

Increasing Trend of Homicidal Drone Attacks in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To study the increasing trend of Homicidal Attacks in Pakistan.

Study Design: Retrospective study.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was carried out at 1. Benazir Civil Hospital Rawalpindi, 2. Forensic Medicine Deptt. General Hospital PGMI Lahore, 3. Civil Hospital Sialkot, 4. DHQ Benazir Hospital Abbottabad 5. DHQ Hospital Gujrat from 01.01.2012 to 31.05.2013.

Materials and Methods: The data of Homicidal drone attacks and mortality was collected from news papers, internet and medical journals of Forensic Medicine.

Results: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism estimates the following cumulative statistics about US drone strikes: (As of March 2013)

- Total strikes: 366
- Total reported killed: 2,537 - 3,581
- Civilians reported killed: 2000 - 3000
- Children reported killed: 368 - 997
- Total reported injured: 1,174 - 1,465
- Strikes under the Bush Administration: 52
- Strikes under the Obama Administration: 314

Conclusion: The trend of Homicidal drone attack was increased in Pakistan in President Pervaiz Musharaf time in favour of Americans by giving our National Airports. The people of Waziristan are also responsible for these attacks as they give information about Taliban to their centers by giving signals in a cost of dollars.

Key Words: Drone, Homicidal, National/International forum, NGOs, Politicians, Protest.

INTRODUCTION

The history of homicidal drone attacks goes back to the Russia verses Afghan war. The trend of these attacks were at the peak in the time of President Pervaiz Musharaf and Asif Ali Zardari in the reward of friendship and salavery/Faithfulness of the Americans(01). As these Presidents were taking dollars for drone attacks that is why this trend was going to be increased in Waziristan as well as other areas of the Pakistan. Even the Army was not safe from these nonsense homicidal drone attacks. This was due to nonsense and weak policy of our Presidents/Prime ministers and Chief of the Army staff (02).

The United States government has made hundreds of attacks on targets in northwest Pakistan since 2004 using drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) controlled by the American Central Intelligence Agency's Special Activities Division. Most of these attacks are on targets in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border in Northwest Pakistan. These strikes were begun by President George W. Bush and have increased substantially under President Barack Obama. Some media refer to the series of attacks as a "drone war".^[03]

Pakistan's government publicly condemns these attacks, but has secretly shared intelligence with the United States and also allegedly allowed the drones to operate from Shamsi Airfield in Pakistan until 21 April 2011, when 150 Americans left the base.^[04] According to secret diplomatic cables leaked by Wikileaks, Pakistan's Army Chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani not only tacitly agreed to the drone flights, but in 2008 requested Americans to increase them. However, Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik said, "drone missiles cause collateral damage. A few militants are killed, but the majority of victims are innocent citizens." The strikes are often linked to anti-American sentiment in Pakistan and the growing questionability of the scope and extent of CIA activities in Pakistan.^[05]

Reports of the number of militants versus civilian casualties differ. According to the Pakistani authorities, 60 cross-border predator strikes in the period from January 2006 to April 2009 killed 14 wanted al-Qaeda leaders and 687 Pakistani civilians.^[06] In a 2009 opinion article, Daniel L. Byman of the Brookings Institution wrote that drone strikes may have killed "10 or so civilians" for every "mid- and high-ranking [al Qaeda and Taliban] leader." In contrast, the New America Foundation has estimated that 80 percent of those killed in the attacks were militants.^[07] The

Pakistani military has stated that most of those killed were Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants. The CIA believes that the strikes conducted since May 2010 have killed over 600 militants and have not caused any civilian fatalities, a claim that some experts disputed.^[108] The Bureau of Investigative Journalism found that between 391 – 780 civilians were killed out of a total of between 1,658 and 2,597 and that 160 children are reported among the deaths. The Bureau also revealed that since President Obama took office at least 50 civilians were killed in follow-up strikes when they had gone to help victims and more than 20 civilians have also been attacked in deliberate strikes on funerals and mourners, tactics that have been condemned by legal experts.^[109] Barbara Elias-Sanborn has also claimed that, "as much of the literature on drones suggests, such killings usually harden militants' determination to fight, stalling any potential negotiations and settlement." However, analysis by the RAND Corporation suggests that "drone strikes are associated with decreases in both the frequency and the lethality of militant attacks overall and in IED and suicide attacks specifically."^[110]

A motive that the 2010 Times Square car bomber Faisal Shahzad stated was the repeated CIA drone attacks in Pakistan, his native country.^[111]

Drone strikes were halted in November 2011 after NATO forces killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in the Salala incident. Shamsi Airfield was evacuated of Americans and taken over by the Pakistanis December 2011. The incident prompted an approximately two-month stop to the drone strikes, which resumed on 10 January 2012.^[112]

In March 2013, Ben Emmerson, the United Nations Special Rapporteur led a U.N. team that looked into civilian casualties from the U.S. drone attacks, and stated that the attacks are a violation of the sovereignty of Pakistan. Emerson said government officials from the country clearly stated Pakistan does not agree to the drone attacks, which is contradicted by U.S. officials.^[113]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data of homicidal drone attacks and mortality was collected from internet, Newspapers and Journals of Forensic Medicine.

RESULTS

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List of Taliban fatality reports in Pakistan.

Table No. 1: US Drone Strike Statistics estimate according to the New America Foundation.(As of 17 April 2013)

Year	Number of Attacks	Number Killed	
		Min.	Max.
2004	1	5	8
2005	3	12	13
2006	2	90	102
2007	4	48	77
2008	36	219	344
2009	54	350	721
2010	122	608	1,028
2011	72	366	599
2012	48	222	349
2013	12	62	73
Total	354	1,982	3,314

DISCUSSION

The homicidal drone attacks have no justification except violation of human rights internationally. The Americans have low & mean mentality because they want to concur the countries of whole world by unfair means and this is criminal act. This issue should be raised at WHO forum^[116].

George W. Bush vastly accelerated the drone strikes during the final year of his presidency. A list of the high-ranking victims of the drones was provided to Pakistan in 2009. Obama has broadened these attacks to include targets seeking to destabilize Pakistani civilian government and the attacks of 14 and 16 February 2009 were against training camps run by Baitullah Mehsud.^[117] On 25 February 2009 Leon Panetta, the director of the CIA, indicated the strikes will continue. On 4 March 2009 The Washington Times reported that the drones were targeting Baitullah Mehsud. Obama was reported in March 2009 as considering expanding these strikes to include Balochistan.^[118]

On 25 March 2010 US State Department legal advisor Harold Koh stated that the drone strikes were legal because of the right to self-defense. According to Koh, the US is involved in an armed conflict with al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their affiliates and therefore may use force consistent with self-defense under international law.^[119]

Former CIA officials state that the agency uses a careful screening process in making decisions on which individuals to kill via drone strikes. The process, carried out at the agency's counterterrorist center, involves up to 10 lawyers who write briefs justifying the targeting

of specific individuals. According to the former officials, if the briefs' arguments are weak, the request to target the individual is denied.^[20] Since 2008 the CIA has relied less on its list of individuals and increasingly targeted "signatures," or suspect behavior. This change in tactics has resulted in fewer deaths of high-value targets and in more deaths of lower-level fighters, or "mere foot soldiers" as the one senior Pakistani official told the Washington Post. "Signature" targeting has been the source of controversy. Drone critics make the claim that regular citizen behaviors can easily be mistaken for militant signatures.^[21]

US officials stated in March 2009 that the Predator strikes had killed nine of al Qaeda's 20 top commanders. The officials added that many top Taliban and al Qaeda leaders, as a result of the strikes, had fled to Quetta or even further to Karachi.^[22]

Some US politicians and academics have condemned the drone strikes. US Congressman Dennis Kucinich asserted that the United States was violating international law by carrying out strikes against a country that never attacked the United States. Georgetown University professor Gary D. Solis asserts that since the drone operators at the CIA are civilians directly engaged in armed conflict, this makes them "unlawful combatants" and possibly subject to prosecution.^[23]

US military reports asserted that al Qaeda is being slowly but systematically routed because of these attacks, and that they have served to sow the seeds of uncertainty and discord among their ranks. They also claimed that the drone attacks have added and confused the Taliban, and have led them to turn against each other. In July 2009 it was reported that (according to US officials) Osama Bin Laden's son Saad bin Laden was believed to have been killed in a drone attack earlier in the year.

During a protest against drone attacks, in an event sponsored by Nevada Desert Experience, Father Louie Vitale, Kathy Kelly, Stephen Kelly, SJ, Eve Tetaz, John Dear, and others were arrested outside Creech Air Force Base on Wednesday 9 April 2009.^[24]

In May 2009 it was reported that the USA was sharing drone intelligence with Pakistan. Leon Panetta reiterated on 19 May 2009 that the US intended to continue the drone attacks.

In December 2009 expansion of the drone attacks was authorized by President Barack Obama to parallel the decision to send 30,000 more American troops to Afghanistan.^[25] Senior US officials are reportedly pushing for extending the strikes into Quetta in Balochistan against the Quetta Shura. Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad on 7 January 2010 Senators McCain and Joe Lieberman stated the drone attacks were effective and would continue but stated that US would make greater efforts to prevent collateral damage. In an effort to strengthen trust with Pakistan

'US sharing drone surveillance data with Pakistan, says Mike Mullen ' US defence budget for 2011 asked for a 75% increase in funds to enhance the drone operations.^[26]

Compare Mr. Obama's use of drone strikes with that of his predecessor. During the Bush administration, there was an American drone attack in Pakistan every 43 days; during the first two years of the Obama administration, there was a drone strike there every four days.^[27]

CONCLUSION

The trend of Homicidal drone attack was increased in Pakistan in President Pervaiz Musharaf time in favour of Americans by giving our National Airports. The people of Waziristan are also responsible for these attacks as they give information about Taliban to their centers by giving signals in a cost of dollars.

Suggestions: The preventive measures should be adopted by recording protest against these homicidal drone attacks on National/International forum, by our NGOs, Politicians such as President/Prime Ministers/ Chief of the Army staff and other affective personalities.

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