



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on September 11, 2012

## Six More People Killed in Yemen by U.S. Drone Strike

The [Associated Press \(AP\) reported](#) that an alleged top-level leader of al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) was killed by a drone strike on Monday, September 10.

According to “senior Yemeni Defense Ministry officials” quoted in the article, Saeed al-Shihri and five others were killed by missiles fired from a drone believed to be operated by the United States.

As the story rightly reported, “The U.S. doesn’t usually comment on such attacks although it has used drones in the past to go after al-Qaida members in Yemen.”



However, [as The New American reported on September 6](#), 29 people were killed by U.S. drones during the week of September 2 in Yemen. With the killing of al-Shihri and his five companions, nearly 200 suspected militants have been killed by drones in Yemen in 2012.

In keeping with the Obama administration’s official silence on the drone program, [State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland would not confirm](#) al-Shihri’s death.

Lately, however, President Obama has let out a little slack in the tight leash on his death-by-drone program. He has given [interviews with Ben Swann of Fox 19](#) in Cincinnati, Ohio, and to [CNN’s chief White House correspondent Jessica Yellin](#).

Statements made by the president in both interviews defend his decision to deploy drones to assassinate those he suspects of assisting al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or associated groups in carrying out their purported threat to the safety of U.S. national security.

It is this presumption of guilt by association, followed by a lethal drone strike, that rightly worries many constitutionalists and friends of liberty. When the president usurps power to place names on a kill list and then have those people summarily executed without a trial, he has placed our Republic on a trajectory toward tyranny and government-sponsored terrorism.

There are many unanswered questions prompted by the president’s drone program.

First, why can’t these alleged “terrorists” be tried in our federal court system? For decades those accused of terroristic crimes have been formally charged with those crimes, had those charges heard before an impartial federal judge, and been permitted to mount a defense to those crimes.

In fact, a survey of such trials conducted by the Human Rights Watch reports that “Federal civilian criminal courts have convicted nearly 500 individuals on terrorism-related charges since 9/11.”

And lest the president suggest that these evildoers cannot be apprehended, he should be reminded that “public enemy number one” Osama bin Laden, was reportedly tracked and overtaken by a U.S. special operations team. Why could other less high value targets not be similarly overtaken? Then, once in the custody of the United States, they could be brought to stand trial for their alleged evil deeds. This would preserve, protect, and defend the fundamental concept of due process, one of the pillars of



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liberty upon which our Constitution is built.

At the end of its report of the latest drone attack in Yemen, the AP writes: "Samir Khan, an al-Qaida propagandist, also was killed in a drone strike last year. Last October, [Anwar] al-Awlaki's son was among nine killed in an airstrike."

What the AP does not report is that all three of these people: Anwar al-Awlaki, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki (his 16-year-old son), and Samir Khan were all American citizens and that not one of them was ever charged with a crime or permitted to answer for his alleged terrorist associations before an impartial judge.

Regarding the killing of Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, the Obama administration has never informed the country of any wrongdoing by this teenager other than being related to a man who posted anti-American videos on the Internet that allegedly influenced others to commit crimes. A government-sanctioned assassination of such an individual is repugnant to all those who cherish life, liberty, and the due process that protects them.

Furthermore, no known attempt was ever made to capture this young man and take him into U.S. custody. Of course, that could be because he might actually have ended up in a court of law if he had been apprehended; and President Obama, a former lawyer, knows that trials can be long, messy, and unpredictable. It is much quicker and cleaner just to launch a missile and kill someone without going through the hassle of due process.

Finally, five unidentified men were killed by the missiles aimed at al-Shihri. The White House seemingly cares very little if those caught within the blast zone are members of al-Qaeda or any associated organization. Being merely in the company of one allegedly associated with those allegedly associated with the alleged al-Qaeda network allegedly threatening the national security of the United States is apparently sufficient provocation for becoming "collateral damage."



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