Negative Brief: Drones - good

By "Coach Vance" Trefethen

***Reducing military commitments***

The Affirmative plan cancels the use of "signature" drone strikes. There are generally 2 types of drone strikes. One is a carefully targeted "personality" strike against a specific individual who is known to be at the spot being hit. The other is a "signature" strike. This involves surveillance of persons who may not be specifically known but whose behavior and movements ("signature") indicate they are involved with terrorism.

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Negative: Drones - good

TOPICALITY

1. No Commitment

Definition of "COMMITMENT"

Merriam Webster online Dictionary copyright 2021. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment>

an agreement or pledge to do something in the future

Link: Biden stays silent about any commitments on drones

Elise Swain 2020. (journalist) 22 Nov 2020 " JOE BIDEN’S SILENCE ON ENDING THE DRONE WARS" THE INTERCEPT <https://theintercept.com/2020/11/22/biden-drones-endless-wars/>

PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN has maintained silence for years on the controversial and continued use of so-called targeted killings — lethal strikes by drones, cruise missiles, and occasionally military special operations raids. Biden has never publicly disavowed or criticized former President Barack Obama’s legacy of expanding the use of drones, nor made clear his own policy on the continuation of targeted killing conducted by the Department of Defense and, clandestinely, the CIA.

Biden doesn't make commitments on use of drones

John Haltiwanger 2020 (journalist) 2 Dec 2020 BUSINESS INSIDER " Biden said he'd 'end forever wars,' but he's shown few signs that he won't repeat the mistakes of the past, human rights groups warn" <https://www.businessinsider.com/human-rights-skeptical-biden-pledge-to-stop-forever-wars-2020-11>

In September, Biden told [Stars and Stripes](https://www.stripes.com/news/us/biden-says-us-must-maintain-small-force-in-middle-east-has-no-plans-for-major-defense-cuts-1.644631) he wants to keep a small military footprint in the Middle East with a focus on special operations in coordination with allies against ISIS and other terror groups. But the site said nothing about drones, which were central to the US government's approach to counterterrorism when Biden was vice president. The president-elect's transition website is also [devoid of references to drone and air strikes.](https://buildbackbetter.gov/priorities/) And it's difficult to point to any specific remarks Biden has made on drones over the years, which could be linked to the fact that it's a touchy subject for the Obama administration.

Violation: Can't follow the resolution if there's no commitment

You can't substantially reduce something that doesn't exist. The Affirmative appears to have misread the resolution. Their plan is based on a resolution that reads something like "reduce anything the military is doing" or "reform a policy the military has." To be topical, they have to show that Pres. Biden has made a commitment to these drone strikes that their plan changes. They have to change a commitment, not a policy.

Impact: No Affirmative team means a Negative ballot

Nobody showed up in the debate round to actually affirm the resolution. Since there is no Affirmative team, no matter who wins, you should vote Negative.

2. Plan goes beyond "military"

Link: Many signature strikes are conducted by the CIA

Catherine Connelly 2019 (PhD candidate at Dublin City University) July 2019 Doctoral Thesis: "Investigating the Relationship between Targeted Killing, American Exceptionalism and Kriegsraison: Repercussions for International Law <http://doras.dcu.ie/23593/1/C%20Connolly%20PhD%20thesis%202019.pdf>

Many of the targeted killings carried out by the CIA are not personality strikes, and are not ‘targeted’ at all, in the sense that ‘targeted’ would generally be assumed to mean. The majority of drone strikes are what are known as ‘signature’ strikes. Signature strikes have never required administrative approval.

Violation: CIA is not part of the military

Melanie J. Foreman 2013. (J.D. Candidate, University of Pennsylvania Law School) January 2013 "WHEN TARGETED KILLING IS NOT PERMISSIBLE: AN EVALUATION OF TARGETED KILLING UNDER THE LAWS OF WAR AND MORALITY" JOURNAL OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW <https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=jcl>

Regardless of this overlap, though, the CIA is not a formal part of the United States military. It is a separate government entity. In this sense, it must be recognized that CIA agents’ participation in the War on Terror is somewhat parallel to those they target in that they are not an official part of a higher military chain of command. Neither CIA agents nor the terrorists they target are members of a military force of a nation-state.

Impact: Extra-topical mandates create several reasons to vote Negative

1) It abuses the Negative team. We shouldn't have to prepare to debate cases that deal with topics outside the resolution. We had enough to do to prepare for all the possible cases that this resolution allows.
2) It shows poor preparation and lack of research on the Affirmative side. If they had researched this topic better, they would have known what we just showed you about the CIA. If their research is incomplete, it suggests we need to hold off and research this more before voting Affirmative, so they can come up with a better Plan.
3) It means they can't show what their plan solves, if anything. If 99% of the drone strikes are carried out by the CIA and 1% are by the military, then their plan solves at most only 1% of the problem. Anything outside the resolution must be dropped from the Affirmative's plan, and they have a burden to prove exactly what their plan does.

SIGNIFICANCE / HARMS

1. Constitutional duty to national defense outweighs all AFF harms

Constitutional duty to "provide for the common defense" outweighs other priorities

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget>

As the leadership of our nation weighs the balance between domestic spending priorities and the fate of future defense budgets, they should not lose sight of the federal government’s solemn constitutional duty: to provide for the common defense.

Founding Fathers taught: Federal government's power to defend the nation shouldn't be limited

Catherine Connelly 2019 (PhD candidate at Dublin City University) July 2019 Doctoral Thesis: "Investigating the Relationship between Targeted Killing, American Exceptionalism and Kriegsraison: Repercussions for International Law <http://doras.dcu.ie/23593/1/C%20Connolly%20PhD%20thesis%202019.pdf> (ellipses in original)



2. No retaliation / anger / recruiting more terrorists

No empirical support for the anger / retaliation claim about the impact of drone strikes. Lots of other factors, not drones

Prof. Aqil Shah 2018. (Assistant Professor of South Asian Politics in the David L. Boren College of International Studies at the University of Oklahoma and a non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 10 June 2018 Drone Blowback: Much Ado about Nothing? <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-blowback-much-ado-about-nothing>

Although intuitive, the blowback argument lacks empirical support. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has launched an estimated 430 drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004 (roughly 75 percent of its known total strikes worldwide). My [research](https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00312) there shows that drone blowback may be much ado about nothing. Drawing on interviews with 167 well-informed adults from North Waziristan Agency (NWA), the most heavily targeted district in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), extensive interviews with respected experts on terrorism, and an official Pakistani police survey of 500 detained terrorists from southern Sindh Province, I find no evidence of a direct link between drones strikes and radicalization or the recruitment of militants, either locally or nationally. Instead, my data and secondary sources suggest that militant recruitment is a complex process driven by a variety of factors, such as political grievances, state sponsorship of militancy as a tool of foreign policy, state repression, weak governance, and coercive recruitment by militant groups—not drone strikes.

Just rumors: When you actually talk to the people, they tell us the drones are not what radicalizes young men

Prof. Aqil Shah 2018. (Assistant Professor of South Asian Politics in the David L. Boren College of International Studies at the University of Oklahoma and a non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 10 June 2018 Drone Blowback: Much Ado about Nothing? <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-blowback-much-ado-about-nothing>

Most respondents claimed to personally know or be aware of someone in their clan or village who had been involved in militant activity or who had been indirectly linked to militants, but none believed that the reason was the loss of a relative in a drone strike. As one tribal elder from Dande Darpa Khel in Miranshah, the drone-targeted headquarters of the Haqqani Network, explained: “We hear rumors that this or that man joined the Taliban or al-Qaeda because of anger over drone strikes. It is possible. But I know almost every family in my area, and I do not know of a case where a local man or boy joined the Taliban as direct result of death or injury to a close relative in a drone strike. In fact, most of the Taliban fighters were already radicalized, or inclined toward militancy for various reasons, or forced to join these groups.” Comments like this came up frequently in my sample. Even local leaders of Islamist and other right-wing parties acknowledged that the ability of drone strikes to spawn militants is exaggerated.

Drones have no impact on boosting terrorist recruitment

Prof. Aqil Shah 2018. (Assistant Professor of South Asian Politics in the David L. Boren College of International Studies at the University of Oklahoma and a non-resident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 10 June 2018 Drone Blowback: Much Ado about Nothing? <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-blowback-much-ado-about-nothing>

Tariq Parvez, founding coordinator of Pakistan’s National Counterterrorism Authority, argues that organizations with a clear anti-U.S. narrative, such as al-Qaeda, can exploit drone strikes for propaganda purposes, but that “drones are a distant threat for people in Punjab or Sindh, for which you can express indignation but not be really be threatened or motivated by it to become militants.” According to Ahmed Rashid, one of the world’s foremost authorities on the Taliban and terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, “There is no evidence to show that Punjabi or other terrorist groups in Pakistan use drone strikes as an important recruitment tool or that these attacks create terrorists en masse.”

3. Civilian casualties not significant

Civilian casualties exaggerated and media is fooled by fake evidence

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/> (brackets in original)

After a strike in Pakistan, militants often cordon off the area, remove their dead, and admit only local reporters sympathetic to their cause or decide on a body count themselves. The U.S. media often then draw on such faulty reporting to give the illusion of having used multiple sources. As a result, statistics on civilians killed by drones are often inflated. One of the few truly independent on-the-ground reporting efforts, conducted by the Associated Press last year, concluded that the strikes “are killing far fewer civilians than many in [Pakistan] are led to believe.”

Drones have far lower civilian casualty rate than other forms of strikes (like planes or cruise missiles)

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/>

But even the most unfavorable estimates of drone casualties reveal that the ratio of civilian to militant deaths—about one to three, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism—is lower than it would be for other forms of strikes. Bombings by F-16s or Tomahawk cruise missile salvos, for example, pack a much more deadly payload. In December 2009, the United States fired Tomahawks at a suspected terrorist training camp in Yemen, and over 30 people were killed in the blast, most of them women and children. At the time, the Yemeni regime refused to allow the use of drones, but had this not been the case, a drone’s real-time surveillance would probably have spotted the large number of women and children, and the attack would have been aborted.

Drones have lower ratio of civilians to bad-guys killed than any other military option

Prof. James Walsh 2013 (Professor of Political Science at Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte) THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DRONE STRIKES IN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND COUNTERTERRORISM CAMPAIGNS, published by US Army War College, Sept 2013 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11764?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents>

Based on a careful review of media reports, these data measure the ratio of militants killed in drone strikes for every civilian who dies in such attacks. Using information only from media sources in Pakistan, they [researchers Avery Plaw and Matthew Fricker] estimate that over 26 militants are killed for each con­firmed civilian death. This ratio falls slightly to 19 mili­tants per civilian killed if they draw on both Pakistani and international media sources. They also calculate the same ratios for other data-collection efforts. These data produce a ratio of 14:1 when using data from the Long War Journal, and either 11.5:1 or 3.97:1, depending on the specific coding rules employed, when based on data from the New America Foundation. The researchers then compare these ratios of mili­tants and civilians killed by drone strikes with corre­sponding ratios for other types of armed conflict, in­cluding Pakistani military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the Swat Valley, U.S. military operations in Pakistan that use types of force other than drones, targeted killings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip carried out by Israel between 2000 and 2008, and all conflicts in the world in the year 2000. All of these other types of force produce ratios that are lower than even the lowest estimates for the propor­tion of civilians killed per militant by drone strikes.

4. Targeting US citizens isn't a problem

No different than police shooting a dangerous suspect. The danger to the public justifies it

Jan Schwarzenberg 2016 (MA candidate at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington Univ.; retired U.S. Navy Special Operations Officer, worked in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency, in both military and civilian positions, since the attacks of 9/11 with multiple combat tours; holds degrees in Political Science and Criminal Justice, a Master’s in Diplomacy and Military studies, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University) "Targeting American Terrorists with Drones: Efficient, But Legal?" SMALL WARS JOURNAL <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/targeting-american-terrorists-with-drones-efficient-but-legal>

Using drones to attack terrorists posing an imminent threat, for whom there are no good alternatives for capture and extradition, has been justified and authorized. The fact that the terrorists creating a danger for Americans are themselves American citizens becomes moot in the face of impending danger. It should be stressed that every effort is made to capture and extradite terrorists holding U.S. citizenship. However, just as a police officer domestically will make every effort to capture and arrest a violent criminal, the officer is authorized to use deadly force if that criminal poses an immediate lethal threat. When other means of safe arrest have been exhausted and threat of death is imminent, the officer is justified in using deadly force in self-defense. The same concept holds true internationally. After it has been determined that a drone attack is the only means by which to halt an impending terrorist plan, it cannot suddenly be halted or aborted because one of the perpetrators is an American, especially where a multitude of innocent American lives are at stake.

Risk to the public outweighs harms of targeting US citizens

Jan Schwarzenberg 2016 (MA candidate at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington Univ.; retired U.S. Navy Special Operations Officer, worked in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency, in both military and civilian positions, since the attacks of 9/11 with multiple combat tours; holds degrees in Political Science and Criminal Justice, a Master’s in Diplomacy and Military studies, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University) "Targeting American Terrorists with Drones: Efficient, But Legal?" SMALL WARS JOURNAL <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/targeting-american-terrorists-with-drones-efficient-but-legal>

Targeting U.S. citizens for drone attacks contravenes constitutional guarantees. The alternative, however, is to risk untold numbers of innocent lives if American terrorists are not interrupted.

5. Host countries support

Countries secretly support drones, they just say they oppose it for political purposes

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/>

It is also telling that drones have earned the backing, albeit secret, of foreign governments. In order to maintain popular support, politicians in Pakistan and Yemen routinely rail against the U.S. drone campaign. In reality, however, the governments of both countries have supported it. During the Bush and Obama administrations, Pakistan has even periodically hosted U.S. drone facilities and has been told about strikes in advance. Pervez Musharraf, president of Pakistan until 2008, was not worried about the drone program’s negative publicity: “In Pakistan, things fall out of the sky all the time,” he reportedly remarked. Yemen’s former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, also at times allowed drone strikes in his country and even covered for them by telling the public that they were conducted by the Yemeni air force.

A/T "Most Pakistanis oppose drones" – Most of them don't even know about the drone program

Prof. C. Christine Fair 2015. (Associate Professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program within the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service) 27 Oct 2015 "The Drone Papers: Intercepting the Nonsense" <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-papers-intercepting-nonsense>

Another set of studies that Mr. Greenwald and Mr. Hasan distorted were the various surveys by Pew. Mr. Greenwald asserted that “the vast majority of Pakistanis oppose the drones,” according to Pew’s surveys of Pakistan. I attempted to explain the problems with this assertion, beginning with the simple fact that [majorities or large minorities of Pew’s overwhelmingly urban sample](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2666612) had never even heard of the drone program.

6. International law supports

Drone retaliation for stateless terrorism complies with Article 51 of the UN

Jan Schwarzenberg 2016 (MA candidate at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington Univ.; retired U.S. Navy Special Operations Officer, worked in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency, in both military and civilian positions, since the attacks of 9/11 with multiple combat tours; holds degrees in Political Science and Criminal Justice, a Master’s in Diplomacy and Military studies, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University) "Targeting American Terrorists with Drones: Efficient, But Legal?" SMALL WARS JOURNAL <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/targeting-american-terrorists-with-drones-efficient-but-legal>

Author John Yoo sums up the argument that targeted killings can be the best policy in this new type of war initiated with the 9/11 attacks. The enemy is a network, not a nation or a state. He posits the best strategy is to attack the individuals of the network, as there are no armed forces to confront. President Bush argued that the on-going violence perpetrated by Al Qaeda against the United States encompassed not just by the 9/11 attacks but also including the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, the 1998 attack on two U.S. embassies in Africa, the 2000 attack on the USS COLE, and then the Al Qaeda attacks in London, Madrid, and Bali all constitute an on-going armed conflict, not individual incidents. Therefore, targeted killings as a response fall squarely under the self-defense concept of Article 51 of the U.N. Charter in response to that on-going conflict.

Consistent with international law just like international anti-piracy efforts in the 17th century

Jan Schwarzenberg 2016 (MA candidate at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington Univ.; retired U.S. Navy Special Operations Officer, worked in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency, in both military and civilian positions, since the attacks of 9/11 with multiple combat tours; holds degrees in Political Science and Criminal Justice, a Master’s in Diplomacy and Military studies, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University) "Targeting American Terrorists with Drones: Efficient, But Legal?" SMALL WARS JOURNAL <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/targeting-american-terrorists-with-drones-efficient-but-legal>

Transnational terrorists today pose a threat similar to that of pirates in previous centuries, being stateless and attacking citizens of multiple nations equally. Just as the first address by the international legal community regarding the use of force by all nations to combat piracy was laid out in the early 17th century, it is time now for international legal rules to recognize the tactic of targeted killing, by whatever means, as a distinct tool for combatting terrorism with internationally recognized limits on its application and repercussions for its abuse.

7. A/T "Better to capture than kill with drones"

Sometimes capture isn't an option and benefits of killing with drone outweigh

Jan Schwarzenberg 2016 (MA candidate at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington Univ.; retired U.S. Navy Special Operations Officer, worked in Counter Terrorism and Counter Insurgency, in both military and civilian positions, since the attacks of 9/11 with multiple combat tours; holds degrees in Political Science and Criminal Justice, a Master’s in Diplomacy and Military studies, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the National Defense University) "Targeting American Terrorists with Drones: Efficient, But Legal?" SMALL WARS JOURNAL <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/targeting-american-terrorists-with-drones-efficient-but-legal>

The U.S. will always prefer to see a terrorist captured and extradited to stand trial for their punishment. There are instances, though, where capture is not possible, or the risk to friendly forces would be too great. Utilizing drone strikes has the triple advantage of low risk to U.S. forces, low cost, and increasing accuracy preventing collateral damage.

8. A/T "Soleimani"

**[Soleimani was an Iranian general killed in a US drone strike while visiting Iraq in January 2020. His death was controversial and gave some critics reasons to raise issues about the harms of US drone policies.]**

Soleimani was probably killed by the CIA (not military), so AFF Plan wouldn't make any difference

Russ Read 2020 (journalist) 3 Jan 2020 " World's most feared drone: CIA's MQ-9 Reaper killed Soleimani" <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/worlds-most-feared-drone-cias-mq-9-reaper-killed-soleimani>

Iranian Gen. [Qassem Soleimani was killed](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/defense-national-security/irans-infamous-shadow-general-qassem-soleimani-killed-in-air-strike%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) Thursday night in a strike by an MQ-9 Reaper drone. The operation to kill Soleimani is believed to have been overseen by the CIA. U.S. Air Force pilots fly Reapers from Creech Air Force base in Nevada and some are seconded to the CIA in Langley, Virginia.

SOLVENCY

1. Easy to circumvent AFF plan

They can simply use the CIA instead of the military

Cross apply our evidence from Topicality argument #2. Since all the Affirmative Plan can do is stop the military's drones, if the Status Quo ever did decide it was "committed" to them, they would simply move them from the military to the civilians at CIA, where the Affirmative's mandates can't regulate them. The harms would continue the same as before, so the Plan wouldn't solve.

President can easily move drones from military to CIA. Trump did it in 2017

Dodge Billingsley 2020 (journalist) 3 Jan 2020 " News analysis: Did the drone strike on an Iranian general set a dangerous global precedent?" <https://www.deseret.com/indepth/2020/1/3/21048613/qassem-soleimani-trump-iran-drone-strike>

In 2017, President Donald Trump reversed Obama’s decision to take the CIA out of the armed drone business and once again conduct drone strikes against the nation’s foreign enemies. Trump’s decision has been met with mixed reviews. It goes back to the very nature of the CIA, which has the legal authority to deny — to not be accountable.

DISADVANTAGES

1. More civilian casualties

Link: AFF doesn't stop all anti-terrorism efforts

**The real issue is: If the US continues its anti-terrorism efforts worldwide, what is the method that produces the least civilian casualties. It's not enough to say that drones cause civilian casualties, you have to explain what are we going to replace it with and how many casualties will the alternative cause.**

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/>

Despite the obvious benefits of using drones and the problems associated with the alternatives, numerous critics argue that drones still have too many disadvantages. First among them is an unacceptably high level of civilian casualties. Admittedly, drones have killed innocents. But the real debate is over how many and whether alternative approaches are any better.

Link: Drones produce fewer civilian casualties than the alternatives

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/>

The drones have done their job remarkably well: by killing key leaders and denying terrorists sanctuaries in Pakistan, Yemen, and, to a lesser degree, Somalia, drones have devastated al Qaeda and associated anti-American militant groups. And they have done so at little financial cost, at no risk to U.S. forces, and with fewer civilian casualties than many alternative methods would have caused.

Impact: Turn AFF harms on civilian casualties

The harms get worse without drones

2. Harm to Pakistan

Link & Impact: Drones are the best protection for local villagers against terrorist groups, and the locals want them

Prof. C. Christine Fair 2015. (Associate Professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program within the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service) 27 Oct 2015 " The Drone Papers: Intercepting the Nonsense" <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-papers-intercepting-nonsense> (brackets in original, quoting a Pakistan newspaper)

Speaking of the Pakistan case, which I know well, those in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in closest proximity to the various terrorists view the drones [either](http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/10/15/voice-of-a-native-son-drones-may-be-a-necessary-evil/) as the [least of all evils](http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/17551/drone-strikes-for-better-or-for-worse/) or even as their best [source of protection](https://aacounterterror.wordpress.com/2013/07/21/a-case-for-drones-how-drone-attacks-have-been-productive-in-pakistan/). One [Pakistani editorial](http://tribune.com.pk/story/478880/a-question-of-sovereignty/?fb_action_ids=101511994134650038fb_action_types=og.likes8fb_source=aggregation8fb_aggregation_id=288381481237582) from 2012 summed up Pakistan’s dilemma:
[T]he real threat to our nation comes from the heavily armed outfits marching across our northern areas, rather than the strikes made by unmanned planes. It is true that such strikes ignite a degree of anger and thus spur on militancy but this is a relatively minor matter, blown out of proportion compared to the threat of militancy from within.

Pakistanis view drones as a savior from terrorists

Prof. C. Christine Fair 2015. (Associate Professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program within the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service) 27 Oct 2015 "The Drone Papers: Intercepting the Nonsense" <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-papers-intercepting-nonsense>

Moreover, many residents in FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas, a lawless region of Pakistan] vigorously support the U.S. armed drone program and even [compare them to ababil](http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/30-Jan-2010/analysis-dangerous-abyss-of-perceptions-farhat-taj), the holy swallows mentioned in the Quran ([Surat al-Fil, “The Elephant”](http://quran.com/105)) who repelled an army of elephants that invaded Mecca by dropping black stones upon the invaders. When I raised this point on Al Jazeera, Mr. Greenwald dismissed it as “rank propaganda,” even though this view originated from residents of FATA in Pakistan itself. Whether Mr. Greenwald wants to admit it or not, Pakistanis in the tribal areas–who are most affected by the terrorists and drones–are not as opposed to them as he would like his flock to believe.

3. More terrorism

Link: Drones target and kill terror group leaders

Daniel Byman 2013 (Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 17 June 2013 "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice" <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-drones-work-the-case-for-washingtons-weapon-of-choice/>

The drones have done their job remarkably well: by killing key leaders and denying terrorists sanctuaries in Pakistan, Yemen, and, to a lesser degree, Somalia, drones have devastated al Qaeda and associated anti-American militant groups.

Link: Signature strikes are highly effective at eliminating terrorists

Dr. Shima D. Keene 2015. (PhD in international criminal law; subject matter expert in the field of asymmetric warfare and counterterrorism, and a former Director of the Security Technology Short Course at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom ) "Lethal and Legal? The Ethics of Drone Strikes" <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=789199>

Signature strikes are the more controversial of the two methods, but make up a significant proportion of the covert drone campaign, constituting the majority of strikes in Pakistan. Indeed, according to one unnamed U.S. official, the United States has killed twice as many “wanted terrorists” in signature strikes than in personality strikes. U.S. officials have also reported that most of the people on the CIA’s kill list have been killed in signature strikes.

Link: Terrorist groups are particularly vulnerable to decapitation strikes

Dr. Bryan C. Price 2012 (PhD political science; Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army; Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy) " Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism" Spring 2012 <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/targeting-top-terrorists-how-leadership-decapitation-contributes-counterterrorism>

Terrorist groups are especially susceptible to leadership decapitation because their organizational characteristics (they are violent, clandestine, and values based) amplify the difficulties of leadership succession. Additionally, in contrast to the conventional wisdom regarding the durability of terrorist groups, politically relevant terrorist groups (defined as those with at least four attacks including one attack resulting in a fatality) endure significantly longer than previously believed.

Link & Impact: Targeting leadership of militant groups reduces violence and attacks

Patrick B. Johnston 2012 (Research fellow, International Security Program, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs) "The Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation in Combating Insurgencies" June 2012 <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/effectiveness-leadership-decapitation-combating-insurgencies>

An analysis of leadership targeting in ninety counterinsurgencies since the 1970s suggests that removing militant leaders is neither ineffective nor counterproductive. Quite the opposite: on average, leadership decapitation (1) increases the chances of a rapid end to insurgencies; (2) enhances the probability of a government victory; (3) reduces the intensity of violent conflict; and (4) decreases the number of insurgent attacks. Killing or capturing high-value targets is far from a magic bullet, but states do it because it weakens insurgencies—in short, because it works.

Link & Impact: Johnston Study finds leadership decapitation reduces violence across all ideological radical groups

*Patrick B. Johnston 2012 (Research fellow, International Security Program, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Belfer Center for Science & International Affairs) "The Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation in Combating Insurgencies" June 2012* [*https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/effectiveness-leadership-decapitation-combating-insurgencies*](https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/effectiveness-leadership-decapitation-combating-insurgencies)

The study examined new data on successful and failed leadership decapitation attempts from ninety campaigns from 1975 to 2003. Leaders were defined as the most powerful figure or figures in each insurgent organization. Lexis-Nexis keyword searches yielded 118 decapitation attempts that could be confirmed; forty-six of these attempts (39 percent) resulted in the removal of an insurgent leader. The findings indicate that militant leaders do matter and that removing them enhances the effectiveness of counterinsurgency strategies. In brief, decapitations were associated with curtailed insurgent activity, decreased insurgent violence, and an increased likelihood of government victory. These patterns were not limited to certain types of groups; there was no statistical evidence that the impact of decapitation differed across groups with different aims and ideologies.

Best Evidence: Dr. Price Study of decapitation is the most comprehensive, and it finds decapitation significantly reduces terror group effectiveness

Dr. Bryan C. Price 2012 (PhD political science; Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army; Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy) " Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism" Spring 2012 <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/targeting-top-terrorists-how-leadership-decapitation-contributes-counterterrorism>

I argue that leadership decapitation significantly increases the mortality rate of terrorist groups, even after controlling for other factors. Using an original database—the largest and most comprehensive of its kind—I analyzed the effects of leadership decapitation on the mortality rate of 207 terrorist groups from 1970 to 2008. The analysis differs from previous quantitative studies because it evaluates the effects of decapitation on the duration of terrorist groups as opposed to the number, frequency, or lethality of attacks after a group experiences leadership decapitation. In doing so, it challenges the conventional wisdom regarding terrorist group duration and addresses some of the most pressing questions about the effectiveness of decapitation.

A/T "Targeted assassinations not effective" – Against insurgencies, drug cartels and States, maybe not. But against terrorists, yes they are

Dr. Bryan C. Price 2012 (PhD political science; Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army; Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy) " Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism" Spring 2012 <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/targeting-top-terrorists-how-leadership-decapitation-contributes-counterterrorism>

Several scholars have concluded that targeted assassinations are ineffective for ending insurgencies, disbanding drug cartels, and changing state behavior. The conclusions from these analyses cast doubt on the likelihood that leadership decapitation can work against terrorist groups. I argue, however, that terrorist groups are different: they have unique organizational characteristics that increase the influence of their leaders and exacerbate the difficulties associated with leadership succession

SOURCE INDICTMENTS

Generals McChrystal and Flynn: Opinions not more valuable than anyone else's and not supported by any data

Prof. C. Christine Fair 2015. (Associate Professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program within the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service) 27 Oct 2015 " The Drone Papers: Intercepting the Nonsense" <https://www.lawfareblog.com/drone-papers-intercepting-nonsense>

Mr. Greenwald also cited the opinions of well-regarded generals such as General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of NATO troops in Afghanistan. Mr. Hasan also cited the views of retired U.S. Lt. General Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), who said in an interview with The Intercept that launching a drone strike “makes us all feel good for 24 hours” but ultimately “doesn’t matter.” Clearly, there are others who disagree with both of these generals; otherwise the program would be dead, rather than thriving. However, it should be emphasized that the opinions offered by any generals, unless supported by data and rigorous analysis, are simply opinions.

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