

State Sponsored “Pre-emptive Murder”: US and Israeli Targeted Killings

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International law permits justifiable self-defense. Targeted killings are prohibited, especially premeditated ones like America and Israel repeatedly commit for reasons other than claimed.

These incidents constitute cold-blooded murder. US drone killings and rampaging death squads, as well as Israel’s deplorable history and latest ritual slaughter highlight the issue. International law prohibits anticipatory self-defense. It amounts to using force to deter it.

Under the UN Charter’s Article 2(4):

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.”

Only two exceptions apply. Article 51 permits “individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.”

In addition, a nation may anticipate self-defense in situations where verifiable, compelling evidence shows imminent or already initiated armed attacks.

For example, if nations face hostile mobilized troops on their borders, self-defense is justified if invasion seems likely. Or if specific provable knowledge of impending terrorist attacks are known, preventive defensive action is warranted.

However, anticipatory self-defense based on unproved allegations is lawless. For example, attacking Iraq for allegedly possessing WMDs had no basis in international law. Moreover, possession of any weapons proves no intent to use them. In the case of Iraq, of course, allegations were entirely spurious.

Key is that employing anticipatory (or preemptive) self-defense against nations, groups, or individuals based on alleged threats is prohibited and lawless if undertaken.

No matter. For America and Israel, it’s official policy. Alleged national security reasons are cited. Nearly always they’re spurious.

In response to Israel’s 1981 Iraq Osirik nuclear reactor attack (under construction at the time), the Security Council ruled “the military attack by Israel in clear violation of the

Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct.”

If Israel and/or America attack Iran’s nuclear facilities, the same standard applies. Of course, US veto power will prevent saying or deterring it unlike decades earlier. Back then, the IAEA head and Israel had no evidence of unlawful weapons development, possession, or imminent use. Anticipatory self-defense was lawless.

Unverifiable “inherent right” claims are spurious. Nonetheless, America and Israel invoke them often. In his 2002 West Point Commencement speech, George Bush said:

“(N)ot only will the United States impose preemptive, unilateral military force when and where it chooses, but the nation will also punish those who engage in terror and aggression and will work to impose a universal moral clarity between good and evil.”

In other words, he unilaterally claimed whatever America says, goes. No restraints apply. At the time, moreover, he suggested Washington has choices unavailable to other nations. Rule of law provisions apply to them. Washington makes its own.

In fact, America lawlessly waged multiple post-WW II wars. All were illegal aggression. None were justified for any reason. It’s equally true for Israel. Today, both nations represent clear and present dangers. Operating extrajudicially, they endanger humanity.

In 2010, Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions presented a report on the topic. It called using them “highly problematic, blurring and expand(ing) the boundaries” of recognized international law.

Asserting a “vaguely defined license to kill” subverts it. Alston called targeted killings “intentional, premeditated and deliberate use of lethal force....” Legal frameworks are blurred. Laws of war and human rights are discarded. Moreover, states employing this practice don’t show justification other than claiming vague threats.

Most often, they violate the right to life. Throughout its history, Israel employed the tactic. In fact, it began during the Mandatory Palestine period when Jewish terrorist groups targeted Jews, Brits and Arabs. Future prime ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir were involved.

For example, in November 1944, Lehi (Stern Gang) terrorists assassinated Lord Moyne, Britain’s Middle East minister of state, near his home in Cairo.

In September 1948, it also killed UN mediator Folke Bernadotte in Jerusalem, five months after Israel was established. Yitzhak Shamir personally approved the assassination.

In July 1946, Irgun terrorists bombed the King David Hotel, massacring 92 Brits, Arabs and Jews, wounding 58 others. Future prime minister David Ben-Gurion approved it as head of the Jewish Agency at the time.

Before and after May 1948, many thousands of targeted killings occurred or were attempted. Using them is official Israeli policy. Mossad assassins murdered Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

On February 14, 2005, compelling visual and audio evidence revealed real time intercepted Israel aerial surveillance footage of routes he used on the day his motorcade was attacked. Israel was involved.

At first, Syria was spuriously blamed, then Hezbollah. Fingers were bogusly pointed the wrong way to absolve Israel. It was typical Mossad, whether by car bombs, shootings, poisoning, slit throats, or other means. Targets get no reprieves.

Assassinations, including US citizens, didn't begin under Bush and Obama. CIA operatives used them for decades. In his book "Nemesis: The Last Days of the American Republic," Chalmers Johnson said:

"(W)e will never again know peace, nor in all probability survive very long as a nation, unless we abolish the CIA, restore intelligence collecting to the State Department, and remove all but purely military functions from the Pentagon."

The Agency acts as judge, jury, and executioner. Imperial Rome had its praetorian guard. The CIA works the same way as a private unaccountable army. It operates extrajudicially against targets ranging from alleged terrorists to heads of state.

Among its original missions, one vaguely permitted "other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may....direct."

As a result, it became a covert, unaccountable force unto itself. It's engaged in mischievous, illegal operations. They include overthrowing democratically elected governments, assassinating foreign heads of state and key officials, propping up friendly dictators, and extraordinarily renditioning targeted subjects to torture prison hell, or simply disappearing them.

Accountable unto itself, it does what it pleases outside the law. Its bag of dirty tricks defines imperial America. In the process, the republic's life was shortened. Johnson said "the company" menaces democracy. Neither can coexist with the other.

Along with US Special Forces, it's involved in death squad killings. It also operates predator drones in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and wherever Washington designates targets to kill.

Allegedly targeting militants and terrorists, independent experts believe noncombatant civilians are killed 98% of the time. Official reports suppress dirty truths.

US citizens are also targeted. Attorney General Eric Holder said:

"The president may use force abroad against a senior operational leader of a foreign terrorist organization with which the United States is at war — even if that individual happens to be a U.S. citizen."

In fact, senior administration officials said Obama and future presidents (on their own authority) may order them killed anywhere, including at home. Holder noticeably added that America's "authority is not limited to the battlefields in Afghanistan" or anywhere else.

They're where presidents say they are. Anyone anywhere may be killed for any reason or

none at all. They can also be arrested, thrown in military dungeons uncharged, denied due process, sent abroad to torture prisons, or simply disappeared.

Constitutional protections no longer apply. Unilateral executive authority replaced them. Planet earth is America's battlefield. Since last year, drone attacks killed at least three US citizens abroad.

The FAA Reauthorization Act authorizes up to 30,000 unmanned homeland aerial vehicles (UAVs) by 2020. They'll be used for spying and who knows what else. Not only will privacy rights be compromised, so will life and liberty protections. This army in the sky will be used repressively against everyone.

A Final Comment

Ron Paul's the only presidential candidate openly expressing alarm about Obama's assassination policy. On February 24, 2010, he said:

"What have we allowed ourselves to become? Are we no longer a nation of laws? Have we become instead a nation of men who make secret arrests? Are secret prisons now simply another tool of the federal government law enforcement?"

"Is secret rendition of individuals now permitted, out of misplaced fear? Have we decided that the writ of habeas corpus is not worth defending? Is torture now an acceptable tool for making us safe? Unfortunately, the single answer to all of these questions from the leaders of our country and to many of our citizens appears to be yes."

When nations no longer observe fundamental international laws and their own, tyranny follows. Governing extrajudicially, American and Israeli leaders, as well as complicit officials in both countries, operate lawlessly. Rule of law protections don't apply. As a result, no one's safe, including Israeli Jews and US citizens.

A shroud of secrecy, mass deception, scoundrel journalism, extrajudicial killing, torture, permanent war, homeland repression, universal spying, and leaders doing what they damn please with impunity threatens life, liberty, humanity, and planet earth.

In his 1961 inaugural address, John Kennedy highlighted "the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself." He asked for "a grand and global alliance" against them, and said "history (will be) the final judge of our deeds...."

On June 14, 1956, Senator Kennedy gave Harvard's Commencement speech. This writer heard it. Politicians today speak differently. He was reasoned, scholarly, effective, and impressive.

He said when freedom is threatened, politicians and intellectuals "should be natural allies, working more closely together for the common cause against the common enemy."

He ended quoting what an English mother once wrote the Provost of Harrow, saying "Don't teach my boy poetry; he is going to stand for Parliament."

"Well, perhaps she was right," said Kennedy, "but if more politicians knew poetry and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place in which to live

on this commencement day of 1956.”

On November 22, 1963, state-sponsored assassins took him. Decades of global lawlessness, permanent wars, state terrorism, and tyranny followed.

History’s verdict is clear. America’s “common enemies” won. Kennedy couldn’t have imagined how decisively, or most anyone a half century ago.

Given today’s bipartisan rogue governance, humanity’s threatened. At issue is will there be another or much time left at all! The prospect’s real and frightening.

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