

# ALETHO NEWS

## ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ

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### President Peace's Predators

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos, October 19, 2009

Seems like President Barack Obama — *Nobel Peace Laureate Obama* — has taken his predecessor's predator drone program and jacked it up with steroids. *The New Yorker's Jane Mayer reports this week* that the number of Obama-authorized strikes in Pakistan equals the sum launched by the Bush Administration — in the last three years of his tenure. Wow. And the Republicans were worried that he wouldn't be man enough. Mayer's article goes on to detail two predator drone programs — one publicly acknowledged by the U.S Military, the other directed by the C.I.A:

From Mayer: The U.S. government runs two drone programs. The military's version, which is publicly acknowledged, operates in the recognized war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq, and targets combatants in support of U.S. troops stationed there. The C.I.A.'s program is aimed at terror suspects around the world, including in places where U.S. troops are not based. The program is classified as covert, and the C.I.A. declines to provide any information to the public about where it operates, how it selects targets, who is in charge, or how many people have been killed. Nevertheless, reports of fatal air strikes in Pakistan emerge every few days. According to a new study by the New America Foundation, the number of drone strikes has gone up dramatically since Obama became President. General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, the defense contractor that manufactures the Predator and its more heavily armed sibling, the Reaper, can barely keep up with the government's demand. With public disenchantment mounting over the U.S. troop deployment in Afghanistan, many in Washington support an even greater reliance on Predator strikes. And because of the program's secrecy, there is no visible system of accountability in place. Peter W. Singer, the author of "Wired for War," a recent book about the robotics revolution in modern combat, argues that the drone program is worryingly "seductive," because it creates the perception that war can be "costless." Cut off from the realities of the bombings in Pakistan, Americans have been insulated from the human toll, as well as the political and moral consequences.

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