

# Human Rights Council To Investigate Obama's Killer-Drone Program

by Carl Osgood

Nov. 1—The British imperial control over the U.S. Presidency, which gained a significant foothold after the British/Saudi-spawned 9/11 attack under the Bush-Cheney Administration, has taken a huge step forward under British puppet-President Barack Obama. And now Obama, whether or not he wins re-election, is moving to make his dictatorial practices permanent, including his infamous killer-drone program. To regain their country, Americans have to not only get rid of Obama, but the entrenched apparatus determined to police the U.S. and the world in support of the British Empire.

Obama has set up a targeted killing machine, which he runs from the White House, and which is intended to be permanent, secret, and unaccountable. Every Tuesday, he is presented with a list of potential targets by John Brennan, his counter-terrorism advisor, and designates who, on that list, will be the next to die, most likely from a missile fired by a Predator or Reaper drone, operated by either the CIA or the military's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC).

Officially, the Obama Administration has never acknowledged the targeted killing program, although everybody knows it exists, but, in the past year, has sent out three of its top officials to make speeches justifying the program, without even the fig leaf of due process. According to various estimates, Obama's killing spree has killed more than 3,000 people, a significant portion of them civilians, including three American citizens, yet there hasn't even been a pretense of oversight by Congress. Lawsuits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) seeking information about the program have been rebuffed by government lawyers who refuse to even acknowledge that it exists. The killing program was only superficially mentioned in the Presidential debates, with Mitt

Romney avowing that he completely supports the program, and would continue it.

However, there is a growing demand across the world for accountability for the Administration's targeted killing campaign. This was noted by Ben Emmerson QC (Queen's Council), the UN Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur for Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, in remarks delivered at Harvard University's School of Law on Oct. 25. Indeed, the Human Rights Council has been looking into the U.S. campaign for quite some time. Emmerson's colleague, South African lawyer Christof Heyns, the Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial Killings, Summary and Arbitrary Executions, issued a report last June, calling on the U.S. to "specify bases for decisions to kill rather than capture 'human targets,' and whether the state in which the killing takes place has given consent."

Heyns had noted at the time that there were a number



UN/Eskinder Debebe

*Ben Emmerson, UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights, has charged that the Obama Administration is "holding its finger in the dam of public accountability" on its killer-drone strikes.*

of cases in which initial drone attacks were followed by attacks on groups of people who had responded as *rescuers* to the initial attack. If those reports are true, Heyns said, then “those further attacks are a war crime,” a view with which Emmerson expressed sympathy.

## Obama Is Blocking Accountability

“Now the Obama Administration continues formally to adopt the position that it will neither confirm nor deny the existence of the drone program while allowing its senior officials to give public justifications of its supposed legality in personal lectures and interviews,” Emmerson said. “In reality, as the administration must no doubt be aware, it is holding its finger in the dam of public accountability.”

Emmerson cited three judicial cases, one in London and two in Pakistan, where the legality and lack of accountability of Obama’s program are being challenged. In the London case, a Pakistani man whose father was killed in a drone strike in March 2011 has brought suit against the British government for aiding the U.S. drone campaign. His goal is a declaration from the High Court in London that the sharing of intelligence data by Britain’s signals intelligence agency (GCHQ), is unlawful.

In Pakistan, there is a case moving through the courts against two former CIA officials who are alleged to have been responsible for a drone strike that caused a disproportionate number of casualties. In the second case, the plaintiffs are seeking a declaration that drone strikes inside Pakistan by U.S. forces amount to acts of war. Should such a declaration be issued, this would put pressure on Pakistan’s air force, to shoot down U.S. drones flying inside Pakistan’s airspace without specific permission.

In the U.S., the ACLU has two ongoing Freedom of Information Act lawsuits on the drone program, and a third, filed together with the Center for Constitutional Rights, charging that the targeted killings of Anwar al-Awlaki and two other American citizens in Yemen in 2011 “violated the Constitution’s fundamental guaran-



*Lawsuits filed by the ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights state that the targeted killings of three American citizens in Yemen in 2011 “violated the Constitution’s fundamental guarantee against the deprivation of life without due process of law.”*  
Shown: a Predator drone firing a missile.

tee against the deprivation of life without due process of law.”

Emmerson reported that the process began with calls by several members of the Human Rights Council, notably Russia and China, but also Pakistan, where the majority of drone strikes have taken place, for an investigation. “It is an issue which is moving rapidly up the international agenda,” Emmerson said. He noted that there has been a great deal of debate over how these operations should be judged, but “the first step is to establish the facts reliably,” and that requires investigative bodies that are truly independent from those countries whose actions are in question. He said that mechanisms can be established to protect the confidentiality of intelligence and technical data, “but if the relevant states are not willing to establish effective, independent monitoring mechanisms that meet those standards then, in the last resort it may be necessary for the United Nations to act and to establish such mechanisms, itself.”

## ‘Global War Paradigm’ Asserted

Emmerson also scored the “global war paradigm” which was put in place following 9/11 attacks in 2001, a paradigm that claims that the U.S., with its allies, is engaged in a war against a stateless enemy in which the entire globe is the battlefield, and that therefore actions by the U.S. and its allies globally are to be judged solely by the law of war, rather than the law applicable in

peacetime, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

Emmerson noted that the last 11 years have demonstrated that terrorism is a phenomenon that can't be defeated by military force. "It is a reality with which nations and the international community must continue to contend and it calls, therefore, for a sustainable approach that not only tackles the manifestations but also the causes and does so within a rule of law framework," Emmerson said.

"But in the meantime, since 2001, the global war paradigm has done immense damage to a previously shared international consensus on the legal framework underlying both international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and it has also, at the same time, and intentionally, given a spurious justification to a range of human rights and humanitarian law violations." Indeed, he could have added, the use of military force, both against terrorist groups and to promote regime change in the Arab world, has actually increased the chaos and lawlessness in these regions, and led to the further spread of the very terrorist groups that we have declared ourselves to be at war with.

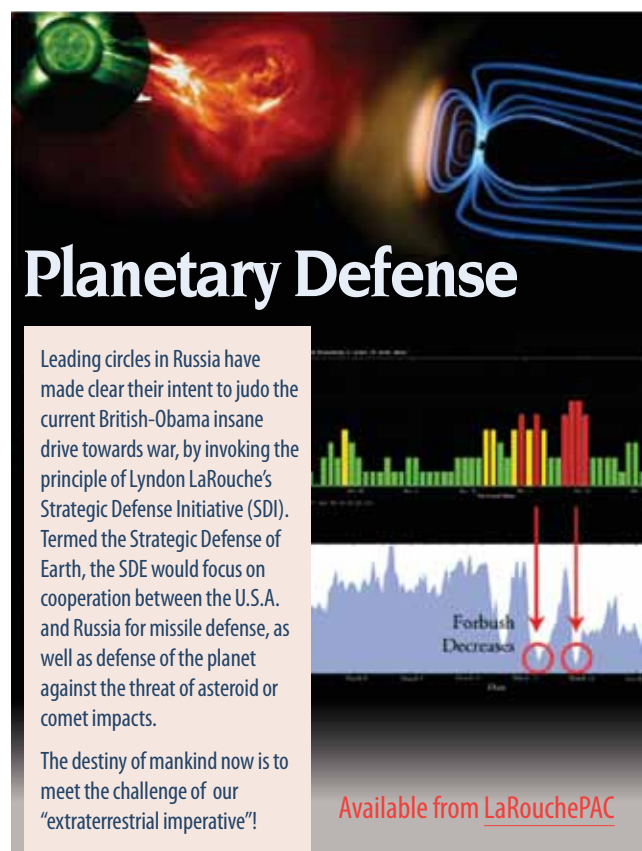
Emmerson also issued a challenge to Republican President candidate Mitt Romney, as it has been reported that Romney has said in the past that he doesn't believe that water boarding is torture. While Emmerson thoroughly demolished that argument, he expressed the belief that Obama is against torture. What he failed to acknowledge is that no one who was involved in the decisions that led to the use of torture, or so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" against detainees during the George W. Bush Administration, has been prosecuted for those crimes, a decision that was made by Obama himself, at the outset of his administration, leaving those crimes as precedents for a future administration that might like to employ such techniques, again.

## Obama Plans To Make Drone War Permanent

Emmerson delivered his speech two days after the *Washington Post* revealed that Obama and his national security staff were putting in place the structures to make the drone war a self-perpetuating, permanent institution within the national security apparatus. The "disposition matrix," as the kill list is known within the government, is now the centerpiece of Obama's counter-insurgency policy, and the targeted killing campaign is likely to last another decade, the *Post* reported, citing unnamed officials.

Indeed, the campaign is reaching a milestone of sorts. The estimated death toll of 3,000 people exceeds the number of people who died in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. The drone campaign has expanded from Pakistan and Afghanistan to North Africa. Centered on Camp Lemonnier, the U.S. commando base in Djibouti, it extends into Yemen, Somalia, the Seychelles, and elsewhere in Africa. The Central Intelligence Agency, under Director David Petraeus, has asked for White House approval of its plan to expand its own drone fleet, indicating how much of a paramilitary organization the CIA has become.

The intention, from the White House to the CIA to the JSOC, is to institutionalize this apparatus so that it perpetuates indefinitely, in a war that will never end. There will always be "terrorists" to add to the kill list. It will generate short-term results, but those results will obscure the long-term costs. "The problem with the drone is, it's like your lawn mower," Bruce Riedel, a former CIA analyst and Obama counter-terrorism adviser, told the *Post*. "You've got to mow the lawn all the time. The minute you stop mowing, the grass is going to grow back."



**Planetary Defense**

Leading circles in Russia have made clear their intent to judo the current British-Obama insane drive towards war, by invoking the principle of Lyndon LaRouche's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Termed the Strategic Defense of Earth, the SDE would focus on cooperation between the U.S.A. and Russia for missile defense, as well as defense of the planet against the threat of asteroid or comet impacts.

The destiny of mankind now is to meet the challenge of our "extraterrestrial imperative"!

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The graphic features a top section with a green sphere and blue energy lines. Below is a bar chart with green and red bars. A line graph shows a blue line with a sharp dip labeled 'Forbush Decreases' with two red circles and arrows pointing to the dip. The bottom section is a dark grey area with the text 'Available from LaRouchePAC' in red.