

Peace Not War

Peace is the Way

Guest post by Rob Mulford, cross-posted from the [News-Miner Community Perspective](#)

The Daily News Miner of Interior Alaska, Jan 3, 2016

Editor's note: Some of us met Rob in Pakistan where we both participated in a peace delegation which took us into Waziristan and gave us an opportunity to talk to people from different segments of society in Pakistan. Rob has been watching the growth of the drone program in Alaska, and his initiative to infiltrate the planning has resulted in an inside perspective on the overweening hubris behind US militarism and the imperialist drive to rule the world.

What our Leaders are Saying

On Nov. 15, the News-Miner quoted Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan as well as former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton regarding the recent "terror" attacks in Paris.

"The truth is... they hate us for who we are, what we stand for. Democracy, religious freedom, tolerance, equality... What we need to do is ... take the fight to them, so they don't show up on our shores." – Senator Dan Sullivan

"The desire of radical Islam to attack our nation remains ever so present. This is not the time to reduce investment in our national security, whether abroad or here in the homeland." – Senator Lisa Murkowski

"This election is not only about electing a president, it's about choosing our next commander in chief. All the other issues we want to deal with depend on us being secure and

strong. We are at war with violent extremism.” – Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

An Inside View of the Military Planners



In December 2011, I attended the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement (IDGA) Special Operations Summit in Tampa, Florida, a yearly event held for the military, private contractors and government agencies involved intelligence and special operations. I did this surreptitiously as a control systems integrator. The conference forbade members of the press from attending, and we were assured that no one was recording the sessions so the attendees were free to openly discuss their clandestine programs.

One of the presentations, covering the technology end of the summit's focus, Human Geography, included PowerPoint slides depicting automated models of human communities. These models look somewhat like organic molecules. I learned that individual atoms in the models represent actual individual human beings, although dehumanized by reclassification as agents. Clusters of atoms represented actual groups of human beings such as villages, tribes, families, professional associations, businesses and religious groups. Each agent and cluster had associated with it data, both historical and dynamic, of that particular object's cultural, religious, economic, political and military characteristics. The interconnecting lines represented interrelationships between the various objects. Near real-time dynamic data driving these models was supplied by: "human intelligence" like that gathered by Human Terrain Systems field teams; signals intelligence coming from sources like the monitoring of cell phone traffic and drone sensors.

This technology, known as Dynamic Network Analysis, is one of the instruments used to generate drone targets. The people that do this they call "human geographers" and "targeters." I receive several help-wanted ads every week from companies looking to fill these positions.

During the session's discussion period, one of the special operators said the term "high value target" is generally misconceived to mean a leader of a terrorist cell or someone responsible for acts of terror. He said, "If we take out a leader, they just replace him in short order." He explained they found it much more useful to use the models to find inter tribal and inter familial connections, like those made by marriage. He said when we take out one of these connections, it disrupts their network (i.e. inter-tribal and inter-familial relations) and has more tactical value. He explained that they were using this method presently to target the Haqqani (tribal) network in Pakistan.

Meeting the Victims

In the fall of 2012, I had the honor and privilege to be a member of a Code Pink peace delegation, invited to Pakistan by Pakistani human rights attorney Shahzad Akbar, to witness the devastation caused by U.S. drone warfare there.

One of the highlights of our visit was an 11-hour caravan to Waziristan. En route we stopped at many villages where we were greeted by crowds of Pakistanis, most in their youth, returning our peace sign salutes in kind. When we reached Dera Ismail Khan, in Pakistan's Federally Administrated Tribal Area it was glowing in the moonlight. Once again crowds of youth lined the street. I placed my hands on the window of the bus. A Pakistani placed his opposite mine. Soon the bus was rocking from others on the bus and in the crowd sharing this loving expression. The next morning we joined thousands of Pakistanis on a farm near the village of Tank chanting, "We want peace". My tears welled.

If we symptomatically diagnose “their” reaction to “their” pain, how can we in all honesty claim, “They hate us for who we are”, if our actions toward “them” have indeed been guided by, “Democracy, religious freedom, tolerance, equality”? To do so defies logic as well as common decency.

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US “investment” in military solutions from 2001 to the present total more than \$8.7 trillion. The world is no less broken today. If your car were malfunctioning, how long would you go on paying a mechanic to beat it with a sledgehammer, 14 years plus? The world “invested” more than 75 million lives in World War II. That’s the equivalent to 40,000 violent deaths per day for five years. Do we really want to go there again? Are these, in themselves, not examples of violent extremism?

I believe that we can do very well without a commander in chief. After all, the Department of Defense is no older than I am. We cannot, however, even begin to address those issues that we need to deal with, like global climate change, while we remain on this deathly path. Let’s begin forging swords into ploughshares by demilitarizing our local economy. As the ever spiritually mindful A. J. Muste said, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”

Rob Mulford is an Interior resident and peace activist.

Lack of transparency in the CIA and military drone

killings

You Never Die Twice: Lack of Transparency in the CIA and Military Drone Killings

By *Mickie Lynn*,

Republished from her blog in the *Albany Times Union*, *Waging Peace*.

This week *Women Against War* and members of several other Capital District peace groups joined in a *Statewide* lobbying initiative of our two Senators, Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer, after having to re-schedule our Monday appointments due to the foot of snow and more that fell on the area. Women Against War had already held a [long, productive lobbying meeting on the topic of Weaponized Drones](#) with David Connors, Senator Gillibrand's Regional Director, in October. So we decided to just deliver the excellent packet prepared by the *Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars* to their office.



At the courthouse in DeWitt, NY, May 16, 2014, Ed Kinane, Teresa B. Grady & Mary Anne Grady Flores

But we took the opportunity to set up a lobbying session with Senator Schumer's Regional Director, Steve Mann. In both cases we asked that they pass our information on to the legislative aides in Washington, D.C. It was nice to be part of an effort that visited regional offices all over the state, each delegation creating their own materials to add to the Upstate Drone Coalition's printouts and talking points.



Drones Kill Civilians, banner and signs at Legislative Office Building, photo by Mabel Leon

If you want to read more about our visits to our two Senators, I've written [a detailed report](#) with links to the packets that we distributed, and our local lobbying materials as well. The links to each of the materials gathered by the Upstate Drone Coalition can be read on [their website](#). Since they have been demonstrating for 4 years now and appearing in DeWitt town court where some have been tried and sentenced they have heard many stories about drone killings of civilians that have moved and inspired them. You can read their ["Talking Points"](#) to find out more.



Hancock Air Base Drone Protest, April 2011

In this particular article I wanted to share two documents from their packet that moved me the most and made me *rededicate* my efforts to stop the use of kill lists, secret drone programs, and such indiscriminate targeting as classifying all men of a certain age range as "military targets" or targeting people for death because of their location or behavior – as seen by drone sensors, or the dropping of bombs and missiles on homes, fields, gardens, and other infrastructure where civilians are most likely to be killed while present but unseen or unidentified.



You Never Die Twice: MULTIPLE KILLS IN THE US DRONE PROGRAM”, report by human rights charity, Reprieve.

US drone strikes kill 28 unknown people for every intended target, new Reprieve report reveals

US drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan have killed as many as 1,147 unknown people in failed attempts to kill 41 named individuals, a [report](#) by human rights charity Reprieve has found. The report looks at deaths resulting from US drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan between November 2002 and November 2014. It identifies 41 men who appeared to have been killed multiple times – drawing into question the Obama administration’s repeated claims that the covert drone program is ‘precise.’ While the US drone program is shrouded in secrecy, security sources regularly brief the media on the names of those suspected militants targeted or killed in the strikes. Frequently, those individuals are reported to have been targeted or killed on multiple occasions. Reprieve’s assessment is the first to provide an estimate of the number of people – including in some cases children – who are killed each time the US apparently attempts to assassinate a ‘high value target.’ Due to the US Government’s refusal to publish any information relating to the program, or the ‘Kill List’ said to determine its

targets, the analysis is limited to existing, publicly-available data from media reports and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism. [...]

And in the case of high value targets who receive the most publicity and the greatest numbers of attempt to kill them without trials the rate of civilian deaths is even higher for every strike.

***Jennifer Gibson, Staff Attorney at Reprieve who compiled the report, said:** “These ‘high value targets’ appear to be doing the impossible – dying not once, not twice, but as many as six times. At the same time, hundreds of unknown men, women and children are also caught in the crosshairs. President Obama continues to insist drone strikes are ‘precise’, but when targeting one person instead kills **as many as 128 others**, there’s only one conclusion that can be drawn – there’s nothing targeted about the US drone program.”*

This is a very detailed report, footnoted and citing many examples. Some names may be familiar to you from the media. You can read the [complete report here](#). The second article is a letter from an Afghan man whose brother-in-law, and four friends were killed in a US drone strike. His name is Raz Mohammad. I’ve heard his story before because his letter asking for the drone attacks to stop is one that several nonviolent drone resisters have cited as their inspiration to act.



Raz Soeaks out on the use of weaponized drones in Afghanistan

Afghan Peace Volunteer Says Drones Bury Beautiful Lives: Raz Mohammad Interviewed by Kathy Kelly by Hakim and the Afghan Peace Volunteers

January 10, 2013

Raz Mohammad: Salam 'aleikum. I am Raz Mohammad. I'm from Maidan Wardak province and I'm Pashtun.

You can read his interview by Kathy Kelly and see a video [at this website](#) Here's the [text of his letter](#) that so moved and inspired me and many other anti-drone activists:

On Friday the 30th of May, 2008, my brother-in-law was killed by a drone along with four of his friends. My brother-in-law was a student and he was innocent. Accountability from the US Military for this incident was non-existent. The incident created a situation which was beyond imagination. It affected the minds of my sister and all members of my family. When my

nephew was 5 years old, he asked his mother "Where is father?" My sister replied "He was killed by a computer." These negative effects persist on all of us to this day. I am worried for my family and for the people of my village. I request that the United States courts protect my family and my village. Signed by Raz Mohammad, translated by Dr.Hakim in Afghanistan, written 11/25/13,

The Ghastly, Remotely Piloted, Robotic Reaper Drone

[The Ghastly, Remotely Piloted, Robotic Reaper Drone](#)

by Ed Kinane, Reprinted from [Truthout](#), January 26, 2015

The MQ9 Reaper – now deployed 24/7 over Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere – makes killing too easy. It makes war easier to initiate and perpetuate. US drone wars are started with little or no public awareness or support – and with little apparent stake in the game. The weaponized drone cheapens honor. It cheapens life.

The Reaper kills and maims combatants and noncombatants, adults and children, infants and elderly. Drone victims are also those left widowed or orphaned, and those – in the hundreds of thousands – who flee the terrorized tribal countryside. Despite the propaganda that saturates US mainstream media, drones are not deployed in a “war on terrorism.” Weaponized drones *are* terror.

Reaper targeting is both precise *and* indiscriminate. *Precise* if and only if the intelligence on the ground is accurate – a very big if. *Precise striking* is too easily confused with *precise selecting*. On average, for every alleged high level adversary assassinated, dozens of family members, neighbors and other noncombatants are also killed.

The British human rights organization, Reprieve, notes that certain al-Qaeda leaders have escaped several drone attacks in which they have been reported killed. Many of those attacks result in “collateral damage,” i.e. other and innocent lives lost. Drone pilots and their chain of command often have no idea who their victims are, or how many they have killed.

Aerial warfare is *cowardly*. The Reaper raises cowardice to new heights. Where there’s no moral compass, where there’s no risk, there’s no courage. Despite the lack of physical risk, drone pilots reportedly often [suffer post-traumatic stress disorder](#). These technicians stalk their human targets for hours or days before launching their Hellfire missiles and 500-pound bombs. From their ergonomic armchairs, they observe the assassination and its aftermath up close and personal. They watch “bugsplat” (pilot talk for victims) try to flee.

Minutes later, the pilot may “double tap” – attacking the first responders who converge on the rubble and carnage. Hours later, they may *triple* tap: targeting those attending the victims’ funeral. Killing and maiming mostly civilians, often far from war zones, drones incite hatred, which can lead to blowback or what might be called *reactive terrorism*: retaliation against suspected informers, aid workers, journalists and US targets near and far. No one can calculate the half-life of such hatred.

Drones violate national sovereignty (Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Gaza etc.), thereby defying international law, thereby rendering the entire planet more hate-filled, anarchic and vulnerable. Drone attacks are racist: They almost

exclusively target Muslims and people of color (“Christian terrorism”).

US (and, let us not forget, British and Israeli) drone attacks spur proliferation – a drone arms race in which dozens of nations, if only in self-defense, are now acquiring or building weaponized drones. The barbaric use of killer drones creates markets: The deadly robots are first demonstrated eviscerating or vaporizing human flesh, then exported. The barbarity also creates precedents that make all of us, everywhere, less safe

The Pentagon’s PR mantra is that “drones save lives.” Yet the Reaper’s advantages are negated by the larger truth that only in the *short-term* and within *narrow contexts* do they reduce US casualties. (Those casualties of other nations, of course, don’t mean so much. Par excellence, the weaponized drone is the flagship of US exceptionalism.)

Summing up, the Reaper is tactically clever, but strategically stupid. The Pentagon is surely aware of this insufficiency. But the Pentagon doesn’t necessarily seek to “win” its wars. The US military machine seeks to multiply enemies and keep the pot boiling, thereby devouring the national budget and perpetuating mega-profits for its corporate allies. The corporados laugh all the way to the bank.

On the Home Front

Reaper deployment from sites such as Niagara Air Force Base near Buffalo and Hancock Air Force Base near Syracuse in upstate New York extend the war zone to nearby civilian areas. Like it or not, without our consent, we’ve become part of the battleground. Upstate New Yorkers didn’t enlist in these undeclared, clandestine wars. We are conscripts. Our federal taxes pay for these wars; vast slabs of our national treasure are diverted to the military and away from schooling, health care, mass transit and other infrastructure.

Reaper deployment is cloaked in secrecy, mocking democracy. Reaper security measures (as at Hancock, home of the 174th Attack Wing) lead to civil liberties abuse. Since 2010, recurring nonviolent anti-drone protests at Hancock have led to more than 150 arrests and multiple incarcerations of those exposing Pentagon and CIA Reaper lawlessness. We're arrested outside the base entrance as we assemble, speak out and petition the government for a redress of grievances – First Amendment rights, supposedly.

The drone assassination of non-US civilians has morphed into the assassination of US citizens overseas. Will these criminal attacks – devoid of due process – morph into drone strikes against US citizens within the United States itself? The targets here one day may be antiwar activists or someone's political opponent, or simply those guilty of being young, male and black, or Muslim. Or, as in Afghanistan, someone's or some cartel's rival drug dealer.

The Federal Aviation Administration, charged with regulating the safety of our skies, can't keep up with the burgeoning drone industry and escalating domestic drone use. Even with adequate regulations, enforcement will at best be patchy. The more drones in the air, the more difficult the enforcement. Drones have a high accident rate. Drones accidentally or deliberately invading air traffic lanes are a threat to manned commercial passenger aircraft. The more drones in the air, the more collisions. Drones can be launched anonymously. Their origins can be faked. Drones can be hacked and misdirected.

Although a drone pilot's field of vision is like looking through a soda straw, drone surveillance technology is almost preternaturally sophisticated. Drones threaten personal privacy, undermining the Fourth Amendment. Police agencies are itching to deploy drones, leading to surveillance without warrants on a mass, indiscriminate scale – pervasive, persistent, wide-area, suspicionless surveillance. Police drones will also surely be used for crowd control, suppressing

demonstrations and other First Amendment activity essential to democracy.

Police surveillance drones can be armed with so-called “non-lethal” devices (facial recognition technology, lasers, sound bombs, rubber bullets etc.). These chill public dissent. Non-lethal can morph into lethal crowd control. Do we really trust the increasingly militarized police and the US intelligence agencies to self-enforce constitutional restraints on their domestic spying? Think NSA.

Drone technology is rapidly evolving. As it penetrates the US economy and the US military machine, drone research in these two spheres will cross-pollinate. The Reaper and its successors are on their way to becoming ever more autonomous and unaccountable.

Domestic drone development has commercial and agricultural application. Drones will create jobs. But rarely mentioned is the fact that drones are a form of automation and that automation snuffs out jobs.

The glitz of consumer drone applications *here* is already displacing perceptions of the military mayhem *over there*. Mainstream media hype is already “normalizing” drones (à la the 1950s “Atoms for Peace” campaign providing cover for the then-emerging toxic nuclear industry). Such hype swamps coverage of the vile aspects of drones both domestically and internationally. The multibillion-dollar drone industry has already bought and bamboozled its engineers, its universities, its media and its representatives in Congress.

Drones and Discrimination: Kick the Habit

Kathy Kelly talks about her recent trial, the action she was convicted for, and her pending jail sentence. She talks about drone victims and the victims she is sure to meet when she arrives at whatever prison she is told to report to.

On December 10, International Human Rights Day, federal Magistrate Matt Whitworth sentenced me to three months in prison for having crossed the line at a military base that wages drone warfare. The punishment for our attempt to speak on behalf of trapped and desperate people, abroad, will be an opportunity to speak with people trapped by prisons and impoverishment here in the U.S.

Our trial was based on a trespass charge incurred on June 1, 2014. Georgia Walker and I were immediately arrested when we stepped onto Missouri's Whiteman Air Force where pilots fly weaponized drones over Afghanistan and other countries. We carried a loaf of bread and a letter for Brig Gen. Glen D. Van Herck. In court, we testified that we hadn't acted with criminal intent but had, rather, exercised our First Amendment right (and responsibility) to assemble peaceably for redress of grievance.

A group of Afghan friends had entrusted me with a simple message, their grievance, which they couldn't personally deliver: please stop killing us.

I knew that people I've lived with, striving to end wars even as their communities were bombed by drone aircraft, would understand the symbolism of asking to break bread with the base commander. Judge Whitworth said he understood that we oppose war, but he could recommend over 100 better ways to make our point that wouldn't be breaking the law.

The prosecution recommended the maximum six month sentence. "Ms. Kelly needs to be rehabilitated," said an earnest young military lawyer. The judge paged through a four page summary of past convictions and agreed that I hadn't yet learned not to break the law.

What I've learned from past experiences in prison is that the criminal justice system uses prison as a weapon against defendants who often have next to no resources to defend themselves. A prosecutor can threaten a defendant with an onerously long prison sentence along with heavy fines if the defendant doesn't agree to plea bargain.

In his article "Why Innocent People Plead Guilty," Jed S. Rakoff draws attention to the institution of plea bargaining which now ensures that less than 3% of federal cases go to trial at all. "Of the 2.2 million U.S. people now in prison," Rakoff writes, "well over 2 million are there as a result of plea bargains dictated by the government's prosecutors, who effectively dictate the sentence as well."

"In 2012, the average sentence for federal narcotics defendants who entered into any kind of plea bargain was five years and four months," Rakoff writes, "while the average sentence for defendants who went to trial was sixteen years."

It's one thing to read about the shameful racism and discrimination of the U.S. criminal justice system. It's quite another to sit next to a woman who is facing ten or more years in prison, isolated from children she has not held in years, and to learn from her about the circumstances that led to her imprisonment.

Many women prisoners, unable to find decent jobs in the regular economy, turn to the underground economy. Distant relatives of mine knew plenty about such an economy several generations ago. They couldn't get work, as Irish immigrants, and so they got into the bootlegging business when alcohol was

prohibited. But no one sent them to prison for 10 years if they were caught.

Women prisoners may feel waves of guilt, remorse, defiance, and despair. In spite of facing extremely harsh punishment, harsh emotions, and traumatic isolation, most of the women I've met in prison have shown extraordinary strength of character. When I was in Pekin Prison, we would routinely see young men, shackled and handcuffed, shuffling off of the bus to spend their first day in their medium-high security prison next door. The median sentence there was 27 years. We knew they'd be old men, many of them grandfathers, by the time they walked out again.

The U.S. is the undisputed world leader in incarceration, as it is the world leader in military dominance. Only one in 28 of drone victims are the intended, guilty or innocent, targets. One third of women in prison worldwide, are, at this moment, in U.S. prisons. The crimes that most threaten the safety and livelihood of people in the U.S. of course remain the crimes of the powerful, of the corporations that taint our skies with carbon and acid rainfall, peddle weapons around an already suffering globe, shut down factories and whole economies in pursuit of quick wealth, and send our young people to war.

Chief Executive Officers of major corporations that produce products inimical to human survival will most likely never be charged much less convicted of any crime. I don't want to see them jailed. I do want to see them rehabilitated

Each time I've left a U.S. prison, I've felt as though I was leaving the scene of a crime. When I return to the U.S. from sites of our war making, abroad, I feel the same way. Emerging back into the regular world seems tantamount to accepting a contract, pledging to forget the punishments we visit on impoverished people. I'm invited to forget about the people still trapped inside nightmare worlds we have made for them.

On January 23, 2015, when I report to whichever prison the Bureau of Prisons selects, I'll have a short time to reconnect with the reality endured by incarcerated people. It's not the rehabilitation the prosecutor and judge had in mind, but it will help me be a more empathic and mindful abolitionist, intent on ending all wars. Kathy Kelly (Kathy@vcnv.org) coordinates Voices for Creative Nonviolence (www.vcnv.org)