



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 20, 2015

Despite Promises, President Keeps Drone War Under CIA Command

Despite a promise made by President Obama nearly two years ago to take control of the drone war away from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the spooks still have their fingers on the trigger.

An article in the *Huffington Post* reports:

In a May 2013 speech at the National Defense University, President Barack Obama offered a rare glimpse into upcoming changes to one of the U.S.'s most closely held covert operations: the ongoing drone strike campaign in the Middle East. Cryptically, he suggested, the White House would start moving to transfer control of the nation's targeted killing program from the CIA to the Department of Defense.



Of course, as befits its role as an establishment mouthpiece, the *Huffington Post* absolves the president of the blame:

Nearly two years later, the administration has had ample time to make its moves — but there's been little success in shifting control of the operation to the Pentagon, though not for the White House's lack of trying. Rather, officials and lawmakers tell *The Huffington Post* that the plans have been largely stymied by skeptical lawmakers, operational difficulties and the competing egos of the two most macho shops in town: the CIA and the Pentagon's elite Joint Special Operations Command, both of whom think they're better suited to pull the drone trigger.

And, in case you missed it, *HuffPo* makes it clear that the White House is not to blame:

The White House says its intention to transition the program hasn't changed.

"The President has explained his belief that we must be more transparent about both the basis of our counterterrorism actions and the manner in which they are carried out, whether they are drone strikes or training partners," Ned Price, a spokesman for the National Security Council, told *HuffPost* last week. "Because of this, he has indicated that he will increasingly turn to our military to take the lead and provide information to the public about our efforts. We continue to work diligently toward this goal."

The fact is, President Obama has "worked diligently" toward one goal from inauguration day: to destroy the Constitution. Given the undeniable success of these efforts, it's clear that he has no intention of disbanding this contemporary praetorian guard.

Since assuming office in 2009, Barack Obama has converted the CIA into his personal army and granted it unfettered assassination authority.



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An in-depth examination of the development and deployment of this presidential killing corps is told in *The Way of the Knife: The CIA, a Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth*, the latest book by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mark Mazzetti.

Mazzetti, who writes for the *New York Times*, describes the evolution of the role reversal between the army of agents in the CIA and the actual army:

And just as the CIA has come to take on tasks traditionally associated with the military, with spies turned into soldiers, so has the opposite occurred. The American military has been dispersed into the dark spaces of American foreign policy, with commando teams running spying missions that Washington would never have dreamed of approving in the years before 9/11. Prior to the attacks of September 11, the Pentagon did very little human spying, and the CIA was not officially permitted to kill. In the years since, each has done a great deal of both, and a military-intelligence complex has emerged to carry out the new American way of war.

The “new American way of war” includes not declaring war. Rather than submit to the constitutional authority of the legislative branch’s exclusive power to declare war, presidents for decades have marched brigades of U.S. armies through the barriers that separate the powers of the White House and Capitol Hill.

Admittedly, when the president assumes the power to designate people as enemies of the state, then he feels legally justified in skirting (or completely disregarding) the myriad constitutional and moral checks on the prosecution of war.

As *The New American* has reported for years regarding to the damage to liberty done by the drones:

President Obama’s nearly daily approval of drone-delivered assassinations is an effrontery to 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 place names on a kill list and then have those people summarily executed without due process, he places our Republic on a trajectory toward tyranny and government-sponsored terrorism.

It would be another matter if those targeted and executed by the president were armed enemy combatants — they 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 has assumed all power over life and death and created *ex nihilo* a new category of individual — one deprived of rights altogether.

The enemies currently being pursued by drones and CIA/Special Ops death squads are not the enemies of America — not demonstrably — but are people unfortunate enough to have their flash card come up in the Tuesday kill list confab.

An informative piece written by two of Mazzetti’s *New York Times* colleagues illuminates much of the macabre methodology of aggregating the names of enemies of the state to President Obama’s proscription list.□

Recounting the scene at one of the regularly scheduled Tuesday intelligence briefings at the White House, Jo Becker and Scott Shane wrote, “The mug shots and brief biographies resembled a high school yearbook layout. Several were Americans. Two were teenagers, including a girl who looked even



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younger than her 17 years.”

It cannot be too soberly restated that these seemingly cold-blooded conferences are occurring every week in the Oval Office and are presided over by the president.□□

That last fact is essential if one is to understand the era into which our Republic has entered. The president of the United States, in this case Barack Obama, sits in a chair in the White House rifling through dossiers of suspected terrorists. After listening to the advice of his claue of counselors, it is the president himself who designates who of the lineup is to be killed. As the *New York Times* explains:

Mr. Obama has placed himself at the helm of a top secret “nominations” process to designate terrorists for kill or capture, of which the capture part has become largely theoretical. He had vowed to align the fight against Al Qaeda with American values; the chart, introducing people whose deaths he might soon be asked to order, underscored just what a moral and legal conundrum this could be.

It is truthfully said by choruses of the president’s men that he inherited this “War on Terror” from President Bush. He must, so the supporters say, continue the operation until the threat to America from extremists is eliminated.

In his prosecution of this global search and destroy mission, President Obama displays more than just a grudging obligation to finish what his predecessor started, however. As Mazzetti reminds his readers, “The foundations of the secret war were laid by a conservative Republican president and embraced by a liberal Democratic one who became enamored of what he inherited.”

In response to such criticism, the White House trots out the well-worn “safety” trope. From the *HuffPo* piece: “One U.S. official familiar with the White House’s plans suggested that moving the program too quickly could leave gaps in the administration’s ongoing counterterror campaign. ‘We are moving deliberately to ensure our security,’ the official said.”

The core question, according the *Huffington Post*, is “Who runs drone strikes more effectively, the CIA or JSOC?”.

That’s precisely the sort of false dichotomy that blinds people to the truth and accelerates the rapid degeneration of our Republic and the timeless principles of liberty upon which it was built.

Actually, the question is much simpler: Will the American people permit the president, and a feckless Congress who refuses to reign him in, to disregard due process and the rule of law or will we assert our natural right to rule and remove from office not only the tyrants, but the tyranny, as well?



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