

The U.S. Drone Program is Fatally Flawed

Intelligencesquaredus.org. September 10, 2013

Ahmed Rashid

Pakistan-based Journalist & Author

Ahmed Rashid is a Pakistani journalist based in Lahore. He presently writes for Financial Times, International Herald Tribune, The New York Review of Books, BBC Online, The National Interest, and several other academic and foreign affairs journals. Previously, Rashid was the Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review for 22 years. He is also the author of four books, including the recently updated second edition of the bestselling Taliban (2000, 2010). He appears regularly on NPR, CNN, and the BBC World Service. Rashid was educated at Malvern College in England, Government College in Lahore, and at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge University. His latest book is Pakistan on the Brink: The Future of America, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (2013).

Remotely piloted aircraft, or drones, have been the centerpiece of America's counterterrorism toolkit since the start of the Obama presidency, and the benefits have been clear.

Their use has significantly weakened al Qaeda and the Taliban while keeping American troops out of harm's way. But critics of drone strikes argue that the short-term gains do not outweigh the long-term consequences—among them, radicalization of a public outraged over civilian deaths.

Is our drone program hurting, or helping, in the fight against terrorism?