

The big story of May 2013 was President Obama's enunciation of his revised UACV policy to National Defense University on May 23rd, the day after the disclosure that four Americans were killed in 2009 by drone strikes. Amid reams of coverage, here's James Traub for Foreign Policy magazine, eviscerating the Pakistan perspective:

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/24/indispensible\\_weapon\\_drones\\_obama](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/05/24/indispensible_weapon_drones_obama)

and the New York Times details the new policy guidance:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/23/us/us-acknowledges-killing-4-americans-in-drone-strikes.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/23/us/us-acknowledges-killing-4-americans-in-drone-strikes.html?_r=1&)

Whether by chance or design, more than half the month elapsed without a single declared UACV strike, writes Elayne Jude of Great North News Services. The pax was broken with a strike in Yemen on May 18th.

On May 4, the US Navy's stealth drone X-47B landed aboard a mock aircraft carrier flight deck, painted on a runway at the Navy's airbase at Patuxent River, Md. From Foreign Policy magazine, footage of the craft's first arrested landing: [http://killerapps.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/06/video\\_the\\_navys\\_stealth\\_drone\\_makes\\_its\\_first\\_arrested\\_landing](http://killerapps.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/06/video_the_navys_stealth_drone_makes_its_first_arrested_landing)

On 28 May, to coincide with discussions in Geneva on the development of lethal robots, Human Rights Watch issued the following statement: "While a positive step, [DOD's policy on lethal drones] is not a comprehensive or permanent solution to the potential problems posed by fully autonomous systems. The policy of self-restraint it embraces may also be hard to sustain if other nations begin to deploy fully autonomous weapons systems."

Killer Apps have compiled an illustrated list of weaponry at the forefront of this as yet unrealised autonomous tendency: [http://killerapps.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/29/killer\\_drones\\_from\\_around\\_the\\_globe](http://killerapps.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/29/killer_drones_from_around_the_globe)

The Guardian carried a report on Aberporth, the Welsh base for UACV operations:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/06/welsh-airfield-drones>

The Israeli Air Force grounded its fleet of UAVs to investigate a technical fault. One craft, a Heron-1, was deliberately crashed into the Mediterranean. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/12/israel-grounds-drone-fleet-fault>

May 18 - Yemen. Four "militants" killed. Four people were attacked in a vehicle carrying explosives in a southern town known to be used by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Several missiles were launched at a truck said to be loaded with grenades and explosive belts in the Al Mahfad area, in the southern province of Abyan. Four suspected members of AQAP were killed in the airstrike.

AQAP fighters and leaders have regrouped in the Al Mahfad area after a Yemeni military offensive that began in the spring of 2012. AQAP controlled the cities in Abyan, as well as other cities and towns in neighboring Shabwa province, after launching its own offensive in 2011. Since losing control in Abyan and Shabwa, AQAP has spread out into the provinces of Aden, Al Baydah, Al Jawf, Damar, Hadramout, Hodeida, Ibb, Marib, Saada, and Sana'a. The US has struck nine times in Yemen so far in 2013, most recently on April 21.

May 20 - Yemen. Two 'militants' killed in an area in the central part of the country. Missiles were launched at two AQAP fighters as they left a farm on a motorbike in the Khobza area of Baydah province. Both were killed. The Yemeni military identified the fighters as Abd Rabbo Mokbal Mohammed Jarallah al Zouba and Abbad Mossad Abbad Khobzi.

May 29 - North Waziristan. Seven killed in the first strike in Pakistan in six weeks, and the first since Obama's landmark speech on reducing American counterterrorist operations. The

Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan's top spokesman, Ihsanullah Ihsan, confirmed that Waliur Rehman, the group's deputy leader and emir in South Waziristan, was among the dead.

A pair of missiles were fired at a compound in the village of Chashma, just outside of Miramshah, the main town in the tribal agency. It is unclear whether the other six dead were civilians or jihadists allied with the Taliban, al Qaeda, or others. An aide known as Fakhar-ul-Islam is said to have been killed in the strike along with "two unknown Uzbek nationals," according to CNN. The strike is the first in Pakistan since April 17.

The program was reportedly put on hold for political considerations. Pakistan held parliamentary elections on May 11, and the chiefs of the two leading parties in the polls, Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan, have been vocal opponents of the US program. Both candidates have also favoured negotiations with the al Qaeda-affiliated Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan, one of several Taliban factions operating in Pakistan. Following confirmation of Rehman's death, the Pakistani Taliban withdrew the prospects of peace talks with the newly elected Pakistani government. Rehman was wanted by the US for involvement in terror plots including the unsuccessful Times Square bombing.