

CIA DEATH SQUADS IN AFGHANISTAN TO HAVE FEWER BASES

Greg Miller reports in the Washington Post that the CIA will be closing several bases in Afghanistan as US military forces are withdrawn from the country. I've been obsessing lately about US death squads operated primarily by the CIA but also affiliated with Special Operations forces and their bases. These death squads have been an integral part of the vaunted David Petraeus COIN strategy in both Iraq and Afghanistan (and rest on the heritage of death squads funded by the US in Latin America and those run by the US in Vietnam).

Miller's article joins a growing trend toward public acknowledgement of the paramilitary activities the CIA has carried out in Afghanistan:

The CIA has begun closing clandestine bases in Afghanistan, marking the start of a drawdown from a region that transformed the agency from an intelligence service struggling to emerge from the Cold War to a counter-terrorism force with its own prisons, paramilitary teams and armed Predator drones.

Think for just a moment about what is being admitted here. These are clandestine bases that are being closed. Those clandestine bases had their own prisons and paramilitary teams. Remember all the US denials regarding the disappearance of innocent civilians and their torture at secret prisons in both Iraq and Afghanistan? Those denials get a lot less believable with this matter-of-fact admission that clandestine bases with their own prisons and paramilitary teams are being closed. You can bet that those secret prisons did not sit empty

and the CIA paramilitary teams did not sit around all day just playing cards at their secret bases.

The entire article is worthy of reading for the number of confirmations it has on CIA activities in Afghanistan. However, lest we think that Mr. Moral Rectitude is going to be cutting back on his war crime activities in Afghanistan, we have this near the end of the article:

This year, President Obama approved new counterterrorism guidelines that call for the military to take on a larger role in targeted killing operations, reducing the involvement of the CIA.

But the guidelines included carve-outs that gave the agency wide latitude to continue armed Predator flights across the border and did not ban a controversial practice known as "signature strikes," in which the agency can launch missiles at targets based on patterns of suspicious behavior without knowing the identities of those who would be killed.

John Brennan will hang on to his "latitude" to continue signature strikes. It seems likely that he also will keep his death squads active in Afghanistan, but they will be operating out of fewer bases. International laws and treaties are just immaterial if you have enough moral rectitude.

Oh, and as a postscript, the article does confirm affiliation of ~~CIA death squads~~ CIA paramilitary forces with military bases (just as has been at the center of the controversy surrounding the Nerkh base in Maidan Wardak Province, where Karzai expelled US Special Forces):

Even so, a full withdrawal of U.S. troops would probably trigger a deeper retrenchment by the CIA, which has relied on U.S. and allied military

installations across the country to serve as bases for agency operatives and cover for their spying operations.

It appears that Brennan and the Obama administration just don't care any more about maintaining secrecy on their war crimes. After all, who is going to stop them?