

RELEASE IN
PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 1, 2012 6:03 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: WP Op Ed - Barack Obama: Drone Warrior

From: Nuland, Victoria J
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2012 04:42 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Reines, Philippe I; Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Fw: WP Op Ed - Barack Obama: Drone Warrior

Creepy but well written

From: PA Clips [mailto:paclips@state.gov]
Sent: Thursday, May 31, 2012 09:47 PM
To: PA-Monitoring-Group-DL
Subject: WP Op Ed - Barack Obama: Drone Warrior

Barack Obama: Drone Warrior
 Washington Post Opinion
 By Charles Krauthammer, Thursday, May 31, 8:03 PM

A very strange story, that 6,000-word front-page New York Times piece on how, every Tuesday, Barack Obama shuffles "baseball cards" with the pictures and bios of suspected terrorists from around the world and chooses who shall die by drone strike. He even reserves for himself the decision of whether to proceed when the probability of killing family members or bystanders is significant.

The article could have been titled "Barack Obama: Drone Warrior." Great detail on how Obama personally runs the assassination campaign. On-the-record quotes from the highest officials. This was no leak. This was a White House press release.

Why? To portray Obama as tough guy. And why now? Because in crisis after recent crisis, Obama has looked particularly weak: standing helplessly by as thousands are massacred in Syria; being played by Iran in nuclear negotiations, now reeling with the collapse of the latest round in Baghdad; being treated with contempt by Vladimir Putin, who blocks any action on Syria or Iran and adds personal insult by standing up Obama at the latter's G-8 and NATO summits.

The Obama camp thought that any political problem with foreign policy would be cured by the Osama bin Laden operation. But the administration's attempt to politically exploit the raid's one-year anniversary backfired, earning ridicule and condemnation for its crude appropriation of the heroic acts of others.

A campaign ad had Bill Clinton praising Obama for the courage of ordering the raid because, had it failed and Americans been killed, "the downside would have been horrible for him." Outraged vets released a response ad, pointing out that it would have been considerably more horrible for the dead SEALs.

That ad also highlighted the many self-references Obama made in announcing the bin Laden raid: "I can report . . . I directed . . . I met repeatedly . . . I determined . . . at my direction . . . I, as commander in chief," etc. ad nauseam.

(Eisenhower's announcement of the D-Day invasion made not a single mention of his role, whereas the alternate statement he'd prepared had the landing been repulsed was entirely about it being his failure.)

Obama only compounded the self-aggrandizement problem when he spoke a week later about the military "fighting on my behalf."

The Osama-slayer card having been vastly overplayed, what to do? A new card: Obama, drone warrior, steely and solitary, delivering death with cool dispatch to the rest of the al-Qaeda depth chart.

So the peacemaker, Nobel laureate, nuclear disarmer, apologizer to the world for America having lost its moral way when it harshly interrogated the very people Obama now kills, has become — just in time for the 2012 campaign — Zeus the Avenger, smiting by lightning strike.

A rather strange ethics. You go around the world preening about how America has turned a new moral page by electing a president profoundly offended by George W. Bush's belligerence and prisoner maltreatment, and now you're ostentatiously telling the world that you personally play judge, jury and executioner to unseen combatants of your choosing and whatever innocents happen to be in their company.

This is not to argue against drone attacks. In principle, they are fully justified. No quarter need be given to terrorists who wear civilian clothes, hide among civilians and target civilians indiscriminately. But it is to question the moral amnesia of those whose delicate sensibilities were offended by the Bush methods that kept America safe for a decade — and who now embrace Obama's campaign of assassination by remote control.

Moreover, there is an acute military problem. Dead terrorists can't talk.

Drone attacks are cheap — which is good. But the path of least resistance has a cost. It yields no intelligence about terror networks or terror plans.

One capture could potentially make us safer than 10 killings. But because of the moral incoherence of Obama's war on terror, there are practically no captures anymore. What would be the point? There's nowhere for the CIA to interrogate. And what would they learn even if they did, Obama having decreed a new regime of kid-gloves, name-rank-and-serial-number interrogation?

This administration came out opposing military tribunals, wanting to try Khalid Sheik Mohammed in New York, reading the Christmas Day bomber his Miranda rights and trying mightily (and unsuccessfully, there being — surprise! — no plausible alternative) to close Guantanamo. Yet alongside this exquisite delicacy about the rights of terrorists is the campaign to kill them in their beds.

You festoon your prisoners with rights — but you take no prisoners. The morality is perverse. Which is why the results are so mixed. We do kill terror operatives, an important part of the war on terror, but we gratuitously forfeit potentially life-saving intelligence.

But that will cost us later. For now, we are to bask in the moral seriousness and cool purpose of our drone warrior president.

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