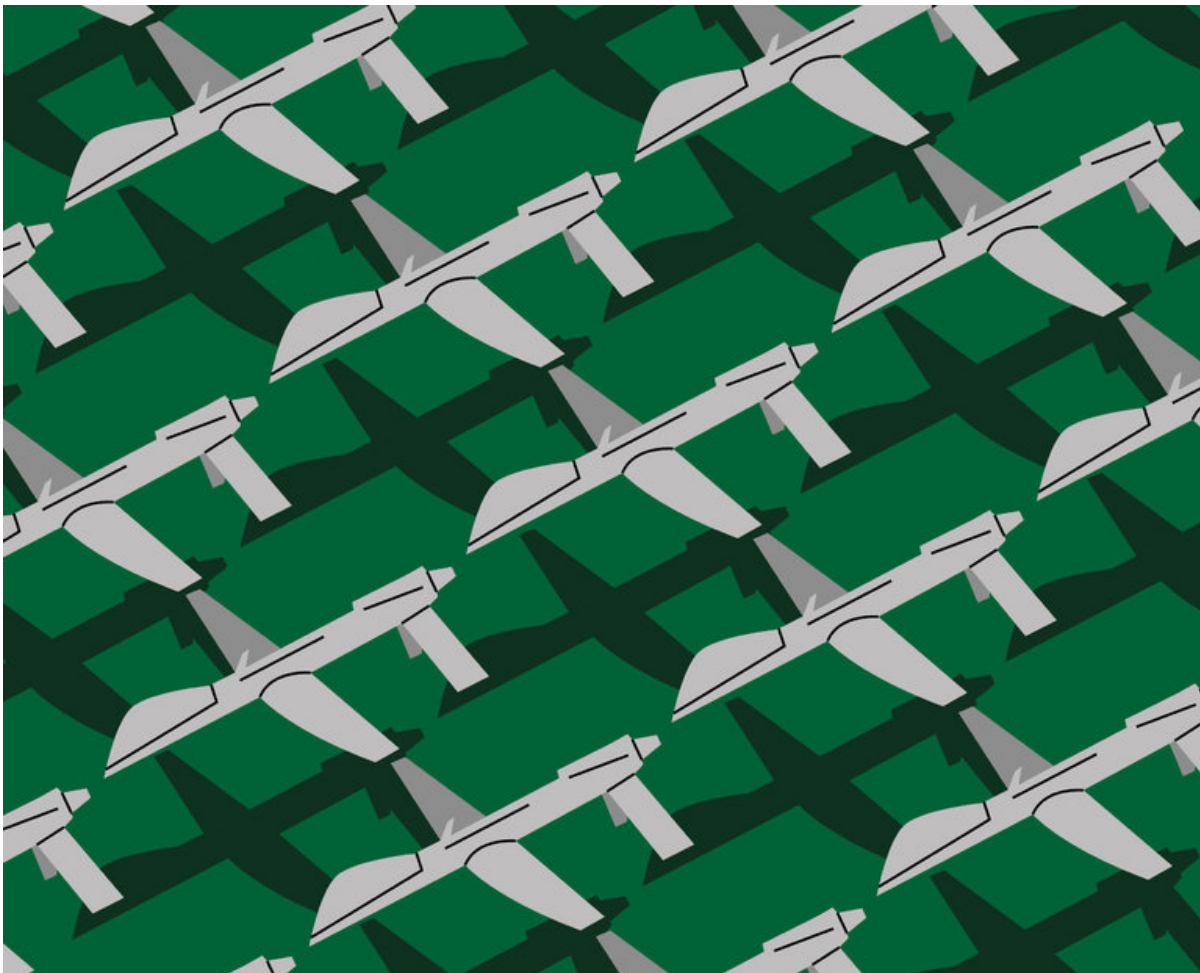


By The Editorial Board

From [The New York Times](#) | Original Article

***Commentary in all caps is made by Ed Kinane of Upstate Drone Action.***



*AJ Dungo*

For nearly a decade, drone strikes have been central to America's counterterrorism policy. Operated from remote locations,

OR, A LITTLE MORE PRECISELY: FROM U.S. MILITARY BASES BOTH HERE AND ABROAD.

the small aircraft can hover over targets for long periods of time and kill extremists

ALLEGEDLY KILL ALLEGED "EXTREMISTS." VERY SLIPPERY WORD. WHO IS "EXTREME"

AND WHO GETS TO DEFINE WHO THEY ARE. FUNNY THING, THE REPUBLICANS, AS FAR BACK AS PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL BARRY GOLDWATER, USED TO SPEAK PRETTY HIGHLY OF "EXTREMISM."

with precision without risking American casualties.

SO IT'S ONLY U.S. CASUALTIES THAT MATTER? IN FACT, U.S. DRONES, VIOLATING DUE PROCESS, HAVE ASSASSINATED AND OTHERWISE KILLED AT LEAST A HANDFUL OF U.S. CITIZENS.

President [Barack Obama](#) found drones so effective and useful that over two terms, he approved 542 strikes that killed 3,797 people

USING THESE PSEUDO-STATS IN THIS WAY PERPETUATES THE LEGEND THAT WEAPONIZED DRONES ARE "PRECISE" AND THAT WE SOMEHOW KNOW HOW MANY AND WHO ARE KILLED IN DRONE STRIKES.

in non-battlefield areas where American forces were not directly engaged, including Pakistan, [Yemen](#) and [Somalia](#).

THE NY TIMES IS PERPETUATING THE NOTION THAT U.S. FORCES - JSOC, FOR EXAMPLE - WEREN'T OPERATING ON THE GROUND IN THESE TARGET AREAS.

But this seductive tool of modern warfare has a dark side. Seemingly bloodless

OH!!!!

and distant, drone strikes can tempt presidents and military commanders to inflict grave damage without sufficient forethought, violating sovereign rights

NOT TO MENTION THE U.N. CHARTER, AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL LAW. AND ARTICLE SIX OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

and killing innocent civilians.

NOT TO MENTION ARMED OTHERS WHO CAN BE SAID TO BE RESISTING ATTACKS ON THEIR LAND. WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS A FAIR CHARACTERIZATION OF THEIR MOTIVES, AT LEAST THEY AREN'T INVADING THE U.S.

Civilian deaths during Mr. Obama's tenure undermined American counterterrorism operations

SUCH OPERATIONS WERE THEMSELVES - LIKE AERIAL WARFARE GENERALLY -  
TERRORISM.

THE SO-CALLED "WAR ON TERRORISM" IS A WAR OF TERRORISM.

and became a recruiting tool for more extremists.

Mr. Obama was persuaded to impose sensible constraints on the use of drone strikes between 2013 and 2016.

IS THE NY TIMES SUGGESTING THAT MR. OBAMA HAD THE POWER TO "IMPOSE" ON  
THE  
WAR MACHINE OR THAT DURING HIS ADMINISTRATION DRONES WERE DEPLOYED  
WITH  
"SENSIBLE CONSTRAINT"?

The White House would decide which individuals outside of the traditional war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan could be targeted, and there had to be "near certainty" that no civilians would be killed. In traditional

"TRADITIONAL" BUT NONETHELESS ILLEGAL

war zones, military commanders make these decisions without interagency review, and the threshold for acceptable civilian casualties is less strict.

Now

ONLY JUST NOW?

comes disturbing news: President Trump and his administration are moving to dilute or circumvent the Obama rules. This could have disastrous outcomes,

"COULD HAVE"???

not least because Mr. Trump seems even more enticed by drone warfare than Mr. Obama was. In the days since his inauguration, the tempo of airstrikes has increased significantly.

YES.

Mr. Trump has already granted a Pentagon request to declare parts of three provinces in Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is fighting Iranian-backed Houthis rebels, to be an “area of active hostilities.” This, [The Times has reported](#), would enable more permissive battlefield rules to apply. The president is also expected to soon approve a Pentagon proposal to do the same for parts of Somalia, where militants of the Shabab who are linked to [Al Qaeda](#) threaten regional stability.

IS IT JUST POSSIBLE THAT THE U.S. IMPERIAL PRESENCE IN THE REGION IS WHAT THREATENS "REGIONAL STABILITY"?

Both designations are supposed to be temporary, giving the administration time to decide

whether to rescind or relax the Obama rules more broadly.

Military commanders often chafe at civilian oversight. But there is no evidence that the Obama rules have slowed counterterrorism efforts, and there are good reasons to keep them in place, including the fact that the legal basis for such strikes lacks credibility because Congress never updated the 2001 authorization for war in Afghanistan to take account of America's expanded military action against terrorists in [Syria](#), Yemen and Libya.

SO, IF ONLY THE CONGRESS ATTENDS TO THE BUREAUCRATIC DETAIL OF  
"UPDATING"  
THE RULES, ALL WILL BE OKAY?

Mr. Trump should heed the advice of [national security experts](#) who have urged the retention of strict standards

AS IF UNDER MR OBAMA "STRICT STANDARDS" WERE MAINTAINED?! HAVE THE NY  
TIMES  
EDITORS NOT READ JEREMY SCAHILL'S "DIRTY WARS"?

for using force in non-battlefield areas and warned how even a small number of civilian deaths or injuries can "cause significant strategic setbacks" to American interests.

THE MIND-DEADENING PHRASE "AMERICAN INTERESTS," LIKE "TERRORISM," IS  
SELDOM  
DEFINED BY PUNDITS AND THE AUGUST NY TIMES. SUCH MAIN STREAM MEDIA  
SELDOM

ACKNOWLEDGE, IF EVER, THAT "AMERICAN INTERESTS" = THE INTERESTS OF U.S. CORPORATIONS.

He has already seen how a badly executed mission can have disastrous results: the [raid in Yemen](#) in January that resulted in the deaths of a member of the Navy's SEAL Team 6 and numerous civilians, including children.

AND WHAT WERE THE SEALS DOING THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

And as most experts agree, killing terrorists does not by itself solve the threat from extremists.

THERE'S THAT SLIPPERY NY TIMES LANGUAGE AGAIN.

For that, Mr. Trump will need a comprehensive policy that also deals with improved governance

IS THE NY TIMES SUGGESTING THAT MR TRUMP AND THOSE THAT PUT HIM IN POWER SHOULD GET TO IMPOSE THEIR NOTION OF "IMPROVED GOVERNANCE"?!

in the countries where terrorists thrive and with ways to counter their violent messages on social media.

