



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 1, 2017

8-Year-Old Girl Becomes First U.S. Citizen Killed in Trump's Drone War

On Sunday, January 29, members of the so-called Seal Team Six carried out a commando operation that along with 14 alleged members of al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP), left more than a dozen other men, women, and children dead, including the eight-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, a man assassinated by the U.S. military in 2011. One American soldier was also killed.



As reported by various news outlets, here are the details of the deadly raid conducted by the U.S. Navy's elite special operations unit, under the protective cover of Reaper drones loaded with missiles, as reported by the U.K. branch of Reuters news service:

A U.S. commando died and three others were wounded carrying out a deadly dawn raid on the al Qaeda militant group in southern Yemen on Sunday, in the first military operation authorized by President Donald Trump.

The U.S. military said it killed 14 militants in a raid on a powerful al Qaeda branch that has been a frequent target of U.S. drone strikes. Medics at the scene, however, said around 30 people, including 10 women and children, were killed.

Two more U.S. servicemen were injured when an American military aircraft was sent to evacuate the wounded commandos but came under fire and had to be "intentionally destroyed in place," the Pentagon said.

The following version of events was provided by the Pentagon in a press release:

An estimated 14 al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula terrorists were killed yesterday during a raid by U.S. forces in Yemen, according to a U.S. Central Command news release issued today.

One U.S. service member died of wounds suffered in the raid, and three others were wounded....

The raid is one in a series of aggressive moves against terrorist planners in Yemen and worldwide, according to the Centcom release. Similar operations have produced intelligence on al-Qaida logistics, recruiting and financing efforts.

The "10 women and children" killed included Nawar al-Awlaki, the aforementioned daughter of suspected (now assassinated) Yemeni-born cleric Anwar Al-Awlaki. Although these casualties were presumably an unintended consequence of the U.S. military intervention in Yemen, it should be kept in mind that such "collateral damage," as well as the death of an American soldier, would not have occurred if the raid had not been undertaken.

While Abdulrahman al-Awlaki was one of several American citizens killed on the order of Barack Obama, eight-year-old Nawar al-Awlaki becomes the first U.S. citizen killed by Donald Trump since his



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inauguration.

A resident of the town where the raid occurred described the event in a statement to Reuters. “The operation began at dawn when a drone bombed the home of Abdulraoof al-Dhahab and then helicopters flew up and unloaded paratroopers at his house and killed everyone inside,” said the resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “Next, the gunmen opened fire at the U.S. soldiers who left the area, and the helicopters bombed the gunmen and a number of homes and led to a large number of casualties,” the unnamed source added.

How exactly was the little girl killed by the SEALs during this encounter? Her grandfather related the story of the sad scene to Reuters.

“She was hit with a bullet in her neck and suffered for two hours,” the girl’s grandfather Nasser al-Awlaki, who served as a minister under a previous government, told Reuters. “Why kill children? This is the new (U.S.) administration — it’s very sad, a big crime.”

Yes, it is undoubtedly a crime for an American serviceman to kill a 8-year-old girl.

The killing by the military of the other 29 or so men and women may have been justified had they been enemy combatants, people fighting against the United States after Congress had exercised its constitutional obligation by declaring a state of war with the United States and the targeted individuals. Such a condition does not exist, however, and those killed by Special Operations forces were sentenced to die by one man: Donald J. Trump.

There are those, of course, who cheer President Trump’s swift entry into the terrible roster of U.S. tyrants committed to considering the Constitution a relic and its principles outmoded.

One of those now-nullified principles is due process. That is to say, we, the American people, hold fast to the tenet that no man (or second grade girl) can be deprived of life, liberty, or property without the due process of law.

President Trump’s approval (and that of Presidents Bush and Obama before him) of drone-delivered assassinations is an assault on, and a dismissal of, over 650 years of our Anglo-American law’s protection from autocratic decrees of death without due process of law.

When any president usurps the power to create a list of enemies of the United States and assassinate people on that list, he places our Republic on a trajectory toward tyranny and unbounded, unaccountable, unending government-sponsored terrorism.

The despicable nature of this despotism is magnified by the fact that beyond those identified by the president as perpetrators of the “evil of radical Islamic terrorism,” there are more than a dozen men, women, and children who lie dead in that town in Yemen whose lives were cut short though they were suspected of no participation in any such alleged anti-American activity.

Of course, it would be another matter if those targeted and executed by the president were in fact armed enemy combatants. The people killed in this latest operation were not. Were these suspected “militants” enemy soldiers captured during wartime, they would be necessarily afforded certain rights granted to POWs.

Those slated for assassination are not allowed any rights — neither the due process rights given to those accused of crimes nor the rights of fair treatment given to enemies captured on the battlefield.

The White House under Donald Trump has continued the practice of exercising control over who lives



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and who dies — and has created a brand-new category of individual — one who can be indiscriminately deprived of all rights altogether.

There are, of course, Americans who say that while the death of the little girl is regrettable, the fact is that the other men killed in the raid, had they not been “eliminated” would have contributed to the recruitment of battalions of new “militants” who would have threatened the safety and peace of the people of the United States.

There are some who argue that the goal of the secret drone war and the U.S. Special Operations ground attacks is not to reduce the strength of the terrorists, but to thereby increase the safety of the United States.

The problem with that premise is that to whom does the Constitution grant the power to decided who is a “militant” and who is not?

More to the point, when did militancy become a crime? If it is a crime, where is it defined? How can anyone know if he is guilty of militancy if such a crime is not defined? Could one hypothetically be a militant without knowing it, given that the crime is nowhere defined?

President Trump’s response to the deaths indicate that he’s likely to order more such summary executions of presumed enemies in the near future. “In a successful raid against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula headquarters, brave U.S. forces were instrumental in killing an estimated 14 AQAP members and capturing important intelligence that will assist the U.S. in preventing terrorism against its citizens and people around the world,” Trump said in a statement.

Since when does the Constitution grant to the president of the United States (or any other branch of the federal government) the authority to prevent harm to “people around the world”?

“Americans are saddened this morning with news that a life of a heroic service member has been taken in our fight against the evil of radical Islamic terrorism,” the president added.

Yes, it is sad that an American service member died. It is sad because he likely left a family without a father and parents without a son and siblings without a brother and men and women without a dear friend.

What is sadder, though, is that his death was senseless. He died carrying out an unconstitutional order to kill people who were never accused of a crime or given an opportunity to answer the crimes they were supposedly guilty of committing or planning to commit. There was no constitutional declaration of war against Yemen, as required by the U.S. Constitution. In fact, Donald Trump, assuming power not granted to him in the Constitution, didn’t even bother consulting Congress. He simply gave the green light to the SEAL team and other operatives to carry out a deadly raid in the hours just after dawn — a raid resulting in the death of innocent children.

Should the states and the people permit this president to act as an autocrat with absolute power over life and death (in the same way they permitted his predecessors to do so), there is very little hope for the rule of law to ever be restored as the standard for this republic.



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