How the CIA can send a Killer Drone after someone using their Mobile Phone

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Since 2001, armed Predator drones have been used by the CIA in many foreign nations to attack individuals on the ground. There's a new revelation about them, too: In some cases, the NSA helped the CIA find targets by locking onto their powered-off mobile phones. Even when phones have their batteries removed, it appears the NSA still has the ability to locate them.

Buried inside a *Washington Post* story by Dana Priest is the following tidbit:

> By September 2004, a new NSA technique enabled the agency to find cellphones even when they were turned off. JSOC troops called this "The Find," and it gave them thousands of new targets, including members of a burgeoning al-Qaeda-sponsored insurgency in Iraq, according to members of the unit.
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> At the same time, the NSA developed a new computer linkup called the Real Time Regional Gateway into which the military and intelligence officers could feed every bit of data or seized documents and get back a phone number or list of potential targets. It also allowed commanders to see, on a screen, every type of surveillance available in a given territory.

"The Find," the *Post* article says, is run by a team in the basement of the NSA's headquarters whose job is to track the location of mobile phones in real time. Because many phones have chips that stay on even after a battery has been removed, tracking powered-down phones is within the realm of possibility.

The revelations fit right in with the Edward Snowden disclosures, but the NSA isn't the only one tracking phones: Other government agencies and private companies regularly track them without warrants or court orders as well.

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