



# The Pentagon's Secret Wars: You Don't Have the Right to Know

Do the American people have the right to know the nations with which the United States is at war?

The Defense Department says no.

When asked by senators to identify the groups being fought, the Pentagon said it's a secret.

The Pentagon did hand over a list of forces associated with al-Qaeda, but members of Congress who received the list were forbidden from sharing it with the public.



ProPublica — an investigative news organization — contacted the office of Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and requested a copy of the enemies roster. Levin's representatives refused.

Why such secrecy? Defense Department spokesmen say it's a national security exigency. "Because elements that might be considered 'associated forces' can build credibility by being listed as such by the United States, we have classified the list," the spokesman, Lt. Col. Jim Gregory, said, [as reported by ProPublica](#). "We cannot afford to inflate these organizations that rely on violent extremist ideology to strengthen their ranks."

Jack Goldsmith of Harvard University Law School disagrees. Goldsmith told ProPublica, "If the organizations are 'inflated' enough to be targeted with military force, why cannot they be mentioned publicly?" He believes there is "a countervailing very important interest in the public knowing who the government is fighting against in its name."

[The New American recently reported](#) that President Barack Obama is rapidly expanding the borders of the undeclared wars he's waging in the name of the United States. Presumably, based on [the president's own prior statements](#), all the people being targeted by the vast Predator and Reaper drone fleets deployed worldwide are members of "Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces."

It's the identity of these "associated forces" that is behind the belligerence boom.

Unless, of course, the "guilt by association" standard is for show and the current and former administrations will drop bombs wherever they want and then retroactively assign the requisite affiliation to the victims.

In a study entitled "[How Many Wars Is the U.S. Fighting Today?](#)" Harvard professor Linda Bilmes and Michael Intriligator of UCLA estimate that the United States government is fighting at least five "unannounced and undeclared" wars around the world.

The paper reports that these unconstitutional combat operations represent a "tradition of many previous covert US military incursions," such as those carried out in past decades in Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and others. With the advancement in drone technology, the government is able to be "involved in more conflicts worldwide."



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 1, 2013

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And the evidence is that the Obama administration is taking full advantage of those capabilities. The paper reported:

Today US military operations are involved in scores of countries across all the five continents. The US military is the world's largest landlord, with significant military facilities in nations around the world, and with a significant presence in Bahrain, Djibouti, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Kyrgyzstan, in addition to long-established bases in Germany, Japan, South Korea, Italy, and the UK.

That list, of course, does not include the less well defined "military presence" in Colombia, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Add to that the following summary of the combat operations [published by Global Research](#):

Many smaller US military operations in Africa and the Middle East are increasingly utilizing drones. Former US Africa Command (AFRICOM) commander General Carter Ham stated in February that his forces required a 15-fold increase in surveillance and reconnaissance capacities for the continent. US Air Force drones have already been flying sorties across North Africa, and the US already operates drone bases in Djibouti, Ethiopia and the Seychelles.

As part of "Operation Nomad Shadow," a secret US military surveillance program, the US military is currently launching drones from the Incirlik air base in Turkey to provide surveillance for the Turkish military in its campaign against the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The drones fly into northern Iraq to gather data, which is then transmitted to a "fusion cell" in Ankara for analysis.

If presented with this information, would President Obama claim that he has approved military activity in all these areas because there are active cells of al-Qaeda or its associates?

Or, alternatively, is the "War on Terror" simply an attractive curtain behind which the wizards in Washington carry out their imperialistic agenda, an agenda that has nothing to do with fighting terror, protecting national security, or promoting democracy and everything to do with expanding the reach of the cadre of covert monied interests that see every new war as a new revenue stream and the citizens of countries involved in the conflict as potential debtors.

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