



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 4, 2013

Al-Qaeda in Yemen Offers 6 Pounds of Gold for Death of U.S. Ambassador

The Obama administration and the CIA have sown the wind in Yemen and now will reap the whirlwind.

[Various outlets](#) are [reporting](#) information posted to Islamist websites placing a bounty of three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of gold on the head of U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Gerald Feierstein.

That hefty sum ([valued at about \\$160,000 at press time](#)) will reportedly be paid by al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) to whoever manages to kill Feierstein.



The organization — allegedly a regional branch of the larger al-Qaeda network — is also offering five million rials (\$23,350) to anyone who kills an American soldier in Yemen.

AQAP claims the bounties were offered “to encourage our Muslim Ummah (nation) and to expand the circle of the jihad by the masses,” according to the [SITE Intelligence Group](#), who reviewed an audio tape released by the group.

While it is impossible to discern the multitude of motivations that compel a person to call for the death of another, in the case of Yemen, President Barack Obama’s escalation of the drone war and his callous disregard for innocents killed in the blast zone is likely a primary prod to the issuance of this latest deadly decree.

The threat to U.S. national security reportedly increases proportionately with the increase in the number of Hellfire missiles fired indiscriminately at suspects and bystanders in Yemen and Pakistan. This deadly relationship and the Obama administration’s zeal for adding and subtracting names from their kill list is increasing the danger of blowback.

Blowback is defined as violent counter-attacks carried out as revenge for drone strikes that have killed thousands, many of whom were doing nothing more threatening than going to the market or attending a funeral.

After a drone attack killed 13 Yemenis by [“mistake”](#) in September, relatives of those killed in the strike spoke with the clarity and carelessness that comes from the mixture of mourning with rage.

“You want us to stay quiet while our wives and brothers are being killed for no reason. This attack is the real terrorism,” said Mansoor al-Maweri, whom [CNN reports](#) as being “near the scene of the strike.”

Then there was this from “an activist” who lives near the site of the September massacre: “I would not be surprised if a hundred tribesmen joined the lines of al-Qaeda as a result of the latest drone mistake,” said Nasr Abdullah. “This part of Yemen takes revenge very seriously.”

[Reuters explains](#) that “Western diplomats in Sanaa say al-Qaeda is a threat to Yemen and the rest of the world.” An argument can be made that a bigger threat to the world is the United States’ daily drone



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attacks that destroy our own dedication to the rule of law and serve as an effective recruiting tool for those seeking revenge for the killing.

The former CIA Pakistan station chief agrees. Speaking of the rapid expansion of the drone war in Yemen, [Robert Grenier told *The Guardian* \(U.K.\)](#):

That brings you to a place where young men, who are typically armed, are in the same area and may hold these militants in a certain form of high regard. If you strike them indiscriminately you are running the risk of creating a terrific amount of popular anger. They have tribes and clans and large families. Now all of a sudden you have a big problem.... I am very concerned about the creation of a larger terrorist safe haven in Yemen.

We have gone a long way down the road of creating a situation where we are creating more enemies than we are removing from the battlefield. We are already there with regards to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

On Christmas Eve, *Foreign Policy* reported the following [account of the “botched drone strike”](#) in Yemen carried out on September 2:

The villagers who rushed to the road, cutting through rocky fields in central Yemen, found the dead strewn around a burning sport utility vehicle. The bodies were dusted with white powder — flour and sugar, the witnesses said — that the victims were bringing home from market when the aircraft attacked. A torched woman clutched her daughter in a lifeless embrace. Four severed heads littered the pavement.

“The bodies were charred like coal. I could not recognize the faces,” said Ahmed al-Sabooli, 22, a farmer whose parents and 10-year-old sister were among the dead. “Then I recognized my mother because she was still holding my sister in her lap. That is when I cried.”

In a [Christmas Eve *Washington Post* report](#), anonymous officials of the government of the United States admitted that the brutal mass murder of 12 innocent civilians (three of whom were children) was carried out by “a Defense Department aircraft, either a drone or a fixed-wing airplane.”

That’s it. The U.S.-dependent Yemeni regime remarked that the drone-delivered deaths were the result of an “accident.”

The irrefutable fact is the prosecution of the drone war in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and North Africa is [creating more enemies than it is destroying](#). Al-Qaeda couldn’t cook up a more effective recruitment program than the U.S. drone war that is allegedly aimed at eliminating the “terrorist” organization.

Although U.S. officials typically do not comment on this or any other drone strike in Yemen or elsewhere, the president of Yemen isn’t quite so close-mouthed about the arrangement between the two “allies.”

In a [statement](#) made to the *Washington Post* in an interview published September 29, President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi said he “personally approves every U.S. drone strike in his country.”

Hadi’s praise for the Predators continued during a speech delivered at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. “They [drones] pinpoint the target and have zero margin of error, if you know what target you’re aiming at,” Hadi said, [according to the *New York Times*](#).

As the *Washington Post* rightly posits, it is likely this personal interest in promoting President Obama’s



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drone war that has influenced U.S. officials to consider Hadi “one of the United States’ staunchest counterterrorism allies.”

Then there is the assassination by drone Thursday, January 3, of an AQAP commander and two alleged operatives in Yemen. Happy New Year.

According to the [report published in AFP](#), the hit went down like this:

“The CIA-operated, remotely piloted Predators or the more deadly Reapers killed Mukbel Abbad and two fighters in an attack today as their vehicle traveled in the town of Rada’a in the central Yemen province of Baydah.”

The Long War Journal reports on the crescendo of drone strikes in Yemen over the past seven months:

AQAP has increased its presence in Baydah province over the past year, and the US has pursued the terror group with drone strikes. On May 28, 2012, the US targeted Kaid al Dhahab, AQAP’s emir in the province, and his brother Nabil, who is also a senior leader in the terror group, in a strike in the town of Rada’a.

Kaid took control of AQAP in Baydah after the death of his brother Tariq. Before he was killed, Tariq had seized control of Baydah, raised al Qaeda’s banner, sworn allegiance to Ayman al Zawahiri, [and warned that “the Islamic Caliphate is coming.”](#)

Kaid and Nabil [were tasked with regrouping AQAP’s forces](#) in Baydah after Tariq’s death. The two leaders are also the brothers-in-law of slain AQAP leader and ideologue Anwar al Awlaki, who was killed in a drone strike in the fall of 2011.

Thursday’s strike brings the total of U.S. drone attacks in Yemen since Christmas Eve 2012 to five. On December 24, drones fired the missiles that killed Abdullah Hussein al Waeli. Five days later, the tell-tale buzzing returned and another AQAP leader and two subordinates were assassinated by the government of the United States. No due process. No charges. No explanations.

Since the government began its covert drone war in Yemen in 2002, [383 people have been killed](#) by the Predators and Reapers that patrol the skies. Not a single one of these people have ever been either charged with a crime or permitted to answer the allegations of intention to threaten the safety of the United States.

Due process doesn’t concern President Obama or those pulling the triggers on the joysticks guiding the missiles toward their human targets. Those “militants” murdered by the United States government are not afforded even the most perfunctory due process protections, but are summarily executed upon order of the president.

In this way, sadly, the president and his agents are no better than those they kill in the name of safety who offer pounds of gold for the killing of American diplomats and soldiers.

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com.



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