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From: Debra Sweet | [Original Article](#)

When Barack Obama announced in [early 2010](#) that he had put Anwar al-Awlaki on his hit list, I heard from people for whom the announcement was a breaking point in their support for the president.



Graphic from 2010 ad by World Can't Wait

World Can't Wait published a statement titled [Crimes Are Crimes, No Matter Who Does Them](#) . It said

In some respects, this is worse than Bush. First, because Obama has claimed the right to

assassinate American citizens whom he suspects of “terrorism,” merely on the grounds of his own suspicion or that of the CIA, something Bush never claimed publicly.

The ad got significant support in *The New York Review of Books*, and *Rolling Stone*. It was much more controversial when it went into

*The New York Times*

, on the anniversary of Bush’s bombing and occupation of Afghanistan, October 6, 2010. That paper, so far, has not published its opinion on the Obama administration’s killing of al-Awlaki and another American, on September 30, in a secret operation in Yemen, so we may assume it joins in supporting this crime by our government.

On October 2, they published an opinion by Jack Goldsmith, who you’ll remember as a lawyer for the Bush regime tainted by the torture scandal. Titled [A Just Act of War](#), Goldsmith’s piece praises Obama’s aggression, because the Office of Legal Counsel came up with opinions justifying the killing by unmanned drone of al-Awlaki and another American citizen. For Goldsmith “what due process requires depends on context,” so it’s all good.

Monday, The New York Times ran a piece against the killing by [Yasir Qadhi](#), an American Muslim cleric currently at Yale who says in

[Assassinating al-Awlaki Was Counterproductive](#)

The assassination is hypocritical because America routinely criticizes (and justifiably so) such extrajudicial assassinations when they occur at the hands of another government.

The Bush-loving [Washington Times](#), in a piece by Rowan Scarborough, whines that [Al-Awlaki would have been difficult to try as a civilian](#)

. So just kill him.

“I think it’s pretty easy to understand why they didn’t take him alive. Would you want to deal with the hassle of trying to put him on trial, an American citizen that has gotten so much press for being the target of a [CIA](#) kill order? That would be a nightmare. The ACLU would be crawling

all over the [Justice Department](#) for due process in an [American court](#),” said a former military intelligence officer who worked with special operations troops to hunt down high-value terrorism targets.

Over at the more “liberal” [Washington Post](#), John Bellinger III settles for the administrations’ self-enforcing opinion:

the [Justice Department reportedly prepared an opinion](#) concluding that his killing would comply with domestic and international law. This is likely to be considered sufficient due process under U.S. constitutional standards.

Leaving aside this monstrous immorality — *no* government should be allowed to kill with impunity, much less from a distance, in secret, off a battlefield — there may be a price the U.S. pays for such actions. Even Jack Goldsmith acknowledges

Such caution, however, does not guarantee legitimacy at home or abroad. There are relatively few complaints in American society about the drone program, but drones are becoming increasingly controversial outside the United States on the ground that they violate international law.

The best piece on what line has been crossed here is Glenn Greenwald’s Friday piece in Salon. See [The due-process-free assassination of U.S. citizens is now reality](#). [Today](#), he says

This was absolutely the heart and soul of the Bush War on Terror: *the President can do whatever he wants to anyone he wants — with no oversight, due process, or checks — because we’re at War and these are Bad Terrorists (says the President, unilaterally and in secret).*

Don't want a world like this? Protest on October 6, 7, 8, and keep at it. Ten years is way too long for the richest country to be destroying one of the poorest on the planet, Afghanistan.

Protest the war. World Can't Wait [listing](#) s. 10YearsandCounting [listings](#) .

[October2011.org](#) at Freedom Plaza. I'll be there. Join us!