



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 4, 2019

CIA Operators Purportedly Participating in Raids on Civilian Targets in Afghanistan

A CIA trained, directed, and assisted Afghani militia unit known as 01 has carried out a “growing number of assaults ... on medical facilities in Afghanistan, according to witnesses and documents seen by The Intercept.”

Here’s [The Intercept’s description](#) of the group’s command, control, and composition:



The 01, which operates in central Afghanistan, including in Wardak, Logar, and Ghazni provinces, is known for rolling into villages at night and leaving a trail of death and destruction. The units are “responsible for extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, indiscriminate airstrikes, attacks on medical facilities, and other violations of international humanitarian law or the laws of war,” said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director for Human Rights Watch, who wrote a report to be released Wednesday night on abuses by CIA-backed militias in Afghanistan. Many witnesses to night raids say 01 is deliberately targeting civilians.

Of course, it is a direct violation of U.S. law for agents of the U.S. government to finance or train foreign military or para-military units when there is “credible information” that the foreign unit is suspected of human rights abuses.

The last sentence of The Intercept’s description of the activities of 01 would seem to qualify that group of having disregarded the dignity and rights of people caught in the crossfire.

Here’s the harrowing account of one such CIA-commanded raid as related to The Intercept:

On the night of March 8, 2019, four staffers at a Swedish-run health clinic in Afghanistan’s Wardak Province ate together, talked around a thermos of tea, and bedded down for the night in the guard’s room. They were awakened some time later by the thump of helicopter rotors followed by distant explosions echoing from farther up the Tangi Valley. The sounds were not unusual in Wardak, where for 20 years there has been little respite from war, and the four went back to sleep.

The men were jolted awake again sometime after midnight. The main gate to the clinic, which was



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next to the guard's room, had been blown in, and the staff heard hurried footsteps in the ruined entryway. The intruders ran past the guard's room and into the clinic's main building.

The clinic staff huddled in the darkened room as several doors were kicked in across the compound yard. After what one of the clinic workers described as five or six minutes, the staffers, worried that they'd surprise the intruders when they eventually reached the guard's room, called out, "We're in here!"

Seconds later, the door to the guard's room crashed open. The soldiers who burst in wore night-vision goggles and told the clinic staffers to face the wall. They bound the men, covered their heads with hoods, and led them to a room that one of the workers, who *The Intercept* is identifying only as Hashmatullah for his safety, believed was the clinic's pharmacy.

Hashmatullah couldn't see, but he guessed that there were five or six soldiers in the room.

"You're here to serve the Taliban," the soldiers alleged. They spoke in Dari and Pashto, Afghanistan's two main languages, but the detainees also heard English.

The English-speakers, according to those familiar with the forces executing these raids, are CIA operators.

Of course, such stories are anecdotal and without corroborating evidence and is not per se proof that American agents are getting their hands dirty by personally participating with Afghani military units in raids on civilian targets.

CIA Press Secretary Timothy Barrett told *The Intercept* that the CIA "conducts its global operations in accordance with law and under a robust system of oversight. The Taliban does not operate with any similar rules and — even worse — conducts an extensive propaganda campaign to discredit those who support the legitimate Afghanistan government."

That's precisely the sort of legalistic sidestepping that seems purposefully evasive. Besides, it's not like the CIA isn't already well known to have been converted over the last two decades into the sixth branch of the U.S. armed forces.

As Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mark Mazzetti wrote in his book *The Way of the Knife*:

And just as the CIA has come to take on tasks traditionally associated with the military, with spies turned into soldiers, so has the opposite occurred. The American military has been dispersed into the dark spaces of American foreign policy, with commando teams running spying missions that Washington would never have dreamed of approving in the years before 9/11. Prior to the attacks of September 11, the Pentagon did very little human spying, and the CIA was not officially permitted to kill. In the years since, each has done a great deal of both, and a military-intelligence complex has emerged to carry out the new American way of war.

The "new American way of war" includes not declaring war. Rather than submit to the constitutional authority of the legislative branch's exclusive power to declare war, presidents for decades have marched brigades of U.S. armies through the barriers that separate the powers of the White House and Capitol Hill.

Admittedly, when the president assumes the power to designate people as enemies of the state, then he feels legally justified in skirting (or completely disregarding) the myriad constitutional and moral checks on the prosecution of war.



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The bottom line is that the CIA is answerable only to the president and if the president is willing to whitewash the activities of the agency, then they are more than happy to take advantage of that kind of cover.

The Intercept does have data to corroborate its claim that CIA agents are committing what amounts to war crimes.

For example, "Airstrike data provided publicly by U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, which has since been removed, showed that three strikes hit an unspecified location in Wardak on March 8 and three more targeted Sayedabad District on March 9."

Even if only part of this treasonous, murderous tale is true, there is still so much that is unconstitutional and unconscionable.

Since September 11, 2001, the American president now unrepentantly and repeatedly spends our wealth on building an empire on the rubble of the constitutional Republic that was erected based on a constitutional blueprint. Long before the Trump era, the office of the president has become a position possessed of nearly unbounded power over life and death, with unitary command over a sophisticated and surreptitious squad of CIA soldiers and special operations manipulators.

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