

The Political and Strategic Effects of American Drone Strikes's Use on its National Security

التأثيرات السياسية والإستراتيجية لاستخدام أمريكا الطائرات بدون طيار على أمنها القومي

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• Abstract

This study investigates the political and strategic effects of American drone strikes' use on its national security in its course of counterterrorism. It uses the Necropolitic theory as a lens of American crucial resort to these military tools. Thus, qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to explain the political and strategic effects that drone strikes engendered to American national security. It aims to examine the effectiveness of drone strikes in eliminating the terrorist threat. The findings reveal that despite that the US succeeds in killing key terrorist leaders that shaped a threat to its security; the issue of terrorism is persisting. The use of drones distorts American image for the killing of innocents fueling anti-Americanism. It encourages their proliferation that leads to international insecurity and breaches the International Law.

Keywords:

The US, Drone Strikes, Necropolitic Theory, National Security, Terrorists, International Law

• الملخص:

هذه الدراسة تبحث التأثيرات السياسية والاستراتيجية لاستخدام الطائرات بدون طيار في مكافحة الإرهاب على الأمن القومي الأمريكي. وتعتمد على نظرية "المقبرة" لفهم دوافع الولايات المتحدة في تبني هذه الأدوات العسكرية. وتستخدم الدراسة مناهج نوعية وكمية لتحليل التأثيرات السياسية والاستراتيجية التي تترتب على الضربات الجوية بدون طيار. وتهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم مدى فعالية هذه الضربات في القضاء على التهديدات الإرهابية. وتظهر النتائج أنه رغم نجاح الولايات المتحدة في تصفية قادة إرهابيين بارزين كانوا يشكلون تهديدًا لأمنها، فإن مشكلة الإرهاب لا تزال قائمة. إن استخدام الطائرات بدون طيار يشوه صورة الولايات المتحدة بسبب استهداف الأبرياء، مما يعزز المشاعر المعادية لها. كما أن تشجيع انتشار هذه التقنية يساهم في انعدام الأمن الدولي وانتهاك القانون الدولي.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الولايات المتحدة، ضربات الطائرات بدون طيار، نظرية المقبرة، الأمن القومي، الإرهابيون، القانون الدولي.

• Introduction

American drone strikes' use against terrorist groups around the globe has taken a strong posture in order to defend its security and eradicate worldwide terrorism. This policy as part of the counterterrorism strategy initiated by President Bush and carried on by President Obama and Trump is a reaction to the 9/11 attacks that threatened America's security by Al Qaeda insurgents. However, the use of drone operations in defense of its homeland has negative effects on its national security at the strategic and political levels. Airstrikes as a weapon are praised by the US as being precise in targeting terrorists and save the lives of its military personnel who experienced huge number of deaths under the traditional method of military boots on the ground. In this vein, the present paper aims to find out whether America's drone policy achieves its national security goals and check its effectiveness in eradicating terrorist groups. It also seeks to delve into the position of the international community, which forms part of the adverse effects that the US confronts because of its drone policy use.

American decision to conduct drone operations against Al Qaeda and its affiliate groups in Pakistan, the Houthis in Yemen, ISIS in Iraq and Syria since 2001 created international political turmoil and disappointed the expectations of the US in a number of ways. These involved public discontent in targeted countries against American drone policies because of civilian deaths, the acquisition of drones by state and non-state actors. America received wide criticism about its drone operations and led many scholars, politicians and human rights officials to question its lack of transparency about the number of deaths that has a direct impact on American political and military image. Besides, the effectiveness of these military tools in eliminating the terrorist threat that shapes a primary national security goal is explored.

The paper reveals that American reliance on drone strikes as the best military tool to eradicate the terrorist groups wherever they hide forms a representation of the Necropolitic theory that Achille Mbembe introduces in his article *Necropolitics*. It also provides a historical overview about American drone operations in Pakistan and Yemen that are classified as safe havens for terrorist groups. Subsequently, American reliance on such a vehicle to defend its nation against terrorist threats has crucial repercussions on its national security goals representing the primary focus of this study. Thus, it will open the door to judge whether the US failed or succeeded in choosing drone strikes to promote its national security and the global peace, and whether the new technological tools of power make any difference in causing the traumatic consequences of wars whatever the enemy or the targeted party that is fought.

The paper relies on the historical and analytical tools using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. It uses the qualitative approach to describe the drone operations that the US conducted against terrorist targets in Pakistan and Yemen as part of its national security strategy and a practice of the Necropolitic theory. It is also used to analyze the consequences of these attacks on America as a superpower that strives to safeguard its security. Moreover, it uses the quantitative approach to present the number of civilian and terrorist deaths from American drone attacks from a number of organizations like the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) and the New America Foundation (NAF) to show whether the US attains its objective of terrorist elimination without causing any harm to innocents. It is also used to expose the frequency of terrorist attacks against the US and its interests after operating its drone attacks against key terrorist leaders that threatens its security. Thus, in the light of this investigation, these questions are worth asking: What are the

political and strategic effects that the US generate from its use of drone strikes on its national security? To what extent American drone strikes' use is effective in eliminating the terrorist threat.

1. Theoretical Framework: American Drone Strikes as a Practice of the Necropolitic Theory

In the light of countering terrorism, the practice of American drone strikes has been the center of debate for several scholars due to their nature and renewal. The projection of Drone strikes takes place against South Asian countries including Afghanistan and Pakistan, Middle Eastern nations like Yemen and African ones like Somalia¹. In fact, America's announcements that Al Qaeda's affiliates are hiding in Muslim countries that are suffering from political destabilization leads us to ask: On which premise does the US launch its drone attacks in these nations? Why do the US target only weak and politically destabilized nations? Is American drone strikes' policy racist? What are the objectives of America's drone program?

In order to provide answers to aforementioned questions, multiple sources from scholars and theorists point to the set of ideas, beliefs and history that motivate Westerner countries and the US in particular in their actions towards the other countries. Under Edward Said's theory of Orientalism that spots the light over Western perspective towards the orient, refers mainly to the Arabs and the Muslims as being the uncivilized others. Based on the Orientalism of American culture, its decision to use drones to target Muslims and project surveillance over them emanated from their logic that the Muslims are terrorists and their cultural and ideological difference from the Western ones shape a threat to the United States².

In addition, under the framework of targeting terrorists by its drones, the United States makes up its selection according to its colonial belief that the Arabs and the Muslims are politically, racially and culturally different whose ideological beliefs oppose the Western ones. In such a way, the American reliance on drones intended to protect its citizens from the terrorist threat. However, in practical terms, they are a form of violence projected over people whose life is unworthy like the military aged-males. They are also a political and military tactic to continue its colonial legacy that it practiced for years in its historical agenda³.

Based on Arjun Sethi's view in his article *Obama Misled the Public on Drones*, the conduct of drone-targeted killings by the CIA is just a representation of the hidden dark picture of the US. The latter refers to the exploitation of Muslim opposition to American culture and lifestyle from an ideological and religious perspective; determining them as the enemy of its national security that intend to destroy its powerful position in the world. Since no information is revealed about the drone operations and the consequences that underlie it particularly the death of civilians. This would mean that American drone program is one of assassination that its ultimate aim is to kill the Muslims in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia⁴.

In his valuable article *Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics*, Pele emphasizes that the role and impact of great powers in shaping the lives of people in the world. His focus on the concept Necropolitics

¹ Tejera A. D. -Drones and Targeted Killings : the Need to uphold Human Rights and International Law- Spain: Parliamentary Assembly-2015.

² Espinoza M.- State Terrorism: Orientalism and the Drone Programme- Critical Studies on Terrorism 2018, pp- 6-8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sethi A. - Obama Misled the Public on Drones- Al Jazeera, October 20, 2015.

that originates from Achille Mbembe's essay published in 2003 with the same title to mean controlling people's lives using social and political power. It also includes how such powers are imposed on people by shaping their destiny by violence that lead to their death. Thus, as Mbembe clarifies that Necropolitics is about the states' exercise of their powers to produce deaths at a large scale, it can be concluded that America's use of drones is just the tool and a practice that allowed it to achieve such an end¹.

Motivated by its belief of idealism and the superiority of its culture and history, the US intimately links terrorism to Muslims being as militants who are regarded as a source of anarchy, autocracy and disorder. America's mission in that sense was to exterminate them in order to preserve order and promote peace and democracy in the world. Foucault, the author of the last chapter of the history of Sexuality (vol.1), pointed that the view of inferiority towards some states or races like the Muslims in which a decision of using power over them to exterminate them is seen as racism ; a political resort to justify the act of killing or using violence against the others². Thus, it is assumed that American drone strike targets are in themselves objectives for the US that are referred as « Jackpots ». Such actions are identified as inhuman as the ultimate aim was death; whomever the identity of the person killed whether innocent or not³. Hence, it is noteworthy to say that the US drone program is based on the Necropolitic theory that depends on minimizing the number of people in the world by creating pretexts to achieve its goal⁴.

2. A Historical Approach: an Overview of American Drone Strikes in Areas outside Active Hostilities (Pakistan and Yemen)

This part of the study will examine the drone operations that the US has conducted in Pakistan and Yemen in its course of combatting terrorism, and promoting its national security objectives.

2.1 American Drone Strikes in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the startup of American drone strikes in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas took place in 2004. The political situation that characterized the FATA region turned it into a pool for militants like Al Qaeda and the Taliban insurgents who had escaped from Afghanistan. The US embarked in a mission to track and attack these terrorists wherever they go with its drones. The US justified its drone targeting of these militant groups with the inability of Pakistan to fight them and its uncooperative stance for such an end⁵.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) witnessed the largest secret targeted killing operations conducted by the CIA. From 2004 until 2010, it was revealed that the CIA launched 114 strikes against the terrorists in FATA resulted in the death of 850 militants in

¹ Pele A. -Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics. *Critical Legal Thinking*2020. Available at: <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2020/03/02/achille-mbembe-necropolitics/>

² Pele A. -Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics. *Critical Legal Thinking*2020. Available at: <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2020/03/02/achille-mbembe-necropolitics/>

³ Sethi A. - Obama Misled the Public on Drones- Al Jazeera, October 20, 2015.

⁴ Zhao S. Y. - Achille Mbembe, Necropolitics- International Journal of Communication- 2022.

⁵ Aslam W .- The US drone strikes and on-the-ground consequences in Pakistan- Peace in Progress- February 2014.

approximation while the civilian deaths were about 350¹. The motives behind CIA use of Covert drone strikes in Pakistan were pointed by Leon Panetta, a former CIA director as « the only game in town in terms of confronting and trying to disrupt Al Qaeda leadership »². In this vein, the US committed itself to target Al Qaeda terrorists in Pakistan who were attacking American and NATO forces in Afghanistan³.

However, in 2013 President Obama authorized 322 strikes in Pakistan; a fact that revealed the importance of drone operations in minimizing the terrorist threat. The escalated use of drones by president Obama was significant as he ordered a strike in every 3 days in 2013 while he allowed a strike in every 40 days in mid-2011⁴. Between 2014 and 2018, American drone attacks were conducted in collaboration with Pakistan's government killing approximately 3.500 TTP militants; a considerable number of deaths that both the US and Pakistan regarded as an effective outcome that weakened the TTP's power⁵.

2.2. American Drone Strikes in Yemen

Yemen became a target of American drone strikes since it has become a camp for Jihadi Salafists. It was argued that the source of Al Qaeda formation dated back to the 1980s after the end of the Afghanistan War when a group of foreign fighters amongst them Yemenis found Yemen as a safe haven⁶. It is emphasized that Yemen is a country that suffered from poverty, poor governance and political instability. All these factors motivated extremism to grow up there. Taking advantage of this situation, Yemen had become a site for extremist groups and terrorists to operate there. Therefore, the US did not shorten its efforts to use its drone strikes to attack Al Qaeda operatives in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State group (IS) in order to weaken their power and devastate their plans against its interests⁷.

America's drone operations in Yemen were conducted under the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA as well. Predator drones were used as reconnaissance aircrafts in the Southern part of the country to collect data about the movements and the activities of the AQAP. The use of these drones to target suspected terrorists were launched with Yemeni government's permission as President Hadi advanced the argument that drones are more precise in targeting terrorists than the Yemeni military flights⁸. America's drones were launched from different bases; a base in the camp Lemonnier in Djibouti and another base in Saudi Arabia that was kept secret⁹. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) revealed that the US operated

¹ Bergen, P. and Tiedemann, K. - Washington's phantom war: The effects of the US drone programs in Pakistan- Foreign Affairs- V. 90- N. 12- 2011.

² Donaldson, R. -The Lawfulness of US Drone Strikes in Pakistan: An International Perspective- School of Advanced Air and Space Studies- June 2012.

³ Franke, V. C.- A Drone's Strike Away: Peace and Security in the Age of Automated Warfare- Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute- Case Study as part of the PKSOI-TRENDS Global Case Program- July 2020.

⁴ Bergen, P. and Rowland, J. - Decade of the Drone: Analyzing CIA Drone Attacks, Casualties, and Policy- Dans P. L. Bergen, & d. Rothenberg, Drone Wars: Transforming Conflict, Law, and Policy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press- 2014.

⁵ Center for Preventive Action. -Instability in Pakistan- February 9, 2024. Available at: cfr.org: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/islamist-militancy-pakistan>

⁶ O'Driscoll D- Violent extremist organisations in Yemen- Manchester: Manchester University-2018.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jordan J. -Drone Attacks Campaign in Yemen- Journal of the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies- 2013.

⁹ Ibid.

between 136 and 156 drone strikes from 2002 to 2016¹. For the US, the use of drones in Yemen as personality strikes were effective to ruin terrorist leaders' activities at an international scale. In this vein, the US killed Al Awlaki despite that he had American citizenship because he was behind the 2009 « Christmas bomber » plot².

American drone strikes increased extensively during 2012 as the Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi allowed the use of American drones against the AQAP either by the Joint Special Operation Command or by even the CIA. Between 2002 and 2012, around 372 people are killed because of drone strikes among whom 82 are civilians as reported by the Long War Journal³. According to data revealed by the Statistical Research Department, the number of drone strikes launched in Yemen against the AQAP occurred at a regular basis each year from 2011 until 2019. The year 2017 marked a peak one in terms of number reaching to 127 strikes as shown in (figure 1)⁴. L E Picard, the executive director of the Yemen Peace Project pointed, « President Trump has drastically increased the number of strikes and special operations raids in Yemen. In his first year in office he launched more drone strikes there than happened in the entire Obama tenure »⁵. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism had also emphasized the escalated number of airstrikes that Trump operated in Yemen while the targets included the death of civilians. This had denoted again that American Presidential powers played a significant role in shaping the socio-politics of Yemen and the other targeted states⁶.

¹ Franke, V. C.- A Drone's Strike Away: Peace and Security in the Age of Automated Warfare- Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute- Case Study as part of the PKSOI-TRENDS Global Case Program- July 2020.

² Terill W. A. - Drones over Yemen: Weighing military Benefits and Political Costs- The US Army War College Quarterly; Parameters-2013.

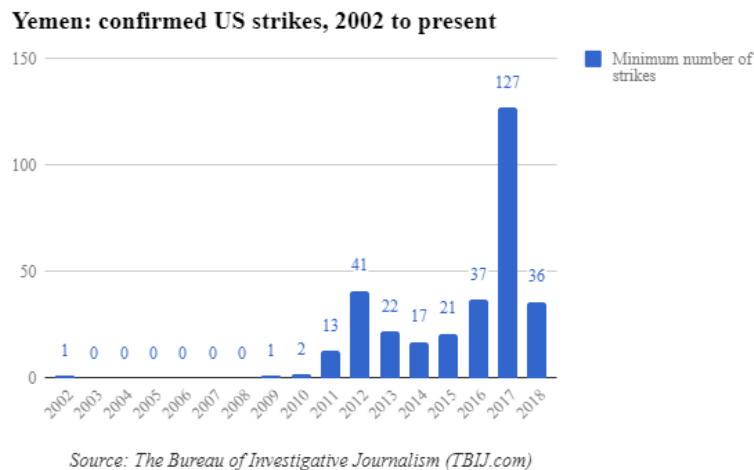
³ Crawford N. C. -Civilians Killed in US Operations in Yemen-2014.

⁴ Number of US Drone Strikes in Yemen- Statista- August 9, 2024. Available at : <https://www.statista.com/statistics/428496/us-drone-strikes-in-yemen/>

⁵ Hasan, S. - Why the CIA must be made to Report Casualties of Drone Strikes- -What makes Trump seem like a nice guy?- TRT World- 2019.

⁶ Purkiss, J. and Serle, J.-Unprecedented Number of US Drone and Airstrikes Hit in Yemen- the Bureau of Investigative Journalism- March 2, 2017.

Fig.1. Number of American drone Strikes in Yemen from 2002-2018



Source: Drones Team. - Yemen strikes Visualized- The Bureau of Investigative Journalism-2012.

3. Investigating the Political and Strategic Effects of American Drone Strikes' Use on its National Security: the Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

The theoretical framework of this study uses historical and analytical tools to present a literature review composed of American use of drone strikes as a vehicle to achieve its national security goals, and a practice to the Necropolitic theory. It is also based on different scholarly works that shows American drone operations against terrorist groups' leaders in Yemen and Pakistan since 2002 and 2004 respectively. However, the theoretical part paves the way to question the repercussions of drone strikes' adoption for self-defense on American national security objectives that takes into account the preservation of world peace, which is a crucial part of American mission in the world. In their paper *the Drone War : Pakistani Public Attitudes toward American Drone Strikes in Pakistan*, Kaltenthaler et al., discuss the opposition of Pakistani public to American drones as well as the parliament's rejection of these tools by asking the US to shut the airbase that it uses to launch its strikes against Pakistani targets¹. The analysis of drone strikes' use is explained through the Necropolitic theory, which shows American actions as terrorist in character, and produce traumatic results that cause harm to civilian lives.

The qualitative approach is used to figure out the political and strategic effects of American drone strikes on its national security. By depending on the views of Pakistani and Yemeni public, news media and political leaders about the consequences of the targeted killings in areas where the US is not in an armed conflict. In addition, the responses of targeted people and terrorist groups towards American actions. Consequently, such approach provides an overview of people's reaction about American practice of drone attacks against terrorist leaders and suspected

¹ Kaltenthaler et al. -The drone war : Pakistani public attitudes toward American drone strikes in Pakistan- Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association- Chicago- pp. 13-17-2012.

militants, which involves the death of civilian innocents. It shows whether the public opinion reflects acceptance or rejection about American use of drones. In this vein, the BBC news argues that Pakistani people are dissatisfied about the use of drone attacks for the killing of civilians¹. Even the Pakistani government was against American drones not only the Pakistani public. As evident in Roe's work who points, that Pakistan regards American drone strikes as a violation to its sovereignty leading to the deterioration of its relation with the US².

Besides, the literature received extensive research on the strategic effects of American drone strikes on its national security that provide answers to the questions: did American drone strikes eliminate the terrorist threat or increase it? Did the US succeed or fail in promoting global stability using drone attacks? In their work *Iranian proxy groups in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen : a principal-agent comparative analysis*, Zorri, D. M., Sadri, H. A., & Ellis, D. C., show that American practice of drone strikes against terrorist groups encouraged Iran to provide assistance to them to acquire weapons that challenge American security³. One more recent revelation by Walsh, James Igoe and Marcus, Schulzke who show in their book *Drones and Support for the Use of Drones* show that the use of drone strikes has shaken world peace and provoked the increase of terrorist groups to challenge American policies⁴. Similarly, in his valuable work *the Enduring Problem of 'grey drone' violence*, Enemark, C stress the view that American use of drones is terrorist in character and produce violence as it has the same results as terrorism ; the death of civilians⁵. The quantitative approach is used to show evidence about the frequency of terrorist attacks against the US after its drone strikes against key terrorist leaders and suspected militants that shaped a threat to American homeland and its interests. It affords reliability in order to assess the effectiveness of drone strikes' use for its national security in terms of minimizing the terrorist threat or producing an adverse effect.

3.1 The Political Effects of American Drone strikes' Use on its National Security: Analysis of Data

In political terms, drone strikes as a military tool to combat terrorist groups have a huge effect on the national security of the United States. The inability of successive American administrations to avoid the consequences of using aerial combat vehicles for the sake of acting in self-defense resulted in the rise of anti-Americanism. Such an outcome represents the rejection of American way of war that implies unjust practices against the targeted states and the civilians. It also reveals that American continuity of using these aerial vehicles against non-state actors without solving the issue of civilian casualties implies its hegemonic character over the population of the targeted states and proves the use of drone attacks as a practice to the Necropolitic theory.

¹ Drones in Pakistan Traumatize Civilians, US report says- BBC News- September 25, 2012. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-19704981>.

² Roe A. - Bugsplat and Fallible Humans: The Hi-Tech Drone Campaigns over North-West Pakistan- Air Power Review 2012, pp. 65-82.

³ Zorri et al. -Iranian Proxy Groups in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen: A Principal-Agent Comparative Analysis- 2020.

⁴ Walsh, J. I., & Marcus, S. -Drones and Support for the Use of Force. University of Michigan Press- 2018.

⁵ Enemark, C. -The enduring problem of 'grey'drone violence. European Journal of International Security- 2022, pp. 304-321.

3.1.1 Civilian Casualties Leading to Anti- Americanism

Recent studies on the effects of American use of drone strikes find that civilian casualties are a definite outcome. However, events evolved to the rise of anti-American sentiments by Pakistani and Yemeni public as an expression to the rejection of these vehicles in targeting terrorists. Even the media reporters and politicians of the targeted states expressed their discontent about such use. Thus, in this study diverse illustrations are given to show opposition to American drone strikes while the US supports their use as efficient to its security. In this vein, American drone attacks that intended to defend its security and fight terrorist groups mainly in Pakistan and Yemen create blowback to its national security interests. This is evident as the identity of people who are targeted in its drone operations include the death of civilians that is an unacceptable consequence either by the governments of the targeted nations who are suffering from terrorist groups in their countries or even the public. The several illustrations that reveal America's unaccountable war against militancy are diverse. In this context, American targeting of Al Qaeda regional franchise in Yemen resulted in the death of about 40 civilian casualties in 2014 according to the UN report¹.

According to a study made by Sumaia AlKohlani, the Yemenis expressed their discontent about America's use of drone strikes referring that the US is a terrorist nation as well and its actions are not far away from that of Al Qaeda. This is evident in which 64% of the citizens claimed that the use of drones is not an efficient policy for fighting terrorism. It is indicated that the use of drones create only enemies for the US and fuel the rise of terrorism only². In addition, Boucek & Revkin highlight that America's drone strikes against the AQAP in Yemen in 2009 resulted in the death of 80 civilians; a fact that pushed the Yemeni public to outbreak and express their dissatisfaction about their use³.

Discontent about American drones continue to take place as the Yemeni citizens express their opposition to American drone strikes against their country in different ways. For instance, figure 2 below reveal how Yemeni graffiti artists visualize Yemeni sufferings like the depiction of a blood writing in Arabic and English by a little girl of a question directed to Americans: why did you kill my family?⁴ Furthermore, through the lens of a wide range of media reports, sermons and political speeches, the Houthis in Yemen prove Yemenis' rejection to American targeted killings in their country pointing to the number of civilian deaths as well as the violation of Yemeni sovereignty⁵.

Fig.2. Yemeni Graffiti artists' Visualization of Yemeni Sufferings from American Drones

¹ Samuel, O. -The UN Says US Drone Strikes in Yemen Have Killed More Civilians Than al Qaeda-2015.

² Wilson M. E. -Counterterror Strike Effects on Civilian Attitudes in Yemen. Doctoral Dissertation- Carnegie Mellon University- 2022.

³ Boucek, C.and Revkin, M. - the Unraveling of the Salih Regime in Yemen- Combating Terrorist Center- 2011.

⁴ Mohamed, E. and El- Desouki, A. A. -Cultural Production and Social Movements After the Arab Spring : Nationalism, Politics, and Transnational Identity- Bloomsbury Academic- 2021.

⁵ Ibid.



Source: US drone strike body count doesn't add up, rights groups' say- 2016

An article provided by Hubbard et al. indicate that, in October 2016, the US provided support to Saudi Arabia to launch strikes against the Houthis in Yemen; in retaliation to Houthi drones that destroyed Saudi oil installations and destabilized the supply of oil to other nations. A fact that disappointed American interests¹. However, Watkins, D & Walsh, D in their article reveal that the operated drone strikes targeted a funeral in Sanaa and resulted in the death of 155 civilians; a fact that reveals that the Victims of drone operations are not justified². The Houthis' terrorist acts are only a reaction to American and Israeli policies against Palestine. They regard the US as the devil as Muhammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of the group's political council points « your strikes on Yemen are terrorism »³.

The question of: Who is being killed in the drone strikes? Represented Pakistani public issue and worry about the use of these weapons as a policy tool against terrorists. While scholars like Daniel Byman have always pointed to the death of civilians more than militants, the CIA has all the time negated such information⁴. Bergen and Tiedmann have also confirmed the counter-productivity of American drones claiming that they have created alienation among the public who joined the militant groups in order to revenge for the lost lives of their relatives. Thus, the US objective of eliminating terrorists only without endangering the lives of the innocents was not attained and led in turn to turmoil in Pakistan⁵. Concerning the views of Pakistan's public and the government, Kaltenthaler et al. Clarify that even in Pakistan uprisings broke out against American drones. The Pakistani parliament requested the US to reduce the number of drones while the Pakistani government asked the US to shut the airbase that is used for conducting its drone strikes against Pakistani targets⁶.

In addition, even the leaders of Islamic political parties stood against American drones. According to the Pew Research Center, the Pakistani public views American drones as a form of

¹ Hubbard, B., Karasz, P. and Reed, S.-Two major Saudi oil installations hit by drone strike, and US blames Iran- The New York Times- 2019.

² Watkins, D. and Walsh, D.- Saudi Strikes, American Bombs, Yemeni Suffering- How Saudi Arabia's War Tactics have Fuelled Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis- the New York Times- December 27, 2018.

³ US Launches New Strikes on Yemen's Houthis as Conflict Escalates-Aljazeera- January 13, 2024.

⁴ Kaltenthaler et al. -The drone war : Pakistani public attitudes toward American drone strikes in Pakistan. Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association- Chicago - pp. 13-17- 2012.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kaltenthaler et al. -The drone war : Pakistani public attitudes toward American drone strikes in Pakistan. Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association- Chicago - pp. 13-17-2012.

racism as they are not targeting terrorists but civilian Muslims¹. American attempts of expanding its special operations raids over Pakistan was met with rejection by the Pakistani ambassador Haqqani claiming that such an action is a violation of the country's sovereignty². Imran Khan, a Pakistani politician and a former cricket star stresses his opposition to American drone strikes referring to them as a source of anarchy. In his words, he says, « There'll be no peace in Pakistan until drone strikes stop »³. Similarly, the Foreign Ministry representative, Muhammad Faisal claims that Pakistan is ultimately rejecting American drones and in case of being used, Pakistan will react immediately against them⁴. America's killing of 40 Pashtun elders in the tribal area by its drone strikes provoked a protest by Pakistani officials denouncing the use of such weapons⁵.

According to the BBC news, American drones in Pakistan resulted in public discontent indicating that they weakened respect for the international law. Based on the extensive use of interviews to local population, drone strikes do not only target civilians in the tribal areas but also the rescuers who come to look after injured casualties in a follow-up strike. This means that the US do not care about people's lives whoever their identity innocents or terrorists, which is something against human rights ; killing people without any guilt or misbehavior is a crime in itself⁶. Another evidence has shown that the CIA conducted its drone operations in FATA killing about 1147 people for targeting 41 individuals without setting definite qualities for those who are recognized as militants⁷. This would mean that the US used drone strikes as a killing machine against weak states that the US intend to display its power over them and show its technological weapons in disregard of innocent lives.

American drone strategy has also worsened the relations between the US and Pakistan as it has produced negative effects on both of them. The strategy is doubted to be ineffective for a number of reasons. Abdul-Rehman indicates in his work *Impact of Drone Attacks in Pakistan and the War on Terror*, that the Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari expressed his opposition to the drone strikes. He claimed, « We feel the strikes are invasion on our sovereignty, which are not appreciated by most of the Pakistani people, at the first aspect of the war is to win the hearts and the minds of the people »⁸. Furthermore, in an attempt to gain public support for their electoral campaigns, Pakistani politicians supported anti-American sentiments regarding the use of drone strikes against terrorists inside their country which resulted in the death of civilians as well. Such an action that political officials has exploited angered the US and led to the deterioration of

¹ Fair, C. C., Kaltenthaler, K. and Miller, W. J. - Pakistani opposition to American drone strikes- Political Science Quarterly- pp. 387-419-2016.

² Bergen, P. and Tiedemann, K. -Washington's phantom war: The effects of the US drone programs in Pakistan- Foreign Affairs- Vol. 90 -N. 12-2011.

³ Peralta, E.- In Pakistan, Thousands Protest against US Drone Strikes- NPR- 2013.

⁴ Latif A.- US Rejects Pakistan's Drone Strike Claim- Asia Pacific-2012.

⁵ Rehman, A.- Impact of drone attacks in Pakistan and the war on terror: A consideration of the effects of drone attacks in Pakistan and whether they are helping or not to win the war on terror- Malmö University: Department of Global Political Studies- October 2013.

⁶ Drones in Pakistan Traumatize Civilians, US report says- BBC News- September 25, 2012. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-19704981>.

⁷ Tahir, M.- Bombing Pakistan : How colonial legacy sustains American drones. Costs of War- pp. 1-7- 2015.

⁸ Rehman, A. - Impact of drone attacks in Pakistan and the war on terror: A consideration of the effects of drone attacks in Pakistan and whether they are helping or not to win the war on terror- Malmö University: Department of Global Political Studies- October 2013.

relations between the two countries as the US regards Pakistan unsupportive to the War On Terror (WOT)¹.

In similar vein, Pakistani- American relations deteriorated as a consequence of American drone attacks that were launched from Pakistani airbases ; a fact that was considered by Pakistani government as a violation to its sovereignty. On that basis, Pakistan dismissed groups of military advisors and shut down its air bases from which the US launched its attacks. As a countermeasure to Pakistan's action, the US stopped its aid provisions to Pakistan that amounted to 500 million. Furthermore, the Pakistani civilians who were killed during these drone attacks that targeted weddings and funeral parties increased the anger of Pakistan's public as the victims did not shape any threat to the US².

The opposition to American drone use is expressed by the Pakistani journalists as well; as 67% of them believed that American drone strikes are acts of terrorism since they target a minority of terrorists only while the majority of deaths are amongst the ordinary people. The Pakistani media reports propagated the negative views about the US as they introduced the consequences that drones left behind. As an example, the claim of Amir Mir in April 2009 that American drones led to the death of 687 civilians³. According to Khan, American drone operations against the dozens of civilian rescuers to militant deaths in Pakistan by a CIA follow-up strike did not align with Obama's claim that American drones are conducted in total precision to eliminate terrorists only where no civilian will be killed as the London Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported⁴. This contradiction spotted the light on American hypocritical policy and increased the sentiments of anti-Americanism.

The increase of anti-Americanism is fueled by the Pakistani media that has always provided portrayal of the events related to the death of innocent civilians and the collateral damage along with the killing of Al Qaeda and Taliban operatives from American drone operations through the Pakistani newspapers and television. In this vein, the Pakistani Television Corporation and GEO TV have frequently exposed sketches and images of the civilian victims and the destruction of the Pakistani infrastructure like the vehicles and the houses because of American drone strikes. The reflection of the effects of American drones on Pakistan by the Pakistani media produced outrage of the Pakistani public against such a policy and their blame to their government over its tolerance to the US for producing such results. Pakistani government has become in a critical position as it faced public anger for its allowance of the use of drones against Pakistani targets that led to the death of innocent people without taking into account the value of their lives and the instability that these weapons precipitated. Furthermore, America's persistence over the use of

¹ Ibid.

² Roe, A. - Bugsplat and Fallible Humans: The Hi-Tech Drone Campaigns over North-West Pakistan- Air Power Review- pp. 65-82-2012.

³ Williams B. G. -Accuracy of the US Drone Campaign : The Views of a Pakistani General- West Point's Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel- March 4-3, 2011.

⁴ Khan, A. - New Study Asserts Drone Strikes in Pakistan Target Rescuers, Funerals- PBS- 2012.

Unmanned Vehicles as accountable to target only terrorists in compliance with the Pakistani government led Pakistan to reconsider its agreement to preserve its national sovereignty¹.

Based on a Pew Global Attitudes Project conducted in 2010 to find out the opinions of the Pakistani public about American use of drone strikes in their country, the results revealed that the majority (60%) of the Pakistani people opposed them. They believed that drone strikes are needless to use to defend Pakistan from extremist groups arguing that they killed a huge number of innocent civilians. Thus, it is likely to note that Pakistani people consider drone strikes as destructive to civilian lives. Because of such results, American policy of drone strikes contradicted with its objective of eliminating terrorism and promoting world peace. The actual situation is that Pakistan had become more unstable suffering from two gates: terrorism and American drones. Both of them have similar effects, which are social anarchy, death of innocents and political instability².

3.2 The Strategic Effects of American Drone Strikes' Use on its National Security

In strategic terms, the US generated a number of effects on its national security that were not taken into consideration through its reliance on drone strikes. America's use of force to combat terrorists represented part of modern warfare that characterized the international system. On this basis, the strive to compete for power and even to protect themselves from aggressive attacks by any threats purported nations and even non-state actors to develop armed drones ; an undesirable fact that shape a threat to American security. Moreover, America's belief that targeting terrorists would lead to the weakening of their power and the minimization of their spread created another adverse effect that was related to the escalation of the terrorist threat through recruitment of the victims' families. Furthermore, the execution of the drone operations without the consent of the targeted states created a legal dilemma in front of the international community that represented American drone attacks as a mere practice of its hegemonic power and its imperialistic tendencies.

3.2.1 The Danger of Drone Proliferation by State and non-State Actors on the Strategic Objectives of the US

America's development of drone weapons as a new tool to counter terrorists everywhere in the world as part of its national security strategy after the 9/11 attacks engendered the risk of drone proliferation by other states which may use them in vital areas of US security interests³. The acquisition of drones and their use by new states other than the US and Israel, which justified their use as part of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency changed the face of warfare in this era into full-scale conventional combat⁴. The development of armed Male drones has become an objective to a number of European countries like Germany, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Poland in 2013. Such a decision led other countries like Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Russia, Taiwan and India to develop armed drones in an attempt to defend themselves from imminent threats particularly from the ones that already have them⁵. In similar vein, a purchase deal of

¹ Kaltenthaler et al. -The drone war : Pakistani public attitudes toward American drone strikes in Pakistan. Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association- Chicago - pp. 13-17-2012.

² Ibid.

³ Okpaleke F. N. and Okoli, A.- The Strategic Efficacy of Drones for US Grand Strategy. Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations-pp. 219-238-2020.

⁴ Marcus J. - Combat Drones: We are in a New Era of Warfare-here's Why- BBC- 2022. Available at : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60047328>

⁵ Who has what: countries developing armed drones? - The New America- No Date.

drone strikes between Ethiopia and Turkey and Iran was done. Several actors can get access to drones with an approximation of 100 countries and non-state groups acquired them¹. On the basis of the actual situation, the drone proliferation to other states particularly the ones who are enemies to the US shape a threat to American security and even will lead to the complexity of future wars and the danger of risking people's lives as a cost of this technological development.

The United States Government office (GAO) revealed in their report in 2012 that the countries that acquired unmanned aerial systems since 2005 increased from nearly 40 to more than 75². A range of non-state actors or terrorist groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Libyan rebel groups, Hamas, Hezbollah acquired the UAS as the CNAS report revealed. It is emphasized that such proliferation lead the balance of air power to change in terms of bridging the gap with the Western states' technological development and the threat of overmatching them³. The danger of drone acquisition by state and non-state actors to the United States is shaped in the fact that the US will not enjoy its superiority and technological supremacy that it uses to have⁴.

The use of drones by militant groups represented one of the crucial threats that senior US military and security officials have preoccupied. In practical terms, this is originated from the fact that the Islamic State (IS), a militant group that operates its militancy in Iraq and Syria have made use of various systems to defend Mosul in December 2016. For such an event, the head of the US Special Operations Command declared that the use of such systems by the Islamic State is « the most daunting Problem » that the American operators encountered in that year⁵. According to Archambault and Veilleux- Lepage, the use of drones by non-state actors is regarded as a form of political violence. This has become a reality as the Houthi rebels tried to kill the Yemeni military leaders and to damage the Saudi Arabian infrastructure⁶.

In the case of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, drones are used as a propaganda tool to attain their goals. In this context, ISIS will be able to conduct its violent attacks effectively and to reestablish and reconfigure the sovereignty concept⁷.

One of the challenges to America 's security and its allies is Iran's support to a number of terrorist groups with equipments, weapons, training and funding including Hizballah, Hamas, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, al-Ashtar Brigades and Saraya al-Mukhtar in Bahrain, Kata'ib Hizballah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq in Iraq, and Hizballah al-Hijaz in Saudi Arabia. Such an action is regarded

¹ Marcus J. - Combat Drones: We are in a New Era of Warfare-here's Why- BBC- 2022. Available at : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60047328>

² Deneau, M. D. - Unmanned Aerial systems Proliferation: What Does it Mean to Military Planners? Canadian forces College- National Defense, Canada- 2016.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rossiter, A. - Drone Usage by Militant Groups : Exploring Variation in Adoption- Defense and Security Analysis- pp. 113-120- 2018.

⁶ Archambault, E., & Veilleux-Lepage, Y. - Drone imagery in Islamic State propaganda : flying like a state- International Affairs- pp. 955-973- 2020.

⁷ Ibid.

by the US as part of a great power competition where Iran would enjoy an expansion of its power in the region¹. Furthermore, Iran is accused of assisting terror cell networks in Africa as well that are intended to attack the US in case that it would impose sanctions on it as the Telegraph reported on June 24, 2019².

In his report, Don Rassler claimed that the acquisition of unarmed aerial drones is fearful particularly when they are developed and used as a program. In this vein, Rassler indicates five main terrorist groups as active actors of drone operations in the form of a program. These included Hezbollah, Hamas, Jabhat Fath El Sham and ISIS and the Yemeni Houthi rebels³. In this context, in January 2022, Emirati air defenses was exposed to a drone attack by the Houthi terrorist group through the Iranian support precipitated the death of three persons and the injury of six others⁴. The Houthi acts of terror shook the security of the US and that of the global community since there were about 65.000 Americans living in the UAE⁵.

Acting in a reactionary manner to Israel's airstrikes in Syria, Iran launched its drone attacks against American military base in Southern Syria. Similarly, on October 20, 2021 another Iranian suicide attacks targeted American base at Al Tanf. The reasons behind Iran's actions relate to its belief that America is the basic creator of terrorism and instability in Syria as it has no right to establish its military bases there with the argument of combatting terrorists and even without the consent of the central government of Syria⁶.

The acquisition of drones by both state and non-state actors fueled the practice of assassinations as seen by the several attempts that were committed against former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in Tokyo in 2015, Nicolas Maduro and the Venezuelan President who experienced an assassination attempt in 2018. The Iraqi PM ALKhadimi has also witnessed a kill attempt in 2021. Hence, it is significant to note that drone use introduced an age of assassinations that threatened the lives of state leaders⁷.

3.2.2 The Escalation of the Terrorist Threat to the International Community

America's insistence on eliminating the terrorist threat through the use of drones has been criticized by a number of critics providing that such actions has only aggravated the situation and led terrorist groups to thrive and their danger increase. They have also emphasized that US's

¹ Zorri et al. - Iranian Proxy Groups in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen: A Principal-Agent Comparative Analysis- 2020.

² Rafat A. - Analysis : Iran's Militia Networks in the Middle East and Africa. Kayhan Life- July 16, 2019.

³ Don R. - Remotely Piloted Innovation: Terrorism, Drones and Supportive Technology- United States Military Academy- 2016.

⁴ Milburn A. the New Face of War: devastating Drone Attacks in Ukraine have Implications for the US Military in the Middle East. JSTOR Security Studies Collection- 2022.

⁵ Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. - Returning the Houthis to the US Terrorist List- 2022. Available at: URL : uae-embassy.org: https://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Yemen%20White%20Paper_02-01-22_v4.pdf

⁶ Schmitt E. and Bergman R. - Strike on US Base Was Iranian Response to Israeli Attack, Officials Say- NY Times- November 18, 2021.

⁷ Rogers J. and Kunertova D. - The Vulnerabilities of the Drone Age : Established Threats and Emerging Issues out to 2035- Center for War Studies- 2022.

actions shook the peace of the international community¹. Furthermore, American conduct of drone operations created adverse effects on its power and military reach. It is also indicated that American drone strikes led to the opposition of American policies as a consequence of the civilian deaths who are targeted by these weapons and proved that America's strategy is not effective enough to protect human rights under the international law standards².

Several scholars indicate that America's drone warfare is not far away from the terrorist echoes that 9/11 attacks precipitated. This vision emanates from Afexentiou³ and Calhoun⁴ claiming that drones terrorized civilian communities. They justified their arguments by linking the effects of American drone strikes's use to the ones engendered by terrorist activities⁵. In theory, America's principle of operating its drone strikes is against suspected militants but in practical terms, the target is the innocents as the ordinary people are the ones who witnessed their death in front of their eyes⁶.

Chavez and Swed highlighted that drone use by violent non-state actors has become a worldwide phenomenon that spread rapidly and threatened the global peace. They pointed to the security concerns that these terrorist groups can cause in terms of being offensive⁷. A fresh example represented by the Houthi's use of weaponized drones on January 17, 2022 against civilian sites in Abu Dhabi international airport; leading to the death of three civilians and the injury of six others⁸. In 2020, American drone attacks against the Baghdad airport that resulted in the death of the leader of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Qasim Soleimani, the Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and a number of others provoked retaliation from the militia supporters of these leaders from both Iran and Iraq⁹. A number of regional leaders pinpointed the US with accusations for its assassination actions that produced violence¹⁰.

In his report entitled *Strategic Dissonance RPA Tactics to Defeat Al Qaeda*, Brownlee Emory revealed that American drone attacks that intended to destroy Al Qaeda produced reversible effects exemplified in the increase of the terrorist groups' activities. In other words, Al Qaeda expanded its terrorist groups to other regions like the Middle East and Africa in order to avoid

¹ Walsh, J. I. and Marcus, S. - Drones and Support for the Use of Force- University of Michigan Press- 2018.

² Okpaleke F. N. and Okoli, A.- The Strategic Efficacy of Drones for US Grand Strategy. Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations-pp. 219-238-2020.

³ Afexentiou A.- A history of drones: Moral(e) bombing and state terrorism- Critical Studies on Terrorism- 2018.

⁴ Calhoun L. - Totalitarian tendencies in drone strikes by states- Critical studies on Terrorism- 2018.

⁵ Enemark C. - The enduring problem of 'grey' drone violence. European Journal of International Security- pp. 304-321-2022.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chavez K. and Swed O. - Off the Shelf: The Violent Nonstate Actor Drone Threat- Air and Space Power Journal- 2020.

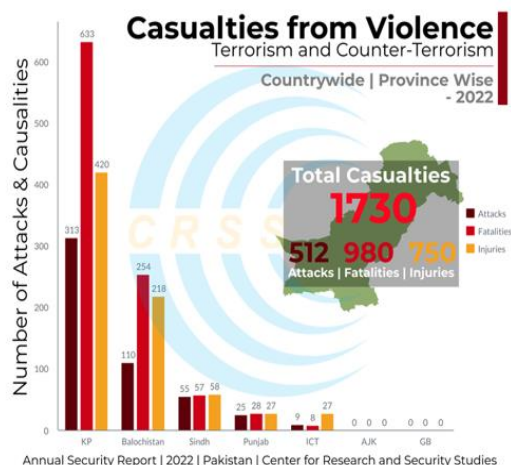
⁸ Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. - Returning the Houthis to the US Terrorist List- 2022. Available at: URL : uae-embassy.org: https://www.uae-embassy.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Yemen%20White%20Paper_02-01-22_v4.pdf

⁹ Wilson E. - Escalation in Iraq: What You Should Know About the US Drone Strikes in Baghdad- Preemptive Love News- January 3, 2020.

¹⁰ World reacts to US Killing of Iran's Qasem Soleimani in Iraq- Al Jazeera News-January 3, 2020.

America's drone detection and carry on its activities¹. In this context, it is noticeable that whenever the US launches a drone strike, four terrorist attacks follow suit per day. From 2006 until 2016, the use of drone strikes in Pakistan led to the rise of terrorist attacks there to 16%². Another report advanced by the Center for Research and Security Studies reveals that, terrorist groups are very active in operating their attacks in different areas of the country leading to the death of a wide number of innocents and the increase of violence with 15% from 2021 to 2022 as figure 3 demonstrates. The actual situation proves that American drone attacks could not get rid of the issue of terrorism for a definite way³.

Fig.3. the Rise of Violence and Terrorist Attacks in Pakistan (2021-2022)



Source: Annual security Report- 2022.

3.2.3 American Drone Strikes: a Source of International Insecurity, Violation to National Sovereignty and the Human Rights of Targeted States

Concerning the moral effects that American drone operations have on target countries, several scholars highlighted their abuse to people's privacy. In this context, an American drone operator for surveillance in New Mexico declared that people could be observed clearly and closely in terms of their daily behavior. Thus, it is likely to say that American drones has broken the individual freedom and privacy of ordinary citizens, which is against the preservation of human rights⁴. American drone policy against Yemen and Pakistan is a form of racism against Muslim tribal regions. This is evident as European countries are not included in its kill-list. In fact, the conduct of American drone operations are against only the Muslim people in particular, it seems that American War on Terror (WOT) turned to be a religious war against the ordinary, poor people who are living in the tribes. Consequently, American drone strategy is just a plan under the name of the war on terror to kill the Muslim people who are disabled and have nothing in this

¹ Emory Brownlee C.I.V. - Strategic Dissonance RPA Tactics To Defeat Al Qaeda- Air War College- 2015.

² Mahmoud R. and Jetter M. - Military Intervention via Drone Strikes- Economic Journal- 2019.

³ Annual security Report. -Center for Research and Security Studies- 2022. Available at: <https://crss.pk/annual-security-report-2022/>

⁴ Ahmed A. - The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam- Bookings Institution Press- 2013.

world only the power of Allah and their sacred religion¹. America's hatred to the Muslims urged it to use its technological advanced weapons « the drones » against them. Its obsession of power to be the most powerful nation on earth, led it to use force against the powerless and the disabled people who are living in isolated places and they do not have even the prerequisites of life. In the light of American practice of drone strikes, it has become clear as crystal that American use of these tools is racist, ruthless, merciless, bullying and terrorist as it has only targeted women, children and even innocent men who have no relation of being a threat to its security².

American decision of minimizing the number of drone strikes against Pakistan and specifying their use against high profile terrorists only proves that the US intended to kill people who are innocents and have no relation with acts of terrorism. According to data that the Bureau of Investigative Journalism presents, American drone strikes against Pakistan precipitated the death of more than 700 innocents in 2010. A fact that contradicts with American proclamation by President Obama that American drone strategy will be discriminating between terrorists and civilians and there would be a certainty of no civilian to be killed³. In fact, American drone strategy is just a display of its power over weak states that could not defend themselves in front of the aggressive teeth - Wilsonian character of American foreign policy

According to a number of sources like the US Department of State and the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, the number of civilian deaths from drone strikes since 2004 reached to an approximation of thousands. Such data denote that the human cost that drones have produced proves that their use do not promote world peace but instead have shaken the stability of nations and led people to lose their confidence in their governments that cooperated with the US for the fight of terrorism. In fact, figure 4 below provides data about the outcome of CIA's use of drone attacks in Pakistan that brought about the death of innocents. In this context, the populations of the targeted countries will join terrorist groups in order to revenge from the US for their dead families and will produce more violence; militancy and anarchy that America seeks to end⁴.

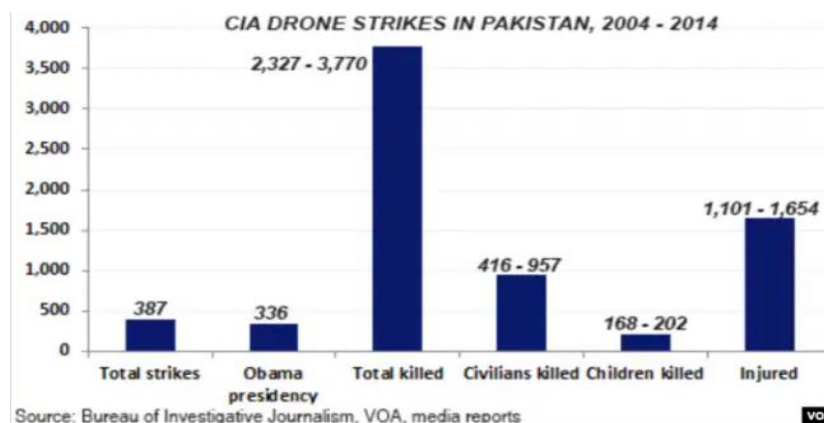
Fig.4. Civilian Casualties from American Drone Strikes since 2004

¹ Ahmed A. - The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam- Bookings Institution Press- 2013.

² Ibid.

³ Boucek, C. and Revkin, M. - the Unraveling of the Salih Regime in Yemen- Combating Terrorist Center- 2011.

⁴ Crawford N. C. - Accountability for Targeted Drone Strikes against Terrorists? Ethics and international Affairs- pp. 39-49- 2015.



Source : Salinas, M. A. & Pande, Aru -2016.

Different international and Pakistani organizations investigate the outcomes that drone strikes produce in terms of civilian casualties. Based on their data, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism points that there are between 472 and 885 civilians who are killed among them 176 children during the Obama administration. In similar vein, the New America Foundation (NAF) reveals that there are 257 and 310 civilian victims as a result of the 337 CIA drone strikes that were launched in Pakistan since 2004¹. Hence, for these reasons Hina Rabbani Khar, Pakistan's Foreign Minister considers American drones as illegal and contradicting with the norms of the international law and Pakistan's sovereignty. In fact, American drones in Pakistan destroy the moves of the Pakistani government to be a democratic nation that enjoys its national autonomy².

The number of civilians killed in Pakistan because of the drone attacks conducted by the CIA in 2010, which marked a peak year reached to 89 deaths at a minimum rate³. Similarly, the Yemen Data Project has shown that from 2015 until 2019, an approximation of 15,000 Yemeni civilian deaths exposed to attacks by the Saudi-led coalition during weddings, which is a violation of the international humanitarian law. Hence, it is likely to note that drone strikes has become as a nightmare to Yemeni people as they suffered from the death of innocents from different parties including the US and the Saudi led coalition⁴.

• Conclusion

It has become a fact that American use of drone strikes as a counterterrorism tool has blowback effects on its national security. At the political level, the drone strategy produces high levels of civilian casualties, which lead in turn to the rejection of American policy in the form of anti-American sentiments by the targeted populations and even political officials. American image has been distorted of being aggressive and terrorist in neglecting the importance of human lives. In

¹ Fair C. C., Kaltenthaler, K. and Miller W. J. - Pakistani opposition to American drone strikes- Political Science Quarterly- pp. 387-419- 2016.

² Ibid.

³ Purkiss, J. and Serle, J.-Unprecedented Number of US Drone and Airstrikes Hit in Yemen- the Bureau of Investigative Journalism- March 2, 2017.

⁴ The War on Yemen's Civilians. - campaign against Arms Trade- August 25, 2023.

similar vein, American claims that its drone policy will achieve certainty of no civilian will be killed failed as the Bureau of Investigative Journalism revealed the high rates of innocent deaths.

At the strategic level, American reliance on drones to fight terrorist groups has only led to their proliferation by state and non-state actors; a fact that increases insecurity and the likelihood of wars. Despite that, the US succeeded in targeting terrorist leaders and weakened their influence, the issue of terrorism remains persistent due to the political and economic instability that weak Muslim states suffer from. Moreover, the terrorist threat in the international community escalates because of American targeting of terrorist groups that their number increase instead of diminishing. The US targeting of innocents led their family members to join terrorists to revenge for their siblings. This has positioned the US as an imperialistic nation that projected its power only over weak states like Pakistan and Yemen.

American use of drone strikes against terrorists has become a model by other states like Israel's targeting of Palestinians and Ukraine's targeting of Russian territories. In such a way, it is likely to note that the US paved the way for other state and non-state actors to legitimize the use of drones in killing innocents and threatening world peace under the pretext of defending their national security, which has in turn breached the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Human Rights Law (HRL). Hence, the impact of drone use by other non-state actors like Israel can be taken for further research.

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