

Senate Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights
Hearing on “Drone Wars: The Constitutional and Counterterrorism Implications of
Targeted Killing”
April 23, 2013

Questions for the Record for Peter Bergen

- 1. There is a lot of ambiguity about where we are using drones and who we are targeting. I have heard estimates that as many as 4700 people have been killed as a result of drone strikes. Based on your research, do you think that number is accurate, and can you please list the countries where you think we have deployed drones and the approximate time frame that they have been in use?**

According to New America Foundation data (<http://counterterrorism.newamerica.net/drones>), US drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen have killed between 2,439 and 3,982, 476-698 of whom we have identified as civilians or “unknowns” (we include an “unknown” category because it is sometimes too difficult to tell from media reports whether those killed are believed to be militants or civilians). We do not currently track the strikes in Somalia, and because the strikes in Afghanistan are conducted within the sphere of the conflict there, they are outside the purview of our research into targeted killings. The 4,700 figure you cite is possible when you include all U.S. drone deployments, but it’s far above even our highest estimate for deaths in CIA-operated drone programs in Pakistan (where 80% of the strikes take place) and Yemen combined.

The United States has used CIA-controlled drones for targeted killing operations in Pakistan (2004-present), Yemen (2002; 2010-present), Somalia (unsure) and perhaps the Philippines (one reported 2006 strike against Indonesian targets in the Philippines has been denied by the Philippines military). In addition, the US military has used armed drones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

- 2. I share your concern that drone technology is going to trigger an arms race of sorts and that it won’t be long before every country has an arsenal of drones. Can you tell us more about what you have uncovered about other countries’ plans to acquire and use drone technology? How long do you think it will be until weaponized drones are fairly ubiquitous?**

According to New America Foundation data, around 80 countries are currently involved in developing drone technology or have acquired it from another state. Only the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel are known to have used armed drones to target adversaries, but China and Iran also claim to have built their own lethal drones. In February 2103, the New York Times reported that the Chinese government considered killing a drug lord in Myanmar using a drone, but eventually nixed the idea. Hezbollah has flown Iranian-made “single-use” kamikaze drones toward Israel, though Israeli anti-aircraft missiles easily shot them down. The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and Counterterrorism Ben Emmerson said at a New America

event in May 2013 that he expects many states and some non-state actors to possess armed drones within five years. Our research supports that prediction.

Israel is the world's largest exporter of drones and drone technology, and the state-owned Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI) has sold to countries as varied as Nigeria, Russia and Mexico. IAI has also reportedly sold a “loitering weapon” called the Harop to India, Turkey, France, and Germany. The Harop can circle over a target for hours before it is activated and sent to the ground as a single-use missile.

In March 2012, the U.S. government agreed to arm Italy's six Reaper drones but rejected a request from Turkey to purchase armed Predator drones. (An official in Turkey's Defense Ministry then said in July 2012 that Turkey planned to arm its own domestically produced drone, the Anka.)

Sweden, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and France are working on a joint project through state-owned aeronautical companies and are in the final stages of developing an advanced armed drone prototype called the Dassault nEURon, from which the France plans to derive armed drones for its air force.