



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-4302
December 19, 2012

The Honorable Eric H. Holder
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder,

In the years since the September 11th attacks, the United States has conducted attacks using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in many locations around the world. Some reports indicate that in Pakistan alone from June 2004 to September 2012, drone strikes have killed between 2,570 and 3,337 people including 474 to 884 civilians, and 176 children.

Clear answers have not yet been given to the American public by the Administration as to the specific legal justifications for the targeted use of drones abroad, especially when it comes to the targeted killings of Americans. It is important for the American public to fully understand the legal authority for these government actions. We request that you answer the following questions:

1. Is it your legal opinion that the President does not need congressional authorization under the War Powers Act to conduct drone strikes abroad?
2. Does your legal opinion change if their use is part of an operation that continues for more than 60 days?
3. Where is the legal authority for the President (or US intelligence agencies acting under his direction) to target and kill a US Citizen abroad?
4. If the President has the legal authority to target U.S. citizens located abroad, what limitations do you see on this power, if any? Specifically, in what instances is such action legally justified under American law and in what instances would it not be justified?

We appreciate your quick response on this important issue.

Sincerely,

TED POE
Member of Congress

Trey Gowdy
Member of Congress