

NATO Continues Killing Spree in Africa And Asia

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On May 13 President Barack Obama welcomed North Atlantic Treaty Organization secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen to the White House and the two pledged to continue the world's two major wars, those in Afghanistan and Libya. There are over 150,000 foreign troops engaged in the nearly ten-year war in Afghanistan, at least 130,000 of them serving under NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Since taking command of the war against Libya on March 31 the military bloc has conducted almost 7,000 air missions, including over 2,600 combat flights. Obama and Rasmussen also announced that the U.S. will host next year's NATO summit.

In a column in the same day's Wall Street Journal, Rasmussen said, "NATO's operational commitments have changed beyond recognition in the past 20 years, and we have never been busier." Indeed.

NATO troops killed a 12-year-old girl and injured four other girls ages 8 to 15 in Afghanistan's Kunar province on May 15, according to the provincial police chief. The day before NATO forces killed a 15-year-old boy, the son of an Afghan soldier, in a night raid in Nangarhar province, resulting in a demonstration by local Afghans that was fired upon by government forces with four protesters killed, including a 14-year-old boy.

On May 12 NATO troops killed a 12-year-old girl and a policeman, her relative, also in Nangarhar province. According to the girl's father: "They (foreign troops) hurled a hand grenade at my daughter after she ran out of the room in a panic. She was killed on the spot." [1]

Two weeks before NATO and Afghan government troops attacked a Pakistani checkpoint in the South Waziristan Agency. Three Afghan soldiers were killed and two Pakistani security personnel were injured. "Pakistani security forces said they returned fire when they came under attack from Afghan and Nato forces...." [2]

According to a leader of a Pakistani opposition party: "The NATO attack was not accidental but a calculated and planned move to target Pakistan so as to hide its failure in Afghanistan. The violation of Pakistani territory indicated that the US was planning to push the war inside Pakistan." [3]

U.S. drone missile attacks killed eight people in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency on May 12, after which "locals said the dead were innocent people." [4] Two days before "U.S. drone aircraft fired two missiles at a vehicle, killing at least five people and injuring seven others" in South Waziristan. "The identities of the deceased were not known immediately." [5]

The U.S. had enough Hellfire missiles left over to launch a drone attack in Yemen earlier this month, missing the intended target and killing two other people instead.

Late last month three NATO helicopters fired on Iranian fishermen 750 kilometers north of the Somali capital of Mogadishu in the Indian Ocean, wounding three Iranians and killing three Somalis in the second such attack in two days. Iran's minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources Mohamed Ali "condemned the NATO attack and demanded an apology from the international forces." [6]

On May 13 NATO aircraft bombed the Libyan city of Brega, killing 16 civilians, including 11 clerics who were there on a peace mission, and wounding 45 others.

The same day Alliance warships, part of a 20-ship flotilla enforcing a naval blockade of Libya, shelled a Red Crescent Society building in rebel-held Misrata as well as bombing the outskirts of the nearby town of Zlitan.

The preceding day Libyan state television reported that a NATO air strike hit the North Korean embassy in Tripoli. Several other sites were targeted in the capital hours after Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi made his first television appearance since a NATO strike on April 30 killed one of his sons and three of his grandchildren.

General Carter Ham, the commander of U.S. Africa Command, which was in charge of the air war and naval operations against Libya from March 19-30, spoke in Uganda on May 11 and advocated the deployment of more troops for the ongoing armed conflict in Somalia, offering American assistance for the effort. Since last year NATO has airlifted thousands of Ugandan troops into and out of the Somali capital, where three Ugandan soldiers were killed and as many wounded three days after Ham's statement.

On May 14 Djibouti, where the Pentagon has its only permanent military base in Africa and at least 2,500 troops assigned to its Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa based there, announced it would deploy two battalions to Somalia to join 9,000 Ugandan and Burundian forces there.

There will be far more innocent people, including children, killed in Africa, Asia and the Arabian Peninsula before the NATO summit convenes in the U.S. next year.

Notes

- 1) Pajhwok Afghan News, May 12, 2011
- 2) Dawn News, April 27, 2011
- 3) News International, April 28, 2011
- 4) The Nation, May 13, 2011
- 5) Online News International, May 10, 2011
- 6) Press TV, April 24, 2011

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