



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 7, 2013

## President's Goal for 2013: All Drones, All the Time

Lose weight. Get organized. Write that novel. Typical New Year's resolutions. All very commendable.

President Obama is thin, has people to keep him organized, and he's written a couple of books already, so he decided to blow it out (literally) in setting his own goals for 2013.

A headline in *Wired* magazine reports: "[Obama's New Year's Resolution: More Drone Strikes.](#)"



Just a week into the new year and the president is well on his way to keeping his resolution.

[Wired](#) reports:

In Pakistan's South Waziristan province, at least 4 MQ-1 Predators or MQ-9 Reapers operated by the CIA killed a Pakistani Taliban commander, Maulvi Nazir, according to media reports that cite unnamed Pakistani intelligence officials. Nazir had struck a detente with the Pakistani government but, according to drone watcher Bill Roggio at the Long War Journal, [maintained ties to al-Qaida](#) and attacked U.S. troops in Afghanistan. The drones [fired on Nazir's vehicle](#), killing him and at least five others.

A separate drone strike on a different vehicle in North Waziristan shortly thereafter [brought the death toll to 15](#), CNN reports. The *New York Times* reports that the identities of those killed in the second attack "were not immediately known." Thousands of miles away and several hours later, a drone strike in Yemen killed Moqbel Ebad Al Zawbah, a "leading al-Qaida figure," and two of his allies, al-Jazeera English [tweeted](#).

At *The New American*, [we reported just days ago](#) on the increase of deadly drone strikes in Yemen.

On January 3, a drone reportedly operated remotely by agents of the CIA fired missiles at a vehicle traveling in the town of Rada'a in the Yemen province of Baydah.

Yemeni officials quoted by AFP reported that Mukbel Abbad and two underlings were killed in the strike.

Those same officials identified Abbad as a "senior al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) leader.

Long War Journal writes that AQAP has "increased its presence in Baydah province over the last year, and the U.S. has pursued the terror group with drone strikes."

On May 28, 2012, for example, the United States used drones in [a failed attempt to track and assassinate Kaid al Dhahab](#) and his brother Nabil, alleged leaders of the regional branch of the larger al-Qaeda network, while the pair traveled in Rada'a.

It is noteworthy that these two suspected "militants" are brothers-in-law of Anwar al-Awlaki, an American-born cleric who was the first U.S. citizen known to be assassinated by President Obama.

Since the government began its covert drone war in Yemen in 2002, [383 people have been killed](#) by the Predators and Reapers that patrol the skies. Not a single one of these people has ever been either



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charged with a crime or permitted to answer the allegations of intention to threaten the safety of the United States.

Of course, that's just one of several sites that must endure the near constant buzz of Predators and Reapers delivering death by remote control to "suspected militants" and those who happen to be near the blast zone or attending a funeral.

The uncertainty as to the number of innocent people murdered by U.S. drone attacks and discounted as acceptable collateral damage only cements the certainty of the fact that under President Barack Obama — a [Nobel Peace Prize winner](#) — the United States maintains two kill lists from which targets are selected for summary execution at the hands of agents of our government. And they don't bother counting the corpses.

Beyond the headlines, one of the most disturbing and damning accounts of the effect of the Obama administration's drone war on the civilian population of Pakistan — the most frequent target of the attacks — was [highlighted recently by \*The New American\*](#).

The report entitled "[Living Under Drones: Death, Injury and Trauma to Civilians From US Drone Practices in Pakistan](#)" was co-authored by the law schools of Stanford and New York Universities and contains on-the-ground accounts of the myriad ways that President Obama's drone-delivered program of assassination is devastating the lives of ordinary Pakistanis who have no connection to terror other than the fact that they are being constantly terrorized by the government of the United States.

Glen Greenwald of the *Guardian* (U.K.) [artfully describes the situation on the ground in Pakistan](#):

The people in the areas targeted by Obama's drone campaign are being systematically terrorized. There's just no other word for it. It is a campaign of terror — highly effective terror — regardless of what noble progressive sentiments one wishes to believe reside in the heart of the leader ordering it. And that's precisely why the report, to its great credit, uses that term to describe the Obama policy: the drone campaign "terrorizes men, women, and children."

Twenty-seven pages of the 182-page document are devoted to enumerating the various ways the use of drones in the White House and CIA's targeted killing programs are rattling the already war-ravaged psyches of the civilian population of Pakistan.

Regardless of the irreversible psychological and physical harm being done by the U.S. drone program in Pakistan and elsewhere, the body count continues mounting. Witness [this account of the aftermath](#) published by *The International News* out of Islamabad:

According to facts and figures compiled by the Ministry of Interior, of the 2,670 people killed by the US drones, 487 were innocent civilians including 171 children and 43 women. Of the remaining 2,183 people killed by the drones, hardly 42 were high value CIA targets while the rest of 2,141 people were believed to be low and mid-level al-Qaeda and Taliban-linked operatives. On average, the American drones have killed 333 people every year over the past eight years between January 2004 and December 2012. The monthly average of the drone killings for the last eight years stood at 27. Fata had to suffer 42 drone attacks every year and four such strikes each month between January 2004 and December 2012.

Although Pakistan has demanded that the United States cease the drone attacks within its sovereign borders, the Obama administration has ignored this request; in fact the number of drones in the air, missiles fired by them, and the body count all continue increasing greatly under orders issued by



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Barack Obama.

While the government of Pakistan points its finger at the United States for the prosecution of the Predator program, calling it a violation of international law, credible reports from inside the government indicate that behind the scenes they have taken another tack — allowing drones to launch from Pakistani airbases and providing intelligence to help track targets.

The truth is the American government sincerely believes it needs neither the permission nor the assistance of Pakistan. President Obama has been very successful in his use of unmanned drones to target, track, and kill those branded as enemies of the state, despite the outcry at home and abroad against the exercise of such dictatorial prerogatives.

New year, old policy. President Obama believes he has not only the political capital to keep the drones flying and the missiles launching, but he has in his pocket a recent decision by a federal judge blocking access to the secret memoranda that reportedly guide the administration in their deadly, due process-denying drone war.

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