

## **ROBOT WARFARE Newsletter #1, December 29, 2010, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace**

Robot Wars are being designed and elements of them are already familiar to us. Drones are an example. The following five articles describe their liabilities. The peace movement will become increasingly preoccupied with the technology and consequences of robot wars with the aim of preventing and reducing them. I hope other OMNI members will add their research in future newsletters. D

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### **“The Dead were Completely Unrecognisable”**

Interview With Family Devastated by US Drone Attack By Asim Qureshi

**September 24, 2010 "[Information Clearing House](#)"** -- EXCLUSIVE - Cageprisoners interview with Haider whose brother-in-law Mohammed Asghar and his friends became the victims of an unlawful US drone attack.

#### **CP: Could you please introduce yourself?**

Bismillahir rahmaanir raheem

Haider: My name is Haider. My brother-in-law, Mohammed Asghar, lived in Peshawar and worked as a money exchanger in the markets there.

#### **CP: Where did the drone attack take place?**

H: The attacks took place in North Waziristan, Miranshah in District Ahmadkheel. My brother-in-law had friends he was visiting in Waziristan. As he was a guest there - and as is the custom of the people - many of the locals gathered to welcome him into the area. He sat with a group of these people from the community when everybody gathered to pray the evening prayer ('Isha) together. The drone attack happened in the middle of the prayers and the entire congregation was martyred.

#### **CP: Were there any Taliban or Al Qaeda in the gathering or were they all civilians?**

H: All the people gathered were locals from the community who had come to welcome the new guest to the area. The people are renowned for their hospitality and it is unthinkable for them that somebody would come to visit and they would not have a gathering to welcome them. In total, 31 people were killed. Drone attacks are so powerful nobody can escape them merely injured.

#### **CP: How did you find out this happened?**

H: Between our area and Waziristan is an 8 hour journey. The drone attack happened at night time and we all knew about it by the following morning. People who had witnessed the attack had come to tell us and described what they saw of the remnants and damage in the aftermath. They said the attack was so severe that they could not even distinguish the bodies from one another- even the bones of the people were completely blown apart. The dead were completely unrecognisable. My brother in law's coffin was tightly sealed and we were not allowed to open it to view anything. We had the coffin with us for 30 minutes before it was taken away for burial.

#### **CP: Why do you think the US/Pakistan government do this and what do you think they hope to gain?**

H: We just don't know. We don't know how much authority Pakistan has given the US to attack our

areas and we don't know until when the US are given free license by the Pakistani government to carry out these drone attacks. So far between 1400-1600 people have died as a result of these attacks. Nobody takes responsibility for these civilian deaths. Ask the journalists or officials for the true statistics, we know that it is 1400-1600 civilians, women and children killed. In this, they would have been lucky to even have 11 or 12 'militants' amongst them. These attacks are so widespread that even my brother in law who lives in Peshawar was made a victim of it. Who do I appeal to? Where can I go? I don't even know who to hold responsible for his death and how I do it.

I am shocked that the US can come to attack Pakistan in this way and Pakistan does not even have the authority to question them on the deaths they are causing. The civilians in all these regions are extremely frightened and fearful. They can't work in the day, nor can they sleep during the night. As soon as they hear the slightest sound of an aeroplane, they flee in panic from their homes and buildings trying to find a place for security. The whole community is in a state of fear and I just cannot explain to you how unbearable these calamities are for the people. Every household has at least half of its people martyred (i.e.: killed) as a result of these attacks. I simply do not understand what the understanding between Pakistan the US is on this matter.

**CP: Haider, thank you for taking the time to speak with us and we are sorry for your loss.** *This item was first posted at <http://www.cageprisoners.com>*

## **Pakistani Opposition Politician Imran Khan on US Drone Attacks, the "Massive Human Catastrophe" in the Swat Valley and the Escalation of War in Afghanistan June 24, 2009**

At least sixty people have reportedly died in the South Waziristan region of western Pakistan after a US drone attack Tuesday. The attack came as the Pakistani army and air force expanded their military operations from Swat into South Waziristan. We speak with Pakistani opposition figure and cricketing legend Imran Khan, the leader of the political party known as the Movement for Justice. Khan has been an outspoken critic of both US drone attacks as well as the Pakistani military's offensive against the Taliban. [includes *Democracy Now* 9-24-10]

## **CIA Drastically Increases Drone Campaign in Pakistan**

The CIA has drastically increased its bombing campaign in the mountains of Pakistan in recent weeks. According to the *New York Times*, the CIA has launched **at least twenty attacks with armed drone aircraft so far in September**, the most ever during a single month. According to one Pakistani intelligence official, the recent drone attacks have not killed any senior Taliban or al-Qaeda leaders. Many senior operatives have already fled the region to escape the CIA drone campaign. *Democracy Now* (9-28-10)

## **US Attack Helicopters Strike Inside Pakistan**

US Apache attack helicopters have carried out at least three air strikes inside Pakistan in recent days, killing more than seventy alleged militants. Pakistan criticized the NATO operation, saying the attack helicopters illegally entered Pakistani air space, but Pentagon officials said the strikes were done in **self-defense**. While the US regularly uses pilotless drone aircraft for missile strikes in Pakistan,

manned military flights across the border have been rare up until now. *Democracy Now* (9-28-10)  
[Self-defense? A blatant example of US double-standards based upon the US myth of exceptionalism.  
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## **US Drone Attacks Are No Laughing Matter, Mr. Obama**

Mehdi Hasan, *Guardian* UK

**Intro: "The president's backing of indiscriminate slaughter in Pakistan can only encourage new waves of militancy."**

**READ MORE** <https://mail.google.com/mail/?hl=en&shva=1#inbox/12d30c31701a7aa5>  
<http://www.readersupportednews.org/>

## **COMMANDERS OF DRONES ON TRIAL**

### **“Activists Go on Trial in Nevada for Protesting Obama Admin Drone Program”**

*Democracy Now* 9-13-10

This week marks the beginning of a trial for fourteen antiwar (the “Creech 14”) activists who held a ten-day vigil outside the Creech Air Force Base in Indian Springs, Nevada last year. The base is one of several homes of the American military’s aerial drone program in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The activists were charged with criminal trespassing for entering the base with a letter describing their opposition to the drone program. Speaking out against US military drones

John Dear, SJ – “On the Road to Peace” *National Catholic Reporter* September 28, 2010

On Sept. 14, thirteen others and I -- known together as the "Creech 14" -- went on trial in Las Vegas, Nev., for an action we committed in April 2009 at Creech Air Force Base to protest the U.S. military's use of unmanned drones in combat abroad.

paste this link into your browser <http://ncronline.org/node/20460>

### **TESTIMONY BASED ON INTERNATIONAL LAWS**

From *Desert Voices: The Newsletter of the Nevada Desert Experience* (Nov./Dec. 2010): Generally in such trials judges allow no to little defense testimony regarding motives, ethics, or international law, but this was an exception, putting drones themselves on trial under international laws. The judge allowed defendants to call three expert witnesses—former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, ret. Col. Ann Wright, and Bill Quigley of the Center for Constitutional Rights. They asserted:

Intentional killings—assassinations--is a war crime, as embodied in U.S. constitutional law.

Drone strikes kill a disproportionate number of civilians.

People have the right and duty to stop war crimes.

According to Nuremberg principles, individuals are required to disobey domestic orders that cause crimes against humanity.

Defendant Renee Espeland said: “I am bound by the law of our land that makes it my duty to stop the killing of civilians and to protect U.S. soldiers being ordered to perform illegal acts.”

**WHY IS THERE GENERAL SILENCE?** Contact OMNI to raise your voice.

## **Smarter Than You Think. War Machines: Recruiting Robots for Combat”**

FORT BENNING, Ga. — War would be a lot safer, the Army says, if only more of it were fought by robots.

Yet the idea that robots on wheels or legs, with sensors and guns, might someday replace or supplement human soldiers is still a source of extreme controversy. Because robots can stage attacks with little immediate risk to the people who operate them, opponents say that robot warriors lower the barriers to warfare, potentially making nations more trigger-happy and leading to a new technological arms race.

“Wars will be started very easily and with minimal costs” as automation increases, predicted Wendell

Wallach, a scholar at the Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics and chairman of its technology and ethics study group.

Civilians will be at greater risk, people in Mr. Wallach's camp argue, because of the challenges in distinguishing between fighters and innocent bystanders. That job is maddeningly difficult for human beings on the ground. It only becomes more difficult when a device is remotely operated.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/science/28robot.html?\\_r=1&ref=global-home](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/science/28robot.html?_r=1&ref=global-home)