

DISPOSITION MATRIX: \$5 MILLION REWARDS IN LIEU OF KILL LISTS?

Mike Rogers, perhaps bolstered by the Administration's insistence that he can say all he wants about drone targeting without it amounting to "admission" of the program for FOIA purposes, ran his mouth the other day about whether any Americans are currently on the kill list.

"There is no list where Americans are on the list," House Intelligence Chairman Mike Rogers told National Journal. Still, he suggested, that could change.

[snip]

"Some notion that every American would even rise to the list by just going over and even signing up is, candidly, just not the truth," Rogers said.

Awlaki, Rogers said, was unique among homegrown terrorists—he publicly declared jihad against the United States, and he was involved in multiple terrorist-related plans, including the failed Christmas Day bombing and the Fort Hood shooting.

"What worries me is they are taking this isolated case and saying, 'Oh well, there's a list of Americans, and you could be on the list of Americans.' That just simply is not how this works," he said.

But Rogers, who said he reviews every strike after it is carried out and sends his staff to a monthly meeting with intelligence officials to ensure staffers have enough information on the strike program, cautioned that should another American citizen again attain

the status Awlaki did, the U.S. government has the authority to kill him.

“If you ever got another American who rose to that same level in the ranks and leadership role in al-Qaida and they were operating in Yemen or Mali or southern Algeria or Libya, well, they’ve picked their team, and their team is al-Qaida. And the United States is in conflict with al-Qaida. In the rules of war, you’re allowed to defend yourself.”

And while the White House has no comment about Rogers running his mouth, just after he did so, the Administration announced \$5 million rewards for tips leading to the capture of two American extremists, Omar Shafik Hammami and Jihad Serwan Mostafa, who have both been indicted on charges of materially supporting a terrorist organization. The Rewards for Justice descriptions, however, say Hammami and Mostafa have done more than just materially support terror.

It accuses Hammami of serving as a military leader.

In 2006, Hammami moved to Somalia where he joined and received training from Islamist militants. In 2007, Hammami began serving as a propagandist for al-Shabaab, helping to recruit English-speaking youth through his writings, rap songs, and televised statements. He also served as a military leader for al-Shabaab, and he at one time led foreign fighters under Jihad Mostafa.

And it accuses Mostafa of serving as a “leader of foreign fighters.”

Jihad Serwan Mostafa, a.k.a. Ahmed Gurey, Anwar al-Amriki, or Emir Anwar; is a United States citizen and former resident of California. He has performed

various functions for al-Shabaab, including acting as a training camp instructor and a leader of foreign fighters. He is also skilled in the group's media activities. Mostafa is an American citizen who lived in San Diego, California before moving to Somalia in 2005. He may have or is likely to visit the following areas: Somalia, Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya, and other African countries.

In other words, while these details don't show up in their indictments (which include redacted sections), the FBI at least claims that both men have had operational, leadership positions.

Just what Awlaki was alleged to have done, with perhaps less evidence and without any known indictment, before they killed him. Just what the government and Mike Rogers maintains merits drone killing.

With Hammami, at least, there's good reason to ask why this reward is being offered now, given that he's mucking things up for al Shabaab.

An FBI official told CNN the two American Shababis "had a persistent interest in targeting U.S. interests" and are "believed to be involved in planning attacks on U.S. persons or property," although Hammami's account on Twitter depicts a more modest daily regimen of buying tea and riding donkeys while hoping no one from Shabab shows up to kill him on any given day. While Hammami is a master of spin, as seen in his tweets and online autobiography, I suspect his account is pretty accurate.

My question about this reward is: Why now? Hammami has split from Al Shabab's leadership and is sowing a remarkable amount of discontent, particularly among other foreign fighters who have joined Shabab. He's even disavowed the jihadi

raps previously attributed to him. I have little doubt that he would love to get back to scheming against America, but he doesn't seem to be a \$5 million threat at the moment, and frankly, don't we want him over there there stirring up trouble? In fact, the person with the most capability and motivation to collect that reward is Abu Zubair, Shabab's current leader, who would like nothing better than to be rid of this meddling priest.

Selected Wisdom suggests – and I agree – this may reflect the government's new disposition matrix.

On a separate note, I'm glad that CNN pointed out that the Rewards for Justice program is being used in this initiative – a tool that I think has been underutilized in recent years. Good for the State Department for using this tool and I point this out to the anti-drone advocates. The Obama Administration has done an arrest-extradition and a Rewards for Justice pursuit recently.

Here's a note I wrote a few weeks back about the program.

Additionally, I think the U.S. should look to bring back and further promote the "Rewards-for-Justice" program, especially in Africa, along with drone campaigns. The program wasn't that successful after 9/11 in Pakistan (Pashtunwali, tribal protection, etc.), but some of the new CT battlefields are not like the Pakistan safe haven al Qaeda enjoyed. An increase in programs like "Rewards-for-Justice" might ease the need for drone strikes, particularly in those places where resources often trump ideology – like

Africa.

So has their "Disposition Matrix" changed in recent weeks? Do you really think the reward will grab Omar from interior Somalia? If it doesn't, then what should we do in the absence of partners in Southern Somalia?

The government has been making high profile use of civilian courts in recent weeks, even for those – like the three Somalis – who might not otherwise merit arrest and rendition to the US.

I would suggest these rewards – whether they work or not, whether they end up enriching some Shabaab sympathizer that would like to get Hammami out of their hair – is designed to be a very public indication that the government has decided killing American propagandists-turned-allegedly-operational-terrorists isn't their first choice anymore.

And note: somehow rewards for wayward terrorists is not subject to sequester.