

# US and Taiwan Plan to Equip Kiev Regime Forces With 'Swarms-of-Swarms' Drones

by *Drago Bosnic*, published on *InfoBRICS*, March 28, 2023

There's very little doubt that warfare has changed dramatically in recent decades, with the tactical gap between leading militaries and those of local powers (or even the usually overlooked small countries) narrowing as the proliferation of unmanned systems continues unabated. With the advent of the information era, the abundance of war footage has essentially eliminated the once-assured readiness of tens of millions to go to war, leaving militaries around the globe struggling to meet their recruitment quotas. Losing even a hundred drones is certainly preferable to having ten soldiers (or even one) killed and/or wounded in action, particularly for politicians and their respective parties seeking reelection. As a result, drones, robots and other unmanned vehicles have become increasingly important.

The combination of these factors created the "perfect storm" for the dramatic rise and adoption of unmanned systems by most militaries around the world. Perhaps the best proof of this has been the mass usage of drones by both sides of the Ukrainian conflict. Ranging from commercial quadcopters to HALE (high-altitude, long-endurance) military drones, these weapons are changing the face of warfare in a manner no less revolutionary than airplanes and tanks did during the First World War. Interestingly, as both the Russian military and the Kiev regime forces deploy advanced long-range air defenses (particularly the former), the role of larger drones has subsided, leaving smaller platforms as the more cost-effective alternative, while also providing significant tactical advantages.

Aside from circumventing advanced SAM (surface-to-air missile) systems, miniature drones offer an important upper hand in terms of first-strike capabilities and forward reconnaissance. Apart from Russia and the Kiev regime, the US-led political West is also taking this into account, especially when considering the fact that NATO's massive ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) capabilities have been used to observe virtually every inch of the vast Ukrainian battlefields. Precisely this is pushing the belligerent alliance to equip the Neo-Nazi junta forces with the latest unmanned technologies, both as a way of providing its favorite puppet regime with weapons to counter the Russian military, as well as battle-testing the said drones against an advanced state adversary.

And while the Kiev regime's pompous announcements of an upcoming offensive may be dismissed as routine propaganda stunts, Russian intelligence found solid evidence that such weapons are being supplied to the Neo-Nazi junta. Needless to say, the political West sending advanced weapons to Kiev is hardly breaking news, but what's unusual is the participation of Taiwan. Apparently, China's breakaway island province is working directly with the US on developing and manufacturing the new unmanned systems. Another novelty in this particular case is the ostensible ability of these drones to autonomously coordinate their attacks and act as a swarm, or more precisely, "*swarms-of-swarms*", as the program's name clearly indicates.

The project, named AMASS (Autonomous Multi-Domain Adaptive Swarms-of-Swarms), is directly supervised by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), the Pentagon's top advanced weapons programs agency. In order to accomplish the task of controlling hundreds of drones simultaneously, the use of advanced artificial intelligence (AAI) is a given in this case. Considering that AAI is one of DARPA's main fields of study, its involvement in the project is effectively

guaranteed. Military experts estimate that several hundred kamikaze drones can function within one network, further connected to a much larger system that includes thousands of drones. DARPA's share in the project is by far the largest, although Taiwan seems to be providing key manufacturing facilities.

Back in early February, several media reports emerged that the AMASS project was fast-tracked by DARPA due to Pentagon's plans to create a "swarms-of-swarms" system that would "simultaneously counter multiple adversarial assets and enable warfighters to operate within the A2/AD [anti-access/area denial] environment". With Russia and China being the only countries with such capabilities, it's essentially guaranteed they are the primary targets. This is further reinforced by the involvement of the government in Taipei, which clearly aims to counter China's A2/AD "bubbles". These still represent an insurmountable obstacle against which the Taiwanese military is effectively powerless, both in terms of offensive and defensive capabilities.

However, before the possible deployment of AMASS in Taiwan, the system needs to be battle-tested in Ukraine. If it were to be proven effective, Washington DC and Taipei would certainly mass-produce it. Thus, it's extremely likely that the project was discussed by Russian and Chinese military delegates during President Xi Jinping's latest visit to Moscow, as it's in the interest of both to see the program fail. Otherwise, if it proves successful in Ukraine, the Chinese military itself would most certainly face it in Taiwan, endangering the success of a possible amphibious operation in case of a US-orchestrated escalation. And while China has advanced systems capable of countering such weapons (including its own drone swarms), the best possible defense is preventing their deployment altogether.

Nevertheless, with the Russian military poised to be the first to encounter weapons such as the AMASS, Moscow has already

started crucial upgrades to its air defense systems. Still, Russia's A2/AD, better known as "*echeloned defense*" in Russian military nomenclature, is only one segment of its (recently revised) strategy, with the so-called "*active defense*" being the key to neutralizing immediate threats. This includes adopting new offensive capabilities and precisely this could have been one of the main topics of behind-closed-doors talks about Sino-Russian technological cooperation, which almost certainly includes the exchange of information on drone swarms.

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**Drago Bosnic**, independent geopolitical and military analyst

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## **8 Arrested Exposing Hancock AirForce Base Terrorism**

by Ed Kinane, June 22, 2019

Shortly before 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 20, our Upstate Drone Action caravan of six or seven vehicles arrived, unannounced, at the main gate of Hancock AFB in De Witt, a suburb of Syracuse, New York. Two of us – accompanied by one of our videographers – proceeded to the guardhouse 50 yards in from East Molloy Road to read aloud and deliver a statement (below). The statement called on base personnel, in accordance with U.S. and International Law, to refuse to obey their chain of command's illegal orders to commit what are ongoing drone war crimes.

Simultaneously we set about creating a street theatre tableau blocking the main entrance to the base. As we have many times

over the past decade, we were calling out Hancock for hosting the 174<sup>th</sup> Attack Wing of the NY National Guard. The 174<sup>th</sup> remotely pilots missile-spewing robotic MQ9 Reaper drones over Afghanistan (and probably elsewhere). These classified operations result in the terrorizing, maiming and killing of uncounted and uncountable numbers of unarmed and undefended children and their parents.

Until our arrest about two hours later, we held an unadorned, white 3x8-ft. banner across the driveway leading to the gate. In bold black letters, it read:

**DRONE FLY, CHILDREN DIE – OUR HEARTS  
ARE BREAKING.**

Nearby, also in the ingress, two grandmothers in traditional black dresses silently sat grieving, holding “*infants*” in bloodied swaddling clothes. Bloodied “*body parts*” and children’s toys and things were strewn about. Crossing back and forth between the banner and the road, pushed by a man in a cape and death’s mask, a model Reaper on wheels fleshed out the tableau. Across the road from base property, over a dozen supporters, singing and chanting, held signs like: **CHILDREN ARE NOT “COLLATERAL DAMAGE.”**

Two rain-soaked hours later, the DeWitt town police and Onondaga County sheriffs, having converged in numerous vehicles, ordered us to leave base property. Those eight who chose not to do so were arrested: Tom Joyce (Ithaca); Dan Burgevin & Mark Scibilia-Carver (Trumansburg); and Rae Kramer, Julianne Oldfield, Les Billips , Ann Tiffany and Ed Kinane (Syracuse).

We were handcuffed, separated by gender and taken in two paddy wagons to the sheriffs’ north station where we were held in three small cells. After a couple hours we were transported by van to the downtown Syracuse “*Justice Center.*” In booking we

were ordered strip, spread our cheeks, and where applicable, lift our scrotums. Our street clothes were put in a device for what seemed to be some chemical inspection and replaced with jail issue.

We were held in a chilly, dirty holding cell with other inmates all day. In the early evening we separately appeared before a Judge Murphy. Public defenders pled us not guilty. The assistant D.A. recommended we be ROR'ed and, released on our own recognizance, without bail. After being taken back to the holding cell, we were released – to the welcoming arms of support people and fellow perps – sometime after 10:30 p.m.

Five of us – LB, DB, TJ, EK, RK – must appear in the DeWitt town night court at 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25; J0, AT & MS-C. must appear June 26, also at 6 p.m. We were each charged with two violations – trespass and disorderly conduct, and with a misdemeanor, obstruction of government administration (OGA). Thus far Hancock's crimes against humanity go insufficiently exposed.

Thanks to our videographers our entire action was live-streamed. The arrest appeared on YouTube. The next morning brief footage appeared near the top of Amy Goodman's "Democracy Now" news hour viewed by hundreds of thousands here and abroad. For a three-minute overview, check out:

Video by Heriberto Rodriguez

Arrest Video by John Amidon

\*Featured photo by Heriberto Rodriguez

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# Trump's Military Drops a Bomb Every 12 Minutes, and No One Is Talking About It

by Lee Camp, originally published on TruthDig

We live in a state of perpetual war, and we never feel it. While you get your gelato at the hip place where they put those cute little mint leaves on the side, someone is being bombed in your name. While you argue with the 17-year-old at the movie theater who gave you a small popcorn when you paid for a large, someone is being obliterated in your name. While we sleep and eat and make love and shield our eyes on a sunny day, someone's home, family, life and body are being blown into a thousand pieces in our names.

***Once every 12 minutes.***

The United States military drops an explosive with a strength you can hardly comprehend once every 12 minutes. And that's odd, because we're technically at war with—let me think—zero countries. So that should mean zero bombs are being dropped, right?

Hell no! You've made the common mistake of confusing our world with some sort of rational, cogent world in which our military-industrial complex is under control, the music industry is based on merit and talent, Legos have gently rounded edges (so when you step on them barefoot, it doesn't feel like an armor-piercing bullet just shot straight up your sphincter), and humans are dealing with climate change like adults rather than burying our heads in the sand while trying to convince ourselves that the sand around our heads isn't getting really, *really hot*.

***You're thinking of a rational world. We do not live there.***

Instead, we live in a world where the Pentagon is completely and utterly out of control. A few weeks ago, I wrote about the \$21 trillion (that's not a typo) that has gone unaccounted for at the Pentagon. But I didn't get into the number of bombs that ridiculous amount of money buys us. President George W. Bush's military dropped 70,000 bombs on five countries. But of that outrageous number, only 57 of those bombs really upset the international community.

Because there were 57 strikes in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen—countries the U.S. was neither at war with nor had ongoing conflicts with. And the world was kind of horrified. There was a lot of talk that went something like, "Wait a second. We're bombing in countries outside of war zones? Is it possible that's a slippery slope ending in us just bombing all the goddamn time? (Awkward pause.) ... Nah. Whichever president follows Bush will be a normal adult person (with a functional brain stem of some sort) and will therefore stop this madness."

We were so cute and naive back then, like a kitten when it's first waking up in the morning.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported that under President Barack Obama there were "563 strikes, largely by drones, that targeted Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. ..."

It's not just the fact that bombing outside of a war zone is a horrific violation of international law and global norms. It's also the morally reprehensible targeting of people for pre-crime, which is what we're doing and what the Tom Cruise movie "Minority Report" warned us about. (Humans are very bad at taking the advice of sci-fi dystopias. If we'd listened to "1984," we wouldn't have allowed the existence of the National Security Agency. If we listened to "The Terminator," we wouldn't have allowed the existence of drone warfare. And if we'd listened to "The Matrix," we wouldn't have allowed the vast majority of humans to get lost in a virtual reality of



spectacle and vapid nonsense while the oceans die in a swamp of plastic waste. ... But you know, who's counting?)

There was basically a media blackout while Obama was president. You could count on one hand the number of mainstream media reports on the Pentagon's daily bombing campaigns under Obama. And even when the media *did* mention it, the underlying sentiment was, "Yeah, but look at how suave Obama is while he's OK'ing endless destruction. He's like the Steve McQueen of aerial death."

And let's take a moment to wipe away the idea that our "advanced weaponry" hits only the bad guys. As David DeGraw put it, "According to the C.I.A.'s own documents, the people on the 'kill list,' who were targeted for 'death-by-drone,' accounted for only 2% of the deaths caused by the drone strikes."

*Two percent.* Really, Pentagon? You got a *two* on the test? You get five points just for spelling your name right.

But those 70,000 bombs dropped by Bush—it was child's play. DeGraw again: "[Obama] dropped 100,000 bombs in seven countries. He out-bombed Bush by 30,000 bombs and 2 countries."

You have to admit that's impressively horrific. That puts Obama in a very elite group of Nobel Peace Prize winners who have killed *that many* innocent civilians. The reunions are mainly just him and Henry Kissinger wearing little hand-drawn name tags and munching on deviled eggs.

However, we now know that Donald Trump's administration puts all previous presidents to shame. The Pentagon's numbers show that during George W. Bush's eight years he averaged 24 bombs dropped per day, which is 8,750 per year. Over the course of Obama's time in office, his military dropped 34 bombs per day, 12,500 per year. And in Trump's *first year* in office, he averaged 121 bombs dropped per day, for an annual total of

44,096.

***Trump's military dropped 44,000 bombs in his first year in office.***

He has basically taken the gloves off the Pentagon, taken the leash off an already rabid dog. So the end result is a military that's behaving like Lil Wayne crossed with Conor McGregor. You look away for one minute, look back, and are like, "What the fuck did you just do? I was gone for like, a second!"

Under Trump, five bombs are dropped per hour—every hour of every day. That averages out to a bomb every 12 minutes.

And which is more outrageous—the crazy amount of death and destruction we are creating around the world, or the fact that your mainstream corporate media basically *NEVER* investigates it? They talk about Trump's flaws. They say he's a racist, bulbous-headed, self-centered idiot (which is totally accurate)—but they don't criticize the perpetual Amityville massacre our military perpetrates by dropping a bomb every 12 minutes, most of them killing 98 percent non-targets.

When you have a Department of War with a completely unaccountable budget—as we saw with the \$21 trillion—and you have a president with no interest in overseeing how much death the Department of War is responsible for, then you end up dropping so many bombs that the Pentagon has reported we are running out of bombs.

Oh, dear God. If we run out of our bombs, then how will we stop all those innocent civilians from ... farming? Think of all the goats that will be allowed to go about their days.

***And, as with the \$21 trillion, the theme seems to be "unaccountable."***

Journalist Witney Webb wrote in February, "Shockingly, more

than 80 percent of those killed have never even been identified and the C.I.A.'s own documents have shown that they are not even aware of who they are killing—avoiding the issue of reporting civilian deaths simply by naming all those in the strike zone as enemy combatants.”

That's right. We kill only enemy combatants. How do we know they're enemy combatants? Because they were in our strike zone. How did we know it was a strike zone? Because there were enemy combatants there. How did we find out they were enemy combatants? Because they were in the strike zone. ... Want me to keep going, or do you get the point? I have all day.

This is not about Trump, even though he's a maniac. It's not about Obama, even though he's a war criminal. It's not about Bush, even though he has the intelligence of boiled cabbage. (I haven't told a Bush joke in about eight years. Felt kind of good. Maybe I'll get back into that.)

This is about a runaway military-industrial complex that our ruling elite are more than happy to let loose. Almost no one in Congress or the presidency tries to restrain our 121 bombs a day. Almost no one in a mainstream outlet tries to get people to care about this.

Recently, the hashtag #21Trillion for the unaccounted Pentagon money has gained some traction. Let's get another one started: #121BombsADay.

***One every 12 minutes.***

Do you know where they're hitting? Who they're murdering? Why? One hundred and twenty-one bombs a day rip apart the lives of families a world away—in your name and my name and the name of the kid doling out the wrong size popcorn at the movie theater.

We are a rogue nation with a rogue military and a completely unaccountable ruling elite. The government and military you

and I support by being a part of this society are murdering people every 12 minutes, and in response, there's nothing but a ghostly silence. It is beneath us as a people and a species to give this topic nothing but silence. It is a crime against humanity.

***Truthdig is running a reader-funded project to document the Poor People's Campaign. Please help us by making a donation.***

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**Lee Camp** is an American stand-up comedian, writer, actor and activist. Camp is the host of the weekly comedy news TV show "Redacted Tonight With Lee Camp" on RT America. He is a former comedy writer for the Onion and the Huffington Post and has been a touring stand-up comic for 20 years. *If you think this column is important, please share it. Also, check out Lee Camp's weekly TV show "Redacted Tonight" and weekly podcast "Common Censored."*

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## **The Environmental Consequences of the Use of Armed Drones**

*It is suspected that a small drone carrying a thermite grenade may have caused a massive arms depot blast near Balakliya, Ukraine in March 2017. The 350 hectare site near Kharkiv is around 100km from the frontline of the conflict in the eastern Donbas area. 20,000 people were evacuated and the blast is likely to have left a significant environmental footprint of heavy metals and energetic materials.*

*by Doug Weir and Elizabeth Minor, Originally published on Toxic Remnants of War Blog*

To date, debate over the implications of the growing use of armed drones has focused on human rights, on the expansion of the use of force into new contexts, and on the imbalances created by the newfound ability to project violence at a distance. Reaching Critical Will invited Doug Weir and Elizabeth Minor to consider the environmental dimensions of the use of drone warfare for a recent publication '*The humanitarian impact of drones*'. They found the literature to be largely absent of considerations over the environmental and derived humanitarian impacts of drone operations, and so this blog, which is excerpted from the report, should be viewed as a starting point for efforts to assess the environmental consequences of the use of armed drones.

In armed conflict, and its aftermath, legal protection for the environment is weak, and systems for accountability and environmental remediation are largely absent. Those protections that do exist have been most clearly articulated in relation to massive levels of environmental harm. They primarily focus on the "natural environment"—without articulating the linkages between environmental quality and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. However, the risks of the generation of toxic remnants of war—conflict pollution that threatens human and ecosystem health—should be an important consideration in taking steps and measures to progressively limit harm in the use of force.

During the last decade, there has been a renewed effort to clarify and codify the relationship between environmental obligations stemming from international humanitarian law (IHL), international environmental law, and international human rights law, before, during, and after armed conflicts. The topic is currently under consideration by the International Law Commission, and states have expressed their growing concern over the environmental and derived

humanitarian consequences of armed conflict at the UN Environment Assembly.

Obligations to address the environmental legacy of pollution from armed conflicts and military activities have been proposed by the International Law Commission, and have recently been articulated in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July 2017. These and other initiatives could support the advancement of both law and practice with respect to addressing toxic remnants of war.

The expansion of the use of armed drones by states to conduct airstrikes both within and outside of armed conflict has coincided with this increased interest in enhancing the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts. However, very little research has been undertaken into any possible relationship between the use of armed drones and environmental harm. Whilst not arguing that the environmental impact of armed drones is a central component of the harms that they cause, this short perspective proposes that air strikes conducted from drones could have environmental implications for communities, and that these should be considered in any discussions about the further regulation of drones. In addressing the problematic aspects or potentials of armed drones as a set of technologies, and current trajectories in their use, states should at least consider that:

- The use of explosive weapons has the capacity to generate toxic remnants. One key concern surrounding armed drones is that these technologies have facilitated the expansion of the types of contexts in which states have been willing to use explosive force deployed from aircraft. If such trajectories are permitted to continue, potential environmental harms risk being seen in a greater variety of contexts;
- The legal standards of armed conflict have been applied in these particular uses of force, though these

standards have been widely argued to be the inappropriate framework. With the low standards of environmental protection associated with armed conflict, this could also present risks in terms of greater environmental harm from the use of force; and

- Given the low standards of environmental protection in armed conflict, it should be investigated whether drone technology through its unique characteristics could help facilitate the striking of environmentally risky targets during armed conflicts, and contribute to harmful practices in this way.

Given the lack of research in this area, this blog does not propose definitive conclusions on these points. Rather, it proposes that these are areas where there may be questions and concerns that states and others should be encouraged to consider, as part of any discussion on the broader picture of harm caused by armed drones.

## **Environmental impacts from the use of explosive weapons**

Airstrikes from armed drones typically use explosive weapons. The use of explosive weapons can produce pollutants that pose risks to human health following their initial impacts, particularly when these weapons are used in populated areas. These toxic remnants—the effects of which are not well documented—may derive from the constituents of munitions[1] or from the destruction of buildings and damage to infrastructure, such as power, water, and sanitation facilities. Whilst potential toxic impacts will be greatest where the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been widespread and sustained,[2] even limited use (such as individual air strikes) can bring risks to health in communities. As such, the environmental impacts of explosive force are a relevant concern in the context of airstrikes conducted using drones.

Several widely used munitions that states have fired from drones present toxicity concerns, such as Hellfire missiles and GBU-12 and GBU-38 bombs. These contain conventional explosive fills that utilise TNT and RDX. Both explosives are mobile in the environment, meaning that, for example, they can spread from soils into groundwater, and are toxic. The metals dispersed from these munitions are environmentally persistent. Where use is intense or sustained, evidence suggests that these can reach sufficient levels to pose a threat to civilian health.[3] There may also be specific concerns from novel materials that are being used in munitions deployed from drone platforms. For example, Dense Inert Metal Explosive (DIME) munitions, the long-term health impacts of which are unconfirmed, have reportedly been deployed from drones. A lack of transparency over the deployment of advanced weapons by drones limits efforts to study and assess their potential health and environmental risks from a perspective of limiting harm.

## **Challenging boundaries in the use of force**

The specific capabilities offered by certain drones have been used by some states to facilitate an expansion in the range of contexts in which they use explosive force. These states have used drones in a way that pushes at the legal and conceptual boundaries where certain types of violence generally associated with armed conflict are used. The technological features relevant here include the range, persistence, and surveillance capabilities offered by drones, and the ability to use force without physical risk to the attacker. The interplay between the potentials provided by these characteristics, and problematic patterns in use—particularly the killing of those associated with particular groups across borders—provides a basis for international discussion on preventing harm from drones as a specific set of technologies.

As a result of this particular pattern of airstrikes launched from drones, harms to people known to result from the use of



explosive force in conflict—including deaths, injuries, psychological impacts, and the destruction of homes—have been documented in novel contexts. This transposition of known impacts in to different situations could also therefore apply to environmental harms. In turn, if some current use of armed drones by states has sought to redefine where particular sets of laws governing the use of force apply, such as the law of armed conflict, this also has clear implications for the protection of the environment.

Along with other impacts, potentials for environmental damage in communities that can affect human health therefore bear consideration in evaluating what the acceptable limits on the use of armed drones by states should be, and for setting standards against the facilitation of expansions in the contexts where certain types of force are used.

## **Environmentally risky targets**

In addressing drones as a development in weapons technology, states should consider which features of systems could facilitate problematic practices or expansions in the use of force, and how the implications of these could be contained. If one aspect of this is to consider how certain capabilities have enabled expansions in the contexts in which certain forms of force have been used, another may be to consider the potential implications of the enhanced surveillance capabilities offered by drones for facilitating attacks on targets whose destruction carries particularly severe risks of generating conflict pollution. Numerous target types have the potential to harm the environment and human health when damaged or destroyed. These include industrial, petrochemical, or pharmaceutical sites; electricity production or distribution networks; water treatment and distribution facilities; and military bases and ammunition storage areas.

The existing thresholds for what constitutes unacceptable environmental harm under IHL are widely acknowledged as being

both too high, and poorly defined—though the relevant general principles of distinction and proportionality nevertheless apply in the selection of targets and of weapons, as does the principle of precaution. Reliably predicting the outcome of strikes on environmentally risky targets requires advanced knowledge of the design, state, and contents of the facility, and the ability to reliably predict the health and environmental consequences of the damage caused; factors that will be balanced against the military advantage gained from disrupting or destroying it.

While aerial surveillance data may increase the confidence of mission planners, it is unlikely that it would contribute substantially to prior knowledge of the intrinsic risks within a facility or the often unpredictable environmental outcome of its destruction. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that access to enhanced surveillance data could encourage the expansion of strikes against such targets, particularly when combined with precision weapons. This potential risk merits further investigation. In the majority of cases, the weak legal provisions protecting the environment in conflict make it unlikely that the consequences of such actions would breach existing thresholds—even where contamination creates persistent localised risks to communities and their environment.

The lack of transparency over the use of armed drones in recent conflicts makes it difficult to determine whether access to enhanced surveillance data has facilitated the targeting of environmentally risky civilian and military infrastructure. It has been reported that drones are being used to some extent in strikes on ISIS oil operations in Syria and Iraq by the international coalition for example,[5] but the role and impact of the use of drones in terms of potentially raising—or reducing—environmental risks to local populations in these operations is not clear. Recent reports of the use of a small drone to destroy an

ammunition dump in Ukraine with grenades, which has likely caused extensive environmental contamination, are also relevant to assessing the picture of use against sensitive industrial targets.

In identifying risks and issues, and considering potential restrictions on armed drones, states should also consider therefore whether the technology could help facilitate practices that pose particularly high environmental risks in communities, and seek data on how this and other risks may have played out in practice.

## **Conclusion**

The environmental impacts of the use of force in general, and the use of armed drones in particular, remain under-documented as a form of harm that is relevant to assessing the limits that might be placed on different weapons technologies.

In considering how state violence should be constrained, and the contexts in which certain impacts of violence may be considered permissible or not, environmental effects with implications for human health must however be factored in—including with respect to armed drones. The lasting environmental impacts and long-term risks to human health from the use of force must, in turn, be curbed through more robust international rules.

*Doug Weir Manages the Toxic Remnants of War Project. Elizabeth Minor is an Adviser at Article 36, a UK-based organisation that works for the development of new policy and legal standards to prevent the unintended, unnecessary or unacceptable harm caused by certain weapons. This chapter first appeared in 'The humanitarian impact of drones', a report published in October 2017 by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Article 36, and the International Disarmament Institute of Pace University*

## References

[1] So far most research into the health risks and environmental fate of the residues from explosive weapons has been restricted to domestic training ranges, and may not be representative of their use in populated areas in conflict and other settings. See for example: Koponen, K, "Development of Guidance Values for Explosive Residues;" and Walsh, et al. "Energetics Residues Deposition from Training with Large Caliber Weapon Systems," in *European Conference on Defence and the Environment, Proceedings 2015*, [http://www.defmin.fi/files/3353/ECDE\\_Proceedings\\_2015.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/3353/ECDE_Proceedings_2015.pdf).

[2] See for example the UN Environment Programme's assessment in 2009 of the impact of the Cast Lead offensive in Gaza, which documented dioxins and asbestos in the conflict rubble: "Environmental Assessment of the Areas Disengaged by Israel in the Gaza Strip," United Nations Environment Programme, 2009, [http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP\\_Gaza\\_web.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Gaza_web.pdf).

[3] See for example "Lebanon Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment," United Nations Environment Programme, 2007, [http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP\\_Lebanon.pdf](http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_Lebanon.pdf).

[4] See for example Manduca P, Naim A, and Signoriello S, "Specific Association of Teratogen and Toxicant Metals in Hair of Newborns with Congenital Birth Defects of Developmentally Premature Birth in a Cohort of Couples with Documented Parental Exposure to Military Attacks: Observational Study at Al Shifa Hospital, Gaza, Palestine," *Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2014 11:5208-5223.

[5] See for example, "RAF Tornados launch first strikes against Isis in Syria", *The Times*, 3 December 2015, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/raf-tornados-launch-first-strikes-against-isis-in-syria-rqpqq2qd88m>. Attacks have frequently been carried out by the coalition on facilities for

extraction, processing, and transportation—see coalition daily reports archived by Airwars at <https://airwars.org/daily-reports>.

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## People's Indictment (Update with video)

**FOR WAR CRIMES PERPETRATED BY THE 174TH ATTACK WING  
OF THE NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD AT HANCOCK AIR FORCE BASE,  
SYRACUSE, NY**

*Video recorded by Charley Bowman of Buffalo, NY. Speaking: Ed Kinane, Julianne Oldfield, Dan Burgevin.*

Since 2010 the 174th Attack Wing, via satellite, has been remotely piloting weaponized MQ9 Reaper drones over Afghanistan – perhaps the poorest and most vulnerable nation in the world. U.S. weaponized drones are also known to target people in Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Yemen and elsewhere in the Islamic oil lands. Those who participate in these operations may believe they are fighting “terrorism”; in fact they are unwitting cogs in a war – on behalf of corporate profiteers – whose main instrument is terrorism.

The Reaper maims and kills untold numbers of human beings and terrorizes whole communities. Reaper aggression generates both internal and external refugees; generates hatred toward the U.S. (bolstering recruitment for hostile groups); heightens global insecurity as other state and non-state powers join the weaponized drones arm race; and, by blatantly violating such law, undermines both U.S. and international law.

U.S. drone killing violates due process and national

sovereignty. It involves intentional, premeditated extrajudicial murder and the massacre of civilians.

These crimes violate Article VI of the United States Constitution: ***"This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges of every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or Laws of the U.S., including treaties made under authority of the U.S. shall be the supreme law of the land."***

One such treaty, since 1945 the supreme law of the United States, is the United Nations Charter. The Charter's Preamble states that its purpose is to ***"save future generations from the scourge of war"***. It further states that ***"all nations shall refrain from the use of force against another nation."*** This Treaty applies to federal, state and local branches of U.S. government as well as to law enforcement and to U.S. Armed Forces personnel – all of whom are sworn to uphold the Constitution.

Since 2010 Upstate Drone Action – impelled by our conscience – has sought to expose Hancock AFB war crimes and to awaken Hancock AFB personnel and their chain of command to their role in perpetrating these crimes. Today, as on many former occasions, we come to Hancock to renew that wake-up call. **People of Hancock: we urge you – we implore you – to stop the killing.**

UPSTATE DRONE ACTION

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# Are We the Terrorists?

Are we the terrorists? This is the subject of Ed Kinane and Dave Kashmer's informative Workshop on Drone Warfare at SUNY Cortland. Students were informed about the actions of military drones around the world then engaged on the subject of 'Are We the Terrorists'. Very interesting result. A good model for introducing the subject to those who have not had an opportunity to see things as we do.

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## Hancock Litany for Good Friday

*Written by Jack Gilroy...www.bensalmon.org*

### **Good Friday Prayer for 174th Attack Wing**

Video by *Judy Bello*

Men of the 174th Attack Wing, **Stop the Killing**

Women of the 174th Attack Wing, **Stop the Killing**

Men & Women of the 174th Attack Wing, **Stop Drone Crucifixions**

Men & women of the 174th Attack Wing, **—Leave the Military**

People of Iraq

**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Afghanistan  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Pakistan  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Syria  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Yemen  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Libya  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Somalia  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

People of Gaza  
**Forgive us our Killer Drones**

Our Tax Dollars for Death  
**Forgive Us**

Slaughtered Native Americans  
**Forgive Us**

Teaching Hate  
**Forgive Us**

Our Sins against our Black brothers and sisters  
**Forgive Us**

Tortured people of the Philippines  
**Forgive Us**

United States invasions of Mexico  
**Forgive Us**

United States invasions of Haiti  
**Forgive Us**



United States invasions of Nicaragua

**Forgive Us**

United States imperialism in Latin America

**Forgive Us**

United States killings in the Great War

**Forgive Us**

60 Million dead in World War II

**Forgive Us**

Calling 60 Million dead a 'Good War'

**Forgive Us**

Believing War can be Just

**Forgive Us**

Christian Churches' Silence in Nazi Germany

**Forgive Us**

German Catholic Bishops' silence

**Forgive Us**

Lutheran Church Silence

**Forgive Us**

Dresden Fire Bombed

**Forgive Us**

Hiroshima Incinerated

**Forgive Us**

Nagasaki Destroyed

**Forgive Us**

Nagasaki Cathedral Ground Zero

**Forgive Us**

All Christian Crews Do Bombing

**Forgive Us**

38,000 Americans Died in World War II

**Forgive Us**

1 Million North Korean Soldiers & Civilians Killed

**Forgive Us**

United States Kills 3 Million Vietnamese

**Forgive Us**

58,000 American Troops Killed in Vietnam

**Forgive Us**

Dow Chemical's Agent Orange Devastates People and Land of Vietnam

**Forgive Us**

American Napalm Burns Vietnamese Children

**Forgive Us**

Trillions Spent on Nuclear Weapons & War Preparation

**Forgive Us**

United States Supports El Salvador Death Camps

**Forgive Us**

United States CIA Helps Assassinate 250,000 People in Guatemala

**Forgive Us**

United States Creates a Torture & Assassination School at Fort Benning, GA

**Forgive Us**

Graduates of the School of the Americas Kill Peasants and Union Leaders

**Forgive Us**

Graduates of the School of the Americas Kill Priests & Nuns

**Forgive Us**

US Troops IN 180 Countries Around the World

**Forgive Us**

US Led Sanctions Kill 500,000 Iraqi Children

**Forgive Us**

United States Slaughters Fleeing Iraqi Soldiers

**Forgive Us**

US Troops Stationed in Muslim Countries

**Forgive Us**

Invasion and Occupation of Afghanistan

**Forgive Us**

Shock and Awe Bombings of Iraq Kill Civilians by the Thousands

**Forgive Us**

Two Million People Flee American War Making in Iraq

**Forgive Us**

American Violence Spreads Throughout The Middle East

**Forgive Us**

Refugees Die in the Deserts & on the Sea Fleeing Wars Promoted by the United States

**Forgive Us**

United States Rejects Middle East Refugees

**Forgive Us**

Islamophobia Sweeps the Nation

**Forgive Us**

United States Drones Assassinate People in Seven Muslim Nations

**Forgive Us**

One Half Our National Spending is for Death & Weapons

**Forgive Us**

Weapons Are Our Largest Export

## **Forgive Us**

United States in Year 2017 Will Cut Assistance to the Poor & Children's Programs

## **Forgive Us**

Building Walls Instead of Empathy and Generosity

## **Forgive Us**

Our Bloated Military Budget Will be Increased \$54 Billion This Year

## **Forgive Us**

Republicans & Democrats Praise Trump for Killing Syrians

## **Forgive Us**

Aaaaa men....Aaaaaa men....Amen Amen Amen

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# **War Crimes Indictment for Good Friday**

## **WAR CRIMES INDICTMENT**

WAR\_CRIMES\_INDICTMENT\_Good\_Friday\_2017.pdf

Indictment read by Matt Ryan, recorded by Judy Bello:

[http://upstatedroneaction.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/Audio/Good\\_Friday\\_Indictment-Matt\\_Ryan.mp3](http://upstatedroneaction.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/Audio/Good_Friday_Indictment-Matt_Ryan.mp3)

To President Donald Trump, to Secretary of Defense Secretary James Mattis, to the full Military Chain of the Command, including Command Chief Michael Will, to all Service Members and civilian staff of Hancock Air Base, and to the local police and Sheriffs Department of the Town of Dewitt, NY:

Each one of you, when you became a public servant, serving in a government position or when you joined the United States Armed Forces or police, you publicly promised to uphold the United States Constitution. We take this opportunity to call your attention to Article VI of the US Constitution, which states:

*“This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.*

This clause is known as the Supremacy Clause because it provides that the Constitution and laws of the U.S., including treaties made under authority of the U.S. shall be supreme law of the land.

The Supremacy Clause provides part of the Supreme Law of the Land.

One Treaty duly ratified by the U.S. is the United Nations Charter. It was ratified by a vote of 89 to 2 in the U.S. Senate, and signed by the President in 1945. It remains in effect today. As such, it is part of supreme law of the land.

The Preamble of the U.N. Charter states that its purpose is to “save future generation from the scourge of war” and it further states, “all nations shall refrain from the use of force against another nation.”

This Treaty applies both collectively and individually to all three branches of government, on all levels, U.S. federal, state and local governments, starting with the executive branch: the U.S. President and the executive staff; the judicial branch: all judges

and staff members of the judiciary; the legislative branch: all members of the U.S. Armed Forces and all departments of Law Enforcement and all civilian staff, who have sworn to uphold the Constitution, which includes Article VI.

Under the U.N. Charter and long established international laws, anyone—civilian, military, government officials, or judge—who knowingly participates in or supports illegal use of force against another nation or its people is committing a war crime.

Today you must recognize that when you promised to uphold the Constitution, you promised to obey Treaties and International Law – as part of the Supreme Law of the Land and furthermore, under the Uniform Code of Military Justice of the U.S., you are required to disobey any clearly unlawful order from a superior.

Based on all the above,

*WE, THE PEOPLE, CHARGE THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT, DONALD TRUMP AND THE FULL MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND*

*TO COMMAND CHIEF MICHAEL WILL, EVERY DRONE CREW, AND SERVICE MEMBERS AT HANCOCK AIR BASE, WITH CRIMES AGAINST PEACE & CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, WITH VIOLATIONS OF PART OF THE SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND, EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS, WARS OF AGGRESSION, VIOLATION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND KILLING OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS.*

We charge that the Air National Guard of the United States of America, headquartered at Hancock Field Air National Guard Base, home of the 174th Fighter Wing of the Air National Guard, under the command of the 174th Fighter Wing Commander, Command Chief Michael Will, is maintaining and deploying the MQ-9 Reaper robotic aircraft, called drones.

These drones are being used not only in combat situations for

the purpose of assassinations but also for killings far removed from combat zones without military defense, to assassinate individuals and groups far removed from military action.

Extra judicial killings, such as those the U.S. carries out by drones are intentional, premeditated, and deliberate use of lethal force to commit murder in violation of U.S. and International Law.

It is a matter of public record that the US has used drones in Afghanistan and in Iraq for targeted killings to target specific individuals which has nearly always resulted in the deaths of many others.

There is no legal basis for defining the scope of area where drones can or cannot be used; no legal criteria for deciding which people can be targeted for killing, no procedural safeguards to ensure the legality of the decision to kill and the accuracy of the assassinations.

In support of this indictment, we cite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, who has said that the use of drones creates “a highly problematic blurring and the law applicable to the use of inter-state force... The result has been the displacement of clear legal standards with a vaguely defined license to kill, and the creation of a major accountability vacuum... In terms of the legal framework, many of these practices violate straightforward applicable legal rules.”

See United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Council Study on Targeted Killings, 28, May 2010.

The drone attacks either originating at Hancock or supported here are a deliberate illegal use of force against another nation, and as such are a felonious violation of Article VI of the US Constitution. By giving material support to the drone program, you as individuals are violating the Constitution,

dishonoring your oath, and committing war crimes. We demand that you stop participating in any part of the operations of MQ-9 drones immediately, being accountable to the people of United States and Afghanistan.

As citizens of this nation, which maintains over 700 military bases around the globe, and the largest, most deadly military arsenal in the world we believe these words of Martin Luther King still hold true, "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government".

There is hope for a better world when WE, THE PEOPLE, hold our government accountable to the laws and treaties that govern the use of lethal force and war. To the extent that we ignore our laws and constitution and allow for the unchecked use of lethal force by our government, allowing the government to kill who ever it wants, where ever it wants, how ever it wants with no accountability, we make the world less safe for children everywhere.

We appeal to all United States citizens, military and civilian, and to all public officials, to do as required by the Nuremburg Principles I-VII, and by Conscience, to refuse to participate in these crimes, to denounce them, and to resist them nonviolently.

Signed by: THE UPSTATE COALITION TO GROUND THE DRONES AND END THE WARS

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**Good Friday Statement at**



# Hancock Base

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ann Tiffany (315) 478-4571 Syracuse, NY  
Mary Anne Grady Flores (607) 280-8797 Ithaca, NY  
John Amidon (518)-312-6442 Albany, NY

[upstatedroneaction.org](http://upstatedroneaction.org), [www.knowdrones.com/](http://www.knowdrones.com/)

## GOOD FRIDAY HANCOCK DRONE ACTION STATEMENT

*April 14, 2017* ~ Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Recognizing that 70% of our nation identify as Christian, we come to the gates of the Hancock drone base to make real the crucifixion today. As Jesus and others were crucified by the Roman Empire, drones are used by the U. S. Empire in a similar fashion. In Roman times, crosses loomed over a community to warn people that they could be killed whenever the Empire decided. So too, our drones fly over many countries threatening extrajudicial killings of whoever happens to be in the vicinity.

On this Good Friday, we recall Jesus' call to love and nonviolence. We're asking this air force base and this nation to turn away from a policy which amounts to a modern-day crucifixion. Let's embrace Jesus call to build the Kingdom of God on Earth instead of killing suspected enemies and innocents, including children. In the process, we are crucifying Children, Families, Love, Peace, Community, Diplomacy, the Rule of Law, the US Constitution, the UN Charter, US Treaties and Due Process.

What if our country were constantly being spied upon by drones, with some of us killed by drones? What if many bystanders, including children, were killed in the process? If that were happening, we would hope that some people in that attacking country would speak up and try to stop the killing.

We're speaking up to try and stop the illegal and immoral drone attacks on countries against which Congress has not declared war.

**Those arrested today:** Ex-CIA analyst of 32 yrs. Ray McGovern, Jessica Stewart, Ed Kinane, Tom Joyce, James Ricks, Joan Pleune, Mark Colville, John Amidon, Brian Hynes.

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## **SHUT DOWN CREECH- A Success!**

**Successful Week at SHUT DOWN CREECH!**

**Democracy Now, April 4, 2016 (At 11.50)**

**Democracy Now, April 1, 2016 (At 11.27)**

25 Activists Arrested in Two days of Nonviolent Blockades at Gates to Creech AFB;

Activists from over 20 states participated in week-long Mass Mobilization to End Drone Warfare

**Videos of action by Holly Severson:**

1- Full Length kids action:

<http://smallworldradio.net/doubletap.mov>

2- Edited shorts from the action:

<http://www.smallworldradio.net/DN.mov>



Anti-drone protesters executed waves of multiple non-violent peaceful actions at Creech Air Force Base throughout the morning last Friday, April 1, with the intent of interrupting the drone killing activities that take place there. Creech AFB, in southern Nevada, is the

primary Command Center for the CIA's and President Obama's Drone Assassination program. At the most heavily used eastern gate, a total of 13 people were arrested in 4 separate actions. After military personnel re-opened the main base gate in the later morning after the 1st action there, three more waves of blockades occurred. The 3rd and 4th waves breeched a barricade near the gate and continued to block the road, ultimately stalling gate operations for nearly an hour totally, counting all actions at that gate. Another 4 were arrested at a 2nd gate.



Shut Down Creech

The first incident at the eastern gate occurred at approximately 7:00 AM when a group of six children and eight adults all dressed as angels, performed a mock drone attack on a funeral. The activists were demonstrating the gruesome U.S. practice of firing drone missiles into funerals for victims

previously killed by U.S. drone attacks, with hopes that militants might also be killed. A ballerina led the procession, laying red roses on the entry road of the main gate, followed by the other children carrying a casket. The funeral procession was interrupted by a simulated drone attack that killed and injured many of the mourners. Ultimately seven adults were arrested after they refused to leave the roadway after a 5 minute warning.



At approximately the same time, actions took place at the other two base gates, leading to

more arrests. The blockade at the 2nd gate focused on the criminal aspects of the U.S. drone assassination program. Activists stretched yellow crime scene tape around the base sign and across the entrance to the gate, preventing vehicles from entering. One protester laid across the roadway to portray a drone victim. And at the seldom used most western gate a small group held a silent meditation vigil for peace. Activists successfully delayed Air Force personnel (and presumably some drone pilots and technicians), from entering the base throughout the morning.

“Many Creech personnel arrived to the base before the normal 6-8am rush hour on Friday, presumably to avoid the protest. Activists who participated in this collective effort consider even that a success because the protest is having a direct impact on daily drone operations. These sustained actions are forcing the military to change their daily routines, and potentially stimulating



more discussion about the drone policies in question and the growing national opposition to drone killing,” says Toby Blomé, one of the organizers. “We deeply hope that our voices will one day soon be heard, and the expanding use of these deadly and destabilizing weapons against the most vulnerable people in the world will cease.”

On Thursday, the day before Friday’s gate blockades, 8 activists, including 7 veterans were arrested in a earlier blockade at the heavily used eastern gate, blocking morning traffic as well.



The two days of actions were part of a week-long protest at the base, culminating in a total of 25 arrests during the 2nd Annual National Mass Mobilization against Drone Warfare known as SHUT DOWN CREECH. Activists from over 20 states converged at “Camp

Justice,” the peace camp directly across from Creech AFB, for daily rush hour vigils, nonviolence training workshops, and strategizing meetings to prepare for these nonviolent blockades to impede drone killing.

[www.ShutDownCreech.blogspot.com](http://www.ShutDownCreech.blogspot.com)

These activities were done to highlight the Obama administration’s drone killing program that leads to many civilian deaths and violates international law.

**Friday’s arrestees:**

Leslie Angeline  
Fred Bialy  
Toby Blomé  
Cynthia Papermaster  
Dennis DuVall  
Arla Ertz  
Rene Esplanade  
Ron Faust  
John Ford  
MaryKate Glenn  
Chris Nelson  
Mahai'a Oliveira  
Shirley Osgood  
Flora Rogers  
Tyler Schaeffer  
Brian Terrell  
Susan Witka



(Photos by Holly Severson and Toby Blomé)