

FLY KITES NOT DRONES 2016



Fly Kites Not Drones is a campaign which came from young people in Afghanistan who told us that the threat of armed drones were now making the beautiful blue skies a fearful sight for Afghan children. Drones work best on clear days where clouds do not obscure the cameras fitted on them, clear days are also considered perfect for kite flying.

The act of flying a kite on the Persian New Year, 21st March, in solidarity with people living in countries under armed drones is now an international event with people of all ages and political persuasion taking part, all with the belief that remote controlled assassination should be stopped.

CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

Children in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan, and Yemen, live in fear of the threat of drone strikes. Blue skies have become an ominous symbol of potential threat from 'death machines' as Mohammed Tuaiman called them, who was thirteen when he was killed by a drone in Yemen.

Living with fear and uncertainty has undermined their happiness but also countless children have been traumatised by first-hand experience of the devastation of a drone strike. Drones have also accidentally killed hundreds of children across these countries, proving their technology is far from precise.

- In Pakistan alone it is estimated around 200 children have been killed by drone strikes.

<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/10/drones-dream-yemeni-teenager-mohammed-tuaiman-death-cia-strike>

It is vital the next generation of children understand the full implications of the use of armed drones, and are asked to question the unaccountability of drone operations for innocent deaths. Children can be asked to envisage a peaceful world where conflict is solved in a nonviolent way.

MAKING ENEMIES FASTER THAN WE CAN KILL THEM

When an innocent member of the community is killed by a drone the grief distends in all directions creating anger and a desire for vengeance. Many see drones are invisible warfare in which there is no 'combatant' to engage with. Some of those who engaged in terrorism in the west in recent years have argued that they are responding to innocent people being killed by these 'invisible' enemies. Drones are reducing security for all.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/obama-drone-war-isis-recruitment-tool-air-force-whistleblowers>

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/oct/15/90-of-people-killed-by-us-drone-strikes-in-afghani/>

<http://www.msf.org.uk/article/yemen-third-msf-health-facility-bombed>

The limited risk to military personnel makes it tempting for the authorisation of a drone attack to be given when it wouldn't be with conventional means of armed attacks. Suggesting drones ultimately create more war and more attacks.

It is not acceptable to breach international humanitarian law using drones for extrajudicial killings. In August 2015 British drone operators killed British National, Reyaad Khan, in Syria. When Syria was not even an operational arena of war for UK forces.

<http://dronewars.net/2015/09/28/stop-british-drone-targeted-killing/>

PROLIFERATION & AUTONOMOUS DRONES

There is no legislation in place to stop other nations following America's foreign policy example and using drone warfare in whichever countries they deem necessary.

<http://dronewars.net/2015/09/25/drone-proliferation-in-light-of-increased-targeted-killing/>

It is estimated that around twenty countries now have armed drone capabilities, with China producing and selling much of the new technology.

The European countries of Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Sweden are collaborating on the development of a stealth drone, the "Neuron".

America has conflicting interests in keeping their technology disclosed or exporting it. So far it has only transferred UAS (Unmanned Ariel Systems) to the UK. But since 2015 the Obama administration has set a new, less stringent export policy, in which it predicts the nations will "begin to employ military UAS more regularly" and the United States will assess each potential buyer on a "case-by-case" basis...

A high proportion of drone pilots suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Drone operators will have watched their targets over a period of time and then will continue to watch them as they die in the aftermath of a strike. A conventional bomber will not have invested this time in their targets, so are potentially less likely to be emotionally troubled by their actions. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_l6ec62l6l

A military answer to the discomfort surrounding being a UAS assassinator is the development of 'autonomous' drones in the future, which use face recognition technology and will be able to operate independently from pilots.

Unless we want to live world where an unexplained assassination can take place at any location at any time and where clear blue skies become synonymous with drone strikes we must take action and demand legislation against the continued use and development of armed drones.

