

Obama's War Crimes: Drone War on Pakistan

Aug. 21—War crimes worthy of being tried at Nuremberg must be added to the impeachable crimes that Barack Obama has committed as President. Glenn Greenwald, writing in the London *Guardian*, documents this in a column dated Aug. 20, though the evidence has been building for some time. The specific crime, in this case, is that of following up drone strikes in Pakistan with secondary attacks that target the rescuers responding to the first attack, thereby increasing the deaths and terror even more.

Reports of the U.S. use of the tactic prompted the UN Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial Killings, Summary and Arbitrary Executions, Christof Heyns, to note these accounts when he issued his report to the UN Human Rights Council on June 21. Speaking in Geneva at a meeting sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union, he said that if these reports are true, “those further attacks are a war crime.” There has been ample confirmation of those allegations since that time, as Greenwald writes.

The Geneva Conventions state that protections must be afforded to people who “collect and care for the wounded, whether friend or foe.”

On Aug. 19, Ben Emmerson, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism, called on the United States to make itself open to a full UN investigation of its drone program. Emmerson said that by refusing to confirm or deny the existence of the program, while allowing selected officials to publicly claim that it is legal, the U.S. Administration “is holding its finger in the dam of public accountability. There are now a large number of lawsuits, in different parts of the world, including in the UK, Pakistan and in the U.S. itself, through which pressure for investigation and accountability is building.”

The London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) has been tracking these attacks since at least [February 2012](#). The first such known attack took

place in North Waziristan on May 16, 2009, where, according to the BIJ, CIA drones slammed into a group of Taliban, killing about a dozen people. As rescuers were clambering through the rubble, a second wave of missiles hit. In all, at least 29 people were killed.

This tactic of follow-up attacks on those responding to the first attack, has been used again and again, although, prior to the Obama Administration, Greenwald notes, Washington condemned the tactic as terrorism. A 2004 FBI alert warned that terrorists may use secondary explosive devices set to go off after the first one, to target first responders. The Department of Homeland Security in 2007 called the tactic “double tap,” and claimed that this was a favorite tactic of Hamas.

Growing Evidence

Since February, there have been numerous other cases of CIA drones turning around and attacking rescuers after the initial strike against alleged militants (Greenwald notes that all military-age males in the target zone are branded “militants” by the U.S., even though much of the time, the targeters really don’t know who they are).

On June 4, U.S. drones attacked rescuers in Waziristan, killing 16 people, according to the BBC. Between May 2009 and June 2011, at least 15 attacks on rescuers were reported by what Greenwald calls “credible news media, including the *New York Times*, CNN, ABC News and Al Jazeera.” AFP wrote on Aug. 19 that at least one of the numerous strikes against Pakistan that day was aimed at rescuers.

As bad as these attacks are, equally evil is the silence in the West, even as attacks on funerals in Syria (allegedly by the government) and Yemen (allegedly by al-Qaeda) draw expressions of outrage.

“The reason for the silence about such matters,” says Greenwald, “and the reason commentary of this sort sparks such anger and hostility, is two-fold: first, the U.S. likes to think of terror as something only ‘others’ engage in, not itself, and more so; second, supporters of Barack Obama, the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, simply do not want to think about him as someone who orders attacks on those rescuing his victims or funeral attendees gathered to mourn them. That, however, is precisely what he is, as this mountain of evidence conclusively establishes.”