



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on March 16, 2017

Drone Strikes Up 432 Percent Under Donald Trump

Since the inauguration of Donald J. Trump, drone strikes have increased over 400 percent.

As reported by Micah Zenko:

During President Obama's two terms in office, he approved 542 such targeted strikes in 2,920 days — one every 5.4 days. From his inauguration through today, President Trump had approved at least 36 drone strikes or raids in 45 days — one every 1.25 days.



Do the maudlin math: despite his promises to reduce American intervention in foreign affairs and despite his oath to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States,” under President Trump, these deadly drone strikes have increased 432 percent over the reprehensible pace set by his predecessor.

It's not just the drones, though. President Trump is unhinged in his unleashing of U.S. airstrikes on “enemy” targets.

Here's the story as told by Foreign Policy online on March 9:

After a week of punishing airstrikes loosed on al Qaeda in Yemen that saw 40 targets go up in flames and smoke, American pilots took a breather the past two nights, watching the dust settle.

The weeklong blitz in Yemen eclipsed the annual bombing total for any year during Obama's presidency. Under the previous administration, approval for strikes came only after slow-moving policy discussions, with senior officials required to sign off on any action. The Trump administration has proven much quicker at green-lighting attacks.

Of course, you can't say President Trump has broken all his promises. After all, during a campaign appearance in Ft. Dodge, Iowa, candidate Trump swore (literally) that he would “Bomb the shit out of” the Islamic State (AKA ISIS). “I'd blow up every single inch, there would be nothing left. We'll get Exxon to come in there and in two months ... I'll take the oil,” Trump boasted at that same event in November 2015.

He's keeping that profane promise.

On February 9, though, it wasn't ISIS that suffered the “shock and awe” of the U.S. strikes, it was women and children.

On that day, “international military forces” attacked Lakari village in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan, killing at least 18 civilians, most of whom were women and children according to reports from the region.

Two weeks before that bloody assault, as many as 30 civilians (the Trump administration's Defense Department insists it was only somewhere between two and four civilians) in a much publicized SEAL Team Six raid that left SEAL Team member William “Ryan” Owens among the dead.



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Also among the victims of that raid was Nawar al-Awlaki, the eight-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, who, himself was summarily executed by a drone strike in 2011. The girl's brother was similarly killed two weeks after his father.

About a month after the deadly raid resulted in the death of a SEAL Team member, U.S. forces were back in the area, continuing the killing. Here's the report according to Digital Journal:

According to residents, U.S. forces carried out "indiscriminate shelling" of the area on March 2-3, killing numerous civilians, including Ahmed and Mohammed al-Khobze, two brothers, ages 10 and 12. Pentagon spokesperson Capt. Jeff Davis said U.S. forces carried out more than 30 strikes in 36 hours, exceeding the 32 confirmed drone strikes in Yemen all of last year. Over the past two years, U.S.-backed Saudi Arabian aerial bombardment has killed thousands of Yemeni civilians, with more than a third of Saudi attacks hitting civilian sites.

In his account of the attacks and their tragic toll of death, The Intercept's Glenn Greenwald pointed to the president's refusal to recognize the multiplying civilian casualty count:

The raid in Yemen that cost Owens his life also killed 30 other people, including "many civilians," at least nine of whom were children. None of them were mentioned by Trump in last night's speech, let alone honored with applause and the presence of grieving relatives. That's because they were Yemenis, not Americans; therefore, their deaths, and lives, must be ignored (the only exception was some fleeting media mention of the 8-year-old daughter of Anwar al-Awlaki, but only because she was a U.S. citizen and because of the irony that Obama killed her 16-year-old American brother with a drone strike).

Greenwald draws attention to the U.S. government's callous disregard for anyone not American who dies in the drone (or other) strikes. "We fixate on the Americans killed, learning their names and life stories and the plight of their spouses and parents, but steadfastly ignore the innocent people the U.S. government kills, whose numbers are always far greater," he writes.

And that is not only a disgusting, but a dangerous attitude.

The sound of drones buzzing above the bodies of those being laid to rest in tribal funerals is commonplace. So are the "signature strikes" that send missiles into the procession in case there are any "terrorists" attending the service.

Often, the story is reported, surviving relatives of those killed by the drone assaults are denied the opportunity to bury their dead and perform the ancient rites associated with placing a body in its final resting place. One man severely injured in a drone attack reported that "people are reluctant to go to the funerals of people who have been killed in drone strikes because they are afraid of being targeted."

On page 92 of a 2012 report entitled *Living Under Drones: Death, Injury and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan*, coauthored by the law schools of Stanford and New York Universities, the story is told of several Pakistanis who were intentionally targeted by Hellfire missiles fired at funerals. The grief experienced and related by these men is evident, heart-wrenching, and demoralizing.

One man who lost several relatives in a drone strike tells how the dead from that strike were buried: "They held a funeral for everybody, in the same location, one by one. Their bodies were scattered into tiny pieces. They ... couldn't be identified," said Massod Afwan.

Is this the sort of behavior that qualifies the area and the attendants to be lit up by a "signature strike"



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— a strike based not on suspicion of guilt, but of a “pattern of behavior?”

To put it another way, if your uncle, a notorious and despicable mobster, was laid to rest and you attend his funeral would it be lawful for the FBI to shoot you (and any other members of your family at the gravesite) on the spot for displaying behavior indicative of affiliation with the Mafia or associated forces?

Signature strikes are tactics of collectivists. The U.S. government lumps together everyone who looks alike and worships the same god or wears the same traditional clothing. This is the very definition of collectivism and collectivism is the embryonic stage of an even more menacing form of government: *communism*.

The same old song with different dancers. Micah Zenko sees the same scene.

“We are now on our third post-9/11 administration pursuing many of the same policies that have failed to meaningfully reduce the number of jihadist extremist fighters, or their attractiveness among potential recruits or self-directed terrorists. The Global War on Terrorism remains broadly unquestioned within Washington, no matter who is in the White House,” Zenko observes.

The Party of Power (be it Republican or Democrat) needs ISIS, al-Qaeda, or some other foreign bogeyman to exist in order to justify the growth of the military-industrial-intelligence complex. The corresponding need for increased security permits the legal plunder of the American people.

In fact, globalization becomes less a foreign policy trajectory and more of a marketing tactic of the immense (and every expanding) military-industrial-intelligence complex and the corps of congressmen that act as salesman staking out new territories for the deadly inventory manufactured by the defense contractors. This expansion of the market makes money, much of which finds its way into the campaign coffers of dozens of influential lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

So although he campaigned as an enemy of the expansion of global intervention, as president, Donald Trump has continued the course established by the two Oval Office occupiers who came before him.

What could explain this warlike waffling? Perhaps these words of Benjamin Constant, written in 1872, can shed some light on the subject. “Your party man, however excellent his intentions may be, is always opposed to any limitations of power. He regards himself as the next in succession, and handles gently the property that is to come to him, even while his opponents are its tenants,” Constant wrote.

On March 15, Defense Department officials told the *Washington Post* that President Trump plans to order “up to 1,000” ground troops to be deployed in Syria.

Photo of anti-war protest: [Tony Webster](#)



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