

Jeremy Scahill - Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield

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A NOTE TO THE READER

- Highlight Loc. 302-3

THIS IS A STORY about how the United States came to embrace assassination as a central part of its national security policy.

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CHAPTER 1: "There Was Concern... That We Not Create an American Hit List" - WASHINGTON, DC, 2001-2002

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- Highlight Loc. 370-72

"The world is a battlefield" was the mantra repeated by the neoconservatives in the US national security apparatus and placed on PowerPoint slides laying out the plans for a sweeping, borderless global war. But terrorists would not be their only target. The two-hundred-year-old democratic system of checks and balances was firmly in their crosshairs.

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- Highlight Loc. 372-77

Room S-407 was nestled in the attic of the Capitol building. It was windowless and accessible only by one elevator—or a narrow staircase. The room was classified as a secure facility and had been fitted with sophisticated counterespionage equipment to block any attempt at eavesdropping or monitoring from outside. For decades, the room had been used to house the most sensitive briefings of members of Congress by the CIA, the US military and scores of other figures and entities that inhabit the shadows of US policy. Covert actions were briefed and debriefed in the room. It was one of a handful of facilities in the United States where the nation's most closely guarded secrets were discussed.

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- Highlight Loc. 398-400

The spate of assassinations had become so out of control that a Republican president, Gerald Ford, felt the need to issue Executive Order 11905 in 1976, explicitly banning the United States from carrying out "political assassinations."

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- Highlight Loc. 403-5

President Jimmy Carter amended Ford's assassination ban to make it more sweeping. He removed language that limited the ban to political assassinations and also extended the ban on participating in assassinations to US proxies or contractors.

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- Highlight Loc. 407-10

Reagan, Bush and Clinton all developed work-arounds to the ban. Reagan, for example, authorized a strike on the home of Libyan dictator Muammar el Qaddafi in 1986 in retaliation for his alleged role in a bombing of a night club in Berlin. The first President Bush authorized strikes on Saddam Hussein's palaces during the 1991 Gulf War. Clinton did the same during Operation Desert Fox in 1998.

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- Highlight Loc. 417-18

Rather than granting a carte blanche authority to conduct these operations, the Clinton White House required each proposed action to be thoroughly vetted.

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- Highlight Loc. 448-51

The neoconservatives had long advocated a posture that, in the wake of the Cold War, the United States was the lone superpower and should exert its weight aggressively around the globe, redrawing maps and expanding empire. At the center of their vision was a radical increase in US military spending, plans for which were drawn up by Cheney and his aides when he was defense secretary in 1992.

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- Highlight Loc. 464-66

The neocons also envisioned further asserting US dominance over natural resources globally and directly confronting nation-states that stood in the way. Regime change in multiple countries would be actively contemplated, particularly in oil-rich Iraq.

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- Highlight Loc. 475-79

Within weeks of taking office, Rumsfeld and Cheney pressed to reverse President Clinton's signing, at the very end of his time in office, of the Rome Statute, which recognized the legitimacy of an international criminal court. They would not stand for US forces being subjected to potential prosecution for their actions around the world. Soon after becoming defense secretary, Rumsfeld wrote that he wanted his legal staff—and those of other US government agencies—to immediately determine "how we get out of it and undo the Clinton signature."

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- Highlight Loc. 540-45

During his time as defense secretary, Cheney began planting the seeds for another program that would aid the consolidation of executive supremacy, commissioning a study from the oil services giant Halliburton that laid out a plan for privatizing as much of the military bureaucracy as possible. Cheney realized early on that using private companies to wage US wars would create another barrier to oversight and could afford greater secrecy for the planning and execution of those wars, both declared and undeclared. Cheney would then go on to head Halliburton for much of the 1990s, spearheading a drive to create a corporate shadow army that would ultimately become a linchpin of his covert and overt wars when he returned to the White House in 2001.

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- Highlight Loc. 570-72

"From the start, we were building the case against Hussein and looking at how we could take him out and change Iraq into a new country," said former treasury secretary Paul O'Neill. "And, if we did that, it would solve everything. It was all about finding a way to do it."

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- Highlight Loc. 623-30

While the Afghanistan war was producing spectacular headlines trumpeting the swiftness and decisiveness of the US military campaign against the weak Taliban government, Cheney and Rumsfeld and their neoconservative deputies were busy plotting a global war. This war would extend to the home front with warrantless wiretapping, mass arrests of Arabs, Pakistanis and other Muslim immigrants and a prodigious rollback of the civil liberties of American citizens. To wage it, they would have to dismantle and manipulate a bureaucracy of oversight and legal review that had been built up over successive administrations. All this would open the door for an array of tactics that had been used before but could now be deployed on an unprecedented scale: covert action, black ops, secret prisons, snatch operations and what amounted to a blanket rebranding of assassinations as "High Value Targeting."

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- Highlight Loc. 680-86

Although the Bush administration was working to widen the scope of acceptable lethal force against bin Laden and his top deputies, the process was marked by the same concerns expressed during the Clinton era about granting sweeping lethal authority. The Bush White House was embarking on a path similar to the Clinton administration's, trying to circumvent the assassination ban while still requiring careful review of each proposed lethal operation. On September 11, all of that would change. As the World Trade Center towers crumbled to the ground, so too did the system of oversight and review of lethal covert ops that had been carefully constructed over the course of the previous decade.

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- Highlight Loc. 701-3

Under the Constitution, it is the Congress, not the president, that has the right to declare war. But seventy-two hours after 9/11, Congress took a radical step in a different direction. On September 14, 2001, the House and Senate gave President Bush unprecedented latitude to wage a global war, passing the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF).

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- Highlight Loc. 737-38

Among Waugh's rejected ideas was allegedly a plot to kill bin Laden in Khartoum and dump his body at the Iranian Embassy in an effort to pin the blame on Tehran, an idea Waugh said Cofer Black "loved."

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- Highlight Loc. 778-81

In a sign of things to come, the covert operations Black organized immediately after 9/11 relied heavily on private contractors. The initial CIA team consisted of about sixty former Delta Force, ex-SEALs and other Special Forces operators working for Black as independent contractors, making up the majority of the first Americans to go into Afghanistan after 9/11.

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- Highlight Loc. 822-23

Authority for targeted kills was radically streamlined. Such operations no longer needed direct presidential approval on a case-by-case basis. Black, the head of the Counterterrorism Center, could now directly order hits.

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- Highlight Loc. 849-52

The CIA had first looked into using naval vessels and remote islands—such as uninhabited islands dotting Lake Kariba in Zambia—as possible detention sites at which to interrogate suspected al Qaeda operatives. Eventually, the CIA would build up its own network of secret “black sites” in at least eight countries, including Thailand, Poland, Romania, Mauritania, Lithuania and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. But in the beginning, lacking its own secret prisons, the Agency began funneling suspects to Egypt, Morocco and Jordan for interrogation.

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- Highlight Loc. 860-66

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION did not create the CIA’s rendition program. It started under Clinton. [...] Under Clinton, more than seventy renditions were conducted. In some cases, US planes would land in countries and ferry their targets back to the United States for trial.

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- Highlight Loc. 870-71

However, in cases where the United States wanted intelligence rather than justice, it would render them to third countries where they would have no legal rights.

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- Highlight Loc. 876-78

As the new kill/capture program began to kick into full gear in late 2001, the CIA’s number-three man at the time, Buzzy Krongard, declared the “war on terror” would be “won in large measure by forces you do not know about, in actions you will not see and in ways you may not want to know about.”

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- Highlight Loc. 928-32

Powell and the State Department’s lawyers had told President Bush that they believed that, under the Geneva Convention, Taliban and al Qaeda detainees were entitled to legal protections and humane treatment while in enemy custody. They furthermore warned that in not offering America’s enemies such protections, it would endanger the lives of US military personnel captured in the war. On February 7, 2002, President Bush made his decision.

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CHAPTER 2: Anwar Awlaki: An American Story - THE UNITED STATES AND YEMEN, 1971-2002

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- Highlight Loc. 987-89

Anwar was in the first class, along with Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, the son of Yemen's president. The two boys would be classmates for eight years. Ahmed Ali would go on to become one of the most feared men in Yemen and the head of its Republican Guard.

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- Highlight Loc. 996-1000

In order for Anwar to get the scholarship, he had to have a Yemeni passport. [...] The Yemeni authorities listed his birthplace as Aden, Yemen. This would later cause trouble for Anwar.

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- Highlight Loc. 1058-60

In fact, during the 2000 presidential campaign of George W. Bush, he [Awlaki] thought the conservative Republicans would be better than the liberal Democrats, and he encouraged the Muslims there to elect George Bush. Because, he said, he was against abortions and things like that. These things conform to Muslim tradition," Nasser recalled.

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- Highlight Loc. 1093-1106

There is another strange mystery regarding Anwar's early run-ins with the FBI, one that will likely never be solved. While he was an imam in San Diego, Anwar was busted twice on charges of soliciting prostitutes. In the first case, he pleaded guilty to a lesser charge and paid a \$400 fine and in the other, he was fined \$240, given three years' probation and sentenced to two weeks of community service. The arrests would later be used to paint Anwar as a hypocrite, but the preacher offered up a different explanation: the US government was trying to blackmail him into becoming an informant. In 1996, Anwar claimed, he was in his minivan at a stoplight waiting for it to turn green when his vehicle was approached by a middle-aged woman who knocked on the passenger-seat window. "By the time I rolled down the window and before even myself or the woman uttering a word I was surrounded by police officers who had me come out of my vehicle only to be handcuffed," he recalled. "I was accused of soliciting a prostitute and then released. They made it a point to make me know in no uncertain terms that the woman was an undercover cop. I didn't know what to make of the incident." Then, Anwar said, a few days later he was visited by two men he said identified themselves as federal agents, who told him they wanted his "cooperation." Anwar said they wanted him to "liaise with them concerning the Muslim community of San Diego. I was greatly irritated by such an offer and made it clear to them that they should never expect such cooperation from myself. I never heard back from them again until" a year later. That was his second bust for soliciting. "This time I was told that this is a sting operation and you would not be able to get out of it," Anwar recalled.

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- Highlight Loc. 1130-32

Anwar condemned the [9/11] attacks as "heinous." "Our hearts bleed for the attacks that targeted the World Trade Center as well as other institutions in the United States, despite our strong opposition to the American biased policy towards Israel,"

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- Highlight Loc. 1168-72

Undoubtedly, Awlaki's mosques seemed to attract an array of characters who would go on to become terrorists. But the extent of Awlaki's knowledge of who they were or what they were plotting is difficult to determine. In examining Awlaki's experiences and statements from this period, the mystery only deepens. What unfolded between Awlaki and the US government behind closed doors in the months after 9/11 and what played out publicly between Awlaki and the US media at the same time is a bizarre tale, filled with contradictions. It was as though Anwar Awlaki were living a double life.

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- Highlight Loc. 1251-52

IN ONE OF THE ODDER TWISTS in Awlaki's post-9/11 story, he was invited by officials at the US Department of Defense (DoD) to address a Pentagon luncheon on February 5, 2002.

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- Highlight Loc. 1268-70

Awlaki may not have made it into the White House, but in early 2002, he was invited to lead a prayer service in the US Capitol. His sermon there was featured in the 2002 PBS documentary Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet.

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CHAPTER 3: Find, Fix, Finish: The Rise of JSOC - WASHINGTON, DC, 1979-2001

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- Highlight Loc. 1328-34

On paper, JSOC appeared to be an almost academic entity, and its official mission was described in bland, bureaucratic terms. Officially, JSOC was the "joint headquarters designed to study special operations requirements and techniques; ensure interoperability and equipment standardization; plan and conduct joint special operations exercises and training; and develop joint special operations tactics."

In reality, JSOC was the most closely guarded secret force in the US national security apparatus. Its members were known within the covert ops community as ninjas, "snake eaters," or, simply, operators. Of all of the military forces available to the president of the United States, none was as elite as JSOC. When a president of the United States wanted to conduct an operation in total secrecy, away from the prying eyes of Congress, the best bet was not the CIA, but rather JSOC.

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- Highlight Loc. 1336-37

JSOC was formed out of the ashes of the failed mission to rescue fifty-three American hostages held in the US Embassy in Tehran, Iran, following the Islamic revolution of 1979.

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- Highlight Loc. 1353-65

Colonel Walter Patrick Lang spent much of his military career in dark ops. Early in his army service, he helped coordinate the operation that led to the capture and killing of Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. He was a member of the Studies and Observation Group, SOG, which ran the targeted killing campaign for the United States during the Vietnam War, and eventually became the head of the secret Defense Intelligence Agency global human intelligence program. He was posted in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and other hot spots around the globe. Lang also started the Arabic-language program at the West Point Military Academy. Throughout his career, he watched closely as the United States created this new special ops capability. The principal role of the "vanilla" Special Forces, like the Green Berets, was "training and leading indigenous forces, usually irregular forces against either regular forces or guerrilla forces. That's what they do, so they're attuned to foreigners. They seek to find people who are empathic, who work well with foreigners. Who like to sit around and eat with their right hand out of a common bowl bits of stringy old goat. And listen to somebody's gramma talk about the baloney, fictional ancestry of the tribe. They like to do that." Lang likened Green Berets to "armed anthropologists." JSOC, he said, was envisioned as "a counterterrorist commando outfit modeled on the British SAS [Special Air Service]. And the SAS does not do 'let's get happy with the natives' stuff. They don't do that. They're commandos, they kill the natives. These people are not very well educated about the larger picture of the effect that [their operations] have on the position of the United States in the world."

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- Highlight Loc. 1376-78

Originally called Mobility 6, this elite unit of seventy-five Navy SEALs would develop into the leading counterterrorist unit available to the US government. Its name was itself propaganda. At the time of

Team 6's founding, there were only two other SEAL teams, but Marcinko wanted the Soviets to think there were other teams of which they were unaware.

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- Highlight Loc. 1391-1409

JSOC was used in Grenada in 1983 when President Reagan ordered a US invasion and throughout the 1980s in Honduras, where the United States was coordinating support for the Contras in Nicaragua and battling a guerrilla insurgency inside of Honduras. [...] In the 1990s, they went on to play central, but secret, roles in the wars in the Balkans, Somalia, Chechnya, Iran, Syria and throughout Africa and Asia. In the former Yugoslavia, JSOC helped lead the hunt for accused war criminals, though it failed to capture its two main targets, Bosnian Serb leaders Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. Under a secret presidential directive issued by President Clinton, JSOC was authorized to operate on US soil in counterterrorism operations and to confront any WMD threats, circumventing the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits the military from conducting law enforcement domestically. In fact, some of JSOC's most sensitive missions were conducted at home. In 1993, Delta Force members participated in the disastrous raid against the Branch Davidian cult's compound in Waco, Texas. Some seventy-five people died in the raid, including more than twenty children and two pregnant women. JSOC also conducted security operations within America's borders when the 1994 World Cup and 1996 Summer Olympics were hosted by the United States.

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- Highlight Loc. 1450-62

He [Donald Rumsfeld] not only wanted the Pentagon to take over covert operations from the CIA but aimed to consolidate control over these operations himself, radically streamlining the established military chain of command. [...] In his memoir, Shelton described Rumsfeld's model of the secretary of defense as being "based on deception, deceit, working political agendas, and trying to get the Joint Chiefs to support an action that might not be the right thing to do for the country, but would work well for the President from a political standpoint."

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- Highlight Loc. 1524-68

Powell and his deputies asserted that "our allies and friends abroad would be more comfortable with retributive U.S. strikes against the perpetrators of 9/11 than with a global war against Islamist terrorists and their state supporters," recalled Douglas Feith. Powell, he asserted, believed a "narrowly scoped campaign of punishment would keep U.S. policy more in line with the traditional law enforcement approach to fighting terrorism." But the neoconservatives were intent on waging preemptive wars against nation-

states and sought to unleash the CIA from the legal and oversight bureaucracy. "Forget about 'exit strategies,'" Rumsfeld said two weeks after 9/11. "We're looking at a sustained engagement that carries no deadlines." [...] While Powell and the State Department were cautioning against widening the focus beyond Afghanistan, al Qaeda and the Taliban, Rumsfeld had been pushing to take the military campaign global.

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CHAPTER 4: The Boss: Ali Abdullah Saleh - YEMEN, 1970-2001; WASHINGTON, DC, 2001

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- Highlight Loc. 1587-88

Saleh became Yemen's leader in 1990, following the unification of the north, which he had ruled since the 1970s, and the Marxist government based in Aden, in the south. In Yemen, he was known as "The Boss."

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- Highlight Loc. 1660-69

While the Saleh show played out in public, with the Bush administration portraying Saleh as an ally in the newly branded "Global War on Terror," behind closed doors senior US officials were brokering agreements with Saleh to expand the US footprint in Yemen. During his meetings in Washington, which included visits at his personal suite at the Ritz Carlton Hotel on Twenty-second Street by Mueller and Tenet, Saleh was presented with an aid package worth up to \$400 million, in addition to funding from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Crucially for the United States, it would also include expanding the training of Yemen's special forces. It was this training that would permit US Special Forces to deploy inside Yemen while allowing Saleh to save face domestically. As part of Saleh's deal with the Bush administration, the United States set up a "counterterrorism camp" in Yemen run by the CIA, US Marines and American Special Forces that would be backed up by the US outpost in the nearby African nation of Djibouti, which also housed Predator drones. Tenet also arranged for the United States to provide Yemen with helicopters and eavesdropping equipment. Crucially, Saleh also gave Tenet permission for the CIA to fly drones over his territory.

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CHAPTER 5: The Enigma of Anwar Awlaki - THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE UNITED STATES AND YEMEN, 2002-2003

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- Highlight Loc. 1735-38

The warrant [for Awlaki's arrest] was not issued for his alleged contacts with the 9/11 hijackers or for soliciting prostitutes, but rather for passport fraud, stemming from Awlaki's scholarship application back in the early 1990s, listing Yemen as his place of birth. When he arrived in the United States for college and applied for a Social Security number, he had also listed his birthplace as Yemen.

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- Highlight Loc. 1791-92

Timimi was identified by the FBI for potential involvement in the "anthrax plots" that were uncovered after 9/11, and the Bureau also believed he might be involved with a network that sought to train Western jihadists on US soil.

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- Highlight Loc. 1793-1810

The meeting between Timimi and Awlaki would help form the basis for an alternative theory on Awlaki's relationship with the FBI; one in which he was not simply the target or person of interest in an investigation. Had the FBI actually flipped Anwar Awlaki and made him an informant? The trail of clues supporting this theory is compelling. Special Agent Ammerman, who facilitated Awlaki's release at JFK Airport, had not only worked the Awlaki case; he was also one of the lead investigators into Timimi after 9/11. [...] When Awlaki came to his home, Timimi said, he started talking about recruiting Western jihadists. "Ali had never, in his whole life, even talked to the guy or met him," Timimi's lawyer, Edward MacMahon, told me. "Awlaki just showed up at the guy's house and asked him if he could assist him in finding young men to join the jihad." [...] Timimi's friends said he suspected Awlaki may have been working with the FBI and trying to set him up.

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- Highlight Loc. 1837-40

Of course, there are other theories about Awlaki's visit to the United States and his meeting with Timimi—namely, that Awlaki was actually attempting to recruit young Westerners for jihad. It is also possible that the FBI intervened when Awlaki was detained at JFK to free him because the Bureau wanted to follow him once he was in the United States to investigate his movements and his contacts.

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- Highlight Loc. 1870-72

In late December, Awlaki left the United States, this time for good. A year later, an FBI official was asked why Awlaki had been allowed to leave. "We don't know how he got out," was the reply.

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CHAPTER 6: "We're in a New Kind of War" - DJIBOUTI, WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, 2002

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- Highlight Loc. 1875-1920

In mid-2002, US intelligence operatives discovered that the man they had fingered as one of the masterminds of the 2000 USS Cole bombing, Abu Ali al Harithi, was in Yemen. US officials had dubbed him "the godfather of terror in Yemen." [...] on November 5, Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy defense secretary, openly confirmed it was a US strike, angering Saleh as well as the CIA.

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- Highlight Loc. 1931-33

The targeted assassination of a US citizen away from the declared battlefield of Afghanistan sparked outrage from civil liberties and human rights groups. It was the first publicly confirmed targeted killing by the United States outside a battlefield since Gerald Ford implemented a ban on political assassinations in 1976.

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- Highlight Loc. 1946-48

In addition to launching a new kind of war in Yemen and the surrounding region, the drone strike that killed Hijazi would prove to be a precedent for Bush's successor, Barack Obama, who nearly a decade later asserted the right of the US government to kill another US citizen in Yemen.

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CHAPTER 7: Special Plans WASHINGTON, DC, 2002

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- Highlight Loc. 1991-95

On April 17, the Washington Post ran a front-page story alleging that US military forces had allowed Osama bin Laden to escape after being injured at Tora Bora in Afghanistan in December 2001, asserting in its lead paragraph that it was the "gravest error in the war against al

Qaeda." Rumsfeld was furious and believed that Cofer Black, then the counterterrorism chief at the CIA, had been the "deep background" source for the story. A month later, Black was "assigned to another position" at a CIA satellite office in Tysons Corner, Virginia.

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- Highlight Loc. 1999-2002

CIA Iraq specialists and the State Department were causing problems for the administration's drive to war with Iraq. Cheney and his top aide, Scooter Libby, began visiting the Agency to pressure analysts to deliver intel linking Iraq to 9/11 or proving that Iraq had an active WMD program. At the time, the pro-Iraq-war clique was receiving significant push-back from Powell's State Department and CIA analysts.

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- Highlight Loc. 2018-20

By mid-2002, Feith's "shop" had grown into the Office of Special Plans, the primary plan being to create a justification for an invasion of Iraq,

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CHAPTER 8: Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape - WASHINGTON, DC, 2002-2003

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- Highlight Loc. 2074-78

The November 2002 drone strike in Yemen was the opening salvo in the Bush administration's drive to expand US military action beyond the stated battlefield of Afghanistan. Although much of the media focus at the time was on the Bush administration's campaign to justify the invasion of Iraq, in secret the CIA was building up a black-site archipelago to deal with the rest of the world. Prisoners who had been snatched from various countries across the globe were being held in the gulags of foreign intelligence services, where they were interrogated and often tortured under the direction of US intelligence agents.

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- Highlight Loc. 2082-83

By December 2002, CIA director George Tenet would boast that the United States and its allies had already detained more than 3,000 suspected al Qaeda operatives and associates, in more than one hundred countries. But despite such proclamations, the game was only just beginning.

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- Highlight Loc. 2091-98

Rumsfeld and his deputies began seeking assistance from a secretive military program. The Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) was responsible for coordinating the rescue of US military personnel trapped in enemy territory, including in "denied areas," where their very presence—if exposed—could cause a major international crisis or scandal. But of particular relevance to Rumsfeld was JPRA's other work: preparing US forces for resisting enemy attempts to extract information from captured US personnel. All US special operators went through JPRA's horrid torture mill, a program known as SERE, for Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape. The SERE program was created to introduce US soldiers, sailors and airmen to the full spectrum of torture that "a totalitarian evil nation with a complete disregard for human rights and the Geneva Convention" could use on them if captured. At SERE training, soldiers would be subjected to a hellish regimen of torture tactics drawn from the techniques of vicious dictatorships and terrorists.

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- Highlight Loc. 2122-25

As JSOC reviewed the "failures" of the interrogation program the CIA and DIA were running at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld and his team soon began reviewing the possibility of taking interrogation of enemy combatants captured on the battlefield to the next level. The SERE program, they believed, could be reverse-engineered. The medieval tactics they had studied from history's greatest torturers would be their new interrogation manual.

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- Highlight Loc. 2155-56

By the summer of 2002, the War Council legal team, led by Cheney's consigliere, David Addington, had developed a legal rationale for redefining torture so narrowly that virtually any tactic that did not result in death was fair game.

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- Highlight Loc. 2204-7

The CIA was reporting to the White House—specifically Cheney's office—on its progress in using SERE tactics at its black sites, but JSOC could provide far greater flexibility and far less oversight. JSOC operators were tapped by the White House to participate in a parallel interrogation program known by its unclassified code name as Copper Green. Internally, the program was called Matchbox.

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- Highlight Loc. 2211-27

The terms "covert" action and "clandestine" operations are often thrown around as though they mean the same thing. They do not. "Covert action" is a doctrinal and legal term that, broadly speaking, refers to an activity whose sponsorship is meant to be a secret. It is meant to provide the United States with "plausible deniability." Such operations are extremely risky—not just in terms of the operational danger, but because they often involve secret US agents conducting operations inside the borders of a sovereign country without alerting its government. If the operation is exposed or disrupted, the potential for scandal is very real. [...] Military doctrine defines another class of activities, "clandestine operations," in which the point of secrecy is to protect the integrity of the mission, not to conceal its sponsor, the US government. The military may conduct operations that are both covert and clandestine, but these are rare. Unlike covert actions, clandestine operations do not require a presidential finding if "future hostilities" are "anticipated" in the country where they are taking place. Nor is the administration required to report the operation to Congress.

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- Highlight Loc. 2289-91

It was the beginning of what would be a multiyear project by Rumsfeld and Cheney to separate this small, elite, surgical unit from the broader chain of command and transform it into a global killing machine. Before 9/11, they had big plans for JSOC, but the terrorist attacks gave them all the ammunition they would need to win their own war against oversight of these elite and highly lethal forces.

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- Highlight Loc. 2315-16

Any country, friend or foe of the United States, would be fair game for operations. The CIA, the US ambassadors and the home government would not be looped in.

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- Highlight Loc. 2406-12

"It grew and went out of control under the vice president. It kinda went wild," Cannistraro, the former senior CIA officer, told me. "There were people at the Pentagon given the responsibility to run 'special Special Operations,' that didn't go through the regular chain of command, and that were kept separate from coordination with CIA, or the State Department, or other elements of the US government. And that was all justified on the basis that 9/11 meant that we were in a war, and this war would require special measures to deal with. And it got out of control. There were a couple of places where, because they weren't coordinated, they weren't informed, they killed people that were not real targets. They were wrong." He added, "It happened, frequently."

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CHAPTER 9: The Troublemaker: Stanley McChrystal - THE UNITED STATES, 1974-2003; IRAQ, 2003

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- Highlight Loc. 2477-83

Fury recalled a conversation he had had with then-Colonel McChrystal in which they discussed the failed Eagle Claw operation in Iran, the Delta Force hostage rescue attempt in 1980 that remained a stain on the Special Ops community. "It was an interesting and enlightening conversation. The essence of the discussion centered on COL McChrystal's reasoning that Beckwith should have continued the mission with fewer operators and lift helicopters. Even though the risk would have increased significantly, COL McChrystal felt the embarrassment in the eyes of the world of failing to try was exponentially more devastating to our nation's reputation than executing a high risk mission that might have even an outside chance of success. McChrystal believed the American people would never accept such a decision like that again."

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- Highlight Loc. 2517-25

McChrystal watched from the sidelines as the invasion of Iraq got under way. Before "Shock and Awe" began, an elite group of JSOC commandos, known as Task Force 20, deployed inside Iraq ahead of the larger invading force. Its mission was threefold: help invading forces develop targets for air strikes, uncover SCUD missiles and other weapons of mass destruction, and hunt down HVTs such as Saddam Hussein. The "super secret" Task Force 20 "had been operating in the Kurdish autonomous region of northern Iraq for more than a decade, and in 2002 its forces infiltrated Iraq proper," William Arkin reported in the Los Angeles Times in June 2003. "Commandos established 'hide sites' and listening posts, and they placed acoustic and seismic sensors on Iraqi roads to track activity. They penetrated Iraq's fiber-optic network to eavesdrop on communications." The task force, which numbered roughly one thousand personnel, included top-tier teams, each with a dozen commandos that would have free rein to travel throughout Iraq in pursuit of Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party leadership and military command structure.

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- Highlight Loc. 2597-2600

McChrystal believed that the Delta and Team 6 guys should work in tandem, but Fury said McChrystal quickly understood that it might not be the best approach. "It took a little while, but the General eventually recognized that the two units were apples and oranges and squaring them in that color coded box resulted in a fruit salad of

conflicting skill sets, SOPs [standard operating procedures], and even mindset.”

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- Highlight Loc. 2601-4

But nearly invisible in the breathless media narrative of the warrior-leader’s ascent is another McChrystal—a man who in reality had seen very little action before ascending to the post of JSOC commander after the Iraq invasion. This McChrystal was a climber who had cozied up to the right people politically, whether Democrats or Republicans, as well as key figures within the military bureaucracy. In essence, he was one of the chosen few.

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- Highlight Loc. 2629-2652

BREMER WAS A CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC CONVERT who had cut his teeth in government working for Republican administrations and was respected by right-wing evangelicals and neoconservatives alike. [...] In mid-April 2003, “Scooter” Libby and Paul Wolfowitz contacted Bremer about taking “the job of running the occupation of Iraq.” By mid-May, Bremer was in Baghdad, leading the Coalition Provisional Authority. [...] He described himself as “the only paramount authority figure—other than dictator Saddam Hussein—that most Iraqis had ever known.” Bremer’s first official initiative, reportedly the brainchild of Rumsfeld and his neoconservative deputy, Douglas Feith, was dissolving the Iraqi military and initiating a process of “de-Baathification,” which in Iraq meant a banishment of some of the country’s finest minds from the reconstruction and political process because party membership had been a requirement for many jobs in Saddam-era Iraq. Bremer’s “Order 1” resulted in the firing of thousands of schoolteachers, doctors, nurses and other state workers, while sparking a major increase in rage and disillusionment. [...] Bremer’s “Order 2”—disbanding the Iraqi military—meant that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers were forced out of work and left without a pension. “That was the week we made 450,000 enemies on the ground in Iraq,” one US official told the New York Times Magazine. Within a month of Bremer’s arrival, talk of a national uprising had begun. As the bloody impact of his decision to dissolve the military spread, Bremer amped up his inflammatory rhetoric. “We are going to fight them and impose our will on them and we will capture or, if necessary, kill them until we have imposed law and order upon this country,” he declared.

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- Highlight Loc. 2690-99

Zarqawi had traveled to Afghanistan to fight with the US-backed mujahedeen against the Soviet occupation. In early 2000, he had been indicted in absentia in a Jordanian court for plotting to attack American and Israeli tourists. The Bush administration had tried to use Zarqawi to prove an al Qaeda tie to Iraq, after Zarqawi allegedly

received medical treatment in Baghdad in 2002. When Bush made his case in a nationally televised address on October 7, 2002, that Saddam's regime posed a "grave threat," he cited "high-level contacts" between Saddam's government and al Qaeda, charging that "some al-Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq. These include one very senior al-Qaeda leader who received medical treatment in Baghdad this year, and who has been associated with planning for chemical and biological attacks." In his UN speech, Colin Powell called Zarqawi the leader of a "deadly terrorist network" that had been given safe haven by Saddam's government. But the charge that Zarqawi was in Baghdad with the consent of the Iraqi government was a dubious one. Saddam's regime and al Qaeda were rivals. Nonetheless, after the invasion, Zarqawi would eventually have a \$25 million bounty on his head and JSOC hunting him in Iraq.

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- Highlight Loc. 2706-10

IRAQ WOULD SERVE AS A laboratory for creating a new kill/capture machine, centered on JSOC, run by McChrystal and accountable to no one but a small group of White House and Pentagon insiders. Within months, the targeted kill/capture program would begin to resemble the CIA's Phoenix Program from the Vietnam War, in which the Agency, supported by US Special Operations Forces and indigenous militias, carried out a vicious campaign to "neutralize" the Vietcong and its support networks. In plain terms, the Phoenix Program was effectively a well-organized death squad.

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- Highlight Loc. 2720-23

"Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against them?" Rumsfeld wrote in a memo to Wolfowitz, Feith and Myers. It was an interesting question and one many were debating in the counterterrorism community.

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- Highlight Loc. 2735-38

At McChrystal's right hand as the forward commander of JSOC's High Value Targeting task force was William McRaven, a Navy SEAL renowned for his scholarly ambition. Although McChrystal would receive much of the credit for building up JSOC's capabilities and overseeing its greatest hits, people in the Special Ops community knew that many of the key achievements of the HVT Task Force were largely McRaven's doing.

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- Highlight Loc. 2775-77

McRaven's time at the NSC would put him on a path to becoming one of the most powerful figures in US military history and a transformative figure in the institutionalization of assassination as a central component of US national security policy. After 9/11, no more than two dozen men were on the US kill list. Once McRaven got to work, the list grew every year.

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CHAPTER 10: "Their Intention and Our Intention Is the Same" - SOMALIA, 1993-2004

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- Highlight Loc. 2838-42

On average, Qanyare [a Somali warlord] said, the Americans would pay him \$100,000-\$150,000 a month for his services and the use of his airport. Classified US diplomatic cables sent from the embassy in Nairobi detailed a plan to use "non-traditional liaison partners (e.g., militia leaders)" in Somalia. Its aim, according to the cables, was "locating and nullifying high value targets." Thus was born a US-funded coalition of warlords who would serve as Washington's men in Somalia.

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- Highlight Loc. 2844-45 AM

What started as a quiet intelligence-gathering operation against a handful of al Qaeda members would soon turn into a full-scale dirty war, reminiscent of the US support for the Contras in Nicaragua in the 1980s.

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- Highlight Loc. 2846-50

SOMALIA COULD HAVE TURNED OUT very differently from the country the United States and its warlords helped create after 9/11. Radical Islam was new to Somalia and was not widespread prior to the launch of the Global War on Terror. Many seasoned Somalia analysts believed that the handful of radicals in the country could have been contained and that the central aim of stabilizing the country should have been to disarm and disempower the warlords. Instead, Washington directly supported an expansion of their power and, in the process, caused a radical backlash in Somalia, opening the doors wide for al Qaeda to step in.

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- Highlight Loc. 2897-2900

Davidson University professor Ken Menkhaus, a Somalia scholar who had written several papers on political Islamic tradition in Somalia prior

to 9/11, estimated that the number of Somali nationals with "significant links" to al Qaeda was between ten and twelve. A few foreign fighters might also be holed up there, but because of a dearth of intelligence—Shinn referred to it as "abysmal"—"snatch and grab" type tactics would be ill-advised, he warned.

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- Highlight Loc. 2912-19

As JSOC's resources were overwhelmingly dedicated to Iraq, the US approach in Somalia consisted of a covert CIA proxy war. And the United States made Mohamed Qanyare [a Somali warlord] its man in Mogadishu. [...] It was the beginning of a multiyear relationship among a network of murderous warlords and the CIA that would set Somalia on a course toward even further chaos and bloodshed. It would also result in the very Islamist militant forces Washington wanted crushed emerging more powerful than they had ever been before.

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- Highlight Loc. 2960-66

Although some US intelligence indicated that scouting missions for the embassy bombings were coordinated in Somalia, the Clinton White House would not permit any incursions into Somalia. Instead, the US response was to strike suspected al Qaeda sites in Afghanistan and Sudan with longrange cruise missiles in a mission code-named Operation Infinite Reach. The target of the Sudan bombing, al Shifa factory, turned out to be a legitimate pharmaceutical plant, which produced half of Sudan's medications, and not, as the United States alleged, a facility for manufacturing nerve gas. Regardless, East Africa had been ripped wide open as a new front in what was rapidly becoming a covert US war against al Qaeda. "We are involved in a long-term struggle," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared. "This is unfortunately the war of the future."

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- Highlight Loc. 3021-24

THE "US GOVERNMENT WAS NOT HELPING the [Somali] government, but was helping the warlords that were against the government," Buubaa, the former foreign minister, complained. Washington "thought that the warlords were strong enough to chase away the Islamists or get rid of them. But it did completely the opposite. Completely the opposite. It was folly, you know, a foolish idea."

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CHAPTER 11: "A Defeated Enemy Is Not a Vanquished One"

- YEMEN, 2003

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- Highlight Loc. 3094-96

Saleh's approach to alleged al Qaeda operatives, Scheuer asserted, "almost certainly equates to a license for the militants to do what they want, where they want, as long as it is not in Yemen."

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CHAPTER 12: "Never Trust a Nonbeliever" - THE UNITED KINGDOM, 2003

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- Highlight Loc. 3134-36

In London, Awlaki delivered a speech in which he warned young Muslims not to be taken in by the perceived kindness of their non-Muslim neighbors or friends. "The important lesson to learn here is never, ever trust a kuffar [a nonbeliever]. Do not trust him."

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CHAPTER 13: "You Don't Have to Prove to Anyone That You Did Right" - IRAQ, 2003

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- Highlight Loc. 3221-25

Like many other experienced intelligence officers who had been tracking al Qaeda prior to 9/11, Shaffer believed that the focus was finally placed correctly on destroying the terror network and killing or capturing its leaders. But then all resources were repurposed for the Iraq invasion. "I saw the Bush administration lunacy up close and personal," Shaffer said. After a year and a half of running the African ops, "I was forced to shut down Operating Base Alpha so that its resources could be used for the Iraq invasion."

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- Highlight Loc. 3235-42

By late 2003, the US military's conventional commanders were growing concerned about the techniques they heard were being used by TF-121 to interrogate prisoners. It sounded a lot like the descriptions they had heard in whispers about what the CIA was doing at its black sites. "Detainees captured by TF 121 have shown injuries that caused examining medical personnel to note that 'detainee shows signs of having been beaten,'" according to a classified military report

prepared for top US generals in Iraq at the time. One officer was quoted in the report as saying, "Everyone knows about it." The report alleged that some of the treatment of detainees by TF-121 could "technically" be illegal and gravely warned that the mass detention of Iraqis could fan the flames of a brewing insurgency, adding that Iraqis could perceive the United States and its allies as "gratuitous enemies."

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- Highlight Loc. 3264-70

[After the capture of Saddam Hussein] Rumsfeld announced that he believed "the eight-month-long insurgency might begin to run out of gas." In reality, the war was just beginning, particularly for McChrystal and McRaven. And the CIA knew it. "We are seeing the establishment of an insurgency in Iraq," Robert Richer, the head of the CIA Near East Division, had told Bush during an intelligence briefing in late 2003. "That's a strong word," Rumsfeld interjected. "What do you mean? How do you define insurgency?" When Richer explained what he meant, Rumsfeld quipped, "I might disagree with you." Finally, Bush weighed in. "I don't want to read in the New York Times that we are facing an insurgency," he declared.

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- Highlight Loc. 3273-80

Although much lip service was paid during the ensuing period to the presence of al Qaeda in Iraq, it was seldom pointed out that the foreign fighters came because of the US invasion. If anything, Saddam's regime and al Qaeda were enemies. And though there was undoubtedly an al Qaeda presence after the March 2003 invasion, Zarqawi and AQI, or al Qaeda in Iraq, represented a tiny portion of those attacking US occupation forces. There were disparate militias, unemployed Iraqi Army units, Shiite guerrillas and various political factions vying for local power, all of which were rising against the United States. American attacks, such as the siege of Fallujah in April 2004 and a shootout in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, combined with the broader war against the popular cleric Moqtada al Sadr, were swelling the ranks of the insurgency. Despite all the talk of sharp sectarian divides in Iraq, the US occupation was actually uniting Iraqis, Shiite and Sunni, in a common cause against their occupiers. The United States should have realized early on that its own disastrous policies were driving the chaos in Iraq.

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- Highlight Loc. 3285-90

There were two wars in Iraq. One being waged by the conventional army, which was largely an occupation; the other was a war of attrition being fought by JSOC. McChrystal's men did not believe in taking orders from conventional commanders. General Sanchez, who from 2003 to 2004 was the top commander in Iraq, told me that JSOC forces would

barely give his command the courtesy of informing his office of when they were going to conduct operations, even in areas where the conventional US forces were holding territory. When they did, he said, it was just to alert the conventional forces that they'd be doing a hit and to have his men stand clear.

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- Highlight Loc. 3303-7

Exum recalled hunting Izzat Ibrahim al Douri, one of Saddam's senior military commanders, who had received the designation as the King of Clubs in the High Value Target deck of cards. They got a tip that Douri was in a particular house and conducted a night raid. As they began the raid, Exum's Ranger team came under fire from two men. His team returned fire and gunned the men down. "We found out later that we were on two weeks old intelligence," he remembered. "We killed them and, you know, we kind of realized later that these guys were just out guarding the neighborhood generator." The men, Exum speculated, likely thought the Rangers were thieves.

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CHAPTER 14: "No Blood, No Foul" - IRAQ, 2003-2004

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- Highlight Loc. 3397-3401

Suspected insurgents snatched in house raids or taken off the streets of Iraq cities were brought to NAMA and placed in one of two structures: "Motel 6" was a plywood barracks; "Hotel California" was an actual cellblock that a few months earlier had been used by Saddam's regime as a prison. The acronym NAMA stood for "Nasty-Ass Military Area." Its motto, as advertised in posters throughout the camp, was "No Blood, No Foul." A Defense Department official said it was a play on a task force adage: "If you don't make them bleed, they can't prosecute for it."

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- Highlight Loc. 3419-26

So secretive was NAMA that when General Geoffrey Miller, the former commander of the Guantánamo Bay prison, tried to visit, he was not permitted to enter the camp until he took his request all the way up the chain of command. There was a special ID to get into Camp NAMA, and the only people permitted to enter without it were prisoners, shackled and hooded. Ironically, even though NAMA personnel didn't want General Miller in their camp, the general seemed to be on their side. During that trip to Iraq, while touring other facilities including Abu Ghraib, Miller reportedly chastised US military prison administrators for "running a country club," charging they were being

too lenient on detainees. Miller suggested they "GTMO-ize" their detention facilities and, according to military officials who met with the "GTMO team," they discussed how using dogs was "effective in doing interrogations with Arabs" because of "Arabs being fearful of dogs."

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- Highlight Loc. 3462-68

The Bush administration also wanted to find WMDs and to retroactively prove that its claims of Iraq possessing them were true. Rowan Scarborough, a conservative military journalist who wrote two books for which he received extensive access to Rumsfeld and his team, recounted how furious Rumsfeld would become each day when he was briefed on the lack of WMDs in Iraq. "Each morning, the crisis action team had to report that another location was a bust. Rumsfeld grew angrier and angrier. One officer quoted him as saying, 'They must be there!' At one briefing, he picked up the briefing slides and tossed them back at the briefers," according to Scarborough. Horton added: "A lot of this intelligence gathering operation, at the outset...was driven by a need to produce information that would justify [the war]. And I think that the use of torture was authorized largely because of an expectation that that would produce results."

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- Highlight Loc. 3476-78

The CIA, which inflicted more than its share of dirty deeds on prisoners, had become so shocked at the torture at NAMA that it withdrew its interrogators from the base in August 2003, though it continued to provide intelligence to the task force.

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- Highlight Loc. 3489-3522

The Battlefield Interrogation Facility at NAMA had four interrogation rooms and a medical screening room, where Saddam was first processed after his capture. Furnished with rugs, prayer mats, couches, tables and chairs, the "Soft Room" was where cooperative and high-ranking detainees were brought for questioning—and tea. The Blue and Red (or Wood) rooms were larger (about six by ten feet), rectangular and plain; the Blue Room had a coat of blue paint over the plywood walls. These rooms were used for medium-intensity interrogations, reportedly employing techniques approved by the US Army Field Manual. The Black Room was preserved from its days as a torture chamber under Saddam and, for good measure, the task force kept the meat hooks that hung from the ceiling during the Iraqi dictator's reign of terror in place for their use. The Black Room was the largest room—approximately twelve by twelve feet. It was here that JSOC would perform its harshest interrogations. [...] Inside the Black Room, the full-spectrum of SERE tactics were unleashed on detainees, along with a slew of medieval freestyle techniques. "It was painted black floor to ceiling. The door was black, everything was black," recalled Perry. "It had

speakers in the corners, all four corners, up at the ceiling. It had a small table in one of the corners, and maybe some chairs. But usually in the black room nobody was sitting down. It was standing, stress positions." The interrogations there often incorporated extremely loud music, strobe lights, beatings, environmental and temperature manipulation, sleep deprivation, twenty-hour interrogation sessions, water and stress positions, and personal, often sexual, humiliation. The forced nudity of prisoners was not uncommon. Almost any act was permissible against the detainees as long as it complied with the "No Blood, No Foul" motto. But, eventually, even blood was okay. One former prisoner—the son of one of Saddam's bodyguards—said he was made to strip, was punched repeatedly in the spine until he fainted, was doused with cold water and forced to stand in front of the air-conditioner and kicked in the stomach until he vomited. Prisoners held at other facilities also described heinous acts committed against them by interrogators and guards, including sodomizing detainees with foreign objects, beating them, forcing water up their rectums and using extreme dietary manipulation—nothing but bread and water for more than two weeks in one case. Members of the task force would beat prisoners with rifle butts and spit in their faces. One member of the task force reported that he had heard interrogators "beating the shit out of the detainee." According to a former interrogator with the task force, one of his colleagues was "reprimanded and assigned to desk duty because he pissed in a bottle and gave it to a detainee to drink." Members of the task force would also interrupt non-harsh interrogations and begin slapping or beating detainees. On at least one occasion, they abducted the wife of a suspected insurgent being hunted by the task force "to leverage the primary target's surrender." The woman was a twenty-eight-year-old mother of three who was still nursing her six-month-old baby. After interviewing numerous members of the task force at NAMA, Human Rights Watch concluded, "the abuses appear to have been part of a regularized process of detainee abuse—'standard operating procedure.'" "

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- Highlight Loc. 3562-64

According to Major General Miller, at times the task force at NAMA would use special operators as interrogators. That created scenarios where the rage from the battlefield would spill over into interrogations, even after the prisoner was disarmed and in custody.

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- Highlight Loc. 3617-26

There are at least two known cases of Iraqis dying immediately after being transferred from the custody of task force Navy SEAL commandos. After what a SEAL team described as a "struggle," on April 5, 2004, the SEALs delivered prisoner Fashad Mohammad to a conventional base, where he was interrogated and then allowed to sleep, at which point he became unresponsive and later died. The medical examiner's report on his death, which was released under the Freedom of Information Act,

said that Mohammad "died in U.S. custody approximately 72 hours after being apprehended. By report, physical force was required during his initial apprehension during a raid. During his confinement, he was hooded, sleep deprived, and subjected to hot and cold environmental conditions, including the use of cold water on his body and hood." Although the report described "multiple minor injuries, abrasions and contusions" and "blunt force trauma and positional asphyxia," it concluded that the cause of death was "undetermined." On November 4, 2003, Manadel al Jamadi died at Abu Ghraib prison, amid allegations that he had been beaten to death by members of SEAL Team 7. One team member was court-martialed but was ultimately acquitted—and nobody was charged with homicide.

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- Highlight Loc. 3645-46

The report cited "military intelligence officers" who told the Red Cross "that in their estimate between 70% and 90% of the persons deprived of their liberty in Iraq had been arrested by mistake."

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CHAPTER 15: The Death Star - IRAQ, 2004

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- Highlight Loc. 3720-24

Journalist Mark Urban, who embedded with British commandos working with McChrystal's task force, said that some JSOC operatives referred to the Joint Operations Center at Balad as "the Death Star because of the sense that 'you could just reach out with a finger, as it were, and eliminate somebody.'" Others who watched live the white splash of five-hundred-pound bombs on image-intensifier cameras referred to the screens above them as 'Kill TV.'" The JSOC command center was known as "the factory" or "the shop floor." McChrystal was fond of calling the kill/capture apparatus "the machine."

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- Highlight Loc. 3732-38

In April 2004, Rumsfeld continued to hammer away on the theme that the Iraqi insurgency was being driven by remnants of the regime. After four private security contractors working for the mercenary firm Blackwater were killed in an ambush in Fallujah on March 31, 2004, Bush had ordered a massive revenge assault on the city, directing US commanders to "Kick ass!" and "Kill them!" With no apparent understanding that the uprising in Fallujah had been sparked by the US siege of the city, which disproportionately killed civilians, Rumsfeld thundered, "Thugs and assassins and former Saddam henchmen will not be allowed...to oppose peace and freedom." The US occupation was creating

a situation in which new militant cells were popping up weekly, and the task force was struggling to keep them all straight, much less track them.

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- Highlight Loc. 3768-74

The hunt for Zarqawi replaced the hunt for Saddam Hussein as a central public goal of the US campaign. The American attention was useful to Zarqawi, who quickly rose to prominence within the insurgency, and Zarqawi's prominence was useful to the Americans, who would use it to justify their bloodiest military operation of the war. That operation would come in November 2004 with the second US siege of Fallujah, which had become a potent symbol of resistance to the US occupation. After that, a bloody civil war would break out in Iraq. Zarqawi would announce a war against Shiites, while the United States, in turn, would build up its own Shiite death squads.

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- Highlight Loc. 3774-86

At the center of the US contribution to Iraq's civil war were two Americans. One was General David Petraeus, who had close ties to the White House, particularly to Dick Cheney, and had been tapped by Rumsfeld in June 2004 to head the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq. The other was retired US colonel James Steele, a former Enron executive who had been selected for a senior Iraq job by Wolfowitz. Although Enron had been a major backer of the Bush campaign, Steele wasn't in Iraq because of his Enron days. He had a deep history with US "dirty wars" in Central America. As a colonel in the marines in the mid-1980s, Steele had been a key "counterinsurgency" official in the bloody US-fueled war in El Salvador, where he coordinated the US Military Advisory Group, supervising Washington's military assistance and training of Salvadoran Army units battling the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front guerrillas. In the late 1980s, Steele was called to testify during the Iran-Contra investigation about his role in Oliver North's covert weapons pipeline, which ran through the Salvadoran air force base at Ilopango, to the Nicaraguan Contra death squads. Steele and Petraeus were central to a program known as the "Salvadorization of Iraq," or simply the "Salvador Option." The two men built up local Iraqi Special Ops units to be used in a counterinsurgency campaign, but they would soon turn into unaccountable death squads.

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CHAPTER 16: "The Best Technology, the Best Weapons, the Best People—and Plenty of Money to Burn" - AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ AND PAKISTAN, 2003-2006

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- Highlight Loc. 3818-20

Just as JSOC found itself being ordered to kill its way through a constantly regenerating and growing list of "insurgents" in Iraq, it would eventually face a guerrilla war in which America's mightiest warriors would be fighting Afghans who previously had no serious connection to al Qaeda or the Taliban.

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- Highlight Loc. 3846-50

PAKISTAN AND THE CIA have a long and complicated history, but particularly in the years after 9/11, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had come to accept that it would have to live with the Agency's operatives running around its territory. At times, the two entities would cooperate, but more often the CIA found itself scrambling to thwart ISI attempts to stymie its operations, while the ISI tried to keep track of all the operatives the United States had working in Pakistan. It was a mutually agreed-upon relationship based on mistrust, dishonesty, backstabbing and, in the end, necessity.

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- Highlight Loc. 3854-56

To the consternation of the ISI, President Pervez Musharraf made a secret deal with JSOC in 2002 that allowed US forces to accompany Pakistani forces on raids against suspected al Qaeda cells in the country's tribal regions.

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- Highlight Loc. 3857-66

Rules of Engagement for US Army Rangers and other elite "terrorist-hunting units" along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border stated that "entries into PAK [were] authorized" in the following cases: hot pursuit, troops in contact with the enemy, personnel recovery—and action against "the big three"—bin Laden, Zawahiri, and Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar—approved by either the CENTCOM commander or the defense secretary. As a "general rule," these terrorist-hunting forces were to forge no deeper than ten kilometers into Pakistan. US and Pakistani authorities would technically need to be notified soon after any such actions. But the reality was different: central to the operations was Pakistan's ability to deny foreknowledge and to denounce violations of sovereignty after the fact. The United States would strike and then Musharraf would characterize any US incursions into Pakistan as an "invasion." But just as the JSOC campaign in Pakistan was getting started, it quickly lost steam after many of the JSOC assets originally focused on Pakistan were, once again, redirected to Iraq to confront the mounting insurgency. As a result, in 2003-2004, Pakistan remained largely a CIA-controlled operation.

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- Highlight Loc. 3866-84

IN 2004, the officials running the White House and Pentagon global manhunt issued a series of classified orders that would, when combined, prove to be an enduring blueprint for US assassinations and disregard for the sovereignty of nations the world over. The post-9/11 infighting between the CIA and Rumsfeld over who would be the prime entity responsible for running the manhunt and global wars had hit a defining moment. To fund the dramatically expanding scope of JSOC's operations, Rumsfeld asked for a 34 percent increase in the Special Ops budget, from \$5 billion to \$6.7 billion. It was 2004 that secured JSOC's place at the head of the counterterrorism table, a position it would keep through Republican and Democratic administrations. Seeking free rein for Special Operations Forces, President Bush developed an assertion that he and his successor, Barack Obama, would provide verbatim to Congress annually to justify the borderless war strategy that made the world a battlefield. "I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests," Bush declared. "Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States." In early 2004, Rumsfeld signed a secret order that would streamline JSOC's ability to conduct operations and hit targets outside of the stated battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Known as the Al Qaeda Network Execute Order, or AQN ExOrd, it allowed for JSOC operations "anywhere in the world" where al Qaeda operatives were known or suspected to be operating or receiving sanctuary. The order, which remains classified despite attempts by journalists to obtain it, reportedly named fifteen to twenty such countries, including Pakistan, Syria, Somalia, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as several other Gulf nations. The AQN ExOrd was drafted in 2003, primarily by the Special Operations Command and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict and was promoted by Wolfowitz and Cambone as a justification for special forces operating covertly—and lethally—across the globe.

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- Highlight Loc. 3889-93

The insertion of Special Ops personnel into US embassies under the cover of Military Liaison Elements (MLE) was extremely controversial with the CIA and State Department. But JSOC personnel were not limited to those operating with official cover. It also had operatives deploying in various countries under "non-official cover," at times using fake identities backed up by falsified passports, sometimes from other nations. Their job was to help prepare the battlefield for JSOC

operations, and they often did not coordinate with the CIA or the ambassadors.

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- Highlight Loc. 3934-37

At the end of 2004, Rumsfeld wrote a memo to his top advisers, including Cambone and Douglas Feith. It was classified FOUO, For Official Use Only, with the subject "Preparation of the Battlespace." In the memo, Rumsfeld wrote that he was concerned that "the old phrase 'preparation of the battlespace' may no longer be appropriate terminology." Today, Rumsfeld declared, "the entire world is the 'battlespace.'"

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- Highlight Loc. 3955-63

The Special Operations Command also began working on a program for monitoring suspected or known insurgents. It was straight out of a sci-fi film. Known as "Continuous Clandestine Tagging Tracking and Locating," or CTTL, it involved using advanced biometrics and chemistry to develop a long-range facial recognition program as well as a "Human Thermal Fingerprint" that could be isolated for any individual. They also used a chemical "bioreactive taggant" to mark people by discreetly swabbing a part of their body. The taggant would emit a signal that JSOC could remotely monitor, enabling it to track people 24/7/365. It was like a modern version of the old spook's tracking devices made famous in films, where spies would weave them into an enemy's clothes or place them on the bottom of a vehicle. The taggant allowed JSOC to mark prisoners and then release them to see if they would lead the task force to a potential terror or insurgent cell. Putting them on nonprisoners was a greater challenge, but it happened.

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- Highlight Loc. 3969-72

As the US body count in Iraq increased as a result of the widening insurgency, President Bush would press commanders on how many people they had killed on any given day. The conventional generals would often balk at the question, but the answer from the JSOC crew was unequivocal. When asked how many Iraqis the task force killed in Iraq, McChrystal's intelligence chief, Mike Flynn, replied, "Thousands, I don't even know how many."

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- Highlight Loc. 4040-45

With resources spread thin in Pakistan as a result of the intensifying insurgency in Iraq, the Bush administration began outsourcing its war in Pakistan. Enter Blackwater, Erik Prince's secretive mercenary company already infamous for its work in Iraq. Like the CIA,

Blackwater had its own cover: diplomatic security. From the early stages of the launch of the Global War on Terror, its operatives were able to deploy in large numbers to war zones as bodyguards for US officials. Blackwater was the elite Praetorian Guard for the senior officials running the US occupation of Iraq and simultaneously worked for the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA providing security for their operations in hostile zones across the globe.

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- Highlight Loc. 4053-59

One of the reasons Blackwater was used, he said, "was to avoid oversight." Many of Blackwater's elite operatives, particularly those who worked for its most sensitive division, Blackwater SELECT, were veterans of US Special Operations. It wasn't hard for them, therefore, to serve two masters: the CIA and JSOC. While the CIA was, by mandate, concerned with an array of intelligence functions, JSOC had one central mission worldwide: the killing or capture of High Value Targets, HVTs. In 2006, twelve "tactical action operatives" from Blackwater were recruited for a secret JSOC raid inside Pakistan, targeting an al Qaeda facility. The operation was code-named "Vibrant Fury." The involvement of Blackwater demonstrated how central the company had become to covert US actions.

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- Highlight Loc. 4072-81

In early 2006, Zarqawi's group formed a Shura Council of the Mujahedeen, which promptly threatened Sunni leaders in Anbar Province—one of the front lines against the United States—that if they did not join al Qaeda, the group would "make you an example to each and every one." In February 2006, Zarqawi's group bombed one of the holiest sites in Shiite Islam, the Askariyya Mosque in Samarra, destroying its famed golden dome. The brief period of a unified national uprising against the Americans in Iraq was over. Zarqawi had made a tremendous tactical mistake by waging a war against the Sunni tribes in Anbar. It pushed the once anti-US tribes into an alliance with the occupation. America gave them arms, money and support in return for fighting Zarqawi's group. Combined with the US support for Shiite death squads, the United States had succeeded in an Iraqization of its war on terrorism. Although General Petraeus would be credited years later with "winning" the Iraq War through a troop "surge," he had also, along with Zarqawi, helped to destroy Iraq and create a sectarian bloodbath that would live on well past the US occupation.

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CHAPTER 17: "A Lot of It Was of Questionable Legality"

SOURCE: "HUNTER"

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- Highlight Loc. 4093-4108

My personal gateway into JSOC was through sources I had developed while working on my investigation into the private military contractor Blackwater, which employed an abundance of former Special Ops men, including many who had worked with JSOC and the CIA. In several of the Blackwater stories I was chasing, JSOC's name was popping up regularly. As I began investigating what was becoming an increasingly global covert war, I received an electronic communication from a man who could help make sense of this highly secretive world. When we first began communicating, I was a bit paranoid about him. My computer had just been hacked and I had received a series of threatening phone calls and e-mails pertaining to my work on Blackwater and on JSOC. So when he reached out to me, the timing seemed suspicious. [...] I decided to call him "Hunter" [...] Hunter had served under General McChrystal, Admiral McRaven and various Special Ops task force commanders, and he had a front-row seat for the secretive organization's operations at the most transformative moment in its history.

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- Highlight Loc. 4123-31

Hunter attributed JSOC's rise to prominence as the lead antiterrorism force after 9/11 to a belief within the Bush administration and the Special Ops community that the CIA was not up to the task of waging a global war. "There was a deep dissatisfaction with the level of human intelligence, and paramilitary operations that were being conducted on behalf of the Agency, and over time the Joint Special Operations Command, in effect, became a paramilitary arm of the administration, in that it would do the bidding of top policy makers in pursuit of political goals," he told me in one of our early meetings. After 9/11, JSOC's "mandate was expanded, significantly, and the funnel, if you will, was turned on. And there was billions upon billions of dollars poured into the Special Operations Command, which was then, in turn, directed to JSOC. And that coincided with a much greater latitude and freedom of movement—autonomy." Hunter pointed to Cheney, in particular, as the administration figure most obsessed with transforming JSOC's role.

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- Highlight Loc. 4136-44

The Bush administration, Hunter alleged, abused the authorities for "Operational Preparation of the Battlespace," which, as he described it, permits US military forces to "lay the groundwork for any potential or future military operations, by sending intelligence collectors, or linguists, into a theater, into a place where you have not necessarily declared war upon, to 'prepare the battlefield.'" Under the Bush administration, he charged, "this was somehow perverted into paramilitary operations, usually of a covert nature, with no

semblance of accountability. They would tell Congress one thing, and do another." He described JSOC's parallel rendition program, which was used to snatch and interrogate prisoners. Among the people taken, he said, were individuals whom the administration "had made a calculation not to turn over to the Department of Justice and not to have the State Department or the Ambassador at Large for War Crimes or the Central Intelligence Agency get involved. They set up their own detainee operations."

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- Highlight Loc. 4150-52

Rumsfeld and Cheney, he said, "would intentionally sidestep the Agency and go to Joint Special Operations Command with a set of mission parameters and goals and policy objectives that they wanted to meet for their own political purposes."

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- Highlight Loc. 4153-58

When I asked him what operations he found most objectionable, Hunter was quick in his response: "Utilizing Special Operations Forces to spy without the knowledge of the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency; using Special Operations Forces to go in and capture or kill people who were supposedly linked to extremist organizations around the world, in some cases allied countries." He described operations conducted by JSOC in scores of countries, beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. Among them: Somalia, Algeria, the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Thailand, Mali, Yemen, Colombia, Peru, as well as various European and Central Asian countries. Across the globe, he said, JSOC was being used to conduct "kinetic operations—whether it's capture or kill, in some cases to detain people—as directed."

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CHAPTER 18: The Imprisonment of Anwar Awlaki - YEMEN, 2004-2007

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- Highlight Loc. 4200-4207

ANWAR AWLAKI was a political prisoner. When he was arrested in mid-2006 by US-backed Yemeni forces, there was a cover story. Something about Anwar intervening in a tribal dispute. But, as with most political prisoners, it was just a thinly veiled excuse to take him off the streets. Anwar was taken at night and put in solitary confinement at the feared prison in Sana'a run by the PSO, the Political Security Organization. The PSO worked closely with US intelligence. After he was arrested, Yemeni intelligence agents confiscated his computer and tapes of lectures he had given at Iman

University. There were never any real charges brought against him. Anwar swore that it was the US government that was keeping him locked up, so Nasser reached out to the US Embassy for help. He was their citizen, after all. Surely they knew Anwar, Nasser thought. He was the one on TV after 9/11. The "go-to imam." A counselor at the embassy said he could offer little more than an assurance they would "look after" Anwar.

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- Highlight Loc. 4255-60

When the Awlaki family pressed the regime for answers, the Yemeni president made clear to them the stakes. Yemen's vice president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, told Nasser that the Yemeni president had a grim choice for him: Do you want to keep Anwar locked up or do you want me to release him "to be killed by an American drone?" "So, this is the president of Yemen telling me, 'Keep your son in prison rather than getting him out, because if he gets out he will be killed by an American drone,'" Nasser said, adding that at the time, he believed that "the only reason which made the United States targeting Anwar was because of his popularity among Muslims, English-speaking Muslims in the world." He concluded, "I think Ali Abdullah Saleh must have known something."

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CHAPTER 19: "America Knows War. They Are War Masters."

- SOMALIA, 2004-2006

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- Highlight Loc. 4325-33

While JSOC came to dominate the expanding killing fields in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, Somalia continued its descent into chaos. The murderous warlords who were running the CIA's targeted kill/capture operations were widely feared and reviled. By 2004, the Agency's outsourced Somalia campaign was laying the groundwork for a spectacular series of events that would lead to an almost unthinkable rise in the influence of al Qaeda in the Horn of Africa. But it wasn't the CIA's warlord program alone that would spur a major uprising in Somalia. The civilian tolls the wars were taking in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the abuses at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo, gave credence to the perception that the United States was waging a war against Islam. While the United States backed its own warlords in Mogadishu, Washington's post-9/11 actions led to the formation of a coalition of former warlords and religious movements that would challenge the rule of the US proxies in Somalia. It was blowback sparked by US policies in Somalia and abroad.

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- Highlight Loc. 4357-58

"If there was accountability, Bush would have been executed like Saddam Hussein. But no one is powerful enough to hold the US to account."

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- Highlight Loc. 4362-68

In a meeting with US officials in early 2006, according to a diplomatic cable, the internationally recognized Somali president "wondered aloud why the U.S. would want to start an open war in Mogadishu." It was this horrific era that gave birth to the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which would rise up against the US-backed proxies. The ICU was not a plot organized by al Qaeda, but rather an indigenous response to the lawlessness and brutality of the warlords, particularly those backed by the CIA. As Somalia disintegrated, small, regional Islamic courts began rising up. They created local justice systems based on Sharia law and sought to bring some level of stability. For several years, the courts were largely autonomous, clan-based entities. In 2004, the twelve courts united to become the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts of Somalia, known as "the Courts."

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- Highlight Loc. 4373-89

In 2005, foreign weapons and money poured into Somalia. Indha Adde and other Courts figures began receiving shipments of heavy weapons and ammunition, flown into private airstrips from Eritrea. Ethiopia, meanwhile, joined with the United States in supporting the CIA's warlords with finances, weapons and ammunition. Somalia's prime minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi, an Italian-educated veterinarian, watched as the CIA bankrolled and armed Qanyare and the other warlords, some of whom were actually ministers in his own government. "I was following very closely those warlords and particularly Qanyare, who was misleading the US intelligence organizations by saying, 'I can defeat this terrorist, this Islamist. Yes, I will catch them tomorrow, the next day.' And they were paying him," Gedi told me. The CIA, he charged, undermined his government and "encouraged the mushrooming of the Islamic Courts and their strength. [The United States] stimulated the Islamic Courts people by supporting the warlords and the 'antiterrorism group' at that time. So the whole mess started from that point." In February 2006, as the Islamic Courts Union grew in strength, Qanyare and the CIA's warlord network went public, officially announcing the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism and calling on Somalis to join them in defeating the "jihadists." In March, at the White House, the National Security Council officially endorsed the US campaign to fund and support the warlords. State Department spokesman Sean Mc-Cormack said the US strategy was to "work with responsible individuals... in fighting terror. It's a real concern of ours—terror taking root in the Horn of Africa. We don't want to see another safe haven for terrorists

created. Our interest is purely in seeing Somalia achieve a better day." Washington "chose to view the situation only through the prism of its 'war on terror,'" observed Salim Lone, a former UN official. "The Bush Administration supported the warlords—in violation of a UN arms embargo it helped impose on Somalia many years ago—indirectly funneling them arms and suitcases filled with dollars."

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- Highlight Loc. 4393-4401

After the warlords openly declared war on the Islamic Courts, Mogadishu was rocked by its worst fighting in more than a decade. By May, the Washington Post was reporting battles that "were some of the most violent in Mogadishu since the end of the American intervention in 1994, and left 150 dead and hundreds more wounded." The UN Monitoring Group, in its report to the Security Council, cited "clandestine third-country" support for the warlords. It did not specify which country, but everyone knew. US diplomats in the region soon found themselves besieged by their colleagues from other nations, including European Union officials. According to one US cable from the Nairobi Embassy, some European governments, "having concluded that the U.S. is supporting individual warlords as a means to prosecute the GWOT, tell us they are concerned that such actions now may set back both CT and democratization objectives in Somalia." The EU, the cable noted, was preparing to release a report that would state bluntly: "There are worrying signs that the general population—riled by overt support of the United States for the warlords—is increasingly rallying to the cause of the jihadis."

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- Highlight Loc. 4427-30

The ICG asserted that only two of the courts had been "consistently associated with militancy" and that they were counterbalanced by other courts. It concluded, "[M]ost courts appear to exist for chiefly pragmatic purposes. Rather than imposing an Islamist agenda on a new Somali government, most are likely to be absorbed willingly into any future judicial system."

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- Highlight Loc. 4487-91

After the Nairobi bombings, the United States aggressively tried to freeze the assets of bin Laden and al Qaeda. In response, bin Laden sought new revenue streams and put Fazul in charge of an ambitious operation to penetrate the blood diamond market. From 1999 to 2001, Fazul would largely operate out of Liberia under the protection of its dictator, Charles Taylor. In all, al Qaeda took in an estimated \$20 million in untraceable blood diamond money, much of it from the killing fields of Sierra Leone. By that point, Fazul was a wanted man, actively hunted by the US authorities, and al Qaeda spent huge sums of money to keep him safe. He had become a player.

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- Highlight Loc. 4581-4601

While the White House strategized, the ICU did indeed implement a radical agenda in Mogadishu—but one that virtually all Somalis viewed as being for the better. The Courts began dismantling the insane maze of roadblocks that separated one warlord's kingdom from another's, leading to a significant drop in food prices. They reopened the ports and the airport, facilitating a dramatic increase in the amount of humanitarian aid that was able to reach Mogadishu. Robbery and other crime dropped substantially, and many residents told journalists that they felt safer than they had at any point in sixteen years. The ICU "brought a modicum of stability that's unprecedented in Mogadishu," recalled Aynte. "You could drive in Mogadishu at midnight, no problem, [with] no guards." US officials acknowledged the improvement in aid shipments and credited the ICU with reducing piracy around Somalia. Even officials within the US-backed Somali government in exile acknowledged that the ICU had achieved something important. "The Islamic Courts brought about some semblance of order and stability to Mogadishu," conceded Buubaa, the former foreign minister, who had opposed the ICU. "A lot of people in Mogadishu appreciated that." That was not the case within the US Special Operations community. After 9/11, JSOC had been tasked with hunting down the most wanted terrorists in the world as identified by the White House. The Islamic Courts' social program would not change that fact. The CIA's warlord adventure had been a categorical failure and had actually resulted in even greater protection for the al Qaeda figures on JSOC's radar. The invasion of Iraq was, in many ways, an enormous distraction from JSOC's core mission. "There's no question about that. Iraq fucked everything up," said Gartenstein-Ross. Somalia is a "country, which, relative to Iraq, would have been easier to stabilize. But resources were never devoted to that. The major problem is that no steps were taken to avert an insurgency—and indeed, very early on, you had an insurgency arise." More to the point, Washington's own policies had directly sparked the insurgency. Following the CIA's failure in Somalia, the US military began preparing for a campaign to crush the Courts. But with Black Hawk Down still dominating the US view of boots on the ground in Somalia, the White House began considering using Somalia's reviled neighbor, Ethiopia, as a proxy force that could provide cover for US hit teams, primarily from JSOC, to covertly enter Somalia and begin hunting "High Value Targets."

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- Highlight Loc. 4695-4703

On December 24, 2006, Ethiopian warplanes began bombing runs, as tanks rolled across the Somali border. It was a classic proxy war run by Washington and staffed by 40,000-50,000 troops from Somalia's widely despised neighbor. [...] As fighter jets bombarded Somalia and Ethiopian forces made their way toward Mogadishu, Frazer and other US officials denied Washington was behind the invasion. The claims were

demonstrably false. "The US sponsored the Ethiopian invasion, paying for everything, including the gas that it had to expend, to undertake this. And you also had US forces on the ground, US Special Operations forces. You had CIA on the ground. US airpower was a part of the story as well. All of which gave massive military superiority to the Ethiopians," said Gartenstein-Ross.

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- Highlight Loc. 4712-18

The events of 2007 would send Somalia on a trajectory toward more horror and chaos, leading to a stunning rise in strength and size of the very forces Washington sought to combat. [...] "If there's one lesson in terms of military operations of the past ten years, it's that the US is a very effective insurgent force," said Gartenstein-Ross. "In areas where it's seeking to overthrow a government, it's good at doing that. What it's not shown any luck in doing is establishing a viable government structure." The US and Ethiopian actions, Buubaa, the former foreign minister, said, would end up "driving Somalia into the al Qaeda fold."

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CHAPTER 20: Prison Break - YEMEN, 2006

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- Highlight Loc. 4730-37

On February 3, 2006, Wuhayshi and twenty-two others escaped from their maximum security prison by tunneling out of a cell into a nearby mosque, though Wuhayshi later boasted that they performed morning prayers before literally walking out the front door. Wuhayshi would unite the Saudi and Yemeni branches of al Qaeda under the regional banner of AQAP [al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula]. Qasim al Rimi, who escaped in the same breakout, would go on to become AQAP's military commander. "It is a serious problem," Rumsfeld said a few days after the prison break. "They were individuals who were deeply involved in al Qaeda activities and directly connected to the attack on the USS Cole and the death of the sailors that were on board that ship." But while Rumsfeld and other US officials focused almost exclusively on pressing Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Saleh to recapture Jamal al Badawi, whom the United States wanted to be extradited, and other Cole bombing suspects, it would be Wuhayshi and Rimi who would become the most notorious and problematic of the escapees.

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- Highlight Loc. 4752-58

The 2006 prison break struck some well-connected Yemeni security experts as "an inside job," asserted journalist Sam Kimball in a

report for Foreign Policy. "The prison is an imposing fortress in the heart of Sana'a, with plainclothes soldiers patrolling its perimeter. Inmates' spare cells—only plastic silverware is allowed in—are inspected several times a day. Prisoners are only allowed a half-hour a day outdoors." Retired Yemeni colonel Muhsin Khosroof said, "We don't know how they got the tools to dig a 300-meter tunnel, and we don't know where the soil they dug out went." Short of direct support from prison officials, he asserted, "this operation would seem impossible."

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- Highlight Loc. 4782-92

Perhaps the most unusual moment during the Townsend-Saleh meeting came when Saleh brought in Faris Mana'a, a top Yemeni arms trafficker, and seated him next to Townsend [top US aid on counterterrorism]. According to the United Nations, "Despite the Somalia UN arms embargo since 1992, Mana'a's interest in trafficking arms into Somalia can be traced back at least to 2003," and Mana'a "has directly or indirectly supplied, sold or transferred to Somalia arms or related material in violation of the arms embargo." As Mana'a entered the room, he was given a chair at Townsend's table. "Hey FBI," Saleh said to one of the US officials, "if he does not behave properly, you can take him... back to Washington in Townsend's plane or to Guantánamo." Saleh told Townsend his forces had recently intercepted a shipment of weapons from Mana'a and given them to the Yemeni military. "He has donated weapons to the nation's military—he can be considered a patriot now," joked Townsend. Saleh laughed. "No, he is a double agent—he also gave weapons to the al-Houthi rebels." A US diplomatic cable Townsend authorized following the meeting proclaimed: "You Can't Make This Stuff Up." Putting an exclamation point on the whole episode, two years later, Mana'a would go on to serve as coordinator of President Saleh's "peace" efforts with the Houthi rebels.

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CHAPTER 21: Hot Pursuit PAKISTAN, 2006-2008

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- Highlight Loc. 4817-32

—Donald Rumsfeld's run as defense secretary met an inglorious end in late 2006. A half-dozen retired generals, some of whom were important commanders in the Iraq War, joined several Republican and Democratic lawmakers to spearhead a campaign demanding his resignation. Many sought to blame him for the deteriorating situation in Iraq, others for the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison. [...] Rumsfeld was undoubtedly a major figure in the secretive assassination and torture bureaucracy launched post-9/11, but his departure would not radically shift the

course of the actions and programs he had helped to shape. In December 2006, Robert Gates succeeded Rumsfeld. Gates had a close working relationship with the CIA, where he had spent much of his professional career. He first worked for the Agency in the late 1960s and ultimately went on to serve as its director in the early 1990s—the first basement-level recruit to rise through the ranks to become director. Gates had done several stints with the NSC and also had close ties to US Special Operations Forces. He was investigated over his alleged role in the Iran-Contra scandal, and though the independent counsel concluded Gates “was close to many figures who played significant roles in the Iran/contra affair and was in a position to have known of their activities,” it was determined that his role “did not warrant indictment.” Gates was also a key player in the US-fueled war in Afghanistan against the Soviets in the 1980s. Among his first acts at the Pentagon was to put Pakistan firmly back on the US targeted kill campaign’s radar.

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- Highlight Loc. 4850-72

By 2007, the budget for US special operations had grown by 60 percent from 2003 to more than \$8 billion annually. In January, President Bush announced the “surge” in Iraq. The number of conventional US forces was expanded by 20,000, but Bush also authorized a dramatic increase in targeted killing operations, spearheaded by JSOC’s forces. The operation was General McChrystal’s swan song at JSOC. By the end of 2007, the president began declaring the Iraq surge a success. This freed up JSOC to refocus on Pakistan. Late in 2007, the Bush administration began drafting plans for a substantial escalation of the use of US Special Operations Forces inside Pakistan. The plan, however, was stalled as a result of the ongoing fight for control of Pakistan operations between the CIA and the Pentagon, described by the New York Times as “bitter disagreements within the Bush administration and within the C.I.A.” over “whether American commandos should launch ground raids inside the tribal areas.” An incident in June 2008 underscored the risks associated with a potential expansion of US special operations activity in Pakistan. A battle between US and Taliban forces in Afghanistan’s Kunar Province spilled over into Pakistan. US forces called in air support and American choppers descended, launching missiles at the Taliban forces. The strikes also killed eleven Pakistani soldiers positioned on their side of the border. The action was denounced by Pakistan as an “unprovoked and cowardly” attack by the United States. “We will take a stand for sovereignty, integrity and self-respect,” Pakistan’s prime minister, Yousaf Raza Gillani told parliament. “We will not allow our soil [to be attacked].” The fact was, Pakistan could not back up such declarations. Two days after the incident, on June 13, 2008, Vice Admiral William McRaven assumed command of JSOC from General McChrystal, inheriting the role of running the hunt for bin Laden and other HVTs. The botched raid that killed the Pakistani soldiers clearly didn’t faze him. McRaven, a former Navy SEAL team leader and McChrystal’s deputy commander at JSOC, began advocating for wider

latitude to strike in Pakistan. In July 2008, President Bush approved a secret order—which had been the subject of much debate among the CIA, State Department and Pentagon—authorizing US Special Ops Forces to carry out targeted kill or capture operations. Unlike the early arrangement with President Musharraf, the US Special Operations Forces would not be working alongside Pakistani forces and they would not seek permission from Pakistan's government before conducting strikes on Pakistani soil. "To soothe the worries of U.S. Ambassador Anne Patterson about the mounting civilian deaths from JSOC raids in other countries, commandos brought her a Predator console so she could witness a raid in real time," according to reporters Dana Priest and William Arkin.

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- Highlight Loc. 4875-86

On September 3, 2008, two helicopters carried a team of JSOC Navy SEALs across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Backed by a high-powered AC-130 Spectre gunship, with the capacity to do serious damage, they descended on a village near Angoor Adda, a small Pakistani mountain town in South Waziristan, near the Afghan border. The helicopters landed quietly, and more than two dozen SEALs, equipped with night-vision goggles, took up positions around the home of a fifty-year-old woodcutter and cattle herder. Some reports suggest that the Special Ops team had intel that an al Qaeda leader was inside. The Washington Post reported that it was "the first US ground attack against a Taliban target inside the country." In any case, once in position, the SEALs executed their raid. What happened after the first shots were fired remains in dispute. According to US officials, "about two dozen suspected Qaeda fighters" were killed in "a planned attack against militants who had been conducting attacks against an American forward operating base across the border in Afghanistan." But according to local villagers, the SEALs opened fire, killing Payo Jan Wazir, the home's owner, along with six children, including a three-year-old girl, a two-year-old boy and two women. When Payo Jan's neighbors heard the gunfire and ran out to see what was happening, villagers said, the SEALs opened fire on them, killing ten more people. The Pakistani government said that all of the dead were civilians. The United States maintained they were al Qaeda militants.

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CHAPTER 22: "Every Step Taken by the US Benefited al Shabab" - SOMALIA, 2007-2009

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- Highlight Loc. 4905-35

On January 7, an unarmed US Predator drone launched from Camp Lemonnier flew into southern Somalia, tracked down a convoy of

vehicles and broadcast a live feed of them back to task force commanders. A short time later, an AC-130 flew into Somalia and strafed the convoy just before it disappeared into a forest along the Kenya-Somalia border. Reports suggested that the target was Aden Hashi Farah Ayro, al Shabab's military commander; or Fazul or Nabhan, the East Africa al Qaeda leaders. US officials claimed the strike killed between eight and twelve fighters, and rumors spread of an "al Qaeda leader" being among the dead. US and Ethiopian intelligence sources believed it might have been Ayro or Abu Talha al Sudani, the al Qaeda financier. A JSOC team from Manda Bay landed at the site of the strike in Somalia to take DNA samples from the dead. There, among the corpses and wreckage, they found Ayro's bloodied passport. They believed they had a major kill. As it turned out, Ayro had indeed been in the convoy and was believed to have been injured, but he ultimately escaped. On January 9, JSOC launched another strike "against members of the East Africa Al Qaeda cell believed to be on the run in a remote area of Somalia near the Kenyan border," according to a US diplomatic cable from the Nairobi Embassy. Over the next few days there were several more air strikes that killed scores of civilians, according to witnesses and human rights groups. Whether these strikes were carried out by the United States or Ethiopia, or jointly, has never been confirmed. Undoubtedly, Ethiopia had its own helicopters and other aircraft pounding Somalia unilaterally. The Pentagon took credit for the January 7 strike but would not comment on the others, though anonymous US officials privately acknowledged they were American strikes. Initial US media reports portrayed the strikes as successful hits that were deftly picking off the "al Qaeda" leadership one by one in Somalia. Several reports, based on information provided by anonymous US officials, had Ayro and Fazul killed by US Special Ops troops. One particularly clownish report in the New York Post, claiming Fazul had been killed, bore the headline: "Qaeda Clobbered: U.S. Somalia Raid Kills Embassy Fiend." In reality, all but one of the major figures sought by the United States went unscathed in these operations. At some point, as US AC-130s, helicopters and Ethiopian aircraft strafed suspected al Shabab or al Qaeda strongholds, Sudani was randomly killed, though the United States did not learn of his death until months later. [...] Indeed, the AC-130 attacks resulted in a shocking number of Somali civilians being killed. In one particularly horrible incident, a large group of nomadic Somali herders and their families was attacked. The human rights group Oxfam alleged that seventy innocent Somalis were killed. "There were no combatants amongst them," said an Oxfam official. "It could possibly be related to a bonfire that the herdsman had lit at night, but that's something they normally do to keep animals and mosquitoes away from their herd." Oxfam joined Amnesty International in questioning the legality of the air strikes. "Under international law, there is a duty to distinguish between military and civilian targets," Oxfam warned. "We are deeply concerned that this principle is not being adhered to, and that innocent people in Somalia are paying the price."

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In the disintegration of the ICU, al Qaeda had found its way into Somalia. "With the help of all these foreign fighters, the Shabab took over the fighting, with al Qaeda leadership," recalled Indha Adde, who had been the ICU defense minister. "The Shabab started ordering executions and innocent Muslims were killed. They even targeted members of [the ICU]. I was commander for all [ICU] military operations, and I turned against the Shabab, after seeing these violations against Islam."

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- Highlight Loc. 5006-17

By early February 2007, the Ethiopian invasion had become an occupation, which was giving rise to widening unrest. [...] Accounts of Ethiopian soldiers "slaughtering" men, women and children "like goats"—slitting their throats—were widespread, Amnesty International noted. Both Somali Transitional Government forces, led by exiles and backed by the United States, and Ethiopian forces were accused of horrific sexual violence. Although forces linked to al Shabab were also accused of war crimes, a large proportion of those reported to Amnesty International, which included looting, rape and extrajudicial killings, were committed by Somali government and Ethiopian forces.

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- Highlight Loc. 5024-32

With the ICU dismantled and the brutal Ethiopian occupation continuing for nearly three more years, al Shabab emerged as the vanguard in the fight against foreign occupation. "For them, it was the break that they were looking for," said Aynte. "It was the anger that they had been looking for, to harness the anger of the people and present themselves as the new nationalist movement that would kick Ethiopia out. So throughout the three years that Ethiopia was in Somalia, al Shabab never uttered a word of global jihad at all. They always said that their main goal was just to kick the Ethiopians out." For al Qaeda, this was just the beginning of a whole new world, made possible in no small part by Washington's actions. "What brought about the Islamic Courts?" Madobe asked. "The US-backed warlords. And if Ethiopia did not invade, and the US did not carry out airstrikes, which were viewed as a continuation of the warlords' and Ethiopia's ruthlessness, al Shabab would not have survived. Every step taken by the US benefited al Shabab."

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- Highlight Loc. 5063-68

THE ETHIOPIAN OCCUPATION began to wind down, following an agreement signed in Djibouti in August 2008 between Sheikh Sharif's faction and officials from the TFG. In reality, the al Shabab insurgency had bled the Ethiopians out, but the diplomatic charade served as a face-saving cover. The "Djibouti Agreement" paved the way for Sheikh Sharif to

assume the presidency in Mogadishu. To veteran observers of Somali politics, Sharif's reemergence was an incredible story. The United States and Ethiopia overthrew his government, only to later back him as the country's president.

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- Highlight Loc. 5096-99

At the same time that it engaged in its version of a hearts-and-minds campaign, however, al Shabab also implemented policies reminiscent of the Taliban: banning popular Bollywood films, forcibly shaving the heads of men with "inappropriate" hairstyles and imposing harsh sentences for infractions against the al Shabab interpretation of Sharia law.

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CHAPTER 23: "If Your Son Does Not Come to Us, He Will Be Killed by the Americans" - YEMEN, 2007-2009

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- Highlight Loc. 5119-21

-During Anwar Awlaki's time in solitary confinement in a Yemeni prison, al Qaeda in Yemen had made a comeback. While the Bush administration's civilian leadership largely ignored the resurgence, JSOC was tracking al Qaeda's new organization in Yemen closely. On March 27, 2007, a Yemeni military unit in the province of Hadramaut discovered a US spy drone that had washed up on the shore of the Arabian Sea.

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- Highlight Loc. 5129-30

On March 29, official Yemeni media outlets reported that the Yemeni military had shot down an Iranian "spy plane" after consulting with "multinational forces" in the region.

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- Highlight Loc. 5206-10

The reality of war is horrible and that's why people try to avoid it, but fighting is proscribed upon you, it is an instruction from Allah." True Muslims, Awlaki said, citing Ayyiri's writings, define victory not as simple military triumph but as the act of sacrifice. "The Mujahid sacrificing 'his self' and his wealth is victory. Victory of your idea, your religion. If you die for your religion, your death will spread the da'wa [proselytizing on behalf of Islam].... Allah chooses Shuhada [martyrs] from amongst the believers. This is a victory."

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- Highlight Loc. 5302-11

As president-elect Obama began to build his foreign policy and counterterrorism teams, Yemen would emerge as a major priority. Although most of the United States and the world had never heard of Anwar Awlaki, the new administration was monitoring his movements in Yemen. US authorities presented no concrete evidence that Awlaki was actively involved in any terror plots, but they asserted that he was an inspirational figure whose sermons kept popping up in investigations into various terror plots: in 2006, a group of Canadian Muslims charged with plotting to storm parliament and behead the prime minister were found to have listened to Awlaki speeches. In addition, some of the men convicted in the 2007 plot to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey were heard praising Awlaki, according to a recording made by a government informant. Other references to Awlaki were registering on the radar in investigations in the United Kingdom, as well as in Chicago and Atlanta. Awlaki was openly praising al Shabab in Somalia, where the United States was becoming increasingly concerned about Western Muslims joining the jihad. A group of young Somali Americans from Minneapolis who had traveled to Somalia to join al Shabab were allegedly inspired by Awlaki's "Constants on the Path of Jihad."

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- Highlight Loc. 5330-35

Awlaki was influential among jihadist circles and with young, conservative Western Muslims, including those contemplating participating in the armed struggles against the United States and Israel and their proxies. His sermons had gone viral on jihadist web forums, which were heavily monitored by US intelligence. But there was no hard evidence presented that Awlaki had done anything that was not protected speech under the First Amendment to the US Constitution, or that would not require a major court battle to prove it was unconstitutional. There was, however, enough smoke around Awlaki for US intelligence to want him silenced, as he was during his eighteen months in a Yemeni prison.

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CHAPTER 24: "Obama Is Set to Continue the Course Set by Bush" - UNITED STATES, 2002-2008

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- Highlight Loc. 5408-17

-Barack Obama is an Ivy League-educated constitutional law professor whose political career was carefully plotted. In October 2002, when he was a state senator in Illinois, Obama had staked out a position on

the Iraq War that foreshadowed the foreign policy vision he would later articulate as a presidential candidate. "I don't oppose all wars," Obama declared. "What I am opposed to is a dumb war. What I am opposed to is a rash war. What I am opposed to is the cynical attempt by...armchair, weekend warriors in this administration to shove their own ideological agendas down our throats, irrespective of the costs in lives lost and in hardships borne." Obama would often refer to that speech, but very few Americans heard it at the time. Obama burst onto the scene in 2004 when he delivered a widely praised, fiery keynote address at the Democratic National Convention, won a seat in the US Senate that year and then, three years later, announced his candidacy for president. "Let's be the generation that never forgets what happened on that September day and confront the terrorists with everything we've got," Obama said in his speech announcing his presidential run. "We can work together to track terrorists down with a stronger military, we can tighten the net around their finances, and we can improve our intelligence capabilities."

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- Highlight Loc. 5422-30

On the morning of October 4, 2007, the New York Times ran a lengthy front-page story detailing a 2005 Justice Department opinion granting "an expansive endorsement of the harshest interrogation techniques ever used by the Central Intelligence Agency." Under newly arrived attorney general Alberto Gonzales, the CIA was "for the first time provided explicit authorization to barrage terror suspects with a combination of painful physical and psychological tactics, including head-slapping, simulated drowning and frigid temperatures." That morning Obama appeared on national television. "This is an example of what we've lost over the last six years and what we have to recapture," Obama told MSNBC anchor Mika Brzezinski. "You know, all of us believe we've got to track down and capture or kill terrorists who threaten America, but we have to understand that torture is not going to either provide us with information, and it's also going to create more enemies. And so as a strategy for creating a safer and secure America, I think it is wrongheaded, as well as immoral." Obama added: "I think this administration basically viewed any tactic as acceptable, as long as it could spin it and keep it out of the public eye."

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- Highlight Loc. 5437-41

But even as Obama won great praise and support from liberals and antiwar organizations in the United States, he articulated a foreign policy vision that, when it came to counterterrorism, made clear he intended to authorize covert and clandestine operations. "It was a terrible mistake to fail to act when we had a chance to take out an al Qaeda leadership meeting in 2005," Obama said. "If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf will not act, we will."

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- Highlight Loc. 5451-57

After his inauguration, as Obama built his foreign policy team, he stacked the administration with hawkish Democrats, including his vice president, Joe Biden, and secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, both of whom supported the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Susan Rice would serve as UN ambassador, and Richard Holbrooke would head up the civilian side of Obama's plan to expand the US war in Afghanistan. All of these figures had a track record of support for military interventions, neoliberal economic policies and a worldview consistent with the foreign policy arc that stretched from George H. W. Bush's time in office to the present. Obama also retained Bush's defense secretary, Robert Gates; tapped CIA veteran John Brennan as his senior adviser on counterterrorism and homeland security; and named General James Jones as his national security adviser.

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- Highlight Loc. 5461-68

Boot's colleague Michael Goldfarb wrote in the Weekly Standard, the official organ of the neoconservative movement, that he saw "certainly nothing that represents a drastic change in how Washington does business. The expectation is that Obama is set to continue the course set by Bush in his second term." Within weeks of assuming office in early 2009, Obama would send a clear message that he intended to keep intact many of the most aggressive counterterrorism policies of the Bush era. Among these were targeted killings, warrantless wiretapping, the use of secret prisons, a crackdown on habeas corpus rights for prisoners, indefinite detention, CIA rendition flights, drone bombings, the deployment of mercenaries in US wars and reliance on the "State Secrets Privilege." In some cases, Obama would expand Bush-era programs he had once blasted as hallmarks of an unaccountable executive branch.

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CHAPTER 25: Obama's Signature Strikes - PAKISTAN AND WASHINGTON, DC, 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 5479-87

-As he settled into the Oval Office and his new role as commander in chief, President Obama tweaked Bush's expansive Global War on Terror rhetoric, rebranding it as a "war against al-Qaeda and its allies." On his third day in office, Obama signed a series of executive orders that were portrayed as "dismantling" the Bushera torture and detention programs. "The message we are sending around the world is that the

United States intends to prosecute the ongoing struggle against violence and terrorism, and we are going to do so vigilantly; we are going to do so effectively; and we are going to do so in a manner that is consistent with our values and our ideals," Obama declared as he stood with sixteen retired military officers. "We intend to win this fight. We're going to win it on our terms." But, while dispensing with the Bushera labels and cowboy rhetoric that marked the previous eight years of US foreign policy, Obama simultaneously moved swiftly to expand the covert US wars that had marked his predecessor's time in office.

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- Highlight Loc. 5503-10

Beginning in the closing months of the Bush administration, the Agency had begun targeting people based on patterns of life rather than specific intelligence. The CIA said that "military aged males" who were part of a large gathering of people in a particular region or had contacts with other suspected militants or terrorists could be considered fair targets for drone strikes. A positive ID was not necessary to strike, only some of the "signatures" the Agency had developed to identify suspected terrorists. After some convincing from Hayden, Obama decided not to reject the signature strike policy, although he added a constraint: the CIA director was to have the final say on all strikes, an authority that had been occasionally delegated to the deputy director or the head of the Agency's counterterrorism center. Obama warned that he might withdraw the signature strike authority at a later time. But he didn't.

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- Highlight Loc. 5519-21

One of the first tasks on Obama's national security agenda was a thorough review of Bush's military executive orders. When it came to counterterrorism, Obama would preserve much of his predecessor's policies, and he ended up sustaining most of the ExOrds without revision. In some cases, he sought to expand the authorities. Obama began striking Pakistan almost weekly.

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- Highlight Loc. 5535-41

On June 23, the CIA killed several alleged militants with a Hellfire missile in South Waziristan, then followed up hours later with an attack on the funeral mourning their deaths. Scores of civilians—estimates ranged between eighteen and forty-five—were killed. "After the prayers ended people were asking each other to leave the area as drones were hovering," said a man who lost his leg in the attack. "First two drones fired two missiles, it created a havoc, there was smoke and dust everywhere. Injured people were crying and asking for help...they fired the third missile after a minute, and I fell on the ground." US intelligence reportedly believed that Baitullah Mehsud,

the leader of the Pakistani Taliban would be "among the mourners." He was not, at least when the drones struck.

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- Highlight Loc. 5545-48

In October 2009, Obama reportedly expanded the "target boxes" in Pakistan, broadening the area in which the CIA could go after targets, gave the agency authorization to acquire more drones, and "increased resources for the agency's secret paramilitary forces." Obama had already authorized as many drone strikes in ten months as Bush had in his entire eight years in office.

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- Highlight Loc. 5550-60

At the center of both the JSOC and CIA targeted-killing programs were members of an elite division of Blackwater, who assisted in planning the assassinations of suspected Taliban and al Qaeda operatives, "snatch and grabs" of high-value targets and other sensitive actions inside Pakistan. Some elite Blackwater SELECT personnel worked for the CIA at "hidden bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the company's contractors assemble and load Hellfire missiles and 500-pound laser-guided bombs on remotely piloted Predator aircraft." Blackwater operatives also worked for JSOC on a parallel program that was run out of Bagram Air Base in neighboring Afghanistan. US military intelligence and company sources told me that some Blackwater personnel were given rolling security clearances above their approved level. Using Alternative Compartmentalized Control Measures (ACCMs), the Blackwater personnel were granted entry to a Special Access Program. "With an ACCM, the security manager can grant access to you to be exposed to and operate within compartmentalized programs far above 'secret'—even though you have no business doing so," a US military intelligence source told me. It allowed Blackwater personnel who "do not have the requisite security clearance or do not hold a security clearance whatsoever to participate in classified operations by virtue of trust," he added.

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- Highlight Loc. 5570-82

In addition to planning drone strikes and operations against suspected al Qaeda and Taliban forces in Pakistan for both JSOC and the CIA, the Blackwater teams also helped plan missions for JSOC inside Uzbekistan against the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Blackwater did not actually carry out the operations, the military intelligence source told me, which were executed on the ground by JSOC forces. "That piqued my curiosity and really worries me because I don't know if you noticed but I was never told we are at war with Uzbekistan," he said. "So, did I miss something? Did Rumsfeld come back into power?" When civilians are killed, "People go, 'Oh, it's the CIA doing crazy shit again unchecked.'" Well, at least 50 percent of the time, that's JSOC

[hitting] somebody they've identified through HUMINT or they've culled the intelligence themselves or it's been shared with them and they take that person out and that's how it works." CIA operations were subject to congressional oversight, unlike the parallel JSOC ops. "Targeted killings are not the most popular thing in town right now and the CIA knows that," my source told me in 2009. "Contractors and especially JSOC personnel working under a classified mandate are not [overseen by Congress], so they just don't care. If there's one person they're going after and there's thirty-four [other] people in the building, thirty-five people are going to die. That's the mentality." He added, "They're not accountable to anybody and they know that. It's an open secret, but what are you going to do, shut down JSOC?"

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- Highlight Loc. 5585-89

As a senator, Obama was critical of Blackwater and introduced legislation to try to hold it and other private security companies accountable. Now, as commander in chief, he was confronted by briefings from the CIA and US military about their necessity to covert US operations. Laying out policy visions on the campaign trail was one thing, but confronting the most secretive, elite forces in the US national security apparatus would be no easy task. And, for the most part, Obama elected to embrace—not restrain—those very forces.

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CHAPTER 26: Special Ops Want to "Own This Shit Like They Did in Central America in the '80s" - WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 5759-64

For many JSOC operators, Yemen seemed more relevant to their skill set than Afghanistan, where al Qaeda had been largely wiped out or forced on the run. "These guys are scalpels. They don't like being used as sledgehammers," the former aide to the special operations commander told me. "In Afghanistan they were used as sledgehammers, chasing down Taliban goatherders. In Yemen, they could be scalpels again, knocking off actual al Qaeda." He added that: Special Operations "wants to own this shit like they did in Central America in the '80s. They don't want Jamba Juice, COIN [counterinsurgency] and 'nation building.'"

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- Highlight Loc. 5779-87

A week after the meeting with Petraeus, Saleh deployed his nephew, Ammar Muhammad Abdullah Saleh—a senior commander of the National

Security Bureau—to Marib, a hotbed of al Qaeda activity. Ammar's mission was to take down a suspected al Qaeda cell in an operation intended to show Washington that Saleh was serious. It was a disaster. Despite Ammar's negotiations with local tribal leaders on the terms of the assault, the Yemeni counterterrorism units botched it. Instead of shelling the al Qaeda safe house, they hit a tribal compound, sparking a gun battle in which tribal fighters actually joined with AQAP in attacking the government forces. A military supply truck got lost and was captured by al Qaeda operatives. In the end, Saleh's forces lost five tanks and several troops, and seven of their soldiers were taken prisoner. AQAP quickly capitalized on the debacle, naming it the "Battle of Marib" and posting a video online that featured the captured soldiers. Although the operation was a colossal failure, it was also useful for the United States and Saleh because it was a very public show that the Yemeni government was fighting AQAP, thus helping to cloak US actions in Yemen.

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CHAPTER 27: Suicide or Martyrdom? - YEMEN, 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 5799-5803

-As President Obama was settling into the Oval Office, Anwar Awlaki was busy building up his website and spreading his message. He posted an essay on his blog titled "Suicide or Martyrdom?" Although cloaked in the language of a debate about whether suicide is a mortal sin in Islam, it ultimately was a defense of suicide bombing. "Today the world turns upside down when one Muslim performs a martyrdom operation. Can you imagine what would happen if that is done by seven hundred Muslims on the same day?!"

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- Highlight Loc. 5857-63

NIDAL HASAN, the US army psychiatrist, kept writing to Anwar Awlaki, even though his e-mails were receiving no responses. He posed questions to Awlaki about theology and about Hamas's fight against the Israeli government, asking, among other things, "Is it Permissible to Fire Unguided Rockets into Israel?" After a few lengthy e-mails, Hasan shifted gears and started asking Awlaki how he could donate money to his causes. He suggested that Awlaki give an address where money orders or checks could be sent, rather than using online services. "This can assure privacy for some who are concerned," Hasan wrote. That same day, Hasan wrote Awlaki again. "InshAllah, A \$5,000.00 scholarship prize is being awarded for the best essay/piece entitled 'Why is Anwar Al Awlaki a great activist and leader'. We would be honored if you would award the prize."

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CHAPTER 28: Obama Embraces JSOC - SOMALIA, EARLY 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 5931-35

-For the first year of the Obama presidency, much of the administration's foreign policy attention was directed at Afghanistan and the president's pledge to escalate the war there. Despite estimates that there were fewer than one hundred al Qaeda operatives remaining in the country, Obama was weighing a dramatic increase in the number of US troops he would deploy to Afghanistan, to continue an intervention Obama had characterized as the "right war" during his presidential campaign.

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- Highlight Loc. 6003-11

THE PIRACY INDUSTRY HAD DEVELOPED in Somalia following the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. During the six months that the ICU ruled Somalia, it cracked down substantially on hijackings. Following the Ethiopian invasion, the pirates reclaimed the high seas around Somalia. Although the pirates were often condemned as terrorists and criminals, there was a seldom-mentioned context to their actions. International corporations and nation-states had taken advantage of the permanent state of instability in Somalia, treating the Somali coast as their private, for-profit fishery, while others polluted it with illegal waste dumping. Initially, piracy was at times a response to these actions and some pirates viewed themselves as a sort of Somali coast guard, taxing ships that sought to profit from what was once the realm of Somali fishermen. Those aims were eventually sidelined as the pirates realized they could make huge sums of money by hijacking ships, taking hostages and negotiating large ransoms. Piracy was big business in Somalia. In some cases, the hostages went unharmed, ransoms were paid and everyone moved on. On rare occasions, hostages were killed or, more frequently, died of disease or neglect.

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- Highlight Loc. 6011-60

The hijacking on April 8, 2009, was a day Somali pirates hit the wrong ship. On that day, the Maersk Alabama, a US-flagged cargo ship, was making its way through the Indian Ocean to Mombasa, passing along the Somali coast, when it was approached by a small vessel carrying four armed pirates. [...] It was the seizing of the Alabama that would very directly introduce President Obama to JSOC and its capabilities. [...] Captain Richard Phillips was rescued and returned to the United States with much fanfare. President Obama won praise from across the political spectrum for his leadership in taking down the pirates and

bringing an end to the hostage situation without losing a single US life and with just three bullets fired. Behind the scenes, it was a powerful lesson for President Obama about the clandestine force that President Bush once praised as "awesome"—JSOC.

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- Highlight Loc. 6089-92

"We have presented President Obama with a number of actions and initiatives against al Qaeda and other terrorist groups," said John Brennan, Obama's counterterrorism adviser. "Not only has he approved these operations, he has encouraged us to be even more aggressive, even more proactive, even more innovative, to seek out new ways and new opportunities for taking down these terrorists."

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CHAPTER 29: "Let JSOC Off the Leash" - SAUDI ARABIA, WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, LATE 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 6099-6120

In late August 2009, Saudi prince Mohammed bin Nayef received a phone call from one of the kingdom's most wanted men, al Qaeda operative Abdullah Hasan Tali al Asiri. Prince bin Nayef was the son of the powerful Saudi interior minister, Prince Nayef bin Abdel-Aziz, third in line to the throne. In addition to serving as his father's deputy, bin Nayef was also Saudi Arabia's head of counterterrorism. [...] According to Richard Barrett, the head of the United Nations' al Qaeda and Taliban monitoring team, as the meeting began, Asiri presented the prince with a mobile phone. "Asiri said, 'Oh, you need to speak to my friends because they also want to give themselves up, and if they hear from you, they'll certainly come.'" While Prince bin Nayef was on the phone with Asiri's alleged cohorts in Yemen, Asiri's phone activated a bomb, Barrett explained. Incredibly, Asiri had managed to board a Saudi royal plane with a bomb made of pentaerythritol tetranitrate, known as PETN, pass multiple security checkpoints and make it onto the grounds of Prince bin Nayef's palace in Jeddah. The reason the Saudis hadn't detected it was because the one-pound bomb was lodged in Asiri's rectum. As Prince bin Nayef held the phone, Asiri exploded. "It was really very fortunate for the prince that all he did was hurt his finger, because the blast blew downwards and blew upwards, and not across towards the prince," said Barrett. The attack was caught on a video. "You see the guy's left arm embedded in the ceiling—so the blast must have been quite considerable—and bits of him scattered all over the room," recalled Barrett.

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- Highlight Loc. 6217-20

Lang, who is a former Green Beret, described the men from JSOC who would fight Petraeus's small wars as "sort of like Murder, Incorporated," adding, "Their business is killing al Qaeda personnel. That's their business. They're not in the business of converting anybody to our goals or anything like that."

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CHAPTER 30: Samir Khan: An Unlikely Foot Soldier - THE UNITED STATES AND YEMEN, 2001-2009

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- Highlight Loc. 6253-79

The Yemen media frenzy kicked off on November 5, 2009, when the young US Army psychiatrist Major Nidal Malik Hasan—who had written a series of e-mails to Awlaki—walked into the Soldier Readiness Processing Center in Fort Hood, Texas, shouted, "Allah u Akbar," and opened fire on his fellow soldiers, killing thirteen people and wounding forty-three others before being shot and paralyzed. By most accounts, Hasan was motivated by a combination of factors centering on his work in treating soldiers who had fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. He had reportedly sought to have some of the patients he saw prosecuted for war crimes after they disclosed their actions on the battlefield to him, but those requests were rejected. Hasan had complained to friends and relatives that fellow soldiers had harassed him because of his religion. They said he tried to get out of the military as he struggled increasingly to reconcile his faith with his work for an armed force waging war in Muslim lands. [...] A few days after the Fort Hood shootings, Awlaki published a blog post with the not-so-subtle title: "Nidal Hasan Did the Right Thing." Hasan, Awlaki wrote, "is a hero. He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people. This is a contradiction that many Muslims brush aside and just pretend that it doesn't exist." Hasan "opened fire on soldiers who were on their way to be deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. How can there be any dispute about the virtue of what he has done? In fact the only way a Muslim could Islamically justify serving as a soldier in the US army is if his intention is to follow the footsteps of men like Nidal." Awlaki called on other Muslims within the US Army to carry out similar operations. "Nidal Hassan was not recruited by Al-Qaida," Awlaki later said. "Nidal Hassan was recruited by American crimes, and this is what America refuses to admit." It was the last blog post Awlaki would publish.

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- Highlight Loc. 6360-62

Khan believed the authorities were doing more than reading his blogs. "Back in NC, the FBI dispatched a spy on me who pretended to convert to Islam," Khan later wrote. On several occasions, FBI agents visited the Khan home in an attempt to get Samir's parents to encourage him to stop blogging.

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- Highlight Loc. 6394-6406

MORTEN STORM says he first met Anwar Awlaki in Sana'a in 2006, shortly before Awlaki was tossed in a Yemeni prison for eighteen months at Washington's request. Storm was a former motorcycle gang member and a convicted criminal who converted to Islam. In the late 1990s, the Denmark native began running in radical Islamist circles under the name Murad Storm. He'd had a troubled childhood, committing his first armed robbery at the age of thirteen, and circulated in and out of jail as a teen. Storm eventually fell in with the Bandidos biker gang. In 1997, however, he renounced his life of drugs and crime, telling friends and family that he had converted to Islam. He moved to Yemen, where he married a Moroccan woman in 2000. Two years later they had a son. They named him Osama. A video from 2005 shows Storm attending a speech given by radical Muslim cleric Omar Bakri Mohammed in London. Storm claimed he met Awlaki a year later in Sana'a. At the time Storm was a student at Iman University, where Awlaki was taking classes and delivering lectures. Storm claimed he and Awlaki "talked freely to each other" in the months that led up to Awlaki's arrest and developed a friendship. While Awlaki was imprisoned, Storm said he began to have a change of heart about the version of Islam he was practicing: "I found out that what I believed in was, unfortunately, not what I thought it was." Storm claimed he approached the Danish Intelligence Service, PET, and offered his assistance. He said he was introduced to British intelligence representatives and the CIA. The PET, he claimed, assigned him a handler.

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- Highlight Loc. 6422-36

Awlaki asked Storm to find him an additional wife. Awlaki had married a second Yemeni wife while he was on the run and had a daughter with her. But this time, he specifically wanted a white Muslim convert to act as his "companion in hiding," Storm claimed. [...] Storm said. "I helped the CIA and PET track Anwar so the Americans could send a drone after him. That was the plan."

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CHAPTER 31: Blowback in Somalia - SOMALIA AND WASHINGTON, DC, 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 6460-68

On the campaign trail and after becoming president, Barack Obama pledged that the United States would no longer use certain Bush-era torture and detention tactics. CIA director Leon Panetta had stated in April 2009 that the "CIA no longer operates detention facilities or black sites" and announced a "plan to decommission the remaining sites." Yet three months later, Hassan found himself in a secret prison being interrogated by Americans. According to a US official who spoke to me on condition of anonymity, Hassan was not directly rendered from Kenya to Somalia by the US government. But, the official said, "The United States provided information which helped get Hassan—a dangerous terrorist—off the street." That description supported the theory that Kenyan forces were rendering suspects on behalf of the United States and other governments. Another well-informed source said that Hassan had been targeted in Nairobi because of intelligence suggesting that he was the "right-hand man" of Nabhan, then the presumed head of al Qaeda in East Africa.

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- Highlight Loc. 6485-91

The Nabhan strike won Obama much praise from the counterterrorism and Special Ops community, but in other circles it raised serious questions about the emerging bipartisan consensus on assassinations, renditions and secret prisons. "These are like summary executions," said Evelyn Farkas, a former Senate Armed Services Committee staffer who worked on oversight for SOCOM from 2001 to 2008. "Who's giving authority? Who's making the [target] lists? Is it a kill or capture [mission], or is it a kill mission?" Candidate Obama laid out a vision of how he would radically depart from the policies of the Bush era, but in the Nabhan case he relied on some of the most controversial of them. "Has our policy shifted at all since the previous administration?" Farkas asked. "My sense is 'no.'"

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- Highlight Loc. 6504-6522

Nabhan's death, like so many of Washington's most passionately embraced "strategic" victories in Somalia, would result in blowback. Even when perfectly executed, targeted strikes had the potential to help bolster the ranks of insurgent groups and provide them with martyrs to be emulated. By the end of 2009, at least seven US citizens had died fighting on behalf of al Shabab and scores of others were believed to be among the group's ranks and in its training camps preparing for future action. [...] During his first year in office, President Obama and his advisers endeavored to reframe US counterterrorism policy as a more comprehensive, full-spectrum effort to reduce extremism, largely based on regional security.

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- Highlight Loc. 6528-39

The priorities laid out in Obama's first annual budget request earlier in May were telling: the president continued the arc of a militarized Africa policy, while increasing security assistance to African states. The budget, noted Daniel Volman, director of the African Security Research Project, showed "the administration is following the course laid down for AFRICOM by the Bush administration, rather than putting these programs on hold until it can conduct a serious review of US security policy towards Africa." The US request for arms sales to Africa went up to \$25.6 million, from \$8.3 million in fiscal year 2009, including \$2.5 million set aside for Djibouti, \$3 million for Ethiopia, and \$1 million for Kenya. Military training programs to those countries expanded as well. Further spending was proposed for Camp Lemonnier, as well as naval assets for security operations in the Indian Ocean. In addition to the drone capability at Camp Lemonnier, the Obama administration reached a deal with the government of the Seychelles to position a fleet of MQ-9 Reaper drones there beginning in September 2009. Although the stated purpose of the drones was for unarmed surveillance to support counterpiracy operations, US counterterrorism officials began pushing for the drones to be weaponized and used in the hunt for al Shabab. "It would be a mistake to assume that Obama will not take further military action if the situation in Somalia escalates," Volman concluded. He was right.

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- Highlight Loc. 6545-49

After Nabhan was killed, al Shabab operatives stole two UN Land Cruisers from central Somalia and brought them to Mogadishu. On September 17, the al Shabab agents drove the vehicles up to the gates of Mogadishu's international airport, where the AMISOM forces were meeting at their base with Somali security officials. They positioned the Land Cruisers outside the offices of a US private security contractor and a fuel depot. The UN vehicles exploded in a spectacular, stealth suicide bombing. In the end, more than twenty people were killed in the attack, seventeen of them African Union troops.

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- Highlight Loc. 6559-83

ON DECEMBER 3, 2009, dozens of proud young Somalis poured into the Shamo Hotel in Mogadishu wearing blue-and-yellow graduation caps and gowns. In a city that desperately needed doctors, they would literally become lifelines. All of them were to receive their medical degrees that day from Benadir University, which was established in 2002 by a group of Somali doctors and academics. In a video of the ceremony, which was given to me in Mogadishu, the young graduates-to-be smiled as they posed for pictures, their friends and families looking on with pride. [...] Among those who filed into the meeting hall at the Shamo Hotel that day were several women wearing burkas or abayas—which cover much of the head and body. Former minister of health Osman Dufle

welcomed the crowd and was beginning the proceedings when one of the burka-clad figures stood up, addressed the dignitaries in the front row and, in a distinctly male voice, said, "Peace." Before anyone could react, the man under the burka blew himself up. The camera filming the proceedings went blank for a moment. When the video resumed, the smoke-filled room had become a grisly panorama. Severed limbs laid next to the bodies they were once connected to, and three of the government ministers were dead. [...] The bomber was later identified as a Danish citizen of Somali descent.

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- Highlight Loc. 6598-6614

A week after his West Point speech, President Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. His remarks would win praise from hawkish Republicans for his forceful defense of the projection of US power across the globe and for his assertion that the wars America was waging were "just wars." "Perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the Commander-in-Chief of the military of a nation in the midst of two wars," Obama said. Obama praised the legendary nonviolent activists Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.—a previous recipient of the prize—in his speech before laying out why he disagreed with their pacifism. [...] Noting the praise from hawkish Republicans for Obama's speech, columnist Glenn Greenwald dubbed it "the most explicitly pro-war speech ever delivered by anyone while accepting the Nobel Peace Prize."

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CHAPTER 32: "If They Kill Innocent Children and Call Them al Qaeda, Then We Are All al Qaeda" - WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, 2009

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- Highlight Loc. 6619-26

—On December 16, 2009, top US national security officials were given a file of "baseball cards" containing the bios of three alleged AQAP members whom Admiral McRaven wanted taken out by JSOC in a proposed "series of targeted killings" inside Yemen. Their code names were Objectives Akron, Toledo and Cleveland. JSOC wanted to move on the targets in less than twenty-four hours and needed an answer from the lawyers: yes or no. The officials who made up the killing committee had little time to review the intelligence. Both Harold Koh, the State Department's legal adviser, and his counterpart at the Pentagon, Jeh Johnson, reportedly had just forty-five minutes from the time they received the files until the JSOC-led teleconference that would decide if the missions were a go. This meeting was larger than most targeting meetings, involving some seventy-five officials. The Obama

administration was about to start bombing Yemen, and the national security establishment was mobilized.

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- Highlight Loc. 6633-36

Johnson felt "heavy pressure exerted by the military to kill" and believed he had been "rushed and unprepared" to weigh all of the options. Still, he gave his thumbs up. A short time later, Johnson watched the satellite imagery of al Majalah from a command center in the Pentagon. Figures that appeared to be the size of ants moved around. And then with a massive flash they were vaporized. The feed Johnson watched was referred to internally at JSOC as "Kill TV." Now Johnson knew why.

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- Highlight Loc. 6668-6708

As soon as bin Fareed arrived in al Majalah, he was horrified. "When we went there, we could not believe our eyes. I mean, if somebody had a weak heart, I think he would collapse. You see goats and sheep all over, you see the heads of those who were killed here and there. You see their bodies, you see children. I mean some of them, they were not hit immediately, but by the fire, they were burned," he told me. Body parts were strewn around the village. "You could not tell if this meat belongs to animals or to human beings," he remembered. They tried to gather what body parts they could to bury the dead. "Some of the meat we could not reach, even. It was eaten by the birds." As bin Fareed surveyed the carnage, most of the victims he saw were women and children. "They were all children, old women, all kinds of sheep and goats and cows. Unbelievable." He examined the site and found no evidence that there was anything even vaguely resembling a training camp. [...] Shaye had long been known as a brave, independent-minded journalist in Yemen, and his collision course with the US government appeared to have been set when al Majalah was bombed. As the story spread across the world, Shaye traveled to the village. There he discovered the remnants of the Tomahawk cruise missiles and cluster bombs, neither of which were in the Yemeni military's arsenal. He photographed the missile parts, some of them bearing the label "Made in the United States," and distributed the photos to international media outlets and human rights organizations. He reported that the majority of the victims were women, children and the elderly. After conducting his own investigation, Shaye determined that it was a US strike, and he was all over the media telling anyone who would listen. The young journalist was becoming a thorn in America's side. But when he started interviewing Anwar Awlaki, he would become a target.

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- Highlight Loc. 6709-16

Al Majalah was the opening salvo in America's newest war. Unlike the CIA's "covert action" programs, which require formal notification to

the House and Senate intelligence committees, this operation was done under a military "Special Access Program," which gives the armed forces wide latitude to conduct lethal, secret operations with little, if any, oversight. In Yemen, the operations were all being coordinated by US Special Operations Forces based at the US-Yemen joint operations center in Sana'a, with JSOC's intelligence division coordinating the intel, directing Yemeni forces in on-the-ground raids and providing coordinates for US missile strikes. Inside the facility, US and Yemeni military and intelligence officials had access to real-time electronic and video surveillance, as well as three-dimensional terrain maps. The US personnel inside Yemen fed intel and operational details back to the NSA in Fort Meade, the Special Operations Command in Tampa and to other intelligence and military agencies.

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- Highlight Loc. 6726-28

A military source familiar with the operation told me al Majalah was a "JSOC operation with borrowed Navy subs, borrowed Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy surveillance aircraft and close coordination with CIA and DIA on the ground in Yemen. Counting the crew of the sub we're talking 350-400 [people] in the loop."

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- Highlight Loc. 6738-41

Among the munitions found at the scene were BLU 97 A/B cluster bomblets, which explode into some two hundred sharp steel fragments that can spray more than four hundred feet away. In essence, they are flying land mines capable of shredding human bodies. The bomblets were also equipped with an incendiary material, burning zirconium, that set fire to flammable objects in the target area. The missile used in the attack, a BGM-109D Tomahawk, can carry more than 160 cluster bombs.

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- Highlight Loc. 6783-84

In Yemen, under tribal customs, to have one's beard shaved in public by another man is to be humiliated for life.

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- Highlight Loc. 6827-28

Yemeni officials told the US ambassador they had given the governor of Abyan \$100,000 to pay off the victims and the families of the dead.

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CHAPTER 33: The Americans Really Wanted to Kill Anwar"

- YEMEN, LATE 2009-EARLY 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 6870-71

The fact that the president had authorized an assassination strike against a US citizen went almost entirely unchallenged by Democrats and Republicans alike.

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- Highlight Loc. 6906-10

Shaye had caused trouble for the United States and the Yemeni government when he reported on the US role in the al Majalah bombing and other strikes. Now he was in contact with Anwar Awlaki, giving the preacher another opportunity to get his message out. Shaye was a serious journalist, chasing down important stories inside his own country. If anything, Shaye's interviews provided the US intelligence community, politicians and the pro-assassination pundits with ammunition to support their campaign to kill Awlaki. Nonetheless, the United States perceived Shaye as a threat—and one that had to be dealt with.

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- Highlight Loc. 6932-56

As Flight 253 began its descent into Detroit, Abdulmutallab complained that he had a stomachache and went into a bathroom, where he remained for about twenty minutes. When he returned to his seat, he covered himself with a blanket. Moments later, other passengers say they heard a noise that sounded like a firecracker. In a flash, Abdulmutallab's pants leg was on fire, as was part of the plane's inner wall. A nearby passenger jumped on him, and flight attendants scrambled to put out the fire. When a flight attendant asked Abdulmutallab what he had in his pants, he reportedly responded, "Explosive device." [...] Awlaki's role in the "underwear plot" was unclear. Awlaki later claimed that Abdulmutallab was one of his "students." Tribal sources in Shabwah told me that al Qaeda operatives reached out to Awlaki to give religious counseling to Abdulmutallab, but that Awlaki was not involved in the plot. While praising the attack, Awlaki said he had not been involved with its conception or planning. "Yes, there was some contact between me and him, but I did not issue a fatwa allowing him to carry out this operation,"

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- Highlight Loc. 6993-96

Cheney's attack [on Obama] was bold, not least for its hypocrisy. When the so-called Shoe Bomber, Richard Reid, tried to blow up a flight in a similar way, the Bush administration prosecuted him in civilian courts and Rumsfeld declared that the case was "a matter that's in the hands of the law enforcement people." Unlike Obama, who responded to

the incident swiftly, it took President Bush six days to address Reid's attempted attack.

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CHAPTER 34: "Mr. Barack Obama...I Hope That You Reconsider Your Order to Kill...My Son" - WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, EARLY 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 7080

In January 2010, the news leaked in the US media that JSOC had officially elevated Anwar Awlaki to the capture or kill category on its list of High Value Targets.

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CHAPTER 35: One Night in Gardez WASHINGTON, DC 2008-2010; - AFGHANISTAN, 2009-2010

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- Highlight Loc. 7155-61

At the Joint Staff, McChrystal was instrumental in persuading Obama to spread out control of Special Operations Forces and shift some command authority over unconventional warfare to the combatant commanders. These moves, in turn, expanded the covert battlefield and facilitated the lethal operations Obama was increasingly authorizing in Yemen and other countries. [...] For the first several months of the Obama administration, his national security team engaged in a heated debate over how to proceed in Afghanistan. Some military commanders had pressed for a sizable increase to the US force and a replay of the counterinsurgency tactics mythologized in the narrative about the "success" of the troop surge in Iraq, but Vice President Joe Biden and National Security Adviser James Jones advocated for a shift in the focus of the campaign to Pakistan, using a combination of Special Ops Forces and drones.

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- Highlight Loc. 7175-99

In appointing McChrystal as the commander of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and commander of US forces in Afghanistan, Obama revealed the extent to which his counterterrorism policies centered on JSOC. Obama selected a man who was more closely aligned than almost any other figure with the most aggressive military

policies of the Bush administration, except, perhaps, General Petraeus, to run the war Obama would soon claim as his own. [...] As the man credited with systematizing the mass killing and detention of suspected insurgents in Iraq, McChrystal may have seemed an unlikely champion of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. But he made a show of embracing its core tenets, such as a significant troop surge and a renewed focus on securing population centers and promoting good governance.

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- Highlight Loc. 7208-11 | Added on Friday, August 02, 2013, 11:19 PM

While McChrystal and the "COIN Doctrine" received much hype in the media, the reality on the ground was that the United States was simultaneously escalating two wars in Afghanistan: the public COIN-centric campaign of the conventional military forces and the covert war being waged by Special Ops Forces. The week that McChrystal was confirmed as the Afghan war commander, 1,000 Special Operations Forces and supporting personnel deployed to the country, bringing the total number of SOFs in Afghanistan to about 5,000.

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- Highlight Loc. 7219-21

By October 2009, there were more than 2,000 people on the Joint Prioritized Effects List. In May 2009, Special Ops Forces were conducting about twenty raids a month in Afghanistan. By November, under McChrystal, that had increased to ninety and was climbing steadily.

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- Highlight Loc. 7225-27

As in Iraq years earlier, JSOC ran its own detainee operations in Afghanistan. Prisoners they believed had intelligence that could lead to HVTs were taken to secretive US-run detention centers, known as Field Detention Sites, situated on US bases throughout Afghanistan.

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- Highlight Loc. 7231-33

Although Obama had pledged to defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan, McChrystal's time at the helm during the war would see a notable rise in support for the Taliban and a record number of US soldiers killed.

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- Highlight Loc. 7237-41

When I visited Afghanistan in 2010, Afghan police commanders told me that US Special Ops teams would enter their areas of responsibility without coordinating with local authorities or informing the main US military bases in the area. They would conduct operations, sometimes

killing people in night raids or snatching people and flying them to other provinces. The raids, the commanders explained, were causing a major backlash against the conventional US forces and the US-supported Afghan police units. They told me that the night raids were actually helping the Taliban.

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- Highlight Loc. 7295-7546

It was around 3:30 a.m., as the celebration was winding down, that the family and their guests noticed the main light to the compound had been shut off by someone outside the party. Around that time, one of the musicians went into the courtyard to use the outhouse and saw lasers scoping the grounds from the perimeter. The man ran back inside and told the others. "Daoud [Afghan police officer of US backed government] went to see what was happening," Tahir told me. "He thought the Taliban had come. They were already on the roof." As soon as Daoud and his fifteen-year-old son, Sediqullah, stepped out into the courtyard, they were both hit by sniper rounds and fell to the ground. The family began hearing the voices of their attackers. Some were shouting commands in English, others in Pashtun. The family suspected the attackers were Americans. Panic broke out inside the house. "All the children were shouting, 'Daoud is shot! Daoud is shot!'" Tahir recalled. Daoud's eldest son was behind his father and younger brother when they were hit. "When my father went down, I screamed," he told me. "Everybody—my uncles, the women, everybody came out of the home and ran to the corridors of the house. I sprinted to them and warned them not to come out as there were Americans attacking and they would kill them." Meanwhile, Daoud's brothers, Mohammed Saranwal Zahir and Mohammed Sabir, tried to come to his aid. "When I ran outside, Daoud was lying here," Mohammed Sabir told me as we stood in the dusty courtyard at the very spot where Daoud was shot. "We carried Daoud inside." As Daoud lay bleeding out on the floor in a hallway inside the compound, his brother Zahir said he was going to try to stop the attack by speaking to the Americans. He was a local district attorney and knew some English. "We work for the government!" he shouted outside. "Look at our police vehicles. You have wounded a police commander!" Three women from the family, Bibi Saleha, aged thirty-seven, and Bibi Shirin, aged twenty-two, and Gulalai, aged eighteen, clutched at Zahir's clothes, pleading with him not to step outside. It didn't make a difference. Zahir was gunned down where he stood, with sniper rounds hitting him and the three women. Zahir, Bibi Saleha and Bibi Shirin died quickly. Gulalai and Daoud held on for hours, but their besieged family members could do nothing for them and they eventually died from their injuries. Somehow, in a matter of minutes, a jubilant family event had become a massacre. Seven people had died in all, according to family members. Two of the women had been pregnant. The women had sixteen children among them. [...] Mohammed Sabir had just seen his brother, his wife, his niece and his sister-in-law gunned down. Now he stood, shell-shocked, above their corpses in a room filled with American soldiers. The masked commandos had burst into the home and proceeded to raid it, searching every room.

Sabir told me that Daoud and Gulalai were still alive at that point. US soldiers kept saying they would get them medical attention. "They didn't let us take them to the hospital and kept saying that they have doctors and they would take care of the injured folks," he said. [...] US soldiers digging the bullets out of the women's bodies. "They were putting knives into their injuries to take out the bullets," Sabir told me. I asked him bluntly, "You saw the Americans digging the bullets out of the women's bodies?" Without hesitation, he said, "Yes." Tahir told me he saw the Americans with knives standing over the bodies. "They were taking out the bullets from their bodies to remove the proof of their crime," he said. [...] A subsequent UN investigation conducted two days after the raid, which was never publicly released, determined that the survivors of the raid "suffered from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by being physically assaulted by US and Afghan forces, restrained and forced to stand bare feet for several hours outside in the cold," adding that witnesses alleged "that US and Afghan forces refused to provide adequate and timely medical support to two people who sustained serious bullet injuries, resulting in their death hours later." [...] After three days in captivity, he told me, the Americans released him and the others. "They told us that we were innocent, that they are very sorry, and it was a very bad thing that they did in our house." In public, however, the United States and its allies put forward a very different story about what happened that night in the compound in Gardez. [...] It wasn't until a British reporter, Jerome Starkey, began a serious investigation of the Gardez killings a month after they took place that the full story would begin to unfold. When Starkey first read the ISAF press release, he said he "had no reason to believe it wasn't true." When I visited him at his home in Kabul, Starkey told me, "I thought it was worth investigating because if that press release was true—a mass honor killing, three women killed by Taliban who were then killed by Special Forces—that in itself would have made an extraordinary and intriguing story." But when he visited Gardez and began assembling witnesses to meet him in the area, he immediately realized ISAF's story was likely false. [...] Starkey arrived at the family compound early in the morning and was sitting with the family drinking tea and talking. "At about eleven o'clock, up rolls a huge convoy of massive American armored cars, armored land cruisers, countless, I mean literally countless Afghan officers and soldiers," Starkey recalled. "And among them is a man wearing a uniform that I recognized as sort of U.S. Marines, but it says U.S. Navy on his lapel." His name tag simply read "McRaven." "I didn't know who he was at that stage," said Starkey, one of the most experienced Western reporters in Afghanistan at the time. "And so, there unfolded perhaps one of the most extraordinary things I've ever seen in Afghanistan as they off-loaded a sheep from the back of an Afghan Army pickup truck. And three Afghan soldiers knelt on this sheep on the street outside the home where this operation had taken place, in the exact same place where these soldiers had been when they started the raid. And there with a knife, they sharpened the knife and there was an Afghan Army mullah who started praying and they were offering to sacrifice this sheep." [...] The Afghan generals handed the family a pile of money—

almost \$30,000, according to relatives. Major international news outlets reported that Hajji Sharabuddin had accepted McRaven's apology. Months later, when I sat with Sharabuddin at his home, his anger seemed only to have hardened. "I don't accept their apology. I would not trade my sons for the whole kingdom of the United States," he told me, holding up a picture of his sons. "Initially, we were thinking that Americans were the friends of Afghans, but now we think that Americans themselves are terrorists. Americans are our enemy. They bring terror and destruction. Americans not only destroyed my house, they destroyed my family. The Americans unleashed the Special Forces on us. These Special Forces, with the long beards, did cruel, criminal things." "We call them the American Taliban,"

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- Highlight Loc. 7570-73

As the pace of night raids increased in Afghanistan under McChrystal, the Special Ops Forces continued to enjoy the freedom to operate with no accountability for their actions, a fact that did not seem lost on McChrystal. "You better be out there hitting four or five targets tonight," McChrystal would tell a Navy SEAL in Afghanistan, before adding, "I'm going to have to scold you in the morning for it, though." But with each new raid, more protests began spreading across Afghanistan.

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- Highlight Loc. 7575-85

Civilian deaths from NATO operations had killed upward of ninety civilians in the first few months of 2010, a 75 percent increase from the previous year. And it wasn't just in night raids. More than thirty Afghans were killed at checkpoint shootings from the time McChrystal took charge in Afghanistan to the spring of 2010. "In the nine-plus months I've been here, not a single case where we have engaged in an escalation of force incident and hurt someone has it turned out that the vehicle had a suicide bomb or weapons in it and, in many cases, had families in it," McChrystal conceded in March 2010, during a teleconference with US troops. "We've shot an amazing number of people and killed a number and, to my knowledge, none has proven to have been a real threat." While McChrystal ostensibly put in place greater restrictions on night raids and almost entirely stopped air strikes, the ground truth was still the same: innocent people were dying and Afghans were growing ever more enraged. By May 2010, the United States was conducting as many as 1,000 night raids a month. US Special Ops Forces "were authorized to shoot any armed man on sight," reported Gareth Porter, "so the raids were resulting in many Afghan civilians being killed during the raids, all of whom were automatically categorized by SOF as insurgents."

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- Highlight Loc. 7588-94

US political and military leaders, he said, "are thinking, 'When we scare the people, they should be quiet.' But this is a different nation. When you are killing one person, four or five others rise against you. If you are killing five people, twenty, at least, are rising against you. When you are disrespecting the people or the honor of the people in one village, the whole village becomes against you. This is creating hatred against Americans." The US killing of civilians, combined with a widely held perception that the Afghan government existed only for facilitating the corruption of powerful warlords, drug dealers and war criminals, had produced a situation in which the Taliban and the Haqqani network gained support from communities in the Pashtun heartland that would not otherwise be backing them.

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- Highlight Loc. 7602-8

As the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated and the Taliban and other insurgent groups gained ground, a stunning scandal rocked the US military and the Special Ops community that would ultimately lead to the resignation and retirement of General McChrystal, one of the architects of the post-9/11 US killing machine. But his demise had nothing to do with any of his actions with JSOC in Iraq or his involvement in covering up the friendly-fire death of Pat Tillman, the former NFL player turned Army Ranger in Afghanistan in 2004 or his role in transforming JSOC into a global hit squad. Instead, McChrystal was brought down by an article in Rolling Stone magazine written by Michael Hastings that captured McChrystal and his inner circle making disparaging remarks about President Obama, Vice President Biden and other top US civilian officials.

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CHAPTER 36: The Year of the Drone - YEMEN AND THE UNITED STATES, 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 7626-31

When I met again with Hunter, who worked with JSOC under Bush and continued to work in counterterrorism under the Obama administration, I asked him what changes had taken place from one administration to the next. He quickly shot back, "There's no daylight. If anything, JSOC operations have intensified under this administration, there's been a greater intensity in what they're being asked to do, where they're being asked to do it and how they're being asked to do it," he told me. "There are things that are transpiring now, around the globe, that would be unthinkable to the Bush administration,

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- Highlight Loc. 7643-54

By early 2010, there were at least three entities within the US government that were maintaining kill lists: the National Security Council, which Obama dealt with directly during weekly meetings; the CIA; and the US military. The CIA had its own "parallel, more cloistered process" for selecting targets and executing strikes, which were for the most part in Pakistan. The NSC and the DoD had little oversight of that process. Obama exercised final authority over "more complex and risky strikes" in Pakistan. At least twice a month, the CIA's top lawyer would receive a file from the Counterterrorism Center (often no more than two to five pages long) containing targeting recommendations and intelligence. The lawyer would hold small meetings that included CTC lawyers and the head of the National Clandestine Service, formerly known as the Directorate of Operations, which coordinates the CIA's covert operations across the globe. Lawyers from the White House and the National Security Council would review the CIA's list, and the Gang of Eight on Capitol Hill would have to approve it, as well. The military list, according to reporters Dana Priest and William Arkin, "was really more than one, since the clandestine special operations troops" from JSOC had their own internal list. These lists often overlapped, but as Priest and Arkin noted, "even these highly classified kill lists were not coordinated among the three primary agencies involved in creating them."

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- Highlight Loc. 7657-59

Unlike President Bush, who often delegated decisions on assassinations to commanders and CIA officials, Obama insisted on personally signing off on most strikes. On Tuesday afternoons, the president would preside over meetings that senior officials dubbed "Terror Tuesdays," during which proposed targets would be "nominated" for spots on the kill list.

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- Highlight Loc. 7720-31

BY MID-2010, the Obama administration had increased the presence of Special Operations Forces from sixty countries to seventy-five countries. SOCOM had about 4,000 people deployed around the world in countries besides Iraq and Afghanistan. [...] Well-placed special operations sources told me that among the countries where JSOC teams had been deployed under the Obama administration were: Iran, Georgia, Ukraine, Bolivia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Peru, Yemen, Pakistan (including in Baluchistan) and the Philippines. These teams also at times deployed in Turkey, Belgium, France and Spain. JSOC was also supporting US Drug Enforcement Agency operations in Colombia and Mexico.

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CHAPTER 37: Driving Anwar Awlaki to Hell - YEMEN, 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 7766-80

On May 24, a US missile hit a convoy of vehicles in the Marib Desert that "actionable intelligence" had concluded was heading to a meeting of al Qaeda operatives. The intelligence was only partly correct. The men inside the vehicle were not al Qaeda members but prominent Yemeni local mediators in the government effort to demilitarize members of AQAP. Among those killed was Jabir al Shabwani, the deputy governor of Marib Province. [...] Months after the attack, some US officials began to believe that the Saleh regime had actually fed the United States bad intelligence to take out Shabwani, after a political feud had broken out between Jabir al Shabwani and "key members" of President Saleh's family. "We think we got played," a US source with access to "high-level" Obama administration discussions on Yemen said.

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- Highlight Loc. 7968-71

Although Awlaki was developing relationships with various al Qaeda figures in Shabwah and elsewhere, and his status was rising within its ranks, well-connected Yemenis who had interviewed AQAP leaders told me that he was not an operational member of the group. "Anwar al Awlaki was not a leader in al Qaeda, he did not hold any official post at all," said journalist Abdul Rezzaq al Jamal.

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- Highlight Loc. 7983-85

Awlaki had not been charged with any crimes by the US government. Nor had the Americans publicly offered any evidence that Awlaki was the AQAP ringleader they made him out to be. Awlaki's case would cut to the heart of one of the key questions raised by the increasing role targeted assassinations were playing in US foreign policy: Could the American government assassinate its own citizens without due process?

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CHAPTER 38: The CIA's Dating Service - DENMARK AND YEMEN, 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 7990-92

Unbeknownst to Awlaki, the Danish intelligence asset was coordinating his bride search with the CIA. Storm had posted messages on websites

frequented by Awlaki's fans and soon received a note from a Croatian woman who had recently converted to Islam. "Aminah" was the name she had adopted after her conversion, though she was raised as a Catholic.

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- Highlight Loc. 8000-37

Awlaki contacted Storm again on February 17, 2010, and said he wanted to meet Aminah. [...] Aminah, Storm alleged, convinced him she was willing to accept the potential consequences of her decision to travel to Yemen to marry Awlaki. [...] Storm returned to Vienna on May 18, 2010, to purchase Aminah's ticket to Yemen and provide her with clothing and \$3,000, all of which he said was paid for by the CIA. He also gave Aminah the bugged suitcase that, if things went according to plan, would set her and Awlaki up for execution by drone. [...] Two days later Storm received a text message from his Danish handler. "Congratulations brother, you just got rich, very rich," it read. The intelligence agent included smiley face emoticons in the text message. Storm claimed he collected his reward on June 9, 2010, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel near Copenhagen, adding that both a CIA and PET officer were present at the exchange and that the PET officer was handcuffed to the briefcase that contained his reward. The suitcase was filled with \$250,000 in bundled \$100 bills. Storm asked for the code to open the suitcase. "Try 007," the CIA agent told him. Storm snapped a photo of the cash in the briefcase and later provided it to Jyllands-Posten as evidence to support his story. Multiple sources confirmed that he received the payment. [...] When Awlaki's aides arrived to pick her up to bring her to Awlaki, they told her she could not bring her suitcase but could only bring a plastic bag containing her belongings. The CIA's bugged suitcase would not make the trek.

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CHAPTER 39: "The Auction of the Assassin" - WASHINGTON, DC, 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 8041-46

In the halls of the US Congress, lawmakers fell into two basic camps on the issue of targeting Anwar Awlaki, a US citizen, for assassination: silence or support. It was not until three months after the plan was revealed that a US representative spoke out against it. "I don't support it-period," Democrat Dennis Kucinich told me at the time. "I think people in both parties that are concerned about the Constitution should be speaking out on this." Kucinich said he had sent several letters to the Obama administration raising questions about the potential unconstitutionality of the policy, as well as possible violations of international law, but said he had received no response.

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- Highlight Loc. 8053-60

The fact that a US citizen was on the hit list was not Kucinich's only concern. A popular Democratic president and constitutional law scholar pushing the boundaries beyond the extreme policies of the Bush administration, Kucinich believed, would have far-reaching consequences. "We are acting out of fear. We've forgotten who we are," he told me. "We're knocking out pillars of our democratic traditions here. The right to a trial? Gone. The right to be able to confront those who are accusing you? Gone. The right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment? Gone. All of these anchors are being pulled away." He added, "Don't think for a moment that we can do these kinds of things without it having a direct effect here at home. You can't have one America abroad and another one at home. It's all the same. The erosion of integrity, the erosion of democratic values, the erosion of a benevolent intent all augurs a nation in which the basic rights of our own people can no longer be secured. They are up for the auction of the assassin."

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- Highlight Loc. 8087-8109

Days after Nasser first spoke with the lawyers in the United States, the Obama administration took swift action to try to ensure that the case would never be heard in US courts. On July 16, 2010, the Treasury Department officially labeled Anwar Awlaki a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist." Rather than the president or defense secretary or the CIA director, the White House put forward the Treasury Department's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, Stuart Levey, to make the case that Awlaki had become "operational," directly accusing him of "preparing" and instructing Abdulmutallab "for his operation," alleging that "after receiving this direction from Awlaki, Abdulmutallab obtained the explosive device he used in the attempted Christmas Day attack." Levey declared that Awlaki had "involved himself in every aspect of the supply chain of terrorism—fundraising for terrorist groups, recruiting and training operatives, and planning and ordering attacks on innocents" but provided no evidence for these charges. The designation by the Treasury Department made it a crime for American lawyers to represent Awlaki without getting a license from the government. On July 23, the ACLU and CCR filed an urgent request for a license. When they were not granted one, they sued the Treasury Department. On August 4, in response to the lawsuit, the Treasury Department changed its position, allowing the lawyers to represent Awlaki. A month later, the CCR and ACLU filed a lawsuit against President Obama, CIA director Panetta, and Defense Secretary Gates, challenging their intention to target Awlaki for assassination, charging that it was unlawful. "Outside of armed conflict, both the Constitution and international law prohibit targeted killing except as a last resort to protect against concrete, specific, and imminent threats of death or serious physical injury,"

the suit alleged. "The summary use of force is lawful in these narrow circumstances only because the imminence of the threat makes judicial process infeasible. A targeted killing policy under which individuals are added to kill lists after a bureaucratic process and remain on these lists for months at a time plainly goes beyond the use of lethal force as a last resort to address imminent threats, and accordingly goes beyond what the Constitution and international law permit." They asked a federal judge to bar the president, the CIA and JSOC "from intentionally killing" Awlaki and to order them "to disclose the criteria that are used in determining whether the government will carry out the targeted killing of a U.S. citizen." The Obama administration responded forcefully to the lawsuit, invoking an argument that was used throughout the Bush administration to quash lawsuits seeking to hold Donald Rumsfeld and other officials liable for their role in extrajudicial killings, torture and extraordinary rendition: the military and state secrets "privilege."

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- Highlight Loc. 8121-23

In essence, the government was asserting that it had the right to kill a US citizen but that the justification for doing so was too dangerous to reveal to the American public.

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- Highlight Loc. 8182-83

The Bush administration claimed a global detention authority in the context of this war on terror, and what the Obama administration is doing is actually extending that and claiming a global killing authority," including the right to kill American citizens.

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CHAPTER 40: "Martyrdom Is Why We Came Here, My Brother"

- YEMEN, 2009-2010

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- Highlight Loc. 8247-51

"After some time passed in the company of the mujahidin, I quickly acknowledged that success does not rely upon the job you undertake from nine to five, nor does it rely upon the wealth that you have accumulated, nor does it rely upon how far you have taken your studies in college. All of these things are respectable, but by being with the mujahidin, it helped open my eyes that our reason in life has nothing to do with any of these things," Khan remembered. "The only thing in the entire world that matters to me, more than ever before, is the condition of my heart when I die."

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- Highlight Loc. 8273-74

Inspire was a way to rally the Western sympathizers and to try and further bolster its roster so they can more easily plan attacks against the West."

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- Highlight Loc. 8273-77

Inspire was a way to rally the Western sympathizers and to try and further bolster its roster so they can more easily plan attacks against the West." The first issue of the magazine was released online, but it was hardly a smashing success. The sixty-seven-page issue only contained four actual pages of the magazine. The other sixty-three contained a computer code that, when deciphered, turned out to be cupcake recipes featured on the popular US daytime talk show Ellen, hosted by gay comedian Ellen DeGeneres. It is unclear how the file was corrupted, though some reports suggested it was a cyberattack by anti-AQAP hackers, MI-6 or the CIA itself.

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- Highlight Loc. 8280-97

Inspire, the editor wrote, was "the first magazine to be issued by the al-Qaeda Organization in the English language. [...] The magazine was well produced, with a layout that resembled a typical US teen magazine, though without fashionably dressed women and celebrities. Instead, it featured photos of children alleged to have been killed in US missile strikes and pictures of armed, masked jihadis. An article written under the byline AQ Chef and titled "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," provided instructions on how to manufacture explosive devices from basic household goods. Another article gave detailed directions on how to download military-grade encryption software for sending e-mails and text messages. Perhaps most disturbing, the magazine contained a "Hit List" of people who it alleged had created "blasphemous caricatures" of the Prophet Muhammad. In late 2005, Jyllands-Posten—the Danish newspaper that would later publish Morten Storm's story—commissioned a dozen cartoons of the Prophet, ostensibly to contribute to a debate about self-censorship within Islam. It had enraged Muslims across the world at the time, sparked massive protests and resulted in death threats and bomb threats against the newspaper. The hit list published by Inspire included magazine editors, anti-Muslim pundits who had defended the cartoons, as well as the novelist Salman Rushdie. But it also included Molly Norris, a Seattle-based cartoonist who initiated "Everybody Draw Mohammed Day." Norris said she did it in response to the US Comedy Central network's decision to edit out a scene in its popular animated program South Park that addressed the controversy, after receiving a threat.

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- Highlight Loc. 8311-14

When Inspire was published, some within the US intelligence community panicked. The first concern was protecting the people who had been identified as targets for assassination. The FBI took immediate precautions to guard the Seattle cartoonist, whom they feared could be murdered. She eventually changed her name and moved. Law enforcement agencies in other countries took similar measures.

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- Highlight Loc. 8332-36

AQAP leader Nasir al Wuhayshi clearly saw value in the US obsession with Awlaki. So much so that he actually sent a message to Osama bin Laden proposing that he name Awlaki as the new head of AQAP. On August 27, 2010, bin Laden ordered his deputy Shaykh Mahmud, also known as Atiya Abdul Rahman, to relay a message to Wuhayshi. Bin Laden seemed to view Awlaki as an ally and a potentially valuable asset to al Qaeda's goals. The problem, bin Laden explained, was that Awlaki was an unknown quantity to al Qaeda central, a man who had yet to prove his mettle in actual jihad.

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CHAPTER 41: The Persecution of Abdulelah Haider Shaye - YEMEN, SUMMER 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 8358-8427

In July 2010, seven months after the al Majalah attack, Shaye and Sharaf were out running errands. Sharaf stepped into a supermarket while Shaye waited outside. When Sharaf came out of the store, he told me, "I saw armed men grabbing him and taking him to a car." The men, it turned out, were Yemeni intelligence agents. They snatched Shaye, hooded him and took him to an undisclosed location. The agents, according to Sharaf, threatened Shaye and warned him against making further statements on TV. Shaye's reports on the bombing and his criticism of the US and Yemeni governments, Sharaf said, "pushed the regime to kidnap him. One of the interrogators told him, 'We will destroy your life if you keep on talking.'" Eventually, in the middle of the night, Shaye was dumped back onto a street and released. "Abdulelah was threatened many times over the phone by the Political Security agents and then he was kidnapped for the first time, beaten and investigated over his statements and analysis on the Majalah bombing and the US war against terrorism in Yemen," Shaye's Yemeni lawyer, Abdulrahman Barman, told me. "I believe he was arrested upon a request from the US." Shaye responded to his abduction by going back on Al Jazeera and describing his own arrest. [...] Around this time, the

US government began privately telling major US media outlets that were working with Shaye that they should discontinue their relationships with him. One source inside a prominent US media organization told me that the government had warned the outlet that Shaye was using his paychecks to support al Qaeda. A US intelligence official told another journalist for a prominent US magazine that "classified evidence" indicated that Shaye was "cooperating" with al Qaeda. "I was persuaded that he was an agent," said the official. [...] As Sharaf was being arrested, Yemeni forces had surrounded Shaye's home as well. "Abdulelah refused to come out, so they raided his house, took him by force, beat him and broke his tooth," Sharaf said. "We were both taken blindfolded and handcuffed to the national security prison, which is supported by the Americans." They were separated and thrown in dark, underground cells, said Sharaf. "We were kept for about thirty days during Ramadan in the national security prison where we were continuously interrogated." [...] When the judge finished reading the charges against him, Shaye stood behind the bars of the holding cell and addressed his fellow journalists. "When they hid murderers of children and women in Abyan, when I revealed the locations and camps of nomads and civilians in Abyan, Shabwah and Arhab when they were going to be hit by cruise missiles, it was on that day they decided to arrest me," he declared. "You notice in the court how they have turned all of my journalistic contributions into accusations. All of my journalistic contributions and quotations to international reporters and news channels have been turned into accusations." As security guards dragged him away, Shaye yelled, "Yemen, this is a place where, when a young journalist becomes successful, he is viewed with suspicion."

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CHAPTER 42: The President Can Write His Own Rules - WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, LATE 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 8430-42

While US counterterrorism operations expanded in Yemen in the summer of 2010, Washington and other political and economic forces were drawing up plans for a neoliberal restructuring of Yemen's economy. Organized under the banner of "Friends of Yemen," the US and British governments joined with the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and some of Yemen's neighbors. [...] The Obama administration increased USAID funding, humanitarian assistance and "democracy promotion" funds for Yemen from \$14 million two years earlier to \$110 million in 2010. [...] But as a condition of the increased aid Yemen was to receive, President Saleh was forced to accept IMF structural adjustments, among them "the gradual reduction in the level of Government subsidies on fuel." A declaration from the "Friends" openly

acknowledged that "necessary economic reforms would have an adverse impact on the poor."

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- Highlight Loc. 8447-58

Saleh's main priority was not fighting AQAP, but rather suppressing the internal rebellions he faced from the Houthis and the southern secessionists. But in order to continue receiving the US military aid he needed for these internal fights, he had to prove to Washington he was serious about fighting AQAP. Colonel Lang, who spent years dealing with Saleh as US defense attaché, said that Saleh was very weary of what he perceived as an attempt by the Obama administration to apply the counterinsurgency doctrine in Yemen but had to play the game to keep the military aid flowing. "Saleh doesn't really want us to get involved to the extent that the full implications of that doctrine would imply, because then he would be increasingly relegated to the position of a Karzai-like state—and, in fact, whereas Afghan President [Hamid] Karzai has never been able to play the game with sufficient skill, to manipulate all the factors to some end that approximates something that he wants, Saleh has. With great skill," Lang said at the time. He added that Saleh knew that the type of money allocated by the "Friends of Yemen" and USAID and for political reform would be monitored by the United States "so that any graft that occurs does not excessively benefit him and his cronies, and other things like that which will tend to reduce his net power. So he's not gonna be really in favor of that." But with the intense US focus on AQAP, Saleh's military aid lunch ticket, he needed to play the game.

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- Highlight Loc. 8500-22

A MONTH AFTER MEETING WITH SALEH, Brennan received a late-night phone call on October 28, 2010, from his friend Prince Mohammed bin Nayef. Saudi intelligence, the prince said, had uncovered a plot by AQAP to bring down US cargo planes. The bombs, he said, were already in place. Shortly after 10:30 p.m., Brennan warned President Obama of a "potential terrorist threat" to the US homeland. Saudi intelligence provided US and British intelligence with tracking numbers for packages they believed contained explosives. By the time Brennan heard of the plot, one of the planes carrying the alleged bomb had already left Sana'a. The package was transferred to a UPS plane and flown to Germany, where it was transferred again before arriving at 2:13 a.m. local time at East Midlands Airport in Leicestershire, one hundred miles north of London. British security forces recovered the package, which was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago. [...] The packages were sent to the Jewish organizations in Chicago but addressed to two infamous and long-dead historical figures. One was addressed care of Diego Deza, the brutal grand inquisitor who, for a period, led the Spanish Inquisition. The other was addressed to Reynald Krak, a French knight of the Second Crusade known for his mass murder of Muslims.

Krak was eventually beheaded by Saladin, the Muslim warrior who defeated the Crusaders in the twelfth century.

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- Highlight Loc. 8551-54

JUDGE JOHN BATES, a 2001 appointee of President George W. Bush, heard oral arguments in *Al-Aulaqi v. Obama*, challenging the administration's placement of a US citizen on an assassination list. "How is it that judicial approval is required when the United States decides to target a U.S. citizen overseas for electronic surveillance, but that, according to defendants, judicial scrutiny is prohibited when the United States decides to target a U.S. citizen overseas for death?" the judge asked.

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- Highlight Loc. 8563-66

But Judge Bates dismissed the case on December 7, 2010, on procedural grounds, ruling that Anwar's father, Nasser, did not have standing to file suit on behalf of his son and that the case would not have survived a review of the "political questions" it raised regarding the president's authority to wage war. Judge Bates concluded that "the serious issues regarding the merits of the alleged authorization of the targeted killing of a U.S. citizen overseas must await another day."

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- Highlight Loc. 8568-71

"If the court's ruling is correct, the government has unreviewable authority to carry out the targeted killing of any American, anywhere, whom the president deems to be a threat to the nation," said the ACLU's Jameel Jaffer after the ruling was announced. "It would be difficult to conceive of a proposition more inconsistent with the Constitution or more dangerous to American liberty."

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CHAPTER 43: Al Qaeda's "Foothold in Somalia Has Probably Been Facilitated" - SOMALIA, 2010

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- Highlight Loc. 8585-92

Al Shabab, in justifying its alliance with al Qaeda, conflated its embrace of the terror group with resistance against foreign aggression. The opportunity to paint itself that way was a gift that Osama bin Laden could only have dreamed of in the 1990s. And Washington's missteps and miscalculations had helped to deliver it.

"The United States has launched air strikes to target high-level members of al-Shabab it believes have links to Al Qaeda. But experts say these air strikes have only increased popular support for al-Shabab. In fact, they argue that two of the only actions that could galvanize al-Shabab and increase its support within Somalia are additional air strikes by the United States, or a return of Ethiopian troops," a report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded in early 2010. "Al Qaeda is now a more sophisticated and dangerous organization in Africa," the report asserted, noting that al Qaeda's "foothold in Somalia has probably been facilitated by the involvement of Western powers and their allies."

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- Highlight Loc. 8607-15

Turki's alliance with al Shabab was of particular concern to the United States, as it gave the alliance ownership of the key port town of Kismayo. Control of that port, along with "the secondary ports of Marka and Baraawe...emerged as the most important source of income for [al Shabab]," according to a UN report. Al Shabab "generates between \$35 million and \$50 million per year from port revenues, of which at least \$15 million is based on trade in charcoal and sugar." The United States wanted that cash flow cut off. So, the Americans began backing Ahmed Madobe, a former member of the Islamic Courts Union whom JSOC had tried to kill in 2007. Madobe had once been an ally of both al Shabab and Hasan Turki's Ras Kamboni militia. Madobe and his men began receiving "training and support" from US-backed Kenyan military forces. They rode around in new technicals and, during battles with al Shabab forces, received artillery backup from Kenyan forces, including military helicopters providing air support. Madobe would become one of the new generation of US-backed warlords drawn from the rubble of the Islamic Courts Union. He

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CHAPTER 44: "Anwar Awlaki... Definitely Has a Missile in His Future" - YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 8679-88

In January 2011, Yemeni journalist Abdulelah Haider Shaye was convicted of terrorism-related charges by a Yemeni court and sentenced to five years in prison, followed by two years of restricted movement and government surveillance. Throughout his trial, Shaye refused to recognize the legitimacy of the court and declined to present a legal defense. Human Rights Watch said the specialized court where Shaye was tried "failed to meet international standards of due process," and his lawyers argued that the little "evidence" that was presented against him relied overwhelmingly on fabricated documents. "What happened was

a political not judicial decision. It has no legal basis," said Abdulrahman Barman, Shaye's lawyer, who boycotted the trial. "Having witnessed his trial I can say it was a complete farce," said Iona Craig, the Times of London journalist. Several international human rights groups condemned the trial as a sham and an injustice. "There are strong indications that the charges against [Shaye] are trumped up and that he has been jailed solely for daring to speak out about US collaboration in a cluster munitions attack which took place in Yemen," said Amnesty International's Philip Luther.

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- Highlight Loc. 8695-8705

After Shaye was convicted and sentenced, tribal leaders pressured President Saleh to issue a pardon. "Some prominent Yemenis and tribal sheikhs visited the president to mediate in the issue and Saleh agreed to release and pardon him," recalled Barman. "We were waiting for the release of the pardon—it was printed out and prepared in a file for the president to sign and announce the next day." Word of the impending pardon leaked in the Yemeni press. That day, February 2, 2011, President Saleh received a call from President Obama. The two discussed counterterrorism cooperation and the battle against AQAP. At the end of the call, Obama "expressed concern" over the release of Shaye, whom Obama said "had been sentenced to five years in prison for his association with AQAP." In fact, Shaye had not yet been released at the time of the call, but Saleh did have the pardon for him prepared and was ready to sign it. It would not have been unusual for the White House to express concern about Yemen's allowing AQAP suspects to go free. Suspicious prison breaks of Islamist militants in Yemen had been a regular occurrence over the preceding decade, and Saleh had been known to exploit the threat of terrorism to leverage counterterrorism dollars from the United States. But this case was different: Abdulelah Haider Shaye was not an Islamist militant or an al Qaeda operative. He was a journalist. After the call from Obama, Saleh ripped up the pardon.

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- Highlight Loc. 8769-71

"The evidentiary standard for actually killing people off, to me, is frighteningly low. I think it's like three separate corroborated HUMINT reports, and that's it? In a court of law, that only amounts to hearsay.

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CHAPTER 45: The Curious Case of Raymond Davis: Act I - PAKISTAN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 8783-8874

The full details of what happened at the Mozang Chowk intersection that day may never be known. And who exactly Raymond Davis is and what he was doing in Lahore—or in Pakistan in general—is even murkier. Within moments of Davis's vehicle coming to a stop, three people would be dead, the American would be on his way to a notorious Lahore jail, mobs of angry Pakistanis would be calling for his death and the most significant diplomatic crisis between the Pakistani and American governments since the 1979 burning and ransacking of the US Embassy in Islamabad would be in full swing. If the official version of that day's events, as provided by Davis and senior US officials all the way up to President Obama, is to be believed, then Raymond Davis was working at the US Consulate in Lahore, a bureaucrat who stamped passports and performed administrative duties—essentially, a pencil pusher—who found himself at the wrong place at the wrong time in a very dangerous city. According to this version of the story, Davis was the victim of an attempted armed robbery by two assailants who trailed him after Davis made a withdrawal from an ATM. As Davis sat in traffic, the would-be robbers pulled in front of him on a motorbike, one of them brandishing a weapon. Davis, fearing for his life, pulled out his .9mm semiautomatic Glock pistol and shot the men through the front windshield of his car in self-defense. After a brief car chase, Davis was arrested by the Punjab police. He held in his possession a diplomatic passport, entitling him to diplomatic immunity. President Obama called Davis "our diplomat." Under the Vienna Conventions, no criminal charges could lawfully be filed against him in Pakistan, and Davis should have been handed back to US custody. Case closed. To accept this version of the story would require believing that an administrative staffer at the consulate would, by chance, be so cool-headed and so skilled with a Glock that he would react with an assassin's precision to an attempted robbery, deftly taking down two assailants by firing his weapon from behind the steering wheel through the windshield of his car. That would be a remarkable feat for a "technical adviser" or a member of the "administrative staff," as US officials characterized Davis. Never mind that US diplomats in Pakistan are not authorized to carry weapons. This, of course, is not the full story. In fact, the official version may actually be void of any substantial truth—save the obvious: that an American named Raymond Allen Davis shot dead two Pakistanis in broad daylight at an intersection in Lahore. The most vital pieces of this story are not Raymond Davis's diplomatic passport, what type of visa he possessed or that the United States publicly owned him as a diplomat once he was arrested. Those are details of a cover story, part of which was preconceived and part of which was cobbled together on the fly. The Kot Lakhpat Jail on the outskirts of Lahore is home to scores of suspected militants and accused terrorists—men who would love nothing more than to have a chance in the dark of night to slit the throat of a suspected American spy. It was this jail where Raymond Davis was ultimately taken after a brief car chase through Lahore that ended in his apprehension by local police at the Old Anarkali Bazaar. Davis was

not placed in the general population, but rather in an isolation cell in the jail's "high security zone." Some twenty-five suspected "jihadis" were transferred out of the jail once Davis arrived. For extra measure, the paramilitary Punjab Rangers were brought in to ring the wing of the jail. Although it was portrayed as a safety measure to protect Davis, it also served another purpose—ensuring that no one could break the American free. Pakistani intelligence knew things about Davis that inspired fears of that happening. [...] The Pakistani authorities were indeed searching Davis's car, but his passport would be the least interesting item they'd discover. They had already recovered Davis's Glock .9mm with a stock of ammunition, including five magazines. In the vehicle, they also found two empty clips of ammo for the .9mm and another semiautomatic weapon, also with ammo. As the search continued of Davis and his car, they uncovered a cache of supplies that would seriously undermine the credibility of claims that Davis was a diplomat or a mere technical staffer at the consulate. Among the items: night-vision equipment, multiple IDs, several ATM cards, masks, a makeup kit used for disguising identity, a survival kit, a telescope, a sophisticated GPS device, a forehead-mounted flashlight, infrared equipment, a satellite phone and various wire cutters and knives. He also had an airline ticket. A check of the numbers on his multiple mobile phones revealed calls to twenty-seven militants from the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Tehrik-e-Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, according to Pakistani law enforcement sources quoted by the Express Tribune. On the memory card of Davis's camera, investigators found photos of religious schools and government and military institutions near the Indian border. They also found an ID showing Davis as a US Department of Defense contractor. Meanwhile, reporters in the United States tracked down Davis's wife, Rebecca, at their home in Highlands Ranch outside Denver, Colorado. She directed them to a phone number provided to her by the US government. It was a number at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. [...] Davis had arrived in Pakistan a week before the Lahore shooting, but that was not his first time in the country. He was a seasoned Special Forces operator, an ex-Green Beret who served as a Special Operations weapons sergeant. His last assignment in the military was with the 3rd Special Forces Group based at Fort Bragg, where JSOC is headquartered. In 2003, as the Iraq occupation was swinging into full gear, Davis left the military to become a private contractor, a move that would send him straight to the heart of US covert and clandestine operations. His first known trip to Pakistan was in December 2008, when he began working for the notorious private security firm Blackwater on a secret CIA contract. His job as a contractor for the Agency's Global Response Staff (GRS) was to provide protection for CIA operatives deployed to Pakistan as part of the ever-widening presence of Agency personnel coordinating Washington's covert war there. The gig often put him in direct proximity to case officers meeting with secret sources or preparing sensitive operations. His official cover, as a regional affairs officer at the embassy, was a common cover for CIA operatives and contractors. While Davis was working for Blackwater, the company was at the center of the CIA's most sensitive covert operations in Pakistan, helping to run its drone bombing campaign and targeted

killing and capture operations. Blackwater, which had long been used by the Bush administration as an "unattributable" force that could conduct off-the-books operations cloaked in secrecy and layers of subcontracts, had its tentacles in almost every aspect of US covert ops. Not only was the company working for the CIA on its assassination program, but it also worked closely with the Joint Special Operations Command. While at Blackwater, Davis was at the nexus of the key organizations running the covert campaign. [...] It was the beginning of Davis's foray into the muddiest realm of covert US operations in Pakistan. Davis had worked with Blackwater in Pakistan until August 2010. In September of that year, he became a free agent and signed a contract worth \$200,000 for "Overseas Protective Services." As a contract vehicle, he used a company called Hyperion Protective Services, LLC, which described itself as providing "loss and risk management professionals." It was registered at an address in Las Vegas. Davis and his wife were listed, along with one other person, as its officers. The address was actually a post office box in a UPS store in a strip mall next to a Super Cuts barbershop. Davis returned to Pakistan. The former JSOC staffer said that Davis helped to "wash" money and to establish safe houses for JSOC personnel, in addition to his work for the CIA. "All over the world we have people that, literally, are peripheral to policy and are just in-country to collect human intelligence or to facilitate special ops or espionage," he said.

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- Highlight Loc. 8887-8930

When exactly this began in Pakistan is unclear. Blackwater had a presence along the Afghan-Pakistan border dating back to April 2002, when it won its first "black" contract to protect CIA operations in Afghanistan in the early stages of the US war. It also held diplomatic security, logistical and CIA contracts in Pakistan. According to a former senior Blackwater executive and the military intelligence source, the relationship with JSOC intensified after President Bush authorized an expansion of Special Ops activities in Pakistan. I asked the former senior Blackwater executive, who had extensive experience in Pakistan, for confirmation of what the military intelligence source told me—that Blackwater forces were not actively killing people in Pakistan, but rather supporting JSOC and the CIA in doing so. "That's not entirely accurate," he replied. He concurred with the military intelligence source's description of the JSOC and CIA programs, but he pointed to another role he said Blackwater played in Pakistan, not for the US government but for Islamabad. He said Blackwater worked on a subcontract for Kestral Logistics, a powerful Pakistani firm that specialized in military logistical support, private security and intelligence consulting. It was staffed with former high-ranking Pakistani army and government officials. Although Kestral's main offices were in Pakistan, it also had branches in several other countries. Kestral did a robust business in defense logistics with the Pakistani government and other nations, as well as top US defense companies. Blackwater's founder, Erik Prince, had a "pretty close

relationship" with Kestral CEO Liaquat Ali Baig, according to the former Blackwater executive. "They've met many times and struck a deal, and they [offer] mutual support for one another." Working with Kestral, the former executive said, Blackwater provided convoy security for Defense Department shipments destined for Afghanistan that would arrive in the port at Karachi. Blackwater would guard the supplies as they were transported overland from Karachi to Peshawar and then west through the Torkham border crossing, the most important supply route for the US military in Afghanistan. According to the former executive, Blackwater operatives also integrated with Kestral's forces in sensitive counterterrorism operations in the North-West Frontier Province, where they worked in conjunction with the Pakistani Interior Ministry's paramilitary force, known as the Frontier Corps (alternately referred to as "frontier scouts"). The Blackwater personnel were technically advisers, but the former executive said that the line was often blurred in the field. Blackwater was "providing the actual guidance on how to do [counterterrorism operations] and Kestral's folks are carrying a lot of them out, but they're having the guidance and the overwatch from some BW guys that will actually go out with the teams when they're executing the job," he said. [...] "So, the things that you're seeing in the news about how this Pakistani military group came in and raided this house or did this or did that—in some of those cases, you're going to have Western folks that are right there at the house, if not in the house." Blackwater, he said, was paid by the Pakistani government through Kestral for consulting services. "That gives the Pakistani government the cover to say, 'Hey, no, we don't have any Westerners doing this. It's all local and our people are doing it.' But it gets them the expertise that Westerners provide for [counterterrorism]-related work." [...] According to federal lobbying records, Kestral had hired former assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs Roger Noriega, who served in that post from 2003 to 2005, to lobby the US government, including the State Department, USAID and Congress, on foreign affairs issues "regarding [Kestral's] capabilities to carry out activities of interest to the United States." Noriega was hired through his firm, Vision Americas, which he ran with Christina Rocca, a former CIA operations official who served as assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs from 2001 to 2006 and was deeply involved in shaping US policy toward Pakistan. In October 2009, Kestral paid Vision Americas \$15,000 and gave a Vision Americas-affiliated firm, Firecreek Ltd., an equal amount to lobby on defense and foreign policy issues.

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- Highlight Loc. 8930-51

IN NOVEMBER 2009, as I worked on an investigative report for the Nation magazine on JSOC's targeted killing operations in Pakistan, I received an unprompted call on my cell phone the day before publication from Captain John Kirby, the spokesperson for Admiral Michael Mullen, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Obama's most senior military adviser. Kirby wouldn't explain how he got my

number or how he had heard about the story. "Let's just leave it at: we heard about it," he told me bluntly. Kirby told me that my story was false but would not go on record saying that. Instead, he told me, "We do not discuss current operations one way or the other, regardless of their nature." He told me bluntly that if we published the story, which connected Blackwater to JSOC's operations in Pakistan, I would be "on thin ice." We had confidence in our sources, so despite this clear attempt at intimidation, the Nation ran the story. The next day, when the article, titled "The Secret US War in Pakistan," was published, Pentagon spokesperson Geoff Morrell called it "conspiratorial" and explicitly denied that US Special Operations Forces were doing anything other than "training" in Pakistan. Morrell told reporters: "We have basically, I think, a few dozen forces on the ground in Pakistan who are involved in a train-the-trainer mission. These are Special Operations Forces. We've been very candid about this. They are—they have been for months, if not years now, training Pakistani forces so that they can in turn train other Pakistani military on how to—on certain skills and operational techniques. And that's the extent of our—our, you know, military boots on the ground in Pakistan, despite whatever conspiratorial theories that, you know, magazines...may want to cook up. There's nothing to it." In fact, there was a lot to it. A year after my story in the Nation, WikiLeaks released a series of classified cables showing that a month before Morrell denounced my report, the US Embassy was aware that US military Special Operations Forces had been conducting offensive operations inside Pakistan, helping direct US drone strikes and conducting joint operations with Pakistani forces against al Qaeda and Taliban forces in North and South Waziristan and elsewhere in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. According to an October 9, 2009, cable classified by US ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson, the operations were "almost certainly [conducted] with the personal consent of [Pakistan's] Chief of Army Staff General [Ashfaq Parvez] Kayani." The operations were coordinated with the US Office of the Defense Representative in Pakistan.

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- Highlight Loc. 8953-58

In the fall of 2008, the US Special Operations Command asked top US diplomats in Pakistan and Afghanistan for detailed information on refugee camps along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and a list of humanitarian aid organizations working in those camps. On October 6, Ambassador Patterson, sent a cable marked "Confidential" to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the CIA, US Central Command and several US embassies saying that some of the requests, which came orally and in the form of e-mails, "suggested that agencies intend to use the data for targeting purposes." Other requests, according to the cable, "indicate it would be used for 'NO STRIKE' purposes."

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- Highlight Loc. 8972-78

So close was Blackwater to the most highly classified, sensitive operations the CIA was conducting that its members were among the casualties in one of the deadliest known attacks against the Agency in its history, the December 2009 suicide bombing at a CIA outpost at Forward Operating Base Chapman in Afghanistan. Blackwater operatives were serving as the security team for the Agency's second-highest-ranking officer in Afghanistan. They were meeting with a source, someone traveling by car from Pakistan, whom they believed knew the whereabouts of Ayman al Zawahiri, al Qaeda's number-two man. Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al Balawi, it turned out, was a double agent whose true allegiance was to the Pakistani Taliban. In all, seven CIA personnel and a Jordanian intelligence officer were killed when Balawi walked onto the base and blew himself up. Two of those killed were Blackwater operatives.

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- Highlight Loc. 8989-95

In late 2010, relations between the United States and the ISI began to rapidly deteriorate. In November, a civil lawsuit filed in New York accused the ISI's chief, Ahmad Shuja Pasha, of involvement in the 2008 Mumbai bombings carried out by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. In December, the CIA scrambled to whisk its Islamabad station chief out of Pakistan after local media blew his cover and reported his name, Jonathan Banks. The top spy's identity was first revealed in a lawsuit filed in Pakistan by a man from North Waziristan who alleged that two of his relatives had been killed in a drone strike. US officials accused the ISI of leaking the name in retaliation for the lawsuit that named Pasha. A US intelligence official said that Banks had to be removed because "terrorist threats against him in Pakistan were of such a serious nature that it would be imprudent not to act."

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CHAPTER 46: The Curious Case of Raymond Davis: Act II PAKISTAN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 8999-9006

In Lahore, Raymond Davis lived and worked out of a US safe house in Upper Mall that he reportedly shared with five CIA security personnel. JSOC operatives also used the house. Far from being a diplomat, Davis worked on an ultrasecret, highly compartmentalized, classified team of men tasked with conducting sensitive surveillance and intelligence operations that could lead to targeted killing or capture. Among their tasks, according to US officials, was covertly gathering intel on the terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba. On January 27, Davis was conducting an "area familiarization route," putting him out in the open on the

streets of Lahore for hours. He scouted several locations, including religious schools and government buildings. That's why the Pakistani authorities found, in his car, the high-tech kit of a clandestine operative: weapons with enough ammo to fight a small street war, surveillance equipment, wire cutters, knives and infrared equipment.

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- Highlight Loc. 9016-23

At some point on January 27, as Davis traveled through Lahore, he came in contact with the men on the motorcycle, twenty-two-year-old Faizan Haider and twenty-six-year-old Faheem Shamshad, also known as Muhammad Faheem. According to the US version of events, the two men scoped out Davis as he stopped at an ATM to withdraw money and then put in place a plan to rob him. But according to four Pakistani sources who spoke to ABC News shortly after the incident, the two men were actually working for the ISI and began tracking Davis after he had crossed "a red line." Days before the incident, Davis "was asked to leave an area of Lahore restricted by the military," according to ABC's sources. "His cell phone was tracked, said one government official, and some of his calls were made to the Waziristan tribal areas, where the Pakistani Taliban and a dozen other militant groups have a safe haven. Pakistani intelligence officials saw him as a threat who was 'encroaching on their turf,'" an official said.

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- Highlight Loc. 9032-38

Which "red line" Davis crossed, if in fact that is what prompted the two men to track him, may never be known. Perhaps it involved getting too close to Lashkar-e-Taiba. Perhaps he was working to expose its ties to the ISI. Maybe he was scouting targets for the Agency's drone bombings. Some suggested that Davis was the CIA's new chief of station. Some Pakistani officials went so far as to offer up a wild conspiracy theory that Davis was actually working with the Taliban and other militant groups to plan attacks on civilian targets that could be blamed on terrorists. It was a common allegation hurled at Blackwater in places like Peshawar, the capital of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and a central front in the covert US war in Pakistan. Despite the incendiary nature of these allegations, no evidence was ever produced to back up any of these charges.

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- Highlight Loc. 9076-81

In Pakistan, theories that the United States was plotting to snatch the country's nuclear weapons were rampant and the source of endless commentary on its news channels. The idea wasn't just paranoia. JSOC had in fact drawn up plans to secure Pakistan's nukes in the event of a coup or other destabilization. In the late 1990s, it was revealed that plans existed for JSOC to be prepared to deploy anywhere across the globe "to recover sensitive NBC [nuclear, biological, chemical]

materials in the hands of terrorist groups, to slip undetected into rogue countries to gain evidence of a secret WMD development program, to sabotage such a program, and to detect, disarm, disable, or seize WMD."

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- Highlight Loc. 9099-9123

Whatever Davis was doing and for whom he was doing it prior to pulling up at the Mozang Chowk intersection in Lahore on January 27, 2011, what happened that day was straight out of a spy movie. At some point, Davis pegged the two guys on the motorcycle in front of him as a threat. As he told it, one of the men brandished a firearm in a menacing way. Davis grabbed his Glock 9 and fired five shots through his front windshield, with deadly precision, taking down Muhammad Faheem, who was on the back of the bike. One shot hit him in the head, just above his ear. Another pierced his stomach. The driver of the motorcycle, Faizan Haider, hopped off the bike and started to flee. Davis, Glock in hand, stepped out of his car, aimed and fired five more shots. Haider fell thirty feet from his motorcycle. At least two shots hit him in the back. He later died in the hospital. According to eyewitnesses, after shooting the two men, Davis returned calmly to his vehicle and took out a military-grade radio. He called for backup. Before getting back into his vehicle, onlookers in the crowded intersection watched as Davis walked over to the blood-soaked bodies of the two men he had shot and photographed them. As crowds began to descend on the streets, the potential for a mob forming was strong. Traffic police called out for Davis to stop. He ignored them, got back in his car—the windshield riddled with the bullet holes made by his own Glock—and sped off. In the meantime, a Toyota Land Cruiser was speeding through the streets of Lahore. Its license plate, bearing the tag LZN-6970, was a fake. The driver of Davis's backup vehicle was not about to wait in congested traffic. He punched it, hopping onto the median of a crowded road, and then darted into incoming traffic, weaving the vehicle toward Mozang Chowk. About five hundred yards from the intersection where the shooting happened, the Land Cruiser slammed into the motorcycle of a Pakistani man, Ibadur Rehman, crushing him, and then continued on toward the scene. After discovering that Davis was already gone, the men in the Land Cruiser fled. By the time his backup vehicle arrived, Davis had made it two miles from Mozang Chowk. But the chase ended swiftly. He was confronted by local police at a crowded market in Old Anarkali in Lahore. Davis put up no resistance and was taken into custody. He worked for the US government, Davis told them. His seven-week ordeal was just beginning. While Davis was on his way to a Punjab police station for questioning, the men on his backup team were making their getaway. Somewhere near Faletti's Hotel, several items fell from their vehicle, among them four ammunition clips, 100 bullets, a black mask, a knife with a compass and a piece of fabric emblazoned with an American flag—another blood chit. They returned to the CIA-JSOC safe house, destroyed all government documents in their possession and headed for the US Consulate. The men inside that vehicle were never heard from nor seen again in Pakistan.

The United States, claiming they had diplomatic immunity, whisked them out of the country before the Pakistanis could question them. "They have flown the coop, they are already in America," a senior Pakistani official remarked.

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- Highlight Loc. 9138-45

The particulars of the incident were not nearly as important as the high-stakes game that would play out between the United States and Pakistan. Unbeknownst to the Pakistani government, five months before Raymond Davis was taken into custody, US intelligence had made a discovery of potentially incalculable value. The CIA had located a courier linked to Osama bin Laden. They tracked his movements, which ultimately led them to a large house in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Using satellite imagery, intelligence analysts noticed the movements of a mysterious figure inside the compound. The White House believed it had found bin Laden. Just as Admiral McRaven began gaming out scenarios JSOC could use to kill or capture the al Qaeda leader, Davis had shot the men in Lahore and now sat in a Pakistani jail. The United States feared that if it raided the house in Abbottabad, Davis could be killed in retaliation for the violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. Washington had to get its man out of there.

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- Highlight Loc. 9195-9203

As Raymond Davis sat in his cell in the Kot Lakhpat Jail, US officials feared for his safety. As many as three prisoners had been murdered by guards in the facility. Some Pakistani officials expressed concern that the CIA would try a spectacular prison break. Davis's food was tested for poison by dogs before being served to him. While his masters tried to free him, Davis remained cool and defiant. During an interrogation after the shooting, Davis, clean-shaven and wearing a blue pullover fleece, told his interrogator, "The US ambassador says I have [immunity], so I'm not answering any questions." Davis demanded to see his passport. "Right on the front page," he said, motioning his hands in a framing motion. "Diplomatic passport." As the interrogator attempted to question him further, Davis announced he would not answer any more questions. "I'm going back to my room," Davis told the man, then got up from the table. "You can't go like this," the interrogator declared. "You are not a diplomat." Davis simply reiterated that he would not answer any more questions as he headed for the door.

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- Highlight Loc. 9259-62

In mid-February, after Davis had been in custody for two weeks, CIA director Panetta talked to ISI chief Pasha, who demanded that the United States identify "all the Ray Davises working in Pakistan, behind our backs." Following that discussion, the ISI agreed to help

facilitate and support a plan to pay off the victims' families, paving the way for Davis's release.

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- Highlight Loc. 9313-22

On March 16, unidentified Pakistani agents forcibly took nineteen of the victims' family members to Kot Lakhpat Jail. It was to be the day of Raymond Davis's trial. The public was not allowed in, nor were reporters. Davis was, according to Punjab law minister Rana Sanaullah, charged with murder. But instead of witnessing the presentation of evidence, the testimony of eyewitnesses or the questioning of Davis, the family members were ordered to sign papers pardoning the American. "I and my associate were kept in forced detention for hours," claimed an attorney for the family of Faizan Haider. Each of the family members was brought before the judge and asked if he or she pardoned Davis. Under intense pressure, all of them answered yes. The judge then dismissed the case against Davis and ordered his release. "This all happened in court and everything was according to law," Sanaullah declared. "The court has acquitted Raymond Davis. Now he can go anywhere." As retired Pakistani Brigadier F. B. Ali observed, "The diyyat provision is much loved by the rich and powerful in Muslim societies where it is in force; it literally allows them to get away with murder." In all, the families were paid a total of \$2.3 million.

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CHAPTER 47: The Tsunami of Change - AUSTRIA AND YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9338-50

In mid-2011, Yemen was caught up in the revolution that was sweeping the Arab world. The popular revolt against oppressive regimes in the region had begun on December 17, 2010, when Mohamed Bouazizi, a twenty-six-year-old street vendor in Tunisia, took the ultimate stand. The young fruit-and-vegetable seller struggled every day in the poor rural city of Sidi Bouzid to make ends meet, facing constant harassment from local police and municipal employees who demanded bribes from him. On this particular day, Tunisian officials stripped him of his only source of income—when they confiscated his cart and goods because he did not have the proper permit. Bouazizi, enraged, ran to the governor's offices, but the governor refused to meet him. Then, desperate and furious, he went to a nearby gas station, filled a jug with gasoline and stood in the middle of traffic. It was 11:30 in the morning. "How do you expect me to make a living?" he shouted before dousing himself in gasoline. He lit a match and his body erupted in flames. Within months, massive protests against the US-backed regimes of the Arab world had broken out in Middle Eastern and

North African capitals, an uprising that became known as the Arab Spring. Several dictators fell, one after another: Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia was the first to go. On January 25, a rebellion began against Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak that would ultimately bring an end to his regime. Yemenis watched as their Arab brothers and sisters in other countries faced down the dictators that had ruled their lives for as long as they could remember. Less than two weeks later, tens of thousands poured into a square in central Sana'a and renamed it Change Square.

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- Highlight Loc. 9358-67

On March 18, 2011, more than 100,000 Yemeni protesters gathered for Friday prayers in the streets near Sana'a University. As the prayers ended and people began dispersing, government security forces and pro-Saleh militiamen opened fire on the crowd, killing more than fifty people. Some of them were shot in the head by snipers. Three days later, a severe blow was dealt to the Saleh regime when the most powerful figure in Yemen's military, General Ali Mohsin al Ahmar, commander of the 1st Armored Division, threw his support behind the protests and vowed to defend Yemen's "peaceful youth revolution." Other senior military figures soon followed suit. Senior civilian officials, including scores of ambassadors and diplomats, announced their resignations. Important tribal leaders, long the most crucial element of Saleh's grip on power, swung to the opposition. As Yemen's revolution was heating up, the United States was beginning a bombing campaign to support armed rebels in Libya that would ultimately bring down the regime of Colonel Muammar el Qaddafi. But in Yemen, the US government was playing a very different game. The prospect of losing Ali Abdullah Saleh made Washington very nervous. [...] While Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and other US officials condemned the violence in Yemen, they stopped far short of calling for an end to the regime or for international military action to confront the brutality of the Yemeni security forces. Instead, the US position was to call for a "political solution." A few days after the massacre in Sana'a, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, on a visit to Moscow, was asked if the United States still backed Saleh. "I don't think it's my place to talk about internal affairs in Yemen," Gates replied. What he said next spoke volumes about US priorities: "We are obviously concerned about the instability in Yemen. We consider Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is largely located in Yemen, to be perhaps the most dangerous of all the franchises of Al Qaeda right now. And so instability and diversion of attention from dealing with AQAP is certainly my primary concern about the situation." At the time, the Obama administration was in the midst of ramping up its training and equipping of Yemen's military and security forces, including some of the very forces that were now repressing peaceful antigovernment protests. "The feckless US response is highlighting how shortsighted our policy is there," Joshua Foust, the former DIA Yemen analyst, told me at the time. "We meekly consent to Saleh's brutality out of a misguided fear that our counterterror programs will be cut off, apparently not realizing that,

in doing so, we are practically guaranteeing the next government will threaten those very programs.”

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CHAPTER 48: The Fortress in Abbottabad - WASHINGTON, DC, 2010-2011; - PAKISTAN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9420-27

Some US officials thought the United States might never catch him, while some terror analysts believed bin Laden might already be dead. But bin Laden was very much alive and was living in the middle-class Bilal Town neighborhood of Abbottabad, Pakistan, in a large compound less than a mile from the Pakistani equivalent of the West Point Military Academy. It is unclear exactly when bin Laden had moved to Abbottabad, but construction on the residence had been completed in 2005. And it was clearly built for secrecy. The al Qaeda leader lived on the third floor of the largest house on the property with three of his wives and many of his children. Their residence was expertly designed to ensure that no one could see inside. It had almost no windows, save for some narrow openings on one of the walls. Ironically, on May 2, 2011, it was those very attributes of the home that would prevent bin Laden from seeing the well-armed US Navy SEALs who were whizzing across Pakistan on a mission to end his life.

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- Highlight Loc. 9428-33

THE LAST SERIOUS CHANCE the United States had of killing or capturing bin Laden had come a decade earlier, in the winter of 2001 in Tora Bora, Afghanistan. A collapse in coordination between the Pentagon and CIA had marred that operation, resulting in bin Laden and his deputy, Zawahiri, disappearing—some thought for good. For the next decade, a determined group of analysts from the CIA followed one lead after another to a seemingly endless string of dead ends. With no human intelligence resources inside al Qaeda, no signals intelligence coming from bin Laden himself and little hope for support from authorities in the regions he was believed to be in, the CIA was stuck. In 2005, the bin Laden unit was shuttered, though a number of analysts continued to pursue the al Qaeda leader.

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- Highlight Loc. 9443-62

But in August 2010, the CIA got its biggest break in the case since Tora Bora, when a CIA asset inside Pakistan spotted Abu Ahmed al Kuwaiti in Peshawar. Kuwaiti had long been on the CIA's radar and had been identified by various al Qaeda figures captured and interrogated

by US forces in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 as a top aide to bin Laden and his primary courier. The Agency's asset in Pakistan followed Kuwaiti's white Suzuki jeep on a two-hour drive from Peshawar to the garrison town of Abbottabad. As the CIA analysts examined the details of the compound, which they likened to a "fortress," they discovered it had no phone or Internet connection and that its residents burned their trash. They grew their own vegetables and raised their own chickens and cows. Every week, they would slaughter two goats. The analysts knew they had one of bin Laden's trusted aides in their scope but also knew there could be a bigger fish living in the compound—perhaps even the biggest. They decided not to try to capture Kuwaiti, hoping that he would lead them to bin Laden himself. In late autumn, Panetta directed his bin Laden analysts to compile a list of twenty-five ways to extract intelligence from within the compound. They had already considered placing devices in the sewage system or placing a camera in a tree near the compound. Eventually, the analysts came up with thirty-eight options. According to author Peter Bergen, "One idea was to throw in foul-smelling stink bombs to flush out the occupants of the compound. Another was to play on the presumed religious fanaticism of the compound's inhabitants and broadcast from outside the compound what purported to be the 'Voice of Allah,' saying, 'You are commanded to come out into the street!'" Eventually, the CIA enlisted a Pakistani doctor to administer a false Hepatitis B vaccination program in the neighborhood. The Agency wanted the doctor and his fake medical team to gain access to the compound and to extract DNA samples from the occupants so that they could compare them to samples the Agency already had from bin Laden's deceased sister. The doctor involved in the effort, Shakil Afridi, was from Pakistan's tribal regions. Eventually, the CIA would pay Afridi to run the fake program, which began in the poorer areas of Abbottabad in order to appear legitimate. In the end, the plan failed and Afridi and his team were unable to get any DNA samples. Afridi would later be arrested and imprisoned by Pakistani authorities for working with the CIA.

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- Highlight Loc. 9465-77

The CIA set up a safe house in Abbottabad and expanded its "pattern of life" analysis of the compound's residents. In addition to the families of Kuwaiti and his brother, they soon discovered that there was another family living in the secluded third floor of the biggest building on the property. By analyzing shadows through aerial imagery, CIA analysts detected someone they believed to be a man who would take daily walks in the courtyard inside the compound in a small vegetable garden—but only under the cover of a tarp, which prevented the drones or satellites from getting anything more than a silhouette of his image. They could not determine the man's height. Internally, the CIA analysts called him "the Pacer." By January 2011, the general consensus at the CIA was that the Pacer was likely bin Laden himself. President Obama asked his counterterrorism team to develop a range of options for action. Undersecretary of Defense Michael Vickers, Panetta and his deputy Mike Morell met with Admiral McRaven at CIA

headquarters and read him in on the intelligence out of Abbottabad. "First of all, congratulations on getting such a good lead," McRaven told them. "Second, this is a relatively straightforward raid from JSOC's perspective. We do these ten, twelve, fourteen times a night. The thing that makes this complicated is it's one hundred and fifty miles inside Pakistan, and logistically getting there, and then the politics of explaining the raid, is the complicating factor. I want to think about it a little bit, but my instinct is to put a very seasoned member of a special unit to work directly with you who will come to the CIA every day and basically begin to plan and flesh out some options."

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- Highlight Loc. 9483-95

The CIA and Obama's national security team considered a number of other options beyond the SEAL team assault [on a compound in Abbottabad that perhaps housed Osama bin Laden]. They explored doing a B-2 strike on the compound, similar to the operation that killed Zarqawi in Iraq. But that scenario presented a number of major-league risks: it would be nearly impossible to extract DNA to confirm bin Laden was killed, and the bombing would certainly kill not only all of the women and children in the compound, but potentially residents of other homes in the neighborhood. A drone strike was always an option in Pakistan, but the conditions at the compound would have made the chance of a direct hit unpredictable. Looming over all of the planning was the fact that CIA contractor Raymond Davis was sitting in a Pakistani jail cell facing murder charges and widespread calls for his execution. Any unilateral action by the United States would undoubtedly infuriate the Pakistani government. Some analysts feared Davis could be killed in retaliation. Ultimately, Obama's counterterrorism team decided that a JSOC raid, conducted by veteran Navy SEALs under the command of McRaven, would provide the best opportunity to take out bin Laden. JSOC had conducted raids in Pakistan before, though never this deep into the country—or with such a sizable force. The risk of the Pakistani government spotting the US helicopters that would have to travel 150 miles into the country—and the possibility that the helicopters could be shot down—was serious. Admiral McRaven began assembling a team of SEALs to start preparing for a sensitive operation, but they were not yet briefed on what that mission would be. Once Raymond Davis was released from the Pakistani jail on March 16, momentum picked up for the operation.

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- Highlight Loc. 9562-68

The raid, planned for the evening of Saturday, April 30, coincided with the White House Correspondents' Dinner, which would have meant that the president and virtually every senior member of his national security team would be rubbing elbows with the media elite and Hollywood celebrities while the raid was taking place. Some of the president's advisers wanted the operation held back until after the

dinner, concerned that if something went wrong, forcing the president and other officials to leave the event, the raid's cover could be blown. The raid was specifically planned to take place on a moonless night in order to allow the approaching helicopters to have the best cover possible. By chance, excessive cloud cover ultimately compelled McRaven to delay the raid until the next night.

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- Highlight Loc. 9581-85

The president had authorized the SEALs to fight off any Pakistani units that confronted them on the mission. An officer briefing the teams informed them of their cover story, should they find themselves in Pakistani custody: you were recovering a drone that had crashed. The proposal drew laughter. "The story was preposterous. We were allies with Pakistan on paper, so if we did lose a drone, the State Department would negotiate directly with the Pakistani government to get it back,"

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- Highlight Loc. 9590-92

Obama's national security staffers began arriving at the White House around 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 1. Sandwich platters were purchased from Costco. Multiple pizzerias were called upon to avoid making one large conspicuous order.

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- Highlight Loc. 9612-31 | Added on Monday, August 12, 2013, 11:25 PM

IT WAS 11:00 P.M. IN ABBOTTABAD, and the families at the bin Laden compound were already in bed. Many miles to the west, across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, in the city of Jalalabad, twenty-three members of SEAL Team 6 were at an airbase preparing to embark on their mission. Half an hour later, the Black Hawks took off. By 2:30 p.m., the White House had received the first word that the choppers were off the ground. "It was nail-biting time and we were holding our breath," recalled Brennan. For the mission, the SEALs would utilize two specialized MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, flown by JSOC's "Night Stalkers." The helicopters were a stealth version of the Black Hawk that the United States had long been rumored to be developing. The unique aircraft had never been discussed publicly. The Black Hawks had been specially modified with advanced technology that would allow it to fly silently and to avoid radar detection. To further mask their presence, the pilots would fly at high speeds as close to the ground as possible, using a tactic known as "nap of the earth." General Hugh Shelton, the former commander of SOCOM, whose son is a JSOC pilot, said the Night Stalkers are the best in the US military. "They can literally—the pilots can fly a helicopter upside-down if they want to, they can land on a moving train—at night," he told me. "Any time that you've got a mission that you don't want to fail, those are the guys that you want to have doing it." Three MH-47 Chinooks took off from

the same Jalalabad airfield once the Black Hawks had entered Pakistan. One set down on the Afghan side of the border with Pakistan. The other two flew to a remote riverbank in Kala Dhaka, located in the Swat region, roughly fifty miles north of bin Laden's compound. There the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) would wait. In the event that the SEALs' raid ran into serious trouble, the QRF could get to Abbottabad in approximately twenty minutes. Meanwhile, the Black Hawks whizzed quietly toward the compound and eventually made it to the outskirts of Abbottabad. In Afghanistan, Admiral McRaven was running the operation from a secure location in Jalalabad. In Kabul, General David Petraeus and one of his aides monitored the events in a classified control room. If the Pakistanis scrambled their fighter jets, Petraeus was poised to mobilize US warplanes to respond.

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CHAPTER 49: "We Got Him. We Got Him" - PAKISTAN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9645-65

That's when things began to diverge from the original plan. The Black Hawk began to drop suddenly. The high temperature was partly to blame, but it was also a consequence of the added weight of the stealth system on the aircraft. At high altitudes, a pilot can attempt to fly vertically in order to avoid the drop, but it can be deadly at low altitudes. The pilot of the struggling Black Hawk tried to control the aircraft as it spun ninety degrees to the right. Bissonnette felt his body lifting from the floor of the chopper as he fumbled for a handhold. Packed so tightly with the other commandos, he could not scoot back. "Holy fuck, we're going in," Bissonnette thought to himself, as the wall of the compound came closer and closer. Bissonnette pulled his legs to his chest, hoping to prevent them from being smashed under the helicopter, should it roll onto its side. "The helicopter shuddered as the nose dug into the soft ground like a lawn dart. One minute, the ground was rushing up at me. The next minute, I was at a dead stop. It happened so fast, I didn't feel the impact," Bissonnette remembered. The Chalk One pilot had managed to follow through on his contingency plan to bring the helicopter down in the compound's larger courtyard. The Black Hawk's tail was pressed against the property's twelve-foot perimeter wall at an angle that prevented the chopper's rotors from digging into the dirt and breaking into dangerous pieces of shrapnel. "If any other part of the helicopter hit the wall, or if we had tipped and the rotor hit the ground first, none of us would be walking away unscathed," Bissonnette later wrote. The pilots, he said, "pulled off the impossible." The "hard landing" saved the lives of the SEAL team members, but the possibility of a deniable mission was gone. So, too, was any hope of surprising the compound's occupants. The original plan had to be nixed. Instead of rappelling into the compound, the SEALs would now have to launch their raid from outside the walls. Losing the element of surprise could potentially

allow their targets to arm themselves and prepare to face down against the American commandos. "My heart sank," Bissonnette recalled. "Up until I heard the go-around call, everything was going as planned. We had evaded the Pakistani radar and anti-aircraft missiles on the way in and arrived undetected. Now, the insert was already going to shit. We had rehearsed this contingency, but it was Plan B. If our target was really inside, surprise was the key and it was quickly slipping away."

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- Highlight Loc. 9680-91

THE SEALS IN THE CRASHED CHOPPER had all survived with no serious injuries. As the second Black Hawk, which was supposed to drop its SEALs onto the roof of the building, landed instead outside the gates of the compound, Plan B kicked into gear. Bissonnette and Will, the SEAL-translator, made their way toward the guesthouse, where they say they came under attack from AK-47 rounds and fired back. Moments later, a woman emerged from the guesthouse carrying a small child in her arms. It was Mariam al Kuwaiti, the courier's wife. "He is dead," Mariam said. "You shot him. He is dead. You killed him." Will searched her for weapons and passed her message on to Bissonnette. Crouching low, Bissonnette opened the door and looked inside. "I spotted a pair of feet lying in the doorway of the bedroom," he said. With Will at his back, he entered the guesthouse and shot Kuwaiti several more times. Although Bissonnette claimed he was fired upon, other accounts, including that of Bergen, suggested that Kuwaiti was unarmed. "The courier's AK-47 was later found by his bedside. It seems unlikely that he fired it, given its location and the fact that no casings from such a weapon were later found at the scene," Bergen wrote. Meanwhile, another group of SEALs made their way toward the main building in the compound, shooting dead two more members of Kuwaiti's family, as women and children looked on in horror.

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- Highlight Loc. 9698-9740

Meanwhile, inside, the gate blocking the stairway was blown. The SEALs began making their way up the stairs, which "were set at ninety-degree angles, creating a sort of spiral staircase separated by small landings." There were four doors on the second floor. The SEALs cleared each room and began moving toward the third floor, where they believed the Pacer and his family resided. As they did so, they saw a head briefly pop out from behind the wall at the top of the staircase. Intelligence analysts had indicated that bin Laden's son Khalid lived on the second floor. The intelligence reports also indicated Khalid was clean-shaven. So was the man who peered around the corner. "Khalid," a SEAL whispered. "Khalid." When the twenty-three-year-old worked up the nerve to peek around the corner again, he took a bullet in the face. "What was Khalid thinking at that time?" Bissonnette later asked. "Look around the corner. Curiosity killed the cat. I guess Khalid, too." The commandos made their way up the stairs,

passing over tiles wet with Khalid's blood. As the SEALs walked through the hallway of the third floor, they saw a man's head pop out from a doorway. One of the SEALs fired two suppressed rounds at the figure. The man vanished into the room. When they entered, the men encountered two women. Believing they might have had suicide vests on, one of the SEALs grabbed them and forced them into a corner, so his colleagues could continue on. Another SEAL stood face to face in the dark with a tall man. "In that second, I shot him, two times in the forehead. Bap! Bap! The second time as he's going down," he recalled. "He crumpled onto the floor in front of his bed and I hit him again, Bap! same place. That time I used my EOTech red-dot holo sight. He was dead. Not moving. His tongue was out. I watched him take his last breaths, just a reflex breath." Bissonnette and another SEAL entered the room. "We saw the man lying on the floor at the foot of his bed," he recalled. "Blood and brains spilled out the side of his skull. In his death throes, he was still twitching and convulsing. Another assaulter and I trained our lasers on his chest and fired several rounds. The bullets tore into him, slamming his body into the floor until he was motionless." The room was still completely dark, so Bissonnette flipped on his helmet light to better examine the man's face. It was covered in blood. "A hole in his forehead collapsed the right side of his skull," he recalled. "His chest was torn up from where the bullets had entered his body. He was lying in an ever growing pool of blood." The SEAL who originally shot the man said, "the American public doesn't want to know what that looks like." The SEALs were not certain that the man they had shot was bin Laden. His face was now a mangled mess. They began taking DNA samples from the body and one of the SEALs sprayed the man's bloodied face with his CamelBak. Bissonnette began wiping the face. "With each swipe, the face became more familiar. He looked younger than I expected. His beard was dark, like it had been dyed. I just kept thinking about how he didn't look anything like I'd expected him to look," he wrote. One of the SEALs radioed over the command net: "We have a possible, I repeat POSSIBLE touchdown on the third deck." Bissonnette began snapping photos of the man's body. He then knelt down to focus on the man's face. He pulled his lifeless head from side to side for profile photos. He had his teammate open one of the man's eyes so he could get a tight shot of it. On the balcony, the Arabic-speaking SEAL was questioning the women and children. An order came over the radio to prep the downed Black Hawk for demolition. Meanwhile, because the mission had gone on longer than planned, fuel for the remaining helicopters, including the rescue CH-47 hovering nearby, was running low. Bissonnette continued to take photos while his teammate collected samples of the man's blood and saliva. The SEALs had two identical sets of the photos and DNA that would be carried back to Jalalabad in each of the Black Hawks. "This had been carefully planned so if one of the helicopters was shot down on our flight back to Jalalabad, a DNA sample and a set of pictures would survive," Bissonnette later explained. The Arabic-speaking SEAL questioned the older woman in the room. When he asked who the dead man was, she told him, "The sheik," but declined to clarify. After being given several aliases, the SEAL turned to the children. He asked one of the little girls, and she told

him the man was Osama bin Laden. When he asked if she was sure, the little girl said, "Yes." The SEAL turned back to the older woman. "Stop fucking with me now," he demanded, as he asked her again who the man in the bedroom was. She cried as she confirmed that it was Osama bin Laden. The SEAL reported the dual confirmation. Just then, two lead SEALs on the operation, including Bissonnette's squadron commander, entered the room. The commander examined bin Laden's face. "Yeah, that looks like our guy," he said. The senior SEAL stepped out of the room and radioed McRaven. "For God and country, I pass Geronimo," he said. "Geronimo E.K.I.A." Enemy Killed in Action.
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- Highlight Loc. 9746-86

The SEALs had been at the compound for a little over half an hour by the time bin Laden was killed. The possibility of an encounter with the Pakistani military was increasing with each passing second. Back on the second floor of the compound, the SEALs were attempting to gather as many of bin Laden's belongings and potential intelligence clues as possible. Once the process of taking bin Laden's photos and DNA samples was completed, a pair of SEALs dragged his corpse out of the bedroom by the legs. Bissonnette began searching the area, grabbing papers and some cassettes. They also found two guns: an AK-47 and a holstered Makarov pistol. Neither was loaded. Time was running short. The interpreter and the SEALs outside the compound had managed to deter curious onlookers, but Abbottabad was waking up. Pakistani authorities could arrive at any moment, and the choppers circling above were running out of fuel. The interpreter's presence was warranted, as residents of the typically tranquil neighborhood heard the sounds of helicopters and explosions and some found their electricity had been cut off. Gul Khan told India Today, "I saw soldiers emerging from the helicopters and advancing towards the house. Some of them instructed us in chaste Pashto to turn off the lights and stay inside." An unidentified man interviewed by CNN in the aftermath of the raid said through a translator, "We never saw their clothes but they were speaking Pashto and told us to go away. After a while, [when the] electricity blackout ended and the light came back on, they told us to turn them all off." Another man speaking to CNN through a translator added, "We tried to go there and they pointed their laser guns on us and said 'No, you can't go.' They were speaking Pashto, so we thought that they were from Afghanistan, not America." The SEALs inside were overwhelmed with the volume of materials on hand but could only gather and carry so much. They had five minutes. "We all knew the risks of running out of gas or remaining on target too long, giving the local police or military time to react," Bissonnette later recalled. "We got what we came for: Bin Laden. It was time to get out while we still could." Bissonnette proceeded to the landing zone. He was soon joined by the SEALs from the second floor of bin Laden's compound, who were overloaded with materials they had gathered from inside. "We looked like a gypsy camp, or like Santa Claus on Christmas Eve," he wrote. "Guys had mesh bags over their shoulders so full they seemed to waddle more than run. I saw one SEAL carrying a

CPU in one hand and a leather gym bag overflowing in the other." Bin Laden's corpse, now in a body bag, was loaded on the remaining stealth Black Hawk, which the SEALs thought had the best chance of escaping Pakistan unscathed. The big Chinook—the CH-47—would carry the remaining SEALs. Before taking off, the commandos blew up the downed Black Hawk so that its stealth technology could not be examined by the Pakistanis. Obama and his team watched the video feed of the \$60-million bonfire. News of unusual events unfolding in Abbottabad traveled fast. At 1:00 a.m., just before the SEALs took off from the compound, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, chief of Pakistan's army, was in his study when he received a call from his director of military operations, Major General Ishfaq Nadeem. From the initial reports he had heard, Kayani thought India might be launching some sort of a strike inside Pakistan. He called Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman and ordered the force to confront any unidentified aircraft. At approximately 1:08 a.m., the SEALs took off from Abbottabad. Obama told his national security team, "Inform me as soon as our helicopters are out of Pakistani airspace." The Black Hawk and the Chinook took more direct but separate routes as they exited Pakistan, with the Black Hawk stopping at a refueling point inside the country. All of the US personnel crossed the border into Afghanistan unscathed, with bin Laden's body in tow. On the tarmac in Jalalabad, a white Toyota HiLux pickup was waiting to transport bin Laden's whereupon the deceased's body slid into the sea."

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CHAPTER 50: "Now They're After My Son" - SOMALIA, WASHINGTON, DC, AND YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9803-21

In the span of less than twenty minutes, the SEALs had shot seven of the eleven adults in the compound, killing four men and one woman. According to Pakistani officials, both women and children were injured in the raid. Peter Bergen, who gained access to the compound and many witnesses, alleged that all of those who were injured appeared to have been unarmed. The international human rights group Amnesty International described the raid as illegal in its annual report for 2011. "The US administration made clear that the operation had been conducted under the USA's theory of a global armed conflict between the USA and al-Qaeda in which the USA does not recognize the applicability of international human rights law," the report asserted. "In the absence of further clarification from the US authorities, the killing of Osama bin Laden would appear to have been unlawful." The day after the operation, Brennan delivered an error-filled press conference that purported to give details of the raid. Brennan opened by claiming bin Laden was killed in a firefight and that there was no opportunity to take him alive. He later added that bin Laden used

women in the compound as human shields. "Thinking about that from a visual perspective, here is bin Laden, who has been calling for these attacks, living in this million dollar-plus compound, living in an area that is far removed from the front, hiding behind women who were put in front of him as a shield," he said. "I think it really just speaks to just how false his narrative has been over the years. And so, again, looking at what bin Laden was doing hiding there while he's putting other people out there to carry out attacks again just speaks to I think the nature of the individual he was." Brennan also alleged that one woman who died was shot while shielding bin Laden, though she was actually killed with her own husband. The White House was later forced to retract Brennan's comments. The leaks from the White House sparked outrage in the Special Ops community and ultimately led Bissonnette, one of the SEALs who had shot bin Laden, to write his own book on the raid, under the pen name Mark Owen, called No Easy Day, which he said he wrote to set the record straight. So many former SEALs and other Special Ops veterans began speaking out that McRaven issued a directive ordering all current and former Special Ops Forces to stop speaking to the media.

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- Highlight Loc. 9839-48

The executive orders that President Obama had issued two days after he was sworn into office required the US government to provide the ICRC with notification of, and timely access to, any persons in the custody of the US government. To those who had long fought the Bush administration's detainee policies, the Warsame case indicated that Obama was violating his own executive orders. "This is illegal and inexcusable. It means in effect that Mr. Warsame was disappeared for this period with all the attendant dangers such hidden detention engenders. It is reminiscent of early Guantánamo Bay and CIA 'black site' detention," alleged the Center for Constitutional Rights. The group accused the Obama administration of "stretching" the meaning of the original Authorization for Use of Military Force granted by Congress to enable pursuit of the 9/11 attackers and using it a decade later "to capture and detain, perhaps indefinitely, anyone it claims is a terrorism suspect anywhere in the world." But the Obama administration was not simply capturing or detaining suspects: It was interrogating them as part of its intensifying campaign to hunt down terrorists.

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- Highlight Loc. 9854-56

Obama was a constitutional law professor in a different lifetime, but as president he had developed an alternative legal structure for dealing with Awlaki. President Obama's executive branch had served as prosecutor, judge and jury. As the ultimate authority, he had rendered his verdict.

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CHAPTER 51: "It Was Cold-Blooded" - PAKISTAN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9950-53

Although the ISI could not do much to strike back at the United States directly, it began a hunt to track down any Pakistanis it believed might have assisted the Americans in the bin Laden operation. Three weeks after the raid, intelligence agents arrested Dr. Shakil Afridi, the doctor who had helped the CIA run the fake Hepatitis B vaccination program in Abbottabad. He was locked up, tried and sentenced to thirty-three years in prison.

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- Highlight Loc. 9960-63

Incursions into Pakistan continued as well. On several occasions, NATO forces based in Afghanistan conducted operations along the border, in one case killing twenty-five Pakistani soldiers. At times, teams of SEALs or members of the CIA's Special Activities Division would cross into Pakistan to conduct operations. Drone strikes continued unabated.

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CHAPTER 52: "The US Sees al Qaeda as Terrorism, and We Consider the Drones Terrorism" - YEMEN, LATE 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 9975-78

On May 27, 2011, several hundred militants laid siege to Zinjibar, thirty miles northeast of the strategically important southern city of Aden, killing several soldiers, driving out local officials and taking control of the city within two days. Who exactly these militants were was a matter of some dispute. According to the Yemeni government, they were AQAP operatives. But the militants who took the city did not claim to be from AQAP. Instead, they announced themselves as a new group, Ansar al Sharia, or Supporters of Sharia.

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- Highlight Loc. 9982-85

Whether Ansar al Sharia had more independent origins or was merely a product of AQAP's crude rebranding campaign, as Abab claimed, the group's significance would soon extend well beyond al Qaeda's historically limited spheres of influence in Yemen, while simultaneously popularizing some of AQAP's core tenets.

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- Highlight Loc. 9995-10021

As we rode along the coast of the Arabian Sea, past stacks of abandoned mortar tubes, Russian T-72 tanks dug into sand berms and the occasional wandering camel, General Sumali gave me his account of what had happened on May 27, 2011, when Ansar al Sharia took the town. Sumali attributed the takeover to an "intelligence breakdown," explaining, "We were surprised in late May with the flow of a large number of terrorist militants into Zinjibar." He added that the militants "raided and attacked some security sites. They were able to seize these institutions. We were surprised when the governor, his deputies and other local officials fled to Aden." As the Yemeni military began fighting the militants, General Sumali told me, troops from Yemen's Central Security Forces fled, abandoning heavy weaponry as they retreated. The CSF, whose counterterrorism unit was armed, trained and funded by the United States, was commanded by President Saleh's nephew Yahya. A media outlet associated with the militants reported that Ansar's forces seized "heavy artillery pieces, modern anti-aircraft weapons, a number of tanks and armoured transports in addition to large quantities of different kinds of ammunition." Sumali said that as his forces attempted to repel the attack on Zinjibar a week later, they were attacked by the militants using the artillery seized from the CSF units. "Many of my men were killed," he told me. The Islamist fighters also conducted a series of bold raids on the base of the 25th Mechanized on the southern outskirts of Zinjibar. In all, more than 230 Yemeni soldiers died in battles with the militants in under a year. "These guys are incredibly brave," the general conceded, speaking of the militants. "If I had an army full of men with that bravery, I could conquer the world." Sumali said Zinjibar fell because of bad intelligence, but critics of the crumbling Saleh regime told me a different story. They alleged that President Saleh's forces allowed the city to fall. The fighting there began as Saleh faced mounting calls both inside and outside Yemen for his resignation. Several of his key allies had defected to the growing opposition movement. After thirty-three years of outwitting his opponents, they said, Saleh saw that the end was near. "Saleh himself actually handed over Zinjibar to these militants," charged Abdul Ghani al Iryani, a well-connected political analyst. "He ordered his police force to evacuate the city and turn it over to the militants because he wanted to send a signal to the world that, without me, Yemen will fall into the hands of the terrorists." That theory, while unproven, was not baseless. Ever since the mujahedeen war against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s and continuing after 9/11, Saleh has famously milked the threat of al Qaeda and other militants to leverage counterterrorism funding and weapons from the United States and Saudi Arabia to bolster his power within the country and neutralize opponents. A Yemeni government official, who asked to remain anonymous because he was not authorized to speak publicly about military issues, admitted that troops from the US-trained and -supported Republican Guard did not respond when the militants entered the town. Those forces were commanded by Saleh's son Ahmed Ali Saleh. Neither did

those forces loyal to one of the most powerful military figures in the country, General Ali Mohsen, commander of the 1st Armored Division, move in. Two months before Zinjibar was seized, Mohsen had defected from the Saleh regime and was publicly supporting his overthrow.

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- Highlight Loc. 10040-41

Unlike the militant movement al Shabab in Somalia, AQAP had never taken control of significant swaths of territory in Yemen. But Ansar al Sharia was determined to do just that, declaring an Islamic emirate in Abyan.

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- Highlight Loc. 10045-55

Ansar al Sharia repaired roads, restored electricity, distributed food and began security patrols inside the city and its surroundings. It also established Sharia courts where disputes could be resolved. "Al Qaeda and Ansar al Sharia brought security to the people in areas that were famous for insecurity, famous for thefts, for roadblocks," said Abdul Rezzaq al Jamal, the independent Yemeni journalist who regularly interviewed al Qaeda leaders and had spent extensive time in Zinjibar. "The people I met in Zinjibar were grateful to al Qaeda and Ansar al Sharia for maintaining security." Although the militants in Abyan brought law and order, the policies were, at times, enforced with brutal tactics such as limb amputations against accused thieves and public floggings of suspected drug users. In one incident in the Ansar al Sharia-held town of Jaar, residents said they were summoned to a gruesome event at which militants used a sword to chop off the hands of two young men accused of stealing electrical cables. The amputated hands were then paraded around the town as a warning to would-be thieves. One of the young men, a fifteen-year-old, reportedly died soon after from blood loss. In another incident, Ansar al Sharia in Jaar publicly beheaded two men it alleged had provided information to the United States to conduct drone strikes. A third man was executed in Shabwah.

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- Highlight Loc. 10062-65

As Ansar al Sharia took control of towns in the south, Washington debated how to respond. Some within the Obama administration agitated for the United States to jump into the fight. General James Mattis, who took over from Petraeus as CENTCOM commander, proposed that the president sign off on a massive air assault on the "Unity" Soccer Stadium on the outskirts of Zinjibar, where Ansar al Sharia fighters had created a makeshift base from which to attack the Yemeni military. President Obama shot down the proposal.

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- Highlight Loc. 10096-102

"The US sees al Qaeda as terrorism, and we consider the drones terrorism," he said. "The drones are flying day and night, frightening women and children, disturbing sleeping people. This is terrorism." Zabara told me that several US strikes in his region had killed scores of civilians and that his community was littered with unexploded cluster bombs, which at times detonated, killing children. He and other tribal leaders asked the Yemeni and US governments for assistance in removing them, he said. "We did not get any response, so we use our guns to explode them." He also said the US government should pay money to the families of civilians killed in the missile strikes of the past three years. "We demand compensation from the US for killing Yemeni citizens, just like the Lockerbie case," he declared. "The world is one village. The US received compensation from Libya for the Lockerbie bombing, but the Yemenis have not."

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- Highlight Loc. 10110-13

"Once I got stopped by AQAP guys at one of their checkpoints, and they saw I had a bottle of Johnnie Walker," he recalled as he guzzled his second Heineken in ten minutes and lit a cigarette. "They asked me, 'Why do you have that?' I told them, 'To drink it.'" He laughed heartily. "I told them to bother another guy and drove off." The message of the story was clear: the al Qaeda guys don't want trouble with tribal leaders.

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- Highlight Loc. 10142-46

most Americans think that anything that might kill you personally, in an airplane or walking down Park Avenue or something, is the biggest threat in the world, right? Because they're not accustomed to dealing with conditions of danger as a standard of life, you know? So to say, 'Is AQAP a threat to the United States?' Yeah. They could bring down an airliner, kill a couple hundred people. But are they an existential threat to the United States? Of course not. Of course not. None of these people are an existential threat to the United States. We've gone crazy over this. We had this kind of hysterical reaction to danger."

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- Highlight Loc. 10151-54

"This is going to go on for a long time," said Lang. "The Global War on Terror has acquired a life of its own. It's a self-licking ice cream cone. And the fact that this counterterrorism/counterinsurgency industry evolved into this kind of thing, involving all these people, the foundations, and the journalists and the book writers, and the generals, and the guys doing the shooting—all of that together has a great, tremendous amount of inertia that tends to keep it going in the same direction."

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CHAPTER 53: The Pink House - WASHINGTON, DC, AND SOMALIA, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 10175-86

When I flew into Mogadishu in the month McRaven was promoted, a rather large symbol of the not-so-quiet presence of American "enablers" was in full view from the moment I landed. Nestled in a back corner of Aden Adde International Airport was a sprawling walled compound. Set on the coast of the Indian Ocean, the facility looked like a small gated community, with more than a dozen buildings behind large protective walls and secured by guard towers at each of its four corners. I later learned from multiple Somali and US intelligence sources that it was a new counterterrorism center run by the CIA and used by JSOC operators. Somalis called it the "Pink House" because of its color. Others simply called it "Guantánamo." Adjacent to the compound were eight large metal hangars, and the CIA had its own aircraft at the airport. The site, which airport officials and Somali intelligence sources said was completed in early 2011, was guarded by Somali soldiers, but the Americans controlled access. At the facility, the CIA ran a counterterrorism training program for Somali intelligence agents and operatives aimed at building an indigenous strike force capable of snatch operations and targeted "combat" operations against al Shabab. As part of its expanding counterterrorism program in Somalia, the CIA also utilized the secret prison buried in the basement of Somalia's National Security Agency headquarters, where prisoners suspected of being al Shabab members or of having links to the group were held.

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- Highlight Loc. 10200-10204

According to well-connected Somali sources, the CIA was reluctant to deal directly with Somali political leaders, who, despite public praise, were regarded by US officials as corrupt and untrustworthy. Instead, the United States put Somali intelligence agents directly on its payroll. Somali sources with knowledge of the program described the agents as lining up to receive \$200 monthly cash payments from Americans, in a country where the average annual income was about \$600.

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- Highlight Loc. 10306-13

As I walked throughout the areas AMISOM had retaken in 2011, I saw a honeycomb of underground tunnels once used by al Shabab fighters to

move from building to building. By some accounts, the tunnels stretched continually for miles. Leftover food, blankets and ammo cartridges lay scattered near "pop-up" positions once used by al Shabab snipers and guarded by sandbags—all that remained of guerrilla warfare positions. Not only had the al Shabab fighters been cleared from the aboveground areas, the civilians that once resided there were cleared, too. On several occasions when I was there, AMISOM forces fired artillery from their airport base at the Bakaara market, where whole neighborhoods had been totally abandoned. Houses lay in ruins and animals wandered, chewing trash. In some areas, bodies had been hastily buried in trenches with dirt barely masking the remains. On the side of the road in one former al Shabab neighborhood, a decapitated corpse lay just yards away from a new government checkpoint.

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- Highlight Loc. 10319-22

According to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, weapons and ammunition given to the Somali government "and its affiliated militias" were increasingly surfacing on the black market and ultimately ending up in the hands of al Shabab. The United Nations estimated that "the Government and pro-Government forces sell between one third and one half of their ammunition" on the black market.

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- Highlight Loc. 10351-54

Indha Adde took me to several front lines where his militia was fighting al Shabab. As we made our way to various positions, we were repeatedly fired on by al Shabab snipers. A few months earlier, Indha Adde's personal bodyguard was shot in the head as he stood in front of his boss in a battle with al Shabab fighters. According to witnesses, Indha Adde slung the man's body over his shoulder, carried him to a secured area, picked up an automatic weapon and then charged at his killers.

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- Highlight Loc. 10418-26

No modern US war would be complete without the involvement of Blackwater founder Erik Prince. Even though his company's crimes and scandals were closely associated with the neoconservatives and the Bush era, Blackwater forces continued to play a significant role in the CIA's global operations under the Obama administration. With Blackwater under intense investigation and his top deputies indicted on federal conspiracy and weapons charges, Prince left the United States in 2010 and relocated to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, a major hub for the mercenary industry and the war-contracting business as a whole. Prince had close ties to the royals, particularly the crown prince of Abu Dhabi. He said he chose Abu Dhabi because of its "great proximity to potential opportunities across the entire

Middle East, and great logistics," adding that it has "a friendly business climate, low to no taxes, free trade and no out of control trial lawyers or labor unions. It's pro-business and opportunity."

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- Highlight Loc. 10431-36

Prince had long been interested in building a privatized counterpiracy force that could deploy off the coast of Somalia. In late 2008, he was in talks with more than a dozen shipping companies about hiring Blackwater to protect their ships and vessels through the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden. In 2006, he had purchased a 183-foot vessel, the McArthur, and transformed it into an antipiracy mother ship that could be equipped with Little Bird helicopters, inflatable boats, thirty-five private soldiers and a .50-caliber machine gun. "We could put vessels out there and go and stop fishing boats the pirates are using a lot cheaper than the Navy could using a billion and a half to two billion dollar war ships," Prince said.

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- Highlight Loc. 10473-81

Manifesting one of the qualities that defined Blackwater's ascent, Erik Prince again saw opportunity in crisis. In 2009, Blackwater had inked a deal with the government of Djibouti to operate the antipiracy ship McArthur from its territory (the ship was later sold to a Saracen International subsidiary). The arrangement was the result of a series of meetings between Djiboutian officials, Prince and Cofer Black, the former head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, who at the time was a senior executive at Blackwater. Initial estimates indicated that the company could make about \$200,000 per escort job for shipping companies. The crew would consist of thirty-three US citizens, including three six-man shooter teams that would operate on a continual rotation. "Blackwater does not intend to take any pirates into custody, but will use lethal force against pirates if necessary," according to a classified US diplomatic cable on the agreement, noting that Blackwater "has briefed AFRICOM, CENTCOM, and Embassy Nairobi officials." The cable added that there was "no precedent for a paramilitary operation in a purely commercial environment."

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- Highlight Loc. 10514-23

Just as Prince and Saracens' latest private war was getting under way, scandal hit. The UN Monitoring Group declared that Saracen had been operating in flagrant violation of the arms embargo on Somalia, concluding in its report that "notwithstanding Southern Ace's short-lived and unsuccessful attempts at arms dealing and drug trafficking, the most egregious violation of the arms embargo by a private security company during the course of the UN Monitoring Group's mandate was perpetrated by Saracen International, in association with an opaque web of affiliated entities." The UN Monitoring Group suggested that

Saracen's continued operations could actually increase support for local Islamist militias and, possibly, al Shabab. "Saracen's presence has increased tension in north-eastern Somalia," it concluded. A year later, in response to a subsequent UN report, Saracen's lawyer accused the monitoring group of publishing "a collection of unsubstantiated and often false innuendo." In early 2011, when Prince's involvement in Saracen became public, his spokesman, Mark Corallo, said that Prince was merely compelled by humanitarian imperative to help "Somalia overcome the scourge of piracy" and claimed he had no financial stake in Saracen's work.

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CHAPTER 54: "Total Savagery Throughout the Country" - SOMALIA, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 10575-89

LATE ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 7, 2011, a man whose South African passport identified him as Daniel Robinson was in the passenger seat of a Toyota SUV driving on the outskirts of Mogadishu when his driver, a Kenyan national, missed a turn and headed straight toward a checkpoint manned by some kids from a Somali militia. It was unheard of during this time for any vehicle to be on the streets of Mogadishu late at night, so the Somalis at the checkpoint, some of whom were high on khat, were immediately suspicious. After the men in the vehicle refused to comply with instructions to properly identify themselves and show their faces by turning on the lights of the car's cab, the militia guys sensed a threat and opened fire. A firefight broke out as the men in the vehicle shot back. By sunrise, the vehicle was pocked with bullet holes. When the Somali forces finally approached the vehicle, they discovered laptop computers, cell phones, documents, weapons and \$40,000 in cash. The soldiers promptly looted the car and took their booty back to their villages. They left the passports and a few other items at the scene.

As soon as it was discovered that the men killed at the checkpoint were foreigners, CIA-funded Somali intelligence agents were dispatched to the scene to launch an investigation and recover the items that had been looted. "There was a lot of English and Arabic stuff, papers," recalled a Somali intelligence official who helped lead the investigation that day. The papers, he said, contained "very tactical stuff" that appeared to be linked to al Qaeda, including "two senior people communicating." The Somali agents "realized it was an important man" and informed the CIA in Mogadishu. The men's bodies were taken to the Somali NSA. The Americans took DNA samples and fingerprints, then flew them to Nairobi for processing.

Within hours, the United States confirmed that Robinson was in fact Fazul Abdullah Mohammed.

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- Highlight Loc. 10694-97

Under President Obama, the large-scale conventional military deployments of Iraq and Afghanistan were replaced by an expansion of drone strikes and Special Ops teams conducting targeted killings. President Obama seemed intent on a strategy that presumed peace would come by killing the bad guys. But, as happened in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, this strategy appeared to fuel the movements that created those "bad guys" in the first place.

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CHAPTER 55: "Abdulrahman Vanishes" - YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 10709-12

Abdulrahman Awlaki, the oldest son of Anwar Awlaki, was born in Denver, Colorado. Like his father, he spent the first seven years of his life in the United States, attending American schools. When he returned to Yemen, his grandparents-Anwar's mom and dad-played a huge role in his upbringing, particularly after Anwar went underground.

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- Highlight Loc. 10734-38

In early September, Abdulrahman woke up before the rest of the house. He tiptoed into his mother's bedroom, went into her purse, took 9,000 Yemeni rials-the equivalent of about \$40-and left a note outside of her bedroom door. He then snuck out the kitchen window and into the courtyard. Shortly after 6:00 a.m., the family's guard saw the boy leave but didn't think anything of it at the time. It was Sunday, September 4, 2011, a few days after the Eid al-Fitr holiday marked the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Nine days before, Abdulrahman had turned sixteen.

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CHAPTER 56: "Hellfire" - WASHINGTON, DC AND YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 10757-67

On September 6, 2011, General David Petraeus was sworn in as the director of the CIA. A decade after 9/11, the Agency had been transformed as a result of its behind-the-scenes turf war with JSOC. And for some veteran intelligence officials, Obama's selection of Petraeus was an ominous symbol. "The CIA has become more militarized, and is working very closely with JSOC, to the extent that they're even

using CIA cover, which would have been unimaginable ten years ago," former CIA case officer Phil Giraldi told me. "A considerable part of the CIA budget is now no longer spying. It's supporting paramilitaries who work closely with JSOC to kill terrorists, and to run the drone program." The CIA, he added, "is a killing machine now."

A State Department liaison who worked extensively with JSOC described Petraeus's vision for running the CIA as transforming the Agency into "a mini-Special Operations Command that purports to be an intelligence agency." For all the praise Petraeus won for his counterinsurgency strategy and the "surge" in Iraq, the liaison told me, Petraeus's most significant contribution was as a "political tool," an enabler of those within the national security apparatus who wanted to see a continuation and expansion of covert global small wars.

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- Highlight Loc. 10775-83

By early September, US surveillance aircraft had pinpointed Awlaki's location at a small house in Khashef, a village in Jawf about ninety miles northeast of Sana's. Jawf, which borders Saudi Arabia, was rife with informants on the kingdom's payroll. [...] The plan to assassinate Awlaki was code-named Operation Troy. The very name implied that the United States had a mole who was leading its forces to Awlaki.

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- Highlight Loc. 10803-15 | Added on Friday, August 16, 2013, 09:26 PM

US spy cameras and satellites broadcast images back to Washington and Virginia of the two men and a handful of their cohorts piling into vehicles and driving away from the house. They began heading toward the province of Marib. As a vehicles made their way over the dusty, unpaved roads, US drones, armed with Hellfire missiles, were dispatched to hunt them down. The drones were technically under the command of the CIA, though JSOC aircraft and ground forces were poised to jump in should the operation require their assistance. A team of commandos stood at the ready to board V-22 helicopters and take action. For extra measure, US Marine Harrier jets scrambled in a backup maneuver.

Six months earlier, Awlaki had narrowly missed death by US missiles. "This time eleven missiles missed its target but the next time, the first rocket may hit it," he had said. As the cars sped down the road, Awlaki's prophecy came true. Two of the Predator drones locked onto the car carrying Awlaki, while other aircraft hovered as backup. A Hellfire missile fired from a drone slammed into his car, transforming it into a ball of flames. A second missile hit moments later, ensuring that the men inside would never escape if they had managed to survive. [...] The Yemeni government sent out a text message to journalists. "The terrorist Anwar Awlaki has been killed along with some of his companions," it read.

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- Highlight Loc. 10878-83

The only voices of dissent that emanated from Washington in the immediate aftermath of Awlaki's killing came from the fringes of the Democratic and Republican parties. "If the American people accept this blindly and casually, that we now have an accepted practice of the president assassinating people who he thinks are bad guys, I think it's sad," Texas Republican Ron Paul said on the campaign trail as he waged an unsuccessful insurgent campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. "Awlaki was born here, he's an American citizen. He was never tried or charged for any crimes. To start assassinating American citizens without charges-we should think very seriously about this," [said Democrat Dennis Kucinich].

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- Highlight Loc. 10893-96

In an interview the day Awlaki's death was announced, Greenwald said, "Remember that there was great controversy that George Bush asserted the power simply to detain American citizens without due process or simply to eavesdrop on their conversation without warrant. Here you have something much more severe. Not eavesdropping on American citizens, not detaining them without due process, but killing them without due process. And yet many Democrats and progressives, because it's President Obama doing it, have no problem with it and are even in favor of it."

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- Highlight Loc. 10913-17

"It's important for the American people to know when the president can kill an American citizen, and when they can't," Senator Ron Wyden told me. Wyden, a Democrat from Oregon, had served on the Senate Intelligence Committee since 2001 and often found himself at odds with the Bush administration over secrecy and transparency issues. Now, under a Democratic president, he was waging the same battles-and new ones. He said that he repeatedly asked the administration for its legal rationale for the government killing its own citizens without trial, calling his attempts to extract this information "an enormous struggle."

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CHAPTER 57: "Paying for the Sins of the Father" - WASHINGTON, DC AND YEMEN, 2011

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- Highlight Loc. 10937-40

He [Abdulrahman Awlaki] and his cousins had joined a group of friends outdoors to barbecue. The boy and his cousins had laid a blanket on the ground and were about to begin their meal. There were a few other people nearby doing the same. It was about 9:00 p.m. when the drones pierced the night sky. Moments later, Abdulrahman was dead. So, too, were several other teenage members of his family, including Abdulrahman's seventeen-year-old cousin, Ahmed.

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- Highlight Loc. 10945-48

As the horror was setting in that their eldest grandson had been killed just two weeks after the death of their eldest child, Nasser and Saleha watched in disbelief as numerous news reports identified Abdulrahman as being twenty-one years old, with anonymous US military officials referring to him as a "military-aged" male. Some reports intimated that he was an al Qaeda supporter and that he had been killed while meeting with Ibrahim al Banna, an Egyptian citizen described as the "media coordinator" for AQAP.

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- Highlight Loc. 10987-96

"I wonder if Obama lost one of his daughters, or Mrs. Clinton, would they be happy? Are they going to be happy if they lost one of their children like that? I was wondering if this will make the American people happier?" [...] The CIA claimed that it had not carried out the strike, asserting that the supposed target, Ibrahim Banna, was not on the Agency's hit list. That led to speculation that the strike that killed Abdulrahman and his relatives was a JSOC strike. Senior US official told the *Washington Post* that "the two kill lists don't match, but offered conflicting explanations as to why." The officials added that Abdulrahman was an "unintended casualty." A JSOC official told me that the intended target was not killed in the strike, though he would not say who the target was. On October 20, 2011, military officials presented a closed briefing on the JSOC strike to the Senate Armed Services Committee. With the exception of the statements from anonymous US officials, the United States offered no public explanation for the strike. The mystery deepened when AQAP released a statement claiming that Banna was, in fact, still alive. "These lies and allegations announced by the government ... are not unusual ... the government has falsely declared the death of mujahedeens many times," the statement declared. The Awlakis began to wonder if perhaps Abdulrahman was, in fact, the target of the strike.

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EPILOGUE: PERPETUAL WAR - JANUARY 2013

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- Highlight Loc. 11037-51

In the year leading up to the inauguration, more people had been killed in US drone strikes across the globe than were imprisoned at Guantánamo. As Obama was sworn in for his second term, his counterterrorism team was finishing up the task of systematizing the kill list, including developing rules for when US citizens could be targeted. Admiral McRaven had been promoted to the commander of SOCOM, and his Special Ops forces were operating in more than one hundred countries across the globe.

After General David Petraeus's career was brought to a halt as a result of an extramarital affair, President Obama tapped John Brennan to replace him as director of the CIA, thus ensuring that the Agency would be headed by a seminal figure in the expansion and running of the kill program. After four years as Obama's senior counterterrorism adviser, Brennan had become known in some circles as the "assassination czar" for his role in US drone strikes and other targeted killing operations.

When Obama had tried to put Brennan at the helm of the Agency at the beginning of his first term, the nomination was scuttled by controversy over Brennan's role in the Bush-era detainee program. By the time President Obama began his second term in office, Brennan had created a "playbook" for crossing names off the kill list. "Targeted killing is now so routine that the Obama administration has spent much of the past year codifying and streamlining the process that sustain it," noted the *Washington Post*. Brennan played a key role in the evolution of targeted killing by "seeking to codify the administration's approach to generating capture/kill lists, part of a broader effort to guide administrations through the counterterrorism process that Obama has embraced," the paper added.

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- Highlight Loc. 11057-68 | Added on Monday, August 19, 2013, 07:10 AM

In early 2013, a US Department of Justice "white paper" surfaced that laid out the "Lawfulness of a Lethal Operations Directed Against a U.S. Citizen." The government lawyers who wrote the sixteen-page document asserted that the government need not possess specific intelligence indicating that an American citizen is actively engaged in a particular or active terror plot in order to be cleared for targeted killing. Instead, the paper argued that a determination from a "well-informed high level administration official" that a target represents an "imminent threat" to the United States is a sufficient basis to order the killing of an American citizen. But, the Justice Department's lawyers sought to alter the definition of "imminent," advocating what they called a "broader concept of imminence." They wrote, "The condition that an operational leader present an 'imminent' threat of violent attack against the United States does not require the United States to have clear evidence that a specific attack on

U.S. persons will take place in the immediate future." The government lawyers argued that waiting for a targeted killing of a suspect "until preparations for an attack are concluded, would not allow the United States sufficient time to defend itself." They asserted that such an operation constitutes "a lawful killing in self-defense" and is "not an assassination."

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- Highlight Loc. 11089-96

President Obama and his advisers seldom mentioned the drone program publicly. In fact, the first known confirmation of the use of armed drone by the president came several years into Obama's first term. It was not in the form of a legal brief or a press conference, but rather on a Google+ "Hangout" as the president took questions from the public. Obama was asked about his use of drones. "I want to make sure that people understand actually drones have not caused a huge number of civilian casualties," Obama said. "For the most part, they have been very precise, precision strikes against al-Qaeda and their affiliates. And we are very careful in terms of how it's been applied." He rejected what he called the "perception" that "we're just sending in a whole bunch of strikes willy-nilly" and asserted that "this is a targeted, focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists, who are trying to go in and harm Americans, hit American facilities, American bases and so on."

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- Highlight Loc. 11151-54

No one can scientifically predict the future consequences of drone strikes, cruise missile attacks and night raids. But, from my experience in several undeclared war zones across the globe, it seems clear that the United States is helping to breed a new generation of enemies in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and throughout the Muslim world. Those whose loved ones were killed in drone strikes or cruise missile attacks or night raids will have a legitimate score to settle.

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- Highlight Loc. 11161-66

In November 2012, President Obama remarked that "there's no country on Earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders." He made the statement in defense of Israel's attack on Gaza, which was launched in the name of protecting itself from Hamas missile attacks. "We are fully supportive of Israel's right to defend itself from missiles landing on people's homes and workplaces and potentially killing civilians," Obama continued. "And we will continue to support Israel's right to defend itself." How would people living in areas of Yemen, Somalia or Pakistan that have been regularly targeted by US drone or missile strikes view that statement?