

# ARTICLE 36 AMHERST TOWN MEETING, 2014

## CONCERNS ABOUT DRONES

- A.  Issues of Privacy given Drone Technology
- B.  Extrajudicial Killings

## From the Article 36, section A.

- BE IT RESOLVED, that this Resolution declares that no agency of the town of Amherst, nor any agents under contract with the town, will operate drones in the **immediate airspace over Amherst** in a manner that violates the constitutional rights of its residents.
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the town of Amherst affirms that within the town limits, **landowners and tenants**, subject to state laws and local ordinances, **have exclusive control of the immediate reaches of the airspace** and that no drone, unmanned aircraft, or other airborne object shall have the “public right of transit” through this private property.

# What Article 36 says

Article 36 A: doesn't bar drone flights in Amherst except if there is infringement of constitutional rights and is concerned about maintaining the right of privacy over our airspace that has been in effect since 1926. This right is to be maintained now and in the future.

Article 36 Part **B**: is about the most fundamental US **domestic** issue, extrajudicial killings of Americans and others the issue of US government killing its own citizens **without due process and accountability**.

Article 36, section B: request as a community for a restitution of Constitutional authority

## ARTICLE 36, PART B

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the **town of Amherst** request that their Congressman, Jim McGovern, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey, **introduce a resolution** in the United States Congress to **end the practice of extrajudicial killing** by armed drones, to specifically **withhold money for that purpose**, and make **restitution** to those who have been killed or injured through the actions of the United States government, the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and their private contractors.

# **Article 36 is not about foreign policy; it's about traditional Rights of US citizens**

**The Magna Carta (1215) prohibited the king from arbitrarily punishing a free man except through judicial proceedings, i.e. trial by jury. This traditional right was written into the US Constitution.**

On September 30, 2011, two American citizens were killed by the US government without a trial or any judicial proceeding. One of these was a targeting killing, ordered by our President under advice of a panel of advisors. On October 14, 2011 a 3rd American citizen was killed by a drone

Three Americans killed by US government without a trial or any judicial proceeding.

On September 30, 2011 **Anwar al-Awlaki**, who was born in New Mexico, and **Samir Khan**, born in North Carolina, were killed in the same drone strike. Anwar al-Awlaki was targeted, Samir Khan was with him and killed “accidentally”

On October 14, 2011, **Abdulrahman al-Awlaki**, Anwar al-Awlaki’s son was killed in a drone strike while in a café with friends.

# Death of Abdulrahman al-Awlaki

Abdulrahman, age 16, was born in Denver. He had no connections to terrorism. He was living with his grandfather in Yemen and hadn't seen his father for several years. Nine other people were killed in the same CIA-led attack. Among the dead was a 17-year-old cousin. According to U.S. officials the killing of Abdulrahman al-Awlaki was a mistake; the actual target was an Egyptian, Ibrahim al-Banna. Al-Banna was not present and not injured



# US Drone killings

In Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq

## Two kinds of killing

1. **Targeted**, a specific person is to be killed.  
There are weekly meetings with the president at which targeted persons are selected for death without transparency, accountability or oversight.
2. **Signature strikes** targeted at groups who fit a pattern that suggests possible harmful activities to the interests of the US.

# Signature strikes: not evidence based but double speak!

- Profiling: Suspicious activity viewed by an American say 6,798 miles away, the distance between Syracuse, NY and Northern Waziristan, may lead to a drone attack.
- If the targeted group are killed, then it is classified as a confirmed death of an enemy; there is no confirmation that the attack killed a person intending harm to US or what criteria of harm was used.
- Meetings of elders in areas concerned about the effects of drone attacks have been seen as engaged in activity harmful to the US and bombed.
- Only untargeted people, like women, children, elderly are classified collateral deaths, or an error.

# Practical reasons drone killings are bad for the US

- Technology is flawed, not better than the humans who operate it. There have been numerous civilian casualties from US drone strikes including children killed. Family & community gatherings have been mistakenly seen as terrorist activities resulting in signature strikes and deaths of ordinary people.
- As we ourselves demonstrated in our reaction to 911, loss of life leads to rage and a determination to gain revenge. It makes dedicated enemies.
- Drones are cheap and the technology allows other nations and people to make them. It is likely that our example will be a precedent for future attacks.

It is hoped to pass local resolutions in many American communities asking the end of Drone killings.

To Date resolutions have been passed in

**Charlottesville, Virginia**

**St. Bonifacius, Minnesota**

**Evanston, Illinois**

**Northampton, Massachusetts**

**Syracuse, New York**

**Iowa City, Iowa**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**Seattle, Washington**

**Leverett, Massachusetts**



“Force without legitimacy leads to Defiance not Submission”. Malcolm Gladwell

References:

- Film, *Unmanned, America's Drone Wars*, Robert Greenwald, [www.warcosts.com/drones\\_partner](http://www.warcosts.com/drones_partner)
- Film, *Dirty Wars*, Jeremy Scahill