

Drone Warfare and “Collateral Damage”. Ninety-eight Percent of the Victims are Innocent Civilians

Accolades for Tim Martin: Can the Complicit British Government Give a Rational Answer to His question?

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Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

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[Tim Martin](#), a HVAC engineer and camera-shy freelance writer with a degree in philosophy, in [his article in the Eureka Times Standard](#), asks:

“What does drone warfare say about the direction our country is headed in? I believe it’s a broader symptom of how quickly we resort to violence. Someone is a threat? Shoot ‘em. Someone looks like they might be a threat? Shoot them, too. It’s no different than how the police in our country deal with black men — use extreme force”.

Lightly edited extracts:

“Why does our government want to drive a wedge between America and the rest of the world by using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen? It isn’t accomplishing anything.

“A study by Stanford Law School and New York University’s School of Law notes the number of Islamic terrorists killed as a percentage of total casualties in drone strikes stands at a paltry 2 percent. The study also casts doubts on Washington’s claims that these attacks produced few civilian casualties. An investigation by the human-rights group Reprieve indicates that drone bombings on al-Qaida members in Pakistan resulted in the death of 874 innocent men, women and children. In Yemen 17 men were targeted and 273 people (seven of them children) were killed in the process. The use of drone warfare is a disaster-in-the-making. When you kill people who are not the enemy, you simply create more enemies . . .



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“Maybe it’s time for us to wake up, slap ourselves upside the soul, and ask how we can ever hope to achieve a durable peace by sitting at computers and “unintentionally” killing people thousands of miles away with Hellfire missiles.

“Drones have been sold to the American public on the claim that they’re “precise” and “a sound weapon of choice.” In reality, they are only as accurate as the intelligence that feeds them. Drones kill, maim and traumatize innocent people. They are counter-productive and (like Guantanamo) one of the best recruiting tools ISIS and al-Qaida ever had.

“Proponents of drone warfare insist that it’s a better option than boots on the ground. They argue that drone strikes beat carpet bombing. But do we usually carpet bomb countries we consider our allies and haven’t declared war upon?

“Would you support the use of drones on a terrorist cell here at home? What if they accidentally wiped out a dozen school children? I doubt that any of us would stand by while our government killed innocent Americans with a remote-controlled weapon that rains death from the sky”.



NBC

news: http://photoblog.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/03/27/17489398-drone-protesters-arrested-at-air-force-base-in-nevada?lite

Tim Martin covers the activities of Reprieve and other actors noted on this site and adds that Members of Veterans for Peace (VFP), Code Pink and other anti-war groups recently went to Creech Air Force Base in Indian Springs, Nevada, home to the Predator and Reaper drones, to protest against America's use of drones. They temporarily closed the base and 38 protestors were arrested, including retired Humboldt State University biology professor Richard Gilchrist. "I never thought I'd spend my later days in demonstrations and getting arrested . . . but I can't ignore what we are doing around the world."

Martin concludes:

"But Americans can no longer pretend that our policy of drone strike vigilantism is going unnoticed by the international community. Drones are considered a coward's weapon. For every bit of "collateral damage" they inflict, they create more deep-seated hatred against the U.S. For every al-Qaida "target" a drone attack eliminates, it spawns more terrorists who are intent on exacting retribution against us - for years to come".

Tim Martin resides in Fortuna and writes a column for the Times-Standard. Email him at tmartin@northcoast.com.

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