

The Criminal US Confirms Unrestricted Permanent War Anywhere it Chooses

by Glenn Greenwald via van - The Guardian UK *Friday, May 17 2013, 11:18pm*
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It must FIRST be clearly stated that the precedent was set by Imperial Germany in WWI -- the Germans openly publicised their brutal and inhumane intentions prior to committing their war crimes. They laboured under the same misapprehension/DELUSION the US labours under today; that is, by openly stating one's intentions it makes it legal. Well, the plain fact is, it DOESN'T, as the Germans discovered to their very great cost.

The similarities made today by Washington and the Pentagon and Imperial Germany are astounding if not tragic for America and its people. The US has no LEGAL right whatsoever to conduct wars anywhere it chooses or kill anyone it chooses -- that is the INTERNATIONAL LEGAL POSITION regardless of the demented claims of Washington sociopaths. Gentlemen, put plainly, you will ALL pay the highest price it is possible to pay for your crimes against humanity, be assured of that fact; you have learned absolutely nothing from history and civilised conventions; you are making EXACTLY the same mistakes made a century earlier and assuredly the same outcome is GUARANTEED!

Article from the Guardian follows:

Washington gets explicit: its war on 'terror' is permanent

Senior Obama officials tell the US Senate: the 'war', in limitless form, will continue for 'at least' another decade - or two!

Last October, senior Obama officials anonymously unveiled to the [Washington Post](#) their newly minted "disposition matrix", a complex computer system that will be used to determine how a terrorist suspect will be "disposed of": indefinite detention, prosecution in a real court, assassination-by-CIA-drones, etc. Their rationale for why this was needed now, a full 12 years after the 9/11 attack:

"Among senior Obama administration officials, there is a broad consensus that such operations are likely to be extended at least another decade. Given the way al-Qaida continues to metastasize, some officials said no clear end is in sight. . . . That timeline suggests that the United States has reached only the midpoint of what was once known as the global war on terrorism."

On Thursday, the Senate Armed Services Committee held a hearing on whether the statutory basis for this "war" - the 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF) - should be revised (meaning: expanded). This is how Wired's Spencer Ackerman (soon to be the Guardian US's national security editor) described the most significant exchange:

"Asked at a Senate hearing today how long the war on terrorism will last, Michael Sheehan, the assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity

conflict, answered, 'At least 10 to 20 years.' . . . A spokeswoman, Army Col. Anne Edgecomb, clarified that Sheehan meant the conflict is likely to last 10 to 20 more years from today - atop the 12 years that the conflict has already lasted. Welcome to America's Thirty Years War."

That the Obama administration is now repeatedly declaring that the "war on terror" will last at least another decade (or two) is vastly more significant than all three of this week's big media controversies (Benghazi, IRS, and AP/DOJ) combined. The military historian Andrew Bacevich has spent years warning that US policy planners have adopted an explicit doctrine of "endless war". Obama officials, despite repeatedly boasting that they have delivered permanently crippling blows to al-Qaida, are now, as clearly as the English language permits, openly declaring this to be so.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that this war has no purpose other than its own eternal perpetuation. This war is not a means to any end but rather is the end in itself. Not only is it the end itself, but it is also its own fuel: it is precisely this endless war - justified in the name of stopping the threat of terrorism - that is the single greatest cause of that threat.

In January, former Pentagon general counsel Jeh Johnson delivered a highly-touted speech suggesting that the war on terror will eventually end; he advocated that outcome, arguing:

'War' must be regarded as a finite, extraordinary and unnatural state of affairs. We must not accept the current conflict, and all that it entails, as the 'new normal.'"

In response, I wrote that the "war on terror" cannot and will not end on its own for two reasons: it was intentionally designed by its very terms to be permanent, incapable of ending, since the war itself ironically ensures that there will never come a time when people stop wanting to bring violence back to the US (the operational definition of "terrorism"), and the nation's most powerful political and economic factions reap a bonanza of benefits from its continuation. Whatever else is true, it is now beyond doubt that ending this war is the last thing on the mind of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize winner and those who work at the highest levels of his administration. Is there any way they can make that clearer beyond declaring that it will continue for "at least" another 10-20 years?

The method of America's elite endless war machine is that, learning from the unpleasantness of the Vietnam war protests, it has rendered the costs of war largely invisible. That is accomplished by heaping all of the fighting burden on a tiny and mostly economically marginalized faction of the population, by using sterile, mechanized instruments to deliver the violence, and by suppressing any real discussion in establishment media circles of America's innocent victims and the worldwide anti-American rage that generates.

Though rarely visible, the costs are nonetheless gargantuan. Just in financial terms, as Americans are told they must sacrifice Social Security and Medicare benefits and place their children in a crumbling educational system, the Pentagon remains the world's largest employer and continues to militarily outspend the rest of the world by a significant margin. The mythology of the Reagan presidency is that he induced the

collapse of the Soviet Union by luring it into unsustainable military spending and wars: should there come a point when we think about applying that lesson to ourselves?

Then there are the threats to Americans' security. Having their government spend decades proudly touting itself as "A Nation at War" and bringing horrific violence to the world is certain to prompt more and more people to want to attack Americans, as the US government itself claims took place just recently in Boston (and as clearly took place multiple other times over the last several years).

And then there's the most intangible yet most significant cost: each year of endless war that passes further normalizes the endless rights erosions justified in its name. The second term of the Bush administration and first five years of the Obama presidency have been devoted to codifying and institutionalizing the vast and unchecked powers that are typically vested in leaders in the name of war. Those powers of secrecy, indefinite detention, mass surveillance, and extra-judicial murder/assassination are not going anywhere. They are now permanent fixtures not only in the US political system but, worse, in American political culture.

Each year that passes, millions of young Americans come of age having spent their entire lives, literally, with these powers and this climate fixed in place: to them, there is nothing radical or aberrational about any of it. The post-9/11 era is all they have been trained to know. That is how a state of permanent war not only devastates its foreign targets but also degrades the population of the nation that prosecutes it.

This war will end only once Americans realize the vast and multi-faceted costs they are bearing so that the nation's political elites can be empowered and its oligarchs can further prosper. But Washington clearly has no fear that such realizations are imminent. They are moving in the other direction: aggressively planning how to further entrench and expand this war.

One might think that if there is to be a debate over the 12-year-old AUMF, it would be about repealing it. Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who heroically cast the only vote against it when it was originally enacted by presciently warning of how abused it would be, has been advocating its repeal for some time now in favor of using reasonable security measures to defend against such threats and standard law enforcement measures to punish them (which have proven far more effective than military solutions). But just as happened in 2001, neither she nor her warnings are deemed sufficiently Serious even to consider, let alone embrace.

Instead, the Washington AUMF "debate" recognizes only two positions: (1) Congress should codify expanded powers for the administration to fight a wider war beyond what the 2001 AUMF provides (that's the argument recently made by the supreme war-cheerleaders-from-a-safe-distance at the Washington Post editorial page and their favorite war-justifying think tank theorists, and the one being made by many Senators from both parties), or (2) the administration does not need any expanded authority because it is already free to wage a global war with very few limits under the warped "interpretation" of the AUMF which both the Bush and Obama DOJs have successfully persuaded courts to accept (that's the Obama administration's position). In other words, the shared premise is that the US government must continue to wage unlimited, permanent war, and the only debate is whether that should happen under a new law or the old one.

Just to convey a sense for how degraded is this Washington "debate": Obama officials at yesterday's Senate hearing repeatedly insisted that this "war" is already one without geographical limits and without any real conceptual constraints. The AUMF's war power, they said, "stretches from Boston to the [tribal areas of Pakistan]" and can be used "anywhere around the world, including inside Syria, where the rebel Nusra Front recently allied itself with al-Qaida's Iraq affiliate, or even what Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) called 'boots on the ground in Congo'". The acting general counsel of the Pentagon said it even "authorized war against al-Qaida's associated forces in Mali, Libya and Syria". Newly elected independent Sen. Angus King of Maine said after listening to how the Obama administration interprets its war powers under the AUMF:

This is the most astounding and most astoundingly disturbing hearing that I've been to since I've been here. You guys have essentially rewritten the Constitution today."

Former Bush DOJ official Jack Goldsmith, who testified at the hearing, summarized what was said after it was over: Obama officials argued that "they had domestic authority to use force in Mali, Syria, Libya, and Congo, against Islamist terrorist threats there"; that "they were actively considering emerging threats and stated that it was possible they would need to return to Congress for new authorities against those threats but did not at present need new authorities"; that "the conflict authorized by the AUMF was not nearly over"; and that "several members of the Committee were surprised by the breadth of DOD's interpretation of the AUMF." Conveying the dark irony of America's war machine, seemingly lifted right out of the Cold War era film Dr. Strangelove, Goldsmith added:

Amazingly, there is a very large question even in the Armed Services Committee about who the United States is at war against and where, and how those determinations are made."

Nobody really even knows with whom the US is at war, or where. Everyone just knows that it is vital that it continue in unlimited form indefinitely.

In response to that, the only real movement in Congress is to think about how to enact a new law to expand the authorization even further. But it's a worthless and illusory debate, affecting nothing other than the pretexts and symbols used to justify what will, in all cases, be a permanent and limitless war. The Washington AUMF debate is about nothing other than whether more fig leaves are needed to make it all pretty and legal.

The Obama administration already claims the power to wage endless and boundless war, in virtually total secrecy, and without a single meaningful check or constraint. No institution with any power disputes this. To the contrary, the only ones which exert real influence - Congress, the courts, the establishment media, the plutocratic class - clearly favor its continuation and only think about how further to enable it. That will continue unless and until Americans begin to realize just what a mammoth price they're paying for this ongoing splurge of war spending and endless aggression.

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It is no secret today that the criminal policy 'decisions' made by bought US 'errand boy' politicians are scripted for them by **Bilderberg, Trilateralist and CFR elites**. Again the solution presents itself in blazing letters -- the restoration of US DEMOCRACY and JUSTICE rests ONLY with the

MAJORITY, the PEOPLE, not some infinitesimal plutocratic MINORITY that have temporarily hijacked government.

When the people (majority) arise from their slumber the outcome is guaranteed -- it's your move, PEOPLE/America!

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/may/17/endless-war-on-terror-obama>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-565.html>