeni people 5

ADVANTAGE 2. Winning hearts & minds. We turn the negative perception of America among the Yemeni people and stop motivating them to support Al Qaeda 6

2A Evidence: END YEMEN DRONE STRIKES 7

OPENING QUOTES 7

Wrong place at the wrong time: You Die 7

TOPICALITY / DEFINITIONS 7

Definition of Middle East 7

INHERENCY 8

Obama escalates drone use in several countries, including Yemen 8

98 US drone strikes in Yemen since 2002 8

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 8

Yemen is particularly vulnerable to civilian deaths from drone strikes because of the lack of reliable targeting intelligence on the ground 8

Innocent civilian deaths from drone strikes help Al Qaeda recruiting by fueling anti-American anger 8

Drones undermine the legitimacy of US-supported governments. That’s bad because it contradicts our counterterrorism policy of strengthening governments helping us against terrorism 9

US drone strikes discredit the Hadi government 9

Drones aren’t accurate enough to correctly identify individuals targeted – innocent civilians get killed 9

Because CIA is untrained and unqualified to carry out military missions, drones have high civilian casualty rate. 10

Yemen drone campaign has increased Al Qaeda strength 10

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 10

Advocacy: Yemen’s National Dialogue Conference (a constitutional convention of representatives from all over Yemen) 10

“President of Yemen approves US drone strikes” – Response: It’s still wrong, and he’s opposing the consensus of the Yemeni people 10

Drones in Yemen are harming our security and political goals 11

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 11

“Terrorism / insecurity in Yemen” – Response: Current policy isn’t working, terrorism is increasing, security situation is getting worse 11

“Terrorism/insecurity in Yemen” – Response: No US foreign policy can “fix” Yemen. All our efforts will make things worse 11

“Drones fight terrorism!” –Response: Better to arrest terrorists than kill them - you get more intelligence information that way 12

“Don’t have to send someone into harm’s way” - Response: That’s bad because drones remove political barriers to war by removing political consequences 12

“We’re assassinating terrorist leaders” - Response: No evidence that assassinations are effective counter-terrorism strategy 12

“Need drones to kill terrorists” - Response: Drones kill civilians along with terrorists, creating a powerful recruiting opportunity among the angry survivors. 13

“Need drones to fight terrorists” - Response: Drone strikes increase anti-American extremism 13

“Need drones to fight terrorists” - Response: Terrorists regroup quickly after a leader is killed, and the resources devoted to drones distract us from larger problems we should be working on 13

Drone attacks are a counterproductive strategy against extremists 14

“Fighting terrorists” – Response: US security cooperation is used by the Yemeni government to carry out vendetta retaliation against groups trying to expose corruption 14

A former Yemen exchange student who studied in America and deeply respects our country said it best in 2013 QUOTE:  "If America is providing economic, social and humanitarian assistance to Yemen, the vast majority of the Yemeni people know nothing about it. Everyone in Yemen, however, knows about America and its drones."[[1]](#footnote-1) END QUOTE. Today we’ll show you why that’s bad and ask you to join us, as we affirm that The United States should significantly reform its policy toward one or more countries in the Middle East.

OBSERVATION 1.Our DEFINITIONS

**Significant**: “large enough to be noticed or have an effect” *(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant)*)*

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body”*(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657)*)*

**“Countries in the Middle East”** is defined as the countries listed under “Middle East” on the CIA World Factbook page, which we’ll make available on request. Yemen is on the list, and that’s what our plan is about.

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY: the policies of the Status Quo.

FACT 1. Current US policies toward Yemen: Supporting the Yemeni government in its fight against terrorism, and drone strikes against suspected terrorist targets.

NEW YORK TIMES 2014. (journalist Helene Cooper) 10 May 2014 In Yemen, a Counterterrorism Challenge <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/world/middleeast/in-yemen-a-counterterrorism-challenge.html?_r=0>

Mr. Saleh was eventually removed from power, and the Obama administration voiced confidence in his successor and increased aid to the country. Worries that a new president would prove less willing to cooperate with American counterterrorism efforts in the country faded as Mr. Hadi continued the previous government’s policies. This year alone, the United States has carried out 11 airstrikes in Yemen, according to [The Long War Journal](http://www.longwarjournal.org/), a website that tracks drone strikes.

FACT 2. The Yemen Parliament begs us to stop, and we escalate instead. Despite their request, the CIA escalates drone strikes even blowing up people when we’re not sure who they are

Robert Sharp 2014. (associate professor on the faculty of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies; retired British Army Colonel) Revisiting the Use of Drones in Yemen 12 Jan 2014 INTERNATIONAL POLICY DIGEST <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2014/01/12/revisiting-use-drones-yemen/>

In other developments: on December 15th, [Yemen’s Parliament](http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/15/world/meast/yemen-drones/) called for an end to drone strikes, then two weeks later on December 27th a U.S. drone was [launched against suspected militants](http://nationalyemen.com/2013/12/30/the-us-drone-ignores-yemen-parliament-calls/) in Shabam, Hadhramout. To explain why the attack occurred despite the Yemeni Parliamentary statement, we should recal that the CIA had [requested permission](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-seeks-new-authority-to-expand-yemen-drone-campaign/2012/04/18/gIQAsaumRT_story.html) from President Obama in April 2012 to extend its covert drone attacks in Yemen and widen the attack aperture “even if it does not know the identities of those who could be killed.” Permission was granted. The CIA can attack patterns of suspicious behavior, like groups assembling etc. Maybe a change of policy is now needed?

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS

HARM 1. Innocent civilians killed

Conor Friedersdorf (journalist) quoting Farea al-Muslimi (Yemen citizen, former exchange student in the US) 2013. 24 Apr 2013 THE ATLANTIC, “This Yemeni Man Loves America, Hates al-Qaeda, and Says Drone Strikes Make Them Stronger” <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/04/this-yemeni-man-loves-america-hates-al-qaeda-and-says-drone-strikes-make-them-stronger/275248/>

"I have met with dozens of civilians who were injured during drone strikes and other air attacks," al-Muslimi states. "I have met with relatives of people who were killed as well as numerous eyewitnesses. They have told me how these air strikes have changed their lives for the worst." On one occasion, he met a man who described how "he stood helplessly as his 4-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter died in his arms on the way to the hospital." The man's house was targeted by mistake. He reported on another strike that killed 40 civilians and spoke to a 12-year-old boy who cried while describing being afraid of the drones buzzing overhead every night.

HARM 2. Recruits Terrorists. Collateral damage generates 40 to 60 new enemies for every bad guy killed

Nabeel Khoury 2013. (former US State Department Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Yemen) 23 Oct 2013 IN YEMEN, DRONES AREN’T A POLICY, CAIRO REVIEW OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS <http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=443> (brackets added)

Despite the renewed focus on aid, U.S. Policy in Yemen still reflects ambivalence, uncertainty and conflicting goals. The global war on terror sill trumps the prioritization needed for assisting the democratic transition underway. Drone strikes take out a few bad guys to be sure, but they also kill a large number of innocent civilians. Given Yemen’s tribal structure, the U.S. generates roughly forty to sixty new enemies for every AQAP [Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula] operative killed by drones.

HARM 3. Blocks cooperation. We see this in 2 sub-points

A. The Link: Drones reduce foreign cooperation with the US against terrorism

Danny Shea quoting Michael Boyle 2013. (Shea is a journalist. Boyle is former counterterrorism advisor to Obama) 15 Jan 2013 “Michael Boyle: 'Visceral Hatred' Of Drones Undermines U.S. Foreign Policy In Long Term (VIDEO) <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/michael-boyle-visceral-ha_n_2480590.html>

Former Obama counterterrorism advisor Michael Boyle joined HuffPost Live Monday to discuss the negative impacts the United States' use of drones may have on its long-term foreign policy. Boyle, who worked in Obama's counterterrorism group during the 2008 campaign, backed up retired General Stanley McChrystal's recent comments that the world hates drones on a "visceral level" and that the use of drones perpetuates a "perception of American arrogance." "Visceral hatred has a political consequence, and the political consequence is that over time it will make it harder for those governments to say yes to the United States," Boyle told HuffPost Live host Ahmed Shihab-Eldin. "Our longer-term counter-terrorism cooperation with Yemen and Pakistan is an extraordinarily important thing. Those governments face domestic political costs. And if it is stirring visceral hatred, and it gets to the point where those governments can't say yes, that's a problem for us over the longer term."

B. The Impact: Yemen’s cooperation is key to the American fight against terrorism

NEW YORK TIMES 2014. (journalist Helene Cooper) 10 May 2014 In Yemen, a Counterterrorism Challenge <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/world/middleeast/in-yemen-a-counterterrorism-challenge.html?_r=0>

 After years of a tortuous relationship with Ali Abdullah Saleh, the strongman who was president of Yemen for more than two decades, Obama administration officials hoped to bolster the credibility at home of Mr. Saleh’s successor, Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, seen as critical to the American fight against Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. But the administration continues to have trouble with those efforts. Now, the news that a United States Special Operations commando and a Central Intelligence Agency officer [shot and killed](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/10/world/middleeast/us-officers-kill-armed-civilians-in-yemen-capital.html) two armed Yemeni civilians who tried to kidnap them has put Mr. Hadi and his government, which has been cooperating with American counterterrorism efforts in Yemen, in the center of a storm of resentment among Yemenis who have complained about [their government’s collaboration](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/world/middleeast/yemens-leader-president-hadi-praises-us-drone-strikes.html) with American drone strikes. The issue is important because Yemen has increasingly become the heart of the American fight against terrorism.

HARM 4. We blow up our friends. Some drone strikes kill allies and friends in the fight against Al Qaeda

Hooria Mashhour 2014. (Yemen government’s minister for human rights) WASHINGTON POST 14 Jan 2014 “Hooria Mashhour: The United States’ bloody messes in Yemen” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hooria-mashhour-the-united-states-bloody-messes-in-yemen/2014/01/14/c21dfcec-7653-11e3-b1c5-739e63e9c9a7_story.html>

In November, [Yemeni civil engineer Faisal bin Ali Jaber traveled over 7,000 miles to the U.S. in search of answers](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/23/world/middleeast/a-yemenis-long-trip-to-seek-answers-about-a-drone-strike.html?_r=2&). He met congressmen, senators, and even some White House officials to tell them how U.S. missiles incinerated his nephew and brother-in-law at his son’s wedding last year. In that strike,[the U.S. killed two potential allies](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/06/201365122319329623.html) – one an imam who regularly preached against al-Qaeda; the other one of the town’s few policemen. Jaber received heartfelt condolences from many lawmakers. Yet no official was prepared to explain why his relatives were killed, or why the U.S. administration would not acknowledge its mistake.

OBSERVATION 4. The PLAN, to be implemented by Congress and the President

1. No more US drone strikes in Yemen.  
2. Enforcement through the military and the CIA through normal means.  
3. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.

4. Funding within existing budgets of existing agencies.  
5. Affirmative speeches may clarify the Plan as needed.  
Now let’s see why this is the right policy in…

OBSERVATION 5. The ADVANTAGES.

ADVANTAGE 1. Uphold democracy. We respect the sovereignty and democratic will of the Yemeni people

Hooria Mashhour 2014. (Yemen government’s minister for human rights) WASHINGTON POST 14 Jan 2014 “Hooria Mashhour: The United States’ bloody messes in Yemen” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hooria-mashhour-the-united-states-bloody-messes-in-yemen/2014/01/14/c21dfcec-7653-11e3-b1c5-739e63e9c9a7_story.html>

Yemeni legislators are aware that the drone war is deeply unpopular. Since the Dec,. 12 strike, our parliament has unanimously voted to ban drone flights in Yemeni airspace, declaring them a “grave breach” of the country’s sovereignty. For a country so often divided, this unanimity from Yemen’s most representative bodies testifies to the strength of opinion against drones. But their calls have thus far met only with more bombings from the skies. How can the people of Yemen build trust in their fledgling democracy when our collective will is ignored by democracy’s greatest exponent?

ADVANTAGE 2. Winning hearts & minds. We turn the negative perception of America among the Yemeni people and stop motivating them to support Al Qaeda

Conor Friedersdorf (journalist) quoting Farea al-Muslimi (Yemen citizen, former exchange student in the US) 2013. 24 Apr 2013 THE ATLANTIC, “This Yemeni Man Loves America, Hates al-Qaeda, and Says Drone Strikes Make Them Stronger” <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/04/this-yemeni-man-loves-america-hates-al-qaeda-and-says-drone-strikes-make-them-stronger/275248/> (brackets added)

"My stories about my experiences in America, my American friends, and the American values that I saw for myself helped the villagers I talked to understand the America that I know and love. Now, however, when they think of America they think of the terror they feel from the drones that hover over their heads ready to fire missiles at any time. I personally don't even know if it is safe for me to go back to Wessab because I am someone who people in my village associate with America and its values." What American policymakers need to understand, he added, is that "Wessab first experienced America through the terror of a drone strike. What radicals had previously failed to achieve in my village, one drone strike accomplished in an instant: there is now an intense anger and growing hatred of America." He is understandably conflicted. "I hate AQAP [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula]. I don't support their ideology. I don't like the way they have distorted my religion. And I despise their methods," he said. But "I fear that these air strikes undermine the United States' effort to defeat AQAP and win the hearts and minds of the Yemeni people."

2A Evidence: END YEMEN DRONE STRIKES

OPENING QUOTES

Wrong place at the wrong time: You Die

Vivian Salama 2014. (journalist) 14 Apr 2014 “Death From Above: How American Drone Strikes Are Devastating Yemen” ROLLING STONE <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/death-from-above-how-american-drone-strikes-are-devastating-yemen-20140414#ixzz382IU3jD0>

The people of Yemen can hear destruction before it arrives. In cities, towns and villages across this country, which hangs off the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, the air buzzes with the sound of American drones flying overhead. The sound is a constant and terrible reminder: a robot plane, acting on secret intelligence, may calculate that the man across from you at the coffee shop, or the acquaintance with whom you've shared a passing word on the street, is an Al Qaeda operative. This intelligence may be accurate or it may not, but it doesn't matter. If you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, the chaotic buzzing above sharpens into the death-herald of an incoming missile.

TOPICALITY / DEFINITIONS

Definition of Middle East

Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, accessed on 16 July 2014.(Undated. The main web site for the World Factbook is last updated in 2014) <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/wfbExt/region_mde.html>



INHERENCY

Obama escalates drone use in several countries, including Yemen

Nick Hopkins 2013. (journalist) 7 Jan 2013 US drone attacks 'counter-productive', former Obama security adviser claims <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/07/obama-adviser-criticises-drone-policy>

US use of drones has [soared during Obama's time in office](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), with the White House authorising attacks in at least four countries: [Afghanistan](http://www.theguardian.com/world/afghanistan),[Pakistan](http://www.theguardian.com/world/pakistan), [Yemen](http://www.theguardian.com/world/yemen) and [Somalia](http://www.theguardian.com/world/somalia). It is estimated that the CIA and the [US military](http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-military) have undertaken more than 300 drone strikes and killed about 2,500 people.

98 US drone strikes in Yemen since 2002

Long War Journal 2014. (written by Bill Roggio and Bob Barry) last updated 14 June 2014 “Charting the data for US air strikes in Yemen, 2002 - 2014“ <http://www.longwarjournal.org/multimedia/Yemen/code/Yemen-strike.php>

Since 2002, the US has been conducting a covert program to target and kill al Qaeda commanders based in Yemen. Reports show that strikes have numbered 98 since 2002, with enemy deaths numbering 480 and civilian deaths numbering 105. This page was last updated on Saturday, June 14, 2014, 10:14 pm  GMT. This will be updated when information about prior or new strikes comes to light.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Yemen is particularly vulnerable to civilian deaths from drone strikes because of the lack of reliable targeting intelligence on the ground

Dr. Nabeel Khoury 2014. (former US State Department Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Yemen) Summer 2014 Yemen:In Search of a Coherent U.S. Policy MIDDLE EAST POLICY COUNCIL, <http://mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/yemen-search-coherent-us-policy>

Ironically, in Yemen the same factor that makes the use of drones appealing, from an American security point of view, also taints the intelligence that is a critical part of targeting strikes and verifying results. With no operatives on the ground and with the limited mobility of embassy personnel, the United States is dependent on Yemeni security officials for strike assessments. On at least two occasions, local accounts and investigations by Human Rights Watch have pointed to mistaken targeting and to under-reporting of the number of innocent civilians killed by drone and missile strikes.

Innocent civilian deaths from drone strikes help Al Qaeda recruiting by fueling anti-American anger

Conor Friedersdorf (journalist) quoting Farea al-Muslimi (Yemen citizen, former exchange student in the US) 2013. 24 Apr 2013 THE ATLANTIC, “This Yemeni Man Loves America, Hates al-Qaeda, and Says Drone Strikes Make Them Stronger” <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/04/this-yemeni-man-loves-america-hates-al-qaeda-and-says-drone-strikes-make-them-stronger/275248/> (brackets added)

In al-Muslimi's estimation, "the killing of innocent civilians by U.S. missiles in Yemen is helping to destabilize my country and create an environment from which AQAP [Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula] benefits." They use innocents killed by drone strikes as a recruiting tool and rely on the impression drones create that America is at war with all Yemenis. One little boy, whose father was killed in a drone strike, carries a picture of a plane in his pocket and says he wants revenge against his father's killer, "America." Drone strikes "are the face of America to many Yemenis," he reports.

Drones undermine the legitimacy of US-supported governments. That’s bad because it contradicts our counterterrorism policy of strengthening governments helping us against terrorism

Michael J. Boyle 2013. (former counter-terrorism advisor to Pres. Obama) The costs and consequences of drone warfare, published by Chatham House, the Royal Institute International Affairs <http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/ia/archive/view/188363#sthash.C6NlxUQe.dpuf>

The Obama administration has used drones in active theatres of war, such as Afghanistan, but it has also dramatically increased the number of drone attacks launched by the CIA in other countries, such as Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. The conventional wisdom on drone warfare holds that these weapons are highly effective in killing terrorist operatives and disabling terrorist organizations, while killing fewer civilians than other means of attack. This article argues that much of the existing debate on drones operates with an attenuated notion of effectiveness that discounts the political and strategic dynamics — such as the corrosion of the perceptions of competence and legitimacy of governments where drone strikes take place, growing anti-Americanism and fresh recruitment of militant networks — that reveal the costs of drone warfare. Focusing particularly on drone use in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, the article suggests that the Obama administration's counterterrorism policy operates at cross-purposes because it provides a steady flow of arms and financial resources to build up governments whose legitimacy it systematically undermines by conducting unilateral strikes on their territory.

US drone strikes discredit the Hadi government

CNN 2014. (journalists  Hakim Almasmari, Mohammed Jamjoom and Barbara Starr ) Drone strike in Yemen kills suspected al Qaeda militants 19 Apr 2014 <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/19/world/meast/yemen-drone-strike/>

Only this week, Yemen's Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi said his country could handle the al Qaeda threat alone. "Security is one of the main challenges facing Yemen," al-Qirbi said. Even though more voices have risen within Yemen in opposition to U.S.-led drone strikes, President Abdu Rabu Hadi has shown no sign his counterterrorism strategy will change, especially because al Qaeda has proved to be a bigger threat than anticipated. But his stance has angered some parliamentarians. "It's a black dot for President Hadi to allow drones to roam our skies and kill our people," said Ali al-Mamari, a prominent member of parliament.

Drones aren’t accurate enough to correctly identify individuals targeted – innocent civilians get killed

Andrew Callam 2010. (candidate for a masters degree in international affairs, George Washington Univ.) Winter 2010 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS REVIEW Vol XVIII No. 3 “Drone Wars: Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles” <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/144>

The lack of multiple intelligence sources also inhibits the ability of drones to accurately identify targets. Local informants are notoriously unreliable and can exploit the attacks for personal gain by pointing drone attacks towards personal rivals. Additionally, while the Predator’s camera can provide remarkably clear images, it can be difficult for drone pilots to accurately identify individuals when staring at them directly from above. For example, just months after the September 11th attacks, a Predator pilot spotted a tall man in flowing white robes walking near the eastern border of Afghanistan. Intelligence officials incorrectly believed the man to be Osama bin Laden and fired the Predator’s missile, killing the innocent villager and his two companions. Without a persistent ground presence, drones must act with incomplete intelligence and may cause civilian casualties.

Because CIA is untrained and unqualified to carry out military missions, drones have high civilian casualty rate.

Prof. Mary Ellen O’Connell 2010. (prof. of law, Univ. of Notre Dame law school) “Unlawful Killing with Combat Drones A Case Study of Pakistan, 2004-2009” Notre Dame Law School Legal Studies Research Paper No. 09-43 <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1501144>

Another issue in drone use is the fact that strikes are carried out by joint operations. The heavy involvement of the CIA and CIA contractors in the decisions to strike may alone account for the high-unintended death rate. CIA operatives are not trained in the law of armed conflict. They are not bound by the Uniform Code of Military Justice to respect the laws and customs of war. This fact became abundantly clear during the revelation of U.S. use of interrogation methods involving torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Given the impact of that unlawful conduct it is difficult to fathom why the Obama Administration is using the CIA to carry out drone attacks. Under the law of armed conflict, only lawful combatants have the right to use force during an armed conflict. Lawful combatants are the members of a state‘s regular armed forces. The CIA is not part of the U.S. armed forces.

Yemen drone campaign has increased Al Qaeda strength

Ariel Zirulnick 2014. (journalist) CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR String of US drone strikes in Yemen target Al Qaeda affiliate (+video) 22 Apr 2014 <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0422/String-of-US-drone-strikes-in-Yemen-target-Al-Qaeda-affiliate-video>

Reuters also notes that when drone strikes cause civilian casualties – whether as a byproduct of a successful strike or directly because of inaccuracy or poor intelligence – they can increase popular support for militancy. Yemeni political scientist Abdulghani al-Iryani told the news agency that there was a "sharp increase" in Al Qaeda's numbers after the drone campaign began in 2003 – from a few hundred to an estimated several thousand now. "The fact that both the Yemeni and the U.S. governments have relied too heavily on the use of drones as an expedient way to postpone the resolution of the problem rather than having a proper, comprehensive approach to the problem, has contributed to the expansion of al Qaeda in Yemen," Mr. Iryani said.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Advocacy: Yemen’s National Dialogue Conference (a constitutional convention of representatives from all over Yemen)

Vivian Salama 2014. (journalist) 14 Apr 2014 “Death From Above: How American Drone Strikes Are Devastating Yemen” ROLLING STONE <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/death-from-above-how-american-drone-strikes-are-devastating-yemen-20140414#ixzz382IU3jD0>

In January, Yemen held the closing ceremony of its National Dialogue Conference, in which 565 delegates from across the country worked on the framework for its first constitution since ousting Saleh. Among the recommendations agreed upon at the conference, delegates, through full consensus, urged criminalizing the use of drones and extra judicial killings, including drone strikes.

“President of Yemen approves US drone strikes” – Response: It’s still wrong, and he’s opposing the consensus of the Yemeni people

Hooria Mashhour 2014. (Yemen government’s minister for human rights) WASHINGTON POST 14 Jan 2014 “Hooria Mashhour: The United States’ bloody messes in Yemen” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/hooria-mashhour-the-united-states-bloody-messes-in-yemen/2014/01/14/c21dfcec-7653-11e3-b1c5-739e63e9c9a7_story.html>

Our president may reassure the United States of his support for drone strikes but the reality is that no leader can legitimately approve the extrajudicial killing of his own citizens. Moreover, he does so in the face of Yemeni consensus. This August, Yemen’s National Dialogue Conference — [which President Obama has praised](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/01/remarks-president-obama-and-president-hadi-yemen-after-bilateral-meeting)— [decided by a 90 percent majority](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/09/2013918595250580.html) that the use of drones in Yemen should be criminalised.

Drones in Yemen are harming our security and political goals

Nabeel Khoury 2013. (former US State Department Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Yemen) 23 Oct 2013 IN YEMEN, DRONES AREN’T A POLICY, CAIRO REVIEW OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS <http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=443>

Open source reporting records 45 drone strikes in Yemen in 2012, and 22 so far in 2013.  Reported casualties are 491 for 2012. In war, unmanned aircraft may be a necessary part of a comprehensive military strategy. In a country where we are not at war, however, drones become part of our foreign policy, dominating it altogether, to the detriment of both our security and political goals.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

“Terrorism / insecurity in Yemen” – Response: Current policy isn’t working, terrorism is increasing, security situation is getting worse

Nabeel Khoury 2013. (former US State Department Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Yemen) 23 Oct 2013 IN YEMEN, DRONES AREN’T A POLICY, CAIRO REVIEW OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS <http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=443> (brackets added)

If we assess U.S. policy in Yemen from a security standpoint first, we would have to conclude that it has certainly not brought more security to the American diplomats in Yemen. Sanaa is now classified as an unaccompanied post, meaning it is too dangerous for diplomats to bring families with them. Further, diplomats who, until recently, tended to live on the economy, in villas and apartment buildings in the  middle of downtown Sanaa, were first moved to a well guarded hotel near the Embassy compound in 2011, and consequently into crowded quarters on the compound itself. American diplomats wishing to go outside embassy walls to meet with Yemenis, now have to have heavy security escorts and are discouraged from all but essential meetings impossible to conduct on the compound itself. In terms of security of the homeland, one can only conjecture. True, there hasn’t been an attempt on the U.S. mainland since the failed Christmas “underwear” bombing of 2009, but the number of AQAP [Al Qaeda of the Arabian Peninsula] operatives has risen over recent years, from several hundred in 2008 to several thousand estimated today. Surveillance interceptions continue to catch “chatter” among AQAP operatives, alerting Washington to continued plotting and acts of terrorism being planned against U.S. interests (as testified to publicly by top intelligence officials). Nowadays, traveling outside of Sanaa is a virtual impossibility for all foreign diplomats. In all respects, the security situation in Yemen today is a far cry from the 2004 to 2007.

“Terrorism/insecurity in Yemen” – Response: No US foreign policy can “fix” Yemen. All our efforts will make things worse

Prof. Donald M. Snow 2010. (Professor Emeritus at the University of Alabama, is the author of over 40 books on foreign policy, international relations and national security topics) 20 Jan 2010 What to Do about Yemen? <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/what-to-do-about-yemen> (brackets added; the word “out” was misspelled in the original, it appears the word should have been “our”)

What the United States does not know about fighting and “winning” (whatever that means) in Yemen would fill a much larger volume that what we do know. All the military “can do” attitude in the world is hard to extrapolate into a likely success of American military efforts. What such efforts would almost certainly do, however, would be to inflame more anti-Americanism by our presence, thereby effectively taking a leaf from the long-practiced Israeli playbook of taking actions that make situations worse than they already were. Our culture is activist and has a hard time dealing with situations and conditions which we cannot “fix.” That America can fix almost anything is ingrained in our worldview, but the intractability and inscrutability of the situation in the Middle East should be creating some sense of limits on out [our] enthusiasm and optimism. The answer to “Yemen, Anyone?” should be a polite, but firm, “No thank you.”

“Drones fight terrorism!” –Response: Better to arrest terrorists than kill them - you get more intelligence information that way

Andrew Callam 2010. (candidate for a masters degree in international affairs, George Washington Univ.) Winter 2010 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS REVIEW Vol XVIII No. 3 “Drone Wars: Armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles” <http://www.iar-gwu.org/node/144>

The lack of military presence on the ground also limits the capability of drones to assist in acquiring critical intelligence. In the urban counterinsurgency operations of Iraq, UAVs would use their persistent surveillance capabilities to observe combatants, then either eliminate or send in ground troops to arrest the combatant. The combatant might then go on to provide U.S. forces with valuable intelligence. In contrast, the use of UAVs in hunter-killer operations in the remote regions of Pakistan, where there are no ground forces, only eliminates the target. As Daniel Byman of Georgetown University argues, “it’s almost always better to arrest terrorists than to kill them. You get intelligence then. Dead men tell no tales.” Hunter-killer operations can only eliminate the target and thus forfeit potential intelligence that could be gained through capture.

“Don’t have to send someone into harm’s way” - Response: That’s bad because drones remove political barriers to war by removing political consequences

Dr. Peter W. Singer 2012. (PhD in government, Harvard; Senior Fellow and Director of the 21st Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution; served as coordinator of the Obama 2008 campaign’s defense policy task force) 22 Jan 2012 “Do Drones Undermine Democracy?” <http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2012/0122_drones_singer.aspx>

And now we possess a technology that removes the last political barriers to war. The strongest appeal of unmanned systems is that we don’t have to send someone’s son or daughter into harm’s way. But when politicians can avoid the political consequences of the condolence letter — and the impact that military casualties have on voters and on the news media — they no longer treat the previously weighty matters of war and peace the same way. For the first 200 years of American democracy, engaging in combat and bearing risk — both personal and political — went hand in hand. In the age of drones, that is no longer the case.

“We’re assassinating terrorist leaders” - Response: No evidence that assassinations are effective counter-terrorism strategy

Dr Stephanie Carvin 2011. (Lecturer at the Royal Halloway, University of London, Department of Politics and International Relations; PhD at the London School of Economics) 14 Dec 2011 “A View to Kill” CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL, <http://www.opencanada.org/features/view-to-a-kil/>

Finally, and most importantly, the largest problem with arguments put forward by assassination advocates is the underlying assumption that assassination is an effective counter-terrorism strategy. Unfortunately, research and scholarship on assassination have not been able to demonstrate that this is actually the case. This is partly due to the secretive nature of assassination programs: We simply do not know what is happening on the ground in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and other areas of the world where assassination strikes against terrorists have been carried out. The lack of access to much of this information also means that measuring the impact of such exercises is extremely difficult. Furthermore, there has been little thought given to how we measure the “success” of assassination. Is it simply deemed successful if it eliminates individuals seen as threats? If there is a measurable decrease in the number of attempted, or successful, terrorist attacks carried out by the target’s organization? Or is it necessary to look at second- and third-order effects such as the target organization’s morale, recruitment, support from the population, etc.?

“Need drones to kill terrorists” - Response: Drones kill civilians along with terrorists, creating a powerful recruiting opportunity among the angry survivors.

David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum 2009. (Kilculler was a counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. David Petraeus from ‘06 to ‘08; Exum, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security, was an Army officer in Iraq and Afghanistan from ‘02 to ‘04) 16 May 2009 “Death From Above, Outrage Down Below,” NEW YORK TIMES <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?_r=1>

While violent extremists may be unpopular, for a frightened population they seem less ominous than a faceless enemy that wages war from afar and often kills more civilians than militants. Press reports suggest that over the last three years drone strikes have killed about 14 terrorist leaders. But, according to Pakistani sources, they have also killed some 700 civilians. This is 50 civilians for every militant killed, a hit rate of 2 percent — hardly “precision.” American officials vehemently dispute these figures, and it is likely that more militants and fewer civilians have been killed than is reported by the press in Pakistan. Nevertheless, every one of these dead noncombatants represents an alienated family, a new desire for revenge, and more recruits for a militant movement that has grown exponentially even as drone strikes have increased.

“Need drones to fight terrorists” - Response: Drone strikes increase anti-American extremism

David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum 2009. (Kilculler was a counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. David Petraeus from ‘06 to ‘08; Exum, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security, was an Army officer in Iraq and Afghanistan from ‘02 to ‘04) 16 May 2009 “Death From Above, Outrage Down Below,” NEW YORK TIMES <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?_r=1>

The appeal of drone attacks for policy makers is clear. For one thing, their effects are measurable. Military commanders and intelligence officials point out that drone attacks have disrupted terrorist networks in Pakistan, killing key leaders and hampering operations. Drone attacks create a sense of insecurity among militants and constrain their interactions with suspected informers. And, because they kill remotely, drone strikes avoid American casualties. But on balance, the costs outweigh these benefits for three reasons. First, the drone war has created a siege mentality among Pakistani civilians. This is similar to what happened in Somalia in 2005 and 2006, when similar strikes were employed against the forces of the Union of Islamic Courts. While the strikes did kill individual militants who were the targets, public anger over the American show of force solidified the power of extremists. The Islamists’ popularity rose and the group became more extreme, leading eventually to a messy Ethiopian military intervention, the rise of a new regional insurgency and an increase in offshore piracy.

“Need drones to fight terrorists” - Response: Terrorists regroup quickly after a leader is killed, and the resources devoted to drones distract us from larger problems we should be working on

David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum 2009. (Kilculler was a counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. David Petraeus from ‘06 to ‘08; Exum, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security, was an Army officer in Iraq and Afghanistan from ‘02 to ‘04) 16 May 2009 “Death From Above, Outrage Down Below,” NEW YORK TIMES <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?_r=1>

The drone campaign is in fact part of a larger strategic error — our insistence on personalizing this conflict with Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Devoting time and resources toward killing or capturing “high-value” targets — not to mention the bounties placed on their heads — distracts us from larger problems, while turning figures like Baitullah Mehsud, leader of the Pakistani Taliban umbrella group, into Robin Hoods. Our experience in Iraq suggests that the capture or killing of high-value targets — Saddam Hussein or Abu Musab al-Zarqawi — has only a slight and fleeting effect on levels of violence. Killing Mr. Zarqawi bought only 18 days of quiet before Al Qaeda returned to operations under new leadership.

Drone attacks are a counterproductive strategy against extremists

David Kilcullen and Andrew Exum 2009. (Kilculler was a counterinsurgency adviser to Gen. David Petraeus from ‘06 to ‘08; Exum, a fellow at the Center for a New American Security, was an Army officer in Iraq and Afghanistan from ‘02 to ‘04) 16 May 2009 “Death From Above, Outrage Down Below,” NEW YORK TIMES <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?_r=1>

People don’t tolerate extremists in their midst because they like them, but rather because the extremists intimidate them. Breaking the power of extremists means removing their power to intimidate — something that strikes cannot do. Imagine, for example, that burglars move into a neighborhood. If the police were to start blowing up people’s houses from the air, would this convince homeowners to rise up against the burglars? Wouldn’t it be more likely to turn the whole population against the police? And if their neighbors wanted to turn the burglars in, how would they do that, exactly? Yet this is the same basic logic underlying the drone war.

“Fighting terrorists” – Response: US security cooperation is used by the Yemeni government to carry out vendetta retaliation against groups trying to expose corruption

Dr. Nabeel Khoury 2014. (former US State Department Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Yemen) Summer 2014 Yemen:In Search of a Coherent U.S. Policy MIDDLE EAST POLICY COUNCIL, <http://mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/yemen-search-coherent-us-policy>

Although President Hadi has not exhibited any of the biases of former President Saleh, in terms of a personal agenda against long-term political opponents and the deliberate use of counterterrorism assets against them, the military leadership is a long way from dissociating itself from its corrupt history. Despite Hadi's best efforts, the pitfalls remain the same in terms of the security collaboration between the United States and Yemen for the foreseeable future. A particular case in point is the quiet rebellion taking place in the Hadramout region of the country, not so much for independence as against the corrupt military generals who are perceived as continuing to exploit the region's resources for their personal gain despite the uprising of 2011 and the political changes it has generated.Behind the military campaign, officially described by the Yemeni government and mainstream U.S. media as a counterterrorism operation, lies what is viewed by many in the region as a vendetta by corrupt generals against their Hadrami opponents and those who would expose their corrupt behavior.

1. Farea al-Muslimi, quoted by Conor Friedersdorf, 24 Apr 2013 THE ATLANTIC, “This Yemeni Man Loves America, Hates al-Qaeda, and Says Drone Strikes Make Them Stronger” http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/04/this-yemeni-man-loves-america-hates-al-qaeda-and-says-drone-strikes-make-them-stronger/275248/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)