

PHILIP MUDD MAKES THE CASE FOR SIGNATURE STRIKES AGAINST BANKSTERS

Last Friday, former Deputy Director of CIA's Counterterrorism Center and FBI Philip Mudd defended the use of signature strikes when used against multinational networked organizations that hide in safe havens.

Signature strikes have pulled out these lower-level threads of al Qaeda's apparatus – and that of its global affiliates – rapidly enough that the deaths of top leaders are now more than matched by the destruction of the complex support structure below them. **Western conceptions of how organizations work, with hierarchal structures driven by top-level managers, do not apply to al Qaeda and its affiliates.** These groups are instead conglomerations of militants, operating independently, with rough lines of communication and fuzzy networks that cross continents and groups. They are hard to map cleanly, in other words.

[snip]

Part of the reason signature strikes have become so prominent in this global counterterror war is, simply put, geography. Local terrorist groups only become international threats if they have leadership that can execute a broad, globalist vision, and **if that leadership has the time and space to plot without daily distractions from armies and security services – as in safe havens** like Yemen, Somalia, the Sahel, and the tribal areas of Pakistan. These are exactly the places where the

United States cannot apply conventional force and where local governments lack the capability or will to counter the threat. Exactly the places where drones offer an option to eviscerate a growing terror threat that has a dispersed, diffuse hierarchy. [my emphasis]

Of course, Mudd is crazy to suggest that the networked organization of terrorism is not found in the West. Indeed, corporations in the West pioneered the concept, with cell structures that provided them legal opacity. Though the safe havens they hid in were named Jersey and Cayman Islands rather than Yemen or Somalia.

So it seems this defense of signature strikes should be read as one of two things. Either, a case that the best defense against the damage bankers have caused is the fairly indiscriminate killing of their mid-level managers. Or, if that solution seems barbarous at its core, then perhaps this is a good case study in how extreme the idea of signature strikes would seem if it weren't couched in a sloppy kind of Orientalism advocating it for others but not for our own.