

The Obama administration's assassination of two U.S. citizens in 2011, Anwar al-Awlaki and his 16-year-old Denver-born son Abdulrahman, is a central part of Jeremy Scahill's new book, "Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield." The book is based on years of reporting on U.S. secret operations in Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan. While the Obama administration has defended the killing of Anwar, it has never publicly explained why Abdulrahman was targeted in a separate drone strike two weeks later. Scahill reveals CIA Director John Brennan, Obama's former senior adviser on counterterrorism and homeland security, suspected that the teenager had been killed "intentionally." "The idea that you can simply have one branch of government unilaterally and in secret declare that an American citizen should be executed or assassinated without having to present any evidence whatsoever, to me, is a — we should view that with great sobriety about the implications for our country," says Scahill, national security correspondent for *The Nation* magazine. Today the U.S. Senate is preparing to hold its first-ever hearing on the Obama administration's drone and targeted killing program. However, the Obama administration is refusing to send a witness to answer questions about the program's legality. "Dirty Wars" is also the name of a new award-winning documentary by Scahill and Rick Rowley, which will open in theaters in June. We air the film's new trailer. [Click here to watch Part 2](#) of this interview.

**AMY GOODMAN:** The U.S. Senate is preparing to hold its first-ever hearing today on the Obama administration's drone and targeted killing program. However, the Obama administration is refusing to send a witness to answer questions about the program's legality. At today's hearing, a Yemeni man whose family village was just hit by a U.S. drone strike is testifying alongside one of the key figures in developing President Obama's counterterrorism policy, retired James Cartwright.

Well, today we spend the hour with Jeremy Scahill, national security correspondent at *The Nation* magazine, longtime *Democracy Now!* correspondent. For the past several years, Jeremy has been working on a book and film documenting America's expanded covert wars and targeted killing program. This is the just-released trailer to his new film, *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield*. It's directed by Rick Rowley.

**JEREMY SCAHILL:** I got a strange phone call. Someone from the inside was reaching out to me, someone close to the heart of the president's elite force.

**ANONYMOUS SOURCE:** There are hundreds of covert operations on multiple continents in full support of the White House.

**JEREMY SCAHILL:** It's hard to say when the story began.

Greetings from Kabul, Afghanistan.

This was supposed to be the front line in the war on terror.

[To read the rest of this transcript, click here.](#)