

# The Press & Dakotan

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**OPINION**

## The Real Face Of Drone Warfare

We now know precisely what the face of drone warfare looks like. It looks like the president of the United States appearing before the nation and taking responsibility and expressing "profound regret" for, in the latest instance, a drone strike back in January that killed two al-Qaida hostages, one of whom was American. It looks like the photo flashed across our television screens of an American victim, somebody most of us have never seen before and will likely never remember a few days from now.

It looks like the image of a high-profile terrorist targets that are confirmed dead amid the collateral damage. It looks like a blank screen where the images of civilians who are also killed in drone strikes, simply because they happen to be in the wrong place in the wrong time, could be but never will be. And ultimately, it's looks like the American public nodding its approval of this new type of warfare — because it is, indeed, mostly faceless and mostly remote-control assassination that generally doesn't put our lives in harm's way.

Drone warfare has become the metaphoric sword of choice in the Obama era, and it has actually netted some important results, including two strikes in January that eliminated a pair of American-born al-Qaida operatives.

But the accidental killings of two western hostages, one American and one Italian, has again stirred tough questions about the rules governing the use of the program.

Lost in these high-profile debates are the deaths of other civilians in the crossfire of this 21st century conflict. In Pakistan, for instance, various sources estimate that possibly up to 630 civilians (66 of them children) have been killed because of collateral damage from U.S. drone strikes. The result has been a growing animosity in Pakistan — supposedly, one of our allies — toward Americans.

The precision and sophistication of drone warfare are marred by ugly imperfections. As the *New York Times* reported: "Every independent investigation of the (drone) strikes has found far more civilian casualties than administration officials admit. Gradually, it has become clear that when operators in Nevada fire missiles into remote tribal territories on the other side of the world, they often do not know who they are killing, but are making an imperfect best guess."

Of course, this is nothing new to the ugly universe of war. There has never been anything antiseptic about how we wage conflicts, and civilian casualties show that. In World War II, for example, more than half of the casualties in that conflict were civilians.

So, in many ways, the 21st century miracle of drone warfare isn't really so different from the cruise missiles of the 1990s or the saturation bombings of World War II. "Death from above" is not as surgical or precise as some theorists may want to believe. As former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told the *New York Times*: "Yes, (a drone strike) is precise. Yes, it is effective. But at the same time, like any other weapon of war, you can wind up hitting targets that were not intended."

There are signs in Washington that a review may take place of the intelligence gathering used to make decisions on how and where drone strikes will be used. That is at least one plus that can come from this.

If this comes to pass, it will be a needed examination. But it also must apply to our lawmakers and to each of us, the majority of whom generally support the drone program — in part, perhaps, because we don't have to see the end results and the mistakes. If we sanction such actions with our approval, we must also expect that the use of such weaponry be conducted using solid intelligence. While mistakes and unintended casualties can't be avoided, efforts must be made to minimize them. It is the least that this country can do as we rain remote-control death on others.

kmh

**ABOUT THIS PAGE**

The View page provides a forum for open discussion of issues and interests affecting our readers. Initialed editorials represent the opinion of the writer, but not necessarily that of the **PRESS & DAKOTAN**. Bylined columns represent the view of the author. We welcome letters on current topics. Questions regarding the Views page should be directed to Kelly Hertz at [kelly.hertz@yankton.net](mailto:kelly.hertz@yankton.net).

**IN HISTORY**

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Tuesday, April 28, the 118th day of 2015. There are 247 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On April 28, 1945, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian partisans as they attempted to flee the country.

**On this date:** In 1758, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

In 1788, Maryland became the seventh state to ratify the Constitution of the United States.

In 1789, there was a mutiny on the HMS Bounty as rebelling crew members of the British ship, led by Fletcher Christian, set the captain, William Bligh, and 18 others adrift in a launch in the South Pacific. (Bligh and most of the men with him reached Timor in 47 days.)

In 1817, the United States and Britain signed the Rush-Bagot Treaty, which limited the number of naval vessels allowed in the Great Lakes.

In 1918, Gavrilo Princip, the assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and the archduke's wife, Sophie, died in prison of tuberculosis.

In 1925, the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts, which gave rise to the term "Art Deco," began a six-month run in Paris.

In 1940, Glenn Miller and his Orchestra recorded "Pennsylvania 6-5000" for RCA Victor.

In 1952, war with Japan officially ended as a treaty signed in San Francisco the year before took effect. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower resigned as Supreme Allied commander in Europe; he was succeeded by Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered U.S. Marines to the Dominican Republic to protect American citizens and interests in the face of a civil war. Barbra Streisand's first TV special, "My Name Is Barbra," aired on CBS.

In 1974, a federal jury in New York acquitted former Attorney General John Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans of charges in connection with a secret \$200,000 contribution to President Richard Nixon's re-election campaign from financier Robert Vesco.

In 1988, a flight attendant was killed and more than 60 persons injured when part of the roof of an Aloha Airlines Boeing 737 tore off during a flight from Hilo to Honolulu.

In 1990, the musical "A Chorus Line"

closed after 6,137 performances on Broadway.

**Ten years ago:** A military jury at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, condemned Army Sgt. Hasan Akbar to death for the 2003 murders of two officers in Kuwait. (Akbar is appealing his sentence.) More than 100 volunteers joined police in Duluth, Georgia, in searching for Jennifer Wilbanks, a bride-to-be who had vanished two days earlier. (Wilbanks turned up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, having run away on her own.)

**Five years ago:** Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry said a massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was worse than officials had believed, and that the federal government was offering to help industry giant BP contain the slick threatening the U.S. shoreline. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown committed a gaffe during his country's short election campaign when an open microphone caught him slamming a voter he'd been trying to win over. (Brown personally apologized to Gillian Duffy for calling her a "bigoted woman" over the issue of immigration.)

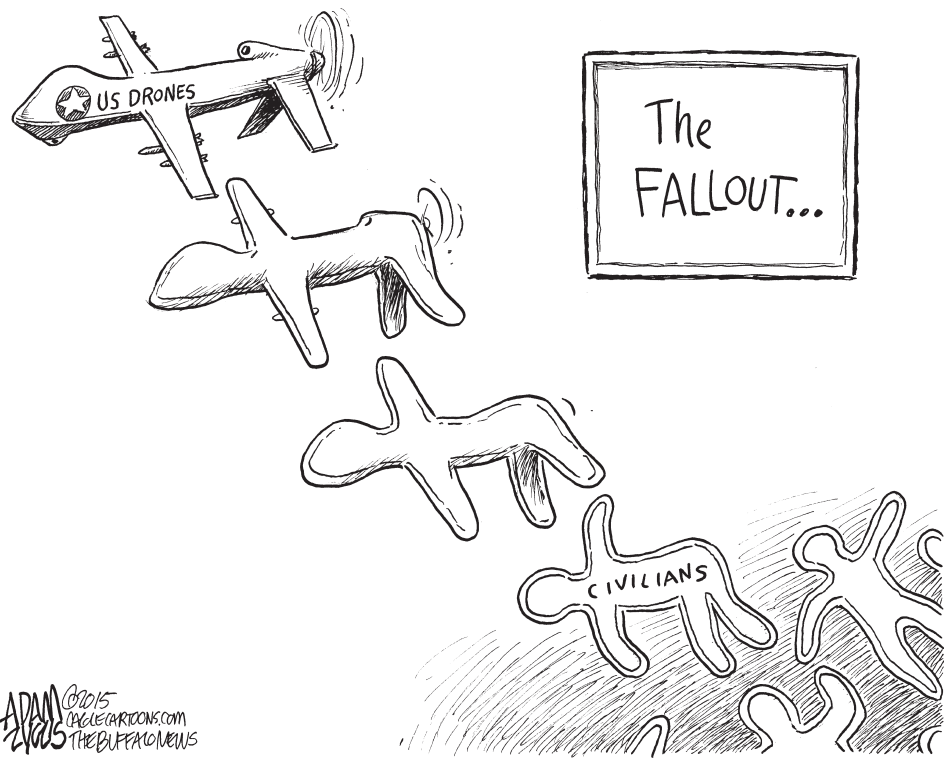
**One year ago:** President Barack Obama arrived in the Philippines on the last stop of a weeklong Asia tour that also included Japan, South Korea and Malaysia. The United States and its European allies hit more than two dozen Russian government officials, executives and companies with new sanctions as punishment for their country's actions in Ukraine. Two dozen tornadoes ripped through Mississippi, killing 14 people.

**Today's Birthdays:** Pulitzer Prize-winning author Harper Lee is 89. Former Secretary of State James A. Baker III is 85. Actor Frank Vincent is 78. Actress-singer Ann-Margret is 74. Actor Paul Guilfoyle is 66. Former "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno is 65. Rock musician Chuck Leavell is 63. Actress Mary McDonnell is 62. Rock singer-musician Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth) is 62. Actress Nancy Lee Graham (TV: "General Hospital") is 59. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan is 55. Rapper Too Short is 49. Actress Simbi Khali is 44. Actress Bridget Moynahan is 44. Actor Chris Young is 44. Rapper Big Gipp is 42. Actor Jorge Garcia is 42. Actress Elisabeth Rohm is 42. Actress Penelope Cruz is 41. Actor Nate Richert is 37. Actress Jessica Alba is 34. Actor Harry Shum Jr. is 33. Actress Jenna Ushkowitz is 29. Actress Aleisha Allen is 24.

**Thought for Today:** "It takes a long time to understand nothing." — Edward Dahlberg, American author and critic (1900-1977).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

We give thanks to God always for all you do ... [for] your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



**The Rez Of The Story**

## Legalizing 'Pez-shi'?

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives), Now that legalization of marijuana has become a reality in the larger society and the discussion about legalizing it in Indian Country has taken on serious tones of late, I think there may be a few things being left out of the public discourse that could help people make up their minds one way or another on the subject.

By the way, here in Dakotah territory, around the rez, we use slang terms like pot, toke, pez-shi or pez for short (pez-shi means medicine in our Dakotah language). I am sure there are local names used as well, but they all refer to one thing.

Much or most of the controversy surrounding legalization seems to center around two major themes.

One discussion is about the medicinal use of marijuana and is perhaps the least troublesome of the two. The other discussion is about the recreational use of the drug — and therein lies the rub — the fact that the active chemical in pot is in fact as drug. Without getting mired in the pharmacology of the active drug in marijuana called THC or tetrahydrocannabinol, lets talk a little bit about marijuana — where it comes from, what it is, its use and abuse, and is it really a feasible or a viable alternative to other kinds of economic development ventures in Indian Country.

Here, taken from one of the most informative publications (in my humble opinion) that treats the subject of drugs and their use in the most honest manner, is an excerpt from Dr. Andrew Weil's and Winifred Rosen's, "Chocolate to Morphine":

"Drugs are here to stay. History teaches that it is vain to hope that drugs will ever disappear and that any effort to eliminate them from society is doomed to failure.

"During most of this century, Western society (a society we Native people have become heir to like it or not) has attempted to deal with its drug problems through negative action: by various wars on drug abuse implemented by repressive laws, outrageous propaganda, and attacks on users, suppliers, and sources of disapproved substances. These wars have been consistently lost. More people are taking more drugs now than ever before. Drug use has invaded all classes and ethnic groups and has spread to younger and younger children. Also, more people abuse drugs now than ever before, and the drug laws have created ugly and ever-enlarging cri-



Vince TWO EAGLES

nal networks that corrupt society and cause far worse damage than the substances they distribute.

"If society cannot do much about drug abuse once it develops, it certainly can, and should, work to prevent abuse ... the only way you can be absolutely sure of avoiding problems with drugs [in Indian Country or elsewhere] is to never use them in the first place. If you involve yourself with illegal drugs, keep in mind the terrible consequences that being arrested can bring to you and your family. On the other hand, do not make the mistake of supposing that just because a drug is legal it is safe. Some of the strongest and most dangerous drugs are legal.

"Marijuana is an ancient drug, used since prehistoric times in parts of the Old World. [It has never been a part of our traditional Dakotah culture.] It is a product of the hemp plant, Cannabis sativa, a species that also provides a useful fiber, an edible seed, an oil and a medicine. ... Cannabis is probably native to central Asia. It tends to grow in waste places around camps and settlements and has been associated with human beings for so long that it is unknown in a truly wild state."

The words of Sitting Bull keep echoing in my mind — and here, I'm paraphrasing, "Take what is good from the white man's road but leave what is bad or what turns out to be bad." I wonder if in all this discourse about legalizing pez-shi we should not be heeding his wise counsel?

We don't have our own eminent scientists and researchers in Indian Country who can advise us of the truth about marijuana since among the non-Native people the discussion about the subject is "... highly [a] highly charged atmosphere, arguments about marijuana tend to be more political than factual. And because pharmacologists and medical doctors are just as caught up in the politics of marijuana as other people, it's difficult to get neutral information about the drug. Much marijuana research sets out to prove preconceived ideas, and much of it is not worth reading." — "Chocolate to Morphine."

I say we take extra care doubly before we entertain the possibility of legalizing marijuana in Indian Country or anywhere else. My vote is no until we know a lot more about what we're getting into.

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Bypass Discussion**

Leo Cwach, Yankton

Randy Gleich's letter "Time for Bypass" (*Press & Dakotan*, April 21) was insightful. After the delay announced last month concerning reconstruction of South Dakota Highway 50 east of Broadway, my thoughts were similar to Mr. Gleich's in that the whole situation should now be carefully reviewed.

I then shared my thinking — mostly concerning traffic safety — in writing to Mr. Ronald Peterson, Yankton Area Engineer with the SDDOT. His meaningful replies were helpful and interesting. Mr. Peterson noted a "truck reliever route" is current engineering lexicon for what has long been considered for S.D. 50.

About 60 years ago, S.D. 50 was reconstructed from Tabor to Tyndall. Back then, some Bon Homme County residents voiced concern that eliminating the numerous sharp corners along that stretch might permit some motorists to drive "much too fast" on the proposed, more direct route. Fortunately, those objections were overruled.

Witness today numerous big rigs and other traffic struggling to make sharp turns to follow S.D. 50 at the often congested intersections on Broadway at Fourth and 31st streets. An objective look at a map showing how S.D. 50 presently follows Broadway through Yankton makes it appear such could just be a temporary "detour" until the plan Mr. Gleich cited is completed.

Mr. Peterson stated the last comprehensive Yankton traffic study was in 2001. Agriculture and general business conditions then were much

**Poll Results**

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

**LATEST RESULTS:**

**Should businesses have the right to fire an employee because of his/her sexual orientation?**  
No .....73%  
Yes .....20%  
Not sure .....7%  
**TOTAL VOTES CAST .....368**

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

**CURRENT QUESTION:**

**Do you plan on going to the new "Avengers" movie?**  
To cast your vote in the **PRESS & DAKOTAN'S** Internet poll, log on to our website at [www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net).

less robust than today. A finding then was: "A majority of heavy trucks going through had business in, destined to or originated from Yankton." It's likely mistaken to conclude all such trucks would have to follow Broadway as their "stops" likely involve locations such as the Kaneb terminal, which are on the edge of town.

Furthermore, Yankton traffic patterns have been significantly affected by other recent developments such as the Discovery Bridge completion and relocation of Yankton's post office.

As Mr. Gleich suggested, some "Big Ideas" have likely been out there for some time, simply awaiting implementation by current leaders.

**EMPOWERMENT:** "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." — Thomas Jefferson

**FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: It's Your Right To Know!**