

# Afghanistan: Shooting Handcuffed Children

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The occupied government of Afghanistan and the United Nations have both concluded that U.S.-led troops recently dragged eight sleeping children out of their beds, handcuffed some of them, and shot them all dead. While this apparently constitutes an everyday act of kindness, far less intriguing than the vicious singeing of his pubic hairs by Captain Underpants, it is at least a variation on the ordinary American technique of murdering men, women, and children by the dozens with unmanned drones.

Also this week in Afghanistan, eight CIA assassins (see if you can find a more appropriate name for them) were murdered by a suicide bombing that one of them apparently executed against the other seven. The Taliban in Pakistan claims credit and describes the mass-murder as revenge for the CIA's drone killings. And we thought unmanned drones were War Perfected because none of the right people would have to risk their lives. Oops. Perhaps Detroit-bound passengers risked theirs unwittingly.

The CIA has declared its intention to seek revenge for the suicide strike. Who knows what the assassination of sleeping students was revenge for. Perhaps the next lunatic to try blowing up something in the United States will be seeking revenge for whatever Obama does to avenge the victims (television viewers?) of the Crotch Crusader. Certainly there will be numerous more acts of violence driven by longings for revenge against the drone pilots and the shooters of students.

In a civilized world, the alternative to vengeance is justice. Often we can even set aside feelings of revenge as long as we are able to act so as to deter more crime. But at the same time that the puppet president of Afghanistan is demanding the arrest of the troops who shot the handcuffed children, the puppet government of Iraq is facing up to the refusal of the United States to seriously prosecute the Blackwater assassins of innocent Iraqis. Justice will not be permitted as an alternative to vengeance — the mere idea is anti-American.

No one so much as blinks at the CIA's avowal of vengeance for the recent suicide attack, never mind the illegality, because the entire illegal war on Afghanistan/Pakistan was launched and is still maintained as a pretended act of revenge for the crimes of 9-11. Of course, we're not bombing the flight schools or the German and Spanish hotels. Of course, we admit that there are fewer than 100 members of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Of course we openly seek massive permanent bases and an oil pipeline. Of course, Obama's decisions are all electoral calculations computed by the calculus of cowardice. Of course, we're prosecuting the Butt Bomber as a criminal, just as we always used to prosecute criminals as criminals. Of course, revenge would not be a legal justification for war even if we could persuade ourselves it was a sane one. But the war is publicly understood as revenge, the

resistance by its victims is understood as revenge, the escalation is understood as revenge for the resistance, and an eye for an eye slowly makes the whole world blind.

But here's what we've forgotten: nothing is ever remotely as horrible as war. So, nothing can ever constitute a justification for launching or escalating or continuing a war. Dragging children out of bed and killing them is not a freak blip in the course of a war. It is war reduced to a comprehensible scale. It's less war, not worse war. Everything we are spending our grandchildren's unearned pay on, borrowed from China at great expense, all of it is for the murdering of human beings. And it will remain so for eternity, no matter how many times you chant "Support Duh Troops."

I know many soldiers and mercenaries had few other options, given our failure to invest in any other industries. I know they've been lied to. I know they're scared and tired. But they wouldn't be there if we brought them home. And I support a full investment in their physical and mental and economic recovery. What I don't support is anyone participating in these wars, and that includes every single American who is not putting every spare moment into demanding that Congress stop forking over the money.

It's blood money. It's payment for murder. It cannot be defended. It cannot be permitted. We must [stop it now](#). We must [shut down](#) the place it comes from.

Not another dime. Not another dollar. Not another death. Not another thought of revenge.

*David Swanson is the author of the new book "Daybreak: Undoing the Imperial Presidency and Forming a More Perfect Union" by Seven Stories Press. You can order it and find out when tour will be in your town: <http://davidswanson.org/book>.*

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