

Ahmed Mohamed and Abdulrahman al-Awlaki: Obama's Kill List Hypocrisy

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The president that expanded U.S. wars throughout the Muslim world thinks he can make himself appear Muslim-friendly by inviting a kid to the White House. President Obama "makes a mockery of principles such as the right to trial when his agenda finds democracy too inconvenient," calmly placing people on his weekly Kill List, then pretends to empathize with a teenager victimized by Texas-style Islamophobia. "Cool clock, Ahmed. Want to bring it to the White House? We should inspire more kids like you to like science. It's what makes America great."

Those words came from president Obama's twitter account after a 14-year old Texan named Ahmed Mohamed became world famous. The high school student brought his homemade clock to school but was later escorted out in handcuffs after a teacher reported that he had a bomb. Racism, Islamophobia, draconian "zero tolerance" policies, and base ignorance all played a role in the disgraceful turn of events.

When social media turned Mohamed's name into a household word the president weighed-in with his words of support. But unlike other individuals who felt genuine empathy or outrage about this case, the presidential tweet came with doses of hypocrisy and opportunism. Obama is no protector of the rights of Muslim teens, as Abdulrahman al-Awlaki's family can attest.

Abdulrahman and his father Anwar were murdered on the president's orders in 2011. Both American citizens, they ran afoul of the never ending "war on terror" and Obama's political ambitions in the year before his re-election campaign.

In the absence of legislation, judicial precedent or any case law, Barack Obama declared that he had the right to assassinate anyone in the world, including American citizens like the Awlakis. Anwar al-Awlaki was [never even charged](#) [3] with a crime. Like his predecessors, Obama makes a mockery of principles such as the right to trial when his agenda finds democracy too inconvenient. His acolytes love to point out that the president once taught constitutional law. That fact doesn't count for much in reality but neither do any of the claims that justify continuing a war of terror against the Muslim world.

The Obama administration made quite a big show of announcing the "kill list" policy which ended the Awlakis lives. The *New York Times* was happily used as the [messenger](#) [4] when the administration eagerly revealed the inner workings of the assassination decision making process. There was precious little outrage about the president of the United States acting like a mafia boss, even after Anwar al-Awlaki was rubbed out like a rival gangster. When his son was killed in another drone strike two weeks later the White House pretended it had all been a mistake and tried to cover their crime by claiming that the 16-year old was 21.

Needless to say there were teenage victims of the United States and NATO in Libya in 2011. That was not just a bad year for the Awlakis, but for millions of people first in Libya and then Syria who had the misfortune of being on the wrong side of the regime change line.

These aggressions should not be forgotten because the president decided to jump on the #istandwithahmed bandwagon. He may have Ramadan Iftar dinners at the White House or speak Arabic words at the opportune moment, but his policies against the Muslim world are even more ruthless than those of his much more reviled predecessor George W. Bush.

The president cannot be let off the hook because of a social media post. He bears a great deal of responsibility for the continued animus against Muslim people. By criminalizing an entire region he gives credence to the belief that its people are criminals and unworthy of being thought of as human beings. If the Awlakis can be killed, if Syrians and Libyans can have their countries torn asunder and Pakistanis and Afghans can be victims of drone strikes on presidential whims, then a precocious teenager can be hauled off by the police.

Obama has always gotten too much credit and too little scorn because he is disliked by racist, dead ender Republicans. Of course, if Fox news and Sarah Palin criticize the president's response to the Ahmed Mohamed case he is again seen as the bulwark of enlightenment when he is in fact just the more effective evil.

Ahmed was released without being arrested and no charges were filed against him. He has been embraced by people all over the world and the White House is not alone in rolling out the red carpet of welcome. But the effects of the traumatic experience have apparently not left him. His father reported that his son has lost his appetite and isn't sleeping well. Ahmed added that the family is now "torn and confused" by their experience.

There are thousands of Ahmeds all over the country, reliving the terror of interactions with police. There are Ahmeds in the Middle East and north Africa who have survived America's attempts to take their lives. Unfortunately that will all be forgotten when Obama gets his photo opportunity with this teenager. He is lucky to live in Texas and not Syria. In this country the president isn't trying to kill him.

Margaret Kimberley's Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well as at <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com>. [5]Ms. Kimberley lives in New York City, and can be reached via e-Mail at [Margaret.Kimberley\(at\)BlackAgendaReport.com](mailto:Margaret.Kimberley(at)BlackAgendaReport.com).

Notes:

[1] http://www.blackagendareport.com/ahmed_mohamed_and_abdulrahman_al-awlaki

[2] <http://www.blackagendareport.com/category/department-war/war-against-islam>

[3]

<https://www.aclu.org/cases/al-aulaqi-v-obama-constitutional-challenge-proposed-killing-us-citizen?re-direct=national-security/al-aulaqi-v-obama>

[4] <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html>

[5] <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com/>

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