

U.S. assassination of terrorist Anwar al-Awlaki justified, in spite of legal and moral concerns

by Ty Peake

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the Daily Hampshire Gazette.

When I was a child, I was reminded of morals and unconditional rights. Even as an elementary school student, teachers would constantly ask, "What is the moral of this story?"

American-born citizen Anwar al-Awlaki was shot down by a drone plane firing a "hell-fire" missile on Sept. 30. Al-Awlaki was the first U.S. citizen in the American-led war on terrorism to be deliberately targeted for death. He was marked as a "global terrorist," officially making it illegal to engage in

transactions with him or for his benefit without a license.

Best known for his Internet sermons and lectures encouraging terrorism, al-Awlaki was a threat mostly because of his English language propaganda.

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Nasser al-Awlaki, al-Awlaki's father, claimed that his son was not the terrorist the government said he was and filed a lawsuit to take his son's name off the list of targeted terrorists. On December 7, 2010, a federal judge dismissed the case, saying that Nasser al-Awlaki did not have the right to sue the United States

over his son's killing. They added that decisions of killing targets overseas are "political questions" for executive officials to make, not judges.

Another issue that ties into the assassination is the topic of growing robot warfare. The U.S. sent out an unoccupied aircraft to kill al-Awlaki. Using robots makes it mentally easier to kill people. You are not looking at or seeing the person and you're not physically killing them either, which puts less guilt on the predator.

The after-effect of the assassination brought up numerous questions. Among the most important is this: Does the government have the power to claim an individual as a "global terrorist," and then have the right to take that life without due process of court?

The assassination of Anwar al-Awlaki was a wrong act by our government. Yemen is far from any combat zone, it was unconstitutional and it displayed clear flaws in the checks and balances of our leaders. It is unfortunate that we had to take such drastic measures and couldn't come up with an alternative.

However, I don't think that the government is completely immoral for killing terrorists that pose a threat to American citizens. I've heard many people say that assassinating other terrorist will only make it worse, but what other option is really available? Doing nothing certainly won't stop suicide bombings. The effort for better education in these areas is difficult, because how would one go about improving the education of a place where your government is not wanted?

It's a tough decision, and I'm certainly open to other ideas, but in the end, I feel that doing something is better than nothing.

Youth health takes a back-seat to politics in Obama administration

On Thursday, December 8, President Obama came out and backed the decision made by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to stop Plan-B, a morning-after pill, from becoming an over-the-counter drug for people under the age of 17. Sebelius' decision overrode the Food and Drug Administration's move to make Plan-B an over-the-counter drug.

"The reason Kathleen made this decision is that she could not be confident that a 10-year-old or an 11-year-old going to a drug store should be able – alongside bubble gum or batteries – to make a bad decision, teens who can't go to their parents, teens who don't have time to get a prescription for Plan-B. For these girls, it is a matter of their entire futures, and Plan-B could help.

In light of such consequences, Mr. Obama's simplistic assessment that we need to use "common sense" is offensive political double-speak to cover up that the self-proclaimed representative of "change" is willing to throw the lives of young teen girls under the bus to score political points.

remarks are a stunning show of the current administration's willingness to put politics before positive change.

With the November 2012 election fast-approaching and independent voters up for grabs, it's not surprising to see Mr. Obama once again stick it to his liberal base and take the conservative side of a social issue. However, it's not going to be the GOP's favorite punching bag – the latte-sipping liberal elites – that are going to suffer from Sebelius' decision. Teens are the ones who will suffer; teens who have nowhere to go, teens who have

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Considering the fact that the FDA scrutinized Plan-B for years and the agency's doctors concluded that Plan-B would be safe and beneficial to put on store shelves, Ms. Sebelius' seemingly nonsensical decision on this issue and Mr. Obama's

U.S. government college financial aid form discriminatory and homophobic

By Emma Knight

The FAFSA, or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, gives millions of students the opportunity to receive a college education every year, but the Defense of Marriage Act (1996), a federal law that defines marriage as the union between one man and one woman, prohibits the Department of Education from recognizing any form of same-sex relationship.

What does this mean for children of same-sex marriages? The applicant must choose only one parent to represent

them in the application. Despite the blatant discrimination of the FAFSA, students with gay parents often ironically benefit. The FAFSA considers the financial assets of only one parent. The financial status of the other parent has no importance; the applicant's need is artificially increased.

To be frank, our government is homophobic. The blatant discrimination in the Defense of Marriage Act and the FAFSA provides just one more opportunity for children of same-sex marriages to be insulted.

The Graphic

Vol. XCVIII, No. 2, December 12, 2011

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Printed by the Daily Hampshire Gazette

The Graphic is the student newspaper of Amherst Regional High School, 21 Mattoon Street, Amherst, Mass. 01002. The staff and advisors can be reached by phone at 362-1506. Most articles printed in *The Graphic* are written by students in Journalism classes. An after-school staff is responsible for the paper's layout, editorial policy, content decisions, and finances. *The Graphic* is a forum for free speech and dissenting opinions. Letters to the editor are encouraged. Letters must be signed and do not necessarily represent the views of *The Graphic* or Amherst Regional High School. *The Graphic* reserves the right to edit letters for length. Editorials represent the opinions of the writer and not those of the school.