Killing the thing you love

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Killing the Thing You Love: Predator Drones, Wilful Neglect and the End of the Internet

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Abstract: At what point in the progress of civilization does technological development stop? Perhaps more accurately, what happens when the evolution of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becomes dystopian? In asking these questions I want to suggest that the end of the Internet has arrived with the emergence of Predator Drones (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), the pilotless planes with missiles used by the US Government to kill its enemies—the people with whom the US is at war. At what point does the use of peaceful technologies for making war bring an end to their value? This is not a new question but it is an awkward one because it raises key philosophical concerns about liberalism as the dominant form of social life. The critical question about the value of technology when put to war use was raised most astringently by Robert Oppenheimer, one of the originators of atomic energy and the US's Manhattan Project atom bomb. Oppenheimer asked two questions in his 1949 essay "The Open Mind" that can inform the question about drones and the Internet: "What elements are there in the conduct of foreign affairs which may be conducive to the exercise of [that] reason, which may provide a climate for the growth of new experience, new insight, and new understanding? How can we recognize such growth, and be sensitive to its hopeful meaning, while there is yet time, through action based on understanding, to direct the outcome?" These questions inform this paper and its critical evaluation of drones and their relationship with the Internet.

Keywords: Drones, Predators, Wilful Neglect, Critical Approach

> *...the main problem... is that man can do, and successfully do, what he cannot comprehend and cannot express in everyday human language.*[1] Hannah Arendt.

The intentionally provocative title of this paper draws attention to the historical dilemma into which technology is drawn. As major innovations in technology race ahead in human history there emerges a moment where the internal contradictions of that technology appear. In this phase of technology it is no longer possible to understand what is happening, much less see innovation as the consistent embodiment of positive human evolution. This happens sooner rather than later, although human ambition being what it is, the criticism of technology tends to be muted, constrained and belated in the face of scientific advances.

This contradictory model of technological development was in evidence and documented in the story of atomic research, when Niels Bohr, Albert Einstein and more significantly, J. Robert Oppenheimer defined the contradictions within the unsteady nexus of science-education-technology and the military. The Atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted from the United States Government's Manhattan Project that Oppenheimer oversaw. The Bomb unilaterally ended the Japanese Imperial war effort in 1944 with a conflagration that mirrored

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[1] Hannah Arendt, "Symposium on Space." *The Great Ideas Today 1963*. Chicago: Britannica Great Books: 38.

the massive and questionable fire storm bombing of Dresden, as Kurt Vonnegut famously noted in his satirical novel about those events, *Slaughterhouse Five*. Meanwhile, Oppenheimer's career as a research scientist shifted soon after the end of World War 2 because of the troubled ethics that informed the creation of The Bomb. Accusations by the US Government that he may have given the Soviets the secret to making The Bomb added to his outsider status. It was also the point at which technology became fully problematized within the complexities of global modernism, US supremacy and international politics (Willis 2010). As this example suggests, the contradictory model of technological development is complicated, constituted by large scale scientific research programs, solutions to human problems, individual values, warfare and personal ambition.

The arrival of The Bomb was closely followed by The Cold War and the rush to militarize America. In the years immediately after World War 2, the confluence of rapidly growing social and economic interests made the United States the dominant western power, and yet it prompted President Eisenhower to launch his famous farewell speech of 1961 warning about the military industrial complex. For Eisenhower, the military industrial complex could easily lead to "the disastrous rise of misplaced power," that would "endanger our liberties or our democratic processes" (1961). From this distance nearly 60 years later, the speech draws attention to the way contemporary American military might is connected to the industrial formations of the economy. These days the shift is to the knowledge economy and its links to the Internet. Indeed, Eisenhower's phrase "military-industrial complex" sounds strangely twee in the post-industrial age of the Internet. Nevertheless, the Internet and the military are closely conjoined fields of interest, rather than separate endeavours. In fact, when viewed through the lens of Predator Drones they can be viewed as one and the same: weapons of state warfare ideology.

Predator Drones, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or "robotic planes" are remotely flown from US military bases, using Internet signalling somewhat based on digital gaming systems (Englehardt 2012). The pilotless planes make it possible to launch missiles that kill militants, often killing anybody in range. Many of the functions associated with identifying targets are undertaken by civilian contractors, who are paid based on targets identified or "review quotas", according to Nick Turse (2012). As US journalist Glenn Greenwald suggested, "When the face you constantly show to the world is one of extinguishing the lives of civilians from the air — which is exactly what the U.S. has been doing for a full decade in multiple Muslim countries," the image of the US is close to what President Eisenhower was warning about: misplaced power and endangered democratic processes (2012). This paper argues that the state warfare ideology embedded in the emergence of Predator Drones is a new dystopian social and political modality, negating utopian ambitions for the Internet.

Critical Approaches in a Dystopian Present–Epistemological Critique

Being critical about how state warfare ideology is embedded in digital technology through the Internet and Predator Drones is part of the task of evaluating what Michael Adas referred to as "contested hegemony" (2004). In fact, there is a strong historical relationship between American claims for global dominance and technology. This relationship continues in the Internet era where Internet technology connects everyone to the network of networks regardless of the consequences. For example, there is a connection between what occurs in social life (say in the use of social media) and what happens in contemporary warfare because of the network. The Internet connects every digital phenomenon with every other one. Combined, they manifest advanced western capitalism for the simple reason that the network is the embodiment of advanced technological innovations, stemming primarily from the USA. Moreover, the planet is incorporated into the continuity of social and economic relations through the Internet. The argument has been made that this connectivity is informed by "the old realism" that constructs a "dangerous fantasy" based on the denial of negative aspects of scientific development

(McKibben 2009, 4). It is for this reason at least that the hegemony of the Internet and its application within state warfare ideology needs to be contested.

Globalization studies make clear how every world crisis produces an incorporationist imperative which actually expands "geopolitical contestation," making the world less secure (Diebert and Rohozinski 2010, 30). In other words, each crisis reverberates to every corner of the planet with unnerving speed and intensity, be it economic or environmental crises, terroristic or financial ones. Recognition of these crises impacts everyone in a dystopian turn. The dystopian turn, with its negative connotations for the Internet, is part of a critical response pointing to problems that require solutions in order for human aspirations to be achieved,. For its part, denialist orthodoxy (or Internet exceptionalism) that *refuses* dystopian readings is premised on disinterest in the crises and a celebration of global connectedness. Such readings lead to "wilful neglect," which describes the way state warfare ideology has been papered over within mainstream discourse to allow western and US-prompted geopolitical contestations to increase in intensity and to be presented as always positive and beneficial (Bortoli *et al* 2010).

As a defining term within this discussion, "wilful neglect" elaborates denialist aspects of the Internet's dystopian characteristics. It allows Predator Drones to be seen within the history of warfare where the rapid invention and use of technological innovations has been used without reference to existing standards of human behaviour. The term itself ("wilful neglect") is grounded in post World War 2 Genocide and Holocaust Studies. It is used in warfare discourse to describe new and unprecedented events that have yet to be fully rendered, known and understood. Those actions, described by Winston Churchill as "a crime without a name," are incorporated into the definition of "wilful neglect." It includes those acts where negligent and indifferent responses are rationalized by calculations "desensitized by ideology to the violence inflicted" on victims and their communities (Bortoli *et al* 2010, 15). Definitions of wilful neglect have been extended by discussions of "politicide," the "destruction of groups based on imputed political affiliation" (Bortoli *et al* 2010, 16). The social and political space incorporated into the meaning structure of "wilful neglect" is, to return to Hannah Arendt, bounded by ambiguity and uncertainty of what is known. The result is unsettled knowledge about what is happening and frequently, social and policy immobilization, with no critical action whatsoever.

Robert Oppenheimer described how the relationship between science and human behaviour can become one of wilful neglect. His critique identified the continuing challenge for knowledge workers and intellectuals:

> People who practice science, who try to learn, believe that knowledge is good. They have a sense of guilt when they do not try to acquire it. This keeps them busy. ... . It seems hard to live any other way than thinking that it was better to know something than not to know it; and that the more you know the better, provided you know it honestly (Pais, 2006, 273).

The imperative embedded in scientific knowledge is the honest acquisition of knowing. Not to pursue knowledge would amount to wilful neglect. For practitioners, not to know would be wrong. This kind of moral perspective amounts to an epistemological critique. It can be traced to Immanuel Kant whose writing about the relationship between knowledge and behaviour still informs academic theory building in the liberal arts at least. Indeed, one conclusion drawn from Oppenheimer's comment is that not to pursue knowledge is to be guilty. The epistemological critique points to guilt that is suppressed in everyday culture. In fact, the guilt we carry with us is part of our tacit knowledge of the universe. It is constructed along two modes: firstly, we know that we inhabit the history of human degradation defined by dehumanizing behaviour and secondly, because of media and the Internet, we know that war incorporates unimaginable human behaviour. Somewhat curiously, knowledge of these aspects of human nature has not prompted public reaction to the US Government's use of Predator Drones against anti-US mil-

itants and terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Knowledge about Predator Drones and what they do is available, although unreported by the mainstream media and barely mentioned in public debate. Is this "wilful neglect?" Does the silence of opposition to Predator Drones mean that the US public endorses a state warfare ideology that uses the Internet for killing?

For its part, guilt hardly appears in public because of the way the dominant discourse of society assumes the uninterrupted continuity of liberal democracy. In other words, Internet interconnectedness generates knowledge about drones and yet it does not generate public guilt. The reasons for this can only be speculated about. One such reason could be the pleasure the Internet generates. Conversely, there is a strong determination on the part of the contemporary imagination to *not* allow this pleasure to be interrupted by guilt. Given that the relationship of guilt with the Internet is not interrogated, wilful neglect becomes a tacit value shared by Internet users.

Despite the absence of public guilt at the use of Predator Drones, the emotional terrain human beings inhabit is more intensive than ever because of the Internet. And yet the enormous amounts of knowledge about what is done by governments "in our name" produces little or no outrage, protest or complaint. It is as if human beings now live within a paradigm of silent public guilt. The Internet locks this public guilt away due to the way the Internet encourages privatism–a sphere of "self-centered aloneness" which individuals inhabit (Breen 2011, 10). Critical work seeks to unpack these kinds of shifts in the order of human emotions and their political implications. It seeks to identify and explore the secret, the silent and the tacit aspects of everyday life and contribute positive solutions to the challenge of living within a dystopian moment created by the relationship of drones with the Internet. In so doing, critical research engages with knowledge through the epistemological critique. It uses knowledge as the raw material of analysis to work against "wilful neglect."

Emancipation?

As a technological innovation the Internet has been trumpeted as an emancipatory tool, offering as Vincent Mosco suggested, the "digital sublime" as a kind of mythologized transcendent force taking users out of the existing social and material world and giving the public access to the world's knowledge (2005, Internetforeveryone.org). In this context, "uncritical enthusiasm" became part of the "cyberbole" (cyberspace –hyperbole) that defined the Internet's early days (Woolgar 2002, 3–4). However, against the background of the military industrial complex, the internet may now have more in keeping with what US critics thought of new technology in the interwar years: an "ambiguous phenomenon." (Pop 2010, 473).

What might have been considered liberalism's claim to utopian peaceful coexistence within open tolerance now over-balances towards its dystopian opposite. In the Internet era, liberalism's insistence on a US-model of political economy is predominant. However, the scales have collapsed in one direction around militarization and its analogue, securitization. The critical literature on the collapse of liberalism perhaps most pointedly from Dan Schiller, has argued that "ICTs have become intrinsic elements in the machinery of war" (Schiller 2011). Unfortunately, the emergence of drone technology within the Internet is a case of déjà vu: the communication technology that could emancipate the public captures it in war culture. This is the dystopian trajectory built into its "code," as Larry Lessig suggested (1999). The sense of déjà vu is especially powerful for people who know US history and its links with technology. This relationship was established, as I noted above, in the use of nuclear research to create the atomic bomb to bring about the rapid cessation of Japanese imperial hostilities in 1944. Where peace and knowledge may have been an ambition of physics researchers like Albert Einstein and Robert Oppenheimer, it became its opposite. The analog is that many years later the Internet project was built around ideals of emancipation and democracy within the political model of US liberalism and "the west." In both cases-The Bomb and the Internet-war was injected into the research culture often

within universities, unmaking the core values of the researchers who were committed to unlocking knowledge to the secrets of peaceful life. In the case of the Internet, it has returned to its roots as an invention based on ideas about US survival in a nuclear war.

In this part of the story, it is important to acknowledge the US Government's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA). This is the long tail of the Internet, which informs how the dystopian perspective to knowledge emerged. After its formation in 1967, ARPANet was created with digital networking capacity and by 1971 it became the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Net DARPANET (Hafner and Lyon 1996). Augier and March's recent book *The Roots, Rituals and Rhetorics of Change: North American Business Schools After the Second World War* identified another important shift in the research activity around ARPANet, namely the way the RAND corporation helped influence the creation of research and development that led to ARPANet and the Office of Net Assessment in the US Defense Department (2011). The ONA is an advisory office to the Department of Defense, particularly noteworthy for its role in identifying "emerging and future threats to the United States" (DOD 2011). These linkages require further critical research because they indicate the way the military has been joined with information warfare, business and the research community. However what is important here is that the Internet began within a nexus of government, university and defense auspices, before connecting to RAND and US business interests. It was commercialized by the Clinton Administration in 1995 in a move that was seen as "reducing access and increasing expense" (Marcus and Segal 1999, 377). It is increasingly monitored, managed and manipulated by the US Government in collaborative shifts with stakeholders–universities and US defense organizations, both public and private (contractors) and national and international security and intelligence institutions. The shifts bring it full circle into the orbit of the US Government and its agencies, even though the Internet flourishes as a private enterprise as well.

The emergence of Predator Drones should prompt us to ask where the Internet is going because its complicated scientific and military characteristics collide with public ambition for a tool that offers access to the world's knowledge and the possibility for emancipation from the chains of social, economic and ideological bondage. As Hannah Arendt suggested in the epigram at the head of this paper, humanity needs to find a way to comprehend and discuss scientific advances. By engaging in such a discussion it may be possible to move away from wilful neglect and to comprehend the knowledge that is generated by users to flow within the Internet.

Defining Criminal Acts

The New America Foundation has identified the unofficial use of drones in Pakistan to kill militants and non-militants as a major shift in US warfare and the fight against terrorism. The foundation's paper, "The Year of the Drone," written by Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedermann estimated that between 1717 and 2680 people were killed by drones in Pakistan between 2004 and 2010 (2010). How many of those people appeared before a judge in a court of their peers to answer accusations about their opinions and actions? The probable answer is zero. How many of them were civilians? The answer to that question is unknown. This is *not* what the Internet was expected to make possible–"targeted killings" of people by the US government (McManus 2012). The terms "extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions" have also been used in a United Nations General Assembly study to describe targeted killings by drones (Alston 2010).

In "The Secrets of Government Killing," an op-ed article by *New York* Times contributor Arthur S. Brisbane, the author pointed out that the legal territory had shifted with Predator Drone killings undertaken by the CIA. For example, the CIA was allegedly responsible for the drone strike that killed the American citizen Anwa Al-Awlaki in Yemen on September 30, 2011. Brisbane described this kind of counterterrorism by the US Government as "highly visible state killings" (2011). Commenting on targeted killings as a new mode in warfare, a former CIA

Director Michael Hayden noted in an interview with *Los Angeles Times* reporter Doyle Mc-Manus that the US Government needed a court order to listen to phone conversations by Anwar Awlaki (this is the same person as above, different spelling), "but we didn't need a court order to kill him" (McManus 2012). The question is what to make of the advances in science and technology when they are used for actions that have little or no basis in existing law? Why is it illegal to tap a person's phone without permission, but possible to kill someone without permission? The general absence of public debate around questions like these is evidence of a kind of "wilful neglect," even if some reporting by the *New York Times* has noted debates within the Obama White House about the use of Predator Drones: "White House Weighs Limits of Terror Fight" (Savage, 16 October, 2011). By February 2012 the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) had filed lawsuits against the CIA and the US Departments of Justice and Defence "over their refusal to disclose any information about the assassination of American citizens" in Somalia (Greenwald February 2, 2012).

To pursue this discussion is to recognize that the world is in a place where the United States as the global leader in technology has an innovation that incorporates the contradictions of that same technology. Inevitably questions emerge about the function of the Internet as a dystopian communication technology. This perspective on the Internet and Predator Drones can be considered within the "major innovation" critique offered by Stephen Rosen, because it "forces one of the primary combat arms of the (US military) service to change its concepts of operation and its relation to other combat arms, and to abandon or downgrade traditional missions." (1998, 134.) As an innovation, Predator Drones offer an insight into state warfare ideology. The Internet and Predator Drones have indeed caused the US military to change from traditional "boots on the ground" military warfare. Furthermore, Rosen's definition can be extended to include changes to basic concepts of civil society–justice, law, due process, criminality and state aggression. In other words, as suggested in the ACLU's action in suing the Obama Administration and the CIA, Predator Drones are a major innovation because they have changed the US military's view of its capacity to destroy enemies of the nation without reference to established standards of public discussion and jurisprudence. The question is whether the Internet has forced a change in the public understanding of civil society. What has become of public debate about civility? The next question is how to comprehend these changes?

The use of the phrase state warfare ideology in this paper is part of a critical framework for evaluating drones and their relation with the Internet. Furthermore, this paper's perspective on the United States is critical because of the way the US has undermined its ambitions as a nation committed to peace and human development: that was the point of President Eisenhower's speech about the military industrial complex. It should be clear that what is being argued is the explicit connection between the everyday use of a public communication resource–the Internet–and its incorporation into American life and state warfare ideology. The complication to this line of reasoning is the challenge of the long ugly shadow of the terror attacks on the USA, of September 11, 2001. Inevitable shifts in thinking and action due to the rise of terror necessarily inform contemporary analysis. Despite these pressures, the question is how "major innovations" such as Predator Drones and the Internet can be comprehended within existing everyday language? What can be done about the way science and technology rushes ahead in their association with state warfare ideology, to leave public discourse a poor relation?

In answering these challenges it is necessary to find other reference points to inform the analysis. One of the most significant turning points in discussions of major innovations in war happened just before the US invention of the Atom Bomb. It was the appearance of Nazi Germany's V-type rockets which bombed and terrorized the people of London in World War 2.[2]

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[2] There is no claim being made here for moral equivalency between the Nazi V2 bombardment of London and the US use of Predator Drones. The point is that they are somewhat similar technologies which inhabit the terrain of state warfare ideology.

Here was a pilotless airborne device that could destroy innocent lives without compunction. It was the inevitable creation of Nazi ideology and part of what the Nuremberg war trials sought to explain: "the criminality of aggressive war" (Telford 1949, 1). The US military directive that informed the Nuremberg war crimes trials suggested that war crimes were those acts within military operations that "outrage common justice and involve moral turpitude" (International Conference 1944, 2). Furthermore, the Nuremberg Trials report included a defining category against which war criminality could be judged:

> ... the concept of "crimes against humanity" comprises atrocities which are part of a campaign of discrimination or persecution, and which are crimes against international law even when com-mitted by nationals of one country against their fellow nationals or against those of other nations irrespective of belligerent status (Telford 1949, 65).

It is noteworthy that in 2007 Dennis Piszkiewicz'z book *The Nazi Rocketeers: Dreams of Space and Crimes of War* was reissued, having been first published in 1995. This book is part of the literature around definitions of war crimes, scientific research and development applications within the context of moral philosophy (and of V2 rockets). *The Nazi Rocketeers* showed how the V2 program came to be repurposed as the US NASA space program through the recruitment of former Nazi's such as rocket scientists Werner von Braun and many of his scientific colleagues.

It is a measure of the way public culture has shifted that there has been almost no debate about Predator Drones in the light of the categories of war established at Nuremberg: "common justice," "moral turpitude" or "crimes against humanity." Some public opposition against drones has been seen in the US. For example on April 22, 2011, 38 protestors were arrested in Syracuse, New York, for staging a "die-in" because since 2009 the US Air National Guard's 174th Flight Wing controls and remotely flies the MQ9 Reaper Drones to Afghanistan from its base in Syracuse. The Hancock 38 Drone Resisters as the arrestees were called, "aimed to visualize the indiscriminate killing of civilians in Afghanistan and in Pakistan by drones operated by personnel sitting in front of computes thousands of miles away" (*Democracy Now*, December 2, 2011). Reportage such as this tends not to enter the mainstream media. Its appearance on *Democracy Now* suggests the importance of alternative media as a means of providing information to the public where the connection is made between drones, the internet, everyday suburban life (in Syracuse) and moral philosophy.

Despite minor examples of opposition and protest, the US Government continues to make use of Predator Drones. It appears that wilful neglect is well settled. In fact, wilful neglect has been described by Herbert Schiller as the result of the corporatization of life, where public discourse has been redefined around business and military language and away from questions such as the ones raised by the Nuremberg Trials (1991). Schiller's claim prompts the question of whether the language of "common justice" or "moral turpitude" is even available for use in public discourse anymore. Some *New York Times* coverage suggests that in selective liberal and public policy circles in the US, there is acknowledgement that Predator Drones represent a line that has been crossed, namely the universal standard of behaviour in warfare: the state should not kill in an uncommon way. The few opinion pieces in the US against the use of Predator Drones—as suggested above in Brisbane's op-ed–sees them as producing atrocities against innocents, which was the test applied for Nazi war crimes in World War 2.

The locus of language has changed, as can be seen in the US Government's *National Strategy for Counter Terrorism*. It presents a United States that is "hardened," a location that is difficult to successfully disrupt, and characterized by a "culture of resilience" (2011, 8). Somewhat curiously, drones are not mentioned in the *National Strategy for Counter Terrorism*. It is as if the US Administration would rather not mention the darker side of its own actions, or those of the CIA in using Predator Drones. Perhaps this is because Predator Drones cannot do what the US administration claims it is doing in counter terrorism: "amplify positive and influential

messages... convey our ideas and messages ... through the power of social media and in every case through the message of our deeds" (2011, 24).

The US Government habit of not admitting to the use of strategies that have resonance with the darker past of warfare as seen in the V2 example has also been noted by Richard Clarke, former special adviser on cyber security to President George W. Bush. Clarke pointed out that the entire spectrum of Internet-based warfare is cloaked in secrecy. He noted in the *Boston Globe* in July 2011 that the US Government will not officially admit that it has cyber weapons, while the US State Department "wanted to avoid charges that it was 'militarizing' cyberspace." For its part, wrote Clarke: "The White House wanted to avoid any public discussion of cyber war or of our strategy to fight one" (July 10, 2011, K10). Clarke's criticism drew attention to the extent of Internet-based warfare and the way Predator Drones are part of a new state warfare ideology that secretly incorporates the Internet. That the White House and the US Government does not want to acknowledge cyber weapons and the Internet domain as part of the war on terror is an indictment of the current state of US public policy making, which Clarke was arguing against. It is the reason why this discussion of Predator Drones as a "new innovation" in warfare draws on World War 2 definitions of war crimes, because the US Government refuses to acknowledge and define its actions with appropriate Internet era language and concepts. Until public acknowledgement and thus public discussion occurs, the US Government can be accused of undermining the established meaning of the moral language of "common justice" and "moral turpitude," and furthermore can be accused of undermining jurisprudence within liberalism.

Regression?

Arthur Kroker suggested in *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism* that contemporary society is characterized by "violent bouts of fantastic explosions of creative energy and fatal implosions of political and social regression" (2003, 79). If the communicative ideals of the Internet have been usurped by state warfare ideology in an act of "political and social regression," a dystopian reading is clearly apparent and continues the Frankfurt School approach originally promulgated by Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This perspective suggests that the Internet has been destroyed by its incorporation into state warfare ideology to create a "netpocalypse" (Lewis-Hasteley 2012). Such a claim is supported by a number of developments within contemporary US political and public policy discourse. These developments offer explanations for Kroker's regression within the current technological moment. From the dystopian perspective, Predator Drones embody the end point of the epistemological critique, highlighting the way scientific knowledge has been used against humanity. As to whether public guilt comes into play at the failure of the Internet to achieve its human ambitions, is a question that can only be judged by an active shift in public policy away from the regressive use of Predator Drones. Another answer is that "wilful neglect" is alive and well.

The point should not be lost on anyone that the shift towards suppressing "future threats" involves interests connected through the Internet that begins with the US Government. In other words, the epistemological critique determines this reading: Predator Drones point to the aggressive use of force embodied in the Internet. It is a dystopian logic which the US Government seeks to present in a positive light, by using "spin." For example, explaining his support for signing the December 31, 2011 "National Defense Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2012,' which legalized the military detention of US citizens without trial, President Obama elaborated on the substance of the dystopian logic's state warfare ideology. In this instance US "counterterrorism professionals" are given "the clarity and flexibility they need to adapt to changing circumstances and to utilize whichever authorities best protect the American people, and our accomplishments have respected the values that make our country an example for the world"

(Obama December 31, 2011).[3] President Obama's reference to "whichever authorities"-typical of the kind of opaque explanation that the US Government offers-includes Predator Drones and the federal agencies that control them and is based on the authority of the executive derived from the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 (Purdum 2012, 113).

Changing Conditions

How did the regressive Internet-Predator Drone relationship came about? In this brief section select research from two American academics with specialist US military knowledge will show how the rise of Predator Drones for targeted killings can be understood. Professor Richard Kohn (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and Professor Andrew Bacevich (Boston University) come from military history and strategic military planning respectively. Their work is informed by democratic political theory and explains the way the Internet and Predator Drones have overtaken public military systems of governance and tradition.

Diminished Civilian Control of the Military According to Kohn, a major organizational change has gradually occurred in the US military. In the liberal democratic model, elected civilian officials make the key military decisions. In Kohn's view this role has become less clear in the US: "the central issue confronting scholars and policy makers today is how to judge the extent to which civilian control exists, how well it functions, and whether it is sufficient for democratic governance" (Kohn 1997, npn). The dystopian interpretation of this development within current state warfare ideology is that the Internet allows the military to use Predator Drones to evade the regulatory systems put in place by civilians and to encourage wilful neglect by the public of self-serving military decision making.

Deficiencies in American mil itary professionalism Kohn has argued that the US is losing its capacity to maintain a well trained military presence because of diminished professionalism among its training and organizational structures (2009). This deficiency has produced a military that is more inclined to "partisan politicization," offering close associations between influential politicians and state warfare ideology. Internet activity makes it possible to imagine a scenario in which military officers operate outside the discipline, as servants of the national public. In this scenario they may be influenced by political interests, even when those interests are undemocratic. The use of Predator Drones by deprofessionalised armed forces, takes place in a complex techno-scientific, geo-political context. It is not possible to "comprehend" this new situation with "everyday human language" (to paraphrase Hannah Arendt). Instead, the military can reproduce the unprofessional space of the Internet: the domain of perfect amateurs. In such a culture, "targeted killings" can be made without recourse to professional or legal standards of jurisprudence.

Organized lawlessness In "Tarnished Brass" Kohn described the context in which the under-professionalised US military now operates.

> The challenges to global stability are less from massed armies than from terrorism; economic and particularly financial instability; failed states; resource scarcity (particularly oil and potable water); pandemic disease; climate change; and international crime in the form of piracy, smuggling, narcotics trafficking, and other forms of organized lawlessness. Very few of these threats can be countered by the high-tempo, high-technology conventional military power that has become the specialty—almost the monopoly—of the United States, shaped and sized to fight conventional wars against other nation-states.

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[3] In contrast, Constitutional lawyer Jonathan Turley said that the law did not exempt American citizens "from the authorization to use the military to indefinitely detain people without charge or trial...one of the greatest rollbacks of civil liberties in the history of our country" (January 3, 2012).

It is a context into which the Internet and Predator Drones offer ideal solutions–even in their most banal forms: "...a drone can loiter for hours, sending a video feed as people move about the site. Such a 'pattern of life,' as it is called, can give crucial clues to the nature of work being done, the equipment used and the size of the work force," reported the *New York Times* in early December 2011, after a US RQ-170 Sentinel drone crashed in Iran. (Shane and Sanger).

What are the laws for this kind of surveillance by the US? Unfortunately, military culture is influenced by the convergence of surveillance, diminished professionalism, speed and deadly force in what could also be considered lawless behaviour. "An axiom of the new warfare is that speed kills: Attacks must be carried out rapidly to recapture an old-fashioned element of surprise, with intelligence identifying targets even before an adversary has recoiled from previous strikes." (Shanker and Schmidt 2011). As argued above, the use of drones is at the pinnacle of this axiom and incorporates an approach that moves more quickly than the reflective, humanistic systems of analysis within a law abiding professional military. This axiom suggests that drones are contributing to the formation of the new state warfare ideology. Is it lawless? The need for speed of reaction suggests that it is. To add fuel to this axiom US Vice President Joseph Biden celebrated the absence of any US loss of life in the overthrow of Muamar Ghadaffi in Libya, where drones were used. The US Biden said, "didn't lose a single life," before adding: "this is more of the prescription for how to deal with the world as we go forward than it has been in the past" (Shanker and Schmidt 2011). As Kohn suggested, conventional warfare is a thing of the past.

Defending Empire Andrew Bacevich has little truck with American military triumphalism. In *The Limits and Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (2008) and related books, articles and interviews Bacevich makes the case that the US has failed in its Constitutional duty to advance democracy. "Rather than insisting that the world accommodate the United States, Americans need to reassert control over their destiny, ending their conditions of dependency and abandoning their imperial delusions." (Bacevich 2008, 13). Bacevich's critique is directed at citizens and the US political leadership who he argues have accepted a state of permanent war that must be maintained in defense of a failing empire. As part of this picture, Bacevich suggested that drones "might provide politicians a certain encouragement to use force more frequently and more recklessly." (Bacevich *The Takeaway* 2011).

These changing conditions for the US military suggest a picture of US political and military culture within a degraded model of democratic jurisprudence and civil society.

Conclusion

What do we know? State warfare ideology is being determined by a confluence of techno-scientific, social and political forces, inextricably connected to the public through the Internet. When viewed through the dystopian lens the inevitable conclusion is that the forces driving state warfare ideology operate in an uncertain legal and organizational terrain that have leapfrogged established standards of morality. These forces open the door for human behaviour that is not regulated by established systems of state jurisprudence. In other words, changes to state warfare ideology due to the Internet and its relationship with Predator Drones are part of the regression of established standards. The epistemological critique cannot avoid this conclusion. We know enough from history to know that the use of Predator Drones has the appearance of criminality within state warfare ideology. We can add to our knowledge by accepting the troubled role of wilful neglect in public discourse. We can do this by recognizing that the Internet offers enriched opportunities for debate, opposition and resistance to state warfare ideology. The question, as Hannah Arendt might have put it is this: Is it possible to know how to comprehend what is happening and express it in everyday human language? Certainly the answer is that the everyday language of justice and morality is difficult to know in a world

constituted by the Internet and Predator Drones. The challenge is to unlock knowledge about the Internet and in doing so find the language to deconstruct the dystopia.

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