

# U.S. to reduce use of drones

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2013



U.S. President Barack Obama has outlined a new policy in the controversial use of drones to kill suspected terrorists. Drones are unmanned aircraft

that can be controlled from the U.S. as well as from bases in or near war zones. Both the U.S. military and the CIA use drones in their operations. Around 800 drone strikes have taken place in Afghanistan in the past two years. The CIA's use of drones is shrouded in secrecy. Experts believe the agency has conducted around 350 drone strikes in Pakistan and fewer than 100 in Yemen and Somalia since 2004. Around 3,000 people have been killed by drones since 2004. The New America Foundation estimates that roughly 21 per cent of those killed were civilians.

President Obama said the U.S. would now only use drone strikes as a last resort, when there is a "continuing and imminent" threat to the American people, and that there must be "near certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured". Kenneth Roth from Human Rights Watch said: "A mere promise that the US will work within established guidelines that remain secret provides little confidence that [it] is complying with international law." Shahzad Akbar, a Pakistani lawyer working for drone victims' families, said: "The problem remains the same because there is no transparency and accountability for the CIA because it will remain inside the system and not be visible to outsiders."

Sources: L.A. Times / ABC News / Washington Post

## Writing

*Drones cause too many civilian deaths and should be banned. Discuss.*

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*new policy / controversial / war zones / military / secrecy / experts / CIA / civilians / last resort / imminent threat / human rights / guidelines / international law / system*

## True / False

- a) A U.S. general summarized the new policy regarding drones. T / F
- b) Drones can only be controlled from near the battle zone. T / F
- c) Drones have been used around 800 times in 2 years in Afghanistan. T / F
- d) An organization said just over 20% of drone fatalities were civilian. T / F
- e) Drones were used to bomb the last resort left in Afghanistan. T / F
- f) From now, drones will only be used if it's certain no civilians will die. T / F
- g) Human Rights Watch has little confidence in the new guidelines. T / F
- h) A lawyer said it was a problem that the CIA's drones use is secretive. T / F

## Synonym Match

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. outlined       | a. openness        |
| 2. controversial  | b. ordinary people |
| 3. shrouded       | c. carried out     |
| 4. conducted      | d. final option    |
| 5. civilians      | e. on the way      |
| 6. last resort    | f. summarised      |
| 7. imminent       | g. following       |
| 8. established    | h. hidden          |
| 9. complying with | i. disputed        |
| 10. transparency  | j. accepted        |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) Why do you think the unmanned aircraft are called "drones"?
- b) What do you think of the use of drones?
- c) Is it better to use drones or warplanes with pilots?
- d) Should the families of civilians killed by drones get compensation?
- e) Do you think all wars will be fought using drones and robots one day?
- f) What happens when all countries have drones?
- g) Would you use a passenger jet that was pilotless?
- h) What do you think of 21% of fatalities being civilian?

## Phrase Match

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. the controversial | a. aircraft               |
| 2. suspected         | b. 21 per cent of those   |
| 3. unmanned          | c. international law      |
| 4. shrouded          | d. terrorists             |
| 5. roughly           | e. threat                 |
| 6. as a last         | f. established guidelines |
| 7. imminent          | g. use of drones          |
| 8. work within       | h. and accountability     |
| 9. complying with    | i. in secrecy             |
| 10. no transparency  | j. resort                 |

## Discussion – Student B

- What options need to be exhausted before the last resort is reached?
- How unacceptable is "near certainty" of no civilian casualties?
- What part does international law play in the fighting of a war?
- How much confidence do you have in the USA's use of drones?
- Would transparency put soldiers' lives at risk?
- What is the alternative to drones?
- Where will we be with this story in ten years from now?
- What questions would you like to ask President Obama?

## Spelling

- the eltcvaoinrsor use of drones
- pusctedse terrorists
- the U.S. liytmira
- shrouded in escecry
- uhlorgy 21 per cent
- those killed were nalciisvi
- emintimn threat
- there must be near raceiyttn
- hlsiadebset guidelines
- lympgicno with international law
- there is no ycntraprnsae
- vilesib to outsiders

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. h	4. c	5. b
6. d	7. e	8. j	9. g	10. a

## Role Play

### Role A – President Obama

You think drones are a necessary part of the war on terror. Tell the others three reasons why. You think accidental civilian deaths are tragic but cannot stop the use of drones. The CIA's use of drones must stay secret – you cannot tell the others why.

### Role B – Pacifist

You are shocked that the USA is using drones. Tell the others three reasons why. You think any loss of civilian life is totally unacceptable. It is the same as murder. The CIA's secrecy means Obama's new "openness" is a big lie. Tell everyone the world needs to know when the CIA uses drones.

### Role C – CIA boss

You think drones are one of the greatest military resources ever. Tell the others three reasons why. Drones greatly reduce the loss of life as no pilot is needed. You cannot say anything about operations because it could endanger the success of the battle with terrorists.

### Role D – Pakistani villager

You hate the drones that fly over your village. Tell the others three reasons why. President Obama and the CIA boss have no idea about the terror drones bring to normal people. You are furious that drones have killed people close to you who were ordinary people with families. Ask for drone strikes to stop.

## Speaking – Remote control

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| • kitchen  | • laundry room |
| • bathroom | • garage       |
| • garden   | • living room  |
| • toilet   | • study        |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.