

The “Inside Drone Warfare” symposium was held at the University of Nevada/Las Vegas School of Law on March 30, 2016 - in the shadow of Creech AFB, the largest drone control and training center in the U.S.

The entire symposium was videotaped and divided into five parts, linked below. These tapes will give you a profound emotional as well as informational understanding of the impact of the U.S. drone war program on the drone operators and their victims, all of whom have been abandoned by the U.S. legal system.

Part 1

- Ann Wright introduces the symposium.
- Whistle-blowers’ lawyer Jesselyn Radack speaks about common problems among drone operators and observes: “most of the people in the program definitely have struggles of conscience”.
- Former drone operator Cian Westmoreland describes experiences in the drone program after saying that what bothered him the most was the “diffusion of responsibility” within the drone program; and he speaks of the “civility” of the killing. He also talks about the impact of war on children.

Part 2

- Former CIA counter-terrorism officer Chris Aaron concludes after his experience in the drone program that: “We absolutely are sowing the seeds for the next round of people to hate us.” There is “a lot of guess work” involved in drone targeting he says, and he believes that “we are essentially setting ourselves up for what we would have to call a perpetual war.”
- Universalist Unitarian Minister and Reserve Army Chaplain Chris Antal tells about being kicked out of Afghanistan by the Army after giving a sermon critical of U.S. military involvement there, including drone warfare.

Part 3

- Reprieve lawyer Shelby Sullivan-Bennis discusses Reprieve’s work in representing the families of drone victims and says that “U.S. courts are kangaroo courts with respect to national security.” She says Reprieve brings cases in the U.S. not with any expectation of winning but in the hope that press coverage of the cases will educate the U.S. public about drone war. “This is very much a war of public opinion,” she says.

- Shelby follows up her presentation by presenting an extremely moving video interview with a Yemeni man whose brother-in-law was killed by U.S. drones. Describing the impact of drone attacks on a Yemeni town, he says that “for the people killing has become normal...” They say: “maybe the bombs will fall on us, it doesn’t matter. We’ll die; it doesn’t matter to us....It’s become all the same whether you’re with Al Qaeda or a normal peaceful citizen you are going to get killed all the same. It’s all the same. You might be alive today and dead tomorrow.”

Part 4

- Marjorie Cohn, human rights lawyer, professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law and editor of “Drones and Targeted Killing”, outlines how drone war violates international law and discusses how American exceptionalism provides an emotional underpinning for drone attacks which leads to the kind of thinking that “it’s preferable that foreign little girls get killed as opposed to U.S., American little girls.” She also says that the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Nuremberg Principles establish...a duty to disobey unlawful orders, and “it is my feeling that this defense could also be used for drone pilots who refuse to carry out orders, direct orders really, to kill people with drones.”

Part 5

- Brian Terrell, Co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, delivers a timeless, must-see commentary on the philosophical basis for drone war protest and war protest generally in which he says, “when we go to Creech and places like it ... we cannot be there to blame other people...”

- A brief question and answer session that includes commentary on the drone war movies “The Good Kill” and “Eye in the Sky”, ways of supporting whistleblowers and protest messaging at drone bases.