

# The Meaning of US Drone Warfare in the War on Terror

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<https://www.e-ir.info/2020/11/28/governing-global-security-through-the-logic-of-disposability-the-meaning-of-us-drone-warfare-in-the-war-on-terror/>

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The changing nature of contemporary modes of warfare is a well-rehearsed topic. The legal-political complexities and ethical pitfalls accompanying the ever-growing phenomenon of ‘remote control’ combat, are many and conjure necessary questions about morality, law, and war. What narratives of human worth, or the protagonists and belligerents of international politics, are manifested through today’s celebration of remote control war? What can these changes, and stories, tell us about the underlying rationales governing global security impulses and practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This essay explores the manifestation of a logic of ‘disposability’ in contemporary security practices, focusing on the securitisation, policing, and killing of designated bodies and spaces in the name of protecting ‘humanity’. To understand what is meant by a politics of disposability, I draw on both the Foucauldian concept of biopower as the late modern kernel of (neo)liberal governmentality and Mbembe’s (2003) discussion on necropolitics as the inescapable other side of biopolitics. Within the processes of locating the threat, and providing security, in relation to the Global War on Terror (GWOT), the logics of ‘making live’ and ‘letting die’ are mutually constitutive and surface as epistemology, ontology, and methodology respectively. As such, they are equally visible in the discourses justifying the use of force in the GWOT, as in the specific practices they generate.

Noting how debates over ‘the liberal problematic of security’ tend to split between those advocating for a historically materialist account of liberal violence over a biopolitical problematisation of liberal war, this paper seeks to reconcile such a divide through a demonstration of how sovereign and biopower converge in the practicing of international security. This entails elucidating material *and* bio-necropolitical logics as simultaneous drivers behind global security practices.

To this end, I explore drone assassinations, and their justification under the rubric of the WoT, as a key setting through which to interrogate the enactment of ‘disposability’ in empirical terms, and the parallel discursive frames through which certain bodies are rendered dangerous, undesirable, and undeserving so as to protect those deemed as deserving of life. This means studying GWOT combat drone programs as an epitomised representation of late modern liberal violence, tapping into the existing literature on how the arrangements connected to liberal peace, rather than making the world ‘safer’ de facto generate and legitimise liberal war. Viewing these practices and discourses through the lens of the politics of disposability, and the bio-necropolitical nexus whereby a specific way of life is protected through securitising and making killable alternative ways of life, further allows us to expose such processes of liberal war/liberal peace as part of a long history of liberal rule.

### **The “martial face” of liberal peace: Security as policing, pacification and governmentality**

The notion of governmentality comes from Foucauldian writing on the modern shift in European practices of power from the sovereign to the biopolitical (see De Angelis 2003). This shift entailed that state rulers no longer sought to control their populations through exercising their sovereignty as demonstrated in ‘the right to take life or let live’, but instead through the governing of life. Biopower is thus the converse “power to *make* something live or to let it die” (Berlant 2007, 756). Though initially intended to capture the function of government in late modern Europe, or to be applied to different cases of ‘governmental rationality’, recent scholarship has sought to apply the notion of governmentality to the global. This has given rise to a scholarly division between those emphasising the continued importance of the nation-state, sovereign power, and neo-imperial desires for ‘reterritorialisation’, and those stressing

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the rise in biopolitical network-centric relations of power, disintegrating the eminence of the nation-state and territorial boundaries (often described as “global governance”; Dingwerth and Pattberg 2006) in explaining the workings of the contemporary world order (see Kelly 2010; Reid 2005; Wai 2014).

As part of this debate, abundant attention has been paid to the particular nature of liberal violence and war and its role within latemodern international relations. The literature splits into two overarching camps corresponding to the divide over whether biopower can be said to have replaced sovereign power in the making of the international. While the former, in explaining the motivations behind liberal forms of war, emphasises more traditional materialist accounts of the need for “expanding spaces of capitalist accumulation,” the latter seeks to understand the same system but from the diverging angle of the “global liberal governmentality” (Mabee 2016, 242). Instead of attributing the underlying motivational logic behind liberal problematisations of security to a direct interest in streamlining the amassment of private capital globally, the rationale is enlarged to incorporate a wider system of population control, amounting to the control of life itself.

The first is thus more concerned with conventional forms of political-material and geostrategic incentives and relations of power – designated as a return of conventional territorial imperialist urges (Kelly 2010; Khalidi 2004; Wai 2014). Conversely, governmentality theorists are more interested in power as *productive*, and the many techniques through which the liberal ‘system’ perpetuates the social relations and forms of subjectivity that are required by the latemodern or neoliberal mode of production, globally and locally (Kienscherf 2011; Neocleous 2011b; Rampton and Nadarajah 2017). This form of subjugation is also colonially rooted (Anghie 2007; Scott 1995), as are most things pertaining to liberal philosophy and political thought (Bell 2014; Losurdo 2011; Mehta 1999). However, the emphasis lies on a different logic of authority and power less concerned with the outright conquest and rule of territories, resources or labour, and more with the mechanisms through which these spaces and people are self-regulated into the circuits of liberal governance. To this end scholars have rethought contemporary practices of global security along with their rootedness in a longer history of colonial and imperial governmentality, in terms of the ‘policing’ and ‘pacification’ techniques through which ‘recalcitrant’ populations or ‘non-liberal worlds’ are subdued to be reintegrated into the liberal social order.

Pacification, in contrast to conventional notions of war, implies the act of disciplining or to “police civilisation” (Neocleous 2011a). Rather than value the direct or complete destruction of spaces and people to provoke their surrender, as would be the traditional aim of warfare (colonial and otherwise), to pacify and police means to secure the subjugation of territory and subjectivities in ways that harness and facilitate their exploitation, as opposed to their demolition and loss. As described within modern both insurgency- and counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy, the ultimate purpose of such warfare is to ‘win the hearts and minds’ of the population (see: Bennett 2009; Egnell 2010; Gilmore 2011; Khalili 2012; 2010a; 2010b; Kienscherf 2011; Kilcullen 2006). Rooted in centuries of colonial COIN policies – from the French in Algeria, the British in Malaya and India, to the settlers in the Americas, the US in Vietnam, the Israelis in Palestine, and beyond (Khalili 2010a; 2012) – the logic of pacifying so as to police, and vice versa, ‘unruly’ populations has engendered a significant shift from overly ‘kinetic’ or force-based military strategy, to a merging of civil and military objectives and strategies (Kienscherf 2011; Kilcullen 2006). Corresponding with the overall turn to a *human* security paradigm (see UNDP 1994) in international peace, security, and development frameworks since the 1990s, 21<sup>st</sup> century COIN doctrine, exacerbated by the security problematics of the War on Terror, has thus effectively harnessed the colonial ‘hearts and minds’ foundation and brought it into the broader biopolitical project of governing life globally.

Biopower and biopolitics thus help illuminate this shift to pacification as civil-military strategy within contemporary global security practices. Through “[attending] to the design and deployment of specific governmental rationalities meant to respond to a biopolitical problematization of human (in)security,” Kienscherf (2011, 518) evaluates US recent COIN doctrine in Iraq and Afghanistan as a critical example of “a program of global pacification.” It should not be forgotten that American policies in and towards the Middle East since the 1930s have been overtly concerned with securing and controlling regional access to oil, leading many to conclude on American ‘democratisation’ projects in the region as critical instances of neo-imperialist conquest (of which Iraq and Afghanistan since the early 2000s are key examples; Jones 2012; Khalidi 2004). However, through the biopolitical problematisation of the practices through which the ‘West’ has (at least in rhetoric) approached issues of global security and peace, a much more complicated

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picture emerges tying such geopolitical and material incentives to a larger and deeper running arrangement of rationalities, technologies, knowledge(s) and logics constituting the liberal order as a whole.

From this view, Kienscherf (2011) can locate US COIN doctrine within an ethical-moral and legal-political discourse strongly rooted in a longer history of 'liberal peace' traditions (Asad 2010; Khalili 2012; Mamdani 2009; Rampton and Nadarajah 2017), now coming alive again through the practices enabled within the post-9/11 umbrella logic of the War on Terror. Liberal peace, and the Euro-Christian 'just war' traditions on which it draws, is fundamentally predicated upon 'practicing difference' whereby both life, violence and forms of intervention and justice, are labelled and categorised along a valorisation scale of just v unjust, good v evil (Asad 2010; Krever 2014). Counterinsurgent violence or liberal democratic state warfare is labelled necessary and 'civilized' violence, whereas terrorism or illiberal state violence is demarcated as 'barbaric'. Interestingly, this distinction holds even when examples of the former sheds more civilian and other lives than the latter (see Mamdani 2009). Through furthermore "[biopolitically differentiating] between 'safe' and 'dangerous' forms of life" (Kienscherf 2011, 517), connecting the latter to a generalised category of "enemies of humanity" and imbuing the former with the right to kill said enemy to defend the rest of humanity (Çubukçu 2013, 43; Mamdani 2009), the contemporary liberal regime of COIN operations and humanitarian intervention has claimed the privilege of *biopolitically* defining who poses a danger to mankind, who needs to be protected, and by which *sovereign* forms of violence and justice protection is delivered.

## 'Making live' through 'letting die': practicing disposability

Attention to the notion of a liberal governmentality further exposes how the discourses wherein life is valued, differentiate between safe and dangerous according to a person's utility in the larger networks of liberal governance and global capital accumulation. This entails that contemporary international security practices make judgements on who to protect from whom, how, and why, based on a categorisation of *deserving* versus *undeserving* life: who is of use and who is dispensable within the liberal ontology (see Berlant 2007; Kienscherf 2011; Lafer 2004; Puar 2017; Shakshari 2014). These classifications would not be possible without an underlying rationale predicated upon the biopolitical urge to manage and make 'life live' (in designated ways). Yet, the management of life is inseparable from, and necessitates, the simultaneous management of death. This is where the notion of *necropolitics* takes centre stage (Mbembé 2003), acknowledging that it is impossible to employ techniques of governing life without also governing death.

To regulate how death is distributed internationally requires an ethical-moral rationale and social-political rhetoric through which to legalise and legitimise how life and death is managed, and thus to justify who is killed in the name of whom (Asad 2010; Çubukçu 2013; Mamdani 2009; Shakshari 2014). This is where the system draws upon the metric of safe against dangerous life-forms, and just against unjust modes of intervention and violence, essentially steered by their positioning within liberal productive circuits, ultimately perpetuating a logic of *disposability*. This is also where the kernel of liberal forms of warfare makes itself known in the attempt to "humanise" the state's or "international community's" use of force and acts of violence through law (Asad 2010, 3) – particularly visible in the discourses around drone violence, explored below.

Disposability implies the at once biopolitical and necropolitical structuring of populations either within the national borders of the liberal world (as seen in the social marginalisation of migrant, diasporic or poor populations in liberal democracies; Giroux 2006; Puar 2017) or within the international organisation of resource allocation, production patterns, routinized civil, military, and economic intervention sites (to name a few aspects), in ways that favour the protection and sustenance of certain populations at the expense of others (see Sabaratnam 2017, on how this effects development aid structures). Thus, the notion of disposability is applicable both to instances where the international humanitarian regime or unilaterally acting liberal democracies, in various ways step in to 'protect humanity' through the active use of force, often with large numbers of civilian casualties (better known as 'collateral damage' – central examples being Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya 2011, Mali 2013); as to less overt processes of national and international structural violence, where designated parts of the world's populations are marginalised in ways that expose them to the realities of *social* or *slow death* (see Berlant 2007; Mbembé 2003; Sabaratnam 2017).

Slow death or the construction of 'death worlds' refer to the suspended forms of dying deriving from individuals or

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communities' simultaneous exclusion from the infrastructures through which life (in its fullest sense) is sustained, while hindering their immediate dying – what Puar (2017, 144) defines as the logic of “will not let or make die.” This can occur when being denied access to the state's social security nets, well exemplified by Giroux's (2006) demonstration of the disposability politics at play in the US in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It can also arise from being unable to partake on equal terms in the international economy writ large, as illustrated by the consequences of an extended imposition of economic sanctions against states such as Iran (Shakhsari 2014). Of interest to this paper is how the logic of disposability, with accompanying just war discourses, have become integral to the justification and perpetuation of both social death *and* the 'kinetic' or 'quick' death associated with the military practices exercised in the name of humanity under the rubric of the War on Terror. The next section will explore drone warfare as one such central facet of 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal violence, in rhetoric seeking to “extinguish” terror and promote safe “species-life” through protecting it from its dangerous kin (Kienscherf 2011, 521).

But first, a note of clarification. The point with this contribution is not to make a case for the authority of global governmentality theories over those more historically realist and materialist (say, 'capitalist imperialist'), but to explore the ways in which the bio- and necropolitical nature of liberal peace and war rely on the exercise of sovereign power – and vice versa. Taking issue with the idea that the modes of power and underlying rationalities explored above have to be mutually exclusive, I do not seek to disqualify materialist accounts of global liberal order and the sovereign security practices necessitated within this regime. Rather, the purpose here is to highlight the extent to which the material imperatives of expanding global capitalist accumulation coalesce with, and compel, the rationalities and pacification technologies enabled by a larger arrangement of liberal governmentality.

The logic of disposability and the necessarily *necropolitical* deliberations *biopolitical* problematisations of security give rise to, are thus integral templates to both sides of the liberal war debate. Exploring the relationality, rather than exclusivity, between these forms of power and motivational structures is imperative to better understand both the interests that are being safeguarded in the name of the War on Terror, and the old and novel (social, political, economic, legal) dynamics that are forming as a result. This piece thus follows in the steps of Reid (2015), who set out to demonstrate the mutual constitution of sovereign power and biopower (reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation) in the current world order. A claim he made through revealing the extent to which the US *sovereign* invasion of Iraq in 2003, relied upon the legal and logistical infrastructures erected by the UN and the international *biopolitical* humanitarian regime as a whole.

## Death by drone: practicing global security in the War on Terror

'Remote control war' through the usage of missile-equipped uninhabited aerial vehicles (UAVs), or 'drones', has become institutionalised as one of the chief counterinsurgency/terrorist tactics in US foreign policy since 9/11. Though initially only directed at targets associated with al-Qaeda, the 60 words at the heart of the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) written in the hours after the attacks in 2001 that would form the War on Terror's legal foundation, cemented the ambiguous definition of who is considered a justified target of American state force.

... the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future act (Public Law 107-40-Sept. 18, 2001).

Two drone programs were established, one attached to the military and operating publicly in 'recognised war zones' such as Iraq and Afghanistan. The other was appended to the covert operations of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), authorised to secretly target terror suspects anywhere in the world including where US troops are absent (Sterio 2012, 198). This program was significantly expanded under the Obama administration, granting the CIA further executive rights of who to target as well as less transparency regarding how these decisions are made. The main theatres of US drone warfare, apart from Iraq and Afghanistan, are Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia. In Pakistan, there has been a minimum of 440 confirmed strikes since 2004, reporting between 2500 to 4000 deaths of which 400 to 1000 are believed to be civilian casualties (The Bureau 2020). In September 2019 reports were made of more than 40 strikes a day in Afghanistan (Purkiss 2019), a country that also saw a threefold rise in civilian casualties as a

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result of US airstrikes compared to the same period in 2018 (Cheeseman 2019).

The usage of drones has smoothly followed in line with recent legal/moral discourses depicting 21st-century liberal military technologies as capable of “sanitary, sensitive and scrupulous” war: deploying cleaner, sharper, fully optimised, and controllable modes of force understood as “surgical” strikes and “precision” warfare (Gregory 2011, 188; Nixon 2012, 207). These clinical tropes incise the drone program within a larger regime of ‘techno-biopolitical’ expertise through which American, and other liberal democratic policymakers, can represent drone killings as an ethical, wise, and ultimately virtuous, form of war. Via this narrative, technological practices are legitimated as necessary remedies prescribed to extinguish and treat the “political cancers, diseases, and illnesses” constituted by terror suspects (Gregory 2011; Schwarz 2016, 59).

The growing number of critics challenging the technocratic and moral frames drawn on to legitimise military drone usage has illuminated a range of paradoxes and dilemmas, from the inherent asymmetry of the drone war and the flawed foundations of such intelligence gathering and precision targeting to the difficulties of delineating civilians from enemies (Espinoza and Afxentiou 2018, 296). The notion of ‘clinical’ warfare is illusory at best, and collateral damage numbers are much higher than advocates admit. In addition, the destruction of living spaces and the disruption of social, political, economic, and by extension psychological worlds, have devastating effects on entire communities (see Cavallero, Sonnenberg, and Knuckey 2012). The spatial, mental, physiological and environmental consequences of such *social ruptures* (Behrouzan 2016; Das et. al. 2000) stretch far beyond the immediate aftermath of individual strikes. Combat drone usage also extends American warmakers’ detachment from the actual sites of violence, making the notion of “virtuous war” (Gregory 2011) ring hollow in light of the disproportionality between executors and recipients of force.

Seen as targeted drone killings have been a staple use of force since 9/11, drone programs have furthermore become seamlessly embedded within the narrative frames of the War on Terror, which pre-emptively criminalise anything related to Islam or the Arab world (see Howell and Shryock 2003; Kapoor and Narkowicz 2017; Li 2018; Sabsay 2012; Puar 2017). Through this logic, liberal democracies and wider international security frameworks, have come to securitise all ‘illiberal’ Muslim communities, states and spaces, to warrant increasingly militarised forms of intervention and preventive measures against them. Drone violence has become central to this militarised hierarchy, whereby certain bodies via covert decision-making processes are deemed dangerous and thus killable outside of the rule of law, in the name of humanity writ large. The extent to which drone strikes thus map on to GWOT frames of the Muslim Other as the ultimate “denizen” (Kapoor and Narkowicz 2017), dangerous species-life, or Enemy of Mankind in the post-Cold War era, underpin the drone as a key feature in American practices of disposability.

In this regard, drone warfare reappears as an epitomised expression of the political-moral narratives and legal frames constituting the liberal peace/liberal war nexus, as it so neatly corresponds with the binary tales of the good (liberal) order versus the bad (illiberal, here named Muslim) order in international politics. To this extent, Neocleous (2013) demonstration of the colonial *policing* character of airpower in general, of which drone power is the latest manifestation, further elucidates the simultaneous bio-necropolitical *and* sovereign character of drone force. *Bio* political in the sense that drone programs seek to control ‘unruly’ spaces through eliminating the population pathologies GWOT narratives mark as potential liabilities, ultimately exercising *necro power* through the *sovereign* use of force.

Uniting these modes of power and underlying motives, are the logics and rhetorics through which necropolitical practices of distributing death are justified and facilitated. Drone violence exemplifies one such practice. At the same time, drone war comprises a facet of contemporary warfare technologies particularly exposing the ways in which the liberal peace/liberal violence nexus perpetuates the disposability of designated populations, through simultaneously granting their *instant* and *suspended* dying. This is visible in the fact that drone strikes kill ‘kinetically’, while also engendering the manifestation of death worlds and the suspended forms of dying resulting from the infrastructural destruction they wreck, demolishing urban as well as rural milieus, homes, means of subsistence, and communal life-worlds – even when (claiming to) directly target only individual bodies. The sensation of suspended death also arises from the constant fear among those communities who are designated as enemies of the liberal order within the GWOT metric, of firstly becoming defined as dangerous species-life which secondly warrants their death by drone,

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with or without warning (see Cavallero, Sonnenberg and Knuckey 2012).

## Global security and private capital

This far, we have explored the convergence of bio- and necropolitics and sovereign power, in facilitating the usage of combat drones in 21<sup>st</sup> century forms of remote warfare, including how the logic of 'disposability' enables, and justifies, decision-making within the post-9/11 international peace and security architecture. There is, however, a crucial aspect missing in this account of the 'drone-era', specifically: the location of global private capital in international security practices.

It is estimated that the global military drone market will generate a revenue of USD 21.76 billion by 2026 (FBI 2020). The key players encompassing large shares of this market are in the majority North American, including GA-ASI, Northrop Grumman Corporation, AeroVironment Inc., Lockheed Martin Corporation and Boeing. Other significant producers emanate from Israel and France, besides China and the UAE (AT 2019; M&M 2018). As stated in a report from 2017, "the global UAV market will be dominated by the US throughout the [decade long] forecast period" (GD 2017). GA-ASI accounts for the production of what is considered the most lethal (read successful) combat/armed UAV, named Predator C Avenger. The Avenger is a development of the previous groundbreaking Reaper, both of which have been extensively used by US forces in Afghanistan (Gregory 2011, 207).

The fact that GA-ASI, exemplifying the kind of actor present at the heart of the global military drone market, is a private company operating across national governments and non-state beneficiaries motivated by private profit concerns (see: [ga-si.com/about](http://ga-si.com/about)), elucidates the extent to which national and international security practices are compromised by and forced to compromise with, the logic of capital accumulation. Though brief, this summary thus confirms the size, and consequent clout, of both national and private capital interests in maintaining a global security climate in which military drones are accepted to the point of constituting common practice. Despite the Asia Pacific region comprising a central market, production patterns further highlight the degree to which said technologies are foremost produced by and traded between liberal states.

In light of this essay's discussion on how drone violence is being used – against whom, for what purposes, within which narrative frames and securitised contexts – the global military drone industry helps disclose the ways in which capital accumulation imperatives, sovereign power, and 'return to imperialism' rationalities, intersect, and overlap with, less tangible systems and technologies of biopolitical governance. Global private capital circuits constitute a curious setting, as it makes clear the loose boundaries between, and frequent coalescence of, global governance (the global decentralisation of power and lessened authority of national borders) and sovereign power practices (the ability of the nation-state to still regulate and protect the flow of capital, goods, and labour). Given the extent to which remote warfare is stimulated by the profits generated by the drone market, drone violence thus offers a particularly interesting site through which to study the mutuality between bio-necropolitics and sovereign power on the one hand, and their intersections with private capital interests, on the other.

This site, thus, constitutes a revealing technology of liberal security praxis, wherein death is dispensed so as to pacify recalcitrant populations, justified through the rhetorics of 'clean', 'surgical', and so 'humane' warfare (just violence, for a just cause; Asad 2010; Mamdani 2009). However, at the same time, drone warfare makes equally visible and tangible, the networks and interests aligning in a global military-industrial complex in which private, corporate, and national concerns for capital accumulation motivate the production and utilisation of drone technologies in late modern forms of war and policing. This further demonstrates how economic drivers are allowed to trump such alleged liberal hallmark concerns as promoting peace, security, human rights, and the rule of law (see Lafer 2004) – even though the narratives surrounding drones claim to have these principles in mind. Such is the oxymoron inherent in liberal peace practices.

## Conclusion

Drawing on the material and discursive processes that naturalise and normalise the usage of combat drones in the international, I conclude that liberal war, while wrapped in the rhetorics of liberal peace, governs contemporary global

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security practices through the simultaneous exercise of biopower and sovereign power. Here, pacification and pre-emption in the form of merged civil-military strategies, have become the central mechanisms through which to achieve the kind of international security envisioned and required by the liberal ontology. The necropolitical logic of disposability is firmly embedded within these modes of power, along with the ethical-moral and social-political rationalities and practices of categorisation – good against evil, just against unjust, safe against dangerous, and, ultimately, liberal against illiberal – to which they are attached.

In this sense, disposability – understood as a principle structuring both the management of life and the distribution of death, nationally and internationally – serves the interests of private/corporate, national and transnational actors seeking to expand the spaces of capital accumulation, as much as the more diffuse networks of power and accumulation incorporated within global liberal governmentality.

Drone programs, and their surgical rhetorical justifications, offer yet another illuminating example of the long view of the ‘martial face’ of liberal rule, and the violence embedded within the practices and problematics of liberal peace (Dillon and Reid 2009); manifesting time and again in the “bloodied hands and honeyed tongues” (Khalili 2012, 5) of liberal democratic policymakers. As such they are part and parcel in a long history of global liberal governmentality and former colonial, now turned ‘humanitarian’, governmental rationalities. Yet, in as much as they operate through the justifications provided by bio-necropolitical problematisations of life and death globally, they continue to rely upon the ability of the state and the international community as an extension of the liberal democratic order, to exercise older forms of sovereign power and facilitate the ‘reterritorialisation’ attempts now demanded by the Global War on Terror.

The lessons here learnt, are many. However, one thing stands out as key in finally addressing the many issues arising from contemporary remote control warfare, including the loss of legality, ethics and transparency in governing the practices of war. Specifically, to acknowledge the tripartite mutual constitution between: liberal emancipatory discourses (associated with the institutions of global governance fending for the protection of ‘humanity’ and ‘democracy’); sovereign assertions of power (seen in the US’ ability to kill ‘enemy others’ without neither accountability nor warning far from the sovereign territory of America); and the authority of capital over shaping the meaning of security and peace across the globe. Without exposing this continuum of interests and motivations, the particular politics of liberal death dealing in the international, will remain hidden behind a generations’ old monopoly on ‘protecting humanity’.

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