



# Bodies of technology

Gender, race and militarism

Week 12

# Technology and war

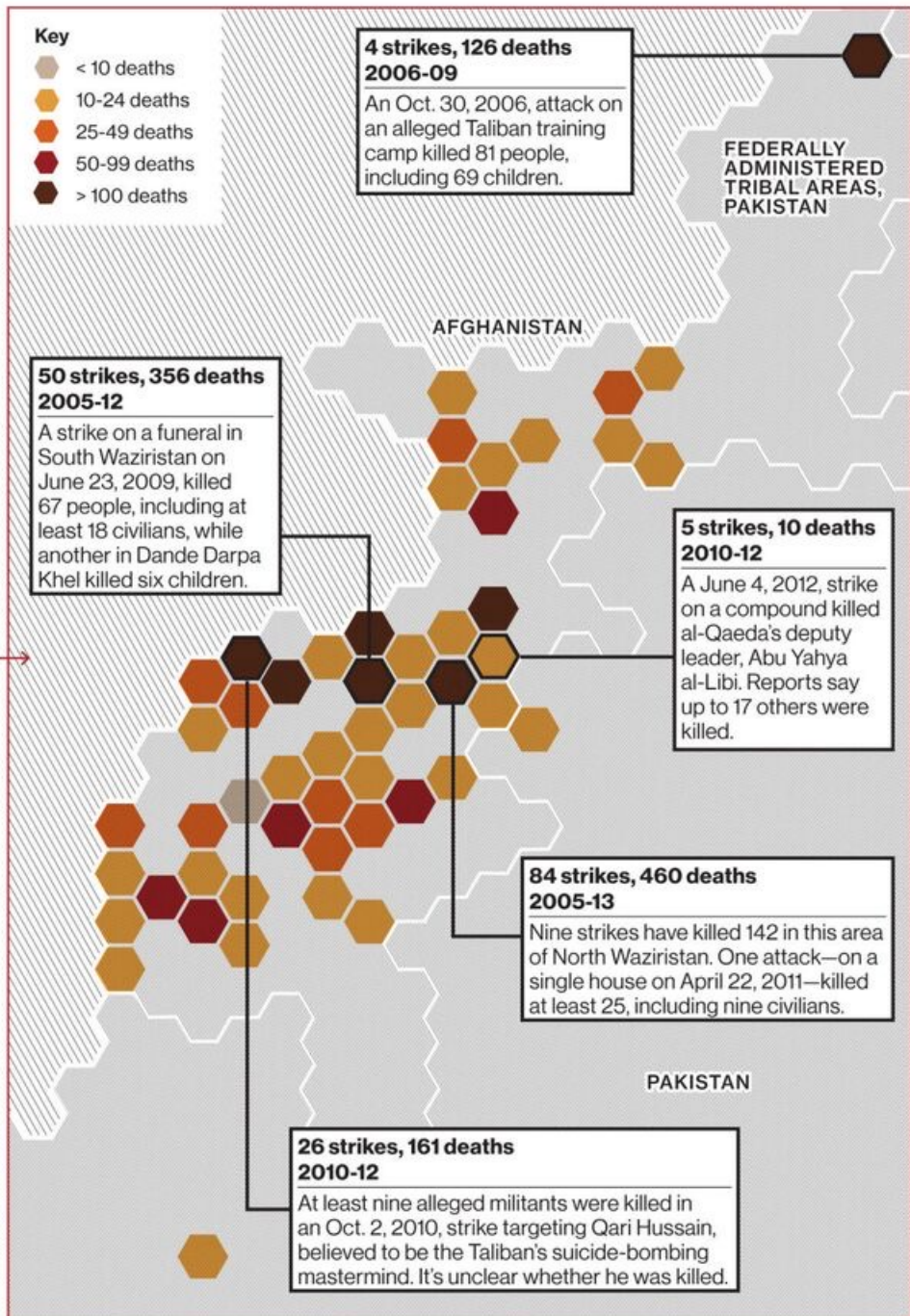
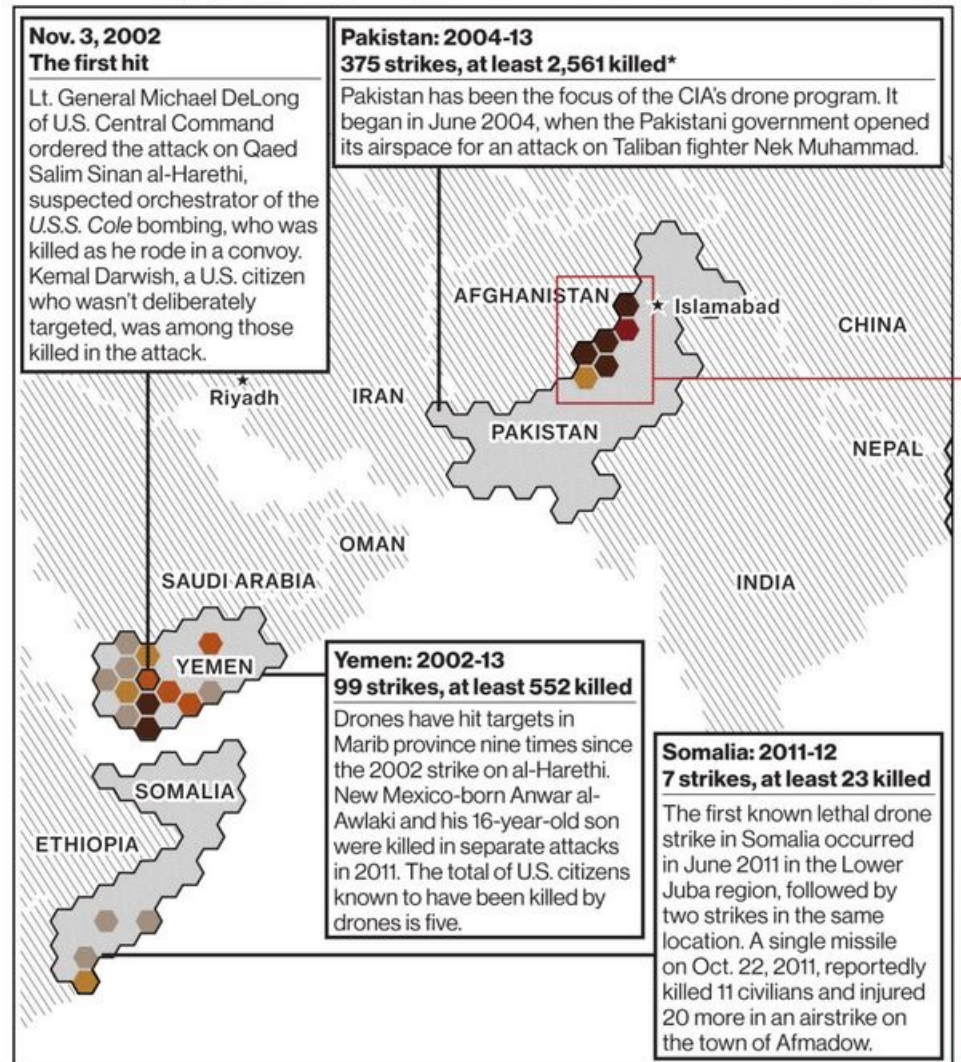
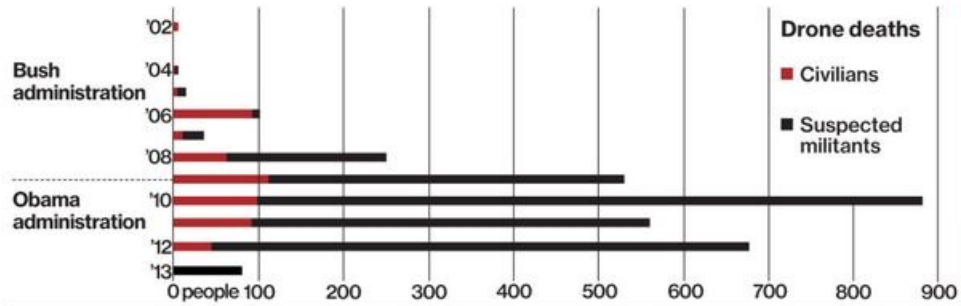
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- With your neighbour(s), and based on your own reflections and reading, spend a few minutes discussing how drone warfare/drone operators can be/have been scripted as 'masculine', and how they can be/have been scripted as 'feminine'.

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- What does Daggett mean when she says drones ‘queer’ the experience of killing? Do you agree with this assertion?
    - “The hegemonic masculinity of the warrior is defined against both the feminine and the queer, marking the “straight” path of combat” (Dagett)

# Task

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Read the three accounts of drone strikes in *Living Under Drones* and reflect on how they compare with the body-less and clinical descriptions of drone strikes often reported by military sources or news reports.



\*ALL DEATH COUNTS ARE THE MINIMUM REPORTED ACROSS MULTIPLE NEWS OUTLETS. ACTUAL DEATHS MAY BE HIGHER. GRAPHIC BY BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK; DATA: BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

# Clean bombs and clean language

Entering the world of defense intellectuals was a bizarre experience because it is a world where men spend their days calmly and matter-of-factly discussing nuclear weapons, nuclear strategy, and nuclear war. The discussions are carefully and intricately reasoned, occurring seemingly without any sense of horror, urgency, or moral outrage—in fact, there seems to be no graphic reality behind the words, as they speak of "first strikes," "counterforce exchanges," and "limited nuclear war," or as they debate the comparative values of a "minimum deterrent posture" versus a "nuclear war-fighting capability."

Yet what is striking about the men themselves is not, as the content of their conversations might suggest, their cold-bloodedness. Rather, it is that they are a group of men unusually endowed with charm, humor, intelligence, concern, and decency. Reader, I liked them. At least, I liked many of them. The attempt to understand how such men could contribute to an endeavor that I see as so fundamentally destructive became a continuing obsession for me, a lens through which I came to examine all of my experiences in their world. In this early stage, I was gripped by the extraordinary language used to discuss nuclear war. What hit me first was the elaborate use of abstraction and euphemism, of words so bland that they never forced the speaker or enabled the listener to touch the realities of nuclear holocaust that lay behind the words.

Anyone who has seen pictures of Hiroshima burn victims or tried to imagine the pain of hundreds of glass shards blasted into flesh may find it perverse beyond imagination to hear a class of nuclear devices matter-of-factly referred to as "clean bombs." "Clean bombs" are nuclear devices that are largely fusion rather than fission and that therefore release a higher quantity of energy, not as radiation, but as blast, as destructive explosive power. "Clean bombs" may provide the perfect metaphor for the language of defense analysts and arms controllers. This language has enormous destructive power, but without emotional fallout, without the emotional fallout that would result if it were clear one was talking about plans for mass murder, mangled bodies, and unspeakable human suffering. Defense analysts talk about "countervalue attacks" rather than about incinerating cities. Human death, in nuclear parlance, is most often referred to as "collateral damage"; for, as one defense analyst said wryly, "The Air Force doesn't target people, it targets shoe factories." (Cohn 1987)



- Are the ethics of drone warfare the same as other forms of warfare?