



CRIMES ARE CRIMES NO MATTER WHO DOES THEM



CRIMES UNDER BUSH ARE CRIMES UNDER OBAMA AND MUST BE RESISTED BY ANYONE WHO CLAIMS A SHRED OF CONSCIENCE

It has become common knowledge that Barack Obama has ordered the assassination of an American citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki. Without trial or other judicial proceedings, the administration has simply put him on the to-be-killed list.*

Whistleblowers in the military leaked a video showing U.S. troops firing on an unarmed party of Iraqis in 2007, including two journalists, and then firing on those who attempted to rescue them, including two children. As ugly as this video of the killing of 12 Iraqis was, the chatter recorded in the helicopter cockpit is even more monstrous. The Pentagon says that **there will be no charges against these soldiers** and the media absolves them of blame. "They were under stress," the story goes; "Our brave men and women must be supported." Meanwhile those who leaked and publicized the video came under government surveillance and are targeted as "national security" threats.

The Pentagon acknowledged, after denials, a massacre near the city of Gardez, Afghanistan, on February 12, 2010. Five people were killed, including two pregnant women, leaving 16 children motherless. The U.S. military first said the two men killed were insurgents, and the women, victims of a family "honor killing," but the Afghan government accepts the eyewitness reports that U.S. Special Forces killed the men (a police officer and a lawyer) and the women, and then **dug their own bullets out of the women's bodies to destroy evidence**. Top U.S. military officials have now admitted that U.S. soldiers killed the family in their house.

Just weeks earlier, a story broken in *Harper's* by Scott Horton carried news that three supposed suicides of detainees in Guantánamo in 2006 were **not suicides, but homicides carried out by American personnel**. This passed almost without comment.

* On 9/24/10 the Justice Department asserted that "state secrets" bar any examination of Obama's order.

** On 9/29/10 a U.S. federal court dismissed a suit by the victims' families on grounds of "national security."

On the ninth anniversary of America's longest war, the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq remain bloody, employing more contractors, while drones rain death upon Pakistan.

In the months since this statement was written, U.S. courts have ruled that innocents who have been tortured may not sue, while the Obama administration defends those who directed that torture be used.**

When leaking war crimes is criminalized, remaining silent is a crime.

IN SOME RESPECTS this is worse than Bush. First, because Obama has claimed the right to assassinate American citizens whom he suspects of "terrorism," merely on the grounds of his own suspicion or that of the CIA, something Bush never claimed publicly. Second, Obama says that the government can detain you indefinitely, even if you have been exonerated in a trial, and he has publicly floated the idea of "preventive detention." Third, the Obama administration, in expanding the use of unmanned drone attacks, **argues that the U.S. has the authority under international law to use extrajudicial killing** in sovereign countries with which it is not at war.

SUCH MEASURES BY BUSH were widely considered by liberals and progressives to be outrages and were roundly, and correctly, protested. But those acts which may have been construed (wishfully or not) as **anomalies under the Bush regime have now been consecrated into "standard operating procedure" by Obama**, who claims, as did Bush, executive privilege and state secrecy in defending the crime of aggressive war.

UNSURPRISINGLY the Obama administration has refused to prosecute any members of the Bush regime who are responsible for war crimes, including some who admitted to waterboarding and other forms of torture, thereby making their actions acceptable for him or any future president.

THE CASE AGAINST TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS BY THE U.S.

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