

DRONE FALLOUT IN PAKISTAN; FALLING DRONE IN AFGHANISTAN

Marcy has been dutifully noting the alignment of forces behind the Czar of Moral Rectitude, John Brennan, in his nomination to be Director of the CIA, as well as the disclosure over the weekend that although a rule book is being drawn up to govern drone strikes, Brennan will be given a free pass for a year or so to avoid any rules for strikes in Pakistan. Who could object to having no rules in Pakistan?

Oh, well, there are the Pakistanis:

Pakistan has asked the United States to halt its highly controversial drone campaign following reports that US President Barack Obama's administration was planning to give the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) a "free hand" to continue its remotely-controlled war in tribal regions.

The issue was raised by Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar in a meeting with Richard Olson, the US ambassador in Islamabad, on Tuesday, a foreign ministry official told *The Express Tribune*.

Foreign Minister Khar voiced her concern over reports that the CIA would step up its drone campaign in the tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan, said the official, who wished not to be named.

She also urged Ambassador Olson to explain his government's position on the new "playbook" for targeted killings, which would not apply to Pakistan. This, according to *The Washington Post*, means the CIA will continue to hunt for al Qaeda and its Taliban cohorts in the

tribal regions for a year or so before the new rules become applicable to it.

But the fallout from the drone campaign in Pakistan is not limited to the political arena only. Drone strikes are claimed to be targeted, but targeting relies heavily on intelligence. It appears that those targeted have found and executed a man believed to be a spy assisting in drone targeting:

Militants on Wednesday dumped the mutilated body of a purported Afghan spy accused of collaborating on US drone strikes that killed prominent warlord Mullah Nazir in South Waziristan this month, officials said.

The body of the man identified as Asmatullah Kharoti was found in Wana, the main town of the South Waziristan tribal district, which borders Afghanistan.

Local officials said he had been shot dead and there were wounds on his neck.

Two notes on the body ordered the remains to be left on the roadside until 10:00 am "so that everyone could see the fate of spies", and the second accusing him of being a spy and being responsible for US drone attacks.

Kharoti was accused of "tagging" militants with an electronic marker:

Two militants from Nazir's group who spoke to AFP accused Kharoti of giving Nazir a digital Quran, fitted with chips to track his movements, during a meeting at an undisclosed location in Afghanistan.

"He presented Nazir and others digital Qurans as a gift which were fitted with chips which help US drones strike their targets," one of the militants said.

“When Mullah Nazir was returning, US drones fired missiles at him in a Pakistani area,” he said.

I’m guessing that many digital Qurans will be found in roadside ditches in the next few days.

While fallout from US drone operations in Pakistan continues, drones themselves are falling in Afghanistan. Well, at least one did yesterday:

A spy drone belonging to the US-led forces in Afghanistan has crashed in the country’s southeastern Paktika Province, Press TV reports.

The aircraft went down in the Jani Khel district of the Afghan province on Tuesday.

Taliban militants claimed that they had downed the spy drone.

NATO confirmed the crash in a statement on Wednesday. However, it did not provide any details about the cause of the incident.

But don’t worry. I’m sure that our benevolent drone dictator can keep both the rules and the drones up in the air a bit longer.