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Arrest of ex-CIA legal chief sought over drone attacks

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A group of human rights lawyers working in cooperation with relatives of the victims of U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan is calling for an international arrest warrant to be served on former CIA legal counsel John A. Rizzo on charges of murder.

The first step in their effort will be the filing of an information report next week at a police station in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad on behalf of relatives of two people killed in drone strikes in 2009. According to the Guardian, the report will "allege Rizzo should be charged with conspiracy to murder a large number of Pakistani citizens".

Rizzo, who retired from the CIA in 2009, told Newsweek in an interview last winter that he was the person who signed off on the CIA's "lethal operations." "It's basically a hit list," Rizzo explained. "The Predator is the weapon of choice, but it could also be someone putting a bullet in your head".

Rizzo has also described himself as having been "up to my eyeballs" in the "enhanced interrogation" program conducted by the Bush administration at its network of CIA secret prisons. It was his request for clarification on permissible interrogation techniques that led to the issuing of John Yoo's infamous "torture memo" in August 2002. Raw Story

FACTS & FIGURES

Pakistan contends that drone attacks are counter-productive as civilian deaths enable militants to gain the sympathy and support of tribes in the border region. Gulf News

Pakistan's parliament has adopted a resolution declaring U.S. drone strikes are a violation of the country's sovereignty. NYT

The Pakistani defense minister has publicly demanded that the U.S. leave its Shamsi air base in the Balochistan Province. The Shamsi air base has been the source of CIA drone strikes across Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

The United States insists that no more than a few dozen Pakistani non-combatants have been killed in drone attacks targeted at militants. Raw Story

According to some estimates drone strikes have killed 2,500 people in Pakistan since 2004. Daily India

At least 1,184 people were killed in U.S. drone attacks in 2010. The News.com

According to Pakistani sources, U.S. drone strikes kill some 50 civilians for every militant killed, a hit rate of 2 percent. NYT