



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 22, 2014

## Rep. Yoho Offers Bill Revoking CIA Control of Armed Drones

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is using armed drones to search out and kill people considered enemies of the United States. This operation is being carried out without any congressional oversight — but one congressman plans to do something about that.

Representative Ted Yoho (R-Fla.) has introduced the Drone Reform Act (H.R. 5091). The bill is aimed at returning authority for the deadly unmanned aerial devices to the Pentagon.



“The thing that prompted the legislation is our broken foreign policy,” Yoho told *The New American* in a phone interview. Yoho compared Obama administration foreign policy to Captain Jack Sparrow (in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie series) “walking around with a broken compass.”

“Our allies overseas have no idea what we stand for anymore. The good will and good deeds of this country have been washed away by our foreign policy,” Yoho added.

One of the principal problems with the U.S. approach to foreign policy is the assumption by the CIA of the power to target and kill alleged enemies without any accountability to Congress or the Pentagon. Representative Yoho’s bill would require that all armed drones be placed under the control of the Pentagon. “That way there is more accountability and our foreign policy will be tightened up,” Yoho told *The New American*.

There is no doubt that the Obama administration’s dedication to death by remote control is an affront to the sovereignty of Pakistan, as well as the other nations whose skies are buzzing with drones. While such a policy is unsupported by the Constitution specifically or by principles of liberty generally, the number of people being killed without being given an opportunity to answer the charges made against them is inimical to the concept of due process, as well. America is making enemies overseas by making herself an enemy to the Constitution.

Sadly, the tally of those killed by American missiles launched from unmanned aerial vehicles under the control of the CIA is growing.

Additional details of the CIA’s drone war were revealed in a report filed a few years ago by the Pakistan-based Conflict Monitoring Center. The report offers evidence of the many people who were killed by American drones with no more than a suspicion of being linked to militant groups.

According to an analysis of the report by Global Research, in 2010:

The CIA carried out an unprecedented 132 drone attacks in tribal areas, claiming the lives of 938 people, it said. The Conflict Monitoring Center points out that none of the media organizations throughout last year reported on body counts from independent sources. Many analysts believe the geo-strategic game plan of the US has turned out to be counterproductive. The year 2010 was one



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of the deadliest years for civilians living in the tribal regions, as the number of drone strikes exceeded the combined number of such attacks carried out from 2004 to 2009. The report states that 2,052 people lost their lives in drone strikes during the 5-year period between 2004 and 2009. The rising civilian casualties have left behind many tragic stories in the tribal areas.

In November 2013, the CIA expanded the Pakistan theater of operations to include mainland Pakistan, where it had previously confined its strikes to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). On November 21 of that year, a CIA-controlled drone fired four missiles at a suspected al-Qaeda operative.

Representative Yoho says that in meeting with representatives of countries affected by the collateral damage caused by CIA drone assaults, he has learned that the civilian death toll is increasing, and he believes we will “have to answer for this rogue CIA operation.” The congressman believes this deadly program could cause other countries “to do a tit for tat,” conducting their own drone strikes on American interests.

“The CIA’s main mission is intelligence collection and analysis. It should not be in the business of military strikes. This legislation will bring our armed drone fleet under the jurisdiction of the DOD, where it should be,” Yoho said in a press release announcing the legislation. “If our national security requires drone strikes abroad, then one agency should be held accountable to the American people.”

As of press time, Yoho’s bill has eight cosponsors, including five Republicans: Justin Amash of Michigan, Raul Labrador of Idaho, Thomas Massie of Kentucky, Paul Broun of Georgia, and Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina; and three Democrats: Rush Holt of New Jersey, John Conyers of Michigan, and Barbara Lee of California.

Yoho’s bill would bring the CIA’s deadly drone operation under the jurisdiction of additional congressional committees, including the Judiciary, Armed Services, and Foreign Affairs. Under current law, only the intelligence committees are given any information on the strikes, and then only in closed-door hearings.

Such expanded oversight is overdue, particularly in light of the fact that much of how, why, and where the CIA carries out its deadly drone strikes is kept from Congress and the American people. It has been reported that Congress has never been informed how many people the CIA has killed, how many they have targeted, and where the strikes have been carried out.

Yoho believes his bill will help U.S. military leaders to defend drone strikes “against criticism at home and abroad and against the spread of misinformation from terrorist groups.”

The Drone Reform Act, Yoho said, “will make it clear that no other federal agency or department, or any personnel, shall have authority to operate or fire an armed drone except for DOD. If a drone strike is ordered and people are killed, you will know it was the United States and it was authorized.”

President Obama is unlikely to ever sign such a bill, given that he has converted the CIA into his personal hit squad.

The story behind the development and deployment of this presidential killing corps is told in *The Way of the Knife: The CIA, a Secret Army, and a War at the Ends of the Earth*, the latest book by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mark Mazzetti.

Mazzetti, who writes for the *New York Times*, describes a role reversal between the army of agents in the CIA and the actual army:

And just as the CIA has come to take on tasks traditionally associated with the military, with spies



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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.

Representative Yoho recognizes the violations of the Constitution and the rule of law that occur every time the CIA exceeds its charter and acts as a branch of the armed forces. His Drone Reform Act would restore such deadly authority to the armed forces and the representatives of the people in Congress.

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