

Cloaked Order: Who's Really Behind 'New Authority' for CIA Drone Strikes?

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Earlier this week, the mainstream media reported that the Trump administration granted the CIA a new 'secret' authority broadening their ability to conduct drone strike operations against suspected terrorists. The new drone provision said to be without oversight from the Pentagon, was brought to our attention by 'unnamed' sources published in the [Wall Street Journal](#) - But is this the full story?

As big media rushed to condemn the Trump administration over the supposedly brand 'new' drone policy given to the CIA, the public has been left without a complete picture.

While the new powers allowing the CIA to conduct larger-scale drone operations overseas should be of concern to the public - you have to wonder if it was truly issued by the Trump administration or already under place during the Obama administration.

While it's no secret that Trump has openly discussed being tough on terror and might be involved with the CIA drone order in some capacity, we should also consider the fact that many Obama and Democratic Party loyalists would like nothing more than to paint the new president in a less than agreeable light, potentially looking to create a political tripwire to derail his first term.

Over the past few years the Obama administration was said to be shifting more drone operations away from the CIA - but was that really what happened?

In 2015, the [NY Post](#) published the following:

"President Obama secretly granted the Central Intelligence Agency more flexibility to conduct drone strikes targeting terror suspects in Pakistan than anywhere else in the world after approving more restrictive rules in 2013, according to a published report."

"[The Wall Street Journal](#), citing current and former U.S. officials, reported that Obama approved a waiver exempting the CIA from proving that militants targeted in Pakistan posed an imminent threat to the U.S."

In particular, the drone report outlined that while on the surface it appeared that Obama issued a directive to get rid of 'signature strikes' conducted by the CIA *"many of the changes specified in the directive either haven't been implemented or have been works in progress."*

A signature strike can be conducted without presidential approval against any suspected

militants.

The *NY Post* then admitted that CIA had in fact a much broader latitude to target individuals under the Obama administration:

“The paper also reports that the CIA’s Pakistan drone strike program was initially exempted from the “imminent threat” requirement until the end of U.S. and NATO combat operations in Afghanistan.”

The [Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported](#) the following drone statistics under Obama:

“Pakistan was the hub of drone operations during Obama’s first term. The pace of attacks had accelerated in the second half of 2008 at the end of Bush’s term, after four years pocked by occasional strikes. However in the year after taking office, Obama ordered more drone strikes than Bush did during his entire presidency. The 54 strikes in 2009 all took place in Pakistan.

Strikes in the country peaked in 2010, with 128 CIA drone attacks and at least 89 civilians killed, at the same time US troop numbers surged in Afghanistan. Pakistan strikes have since fallen with just three conducted in the country last year.”

QUESTION: Is it possible that the CIA drone policy was just transferred from one administration to another?



(Photo Illustration 21WIRE’s Shawn Helton)

According to article by Gordon Lubold and Shane Harris in the [Wall Street Journal](#) entitled Trump Broadens CIA Powers, Allows Deadly Drone Strikes:

President Donald Trump has given the Central Intelligence Agency secret new authority to conduct drone strikes against suspected terrorists, U.S. officials said, changing the Obama administration’s policy of limiting the spy agency’s paramilitary role and reopening a turf war between the agency and the Pentagon.

The new authority, which hadn’t been previously disclosed, represents a significant departure from a cooperative approach that had become standard practice by the end of former President Barack Obama’s tenure: The CIA used drones and other intelligence resources to locate suspected terrorists and then the military conducted the actual strike. The [U.S. drone strike that killed Taliban leader Mullah Mansour in May 2016](#) in Pakistan was the best example of that hybrid approach, U.S. officials said.

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