

International Master's Program in International Studies
National Chengchi University
國立政治大學國際研究英語碩士學位學程

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Pakistan and Yemen: Effective or Destabilizing Tactic in the U.S. War on Terrorism?

**巴基斯坦和葉門的無人機：
在美國反恐戰爭中是有效或是
破壞穩定的戰術？**

Thomas Shattuck 善學

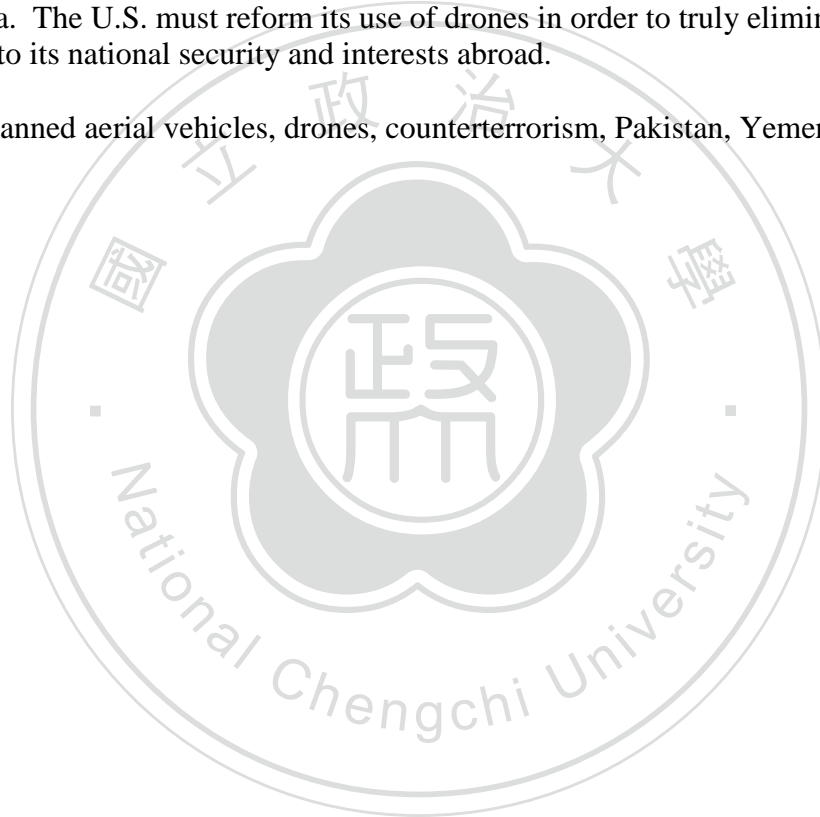
Advisor: Wen-Yang Chang 張文揚

May, 2016

Abstract

The American use of unmanned aerial vehicles in Pakistan and Yemen has become the sole mechanism to combat al Qaeda and its affiliates. This study evaluates four U.S. counterterrorism goals to determine whether or not drone strikes in these countries can defeat al Qaeda. The four goals are (1) disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates; (2) eliminate safe havens; (3) build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities; and (4) counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. Drones strikes in Yemen and Pakistan do not achieve any of these goals, and in some cases, work against them. They are not effective at eliminating the proper targets, increase anti-American sentiments and the desire for revenge, demonstrate Yemen's and Pakistan's incompetence at fighting al Qaeda, and provide al Qaeda with a reverberating message to exploit with propaganda. The U.S. must reform its use of drones in order to truly eliminate al Qaeda as a serious threat to its national security and interests abroad.

Keywords: unmanned aerial vehicles, drones, counterterrorism, Pakistan, Yemen



摘要

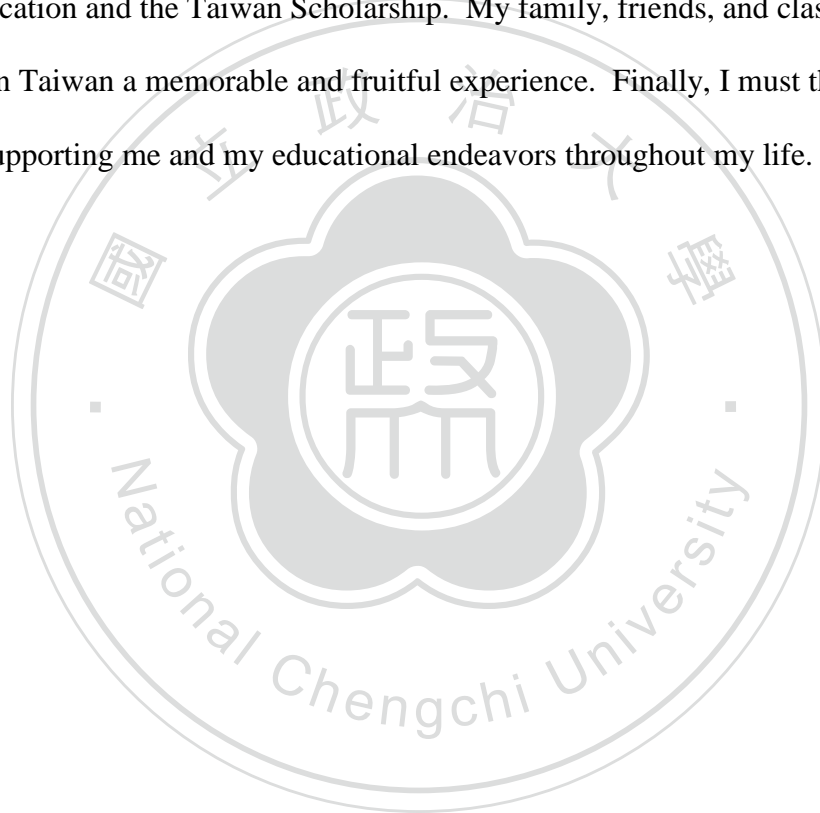
美國只好在巴基斯坦和葉門使用無人機,做為打擊基地組織及其分支機構的武器。這本研究評估四個美國的反恐目標,是否在這些國家使用無人機攻擊基地組織。這四個目標是(1)破壞,降解,搗毀和擊敗基地組織及其附屬機構;(2)消除安全避難所;(3)建立持久反恐的夥伴關係,和能力;(4)對抗基地組織的意識形態和共振,減少暴力,基地組織攻擊的特定的驅動程序。無人機攻擊葉門和巴基斯坦,當他們不實現任何的這些目標時,以及在某些情況下,反對他們的工作時。無人機攻擊無法有效在定位和消除正確的目標,增加反美情緒和復仇的慾望,在與基地組織戰鬥中葉門和巴基斯坦的政府表現出無能,並為基地組織有迴盪消息,宣傳利用。美國必須改革使用無人駕駛飛機,才能真正消滅基地組織構成的嚴重威脅,衛護其國家安全和海外利益。

關鍵詞: 無人戰機, 無人機, 反恐, 巴基斯坦, 葉門



Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Wen-Yang Chang for serving as my thesis advisor. Without his advice and guidance, I would not have been able to complete this project. I also would like to thank Dr. Yeh-Chung Lu and Dr. Szu-Ning Ping for serving as committee members and providing me with valuable feedback to improve my arguments and conclusions. Receiving my degree in Taiwan would not have been possible without the support of the Ministry of Education and the Taiwan Scholarship. My family, friends, and classmates have made my time in Taiwan a memorable and fruitful experience. Finally, I must thank my mother and father for supporting me and my educational endeavors throughout my life.



“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.”
Friedrich Nietzsche

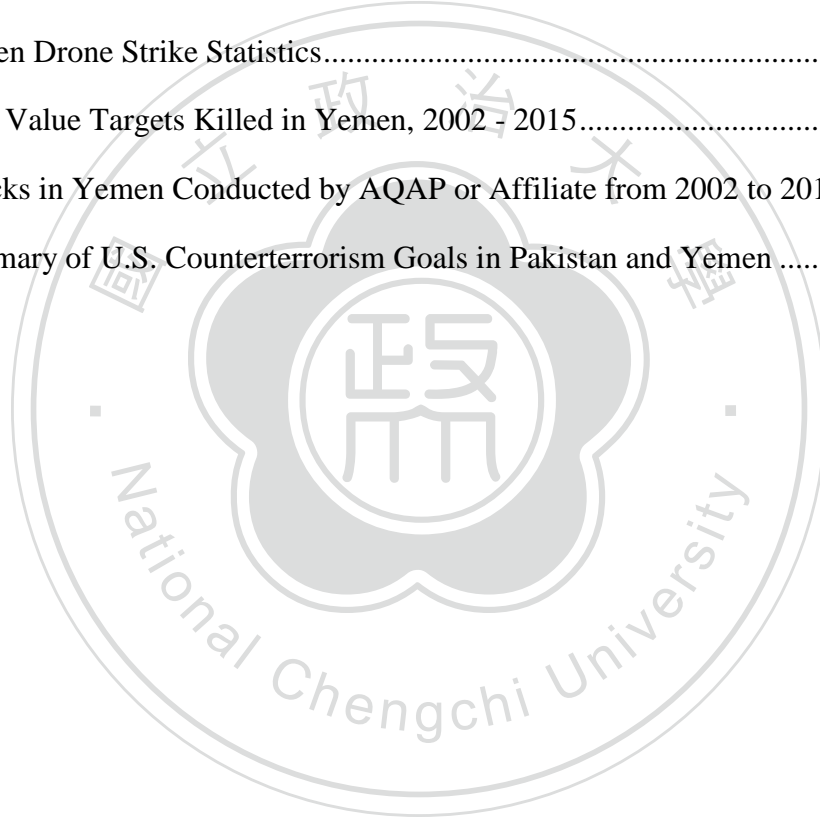


Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Importance and Implications.....	10
1.3 Research Limitations.....	12
1.4 Research Methodology and Approach	13
Chapter Two: Literature Review	16
2.1 The U.S. Drone Program: An Evaluation of its Effectiveness and Effects	16
2.2 The Legality of the U.S. Drone Program	24
2.3 Practical and Theoretical Issues with the Program.....	29
2.4 Military Coercion Theory	33
Chapter Three: Drones in Pakistan	36
3.1 Military Coercion and Drones in Pakistan	36
3.2 U.S. Counterterrorism Goals and Drone Usage in Pakistan.....	37
3.3 Evaluation of U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan.....	50
Chapter Four: Drones in Yemen	53
4.1 Military Coercion and Drones in Yemen	54
4.2 U.S. Counterterrorism Goals and Drone Usage in Yemen.....	56
4.3 Evaluation of U.S. Drone Program in Yemen.....	71
Chapter Five: Conclusion	74
5.1 Recommendations for U.S. Drone Programs.....	74
5.2 Policy Implications.....	81
5.3 Further Research Suggestions	82
Bibliography	84

List of Tables

Table 1.1: U.S. Counterterrorism Overarching Goals	2
Table 1.2: Statistics by New America Foundation	3
Table 1.3: Decapitation Strike Outcomes	9
Table 3.1: Pakistan Drone Strike Statistics.....	38
Table 3.2: High Value Targets Killed in Pakistan, 2004 - 2015.....	39
Table 3.3: Attacks in Pakistan Conducted by Al Qaeda or Affiliate from 2004 to 2014.....	41
Table 4.1: Yemen Drone Strike Statistics.....	57
Table 4.2: High Value Targets Killed in Yemen, 2002 - 2015.....	58
Table 4.3: Attacks in Yemen Conducted by AQAP or Affiliate from 2002 to 2014	60
Table 5.1: Summary of U.S. Counterterrorism Goals in Pakistan and Yemen	75



List of Maps

Map 3.1: Tribal Areas of Pakistan 36

Map 4.1: AQAP Influence in Yemen 53



List of Graphs

Graph 3.1: Relationship between Drone Strikes and Attacks in Pakistan 52

Graph 4.1: Relationship between Strikes and Attacks in Yemen 73



List of Abbreviations

Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
Counterinsurgency Incorporating Counterterrorism	COIN
Federally Administered Tribal Areas	FATA
High Value Target	HVT
Joint Special Operations Command	JSOC
New America Foundation	NAF
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NATO
The Bureau of Investigative Journalism	TBIJ
United Nations	U.N.
United States of America	U.S.
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	UAV, drones



Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

First used in October 2001 in Afghanistan, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, drones) did not become the preferred fighting method of the United States in the Middle East and South Asia until 2004—the first year of use in Pakistan. The first year that a drone killed an al Qaeda member in Yemen was 2002. Since 2004, the targeted killing program slowly expanded under the administration of President George W. Bush, but ballooned exponentially under the leadership of President Barack Obama. In the early years of the drone program, U.S. operators, either the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), used the tactic of decapitation, or the elimination high value targets (HVTs), but have since expanded to a “pattern of life” targeting system, which is also called signature strike.¹ The pattern of life system monitors whom specific targets interact with, their daily schedules, and life habits. It does not attempt to identify the targets, but seeks to determine whether an individual is a threat based on how they live. These two tactics are the primary mechanisms in the U.S. government’s targeted killing program.² Targeted killing is defined as “the intentional killing of a specific civilian or unlawful combatant who cannot reasonably be apprehended, who is taking a direct part in hostilities, the targeting done at the direction of the state, in the context of an international or non-international armed conflict.”³ The change in tactic caused the increase in drone use. On May 18, 2009, then CIA Director Leon Panetta said the following about U.S. drone strikes, “I can assure you that in terms of that particular area, it is very precise and it is very limited in terms of collateral damage and, very frankly, it’s the only game in town in terms

¹ Ian Shaw and Majed Akhter, “The Dronification of State Violence,” *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2 (2014): 227.

² Ian G.R. Shaw, “Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare,” *Geopolitics* (2013): 1-5.

³ Gary D. Solis, *The Law of Armed Conflict: International Humanitarian Law in War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 538.

of confronting and trying to disrupt the al-Qaeda leadership.”⁴ Whether or not that is true is up for debate. The larger issue regarding his statement is should drone strikes be “the only game in town?” Should the U.S. use other options? Why do drone strikes have to be “the only game in town?”

In June 2011, the Obama administration released a new “National Strategy for Counterterrorism.” This new policy has eight overarching goals that the U.S. government seeks to achieve to defeat al Qaeda and to eliminate it as a major threat to U.S. national security and interests abroad.

Table 1.1: U.S. Counterterrorism Overarching Goals
1. Protect the American People, Homeland, and American interests
2. <i>Disrupt, Degrade, Dismantle, and Defeat [al Qaeda] and its Affiliates and Adherents</i>
3. Prevent Terrorist Development, Acquisition, and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction
4. <i>Eliminate Safe Havens</i>
5. <i>Build Enduring Counterterrorism Partnerships and Capabilities</i>
6. Degrade links between [al Qaeda] and its Affiliates and Adherents
7. <i>Counter [al Qaeda] ideology and Its Resonance and Diminish the Specific Drivers of violence that [al Qaeda] Exploits</i>
8. Deprive Terrorists of their Enabling Means
Source: Barack Obama, “National Strategy for Counterterrorism,” June 2011, 8-10.

In order to determine whether or not the current tactical use of drones in Pakistan and Yemen can defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates, this study will evaluate the second, fourth, fifth, and seventh overarching counterterrorism goals. Every drone strike conducted against a target deals directly with the goals of disrupting, degrading, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its affiliates as well as eliminating safe havens. The strikes can kill members of the organization, and the fear of future strikes can result in civilians refusing to allow al Qaeda members to stay in the area. The

⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, “Director’s Remarks at the Pacific Council on International Policy,” May 18, 2009. <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/directors-remarks-at-pacific-council.html>.

after-effects of drone strikes and the opinion of the overall tactic relate to the ability to create and to strengthen partnerships with other states. How al Qaeda uses civilian deaths can harm the goal of countering its ideology and its resonance. As more civilians die from strikes, there is a greater chance that others may listen to or believe in al Qaeda’s message. This issue plays a pivotal part in the long term plan to win over the “hearts and minds” of the local population.

The two leading organizations that cover U.S. drone usage are the New America Foundation (NAF) and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ).^{*} This study uses statistics from NAF. NAF reports that 400 strikes have occurred in Pakistan from 2004 to 2015 killing 2,276 to 3,614 people of which 255 to 315 were civilians (8.71% to 11.21% of all casualties). President Bush ordered 48 strikes, and President Obama ordered 352.⁵ In Yemen, NAF reports that 123 drone strikes (plus 15 air strikes, for a total of 138 strikes) have occurred from 2002 to 2015 killing 901 to 1,159 people of which 87 to 93 were civilians (8.02% to 9.66% of all casualties). President Bush ordered one strike, while President Obama ordered 137.⁶

Table 1.2: Statistics by New America Foundation

Country	Number of Drone Strikes		Number of Deaths		Number of Civilian Deaths	
	<i>Bush</i>	<i>Obama</i>	<i>Bush</i>	<i>Obama</i>	<i>Bush</i>	<i>Obama</i>
Pakistan	48	352	378 - 558	1,899 - 3,056	126 - 154	129 - 161
Total	400		2,277 - 3,614		255 - 315	
Yemen	1	137 (including 15 airstrikes)	6	895 - 1,153	0	87 - 93
Total	138 (including 15 airstrikes)		901 - 1,159		87 - 93	

Source: New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis,” and “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis,” 2015.

^{*}Information for TBIJ is available at The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, “CIA drone strikes in Pakistan, 2004 to present,” 2015, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>, and “US strikes in Yemen, 2002 to present,” 2015, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>.

⁵ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis,” 2015, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html>.

⁶ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis,” 2015, <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/yemen-analysis.html>.

Despite all of these deaths in Pakistan and Yemen, not a single American has been killed piloting a drone. They are flown remotely from many locations around the world. American pilots are not in any danger if a drone crashes or gets shot down. This one-sidedness makes it a very popular weapon. The MQ-1 Predator has the ability to receive commands from thousands of miles away. It was designed under the requirement “to provide persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance information combined with a kill capability to the warfighter.”⁷ A drone can travel anywhere in the world and can hover above a potential target for hours on end. Instead of one pilot flying past an area at a high speed once, a drone allows for several camera angles over the span of multiple hours giving people many views of the area and target. This system allows for the CIA or JSOC to observe targets safely for many days at a time without risking the lives of U.S. pilots. This extra time and safety can allow for better decision-making in regards to when to fire and when not to. The Predator B can fly for about 30 hours continuously at a maximum altitude of 50,000 feet; it is equipped with two cameras (for daytime and nighttime) along with a laser guidance system.⁸

Since the U.S. government publicly denies the existence of the CIA drone programs, there are many controversies relating to deaths, legality, effectiveness, and completion. It is impossible to know exactly how many strikes have occurred, how many people have died, and how many of the deceased are civilians without declassified documents. Table 1.2 above shows large ranges for total casualties and civilian deaths. Due to the location of the strikes and the Muslim tradition of burying the deceased as quickly as possible, reporters and data collectors

⁷ Shaw, “Predator Empire,” 2.

⁸General Atomics Aeronautical, *Predator B*. 2015. http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/predator_b.php.

cannot report exact numbers.⁹ It is often unsafe for people to travel to these areas. However, the sources and methodology of NAF provide the most accurate estimates. It uses information from local and international sources in order to provide the best possible numbers. The number of civilian casualties from drone strikes is one of the greatest areas of contention in the world due to the secrecy of the program. Organizations across the globe, especially Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, call for greater transparency and clarity about U.S. drones in the Middle East and South Asia.*

Due to the unclear number of civilian casualties and the lack of a formal declaration of war against Pakistan or Yemen, the issue of legality has become an important topic. Many scholars, such as Andrew C. Orr (2011) and Laurie R. Blank (2012), use three criteria under the law of armed conflict to determine the legality of the programs in Pakistan. The same criteria apply to Yemen due to similar circumstances. The three indicators are distinction, proportionality, and necessity.¹⁰ Different scholars call these three terms by different names, but they all have the same concept.** Distinction mandates that forces target only members of the enemy forces, not civilian populations. Proportionality calculates expected civilian losses to anticipated military gains. The use of force cannot be excessive against civilians in favor of small military victories. The principle of necessity says that forces are allowed to use any legal

⁹ Michael J. Boyle, "The costs and consequences of drone warfare," *International Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 1 (2013): 6. *Publications and reports on this issue include "Between a Drone and Al-Qaeda: The Civilian Cost of US Targeted Killings in Yemen" (Human Rights Watch, 2013), "Will I Be Next? US Drone Strikes in Pakistan" (Amnesty International, 2013), "United States of America: 'Targeted Killing' Policies Violate the Right to Life" (Amnesty International, 2012), "Recommendations and Report of the Task Force on US Drone Policy (The Stimson Center, 2014), "Targeting Operations with Drone Technology: Humanitarian Law Implications" (Human Rights Institute, Columbia Law School, 2011), and "Counting Drone Strike Deaths" (Human Rights Clinic, Columbia Law School, 2012).

¹⁰ Andrew C. Orr, "Unmanned, Unprecedented, and Unresolved: The Status of American Drone Strikes in Pakistan Under International Law," *Cornell International Law Journal*, vol. 44 (2011): 738-752, and Laurie R. Blank, "After 'Top Gun: How Drone Strikes Impact the Law of War," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, vol. 33 (2012): 681-682.

** Other terms used as substitutes include discrimination, discriminatory, military necessity, the principle of humanity, and the principle of unnecessary suffering.

weapon that will lead to military victory.¹¹ There is no general consensus on the legality of the program in terms of either *jus ad bellum* (the right to engage in warfare) or *jus in bello* (the laws of war).

Although the issues of effectiveness and possible completion of the program relate to the legal issues of the drone program, they are even more important in military terms, specifically the theory of military coercion, which will be discussed at length later in the study.

Effectiveness does not only mean the number of militants killed in any given strike, but it also means preventing terrorist organizations like al Qaeda from operating properly, keeping recruitment at the status quo or lower, and isolating militants from civilians limiting the number of safe havens available.¹² Most definitions of effectiveness only look at the number of dead militants when determining a tactical success or failure, and until the U.S. expands the definition to include all facets of combat, the program will continue indefinitely along with al Qaeda's existence. Overall effectiveness of the drone program arguably has decreased since its expansion: more is not always better. With the increase in number of drone strikes, the number of HVTs killed has not increased. Also, the drone program is not effective because strikes help to increase propaganda and recruitment as well as retaliatory attacks.¹³ The so-called "accidental guerrilla" effect radicalizes moderates against the U.S. in favor of terrorist organizations. If drone strikes push civilians and militants closer together, then the drone program is not effective and will never end. If drone strikes do not hamper the organizational effectiveness of al Qaeda operations, then the drone program is not effective and will never end.

¹¹ Blank, "After 'Top Gun,'" 681-682.

¹² Boyle, "The costs and consequences of drone warfare," 4-6; 13.

¹³ Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens, and Matt Flannes, "Drone Warfare: Blowback from the New American Way of War," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 18, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 125-126.

As mentioned above, the U.S. has two primary tactics for targeting individuals: decapitation and pattern of life. Decapitation theory states that the capture/death of an organization's or state's leadership will lead to its destruction.¹⁴ However, history has shown that this theory does not work, yet military strategists and advisors still believe in its usefulness. The eventual death of Osama bin Laden did not cause the collapse of al Qaeda or its affiliated groups. Other al-Qaeda leaders and key contacts, such as Abu Yahya al-Libi (in 2012), Anwar al-Awlaki (in 2011), Atiyah Abd al-Rahman (in 2011), and Ilyas Kashmiri (in 2011), were all considered HVTs, and they have all been killed by drone strikes.¹⁵ Saad bin Laden (in 2009), Abu Laith al Libi (in 2008), Osama al Kini (in 2009), Abu Khabab al Masri (in 2008), and Saleh al Somali (in 2009) were HVTs killed by drone strikes in Pakistan.¹⁶ All of these men were part of the leadership of al Qaeda and orchestrators of various attacks across the world. However, al-Qaeda did not collapse and still remains a threat. Bureaucratization and community support allow for the continued survival of terrorist organizations after successful decapitation strikes.¹⁷ Bureaucracy, especially in the modern internet age, allows for members to remain in contact with each other and have a decentralized command structure. With drone strikes, terrorist organizations like al Qaeda must decentralize command structures or face catastrophic results. An imbedded bureaucracy allows for an easier transition between leaders.¹⁸ The group will have a replacement in the event of a leader's death. The death of bin Laden demonstrates this fact: the

¹⁴ Jenna Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security*, vol. 38, no. 4 (Spring 2014): 7-9, and Bryan C. Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *International Security*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Spring 2012), 9.

¹⁵ Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark," 8.

¹⁶ Brian Glyn Williams, "The CIA's Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010: The History of an Assassination Campaign," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 33, no. 10 (2010): 878.

¹⁷ Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 31-32.

¹⁸ Austin Long, "Assessing the Success of Leadership Targeting," *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 3, no. 11-12 (November 2010): 19-20.

bureaucracy in al Qaeda allowed for a smooth transition, the organization did not collapse, and it created a greater bond between members.

Furthermore, the age of a group aids in its continuation after a successful decapitation attempt—older is better,¹⁹ and al Qaeda, created in 1988, is one of the oldest terrorist organizations functioning today. “No previous terrorist organization has exhibited the complexity, agility, and global reach of [al Qaeda], with its fluid operational style based increasingly on a common mission statement and objectives, rather than on standard operating procedures and an organizational structure.”²⁰ Moreover, terrorist organizations require the support of local communities in order to survive decapitation attempts. This support allows members to live with civilians and to blend into society, provides potential recruits, and deepens the relationship between militants and civilians through constant interactions. These bonds are even stronger when the organization is religious based.²¹ Al Qaeda has both the bureaucracy and community support required to survive decapitation strikes. Table 1.3 explains the relationship between bureaucracy, community support, and survival—al Qaeda is high in both categories (square I) leading to retaliation. This data proves that decapitation has actually created a more unified and somewhat stronger al Qaeda. Greater sympathy from the community allows members of al Qaeda to further blend into society making it harder to target them. Finally, decapitation provides very few “tangible effects,” and it is difficult to determine the actual benefits of a successful strike especially when retaliatory strikes and increases in recruitment are considered. People who think that decapitation strikes severely damage an organization believe that these groups are “meritocratic system[s] in which the leaders are the most talented rather

¹⁹ Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” 9, and Long, “Assessing the Success of Leadership Targeting,” 19-20.

²⁰ Audrey Kurth Cronin, “How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups,” *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 33.

²¹ Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” 11-12.

than the most ideologically committed; in actuality, their replacements could turn out to be more talented and more skillful leaders.”²²

Table 1.3: Decapitation Strike Outcomes²³

		bureaucracy	
		high	low
communal support	high	I survive (retaliate)	III survive (harder to regroup)
	low	II survive (easier to regroup)	IV collapse

Before 2008, the U.S. government sought to only kill HVTs through decapitation strikes, but in 2008, the program expanded to include the pattern of life tactic, which targets individuals based on actions not identity. “We might not always have their names but . . . these are people whose actions over time have made it obvious that they are a threat.”²⁴ This tactic has led to the targeting of many low level operatives and subsequent civilians in the surrounding area. These targets may not even pose an imminent or direct threat to the U.S., but they are still targeted based on their actions and interactions. These targets are people who live inside the communities and hold close ties to the people in villages. Killing them affects the civilian population. Targeting them leads to the death of civilians. NAF shows that the number of drone strikes in Pakistan increased sevenfold from 2004-2008 (48 strikes) to 2009-2015 (352 strikes). This increase can be directly attributed to the pattern of life tactic. More strikes do not always lead to greater efficiency. More strikes, especially those targeting low level members, lead to more

²² Noel Sharkey, “Death Strikes from the Sky: The Calculus of Proportionality,” *IEEE Technology and Society*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Spring 2009), 19.

²³ Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” 21.

²⁴ Christian Enemark, “Drones over Pakistan: Secrecy, Ethics, and Counterinsurgency,” *Asian Security*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2011): 232.

civilian deaths. More civilian deaths lead to greater alienation from the government and population for allowing the strikes to take place, greater hatred of the U.S. for killing family members and friends, and a greater desire for revenge. These deaths do not occur in a black box. There is a ripple throughout the entire community. “Every one of these noncombatants represents an alienated family, a new desire for revenge, and more recruits for a militant movement that has grown exponentially even as drone strikes have increased.”²⁵ The expansion of the drone program under the pattern of life tactic has not helped in defeating al Qaeda, especially in Pakistan (since only 1 drone strike occurred in Yemen before 2009, it is omitted from this specific consideration). It has become increasingly difficult to win the hearts and minds of the local population in these areas.

1.2 Research Importance and Implications

The way in which the U.S. has used drones in Pakistan and Yemen has upset civilians, allies, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions. If the U.S. truly wishes to win over the “hearts and minds” of the civilian population of Yemen and Pakistan, then it must take steps to limit civilian casualties and regain their trust. They are the number one deterrent against al Qaeda finding safe places to plan future attacks. As it stands, the U.S. does not have the trust of these people. As mentioned above, every civilian killed by a drone strike represents a new threat to the U.S. The deceased’s family will not look favorably upon the U.S. and could potentially either join al Qaeda or aid the organization in some other way. The support of the civilians in these areas is pivotal in preventing al Qaeda from obtaining or retaining a foothold. Community support is a key factor in the survival of any terrorist organization. This study will

²⁵ David Kilcullen and Andrew McDonald Exum, “Death From Above, Outrage Down Below,” *The New York Times*, May 16, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?utm_source=affiliate&utm_medium=ls&utm_campaign=PPkX79/c*b0&utm_content=357585&utm_term=177&siteID=PPkX79_c.b0-YctiYQ7UFIErZ6b1vI.vCg&_r=0.

help to determine if drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan are running counter to the goal of winning over the local populations. This important issue will determine whether drone strikes are an effective or destabilizing tactic in the U.S. “War on Terrorism.”

Obviously, the issue of utmost importance both to this study and U.S. counterterrorism strategy is determining whether or not the drone strikes are effective at achieving their desired goals. If this study concludes that these drone programs meet the four goals, then the U.S. government may look to expand its success to other locations. If this study concludes that the drone program does not achieve these goals, then the U.S. government should either alter its course or stop drone strikes immediately. A new tactic and revised strategy would have to be implemented as a result. The results will have ramifications for the future of U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa, and anywhere else that al Qaeda tries to spread its influence. The final victory of the “War on Terrorism” is at stake because drone strikes have become the prominent (and in many areas only) method of fighting al Qaeda and its affiliates. The end goal of this study is to determine whether these drone strikes are moving towards the elimination of al Qaeda as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests—preventing al Qaeda from orchestrating large scale attacks anywhere in the world and controlling large swaths of territory. Achieving this objective (by meeting the aforementioned counterterrorism goals) will lead to victory in the War on Terror.

The way in which the U.S. conducts drone strikes may create an uncertain future with wider use of drones by other great powers across the world. The eventual widespread use of drones will lead to their expansion beyond the Middle East and South Asia. Currently, there are no international norms, standards, or laws in place to regulate their usage—all the international community has is the U.S. example of arbitrary use with no rules. It is entirely possible to

imagine a future where Russia or China or any other state uses drones to stop dissident movements before they gain momentum.²⁶ The parameters for legitimate targets are nonexistent, which makes anyone a possible target in the future as long as they are some sort of threat.

The final issue that the U.S. must navigate is the race for drone technology. Current U.S. law forbids the sale of drones and drone technology without Congressional approval.²⁷ U.S. companies can only sell drones and drone technology to 66 states, while other countries, such as Israel and China, do not have such strict requirements for companies to sell drones to foreign states.²⁸ After seeing the “success” of the U.S. drones in the Middle East and South Asia, a new market has opened for drones, and the U.S. must not lose its edge in the industry by having archaic rules. Once China develops high quality drones, it will push the U.S. out of the market before it even enters it. These issues are areas in which the U.S. is faltering and must address in order to create a positive future for drone technology and usage.

1.3 Research Limitations

This study is limited mainly by geographic and linguistic boundaries as well as the inability to read classified documents. Due to the location and unsafe nature of Yemen and the FATA in Pakistan, the author was unable to conduct firsthand interviews and observations on the effects of drones. Field research is generally helpful, but other organizations with the proper means have conducted many visits to these areas. Therefore, the author will rely on the data collection of other organizations like The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, New America Foundation, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, among others. Whatever limitations these groups face, the author faces as well. Furthermore, the author cannot speak or

²⁶ Boyle, “The costs and consequences of drone warfare,” 26.

²⁷ Council on Foreign Relations, “Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies,” *Council Special Report No. 65*, (2013): 19-20.

²⁸ Boyle, “The costs and consequences of drone warfare,” 22-23.

read any of the languages used in the Middle East and South Asia, specifically Arabic and Urdu. Newspapers and television reports use these languages when discussing local events, such as a drone strike in a particular location. The author relies upon translations by others in order to read or to listen to them. Finally, the greatest limitation of this study is the lack of transparency of the U.S. government and military. The U.S. has confirmed or acknowledged very little in regards to its targeted killing program. It is virtually impossible to know the exact number of strikes and related deaths without proper confirmation. Few government documents have been released; some have been leaked, and not many currently-employed government workers and officials publicly comment on these issues in order to avoid prosecution.

This study will only use the cases of Yemen and Pakistan when developing the argument. The U.S. does have a drone program in Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, but the U.S. used ground troops in the fight against al Qaeda and its affiliates in Afghanistan and against insurgents in Iraq. Also, NAF and TBIJ do not have suitable datasets for Syria or Somalia. There is very little information on the program in Syria since it is in its infancy, and there have not been enough drone strikes conducted in Somalia to develop any proper conclusions. The cases of Yemen and Pakistan have existed since 2002 and 2004, respectively. The programs in Yemen and Pakistan have the data, time, and commitment that do not exist yet for Somalia or Syria when it comes to U.S. drone strikes.

1.4 Research Methodology and Approach

While many scholars have addressed the significance of drone strikes in the Middle East and South Asia, this study's methodological use of the theory of military coercion and the four counterterrorism overarching goals is a new approach. In order to develop a proper argument and subsequent conclusions, this study uses Robert A. Pape's theory of military coercion as

explained in his book, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (1996). This theory addresses the use of air power in war and its proper role in achieving victory against an enemy. Drones are the future of air power, and this theory will apply to how the U.S. conducts itself in the Middle East and South Asia with drones. Pape's theory of coercion addresses the history of air power, where it has succeeded and failed, and how militaries should use air power to their advantage. It breaks down the different types of coercion, which will help to determine where drones stand in the future of U.S. counterterrorism operations.

This study uses qualitative research methods with two case studies: the U.S. drone programs in Yemen and Pakistan. These drone programs have existed for the longest amount of time, and these countries have the highest number of strikes conducted in them. As mentioned above, other organizations, such as Humans Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have written studies on these countries. The Global Terrorism Database provides statistics on attacks conducted by al Qaeda and its affiliates. This study uses the cases of Yemen and Pakistan because the U.S. is not engaged in a conflict with either state/government; the drone programs here exist in an effort to protect these states and their citizens against terrorist organizations like al Qaeda and its affiliates. Also, only drone strikes have been conducted in these two states; the U.S. has not sent in ground troops in an effort to eliminate the threat (excluding the raid that killed Osama bin Laden and piloted air strikes in Yemen). Military coercion theory relates directly to whether or not a state can properly defeat an enemy with just air power. These are the only cases in existence with the proper time length, available data, and situations.

In order to determine the effectiveness of drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan, this study will determine whether or not they help the U.S. to fulfill four of its eight overarching counterterrorism goals: (1) disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates and

adherents, (2) eliminate safe havens, (3) build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities, and (4) counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. Drone strikes have the ability to fulfill these four specific goals, but if they do not, then they cannot be considered effective. Every tactic that the U.S. uses in the War on Terrorism, specifically in Yemen and Pakistan against al Qaeda and its affiliates, must work towards meeting these overarching counterterrorism goals.



Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, “The U.S. Drone Program: An Evaluation of its Effectiveness and Effects,” reviews literature from both sides of the drone argument. Sources explaining why the drone program needs to change, to stop, or to continue are used in order to understand the problem from every angle. In the second section, “The Legality of the U.S. Drone Program,” the sources explain the legal ramifications of the use of drones in Yemen and Pakistan. The questions of *jus in bello* (the laws of warfare) and *jus ad bellum* (the right to engage in warfare) are addressed. Although this study makes no determination of the legal status of drone strikes, these issues are important to properly understand the possible biases that people or governments may have against the drone program. The third section, “Practical and Theoretical Issues with the Program,” reviews the issues of decapitation theory, U.S. grand strategy, propaganda, and the types of “blowback” from the drone program. The final section, “Methodology and Approach,” uses the theory of military coercion by Robert A. Pape as the primary theory to evaluate the drone program.

2.1 The U.S. Drone Program: An Evaluation of its Effectiveness and Effects

In “Those costs and consequences of drone warfare,” Michael J. Boyle (2013) explains how the U.S. drone program negatively affects counterterrorism policy around the globe. He argues against the beliefs that the use of drones to fight terrorism is both efficient and effective. The prevalence of drones in U.S. policy favors short term goals over long term strategy and gains. Depending on the source used, the number of strikes conducted and the number of militants or civilians killed differs greatly. Boyle (2013) cites NAF and TBIJ as the most reliable sources, and he argues that the U.S. government’s definition of “militant” artificially inflates the accuracy

of a strike. Drones now attack people with very loose associations with terrorists, which angers the civilian population and increases anti-American sentiment and terrorist recruitment for the purposes of revenge.¹ “Drones are only ‘effective’ if they contribute to achieving US strategic goals in a region, a fact which is often lost in analyses that point only to body counts as a measure of their worthiness. More generally, arguments in favour of drones tend to present only one side of the ledger, measuring the losses for groups like Al Qaeda and the Taliban without considering how many new recruits they gain as a result of the escalation of the drone strikes.”² The programs in Pakistan and Yemen undermine the authority and credibility of the national governments because they show their inability to fight their own wars. These attitudes directly contradict the U.S. long term goal of building up the capacity of governments to deal with terrorists on their own. In addition, Boyle (2013) examines the psychological and international effects that the drone program has on individuals and the international system, respectively. Drone strikes create an atmosphere of distrust between neighbors as well as an atmosphere of fear of carrying out everyday necessities.³ These stresses create an environment in which terrorist organizations successfully portray the U.S. as the enemy. The wide use of drones creates the future problem of international use of drones. There are currently no international legal guidelines for the use and implementation of drone strikes. This technology has the ability to interrupt currently accepted norms and practices of the international system. Other countries will most likely imitate the U.S. by targeting individuals indiscriminately.⁴ Without formal guidelines, the current U.S. drone program will continue to diminish its counterterrorism goals and create an uncertain future for the use of this technology.

¹ Boyle, “The costs and consequences of drone warfare,” 1-11.

² Ibid, 13.

³ Ibid, 15-21.

⁴ Ibid, 24-26.

Brian Glyn Williams (2010) uses many of the same sources as Boyle (2013), but he focuses on the history of the drone program and its effects on the ground in Pakistan. He evaluates whether or not drone strikes in Pakistan will help to win “arguably one of the greatest battles of the War on Terror, the battle for the hearts and minds of 160 million Pakistanis.”⁵ This program evolved from surveillance to the use of armed drones. The first armed drone was used on June 18, 2004 to kill Taliban commander Nek Muhammad; the U.S. only used armed drones to kill high value targets from 2004 to 2007 after which the program expanded its targeting methods to all levels of al Qaeda and the Taliban. The expansion may have occurred sooner if not for a strike that killed 18 civilians—the U.S. halted drone strikes for 8 months to let anti-American sentiment cool down.⁶ In 2007, the JSOC started conducting its own drone program in addition to the CIA’s causing an increase in the number of strikes conducted in Pakistan’s FATA region. The drone program is the most effective and efficient means to kill terrorists in Pakistan’s hard-to-reach areas, and these strikes have greatly destabilized the terrorist organizations operating in those areas. The militants are now isolated from civilians due to fear of an attack, hunt down potential spies, fear new recruits, and cannot remain in one place for long.⁷ However, drone strikes undermine the authority of the Pakistani government for many reasons. The local newspapers publish exaggerated civilian casualty numbers to promote their anti-American agenda, and the deaths of civilians from a strike further push neutral Pakistanis to hate the U.S.⁸ The civilian deaths prevent the U.S. from winning the hearts and minds of the local population. Furthermore, the strikes show civilians that their own government is not powerful enough to fight terrorism or to force the U.S. to stop the strikes. Despite these

⁵ Williams, “The CIA’s Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” 872.

⁶ Ibid, 874-876.

⁷ Ibid, 879-880.

⁸ Ibid, 881.

sentiments, as of 2009, Pakistani public opinion has begun to shift in favor of drone strikes to kill terrorists. Several surveys across the country have shown that noncombatants in the FATA are more pro-U.S. and pro-drone than civilians outside of the area. These people understand the benefits of the attacks, and as terrorists push deeper into Pakistan, the rest of the population will witness the carnage that accompanies them.⁹ While Pakistanis keep their anti-American sentiments, they understand the necessary evil of drone strikes to eliminate these threats. As the Pakistani government and military develop and purchase armed drones and can conduct their own strikes, the public opinion may shift even further in support of drone strikes.

Mahmood Ahmad (2014) argues that the U.S. drone program has caused more damage to counterterrorism in Pakistan than it has produced positive outcomes. Citing NAF and TBIJ to demonstrate the inconsistencies with available data for the number of casualties caused by the program, Ahmad (2014) verifies many of Boyle (2013)'s claims about the lack of effectiveness and efficiency of the current drone program. Since 2004, drone strikes have only killed 49 high value targets, or 2% of all casualties; the other 98% are either civilians or low-to-mid level militants. While the strikes have caused terrorist organizations to constantly move around Pakistan, many of them flee the country to fight elsewhere. Instead of restricting the damage caused by these groups, drone strikes have actually scattered members—further amplifying the problem to other parts of the Middle East and South Asia. Furthermore, drone strikes undermine the Pakistani government's ability to sway the people away from terrorist organizations. The drone program directly contradicts U.S. counterterrorism policy in this respect: instead of building up the capacity and strength of the government, these strikes undermine these governments' authority and weaken them. With 90% of the population unhappy with government policies, the Pakistani—and U.S.—government cannot afford to further alienate the

⁹ Williams, "The CIA's Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010," 884-886.

people.¹⁰ “The foremost strategic objective of U.S. counterterrorism should have been to prevent local militants abroad from aligning themselves with Al-Qaeda that threaten the interest of United States.”¹¹ It appears that the drone program has done the opposite—attracting more recruits than the U.S. would ever have liked.

While Ian Shaw and Majed Akhter (2014) condemn the drone program, they take a very different approach by chastising the “dronification of state violence,” the “individualization of state violence,” and the bureaucratic nature of the program. This article traces the history of the drone program and argues that it is the natural progressive use of technology by the U.S. military.¹² The Obama administration shifted from Bush’s policy of territorial gains to targeting specific individuals in order to sidestep issues of sovereignty. The U.S. does not attack a nation or seek to make territorial gains, but it does target dangerous individuals.¹³ The path to the current drone program was first initiated by President Clinton in 1998 when he signed a Memorandum of Notification allowing the CIA to capture terrorists, and in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001 (9/11), President Bush “formally expanded the CIA’s power to include the use of lethal force against suspected terrorists when engaging in global counterterrorism activities.”¹⁴ He enabled the CIA and military to hunt down militants anywhere in the world based on their life patterns, not their identity. In addition, Shaw and Akhter (2014) argue that there is a mutually constitutive relationship between the drone program and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy allowed for the creation of the drone program along with the development of new technology, but the drone program has created a new form of bureaucracy

¹⁰ Mahmood Ahmad, “The United States Use of Drones in Pakistan: A Politico-Strategic Analysis,” *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, no. 41 (2014): 22-26.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 23.

¹² Shaw and Akhter, “The Dronification of State Violence,” 222.

¹³ *Ibid*, 213.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 221.

that has expanded the program from a temporary one to an indefinite one. Several U.S. officials have stated that the program is so ingrained that it is impossible to stop.¹⁵ Shaw and Akhter (2014) accept the notion that the drone program cannot and will not end due to its embedded bureaucratic nature which further limits individual accountability. In an article written one year earlier, Ian G.R. Shaw (2013) wrote a very similar article with almost the exact conclusion, but instead labelled the issue of the increase in drone strikes the “Predator Empire.” He focuses on the increased use of drones domestically, the alienation of Pakistanis due to civilian deaths from drones creating a possibly permanent war, and the violation of state sovereignty.¹⁶

In “The Foreign Policy Essay: Is this How to Win the “War on Terrorism?” Audrey Kurth Cronin (2014) follows a similar path as Boyle (2013) and Williams (2010), but focuses on the overall war, not just the drone program. The original goal of preventing another 9/11-like terror attack in the U.S. has been replaced by the goal of the elimination of terrorism. Also, she compares the War on Terrorism to Fred Ikle’s statement on the perils of the Vietnam War: “More absorbing than the final outcome are the perfection of the tools and the mastery of the components and maneuvers that form part of the undertaking.”¹⁷ In addition, Anthony H. Cordesman (2006) expands these points in “Winning the ‘War on Terrorism:’ The Need for a Fundamentally Different Strategy,” which emphasizes the need for the use of local Islamic forces to fight against terrorist organizations.¹⁸ While Cronin (2014) and Cordesman (2006) focus on the big picture of the War on Terrorism, two articles by Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann (2010 & 2011), “Washington’s Phantom War: The Effects of the U.S. Drone Program in

¹⁵ Shaw and Akhter, “The Dronification of State Violence,” 222-228.

¹⁶ Shaw, “Predator Empire,” 17-18.

¹⁷ Audrey Kurth Cronin, “The Foreign Policy Essay: Is this How to Win the “War on Terrorism?” *Lawfare Blog*, (September 14, 2014), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/somalia/2013-06-11/why-drones-fail>.

¹⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman, “Winning the ‘War on Terrorism:’ The Need for a Fundamentally Different Strategy,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, (September 18, 2006), 2-3; 6.

Pakistan” and “The Year of the Drone: An Analysis of U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” focus specifically on how drones in Pakistan negatively affect the U.S. effort to defeat al Qaeda. In the first article, they argue that only one in seven strikes kill an HVT, while the rest kill low-to-mid level members or civilians. These strikes are ineffective and have led to an increase in violence in the country (150 attacks in 2004 to 1,916 in 2009).¹⁹ Their second article is the primary source used by most scholars conducting research on drone strikes. It makes the same conclusions as their previous article, but provides the statistics that they calculated with NAF.

On the other side of the argument, Daniel L. Byman (2013) makes the case for the continuation of the U.S. drone program. Drone strikes have a cheap cost and a high level of safety. Using data from NAF, he argues that 3,000 militants have been killed in Pakistan and Yemen since 2008, including more than 50 HVTs. Killing HVTs helps to destabilize the organization because newer, less experienced members who rise through the ranks due to HVT deaths will not be as effective in leading the organization. Osama bin Laden once warned of “the rise of lower leaders who are not as experienced as the former leaders.”²⁰ Conversely, others do not appreciate the importance of low level members with special skills that are hard to replace. A drone strike is much safer than sending U.S. ground forces to capture or eliminate a target. The physical presence of U.S. soldiers can lead to unwanted U.S. casualties, but drones remove that risk. State sovereignty is protected more under drone strikes than by sending in forces or conducting an air strike. There is greater potential for collateral damage (civilian death) from an

¹⁹ Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann, “Washington’s Phantom War: The Effects of the U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, no. 4 (July/August 2011), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2011-07-01/washingtons-phantom-war>.

²⁰ Daniel L. Byman, “Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington’s Weapon of Choice,” *Brookings* (July/August 2013), <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2013/06/17-drones-obama-weapon-choice-us-counterterrorism-byman>.

air strike than a drone strike. There are other options available to eliminate terrorists, but drones are the best option when faced with difficult-to-reach and unsafe places in both Pakistan and Yemen.²¹

In “Drop the pilot,” (2013) the unnamed author discusses an interesting phenomenon: civilians living in the FATA are generally in favor of drone strikes. While no residents in the area would reveal their names due to fear of reprisal, one civilian said, “No one dares tell the real picture . . . Drone attacks are killing the militants who are killing innocent people.”²² Residents in the area prefer a focused, limited drone strike to inaccurate artillery bombardments by the Pakistani military. The strikes do not cause them as much harm, and they believe that the strikes kill the correct individuals. Some people actually wrote and signed the “Peshawar Declaration” showing their support for drone strikes in FATA, but the signatories had to flee Pakistan for some time afterwards.²³ Similarly, in “The Drone Blowback Fallacy,” Christopher Swift (2012c) explains how during a trip to Yemen he interviewed 40 Yemeni men, very few of which believed that drone strikes helped al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen. Swift (2012c) says that his subjects were older, religious, conservative, and from the rural provinces of Yemen (i.e. those most affected by the drone strikes). Only five of the 40 questioned truly believed that drones aided AQAP in recruitment; the main factor is economic. AQAP lifts poor men out of poverty and provides social services to the very poor parts of the country. “Those who fight do so because of the injustice in this country . . . A few in the north are driven by ideology, but in the south it is mostly about poverty and corruption.”²⁴ The interviewees understood the importance of drone strikes in defeating al Qaeda; the problem that

²¹ Byman, “Why Drones Work,”

²² “Drop the pilot,” *The Economist*, October 9, 2013.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Christopher Swift, “The Drone Blowback Fallacy,” *Foreign Affairs* (July 1, 2012), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2012-07-01/drone-blowback-fallacy>.

most people in Yemen have with these strikes is that they kill civilians and that they are conducted by a foreign state. They would not have problems with drone strikes conducted by the Yemeni government because “drones remind us that we don’t have the ability to solve our problems by ourselves.”²⁵ These two articles show that people living in the areas directly affected by drone strikes and terrorism are generally in favor of the strikes because they see the positive impact that they have in defeating al Qaeda and its affiliates.

2.2 The Legality of the U.S. Drone Program

Christian Enemark (2011) uses three indicators to judge the ethical justification for carrying out drone strikes and to determine whether or not they should continue in Pakistan. The three indicators are benefits, discrimination, and proportionality, with particular emphasis on the final two. They are a part of the U.S. strategy in Pakistan called counterinsurgency incorporating counterterrorism (COIN). With current evidence and little transparency, it is not possible to determine how much the U.S. benefits from using drones. The strikes do considerable damage to the functionality of the targeted groups, but when it comes to winning the hearts and minds of the local noncombatants, the evidence does not favor the continuation of the program. Evidence does suggest that the tactic of decapitation—targeting HVTs—does not aid in causing organizations to fall apart, especially fervent religious ones. The decapitation strategy assumes that HVTs are more capable than lower level targets and not just more religious.²⁶ The discrimination indicator, or the fact that combatants are targeted and not noncombatants, is also inconclusive. Drones are more accurate in theory due to better technology, but without official data for people killed in strikes, it is impossible to determine whether drone strikes are

²⁵ Swift, “The Drone Blowback Fallacy.”

²⁶ Enemark, “Drones over Pakistan,” 222-226.

discriminatory.²⁷ The final indicator, proportionality, tests whether “anticipated harm resulting from using force in pursuit of a legitimate military objective must not be excessive in relation to the expected military benefits.²⁸” Once again, Enemark (2011) cannot give a definitive answer. The COIN philosophy seeks out higher quality targets over a greater quantity of targets, but with the expansion of the drone program to target people who meet certain pattern-of-life standards, the U.S. cannot claim that the CIA follows suit. Until the U.S. releases information on judging the value of targets or the standards used to determine whether someone is dangerous, drone strikes cannot be considered proportionate.²⁹ The inconclusive nature of the drone program’s benefits, discrimination, and proportionality allows terrorist groups in Pakistan to “portray their opposition [the U.S.] as unethical by the opposition’s own standards.”³⁰ This doubt helps the combatants gain more recruits by claiming that the U.S. acts in an unethical manner, and, therefore, until the U.S. becomes more transparent with its drone program, it should cease all operations to stop causing more harm than good.

On the other hand, Andrew C. Orr (2011) argues in favor of the overall legality of the U.S. drone program in Pakistan. He evaluates the legality of *jus ad bellum*, or the initial reason for starting the strikes, and *jus in bello*, or the legality for individual strikes.³¹ Using many different standards, treaties, and conventions, Orr (2011) concludes that the initiation of the program is legal in general because it did not violate the sovereignty of Pakistan and the U.S. acted in self-defense when starting the program. Pakistan cannot and does not attempt to remove al Qaeda from its borders—allowing the U.S. to intervene lawfully without violating its

²⁷ Enemark, “Drones over Pakistan,” 227-230.

²⁸ Ibid, 230.

²⁹ Ibid, 230-232.

³⁰ Ibid, 233.

³¹ Orr, “Unmanned, Unprecedented, and Unresolved,” 733-752.

sovereignty.³² Also, the U.S. has acted in self-defense against a continuing threat, and until the U.N. acts in a way to stop the threat, the U.S. may continue its operations legally because “self-defence may continue until the [Security Council] has taken *effective* action rendering armed force by the victim unnecessary.”³³ Furthermore, the drone program passes the Boskoski Test which lays out the framework for an armed conflict against a non-state actor, and the Geneva Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights do not apply.³⁴

However, he cannot conclusively determine the legality of individual strikes because they rely on the same three criteria that Enemark (2011) uses: proportionality, discrimination, and benefits. Until the U.S. government releases more information regarding each strike, these criteria are speculative at best. Generally speaking, the strikes have grown more and more proportionate with the development of more accurate technology. The issue of discrimination is difficult to analyze due to the covert nature of terrorist organizations, but as long as the U.S. attempts to target combatants and avoid noncombatant casualties, the requirement is generally fulfilled. Orr (2011) adds another criterion to his *jus in bello* analysis: human shielding. Law prevents the targeting of involuntary human shields, but it is unclear when addressing voluntary human shielding (the author concludes that voluntary ones should be considered as combatants). In the end, overall, the program is generally legal, but the legality of individual strikes is murky due to little available data.³⁵ The U.S. must develop a public framework for strikes and declassify data that allows the public to understand and to test the legality of the U.S. drone program.

Laurie R. Blank (2012) takes the same criteria that Orr (2011) and Enemark (2011) use in determining the legality of U.S. drone strikes (discrimination, proportionality, and necessity) and

³² Orr, “Unmanned, Unprecedented, and Unresolved,” 736.

³³ *Ibid*, 737.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 742-746.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 746-750.

concludes that the program meets all of the necessary thresholds of legality. The article focuses on *jus ad bellum* and does not address *jus in bello*. Enemark (2011) argued that each prong did not have enough evidence for a proper conclusion, and Orr (2011) agreed with Enemark (2011) but argued that there was enough for a more solid conclusion. Blank (2012) does not hesitate in her arguments on the legality of these three points. The drone as a weapon meets the necessary standards required by the U.N. to be a legal weapon because the missiles are used by other vehicles, are able to be discriminate, and can minimize harm. Anticipation of misuse of a drone does not make it unlawful. Furthermore, the fact that drones can fly for hours on end using high-powered cameras allows for operators to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants. These features meet the legal requirement of discrimination. The ability to fly long hours also plays a role in the proportionality of a drone strike. The “anticipated military advantage” must outweigh the “expected loss of civilian life or damage.” These issues are determined before the strike occurs, not after. Proportionality focuses on the protection of civilians, but does not prohibit the death of civilians as long as damage is not considered excessive. Finally, the issue of necessity relates to the number of precautions taken before a strike occurs. A drone’s ability to fly for an extended period of time allows for the pilot to survey the area, identify the target and collateral damage, and determine the proper moment to strike. The number of hours clocked before each strike meets the requirements for necessity/precaution.³⁶ Drone strikes, no matter where they occur in the world, are legal under the law of armed conflict and international humanitarian law, but with improved technology, the standards may become too strict in regards to civilian deaths. The standard could easily change from accepting the possibility of civilian casualties to forbidding them due to increased precision in cameras and targeting capabilities. This change will harm civilians more than benefit them because pilots will ignore the

³⁶ Blank, “After ‘Top Gun,’” 683-702.

unreasonable new standards or no longer engage in strikes—endangering the civilians in a different way.³⁷

While previous articles focused solely on the legality of the U.S. drone program in Pakistan, M.W. Aslam (2011) expands the conversation to include both legitimacy and prudence. He addresses the issue of so-called great power responsibility, but does not make any major conclusions regarding whether the drone program is in line with this thinking—that great powers are expected “to act as guardians of international society.”³⁸ The issues of consent or self-defense are the keys to determine the legality of drone strikes. With little available evidence for Pakistani consent to the strikes and whether the strikes are preemptive or preventative, he argues that the program’s legality is dubious at best. Consensus, or approval from the international community, regulates the legitimacy of strikes. While the notion of preemption is gaining more consensus as the threat of terrorism increases around the world, the U.S. does not have a positive consensus supporting its actions in Pakistan. Neither NATO allies nor the United Kingdom have openly spoken about it, and one German official has supported Pakistani opposition.³⁹ It is not prudent for strikes to continue for many reasons. A drone strike that kills civilians pushes surviving family members to join militant groups due to the custom of *badal*, which demands family members kill those who killed their deceased relatives. The program damages the very fabric of the FATA by sowing distrust and starting witch hunts for spies. The U.S. undermining of Pakistani public opinion helps to push people into supporting the militants, increasing regional Pashtun nationalism, uniting formerly divided militant groups, and causing revenge

³⁷ Blank, “After ‘Top Gun,’” 713-715.

³⁸ M.W. Aslam, “A critical evaluation of American predator strikes in Pakistan: Legality, legitimacy, and prudence,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2011): 2.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 5-10.

strikes against both U.S. and Pakistani interests.⁴⁰ The U.S. drone program's legality is once again considered inconclusive; it has no legitimacy at the international level; and it causes greater damage to overall grand strategy in fighting terrorism in Pakistan by destabilizing the area and radicalizing the affected population.*

2.3 Practical and Theoretical Issues with the Program

Jenna Jordan (2014) provides statistical evidence supporting Enemark (2011)'s claim regarding the lack of effectiveness in the decapitation tactic of targeting al Qaeda leaders. She uses two variables to gauge whether or not the tactic has a long term negative effect on terrorist organizations: bureaucracy and public support. When information is unavailable for these two variables, age and size substitute for bureaucracy, and organization type substitutes for public support.⁴¹ The logic behind age and size is that as an organization gets older, policies and rules become more ingrained into the organization, and it has more members to replace the deceased ones. Organization type refers to whether the group is religious, ideological, or separatist in nature, with religious and separatist-oriented ones getting more widespread support from the people than ideological ones.⁴² Al Qaeda and its affiliates have the elements in place to survive decapitation strikes: 25 years of activity, large size, and religious goals. Documents taken from various al Qaeda headquarters demonstrate the embedded bureaucratic nature of the organization: rosters, accounting sheets, meeting minutes, by-laws, etc. Public opinion polls show a general decline in support for al Qaeda in some areas, but an increase in other places mainly to due to the introduction of public services to sway people's opinions. The organization has both religious

⁴⁰ Aslam, "A critical evaluation of American predator strikes in Pakistan," 10-12.

*Other studies that address the legality of the drone programs are "United States of America: 'Targeted Killing' Policies Violate the Right to Life" (Amnesty International, 2012), "Targeting Operations with Drone Technology: Humanitarian Law Implications" (Human Rights Institute, Columbia Law School, 2011), and "Counting Drone Strike Deaths" (Human Rights Clinic, Columbia Law School, 2012).

⁴¹ Jordan, "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark," 38.

⁴² Ibid, 11-20.

goals (Islamic) as well as political goals (anti-Western occupation) giving al Qaeda the support of the public.⁴³ Jordan (2014) concludes that “the figures above do not indicate significant degradation of organizational capacity or a marked disruption in al Qaida’s activities.”⁴⁴ The U.S. tactic of decapitation has more negative effects than positives ones given this conclusion: possibility of revenge attacks, sympathy of the public, drop in public opinion of U.S., and radicalization of new leaders.⁴⁵ With al Qaeda’s high levels of bureaucracy and public support, decapitation strikes result in the survival of the organization along with short and long term retaliation.⁴⁶ This study proves that decapitation attempts are not an effective mechanism to fight al Qaeda.

In “U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism,” Cronin (2012) outlines the failures of U.S. tactics and strategy in the fight against al Qaeda. The U.S. has no achievable goal in sight, and current tactics have evolved into a feckless strategy. Al Qaeda has succeeded in its strategy of provocation (forcing an unreasonable reaction by the targeted state) and mobilization (garnering support from the masses).⁴⁷ However, recently, public opinion for al Qaeda has declined sharply due to its targeting of Muslim civilians. If al Qaeda were to push harder by demonstrating the unreasonable nature of U.S. drone strikes (provocation), it could get even more recruits. Also, Cronin (2012) argues that eliminating particular leaders is detrimental to U.S. interests or a waste of resources.⁴⁸ The killing of bin Laden did not have much of an effect on al Qaeda’s operations, but had a large personal impact in the U.S. Al Qaeda uses U.S. attacks as a much better public relations tool than the U.S. does for al Qaeda attacks, and it continues to

⁴³ Jordan, “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark,” 22-25.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 32.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 35-38.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 21.

⁴⁷ Audrey Kurth Cronin, “U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism,” *Orbis* (2012): 5-9.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 11; 14.

get support in Pakistan from using drone strikes as a propaganda tool to recruit new members. Cronin (2012) urges a recalculation of U.S. grand strategy to defeat al Qaeda with an emphasis on the creation of a “rule-based world order” and aiding regional powers to fight the terrorist threat themselves.⁴⁹

Megan Smith and James Igoe Walsh (2013) use statistical analysis to determine the effectiveness of U.S. drone strikes in preventing al Qaeda in Pakistan from creating and disseminating propaganda videos. U.S. government officials, especially Leon Panetta, argue that drone strikes are effective: “Those operations are seriously disrupting al-Qaeda. . . . It’s pretty clear from all the intelligence we are getting that they are having a very difficult time putting together kind of command and control, that they are scrambling. And that we really do have them on the run.”⁵⁰ However, using the independent variable of the number of drone strikes conducted and the dependent variable of the number of propaganda videos disseminated using many control variables regarding troops, peace accords, time lag, and the death of bin Laden, Smith and Walsh (2013) conclude that drone strikes have a very small effect on propaganda output.⁵¹ Propaganda output is used because it is one of the few indicators completely available to the public, and it is al Qaeda’s best available mechanism to reach the public and to criticize the U.S. Al Qaeda possesses a decentralized hierarchy making its leaders and propaganda output less vulnerable to drone strikes.⁵² However, with the advent of smaller technology and the decentralized nature of al Qaeda in Pakistan, drone strikes are not as effective as once believed. If drone strikes were effective in killing HVTs, then al Qaeda would have a harder time creating

⁴⁹ Cronin, “U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism,” 18-23.

⁵⁰ Megan Smith and James Igoe Walsh, “Do Drone Strikes Degrade Al Qaeda? Evidence From Propaganda Output,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 25 (2013): 312.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 325.

⁵² *Ibid*, 314-317.

new propaganda.⁵³ The data proves otherwise—drones strikes are not undermining al Qaeda’s organizational capacity to create propaganda videos.

Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens, and Matt Flannes (2011) argue that the drone program has resulted in 5 major types of blowback for the U.S.: retaliatory strikes, the creation of accidental guerrillas, complicating grand strategy, the destabilization of Pakistan, and damaging of U.S.-Pakistani relations. The initial drone program under Pres. Bush only targeted HVTs, but then the program greatly expanded under Pres. Obama’s signature strike tactic. However, from 2002 to 2010, only 16 HVTs have been killed, compared to around 1,426 other casualties (combatant and noncombatant alike). This lack of effective targeting pushes survivors into the hands of al Qaeda causing them to perform retaliatory attacks against U.S. interests. This phenomenon is known as the accidental guerrilla effect, in which an increase in drone strikes has caused an increase in terrorist recruitment and retaliation attacks. These attacks occur against both U.S. bases and the Pakistani military and civilians—which further strains U.S.-Pakistani relations. Also, they argue that current U.S. strategy is contradictory, counterproductive, and counterintuitive because it pushes survivors to the enemy and causes political destabilization in Pakistan where citizens demand change. Nevertheless, the government continues to resist such demands. The drone program’s expansion has caused more harm to overall U.S. strategy and foreign affairs than good because it damages its relationship with Pakistan, does not cause great harm to al Qaeda by targeting lower ranking combatants, and increases the terrorist organization’s numbers. There is no end in sight for the program, and the chances are high that this same strategy will be used as the program expands and escalates in Yemen and Somalia.⁵⁴

⁵³ Smith and Walsh, “Do Drone Strikes Degrade Al Qaeda?” 316.

⁵⁴ Hudson, Owens, and Flannes, “Drone Warfare,” 122-130.

In “Why Drones Fail,” Cronin (2013) outlines why the U.S. should change its current drone policy. While the drone program protects the American home front from future terrorist attacks, it helps al Qaeda to recruit new members and will never definitively defeat al Qaeda or any other terrorist organization. The tactic of decapitation cannot work against al Qaeda due to its fragmented organization structure and age. The death of Osama bin Laden proved that it can survive the death of a major leader. Though drones have helped to lower the number of terrorists in Pakistan as well as reduce the violence in the area, these facts could be attributed to al Qaeda leaving the area. Al Qaeda spreads out further across the region, and drone strikes, no matter who they kill, give the organization a propaganda tool to use against the U.S. As long as al Qaeda can broadcast its message to potential members, it will continue to live on, and drone strikes will always allow them to continue the message. Moreover, the drone program fails at a secondary goal called “the conservation of enemies,” which seeks to keep the number of terrorists at its current level. The diaspora of al Qaeda works against U.S. counterterrorism strategy, and until the drone program reverts to a supplementary role only used in rare circumstances, the U.S. will never defeat al Qaeda, and retaliatory attacks will continue. These strikes destroy the most valuable asset in fighting terrorists: intelligence. Drone strikes destroy everything, while special ops missions are able to collect data—Cronin (2013) even argues that the intelligence collected in the bin Laden raid was more important than his death. The drone program has its benefits in the “War on Terrorism,” but it undermines long term U.S. strategy.⁵⁵

2.4 Military Coercion Theory

In *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, Robert A. Pape (1996) develops a theory of how states should use air power to attain desired goals. The main mechanism that air

⁵⁵ Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2013), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/somalia/2013-06-11/why-drones-fail>.

power uses is called coercion, which “involves persuading an opponent to stop an ongoing action to start a new course of action by changing its calculations of costs and benefits.”⁵⁶ There are two main types of coercion: punishment and denial. Punishment occurs when the coercer/attacker targets the civilian population in the hopes of starting anti-government behaviors/movements. Punishment coercion can take many different forms, such as directly bombing civilian areas or destroying key economic locations that civilians depend upon for their livelihood. Denial coercion occurs when the coercer/attacker targets the state’s military capabilities. Punishment almost never works, while denial has the highest potential success rate depending on whether air power is used closely with land power. Denial breaks down into strategic interdiction (destroying/isolating key military production locations) and operational interdiction (attacking military points behind the front lines in order to disrupt coordination and movement). Operational interdiction, especially when used in coordination with ground troops, is the more effective of the two. In addition to punishment and denial, decapitation has become popular despite its constant failure. Decapitation occurs when the coercer specifically targets a state’s political or military leadership, or when the coercer tries to help opposition groups to overthrow the government. In the modern age, it has never been successful.⁵⁷ Although punishment and strategic interdiction do not work, they will continue to be used to keep a state’s air power independent of its land power. Even though operational interdiction is the most successful mechanism of coercion, the required coordination between air and land power will keep it from being widely used.

Pape (2004) further updates his theory in “The True Worth of Air Power.” The assumption that air power alone can lead to victory in a conflict is incorrect, and decapitation

⁵⁶ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 12.

⁵⁷Ibid, 55-86.

does not work. While he does not discuss the use of drones, he talks about the continual increase in precision and accuracy in air strikes. Military strategists continue to push for the independent use of air power to defeat enemies, but Pape (2004) argues for the continued integration of air and ground forces—which he calls “hammer” and “anvil.” Air power targets the enemy’s armaments and soldiers before, during, and after battles in order to supplement and complement the territory captured and casualties inflicted by the ground forces. Air power grants ground forces a safer combat atmosphere. At no point in U.S. military history has the independent and sole use of air power lead to victory in war. The combination of the hammer and anvil has worked in the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The sole use of air power has actually lead to retaliatory attacks from failed strikes on Muammar al-Qaddafi and from the failure of the initial air campaign in Kosovo. Pape (2004) emphasizes a continued use of precise intelligence in order to allow the air force to target important locations. Precise air strikes without precise intelligence will never work. Even the combined use of air and ground forces has limitations against groups with decentralized hierarchies.⁵⁸ Written almost a decade after his book, this article proves his prediction correct that states will prefer strategic interdiction over operational interdiction.

⁵⁸ Robert A. Pape, “The True Worth of Air Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2004), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2004-03-01/true-worth-air-power>.

Chapter Three: Drones in Pakistan

The following case study will evaluate whether or not the U.S. drone program in Pakistan can eliminate al Qaeda as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests. These drone strikes take place in the FATA of Pakistan, primarily in North and South Waziristan (See Map 3.1 below). In order to properly evaluate this particular case, this study will evaluate the four counterterrorism goals mentioned in Table 1.1 under the lens of the theory of military coercion.

Map 3.1: Tribal Areas of Pakistan¹



3.1 Military Coercion and Drones in Pakistan

Before making a final judgment on the drone program in Pakistan, it is important to evaluate the viability of strikes on a theoretical level. The theory of military coercion explains how air power alone cannot lead to victory in war. Pape (1996) only uses traditional examples of warfare in the cases of Japan (1944-45), Germany (1942-45), Korea (1950-53), Vietnam (1965-72), and Iraq (1991), and in those example, he explains how coercive denial through operational interdiction worked best in combination with land power. This method succeeded in the cases of

¹ “Taliban all over,” *The Economist*, April 12, 2007, <http://www.economist.com/node/9008911>.

Japan, Korea (1950-1), Vietnam (1972), and Iraq, but failed in the cases of Korea (1952-3), Vietnam (1965-68), and Germany.² In a later article, he also argues that the integration of land and air power was successful in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq (2003), and Afghanistan.³ In addition, air power cannot succeed against guerrilla warfare—the type of warfare that most closely resembles how al Qaeda operates in Pakistan. In guerrilla warfare, “the ability of air power to substitute for ground power is significantly constrained by tremendous difficulties in identification of friend and foe from the air, however, which can be offset only partially by increasing loiter time over the target and coordination between air and ground units.”⁴ While drones have increased loiter time, unless a positive identification has been made with precise intelligence, it is very difficult to determine friend from foe. Pape (1996) further argues that guerrilla forces will resist the enemy at all costs, so they “should be largely immune to coercion.”⁵ With only air power in play in Pakistan, coercion in the form of drone strikes will fail to defeat al Qaeda.

3.2 U.S. Counterterrorism Goals and Drone Usage in Pakistan

Even though the theory of military coercion predicts a failure in Pakistan, it is both necessary and important to evaluate the drone program on a practical level by assessing the following four U.S. counterterrorism goals:

(1) disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents

The drone program in Pakistan has had mixed results in terms of casualties from drone strikes. From 2004 to 2015, drone strikes have killed between 2,274 and 3,617 people, of which 255 to 315 were civilians and 1,748 to 2,823 were militants.⁶ Table 3.1 outlines the number of

² Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 86.

³ Pape, “The True Worth of Air Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2004).

⁴ Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 79.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis,” 2015. <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html>.

drone strikes, number and types of casualties, and the civilian casualty rate. This study sets any civilian casualty rate above 10% as unacceptable for the U.S. Half of the years (2007, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015) is under that threshold, while the other half (2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011) is above 10%. This data shows that progress has been made in recent years (since 2012, the civilian casualty rate has been below 10%). From another perspective, overall 8.71% to 11.21% of all casualties were civilians. Initially, the U.S. failed under this premise, but it has recently made strides in accuracy.

Table 3.1: Pakistan Drone Strike Statistics

Year	Number of Drone Strikes	Number of Militants Killed*	Number of Civilians Killed	Civilian Casualty Rate**
2004	1	1 – 5	2 – 2	22.20% - 50.00%
2005	3	4 – 5	6 – 6	40.00% - 42.90%
2006	2	1	87 – 99	98.9% - 99.00%
2007	4	37 – 65	0	0.00%
2008	36	157 – 263	31 – 47	13.50% - 14.20%
2009	54	240 – 511	57 – 67	9.50% - 15.90%
2010	122	482 – 769	14 – 19	2.31% - 2.68%
2011	72	319 – 518	49 – 63	10.30% - 12.40%
2012	48	209 – 320	4 – 5	1.40% - 1.80%
2013	26	124 – 152	3 – 5	2.40% - 3.20%
2014	22	126 – 155	0	0.00%
2015	10	48 – 59	2	3.28% - 4.00%
Total	400	1,748 – 2,823	255 – 315	8.71% - 11.21%
Source: New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis.”				

As discussed in Chapter One, decapitation strikes will not lead to the destruction of al Qaeda. Strikes against HVTs have not had great success in eliminating the target. Despite claims of precision by U.S. officials, the statistics in Table 3.2 contradict apparent conventional wisdom.

*There is a slight difference between these totals and the overall numbers—“unknown” casualties were intentionally omitted.

**Civilian casualty rate range was calculated by dividing the minimum number of civilians killed by the minimum total casualties and by dividing the maximum number of civilians killed by the maximum total casualties. For example, in 2009, the rate was calculated by dividing 57 civilian casualties/358 total casualties and 67 civilian casualties/703 total casualties.

While most of the HVTs listed died as a result of the final strike, the list shows the inefficiency of drone strikes at eliminating specific people. Since the start of the program in Pakistan, at least 58 HVTs have been killed as a result of a drone strike (~2.0% of total casualties).⁷ These strikes do not diminish al Qaeda’s operational capacity—it absorbs them by continuing to train and recruit more members and moving to other locations.⁸ Al-Qaeda has not collapse and remains a threat in South Asia.

Table 3.2: High Value Targets Killed in Pakistan, 2004 - 2015

Baitullah Mehsud	Nek Muhammad	Sheikh Abdul Bari	Amir Moawia
Qari Hussain	Haitham al-Yemeni	Nazimuddin Zalalov	Saifullah
Mullah Sangeen Zadran	Abu Hamza Rabia	Saleh al-Somali	Sheikh Fateh
Hakimullah Mehsud	Abu Sulayman Jazairi	Zuhaib al-Zahibi	Ali Marjan
Sadiq Noor	Abdul Rehman	Haji Omar	Ibne Amin
Badruddin Haqqani	Abu Haris	Jamal Saeed Abdul Rahim	Ratta Khan
Mustafa Abu Yazid	Khalid Habib	Abdul Basit Usman	Abu Zaid al-Iraqi
Ilyas Kashmiri	Mohammad Omar	Azmatullah Mawiya	Wali Mohammad Toofan
Abu Khabab al-masri	Abu Zubair al-Masri	Waliur Rehman	Atiyah Abd al-Rahman
Abu Kasha	Abdullah Azzam al Saudi	Mohammad Qari Zafar	Abu Hafs al-Shahri
Abu Yahya Al-Libi	Rashid Rauf	Sadam Hussein Al Hussami	Janbaz Zadran
Abdullah Bahar Mehsud	Abdullah Haqqani	Tariq Mehsud	Ahmed Farouq
Mullah Nazir	Osama al Kini	Mullah Akhtar Zadran	Taj Gul Mehsud
Mohammed Usman	Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan	Hamza al-Jufi	Aslam Awan
Amir Hamza Toji Khel	Abu Akash al-Iraqi	Shah Faisal	Badr Mansoor

Source: Spencer Ackerman, “41 men targeted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes – the facts on the ground,” *The Guardian*, November 24, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/-sp-us-drone-strikes-kill-1147>, and New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis.”

⁷ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis.”

⁸ Peter Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda*, (New York: Free Press, 2011), 332-3.

From an operational standpoint, drone strikes do not have the desired effect on al Qaeda propaganda output or the prevention of retaliatory strikes. One study, conducted by Smith and Walsh (2013), contradicts Leon Panetta's claim that "those operations [drone strikes] are seriously disrupting al-Qaeda . . . It's pretty clear from all the intelligence we are getting that they are having a very difficult time putting together the kind of command and control, that they are scrambling. And that we really do have them on the run."⁹ They concluded that strikes have a small effect on the output of propaganda videos, which is one of the best indicators to study because videos are available to the public and are the organization's best available mechanism to reach the public and to criticize the U.S. Drone strikes do not prevent al Qaeda leaders from "starring" in videos, and videos can still be produced, edited, and dispensed. Enhanced technology works well for al Qaeda because it is now easier to disseminate their message on the internet.¹⁰ Also, drone strikes may increase the number of retaliatory strikes due to the "accidental guerrilla" effect, in which civilians are radicalized or driven into the hands of al Qaeda due to errant drone strikes and dead family members. Individuals driven by revenge cause an apparent increase in attacks.¹¹ While not all attacks were conducted in direct response to a drone strike, they show that drone strikes have not limited the operational capacity of al Qaeda during the years of highest frequency of drone strikes: more is not always better. Table 3.3 (below) outlines the number of attacks (suicide and non-suicide) and the number of deaths that they caused. These attacks include bombings, armed assaults, kidnappings, assassinations, etc. These attacks were carried out by various groups, but Tehrik-i-Taliban, Lashkar-e-Islam,

⁹ Smith and Walsh, "Do Drone Strikes Degrade Al Qaeda?" 312.

¹⁰ Ibid, 313-317.

¹¹ Hudson, Owens, and Flannes, "Drone Warfare," 126-127.

and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi are the main identified groups;¹² there are dozens of affiliates within Pakistan carrying out attacks. Not every attack resulted in casualties. Al Qaeda is not as damaged and “on the run” as Leon Panetta claimed. These numbers are steady and slightly increasing despite the large amount of drone strikes. A truly weakened organization would have a harder time organizing and carrying out such a high number of attacks throughout the country. Al Qaeda and its affiliates may be weakened, but they still remain a threat to both the U.S. and Pakistan. Therefore, due to the overall civilian casualty rate, the failure of the decapitation policy, the continued propaganda output, and the retaliatory strikes, the drone program in Pakistan does not fulfill the U.S. counterterrorism goal of disrupting, degrading, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda.

Table 3.3: Attacks in Pakistan Conducted by Al Qaeda or Affiliate from 2004 to 2014

Year	Suicide Attacks	Non-Suicide Attacks	Total Attacks	Casualties	Bombings	Armed Assaults	Other Types of Attacks
2004	3	7	10	71	7	3	0
2005	0	5	5	12	2	2	1
2006	1	15	16	86	7	6	3
2007	8	28	36	330	18	6	12
2008	10	118	128	380	42	31	55
2009	16	157	173	711	90	37	46
2010	20	161	181	943	95	33	53
2011	21	134	155	758	77	29	49
2012	32	220	252	1297	115	92	45
2013	38	177	215	1361	122	47	46
2014	29	208	237	1051	109	74	54
Total	178	1259	1408	7000	684	360	364

Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database, 2013, retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.

¹² National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), “Global Terrorism Database,” 2013, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.

(2) *eliminate safe havens*

Safe havens are locations where terrorists settle down to organize future attacks, carry out every day operations, and are relatively safe from targeting. As discussed in Chapter One, the development of drone technology has limited places where terrorists feel safe from a drone strike. There are very few places where they can hide safely. The MQ-1 Predator has technology that allows for continuous surveillance and the use of deadly force.¹³ This technology has changed the way in which al Qaeda operates. Former CIA Director General Michael Hayden argued that the use of drones in Pakistan has made al Qaeda feel less safe: “By making a safe haven feel less safe, we keep al-Qaeda guessing. We make them doubt their allies; questions their methods, their plans, even their priorities. . . . We force them to spend more time and resources on self-preservation, and that distracts them, at least partially and at least for a time, from laying groundwork for the next attack.”¹⁴ They have even fomented distrust amongst al-Qaeda members and their “hosts” causing witch hunts for potential spies both inside and outside the organization.¹⁵ The loitering time of a drone prevents members from congregating in large groups because a drone would be able to easily spot such a meeting. Members are constantly mindful that a strike could kill them at any moment.

In 2012, the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point released many al Qaeda documents that point to drone strikes affecting how the organization operates on a daily basis. Letters from top officials discuss changes in meeting points, transportation methods, and moving to more remote areas of Pakistan. In 2010, Osama bin Laden warned Atiyya Abdul Rahman, one of al Qaeda’s leaders in Pakistan who died in 2011, to move operations out of Waziristan into Kunar due to the change in geographic features: “Kunar is more fortified due to its rougher

¹³General Atomics Aeronautical, *Predator B*.

¹⁴ Bergen, *The Longest War*, 346.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 332-3.

terrain and many mountains, rivers and trees, and it can accommodate hundreds of the brothers without being spotted by the enemy. This will defend the brothers from the aircraft.”¹⁶ The fact that he mentioned “the aircraft” shows how great of an effect that drones have on al Qaeda operations. Also, bin Laden wrote explicit directions for transportation procedures to prevent targeting by constantly changing cars but only doing so under the cover of trees or tunnels so that drones cannot track the changes in personnel. Important communication must be handwritten, and never done by phone due to fear of tracking. Anything that could be tracked or bugged was eliminated from the day-to-day operations of al Qaeda.¹⁷ These letters from bin Laden show that the high casualty number for militants and the constant threat of a drone strike forced al Qaeda’s hand into changing their operational tactics.

While technological developments have enabled the U.S. to surveil al Qaeda more easily and for longer periods of time, other factors hurt U.S. chances of eliminating safe havens in Pakistan. The tribal people in the FATA abide by a code called *Pashtunwali*. This code has many facets, and the one most directly related to drone strikes is known as *badal* (revenge). The concept demands that families must avenge crimes or face the loss of honor. The revenge can take time: one proverb says, “I took my revenge after a hundred years, and I only regret that I acted in haste.”¹⁸ Such actions can take a long time to fulfill, and they can escalate as well. One simple wrongdoing can result in a blood feud. When a drone kills an individual in the FATA, the families can start to enact *badal* by giving refuge or money to al Qaeda members who are fighting against the U.S. The dead person could be a civilian or an al Qaeda member: it does not matter. The family must avenge the death. They also have the ability to join the organization to

¹⁶ Pam Benson, “Bin Laden documents: fear of drones,” *CNN.com*, May 3, 2012, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/05/03/bin-laden-documents-fear-of-drones/>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ The Global Security, “Pashtunwali/Pashtuanwaali,” 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/pashtunwali.htm>.

fulfill the custom and retain their honor. In one instance, a man rammed a car bomb into a Pakistani convoy to avenge the death of four of his family members caused by a U.S. drone strike.¹⁹ In November 2015, former drone pilot Brandon Bryant said at a press conference that drone strikes create anger and a desire for revenge: “We kill four and create 10 [militants]. If you kill someone’s father, uncle or brother who had nothing to do with anything, their families are going to want revenge.”²⁰ The concept of *badal* can cause a significant ripple across communities—increasing the number of safe havens, not decreasing them. One victim, whose mother was killed by a strike and his children badly injured, said, “Our blood has been shed and my mother was killed and we are called terrorists. . . . I am angry at America and have become its enemy after the death of my mother. Thousands will become America’s enemy after such incidents.”²¹ His son, who was injured in the strike, said, “Drone strikes have turned all of Waziristan into enemies. We were not their enemy before the drone attack but now they have made us their enemy by killing us with drones.”²² Since so many people have died from drone strikes, it is impossible to know how many people are now motivated by *badal* and just waiting for the proper moment.*

Even though drone strikes have forced al Qaeda to change its tactics and operations to avoid detection, it is nearly impossible to know the true limitations of members in regards to safe havens. The move to more remote parts of Pakistan may have worked, but drone strikes certainly pushed them out of their normal area of operation; al Qaeda adapted to survive. Drone

¹⁹ Williams, “The CIA’s Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” 882.

²⁰ Murtaza Hussain, “Former Drone Operations Say They Were ‘Horrified’ by Cruelty of Assassination Program,” *The Intercept*, November 20, 2015, <https://theintercept.com/2015/11/19/former-drone-operators-say-they-were-horrified-by-cruelty-of-assassination-program/>.

²¹ Brave New Films, *Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars*, 2015. [Time: ~47:45-50:00]

²² *Ibid.*

*More information on the effect of drone strikes on local communities can be found in Amnesty International, “Will I Be Next? US Drone Strikes in Pakistan,” 2013, London: Amnesty International Publications: 5-74.

technology has pressured the organization to eliminate spies and to change tactics, but due to its evolution and the concept of *badal*, there can be no definitive determination in the success or failure of the U.S. counterterrorism goal of eliminating safe havens—though drones do make al Qaeda members feel less safe.

(3) build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities

An important part in eliminating al Qaeda as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests is the incorporation of the directly-affected states in the fight against the terrorist organization. The U.S. cannot defeat al Qaeda by itself: Pakistan is needed. However, as it currently stands, the U.S. does not take advantage of Pakistani forces. It conducts drone strikes throughout the country despite constant protests by the civilian population. Such actions do not help to build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities. They do the opposite by showing the people and the world that Pakistan cannot solve the problems inside its borders. One resident summed up the issue quite succinctly: “I still want the drones to end . . . But if my government wants to do something they should do it themselves, without foreign help.”²³ Unfortunately, from 2004 to 2014, the U.S. has not successfully integrated Pakistani forces in the fight against al Qaeda or built up Pakistan’s ability to conduct the war more independently.

This pattern has great ramifications for a democratic nation like Pakistan as well as for Pakistani public opinion of the U.S. By unilaterally conducting drone strikes, the U.S. undermines the sovereignty of a democratic state. What message does that send to the civilian population? Their own country cannot protect its borders or prevent a state from conducting attacks inside its borders. Former President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari said, “continuing drone attacks on our country, which result in the loss of precious lives or property, are counterproductive and difficult to explain by a democratically elected government. It is creating

²³ “Drop the pilot.”

a credibility gap.”²⁴ The chief of a state must explain to his people why and how these strikes are allowed to happen, especially when public opinion is so drastically against them. Another Pakistani official supplemented Zardari’s point:

What has been the whole outcome of these drone attacks is that you have directly or indirectly contributed to destabilizing or undermining the democratic government. Because people really make fun of the democratic government—when you pass a resolution against drone attacks in parliament and nothing happens. The Americans don’t listen to you, and they continue to violate your territory.²⁵

Despite these public statements of anger and resentment towards the drone program, the Pakistani government has given the U.S. its secret blessing to conduct drone strikes. The U.S. flew drones out of a base within Pakistani borders, and the government even occasionally requests targets. This two-faced nature has angered U.S. officials: “For them to look the other way, or to give us the green light privately, and then to attack us publicly leaves us, it seems to me, at a very severe disadvantage and loss with the Pakistani people.”²⁶ The Pakistani government gets to reap the benefits of the U.S. eliminating its domestic threats. If anything ever goes wrong, they have plausible deniability and can blame the U.S. This lack of respect for Pakistani borders and its apparent undermining of the government along with Pakistan’s confusing stance on drone strikes weakens relations between the two states.

In 2014, the Pew Research Center conducted many polls in Pakistan related to U.S.-Pakistan relations with an emphasis on drone strikes. When asked to complete the statement “Drone strikes...,” 67% agreed with the statement “kill too many innocent people,” while 9% disagreed. Forty-one percent agreed with “are being done without Pakistani government approval,” while 23% disagreed. Only 21% agreed that they “are necessary to defend,” while 46%

²⁴ Boyle, “The costs and consequences of drone warfare,” 15.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Williams, “The CIA’s Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” 882-883.

disagreed.²⁷ In 2012, the opposition to the Pakistani army's ability to fight extremism surpassed its support (35% to 32%).²⁸ The people in Pakistan have very little faith in their own military's ability to fight al Qaeda and its affiliates in their own country.

The more telling questions relate to Pakistani public opinion of the U.S. These answers show that the U.S. has truly failed at establishing better relations with Pakistan and building up its capacity. In 2007, 72% of Pakistanis supported the U.S. providing financial and humanitarian aid to the country, but in 2012, only 50% supported it. In 2007, 63% supported the U.S. providing intelligence and logistical support, but in 2012, only 37% supported it. In 2010, 23% supported the U.S. conducting drone strikes, and in 2012, it dropped to 17%.²⁹ Pakistani opinion of the U.S. has lowered so much now that half of the population does not even want its humanitarian aid. Drone strikes have changed how the people think of the U.S. in all areas of foreign policy. Finally, in the same survey, 74% of Pakistanis viewed the U.S. as an enemy; 80% had an unfavorable opinion; 58% believed that U.S.-Pakistani relations have not improved; 38% said that the impact of U.S. economic aid was mostly negative; and 40% said that the impact of U.S. military aid was mostly negative.³⁰ These answers and percentages are troubling. Drone strikes have created an almost entirely negative image of the U.S. in Pakistan. The unfavorable opinions have only gotten worse with time. These opinion polls show how the U.S. fails to meet its counterterrorism goal of building enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities.

²⁷ Pew Research Center, "A Less Gloomy Mood in Pakistan," August 27, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/08/27/a-less-gloomy-mood-in-pakistan/>.

²⁸ Pew Research Center, "Pakistani Public Opinion Ever More Critical of U.S.," June 27, 2012, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/06/27/pakistani-public-opinion-ever-more-critical-of-u-s/>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

(4) counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits

When it comes to countering al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminishing the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits, the U.S. currently has a deficit. While the above opinion polls show a country-wide disdain for the U.S. and drone strikes, the civilians in the regions directly affected by al Qaeda, terrorism, and drone strikes have a very different opinion. In 2009, a study conducted in the FATA showed that 52% of people “felt the strikes were accurate;” 58% thought “the strikes did not cause anti-Americanism;” and 60% thought “the militants were damaged by the strikes.”³¹ This study tells a very different story. The people who live with the perpetual threat of an attack by al Qaeda understand and even see the benefits of drone strikes; over 66% of people believed that drone strikes violate al Qaeda sovereignty, not Pakistani because “they feel powerless toward the militants and they see the drones as their liberator.”³²

As has been discussed earlier, drone strikes in Pakistan do not negatively affect the propaganda output of al Qaeda. Drone strikes may even enhance the message that al Qaeda disseminates to potential recruits. Every drone strike that kills an innocent Muslim civilian is a new video message waiting to be made. Al Qaeda ensures that the region is aware of the chaos, death, and destruction that the U.S. causes, but the U.S. does not do the same against al Qaeda. Al Qaeda attacks and kills innocent civilians (including Muslims), yet the U.S. does not take advantage of this fact. It needs to do more to isolate al Qaeda from future members.³³ People need to see the carnage that al Qaeda creates, and until that happens, al Qaeda will not have a problem continuing to exploit people in the FATA. “Around 85 percent of those killed by al

³¹ Williams, “The CIA’s Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010,” 883-4.

³² Ibid.

³³ Cronin, “U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism,” 21.

Qaeda's attacks have been Muslims, a fact that breeds revulsion among its potential followers. The United States should be capitalizing on this backlash. In reality, there is no equivalence between al Qaeda's violence and U.S. drone strikes – under the Obama administration, drones have avoided civilians about 86 percent of the time, whereas al Qaeda purposefully targets them.”³⁴ The U.S. needs to significantly increase its information dissemination in order to stop al Qaeda from easily spreading its ideology in Pakistan.

The final area that al Qaeda exploits relates to Western presence and intervention in the Middle East and South Asia. This presence feeds al Qaeda's message of Western imperialism, which will allow for an increase in new recruits. Terms such as “occupiers,” “crusaders,” and “neo imperialists”³⁵ reverberate in the hearts of potential members. They have an historic meaning that strikes a chord with people. A continued U.S. presence without the integration of local forces helps this image become a reality in their minds. Less direct involvement by U.S. forces or drones will take away a fundamental part of al Qaeda's message. What would al Qaeda say if Pakistani drone strikes kill their members? They would not be able to legitimately use the U.S. as a scapegoat anymore. This issue relates directly to the previous goal of the U.S. failure to build up Pakistan's capacity to fight al Qaeda on its own. As it stands, the U.S. fails to counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and does not diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. The U.S. must counter al Qaeda's ideology by using its own actions against it, and as terrorists kill more innocent civilians, the organization's message will lose its resonance once more and more people see the damage and death that it has caused to Muslims and other civilians.

³⁴ Cronin, “Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy.”

³⁵ Cordesman, “Winning the ‘War on Terrorism,’” 2.

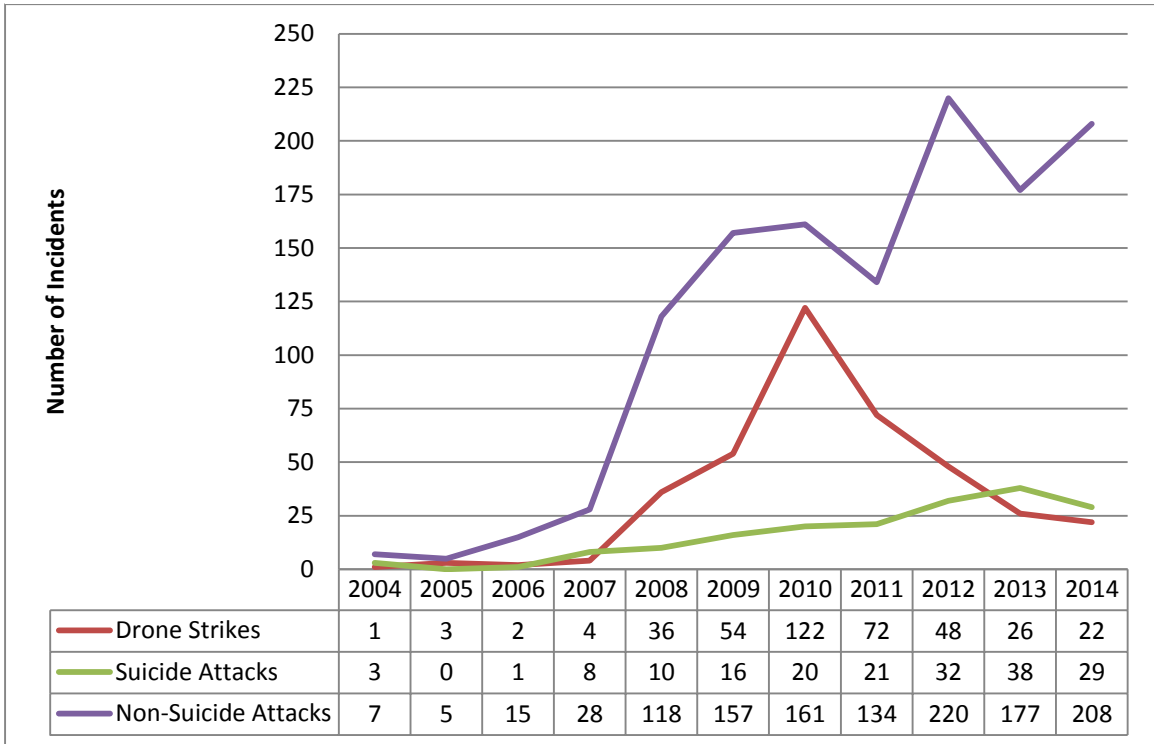
3.3 Evaluation of U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan

Despite the shift from the limited decapitation tactic under President Bush to the more expanded signature strike/pattern of life tactic under President Obama, the drone program in Pakistan has not resulted in more effectiveness or a significantly weaker al Qaeda. Al Qaeda still remains a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests. Graph 3.1 shows that drone strikes do not have a serious effect on preventing suicide and non-suicide attacks in Pakistan. Although both types of attacks fluctuate year-to-year, they have a general upward trend. Even though the rhetoric within the administration emphasizes the effectiveness and lethality of drone strikes, this case study has demonstrated that they do not successfully meet any of the four selected U.S. counterterrorism goals. The strikes expressly fail to meet the goals of (1) disrupting, degrading, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents and (3) building enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities. Whether or not drone strikes help to (2) eliminate safe havens in Pakistan is inconclusive, and the U.S. is moving from failure towards success in (4) countering al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminishing the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. Such results are not surprising: the theory of military coercion states that air power alone cannot and has never led to victory in any type of warfare. Drone strikes are the most technologically advanced form of air power, yet they still have neither helped the U.S. to meet its overall counterterrorism goals nor to reduce al Qaeda as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests.

The drone program in Pakistan is not completely without merit. Strikes have killed at least 1,700 militants—this number includes high value targets as well as low-to-mid level members of al Qaeda and its affiliates. The strikes have forced al Qaeda to move away from populated areas and into remote locations. The organization adapted to drone technology.

However, if the U.S. truly wants to eliminate al Qaeda as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests, then it must adopt some changes to the program. The U.S. must adhere to Pape's theory by integrating land power (ground troops) and air power (drones) to fight al Qaeda. There are no current examples of the U.S. using this strategy against a non-state actor like al Qaeda in an inactive war zone. This integration would allow for the collection of intelligence before and after strikes, and the presence of ground troops would prevent al Qaeda from moving back into the occupied locations. While this integration is necessary for military victory, the U.S. must incorporate the Pakistani military into this war—they should be the troops on the ground, not American soldiers. A direct American presence would not solve anything because it would feed into al Qaeda's message of Western imperialism as discussed in the fourth goal. The U.S. must work with the Pakistani military to build up its fighting capacity so that it can solve its own problems in a way that does not endanger civilians. The military must work to regain the support and confidence of the civilian population. The integration of U.S. drones (operated by Pakistani pilots in a hopeful future) with Pakistani ground forces would spell disaster for al Qaeda across the country. Adhering to this war-fighting tactic would help to achieve many counterterrorism goals and make Pakistan a safer and more stable country.

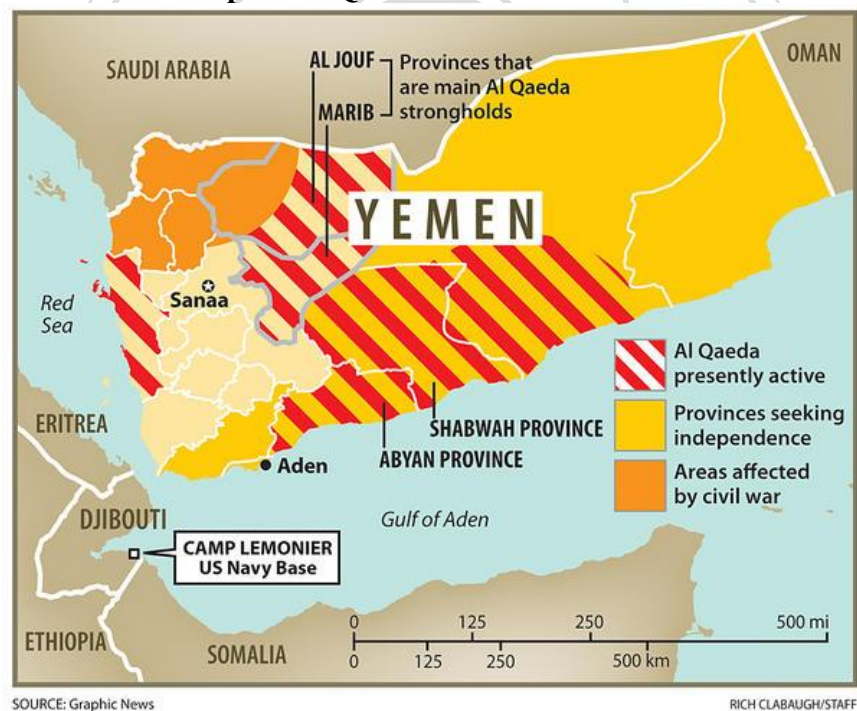
Graph 3.1: Relationship between Drone Strikes and Attacks in Pakistan



Chapter Four: Drones in Yemen

The following case study will evaluate whether or not the U.S. drone program in Yemen can lead to the elimination of al Qaeda, specifically AQAP, as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests. These drone strikes take place primarily in the central and southern provinces, where AQAP has the most influence and power (see May 4.1 below). In order to properly evaluate this particular case, the same four variables used in the previous chapter along with military coercion theory will be used.

Map 4.1: AQAP Influence in Yemen¹



¹ Stuart Munnich, "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Part 1," *NATO Association of Canada*, March 4, 2014, <http://natoassociation.ca/al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-aqap-part-1/>.

4.1 Military Coercion and Drones in Yemen

Before making a final judgment on the drone program in Yemen, it is important to evaluate the viability of strikes on a theoretical level. AQAP functions much like an insurgent guerrilla group due to its role in certain provinces of Yemen as well as in its fight against the national government. AQAP has become one of—if not the most—powerful branch of al Qaeda due to the way that it operates. Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle East, and AQAP takes advantage of that by functioning as a *de facto* local government in the poorest regions of the country. People in these provinces allow the organization to take power either out of desire or necessity—there simply is no other option available. “In parts of Abyan and Shabwa provinces, the organization controls towns in which it has established its own police departments and court systems. It is providing water, electricity and services to these towns. In short, AQAP now sees itself as the *de facto* government in the areas under its control.”² Also, AQAP not only offers much needed services, but it also does not strictly enforce religious laws like other branches of al Qaeda. It compromises on issues,³ which allows for an increase in power by not marginalizing the civilian populations or making enemies out of them. For these reasons, the fight against AQAP can be more easily compared to guerrilla warfare than the fight against al Qaeda in Pakistan.

Even though al Qaeda operates differently in Yemen than it does in Pakistan, the theory of military coercion still does not predict a successful outcome for U.S. drone strikes. Even though the U.S. has trained Yemen’s counterterrorism units,⁴ they were not strong enough to

² Peter Bergen and Jennifer Rowland, “Obama ramps up covert war in Yemen,” CNN.com, June 12, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/11/opinion/bergen-yemen-drone-war/>.

³ Ibrahim Mothana, “How Drones Help Al Qaeda,” *The New York Times*, June 13, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/14/opinion/how-drones-help-al-qaeda.html>.

⁴ Greg Miller and Craig Whitlock, “Yemen crisis disrupts U.S. counterterrorism operations, officials say,” *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-counterterrorism-operations-with-yemen-suspended-officials-say/2015/01/23/03bf8826-a337-11e4-903f-9f2faf7cd9fe_story.html.

push out the entrenched AQAP, especially when the instability and civil war are considered. They were trained for removing AQAP, and the war against the Houthis prevents them from carrying out their prime directive. They are not trained in conventional warfare.⁵ As argued in Chapter Three, air power alone cannot defeat an enemy, especially one that uses guerrilla tactics, and in the case of Yemen, AQAP serves in that capacity.

Guerrilla warfare, in contrast, aims to gain control over population, usually beginning with villages located in remote areas, and to use these as anchors to control still larger segments of the population and thus undermine support for the government. Guerrillas fight in small units dispersed over large areas with no well-defined front line. . . . The objective is gradually to wear down the opponent government's political authority and thus its ability to field military forces, rather than to destroy those forces in battle.⁶

AQAP fits this description quite well: it has taken control of remote villages and poor provinces all while providing much needed infrastructure and services. As discussed earlier, due to the technology of drones, al Qaeda members operate in small cells and blend in with the civilian population. All of these factors prevented and still prevent the U.S. from pushing AQAP out of the country.

The current situation in Yemen does not bode well for the success of the drone program. No matter the type of military coercion used by the U.S., it will almost certainly fail. "Guerrilla wars depend on the willingness of overlapping small groups to continue to resist central authorities . . . Guerrillas should be largely immune to coercion; coercers should expect to pay the full costs of military success to extract political concessions."⁷ AQAP has so far shown itself to be immune to U.S. coercion, and the U.S. does not appear willing to "pay the full costs of military success" in Yemen—that would force the U.S. to get more actively involved in the insurgency against the national government.

⁵ Miller and Whitlock, "Yemen crisis disrupts U.S. counterterrorism operations, officials say."

⁶ Pape, *Bombing to Win*, 30.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

4.2 U.S. Counterterrorism Goals and Drone Usage in Yemen

Even though the theory of military coercion predicts a failure in Yemen (at least until the national government regains control), it is both necessary and important to evaluate the drone program on a practical level by assessing the same four U.S. counterterrorism goals used in the previous chapter:

(1) disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents

The drone situation in Yemen is a stark contrast from that of Pakistan—it began in earnest much more recently and appears to have a much more limited scope. In Pakistan, drone strikes are entering their 13th year, while the program in Yemen has only existed for around eight years. Table 4.1 outlines the strike statistics in the country. From 2002 to 2015, between 901 and 1,159 people have died as a result of strikes in Yemen, of which 785 to 1,018 were militants and 87 to 93 were civilians (8.02% to 9.66% of all casualties). Only 138 strikes have occurred in Yemen (123 drone strikes and 15 airstrikes).⁸ Even though the U.S. uses the pattern of life/signature strike method of targeting in Yemen, the program is still limited in scope and seems to be more accurate in terms of killing militants over civilians. Only three years (2009, 2010, and 2013) have civilian casualty rates over 10%. Granted, in 2010, only 4 to 6 civilians were killed, which makes up over 66% of total casualties. In 2009 and 2013, a high number of civilians died, and in 2009, only 2 airstrikes (no drone strikes) were conducted causing the highest number of civilian casualties for the entire length of the program. All 41 civilians died in one airstrike. In 2002 and 2015, no civilians died from drone strikes, and in 2011, 2012, and 2014, the rate was below 10%. The overall civilian casualty rate for the drone program (8.02% to 9.66%) points to a more careful and restrained targeting process.

⁸ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis.”

Table 4.1: Yemen Drone Strike Statistics				
Year	Number of Drone Strikes	Number of Militants Killed*	Number of Civilians Killed	Civilian Casualty Rate**
2002	1	6	0	0%
2009	2 airstrikes	44 – 64	41	39.05% - 48.24%
2010	1	2	4 – 6	66.67% - 75.00%
2011	12, including 3 airstrikes	83 – 99	4	3.15% - 4.17%
2012	56, including 9 airstrikes	378 – 504	16	2.96% - 3.90%
2013	25, including 1 airstrike	91 – 115	17 – 21	15.00% - 15.18%
2014	17	90 – 137	5	3.52% - 5.23%
2015	24	91	0	0%
Total	138, including 15 airstrikes	785 – 1,018	87 – 93	8.02% - 9.66%
Source: New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis.”				

Even though the drone program in Yemen has a low civilian casualty rate, it still lacks in the necessary efficiency in killing intended targets. Since 2002, at least 35 HVTs have been killed in Yemen.⁹ U.S. strikes have killed between 901 and 1,159 total people; HVTs comprise only 3.02% to 3.88% of total casualties. These HVT deaths, although limited, counter decapitation theory because AQAP’s strength has not diminished. Table 4.2 below outlines some of the HVTs that drone strikes have killed in Yemen. It takes several strikes to successfully eliminate key militant leaders—causing more death and destruction than intended. Many HVTs in Yemen still elude U.S. targeting. At first glance, killing extra people in the pursuit of these HVTs might be looked at in a positive way, but the U.S. military and government constantly discuss the advanced technology and targeting systems of drones which

⁹ New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis.”

supposedly lead to efficient and concise strikes. This data shows a flaw somewhere with the “eye in the sky” – most likely intelligence, the key to any successful military operation.

Said al-Shihri	Samir Khan	Abdullah Bawazir	Ibrahim al-Rubeish
Fahd al-Quso	Ibrahim al-Banna	Saleh Mohammed al Ameri	Fahd Saleh al-Anjaf al-Harithi
Anwar al-Awlaki	Abdulrahman al-Wuhayshi	Moqbel Ebad Al Zawbah	Jallad
Nader Shadadi	Abdel-Munem al-Fatahani	Hadi Mohammad Ali	Saleh Hassan Huraydan
Abu Ayman al Masri	Abdulwahhab al-Homaiqani	Ali Saleh Tuaiman	Adnan al Qadhi
Shawki al-Badani	Nasser al-Thafri	Qasem Naser Tuaiman	Muhannad Ghallab
Ayed Jaber al-Shabwani	Khadim Usamah	Ahmed al-Ziadi	Nader al-Shaddadi
Qaed Salim Sunian al-Harithi	Mohammed Al-Umda	Hamid al Radmi	Qaid al-Dahab
Kamal Derwish	Fahed Salem al-Akdam	Khaled Batis	Hassan Ali al-Ishaqi
Saleh al-Qazimi	Kheldoan Al Sayed	Murad Ben Salem	Qaid Ahmad Nasser Al Dhahab

Source: Spencer Ackerman, “41 men targeted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes – the facts on the ground,” *The Guardian*, November 24, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/-sp-us-drone-strikes-kill-1147>, and New America Foundation, “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis.”

Also, the inefficiency at killing HVTs contradicts the very policies and guidelines that the Obama administration claims to follow before firing on a target. For any strike to be approved, it must meet at least three specific criteria:

First, there must be a legal basis for using lethal force, whether it is against a senior operational leader of a terrorist organization or the forces that organization is using or intends to use to conduct terrorist attacks.

Second, the United States will use lethal force only against a target that poses a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons. It is simply not the case that all terrorists pose a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons; if a terrorist does not pose such a threat, the United States will not use lethal force.

Third, the following criteria must be met before lethal action may be taken:

- 1) Near certainty that the terrorist target is present;

- 2) Near certainty that non-combatants will not be injured or killed;
- 3) An assessment that capture is not feasible at the time of the operation;
- 4) An assessment that the relevant governmental authorities in the country where action is contemplated cannot or will not effectively address the threat to U.S. persons; and
- 5) An assessment that no other reasonable alternatives exist to effectively address the threat to U.S. persons.¹⁰

Table 4.2's statistics go against all three of these guidelines. Granted, it is perfectly possible that in some of the strikes the target escaped with injuries, but not in all of them. Also, it is highly unlikely that capture is never a feasible option because drone strikes have become the only way in which the U.S. combats al Qaeda. In this sense, "feasible" has been replaced with "easy" or "safe." The extra deaths and strikes point to the fact that not every strike has the legal basis for the use of lethal force and not every casualty posed an imminent threat to the U.S.

Similar to U.S. drone strikes in Yemen, attacks conducted by AQAP and its affiliates seem limited in nature. Their numbers are nowhere near the number of attacks in Pakistan. Table 4.3 outlines the statistics of attacks in Yemen. Since drone strikes restarted in 2009, attacks in Yemen have increased in number and lethality. AQAP was also officially founded in 2009;¹¹ attacks rose steadily after its inception. While al Qaeda itself conducted very few attacks in Pakistan, and its affiliates carried out a large percentage of them, in Yemen, al Qaeda has very few surrogates acting on its behalf. The only affiliate that executed an attack was Takfir wal-Hijra (Excommunication and Exodus), which occurred in 2003. After 2003, only al Qaeda in Yemen (a predecessor of AQAP) and AQAP executed attacks.¹² These statistics point to a more centrally controlled organization in Yemen than in Pakistan. What comes first: drone strikes in

¹⁰ "U.S. Policy Standards and Procedures for the Use of Force in Counterterrorism Operations Outside the United States and Areas of Active Hostilities," *The United States Government*, May 23, 2013, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/2013.05.23_fact_sheet_on_ppg.pdf.

¹¹ Gabriel Koehler-Derrick, "A False Foundation? AQAP, Tribes and Ungoverned Spaces in Yemen," *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, September 2011.

¹² START, "Global Terrorism Database."

response to a greater perceived threat due to an increase in attacks or an increase in attacks in response to an increase in drone strikes? The two have a symbiotic relationship—one does not necessary come first or cause the other, but they do occur together in a fluid manner. Drone strikes would still occur without such attacks because al Qaeda has other ways of threatening the U.S. and its interests abroad, and these attacks would still occur without drone strikes because al Qaeda has more enemies than just the U.S. One thing is certain: both drone strikes and attacks are highest from 2012 to 2014. They both increased together during the same time period. The increase in the use of bombings and armed assaults over time suggests that AQAP’s newer members are more skilled, and the organization itself is better equipped to execute sophisticated attacks that require coordination. These numbers indicate an AQAP that flourishes in Yemen and has gained strength as the country’s infrastructure collapsed.

Table 4.3: Attacks in Yemen Conducted by AQAP or Affiliate from 2002 to 2014

Year	Suicide Attacks	Non-Suicide Attacks	Total Attacks	Casualties	Bombings	Armed Assaults	Other Types of Attacks
2002	0	4	4	0	3	0	1
2003	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
2004	No Attacks						
2005	0	1	1	12	0	1	0
2006	No Attacks						
2007	1	0	1	9	1	0	0
2008	1	7	8	20	7	1	0
2009	2	1	3	13	2	1	0
2010	7	39	46	178	17	16	13
2011	4	71	75	408	17	30	28
2012	19	93	112	420	52	33	27
2013	16	126	142	370	49	47	46
2014	35	246	281	865	99	86	96
Total	85	589	674	2296	247	215	212

Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database, 2013, retrieved from <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.

As has been discussed at length earlier, older terrorist organizations with community support and an ideological bent tend to survive decapitation attempts. Although AQAP was only formally established in 2009, it has many predecessor groups: Islamic Jihad in Yemen (1990—1994); Army of Aden Abyan (1994—1998); al Qaeda in Yemen (1998—2003); and Soldier’s Brigade Yemen (2006—2008).¹³ Despite its relative youth, AQAP holds historic roots in Yemen and retains the same backers giving it the capacity to survive decapitation strikes. Also, it is important to note that upon its founding in 2009, AQAP only had membership levels of 200 to 300 people, but the organization has since increased its numbers to about 1,000 members,¹⁴ possibly even up to “a few thousand.”¹⁵ Instead of crumbling under the threat of drone strikes, AQAP has increased its ranks exponentially giving it more manpower and skilled workers to conduct more effective attacks. Although the U.S. drone program in Yemen has a somewhat limited scope and despite the signature strike targeting method and impressively low civilian casualty rate, it still does not fulfill the goal of disrupting, degrading, dismantling, and defeating AQAP—the opposite may even be true with more deadly attacks and growing numbers.

(2) eliminate safe havens

The political climate in Yemen provides AQAP with the opportunity to expand its presence throughout the country. As mentioned earlier, in the southern and central provinces, AQAP acts as the local government by providing civilians with necessary social services that they otherwise would not receive because the central government simply does not have the ability to administer them due to widespread political and social unrest, and members have compromised on the normally stringent religious laws that al Qaeda enforces. These two things

¹³ Koehler-Derrick, “A False Foundation?”

¹⁴ CFR.org Staff, “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP),” *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 19, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap/p9369>.

¹⁵ Micah Zenko, “Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council Special Report No. 65, January 2013, 10.

have given AQAP an advantage in the poorest areas of Yemen. Many of the same factors (primarily the advancement of drone technology) that contribute to the elimination of safe havens in Pakistan also apply to Yemen, but this country has other factors that make it a unique case for the U.S. goal to eliminate safe havens.

The primary difference between Pakistan and Yemen's al Qaeda organizations is the ancestry of members. For the most part, in Pakistan, al Qaeda members come from other countries, but in Yemen, the members of AQAP are local Yemenis—making them directly part of the community.¹⁶ Members of AQAP are not foreign terrorists taking refuge from the U.S., but people whom these communities know personally. These ties give them an advantage that al Qaeda members in Pakistan, for the most part, do not have. Also, AQAP changed its model to better fit the sentiments of the people of Yemen. Normally, al Qaeda sets out to take control and conquer specific areas to push its agenda by force. However, in Yemen, AQAP seeks to integrate itself with local tribes and insurgency movements. By blending into an already existing mechanism, AQAP can gain the support of the population without oppression.¹⁷ The leadership understands that certain tribes and AQAP are fighting the same war against the central government. Furthermore, foreign members of AQAP marry into local Yemeni families and tribes to further increase the bond between the organization and the communities.¹⁸ No matter how many drone strikes target AQAP members who have integrated into the tribes, they will not be removed for the safety of others. When a civilian dies from a drone strike, it is AQAP, not the U.S. or Yemeni government, which gives family members compensation and aid: “Al Qaeda

¹⁶ Gregory D. Johnsen, “How We Lost Yemen,” *Foreign Policy*, August 6, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/06/how-we-lost-yemen/>.

¹⁷ Christopher Swift, “The Crisis in Yemen: al-Qaeda, Saleh, and Governmental Instability,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, July 2012, <http://www.fpri.org/article/2012/07/the-crisis-in-yemen-al-qaeda-saleh-and-governmental-instability/>.

¹⁸ Christopher Swift, “To Defeat Al-Qaeda, Win in Yemen,” *Bloomberg*, June 21, 2012, <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2012-06-21/to-defeat-al-qaeda-win-in-yemen>.

always gives money to the family . . . Al Qaeda's leaders may be killed by drones, but the group still has its money, and people are still joining. For young men who are poor, the incentives are very strong: they offer you marriage, or money, and the ideological part works for some people."¹⁹ These members are one with the community, and the U.S. becomes an even greater enemy for attacking a local.

The way in which the U.S. kills civilians and militants angers everyone in these areas which creates even more hostility. The death of a foreign terrorist in Pakistan did not really cause much anger to the local civilians in the FATA—their anger came from the rampant civilian casualties. In Yemen, due to the strong ties between AQAP and the tribes, the death of anyone—civilian or militant—causes anger. Moreover, these tribes have a custom called *thar*: revenge.²⁰ The tribal areas of Yemen are governed by rules and customs that help to settle all sorts of disputes, and revenge killings play an important part in this culture.²¹ If someone—anyone—dies from a strike, then the family is required to find a way to settle the dispute. This duty normally takes the form of supporting or joining AQAP. The problem is further intensified by AQAP's roots. Families of both civilian and militant casualties abide by this code of revenge creating even more terrorists and drone targets. A former soldier fighting against the militants in the Abyan Province left his post after his nephew (a civilian) died in a drone strike. This man says that while he does not fight with AQAP, he does support the group now out of hatred for the U.S.²² The U.S. alienated and created an enemy out of someone fighting against AQAP because

¹⁹ Robert F. Worth, Mark Mazzetti, and Scott Shane, "Drone Strikes' Risks to Get Rare Moment in the Public Eye," *The New York Times*, February 5, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/06/world/middleeast/with-brennan-pick-a-light-on-drone-strikes-hazards.html>.

²⁰ Johnsen, "How We Lost Yemen."

²¹ Nadwa Al-Dawsari, "Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 2012, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/24/tribal-governance-and-stability-in-yemen>.

²² Sudarsan Raghavan, "In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda," *The Washington Post*, May 29, 2012, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/in-yemen-us-airstrikes-breed-anger-and-sympathy-for-al-qaeda/2012/05/29/gJQAUmKI0U_story.html.

a drone strike killed an innocent civilian. This custom of *thar* runs deep within this society: “Each time they kill a tribesman, they create more fighters for Al Qaeda. . . . I would not be surprised if a hundred tribesmen joined Al Qaeda as a result of the latest drone mistake.”²³ There are countless stories about innocent people dying as a result of drone strikes—no wonder the U.S. government estimates an increase in membership to about 1,000 militants.²⁴ Former CIA station chief Robert Grenier warned about the disastrous effects of the drone program in Yemen: “That brings you to a place where young men, who are typically armed, are in the same area and may hold these militants in a certain form of high regard. If you strike them indiscriminately you are running the risk of creating a terrific amount of popular anger. They have tribes and clans and large families. Now all of a sudden you have a big problem. . . . I am very concerned about the creation of a larger terrorist safe haven in Yemen.”²⁵ Grenier believes that it has the potential to be “the Arabian equivalent of Waziristan.”²⁶ Although drone technology allows for greater loitering times, nearly every person killed in Yemen has a local connection. The vastly integrated and capable AQAP and the Yemeni custom of *thar* have allowed for an expansion of safe havens in Yemen, not their elimination.

(3) build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities

While the other three goals have both positive aspects and negative aspects to consider, the goal of building enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities in Yemen has only negatives due to the current crisis in Yemen as well as the apparent targeting of important tribal mediators. The situation in Yemen has deteriorated so substantially over the past two years that the U.S., other countries, and international organizations have ended or paused meaningful

²³ Raghavan, “In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda.”

²⁴ CFR.org Staff, “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).”

²⁵ Paul Harris, “Drone attacks create terrorist safe havens, warns former CIA official,” *The Guardian*, June 5, 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/05/al-qaida-drone-attacks-too-broad>.

²⁶ Mothana, “How Drones Help Al Qaeda.”

relations with Yemen. Before the crisis, the U.S. worked very closely with President Ali Abdullah Saleh to develop Yemen's counterterrorism capabilities. From 2007 to 2012, the U.S. gave over \$300 million to Yemen in various forms of aid. The U.S. trained and equipped special counterterrorism units, but once the political crisis intensified, these units were wasted by performing tasks that they were not trained for.²⁷ There was a great possibility for success by combining U.S. drone strikes with Yemen's counterterrorism units (testing the theory of military coercion's viability in a non-traditional war setting), but the violence and corruption across Yemen prevented those developments. Now, there are no partnerships or capabilities possible during the current national crisis. Its internationally recognized president lives in Saudi Arabia in exile due to the military victories and strength of the rebel Houthi group, which captured Sanaa, the capitol of Yemen, in September 2014.²⁸ Although the Houthis control the capitol, they do not control the entire country because there are so many competing groups: various tribes, AQAP, Houthis, insurgent secessionists in the south, and loyalists of former President Saleh. Each of these groups has their own agenda and desires, and several attempts at peace deals have failed as a result.²⁹ The U.S., Iran, and Saudi Arabia have their own plans for the country, which even further complicates matters.

Pertinent indicators show how dire the situation in Yemen truly is: the poverty rate in 2012 was 54.5%.³⁰ Since March 2015, over 3,000 people have died from this crisis, and in July 2015, the U.N. declared a "level 3" emergency response—the highest possible designation for a humanitarian crisis—for six months. The reasoning behind this designation is that four in five

²⁷ Leila Hudson, Colin S. Owens, and David J. Callen, "Drone Warfare in Yemen: Fostering Emirates through Counterterrorism?," *Middle East Policy Council*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Fall 2012).

²⁸ Zachary Laub, "Yemen in Crisis," *Council on Foreign Relations*, July 8, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488/>.

²⁹ CFR.org Staff, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)."

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Yemeni people need some sort of humanitarian relief; 13 million live in a state of food insecurity; 9.4 million have experienced water disruptions; and 160 hospitals/clinics have closed.³¹ Essentially, every area needed for basic survival is in dire need of repair, but the war prevents organizations from properly intervening due to safety concerns. In February 2015, the U.S. closed its embassy, and counterterrorism cooperation has been limited.³² In March 2015, the World Bank closed its office because it could no longer guarantee employee safety or manage its projects.³³ Finally, in 2014, Yemen scored 21 out of 25 on the Center for Systemic Peace's "Fragility Index" only behind North and South Sudans, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and it was labelled as a "State Failure" for Regime Type.³⁴ The situation in Yemen has only worsened since 2014. The country lacks basic government functions and social services, which gives groups like AQAP the ability to fill that hole.

The other area in which the U.S. has failed to build partnerships and capabilities in Yemen is by killing key mediators between AQAP and the national government. In order for any peace or cease-fire to occur, the two sides in need to be able to trust each other—or at a more basic level, find a person whom both sides respect. In two high profile cases, U.S. drone strikes killed important mediators. In May 2010, a U.S. drone strike killed Jabir Shabwani, Mareb's deputy governor, along with five others. He was meeting with AQAP members to negotiate surrender.³⁵ He could have successfully convinced several members of AQAP to drop their arms

³¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Yemen: highest emergency response level declared for six months," *UN OCHA*, July 1, 2015, <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/yemen-highest-emergency-response-level-declared-six-months>.

³² Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, February 11, 2015, 6-7.

³³ "World Bank Suspends Operations in Yemen," *The World Bank*, March 11, 2015,

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/03/11/world-bank-suspends-operations-in-yemen>.

³⁴ Monty G. Marshall and Benjamin R. Cole, "Table 1: State Fragility Index and Matrix 2014," *Center for Systemic Peace*, 2014, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/SFImatrix2014c.pdf>.

³⁵ "Air strike kills Yemen mediator," *Reuters-Thompson*, May 26, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-idUSLDE64O0DF20100526>.

and stop the fighting, but instead, he died in a drone strike. His death sparked controversy both in Yemen and the U.S. because there are claims that the Yemeni government purposefully gave the U.S. bad intelligence in order to eliminate Shabwani, a potential threat to Saleh's regime. Saleh's administration denied all claims by stating that they did not know of Shabwani's meeting with the AQAP members. However, family members claim that Saleh's government sent him to negotiate and that there was an intelligence officer present at the meeting. Apparently, Shabwani's family, normally close to Saleh, had a dispute with Saleh over government matters shortly before the drone strike.³⁶ Whether the conspiracy is true or not, it demonstrates a lack of trust that the U.S. had for Saleh. No matter, Shabwani had ties to tribes in an important province in central Yemen, and he died from a drone strike while working to achieve U.S. counterterrorism goals. Also, in August 2012, a drone strike killed respected Islamic cleric Salim bin Ali Jaber, who frequently preached against AQAP and its mission. He was speaking with AQAP members when a drone strike killed everyone in the group (3 militants, Jaber, and a police officer). Jaber's brother-in-law pleaded with him not to meet the men, but he replied, "If we all keep silent, then who will speak out? If we keep silent, these people will destroy the country."³⁷ The U.S. needs men like Jaber to gain the trust of the tribes in the affected areas. He preached to his village a different, less violent interpretation of Islam by arguing that the violence that AQAP represents will do more harm than good for the country and faith. Was killing someone this respected and revered in the community worth killing three low level militants? These two examples demonstrate that strikes not only kill innocent and important people, but also that the U.S. views the short term effects (killing militants) as more important

³⁶ Adam Entous, Julian E. Barnes, and Margaret Coker, "U.S. Doubts Intelligence That Led to Yemen Strike," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 2011, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203899504577126883574284126>.

³⁷ "Between a Drone and Al-Qaeda: The Civilian Cost of US Targeted Killings in Yemen," *Human Rights Watch*, 2013, 59-65.

than the long term effects (working with these mediators to stop AQAP peacefully). Due to the current political, social, and economic crisis as well as the U.S. killing of key mediators and figures with anti-AQAP sentiments, the U.S. fails to meet the counterterrorism goal of building enduring partnerships and capabilities.

(4) counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits

This particular variable deals with the composite effects of the other three: every part of the drone program in Yemen plays a role in AQAP's ideology. Due to the state of unrest, there are no in-depth studies on Yemeni public opinion on drone strikes. As argued in the "eliminate safe havens" section, all casualties resonate with the civilian population. AQAP uses these deaths to rally the people to its side and against the U.S. Civilian deaths are the best propaganda tool that AQAP has at its disposal. "These attacks are making people say, 'We believe now that al-Qaeda is on the right side.'"³⁸ For people whose only experience with the U.S. is the death of a family member or friend from a drone strike, what other response is to be expected? AQAP gives money or support and promises to avenge these deaths, so naturally, people are attracted to this message.³⁹ With the national government (when it was in power) either turning a blind eye or openly accepting U.S. drone strikes, AQAP exploits the opening to gain more supporters. Also, AQAP has adapted its ideology to better fit the circumstances to attract more recruits. In Pakistan, al Qaeda members are mostly foreigners, so leadership could not develop a localized message. However, in Yemen, because most members are locals, AQAP pushes the idea of a national struggle over global jihad. By framing their message as a desire to liberate Yemen from

³⁸ Raghavan, "In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda."

³⁹ Ibid.

those in control, AQAP has benefited from this more attractive message with more recruits.⁴⁰

AQAP even has two publications for its members and potential members: *Sada al-Malahim* for the people of Yemen and *Inspire* for English speakers.⁴¹ This type of ideological twist is difficult to counter because the more that the U.S. attempts to get involved in Yemen, the more resonance AQAP's ideology has. The organization can and has easily portrayed the U.S. as the true terrorist because its bombs indiscriminately kill people in their homes, in their cars, and on their land. Evidence consistently points to the radicalization of the civilian population, specifically in the tribal areas, and the AQAP leaders become viewed as martyrs or heroes when they die in a strike.⁴² When Yemeni activist Farea al-Muslimi testified in front of U.S. Congress, he discussed the negative effects of drone strikes in his country. This man, from a remote part of Yemen where drone strikes have occurred, believes that they prevent any goodwill between the U.S. and civilians. The victims desire revenge and look to AQAP for help. In his testimony, he said,

In the past, what Wessab's villagers knew of the U.S. was based on my stories about my wonderful experiences here. The friendships and values I experienced and described to the villagers helped them understand the America that I know and love. Now, however, when they think of America they think of the terror they feel from the drones that hover over their heads ready to fire missiles at any time. What violent militants had previously failed to achieve, one drone strike accomplished in an instant: there is now an intense anger against America in Wessab.⁴³

Without a capable national government in place, U.S. drone strikes are now the only available option for eliminating the AQAP threat, and hatred for the U.S. will spread along with AQAP's ideology.

⁴⁰ Christopher Swift, "Arc of Convergence: AQAP, Ansar al-Shari'a and the Struggle for Yemen," *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, June 21, 2012.

⁴¹ CFR.org Staff, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)."

⁴² Raghavan, "In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda."

⁴³ Farea al-Muslimi, "In Senate Testimony, Yemeni Activist Describes Human Costs of Targeted Killing Program," *American Civil Liberties Union*, April 24, 2013, <https://www.aclu.org/blog/senate-testimony-yemeni-activist-describes-human-costs-targeted-killing-program>.

The few public opinion polls available in Yemen demonstrate an overall negative attitude or ambivalence towards the U.S. In 2007, 73.5% of respondents (12,000 total residences questioned) agreed that “The United States’ interference in the region justifies armed operations against the United States everywhere.” In 2011, 13.2% “strongly agreed,” and 24.8% “agreed” with the same statement. In 2013, 14.4% “strongly agreed,” and 17.3% “agreed” with that statement⁴⁴—quite a large shift from 2007 to 2013. Also, in 2013, 47.1% of residences answered that “the most positive policy that the US can follow in our region” was “the US shouldn’t interfere.”⁴⁵ These responses demonstrate a change in attitude about the U.S. from almost entirely negative to a kind of ambivalence where the U.S. should not have a role in Middle Eastern affairs.

Despite what the public opinion polls show and what AQAP preaches, one study, conducted by Christopher Swift, points to another reason for AQAP’s success: the poor economic situation. He interviewed 40 tribal leaders (old, religiously conservative men from rural areas) from 14 provinces. Only five believe that drone strikes help AQAP more than they hurt the organization. The other 35 argue that the dire economy of Yemen helps AQAP attract new members: “It gives teenagers cars, khat, and rifles – the symbols of Yemeni manhood. It pays salaries (up to \$400 per month) that lift families out of poverty. It supports weak and marginalized sheikhs by digging wells, distributing patronage to tribesmen, and punishing local criminals. As the leader of one Yemeni tribal confederation told me, ‘Al Qaeda attracts those who can’t afford to turn away.’”⁴⁶ Religious beliefs play a small role in the grand scheme of AQAP recruitment. The tribal leaders claim that people now understand how much damage drone strikes do to AQAP and that as long as no civilians die, most people are pro-drone. The

⁴⁴ “Online Data Analysis,” *Arab Barometer*, 2013, <http://www.arabbarometer.org/content/online-data-analysis>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Swift, “The Drone Blowback Fallacy.”

greatest complaint about drone strikes is that Yemen does not have the ability to fight AQAP on its own. A member of the Muslim Brotherhood said, “No one resents a drone strike if the target was a terrorist. . . . What we resent is the fact that outsiders are involved. . . . The problem is not killing people like [Anwar] al-Awlaki. . . . The problem is when the U.S. ambassador goes on television and takes credit for it.”⁴⁷ This particular message is a part of what AQAP preaches: U.S. violation of Yemeni sovereignty as a Western aggressor. The difference between AQAP and these tribal leaders is that the tribal leaders understand the damage that AQAP does to Yemen’s economy and people as well as the Muslim faith. Even if there is truly a change in public opinion about the efficacy of drone strikes in Yemen, the U.S. can do very little right now to successfully counter al Qaeda’s ideology and resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. Doing such a thing would require a functioning national government and a safe environment for international aid workers to help those in need. If eliminating rampant poverty in Yemen is the key to meeting this counterterrorism goal, then the U.S. has a long way to go before achieving it.

4.3 Evaluation of U.S. Drone Program in Yemen

Before the recent crisis and state failure of Yemen, the country had an opportunity to test the theory of military coercion and potentially eliminate AQAP as a major threat to U.S. national security and interests. That test never materialized because the national government collapsed as a result of the Houthi rebellion. Now, other than resistance efforts by a small coalition of Arab nations, some tribes, and the Houthis, AQAP has very little in its way from gaining more power and territory in Yemen. The drone program in Yemen does not meet any of the four counterterrorism goals evaluated in this study: (1) disrupt, degrade, dismantle, and defeat al

⁴⁷ Swift, “The Drone Blowback Fallacy.”

Qaeda and its affiliates and adherents, (2) eliminate safe havens, (3) build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities, and (4) counter al Qaeda ideology and its resonance and diminish the specific drivers of violence that al Qaeda exploits. Graph 4.1 shows that drone strikes have not prevented suicide and non-attacks attacks from increasing over time. After the change from decapitation strikes to signature strikes in 2009, attacks have increased in number significantly. The situation in Yemen is worse than the one in Pakistan due to the civil unrest and failure of the national government. Drone strikes have killed many militants, but civilian deaths, AQAP members' local ties, and targeting inefficiency when it comes to HVTs prevent any overall gains. These same factors feed into the Yemeni custom of revenge creating even more safe havens for AQAP. The unsafe situation in Yemen caused by the civil war prevents the U.S. from developing any worthwhile counterterrorism partnerships.

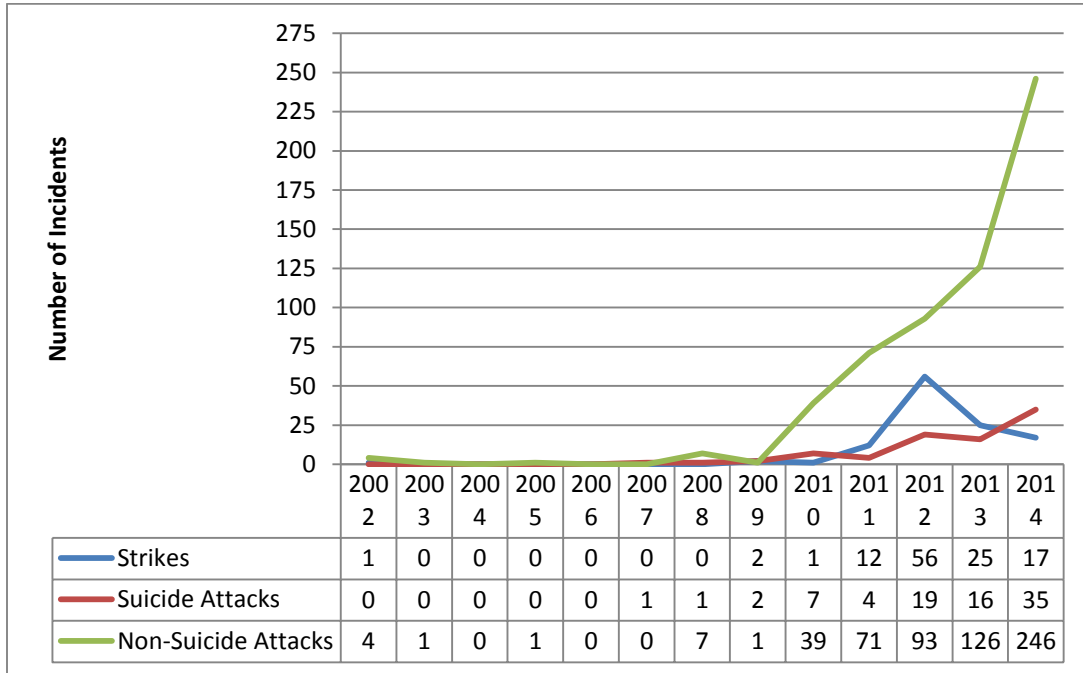
AQAP has grown and thrived in this atmosphere—empowered by the country's disarray and the brewing hatred of the U.S. This al Qaeda branch pushed aside the normal operating procedures of conquering territory and preaching a global jihad; AQAP localized the struggle by aligning with tribal leaders, setting up and delivering social services, and preaching a nation-centric message. For these reasons, AQAP is the most dangerous branch of al Qaeda in the world. Some of its members are even U.S. citizens with the ability to travel back to the U.S. to attempt attacks like the infamous “underwear bomber.”⁴⁸ AQAP leader Anwar al-Awlaki and his son were also American citizens, and both of them died in drone strikes in 2011.⁴⁹ The organization has grown exponentially since its creation in 2009, partially fueled by anger from drone strikes. If al Qaeda expands this localization model to other countries, then its message will only to continue to spread. The U.S. should freeze its drone program in Yemen until a new

⁴⁸ Sudarsan Raghavan, “Investigators scrutinize Yemeni American cleric’s ties to plane suspect,” *The Washington Post*, January 1, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/31/AR2009123101524.html>.

⁴⁹ Raghavan, “In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda.”

functioning and capable government forms because drone strikes alone will do more harm than good in a country that cannot afford any more instability.

Graph 4.1: Relationship between Strikes and Attacks in Yemen



Chapter Five: Conclusion

The U.S. has engaged in drone warfare since 2002, and with the current geo-political situation in the Middle East and South Asia, it will most likely continue indefinitely. If the U.S. manages to successfully eliminate al Qaeda or one of its affiliates, then that absence creates a new opportunity for another organization to grow and flourish. Drone warfare is equivalent to applying a small bandage to a serious wound: its ability to solve the problem is very limited in scope, and the problem will only continue unless something more is done to fix it. If drone strikes are ever successful in one particular region, al Qaeda, or any terrorist organization for that matter, will simply re-emerge elsewhere where its ideology can take root and spread. Air power alone cannot solve the problem of terrorism, so the U.S. must reform its counterterrorism policies and strategy in order to truly have an impact in the never-ending War on Terrorism.

5.1 Recommendations for U.S. Drone Programs

This study concludes that the current tactical use of unmanned aerial vehicles by the U.S. in Pakistan and Yemen cannot defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates largely because these drone programs do not successfully meet any of the counterterrorism goals espoused by the Obama administration in 2011. Because drone warfare does not achieve any of these goals, al Qaeda and its affiliates remain a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests. They do not prevent the organization from orchestrating large scale attacks, and they do not prevent it from controlling large swaths of territory. Suicide attacks, such as the one that occurred in Lahore, Pakistan on March 27, 2016 conducted by Jamaat-ul Ahrar (an al Qaeda affiliate),¹ demonstrate that drone strikes in Pakistan do not weaken al Qaeda and its affiliates. The opposite may even

¹ "Lahore attack: Pakistan PM Sharif demands swift action on terror," *BBC News*, March 28, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35910124>.

be true in regards to controlling territory and gaining sympathy from the local populations due to the tribal traditions of the FATA and Yemen. In 2014, al Qaeda had control of more territory in the Middle East and South Asia than ever before in its history (about 400 miles).² In early 2016, Afghan officials warned that al Qaeda re-emerged as a major threat to the country's security: "They are really very active. They are working in quiet and reorganizing themselves and preparing themselves for bigger attacks. . . They are working behind other networks, giving them support and the experience they had in different places. And double their resources and recruitment and other things. That is how -- they are not talking too much. They are not making press statements. It is a big threat."³ Although this warning comes from Afghanistan not Pakistan, the open border between western Afghanistan and Pakistan's FATA allows for easy movement between the two. It is entirely possible that the drone program in Pakistan succeeded in pushing al Qaeda back into Afghanistan because this reemergence has close ties to an al Qaeda branch known as al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent. Table 5.1 summarizes the final conclusions for the four counterterrorism goals evaluated in this study.

<i>Counterterrorism Goals</i>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>Yemen</i>
Disrupt, Degrade, Dismantle, and Defeat al Qaeda and its Affiliates and Adherents	X	X
Eliminate Safe Havens	?	X
Build Enduring Counterterrorism Partnerships and Capabilities	X	X
Counter al Qaeda ideology and Its Resonance and Diminish the Specific Drivers of violence that al Qaeda Exploits	X → √	X
Source: Barack Obama, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," June 2011, 8-10; evaluated by author		

² Peter Bergen and Jennifer Rowland, "Al Qaeda controls more territory than ever in Middle East," *CNN.com*, January 8, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/01/07/opinion/bergen-al-qaeda-terrority-gains/>.

³ Nick Paton Walsh, "Al Qaeda 'very active' in Afghanistan: U.S. Commander," *CNN.com*, April 13, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/13/middleeast/afghanistan-al-qaeda/>.

These conclusions point to the inability of drone strikes to meet their desired goals. The civil war in Yemen and the local ties of AQAP members make the situation in Yemen much worse than the one in Pakistan. Pakistan has a functioning government and military, which increases any chance of success to defeat al Qaeda. The Pakistan drone program has room for growth with increased cooperation between governments and the further development of the Pakistani military, while no growth or success is possible in Yemen given its current circumstances. Instead of meeting the above goals, drone strikes fuel al Qaeda by increasing local sympathies and by continuing to provide examples of U.S. imperialism. These strikes prove to the local populations that their governments either cannot fight al Qaeda on their own or they have no interest in doing so. Either option does not bode well for building enduring counterterrorism partnerships with Yemen and Pakistan.

In November 2015, four former drone pilots wrote an open letter to President Obama, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, and CIA Director John Brennan decrying U.S. drone programs throughout the world. Their letter discusses the negative effects that such strikes have on communities and on the drone pilots themselves:

We are former Air Force service members. We joined the Air Force to protect American lives and to protect our Constitution. We came to the realization that the innocent civilians we were killing only fueled the feelings of hatred that ignited terrorism and groups like ISIS, while also serving as a fundamental recruitment tool similar to Guantanamo Bay. This administration and its predecessors have built a drone program that is one of the most devastating driving forces for terrorism and destabilization around the world.

When the guilt of our roles in facilitating this systematic loss of innocent life became too much, all of us succumbed to PTSD. We were cut loose by the same government we gave so much to – sent out in the world without adequate medical care, reliable public health services, or necessary benefits. Some of us are now homeless. Others of us barely make it.

We witnessed gross waste, mismanagement, abuses of power, and our country's leaders lying publicly about the effectiveness of the drone program. We cannot sit silently by and witness tragedies like the attacks in Paris, knowing the devastating effects that the drone program has overseas and at home. Such silence would violate the very oaths we took to support and defend the Constitution.⁴

These men witnessed the effects of the drone program on the world. It even broaches a topic rarely discussed due to the secrecy of the program: the mental state of the drone pilots. This letter contains elements that directly contradict the U.S. Counterterrorism Overarching Goals that this study focuses on. The lives of these men are forever damaged by the actions of this program. Moreover, retired U.S. General Stanley McChrystal made a similar argument in 2013: "What scares me about drone strikes is how they are perceived around the world. . . . The resentment created by *American* use of unmanned strikes . . . is much greater than the average American appreciates. They are hated on a visceral level, even by people who've never seen one or seen the effects of one."⁵ As evidence in this study has shown, local populations are not in favor of foreign (re: American) drone strikes in their own country. It demonstrates a fundamental lack of resources or ability on the part of their governments. These governments cannot do anything to stop the U.S. from conducting drone strikes. The use of drones by the U.S. has a much larger ripple than it is willing to admit either in public or private.

Despite the problems and failures of the drone programs in Yemen and Pakistan, they can be fixed by going back to the root of the desired counterterrorism goals and by following the theory of the military coercion. The way in which the current drone programs operate favors short term successes and goals over long term ones. In some respects, drone strikes actually act *against* U.S. counterterrorism goals. Killing one HVT is viewed more highly than letting him

⁴ Brandon Bryant, Cian Westmoreland, Stephen Lewis, Michael Haas, "Letter to President Barak Obama," 2015, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2515596/final-drone-letter.pdf>.

⁵ David Alexander, "Retired general cautions against overuse of 'hated' drones," *Reuters-Thompson*, January 7, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-mcchrystal-idUSBRE90608O20130107>. [*italics added*]

live to avoid killing civilians. In Pakistan, 4.39 to 5.43 civilians died for every HVT killed from 2004 to 2015. In Yemen, 2.49 to 2.66 civilians died for every HVT killed from 2002 to 2015. These ratios do not favor long term goals of winning over civilians. Therefore, this study recommends the following policy and tactical changes to the U.S. programs in Pakistan and Yemen.

Overall Recommendations:

1. *Adopt greater transparency with drone strikes conducted in any country by taking responsibility for civilian casualties and by releasing pertinent documents*

Greater transparency by releasing documents that outline targeting procedures, the decision-making process, and casualty numbers would demonstrate to the public that the military and government is fixing the weaker areas of the program. Admitting that mistakes have occurred, which President Obama did in April 2016 when he said, “[The drone program] wasn’t as precise as it should have been, and there’s no doubt civilians were killed that shouldn’t have been. . . . We have to take responsibility where we’re not acting appropriately, or just made mistakes,”⁶ is the first step towards reforming a flawed tactic.

2. *Re-evaluate 2011 counterterrorism goals and the role that drones can play in fulfilling them*

This study finds that the drone programs fail to achieve these counterterrorism goals. Their broad language and vague terminology make them almost impossible to achieve. Creating succinct, achievable goals, no matter how basic, will make fighting the War on Terrorism easier for all government agencies and military branches. As George Orwell warned, these objectives lose their worth when language becomes meaningless: “The inflated style itself is a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outline and

⁶ Nicole Gaouette, “Obama: ‘No doubt’ U.S. drones have killed civilians,” *CNN.com*, April 2, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/01/politics/obama-isis-drone-strikes-iran/>.

covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish spurting out ink."⁷ There is clearly a gap between "real" and "declared" counterterrorism goals, and the U.S. government must rectify them to make future goals achievable.

3. *Allow "host countries" to play a greater role in the fight against al Qaeda*

Several sources have pointed out that one of the biggest problems with drone strikes is that the U.S. conducts them, not the targeted country. The U.S. needs to take a step back and make these countries work out some of their internal problems on their own. Getting involved only provides al Qaeda with another recruitment tool.

4. *Create a new restricted targeting tactic that limits the number of strikes in order to lessen civilian casualties*

Less is more when it comes to drone strikes. Limiting the appropriate targets to HVTs will reduce civilian casualties, but it will not lead to al Qaeda's demise. When comparing Yemen to Pakistan, it becomes clear that fewer drone strikes causes fewer civilian casualties. The only instances in which drone strikes should be conducted in large numbers are before ground troops enter the area. The decapitation and pattern of life tactics have not worked, so the U.S. government must develop a new targeting method.

⁷ George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," 1946, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm>.

Case Specific Recommendations:

- 1. Abide by the theory of military coercion and the hammer and anvil tactic by integrating air and land power, where Pakistan plays a greater and more direct role*

The U.S. cannot defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan without the direct involvement of the Pakistani government and military. Currently, Pakistan takes a backseat in its own affairs when it comes to fighting al Qaeda. To achieve this objective, the U.S. must better train and equip Pakistani forces. It must take ownership of the fact that a terrorist organization has taken root within its borders. In the short term, U.S. drones should receive intelligence and support from local Pakistani forces, and in the long term, Pakistan should conduct its own drone strikes.

- 2. Repair damaged relations with FATA tribes by making peace with militant tribes and by emphasizing the innocent victims that al Qaeda kills in-country*

Perhaps the greatest deterrent against al Qaeda in Pakistan is the local tribes themselves. If they resist al Qaeda and do not grant them safe haven, then members will have to move elsewhere. The Pakistani government does not have the best relationship with tribes in this area, but there is room for both of them to work together against al Qaeda.

- 3. Stop all drone strikes until civil unrest in Yemen ends and a functioning government forms*

The hammer and anvil tactic cannot work without a government and military to provide the land support for the drones. Yemen is currently a failed state, and the first priority for the U.S. should be to end the civil war and create a government that works for all of the factions within the country. Al Qaeda feeds off of this unrest by providing social services and stability. Drone strikes will do nothing but make the problem worse. Nothing is more important for Yemen right now than ending the bloodshed, and no further recommendations should be made until the unrest is resolved.

Following these recommendations will help to reform the tactical use of unmanned aerial vehicles and lead to the eventual defeat of al Qaeda and its affiliates in Pakistan and Yemen.

5.2 Policy Implications

The best change for the drone programs in Yemen and Pakistan would be for the U.S. to adopt a more comprehensive strategy to eliminate al Qaeda that does not rely solely on the use of drone strikes. Air power alone has never won a war, and this study concludes the same thing that history has demonstrated time and time again. Drones cannot defeat al Qaeda. However, such a change is simply not possible with the current state of affairs in either location as well as the fact that drones provide the safest possible fighting option for the military. Pilots are never in any physical danger when piloting a drone remotely, and for this particular reason, the U.S. government prefers to use drones instead of putting pilots or ground troops in danger—even if they do not achieve counterterrorism goals. Until the situation in Yemen improves, the hammer and anvil tactic cannot be used, and until the Pakistani government improves relations/makes peace with the tribes in the FATA, the hammer and anvil tactic cannot be used. This unfortunate reality relates to the failure to build enduring counterterrorism partnerships and capabilities with these countries. To truly fix the al Qaeda problem and eliminate it as a serious threat to U.S. national security and interests, the U.S. must work towards state building in Yemen and Pakistan. The solution requires a long term investment in these countries. As Christopher Swift's field research in Yemen demonstrates, al Qaeda feeds off of the poverty and instability of Yemen.⁸ Conducting drone strikes can do nothing to eliminate poverty or make a country more stable.

The way in which the U.S. has conducted its tactical use of drones not only in Yemen and Pakistan, but also in Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq will shape how other countries use

⁸ Swift, "The Drone Blowback Fallacy."

drones in future conflicts and wars. As it currently stands, there are no international norms or guidelines specifically dealing with drone usage. Each country has the ability to create its own manual for drone use and warfare as long as it abides by the normal laws of war. The precedent that the U.S. has set for others is unsettling—no transparency, virtually complete denial of existence, inefficient targeting methods, borderless warfare. In the future, other countries with different interests and objectives than the U.S. could use drones to fulfill their desires all while using them in the same way that the U.S. has used drones in the Middle East and South Asia. “To some extent, this world is already being ushered in by the United States, which has set a dangerous precedent that a state may simply kill foreign citizens considered a threat without a declaration of war. . . . Given this precedent, there is nothing to stop other states from following the American lead and using drone strikes to eliminate potential threats.”⁹ This dangerous game will, without a doubt, escalate due to the U.S. *carte blanche* use of drones. Notwithstanding, the U.S. has shaped the future of warfare in its failed attempt to defeat al Qaeda and its affiliates in the region by only using unmanned aerial vehicles.

5.3 Further Research Suggestions

Although this study’s scope only addresses whether or not drone strikes can defeat al Qaeda by achieving U.S. counterterrorism goals, several new topics arose in the discussion that should be explored further in other studies. The role of traditional customs and revenge in the tribal areas of Yemen and Pakistan play a key role in creating more enemies for the U.S. However, no comprehensive studies have yet to be conducted on this link. Christopher Swift’s field research in Yemen is the best information available to date, but he only interviewed 40 men of very similar backgrounds. Such a study would be difficult and dangerous to conduct because

⁹ Boyle, “The costs and consequences of drone warfare,” 25.

it would require interviewing drone strike victims' families as well as members of al Qaeda or one of its affiliates. Despite these obstacles, it would benefit the conversation about the effect of drone strikes on these communities and overall U.S. strategy. Limited personal interviews and general customs point to a link between an increase in recruitment and drone strikes, but something more complete is needed. Also, the role of state-building in the prevention of terrorism (i.e. policies other than drone strikes) must be further explored. Current U.S. counterterrorism strategy favors short term, cheap successes over long term, meaningful development. Drone strikes will never defeat terrorism or al Qaeda, but could elevating the quality of life and standard of living in these countries make a difference? Would it take away from al Qaeda's message or ideology? Further exploration into other areas, like state building, is necessary to develop a better counterterrorism strategy.

Finally, because the U.S. keeps its drone program under wraps and rarely ever releases any information to the public, there is no research conducted on the mental state or capabilities of drone pilots. The authors of the letter cited in this study risked imprisonment by writing about the drone program so openly. Their criticisms, if true, bring a troubling reality to light: pilots are not trained properly, superiors encourage killing targets for the sake of revenge, and the military does not provide suitable care for the pilots. Receiving permission to interview and evaluate these pilots would be extremely difficult, but if the U.S. wishes to improve its drone program, then it is a necessity. These are only a few topics that were briefly mentioned in this study which should be further explored.

Bibliography

2007. "Taliban all over," *The Economist*, (April 12), <http://www.economist.com/node/9008911>.
2010. "Air strike kills Yemen mediator," *Reuters-Thompson*, (May 26), <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-idUSLDE64O0DF20100526>.
2013. "Online Data Analysis," *Arab Barometer*, <http://www.arabbarometer.org/content/online-data-analysis>.
2013. "Drop the pilot," *The Economist*, (October 9), <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21588142-surprising-number-pakistanis-are-favour-drone-strikes-drop-pilot>.
2013. "U.S. Policy Standards and Procedures for the Use of Force in Counterterrorism Operations Outside the United States and Areas of Active Hostilities," *The United States Government*, (May 23), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/2013.05.23_fact_sheet_on_ppg.pdf.
2015. "World Bank Suspends Operations in Yemen," *The World Bank*, (March 11), <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/03/11/world-bank-suspends-operations-in-yemen>.
2016. "Lahore attack: Pakistan PM Sharif demands swift action on terror," *BBC*, (March 28), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35910124>.
- Ackerman, Spencer. 2014. "41 men targeted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes – the facts on the ground," *The Guardian*, (November 24), <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/-sp-us-drone-strikes-kill-1147>.
- Ahmad, Mahmood. 2014. "The United States Use of Drones in Pakistan: A Politico-Strategic Analysis," *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, vol. 41, no. 1: 21-29.
- Al-Dawsari, Nadwa. 2012. "Tribal Governance and Stability in Yemen," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (April), <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/24/tribal-governance-and-stability-in-yemen>.
- Alexander, David. 2013. "Retired general cautions against overuse of 'hated' drones," *Reuters-Thompson*, (January 7), <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan-mcchrystal-idUSBRE90608O20130107>.
- Al-Muslimi, Farea. 2013. "In Senate Testimony, Yemeni Activist Describes Human Costs of Targeted Killing Program," *American Civil Liberties Union*, (April 24), <https://www.aclu.org/blog/senate-testimony-yemeni-activist-describes-human-costs-targeted-killing-program>.

- Amnesty International. 2012. "United States of America: 'Targeting Killing' Policies Violate the Right to Life," London: Amnesty International Publications: 1-17.
- Amnesty International. 2013. "Will I Be Next? US Drone Strikes in Pakistan," London: Amnesty International Publications: 5-74.
- Aslam, M.W. 2011. "A Critical Evaluation of American Predator Strikes in Pakistan: Legality, Legitimacy, and Prudence," *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, vol. 4, no. 3 (December): 1-19.
- Benson, Pam. 2012. "Bin Laden documents: fear of drones," *CNN.com*, (May 3), <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/05/03/bin-laden-documents-fear-of-drones/>.
- Bergen, Peter. 2011. *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and al-Qaeda*. New York: Free Press.
- Bergen, Peter and Katherine Tiedemann. 2010. "The Year of the Drone: An Analysis of U.S. Drone Strikes in Pakistan, 2004-2010," *New America Foundation* (February 24): 1-9.
- Bergen, Peter and Katherine Tiedemann. 2011. "Washington's Phantom War: The Effects of the U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2011-07-01/washingtons-phantom-war>.
- Bergen, Peter, and Jennifer Rowland. 2012. "Obama ramps up covert war in Yemen," *CNN.com*, (June 12), <http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/11/opinion/bergen-yemen-drone-war/>.
- Bergen, Peter and Jennifer Rowland. 2014. "Al Qaeda controls more territory than ever in Middle East," *CNN.com*, (January 8), <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/01/07/opinion/bergen-al-qaeda-territory-gains/>.
- Blank, Laurie R. 2012. "After 'Top Gun': How Drone Strikes Impact the Law of War," *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*, vol. 33, no. 3: 675-715.
- Boyle, Michael J. 2013. "The Costs and Consequences of Drone Warfare," *International Affairs*, vol. 89 no. 1: 1-29.
- Brave New Films. 2015. *Unmanned: America's Drone Wars*.
- Bryant, Brandon, et al. 2015. "Letter to President Barak Obama," <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2515596/final-drone-letter.pdf>.
- The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. 2015a. "CIA drone strikes in Pakistan, 2004 to present," <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>.
- The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. 2015b. "US strikes in Yemen, 2002 to present," <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>.

- Byman, Daniel L. 2013. "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice," *Brookings* (July/August), <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2013/06/17-drones-obama-weapon-choice-us-counterterrorism-byman>.
- Central Intelligence Agency. 2009. "Director's Remarks at the Pacific Council on International Policy," (May 18), <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/directors-remarks-at-pacific-council.html>.
- CFR.org Staff. 2015. "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)," *Council on Foreign Relations*, (June 19), <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-aqap/p9369>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. 2006. "Winning the 'War on Terrorism:' The Need for a Fundamentally Different Strategy," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (September 18): 1-9.
- Council on Foreign Relations. 2013. "Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies," *Council Special Report No. 65*, (January): 3-40.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2006. "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Summer): 7-48.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2009. *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2012. "U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism," *Orbis* (Spring): 1-23.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2013. "Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, (July/August), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/somalia/2013-06-11/why-drones-fail>.
- Cronin, Audrey Kurth. 2014. "The Foreign Policy Essay: Is this How to Win the 'War on Terrorism?'" *Lawfare*, (September 14), <https://www.lawfareblog.com/foreign-policy-essay-how-win-war-terrorism>.
- Enemark, Christian. 2011. "Drones over Pakistan: Secrecy, Ethics, and Counterinsurgency," *Asian Security*, vol. 7, no. 3 (October): 218-237.
- Entous, Adam, Julian E. Barnes, and Margaret Coker. 2011. "U.S. Doubts Intelligence That Led to Yemen Strike," *The Wall Street Journal*, (December 29), <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203899504577126883574284126>.
- Gaouette, Nicole. 2016. "Obama: 'No doubt' U.S. drones have killed civilians," *CNN.com*, (April 2). <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/01/politics/obama-isis-drone-strikes-iran/>.
- General Atomics Aeronautical. 2015. *Predator B*, http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/predator_b.php.

- The Global Security. 2016. "Pashtunwali/Pashtuanwaali," <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/pakistan/pashtunwali.htm>.
- Harris, Paul. 2012. "Drone attacks create terrorist safe havens, warns former CIA official," *The Guardian*, (June 5), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/05/al-qaida-drone-attacks-too-broad>.
- Hudson, Leila, Colin S. Owens, and Matt Flannes. 2011. "Drone Warfare: Blowback from the New American Way of War," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Fall): 122-132.
- Hudson, Leila, Colin S. Owens, and David J. Callen. 2012. "Drone Warfare in Yemen: Fostering Emirates through Counterterrorism?," *Middle East Policy Council*, vol. 19, no. 3 (Fall).
- Human Rights Clinic, Columbia Law School. 2012. "Counting Drone Strike Deaths." New York: 3-34.
- Human Rights Institute, Columbia Law School. 2011. "Targeting Operations with Drone Technology: Humanitarian Law Implications." *American Society of International Law Annual Meeting*, (March 25): 2-37.
- Human Rights Watch. 2013. "Between a Drone and al-Qaeda: The Civilian Cost of US Targeted Killings in Yemen," *Human Rights Watch*, 1-97.
- Hussain, Murtaza. 2015. "Former Drone Operations Say They Were 'Horrified' by Cruelty of Assassination Program," *The Intercept*, (November 20), <https://theintercept.com/2015/11/19/former-drone-operators-say-they-were-horrified-by-cruelty-of-assassination-program/>.
- Johnsen, Gregory D. 2013. "How We Lost Yemen," *Foreign Policy*, (August 6), <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/06/how-we-lost-yemen/>.
- Jordan, Jenna. 2014. "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security*, vol.38, no. 4 (Spring): 7-38.
- Kilcullen, David, and Andrew McDonald Exum. 2009. "Death From Above, Outrage Down Below," *The New York Times*, (May 16), http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/17/opinion/17exum.html?utm_source=affiliate&utm_medium=ls&utm_campaign=PPkX79/c*b0&utm_content=357585&utm_term=177&siteID=PPkX79_c.b0-YctiYQ7UFIErZ6b1vI.vCg&r=0.
- Koehler-Derrick, Gabriel. 2011. "A False Foundation? AQAP, Tribes and Ungoverned Spaces in Yemen," *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, (September).
- Laub, Zachary. 2015. "Yemen in Crisis," *Council on Foreign Relations*, (July 8), <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488/>.

- Long, Austin. 2010. "Assessing the Success of Leadership Targeting," *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 3, no. 11-12 (November): 1-28.
- Marshall, Monty G., and Benjamin R. Cole. 2014. "Table 1: State Fragility Index and Matrix 2014," *Center for Systemic Peace*, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/SFImatrix2014c.pdf>.
- Mothana, Ibrahim. 2012. "How Drones Help Al Qaeda," *The New York Times*, (June 13), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/14/opinion/how-drones-help-al-qaeda.html>.
- Miller, Greg, and Craig Whitlock. 2015. "Yemen crisis disrupts U.S. counterterrorism operations, officials say," *The Washington Post*, (January 23), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-counterterrorism-operations-with-yemen-suspended-officials-say/2015/01/23/03bf8826-a337-11e4-903f-9f2faf7cd9fe_story.html.
- Munnich, Stuart. 2014. "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Part 1," *NATO Association of Canada*, (March 4), <http://natoassociation.ca/al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-aqap-part-1/>.
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. 2013. "Global Terrorism Database," <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>.
- New America Foundation. 2015a. "Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis," <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html>.
- New America Foundation. 2015b. "Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis," <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/yemen-analysis.html>.
- Obama, Barack. 2011. "National Strategy for Counterterrorism." (June), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf.
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2015. "Yemen: highest emergency response level declared for six months," *UN OCHA*, (July 1), <http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/yemen-highest-emergency-response-level-declared-six-months>.
- Orr, Andrew C. 2011. "Unmanned, Unprecedented, and Unresolved: The State of American Drones Strikes in Pakistan under International Law," *Cornell International Law Journal*, vol. 44: 729-752.
- Orwell, George. 1946. "Politics and the English Language," <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm>.
- Pape, Robert A. 1996. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

- Pape, Robert A. 2004. "The True Worth of Air Power," *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2004-03-01/true-worth-air-power>.
- Pew Research Center. 2012. "Pakistani Public Opinion Ever More Critical of U.S.," (June 27), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/06/27/pakistani-public-opinion-ever-more-critical-of-u-s/>.
- Pew Research Center. 2014. "A Less Gloomy Mood in Pakistan," (August 27), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/08/27/a-less-gloomy-mood-in-pakistan/>.
- Price, Bryan C. 2012. "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *International Security*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Spring): 9-46.
- Raghavan, Sudarsan. 2010. "Investigators scrutinize Yemeni American cleric's ties to plane suspect," *The Washington Post*, (January 1), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/31/AR2009123101524.html>.
- Raghavan, Sudarsan. 2012. "In Yemen, U.S. airstrikes breed anger, and sympathy for al-Qaeda," *The Washington Post*, (May 29), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/in-yemen-us-airstrikes-breed-anger-and-sympathy-for-al-qaeda/2012/05/29/gJQAUmKIOU_story.html.
- Sharkey, Noel. 2009. "Death Strikes from the Sky: The Calculus of Proportionality," *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine*, (Spring): 16-19.
- Sharp, Jeremy M. 2015. "Yemen: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, (February 11): 1-33.
- Shaw, Ian G.R. 2013. "Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare," *Geopolitics*: 1-24.
- Shaw, Ian and Majed Akhter. 2014. "The Dronification of State Violence," *Critical Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2 (April): 211-234.
- Smith, Megan and James Igoe Walsh. 2013. "Do Drone Strikes Degrade Al Qaeda? Evidence from Propaganda Output," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 25: 311-327.
- Solis, Gary D. 2010. *The Law of Armed Conflict: International Humanitarian Law in War*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Swift, Christopher. 2012a. "To Defeat Al-Qaeda, Win in Yemen," *Bloomberg*, (June 21), <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2012-06-21/to-defeat-al-qaeda-win-in-yemen>.
- Swift, Christopher. 2012b. "Arc of Convergence: AQAP, Ansar al-Shari'a and the Struggle for Yemen," *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, (June 21).

Swift, Christopher. 2012c. "The Drone Blowback Fallacy," *Foreign Affairs* (July 1), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2012-07-01/drone-blowback-fallacy>.

Swift, Christopher. 2012d. "The Crisis in Yemen: al-Qaeda, Saleh, and Governmental Instability," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, (July), <http://www.fpri.org/article/2012/07/the-crisis-in-yemen-al-qaeda-saleh-and-governmental-instability/>.

Walsh, Nick Paton. 2016. "Al Qaeda 'very active' in Afghanistan: U.S. Commander," *CNN.com*, (April 13), <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/13/middleeast/afghanistan-al-qaeda/>.

Williams, Brian Glyn. 2010. "The CIA's Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010: The History of an Assassination Campaign," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 33, no. 10 (September): 871-892.

Worth, Robert F., Mark Mazzetti, and Scott Shane. 2013. "Drone Strikes' Risks to Get Rare Moment in the Public Eye," *The New York Times*, (February 5), <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/06/world/middleeast/with-brennan-pick-a-light-on-drone-strikes-hazards.html>.

