

Weapons of War, or Tool of Repression?

by Carl Osgood

Oct. 17—For a dictatorship to “succeed,” it needs both psychological control over the population, and the means to eliminate its enemies at will. President Obama, who intends to make himself a dictator over the United States (on behalf of his British masters), has demonstrated access to both types of control, with the assassination of Anwar al-Awlaki by use of a remote-controlled armed Predator aircraft, the first time an American citizen has been murdered by Presidential decree.

When examining the usage of Predator and other types of drones for targeted killing, the astute critic has to ask, are these really weapons for warfare or for something else? The history of Israel’s war against the Palestinians in Gaza clearly shows that the Israelis have been using drones primarily as a tool of repression. One observer noted, on the website electronicintifada.com in February 2009—that is, a few weeks after the conclusion of the genocidal Operation Cast Lead—that “Current military use of UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] is limited by the need for relatively unchallenged airspace or prohibitively expensive stealth technology, as they have almost no defensive capability. Efforts to make air combat-capable UAVs are years away from equaling the capability of piloted aircraft. Until that happens, they will be exceedingly vulnerable in challenged airspace. Thus, UAVs remain an effective tool only when used by more militarily dominant nations, corporations and other entities.”

This brings to mind the German Stuka dive-bomber of World War II infamy. The Stuka was very effective both as a bomber and as a psychological terror-weapon in the early phases of the war, when German control of the air was uncontested, such as in Poland in 1939. But against an enemy capable of resistance, the Stuka proved useless.

As with the German terror-bombing tactics of World War II, the Israeli use of drones against subject popula-

tions, in this case the Arabs of Gaza and the West Bank, is nothing but an extension of British air power doctrine. While the Israeli drones don’t have sirens attached to them, as the German Stukas did, the knowledge that they’re up there, and can target you at any time, has just as powerful a psychological effect as the shrieking of the Stukas did in Poland.

“Palestinians say they know when an Israeli drone is in the air: Cell phones stop working, TV reception falters and they can hear a distant buzzing,” AP reported from Gaza City in 2008. “They also know what’s likely to come next: a devastating explosion on the ground.” The Israelis have been killing Palestinians with drones since at least 2004, and drones, both armed and unarmed, played a key role in the genocidal Operation Cast Lead in December 2008-January 2009.

The Israelis have also been busy peddling their drone technology around the world. At least three countries, Great Britain, Germany, and Canada, have purchased the Israeli Hermes surveillance drone for occupation duty in Afghanistan. The U.S. has also bought Israeli drones, and is a student of Israeli occupation tactics, as reported after the U.S. assault on Fallujah, Iraq in November 2004. U.S. Army officers had traveled to Israel during 2003 to study how the IDF ran the occupation of Gaza, and subsequently applied what they learned in Iraq. The exhibit hall at last week’s annual conference of the Association of the U.S. Army featured large displays by Israel’s two largest weapons-makers, Elbit Systems and Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI), both hawking their wares, including their latest drone technologies.

Today’s *Los Angeles Times* features an op-ed by Michael Lewis, a professor of international law at Ohio Northern University School of Law and a retired Navy pilot, aimed at debunking certain “myths” about the use of drones. One of the myths he’s worried about is that drones might be used against the United States by Russia or China. Why not? “Drones are surveillance and counter-terrorism tools; they are not effective weapons of conventional warfare,” Lewis writes. “The unmanned aerial vehicles are slow and extremely vulnerable to even basic air defense systems.”

In fact, under Obama’s drive for dictatorship over the United States, drones are good for only one thing: Wellsian psychological warfare against the American people, and the extra-judicial murder of anyone who stands in the way. That’s what the Presidential murder of Awlaki demonstrates.