

# **“Fabricated War on Terrorism”: Pentagon Drone Attacks Killed Many Innocent People with Impunity**

New York Times report vindicates further the struggle against “permanent war” and “targeted assassinations

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*A frontpage New York Times Magazine report on Sunday January 2 revealed in chilling details the systematic targeting of peoples in territories where the United States government had declared a frontline battlefield against its fabricated “war on terrorism.”*

In fact, the “war on terrorism” was a calculated efforts to enhance and secure the status of the U.S. as the dominant imperialist country in the world.

The use of drones has become a major weapon in the war arsenal of the Pentagon since the usage of this long-range ordnance minimizes U.S. casualties. The less injuries and deaths reported by the corporate and western government-controlled media outlets, the more the Pentagon and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can attempt to build support for aggressive military actions against perceived enemies.

In justifying the use of drone warfare, the Pentagon and its allies continue to say that civilians unconnected with the so-called “terrorists” or “jihadists” are never injured or killed. Nonetheless, the New York Times reports and in years prior, the revelations from WikiLeaks, exposed these genocidal war crimes for the world to see.

With the withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the refusal to fully exit Iraq and Syria, the White House, Pentagon and State Department are looking for additional avenues to assert its military and economic prowess amid a rapidly shifting international situation. Although tensions are escalating between Washington and the governments of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, among others in Latin America and Africa, the political status of the current administration of President Joe Biden would be further comprised in the event of a major geo-political conflict in Eastern Europe, the Asia-Pacific or South America and the Caribbean.

Obviously losing influence around the world, the Biden administration has issued threats against Beijing and Moscow. They have accused China of planning to retake Taiwan and

Russia of positioning itself militarily to intervene in neighboring Ukraine. These allegations are baseless since it is the U.S. which has sought to minimize and destabilize the governments in Beijing and Moscow. Holding a “Democracy Summit” while ignoring large and significant states such as Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela, etc., can only fuel international tensions.

The [New York Times Magazine article](#) written by Azmat Khan with photos from Ivor Prickett says:

“The Times obtained more than 1,300 confidential Pentagon assessments of allegations of civilian casualties in the American-led air war in the Middle East, between September 2014 and January 2018, during the height of the war against the Islamic State. Based on those documents, The Times recently reported patterns of failed intelligence, decision-making and execution behind deadly airstrikes. These documents detail the criteria and rationales for how the Pentagon chose to classify civilian casualty allegations as either credible or noncredible.”

Although these documents only cover a period of four years during the war against the so-called “Islamic State” in Iraq and northern Syria, the drone and other targeted bomb attacks on people within these two countries and neighboring nations such as Yemen, have been going on since the post-2001 intervention in Afghanistan. Even prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, the utilization of targeted assassinations through bombings has been standard practice of U.S. imperialism and its allies.

Khan does deal with the impact of the air war in Afghanistan as well. Many innocent civilians lost their lives as a result of the purported failure of the Pentagon to properly target its designated enemies within ISIS, the Taliban and other organizations. The Pentagon’s own internal investigations and assessments reinforced the disregard for human life in the “war on terrorism.”

Moreover, the “Islamist” groupings from al-Qaeda to ISIS and its affiliates, have their origins in the wars waged by the Pentagon and NATO in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. These organizations have been used by the U.S. to overthrow states in Africa and Asia which represented independence from the western imperialist policies. At the same time, the very existence of al-Qaeda and ISIS and their being labelled as “terrorists”, provides a rationale for the continued deployment of U.S. military forces and the launching of drone attacks.

Even with these contradictory narratives in place, the failure to understand the geography of these countries and the predominant languages which are spoken, contributed immensely to the deaths and injuries of noncombatants. The New York Times reports on drone attacks reveals that the wrong areas, towns and villages were struck while there was no thorough investigation of these errors where casualties occurred.

Khan notes in the same NYT Magazine report that: “In some assessments, the Pentagon simply confused towns with the same or similar names and dismissed the claims, the documents show, as happened with a reported airstrike on a Syrian town in March 2017. Several social media posts said that the strike had hit a neighborhood in Maskana, part of Aleppo Province in Syria, killing at least eight people. An internal Pentagon team flagged the claim for further review. The documents show that assessors zeroed in on Maskana, but it was the wrong one. There is a town with the same name in Homs, a different province of

Syria. The reviewers were unable to find correlating airstrikes, and the allegation was dismissed.”

These facts require an independent investigation into the war crimes and the punishment of those responsible. However, the policy of military impunity seems to be thoroughly ingrained into the policies of the Pentagon.

#### Those Who Exposed War Crimes Should Be Exonerated

What is often overlooked in the period between the beginning of the first Iraq war in 1991 and continuing through the invasions of Afghanistan (2001), the occupation of Iraq in 2003, the destruction of Libya (2011) and the continuing destabilization efforts against Syria (2011-present), is that significant resistance to these genocidal wars took place outside and inside the military.



Some of the most well-known people who exposed these criminal acts are Julian Assange of WikiLeaks, Edward Snowden, a private contractor with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Chelsea Manning, a former soldier accused of sharing military secrets with WikiLeaks. Snowden was driven into exile in Russia, Manning was court martialed under the Espionage Act and served seven years in U.S. military prisons, while Assange is facing extradition to the U.S. to stand trial.

There is no way that Assange can have a fair trial in the U.S. since both the Democratic and Republican parties are implicated in these war crimes which were exposed by WikiLeaks. Since the crimes of the Pentagon have long been exposed and the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan illustrated the futility of the occupations, Assange, Snowden and Manning should be pardoned for their work.

Assange took refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy for seven years (2012-2019) until there was a right-wing change of government which ousted him from the building. He was arrested by the British authorities while the U.S. heightened its efforts to have him extradited to stand trial for supposedly hacking into State Department and Defense Department files. A lower court in Britain held up the extradition due to mental health concerns expressed through the lawyers for Assange. Nonetheless, the British High Court overturned the decision under the guise that the U.S. has given guarantees that Assange would be treated fairly and not placed in heavily restricted custody.

In a [report published by the British Broadcasting Corporation \(BBC\)](#) on the High Court ruling it emphasizes that:

“If convicted in the U.S., Mr. Assange, 50, faces a possible penalty of up to 175 years in jail, his lawyers have said. However, the U.S. government said the sentence was more likely to be between four and six years. Mr. Assange faces an 18-count indictment from the U.S. government, accusing him of conspiring to hack into U.S. military databases to acquire sensitive secret information relating to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, which was then published on the Wikileaks website. He says the information exposed abuses by the U.S. military. But U.S. prosecutors say the leaks of classified material endangered lives, and so the U.S. sought his extradition from the UK.”

This argument that the exposure of war crimes cost lives is absurd. It was not Assange that carried out drone attacks and other bombing operations against innocent civilians and journalists. The lives were taken by the Pentagon based upon imperialist designs to control large swaths of territory in Central, South and West Asia along with Africa. It was the Pentagon war planes directed by high-ranking military officials, intelligence operatives and politicians that killed and maimed millions over the last two-to-three decades.

In addition to the mass killings, tens of millions more have been internally displaced and turned into refugees. The political, economic and military institutions of the U.S. and NATO countries are the ones that require prosecution, imprisonment and dismantlement in order for corrective justice to be achieved.

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