

PAKISTAN PRESS REPORTING UK LAWMAKERS WROTE LETTER URGING OBAMA TO STOP DRONE STRIKES IN PAKISTAN

Virtually every press outlet I scan in Pakistan is reporting today that a group of at least twelve member of the House of Lords and House of Commons have written a letter variously reported as addressed to Barack Obama, the United States and to NATO, urging an end to US drone strikes in Pakistan. So far, however, I have seen no mention of the letter in the British or US press. [Update: Chris Woods of the Bureau of Investigative Journalism points out in comment number 1 below that the letter was sent to the London Times and provides a link to its full text.]

It appears that two major concerns are stated in the letter. First, it is claimed that the drone strikes put the UK and US at risk because the drone strikes provide justification for terrorist strikes. Second, the letter expresses concern for the killing of innocent people in the drone strikes. There is also concern that the strikes do damage to Pakistan's sovereignty.

Here is the description from the Express Tribune:

A squad of UK parliamentarians have written to President Barack Obama to stop drone attacks in Pakistan, *Radio Pakistan* reported on Thursday.

The 12 parliamentarians in a letter written to the United States said that the Britain and Western countries are under threat because drone attacks provide justification for future

terrorist activities.

The letter also stated that innocent people are killed in drone strikes.

The parliamentarians said that the attacks are creating hatred for the US amongst Pakistanis and they are also harming a British allied country's sovereignty.

Both Dawn and Pakistan Today list the same twelve MP's (although in different order in their lists) as having signed the letter. From Dawn:

George Galway, Yasmin Qureshi, John Hemming, Jeraldko Famin, Paul Flain and Simon Disnek include members of House of Commons while Lord Nazir Ahmad, Lord Hussain, Lord Steel Awood, Lord Jad, , Lord E Escadel and Lord Eubarry are from House of Lords who have signed the letter written to the US President.

This is a very interesting development, coming just on the heels of complaints from the left in Denmark:

Danish lawmakers are levelling unprecedented criticism at the US president, Barack Obama, for his use of remote-controlled attack drones in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.

Rasmus Helveg Petersen, Radikale foreign policy spokesperson, told Politiken newspaper that Obama's actions mirror those of the terrorists he professes to be fighting against.

"It's terrible," said Petersen. "The United States has no right to carry out these types of executions of suspected political adversaries. It contravenes international law."

Petersen added that executing political

adversaries within another country's borders was tantamount to terrorism.

But there is even more:

The comments came after Søren Pind, of the opposition party Venstre, in an interview with the magazine Ræson, likened the drone attacks to "assassination".

"I criticised George Bush for allowing torture during his presidency," Pind told Politiken. "But what he is doing is much worse and violates the principals of the Western world."

Finally, the article quotes "Ole Wæver, who teaches political science at the University of Copenhagen" who points out that Obama has not lived up to the expectations of Danes and that he has "used up his goodwill account."

With the opening ceremony of the London Olympics just hours away and the nonstop coverage of the Romney gaffe-orama, it will be very difficult for the drone letter to break into the British press, but if it does, it is hard to see how the Obama administration can avoid putting out a response of some sort.