

## Remote Control War

The Brennan hearing today, along with wider knowledge of the policy of targeted killing of presumed terrorists, has focused much greater interest and discussion of the 'War on Terrorism'

Some find the idea of unmanned drones specifically to be offensive. Traditional combat, because humans have used it for thousands of years, seems preferable-- to look the enemy in the eye.

Face-to-face killing does sound somehow more honorable, but our country has done plenty of that in the past, and I'm not convinced that close combat makes killing any more moral, or has any better long-term result. I think the issue is that any killing at all that is not clearly in self-defense is wrong, and the effect of wrongful killing is to incite retaliation, which in turn brings more killing.

Now, if a deadly attack actually is rational national self-defense, a method of narrow targeting with drones or other means is a better option than a mass invasion with troops or bombing cities and towns. The fewer innocent people killed, the better, remembering that the number will seldom be zero.

But we, the people in whose name this killing is done should demand to know whether and how it is truly necessarily in our defense. It is a question we need to keep asking, expecting honest answers, as long as it is happening. Whenever the answers don't convince us, the killing must stop.

'The people have a right to know when and where their government is allowed to kill them.' --Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon

[Code Pink protested admirably, succeeding in being heard on national TV.](#)

One of their points is 'drones make enemies' - that every time a supposed terrorist is 'terminated', his or her friends, family, and countrymen may be angered and radicalized, perpetuating the motivation for terrorism in a potentially endless cycle of violence. This is even more true if innocent bystanders are also killed. When, then, can we expect the War on Terrorism to end?

This is a question that all Americans should think about, even those who would rather not. We need to take control of our foreign policy, not let it be operated in secret under rules and principles we are not permitted to know. It will not be an easy task. It will take a sustained effort.

What we should not do is engage in hysteria and name-calling. The problems are complex, and exaggerated rhetoric can impede the gathering of knowledge and understanding. Speaking out, protesting, and demonstrating are valuable and necessary, but at the same time we need to keep the dialog rational.

-cosmic rat 2/8/2013