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Memory of Nazi Atrocities May Be a Factor

For the first time in history, a national legislative body has taken a position against installing weapons on drones.

As reported in the linked Reuters article, German SPD party members have blocked the leasing from Israel of drones that can carry weapons. <http://www.reuters.com/article/germany-defence-drones-idUSB4N1GS015>

The headline in this Haaretz article, expresses the surprise of what the Germans did. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.798475>

This historic, remarkable decision may be revisited after German elections in September, but for now it stands as a signal victory of concern for human rights and ethics within the German Bundestag and an exemplary position in dramatic contrast to the avoidance of consideration of international human rights law as it applies to drone killing within the United States Congress.

The German decision is completely in line with the intent of the linked Roots Action petition that has been circulating since 2013, calling for an international ban on weaponizing drones, and the decision offers hope that other national legislatures will endorse a ban against armed drones. http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=6180

Here is an article that gives further background on the German developments. <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4980423,00.html>

(Note also letters posted earlier in this blog urging German parliamentarians to oppose the

drone deal.)

It is essential to note that the central anti-drone war figure in achieving the German decision is Elsa Rassbach, a German-American anti-war organizer and CODEPINK leader who has over the last several years organized meetings between German politicians and American anti-drone war organizers.

The Role of Memorials

Elsa points out that the memories of Germans are haunted by the Nazi atrocities of World War II, leading to the sensitivity against being involved in violations of human rights that go with drone stalking and killing.

Germany, unlike the U.S., has been willing to expose itself to truths of crimes against humanity generated by its government and to erect memorials, so that these crimes will be less likely to be forgotten. For example, there is a memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, covering nearly five acres.

The German drone decision came, coincidentally, shortly after this linked article was written by David Swanson, in which he says <https://www.counterpunch.org/2017/06/01/war-monuments-are-killing-us/> :

“In a sane society, the war memorials would be one small example of many types of public memorials, and where they existed they would mourn, not glorify, and mourn all victims, not a small fraction deemed worthy of our sorrow.”