

# Press Release for Day of Atonement Actions

*Ban Killer Drones, Upstate Drone Action, October 3, 2021*

Just two weeks ago, several online journals published an article by Brian Terrell, a Catholic Worker from Maloy, Iowa, entitled *"No, the Longest War in U.S. History is Not Over"*.

In it, Brian pointed out the significance of October 7, 2001. On this day, in 2001, the United States began a 20-year long war against Afghanistan and initiated the so-called U.S. global *"War on Terror"*.

Brian believes that October 7th needs to be remembered especially in light of President Biden's pledge to hunt down people anywhere in the world who are viewed by the U.S. government as threats. Biden said: *"We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay"*. His threat is based on the U.S. use of weaponized drones to kill anyone, at anytime, anywhere in the world.

We, as members of the Ban Killer Drones network, propose to observe October 7, 2021 as a *"A Day of Atonement"*, a day to repent for the war crimes of our government and military in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere around the world.

Emblematic of those crimes is the August 29th U.S. revenge drone attack in Kabul that killed ten civilians.

As U.S. citizens whose tax dollars went into buying the MQ-9 Reaper drone that made that attack, and the missile it fired, the blood of Zemari Ahmadi and his three children, Zamir, 20, Faisal, 16, and Farzad, 10; Ahmadi's cousin Naser, 30; the children of Ahmadi's brother Romal: Arwin, 7, Benyamin, 6, and Hayat, 2; and two 3-year-old girls, Malika and Somaya is on our hands.

On Thursday, October 7th, we will gather, and we urge all those reading this to gather, at places of worship at 11am to call for a real end to the 20 years of U.S. terror against the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. We urge a ban on weaponized drones and an end to any "*Over the Horizon*" airstrikes against Afghanistan and any other country. We will also call on our religious leaders to speak out clearly for peace, ending what has too often been a tragic, enabling silence from faith leaders over the 20 years.

Organize as best you can on such short notice. Having talking points for the media is key to any action. Call the press multiple times before the date. Television staffs need to get their copy edited for the evening sound bites. Help them succeed. Thank them.

Here are some talking points:

- 1) 10/7 was the start of 20 years of U.S. terror against the people of Afghanistan and the Middle East and elsewhere.
- 2) The fiasco of the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan that was exposed with the U.S. departure from that tortured nation has also exposed the mistake religious leaders made in supporting the war and "supporting the troops".
- 3) President Biden has vowed to continue drone attacks under the banner of "*Over the Horizon*"—continued illegal immoral assassinations and more generalized attacks. It appears that possibly 90% of those killed by weaponized drones have been other than those who were targeted. We urge religious leaders to call for an end to the use of weaponized drones, the illegal "*Over the Horizon*" and the U.S. vigilantism that it represents.
- 5) U.S. military contractors are eager to make China our enemy. Now is the time for religious leaders **not** to be silent. It is time for them to call for diplomatic

responses to China and to oppose a U.S. military build-up in Asia.

Bring signs and flyers, and, if possible, posters showing the photos and the names of the members of the Ahmadi family killed by the August 29 U.S. drone attack, to places of worship in your community.

**See this video:** In Memory of the victims of the U.S. Drone Strike in Kabul, September 29, 2021

**Read Jack Gilroy's article on Covert Action:** Blessed be the Warmakers? Why Post-9/11 American Religious Leaders Must Atone

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

**Day of Atonement Letter to Pastors**

**Day of Atonement Planned Actions**

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## **PR: Rich Man's War; Poor People's Blood (Update with Video)**

UpstateDroneAction.org

Livestream on Youtube by Other Voices, Other Choices

# Rich Man's War; Poor People's Blood

## 7 Arrested at Hancock Reaper Drone Base with Giant Bloody Dollars

Monday, 25 September 2017 at 9 AM, 7 members of the grassroots group Upstate Drone Action once again were arrested as they delivered a citizen's war crime indictment to the chain of command at Hancock Air Force Base. Upstate Drone Action also placed a huge dollar sign [\$] dripping with "blood" in the main entrance way to the base. The six-foot high dollar sign dramatizes what the group believes determines the many overseas wars the Pentagon/CIA engages in: corporate greed.

Hancock AFB – on East Molloy Rd, town of DeWitt, County of Onondaga, State of New York, just north of Syracuse – hosts the 174th Attack [sic] Wing of the NY National Guard. The 174th is one of two Reaper drone Attack Wings in New York State. Piloted from Hancock, the MQ9 Reaper drone is an unmanned, satellite-directed assassin flown over Afghanistan. CIA also uses such airborne robots for its clandestine, illegal, lethal missions over Northwest Pakistan and other majority-Islamic nations and oil lands.

According to ***"LIVING UNDER DRONES: Death, Injury and Trauma to civilians from US Practices in Pakistan,"*** published by Stanford University and New York University Law Schools, such missions are responsible for the deaths of many hundreds of noncombatants, including women and children, in that region.

*Short review of events with interviews by John Amidon*

According to Julianne Oldfield,

*"The Hancock Reaper terrorizes whole communities, generating desperate refugees."*

Mark Scibilia-Carver adds that

*“U.S. taxpayers fund this terrorism keeping the pot boiling and creating enormous ill will toward the United States – instead of funding health, education and infrastructure here.”*

Today’s action at Hancock’s main gate is simply one episode in Upstate Drone Action’s persistent nonviolent campaign to expose Reaper drone war crime. Since 2010 there have been some 200 anti-Reaper arrests at Hancock in about a dozen such street theater actions. These have resulted in extreme bails, maximum fines, Orders of Protection, and incarcerations...as well as some acquittals.

**Those arrested:** *Ann Tiffany, Syracuse ... Dan Burgevin, Trumansburg, NY ... Ed Kinane, Syracuse ... Harry Murray, Rochester ... Julianne Oldfield, Syracuse ... Mark Scibilia-Carver, Trumansburg, NY ... Rae Kramer, Syracuse ...*

They were charged with Disorderly Conduct and Trespass, and released with Arraignment tickets.

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# Weaponized Drones And The Endless “War on Terror”

***Ed Kinane at Left Forum***

*Session 7, 3:40 to 5:40 p.m., Sunday, May 22, 2016*

*Room 1,127*

*John Jay College of Criminal Justice, NYC*

*Panel with Ed K., Nick Mottern, Debra Sweet, Shelby Sullivan-*

*Bennis*

*Moderator: Amanda Bass*

Like the phony “war on drugs,” the phony “war on terrorism” promotes economic interests, serves political agendas, entrenches militarism. Neither war reduces drug use or violence. Nor are they designed to.

Terrorism – past and present – pervades the U.S. psyche and economy. Terrorism, so-called, and the fear thereof, blunts our minds, shrinks our hearts. This contrived national obsession gives the Pentagon and NSA/Homeland Security their ever-expanding powers. It tightens their grip. It swells their coffers.

Their bloated budgets, like the Congress that funds them, march to corporate drummers. Since World War II, terrorism/militarism has been exceedingly profitable for the so-called “defense” industry (think, for example, Lockheed Martin). U.S. corporations thrive on the export of weapons and weapon systems. Peace kills the war economy. Why seek peace?

The high-tech war industry – the U.S. economy’s warped backbone – enriches the rich, deprives the poor. Military spending sucks the life out of civil society. That military spree, barely monitored, finances death-dealing projects; these profit-intensive projects preempt job-intensive, life-serving ones.

Pentagon budgets assure grossly underfunded housing, schooling, health and infrastructure development. Along with the nuke industry – now in its eighth decade – the perpetuated terrorism/militarism nexus drives economic disparity, propping up this nation’s class structure.

Patriots and propagandists endlessly invoke, but seldom define, “terrorism.” Now, I’ll do the unusual – I’ll define “terrorism.” Terrorism is the use, or threat, of violence against civilians for military, political or economic ends.

This definition cuts to the chase, cuts through the layers of jingoism and obfuscation perpetrated by the patriots and propagandists.

The definition has four corollaries:

~ First. Contrary to U.S. mainstream media usage, terrorists aren't inevitably people of color. Nor are they primarily swarthy or sallow. Here in the U.S. the term "terrorism" somehow only applies to what they – non-whites – do, not to what whites or the U.S. does.

~ Second. In the 20th and 21st centuries, it's fascism and capitalism that have colonized the skies. Hence most terrorism has been aerial: V-2 rockets, Cruise missiles, Hellfire missiles, napalm, white phosphorus, cluster bombs, depleted uranium, weaponized drones....

~ Third. Most terrorism is wholesale, not retail; most is state terrorism. Most terrorism is perpetrated by uniformed military. In these centuries most war casualties – in their tens of millions are civilian.

~ Last. Since at least August 6, 1945 the Pentagon has been the world's most relentless single purveyor of terrorism.

Bottom line: the so-called "war on terror" is a racist war, a war for hegemony, a war for profit. It's a war its perpetrators and its perpetuators have no desire to see end.

**Terror is nothing new;** it's built into this nation's DNA. Consider the continent-wide armed robbery of indigenous lands. Thanks to their higher tech weaponry, European invaders ethnically cleansed Native Americans – mostly non-combatants. Like our counterparts in Israel and other colonial settler states, U.S. Americans militarily occupy stolen land.

Yes, we are occupiers – and by a curious inversion or dialectic, now it is U.S. Americans who are finding ourselves

occupied. The occupation is so incremental, so normalized, it's barely visible to us.

If the U.S.-as-occupied-nation notion seems outlandish, consider the following:

- why was the interstate highway system built to military specification by a general,
- or why does the NSA so comprehensively monitor our phones and email,
- or why is every effort is made to keep the U.S. people distracted and dumbed down,
- or why does the judiciary neglect the First Amendment and why, despite Article Six of the Constitution, does the judiciary ignore International Law (*much as Southern judges ignored lynching*),
- or why are the police so heavily armed and drilled in military shoot-to-kill tactics,
- or why does the U.S. have such a vast prison system,
- or why do military bases, in all their redundancy, proliferate throughout the land,
- or – and this brings us directly back to today's panel – why are surveillance and weaponized drones, so deadly overseas, increasingly flying over the U.S.?

Further, regarding our national DNA, consider the centuries-long wholesale abduction and displacement of Africans – robbing them of their labor, liberty, languages, dignity and their offspring. Ask: how did such a regime last so long? Without a whip at her back, a noose around his neck, no human endures such rape and servitude. See the film “12 Years a Slave.”

That terror regime in full force lives on today with mass incarceration and what author Michelle Alexander calls “The New Jim Crow.” Police assassinating young black men channel Ku Klux Klan castration. Both are seldom prosecuted. (Note the enduring intersection of impunity and racism.)



We've been conditioned to believe terrorism is violence perpetrated by the "other"— the non-white other. Blind to the origins of white supremacy and privilege, we are the legatees of our previous — and ongoing — terrorisms. Only when terrorism is defined do we see Manifest Destiny and slavery for what they were. Only when terrorism is defined do we see that today's "War on Terrorism" for what it is: a war of, for and by terrorism.

Today's so-called "War on Terrorism" — quotation marks are a must — features aerial bombing of tribal people and people of color who can barely shoot back: the Anglosphere globalizing its centuries-long terror track.

Since August 6, 1945 the world has been chilled by U.S. nuclear blackmail. Since the grotesquely one-sided air war on Viet Nam and since the 2003 "shock and awe" terror attacks on Baghdad, the world knows it resists the Imperium at its peril. The world knows the U.S. mostly and more readily targets people of color — whether Japanese, Southeast Asian, West Asian, or...American. The dark-skinned world waits, defiantly, wondering who will be next.

Aerial terror can't neutralize, but it does provoke, non-state resistance — a resistance sporadically erupting as terrorism. How convenient for the propagandists! The hunter/killer MQ9 Reaper drone and its cowardly ilk seem for now to be just the thing for taking out so-called "bad guys." However, for each "bad guy" assassinated, many civilians are killed or maimed. More are recruited to resist. Not smart. While drones can be tactically clever, recruiting your enemy is strategically stupid...unless, of course, you profit from keeping the pot boiling.

Up our way in Central New York the local mainstream media normalizes the hunter/killer Reaper drone remotely piloted from Hancock Air Force Base on the outskirts of Syracuse. The Reaper, a former Hancock commandant boasts, operates over

Afghanistan 24/7. These robots are deployed to kill with impunity. The media downplay, if not ignore, drone war illegality, its evasion of due process, its violating others' sovereignty, and the government lies surrounding its terror. The media sanitize Reaper transgression against human bodies and human rights. The media ignore Reaper indecency, Reaper cowardice.

The Syracuse Post-Standard ignores the back story behind any blowback – always called “terrorism” – of those avenging and resisting U.S. aggression. Further, perhaps sensing instinctively what a boon to business drones and arms races are, the Post ignores the deadly prospect of weaponized drone proliferation.

U.S. media has little to say about drone “collateral damage” incinerating and dismembering women and children and other noncombatants, whether within or beyond so-called “legal” war zones. But our local media surely typify U.S. mainstream media. So, let me ask: how many in this room heard much about the killing of 150 unknown human beings by U.S. drones and manned aircraft on a single day, March 7, 2016, in Somalia – Somalia, a desperately poor tribal nation the U.S. isn't even at war with? This massacre, noted in the New York Times, didn't rate a blip in the Post-Standard.

The December 17 Post-Standard reported that the Reaper now is actually flying – not just being remotely controlled – out of Hancock Air Force Base and from Syracuse's civilian international airport. The page 1 story, festooned with color photos, is headlined “REAPER DRONE MAKES HISTORY IN SYRACUSE.”

With no pretense to journalistic balance, such stories fail to note that since 2010 our grassroots group, Upstate Drone Action, has been continually protesting the Hancock Reaper and its operating unit, the 174th Attack Wing of the New York State National Guard. The increasingly militarized local police, at Hancock's bidding, arrest us as we block Hancock's

main gate and exercise our First Amendment right to petition the government for redress of grievance. Maximum fines and multiple incarcerations ensue.

But the Post-Standard doesn't acknowledge such erosion of civil liberty. Nor does it investigate or even mention our allegations of Hancock war crime. Further, the Post has been eerily silent about the role that domestic drones are beginning to play in policing and intimidating dissidents and minorities.

Like the 1950s' "Atoms for Peace" hype masking the dark side of the then-emerging nuclear industry, mainstream media downplay the drone dark side. The Post, it seems, doesn't want to jinx upstate New York's becoming the Silicon Valley of an emerging domestic drone money machine. Over the next several years Governor Cuomo will be subsidizing that industry with tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

What does domestic drone development and deployment have to do with terrorism? Plenty. Like the government-subsidized nuclear industry, the domestic drone industry (again think Lockheed Martin) will maintain the facilities, research, engineering expertise, skilled labor, and operators – i.e. the industrial base – that the Pentagon draws on for its terror wars.

As long as perpetual war keeps yielding corporate profit, state terrorism will keep "making history." If we let it. ###

[[drone terrorism remarks for 2016 left forum]]