



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on June 28, 2010

Dozens of U.S. Citizens May Be on Obama Assassination List

The Washington Times reported June 24 that dozens of U.S. citizen may be targets for assassination by the Obama administration. "There are, in my mind, dozens of U.S. persons who are in different parts of the world, and they are very concerning to us," John O. Brennan, Deputy White House National Security Adviser for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, told the Washington Times June 24.



"If a person is a U.S. citizen, and he is on the battlefield in Afghanistan or Iraq trying to attack our troops, he will face the full brunt of the U.S. military response," Brennan said, adding: "If an American person or citizen is in a Yemen or in a Pakistan or in Somalia or another place, and they are trying to carry out attacks against U.S. interests, they also will face the full brunt of a U.S. response. And it can take many forms."

Salon's magazine's Glenn Greenwald [explained](#) what Brennan's statement meant:

"Nobody — or at least not me — disputes the right of the U.S. or any other country to kill someone on an actual battlefield during war without due process. That's just obvious, but that's not remotely what Brennan is talking about, and it's not remotely what this assassination program is about. Indeed, Brennan explicitly identified two indistinguishable groups of American citizens who "will face the full brunt of a U.S. response": (1) those "on the battlefield in Afghanistan or Iraq"; and (2) those "in a Yemen or in a Pakistan or in Somalia or another place." In other words, the entire world is a "battlefield" — countries where there is a war and countries where there isn't — and the President's "battlefield" powers, which are unlimited, extend everywhere. That theory — the whole world is a battlefield, even the U.S. — was the core premise that spawned 8 years of Bush/Cheney radicalism, and it has been adopted in full by the Obama administration (indeed, it was that "whole-world-is-a-battlefield" theory which Elena Kagan explicitly endorsed during her confirmation hearing for Solicitor General)."

The Obama assassination list was [first reported](#) by the *Washington Post*'s Dan Priest back on January 27, though at the time it was believed only three American citizens were on the list. Brennan's statement changes that math.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration and its spokesmen are still denying that having the U.S. military kill American citizens without trial far from the Afghan and Iraqi war zones constitutes an assassination list. CIA Director Leon Panetta did precisely that on ABC's *This Week* program [June 27](#):



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ABC's Jake Tapper: An American cleric who is now supposedly in Yemen, Anwar al-Awlaki. He has said to be on an assassination list by President Obama. Is that true and does being an American afford him any protection that any other terrorist might not enjoy?

CIA Director Pannetta: Awlaki is a terrorist who has declared war on the United States. Everything he's doing now is to try to encourage others to attack this country, there's a whole stream of intelligence that goes back to Awlaki and his continuous urging of others to attack this country in some way. You can track Awlaki to the Detroit bomber. We can track him to other attacks in this country that have been urged by Awlaki or that have been influenced by Awlaki. Awlaki is a terrorist and yes, he's a U.S. citizen, but he is first and foremost a terrorist and we're going to treat him like a terrorist. We don't have an assassination list, but I can tell you this. We have a terrorist list and he's on it.

The essence of Pannetta's statement means that if the President labels you a terrorist — whether you are guilty or not (and many Guantanamo terror suspects deemed the ["worst of the worst"](#) were later released in [mistaken identity cases](#)) — you are fair game for being killed without trial. President Obama and his officials may dispute the term "assassination list," but they have without a doubt completely adopted the Bush administration policy of the world being a battlefield. And because there are no civilian rights on a battlefield, the "global war on terror" is by definition a war on the rights of Americans that are supposed to have protected by the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Obama may have run on a platform of change, but he clearly hasn't changed course from the Bush administration attack on the U.S. Constitution.

Hat tip for this story: *Salon's* heroic civil libertarian [Glenn Greenwald](#)

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