

\$9 MILLION PER SORT-OF-KIND-OF IMPORTANT DRONE STRIKE

Amidst all the discussion of why the US froze drone strikes after Raymond Davis got picked up, Greg Miller [published](#) another important story on drone strikes.

Among other things, the story reveals that we've spent \$118 million in the last year to hit 581 militants, of which just two were on the CIA's most wanted list, and just 13 qualified as high value targets.

CIA drone attacks in Pakistan killed at least 581 militants last year, according to independent estimates. The number of those militants noteworthy enough to appear on a U.S. list of most-wanted terrorists: two.

Despite a major escalation in the number of unmanned Predator strikes being carried out under the Obama administration, data from government and independent sources indicate that the number of high-ranking militants being killed as a result has either slipped or barely increased.

Even more generous counts – which indicate that the CIA killed as many as 13 “high-value targets” – suggest that the drone program is hitting senior operatives only a fraction of the time.

After a year in which the CIA carried out a record 118 drone strikes, costing more than \$1 million apiece, the results have raised questions about the purpose and parameters of the campaign.

In other words, we're spending \$9 million for each high value but not most wanted target.

Mind you, that's not as bad as the \$33 billion we spent on Afghanistan last year to go after roughly 50 members of al Qaeda (admittedly, some of that \$33 billion is probably paying for these drone strikes).

But \$9 million per target is still far too expensive for a country purportedly needing to cut education funding.