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1.    Can a country successfully wage a war against an ideal carried out by non-traditional combatants?

2.    How does the film convey the multinational efforts of the War on Terror? What are the strengths and limitations of this kind of bureaucracy among allies?

3.    What is your position on the use of drones by the U.S. in the War on Terror?

4.    As the characters were trying to decide what to do about bombing the house, who would you have sided with and why?

5.    Should the U.S. be in the business of assassinating individuals? If you believe that assassination is a valid policy, how would you separate those who can be killed from those who cannot?

6.    The 21st century has seen two new ways of killing utilized on a large scale. One is the suicide bomber, and the other is the drone. Compare them.

7.    What incident occurred in this movie that resulted in the final decision to fire the Hellfire missile from the drone? Was this the right thing to do?

8.    What was the message of the scenes with Lieutenant General Benson and the purchase of the doll?

9.    Although this is a fictionalized film based on a hypothetical scenario of recent history, how do such movies encourage viewers to think about current events?

10. Do such drone attacks stop terrorists or simply create more of them?


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Accompanying primary source:

**U.S. launches drone strike against al-Shabab figure tied to Kenya mall attack**

 By Craig Whitlock and Kevin Sieff – *The Washington Post*

March 13, 2015

U.S. military officials said Friday that they had launched a drone strike against a senior leader of the militant group al-Shabab who was suspected of helping to plan a massacre at an upscale Kenyan shopping mall in 2013.

The officials said they believed Thursday’s strike killed Adan Garaar, an al-Shabab commander whom they described as a ringleader of the attack on Westgate Mall in Nairobi. Garaar was riding in a car with two other suspected al-Shabab members in southern Somalia, near Bardera, when the attack occurred, the officials said.

Army Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, confirmed that the U.S. military conducted a counterterrorism operation against an al-Shabab leader but declined to name the target. He said U.S. officials were still awaiting confirmation on whether the individual was killed.

The U.S. drone strike was the fourth in Somalia since September, a small but steady escalation after years of sporadic activity in the country. The increase co¬incides with a decision by the Pentagon in late 2013 to deploy a small team of advisers to Mogadishu, the capital, to coordinate operations with African troops fighting to wrest control of Somalia from al-Shabab.

Prior to that, U.S. troops had not been deployed to Somalia on a regular basis since 1993, when two helicopters were shot down and 18 Americans were killed in the “Black Hawk Down” disaster.

The U.S. military regularly conducts drone surveillance over Somalia from Camp Lemonnier, a U.S. base in neighboring Djibouti, as well as from a smaller airport in Ethi¬o¬pia.

U.S. drone strikes have started to take a toll on al-Shabab’s leadership, though it is unclear to what degree the attacks have weakened the group’s military capabilities.

On Jan. 31, a U.S. drone strike killed Yusef Dheeq, al-Shabab’s head of external operations, near the town of Dinsoor. In late December, the group’s intelligence chief, Tahlil Abdishakur, was killed in a strike while he was riding in a vehicle near the southern town of Saakow.

The biggest blow to al-Shabab came in September, when a drone strike killed the movement’s overall leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, near the port city of Barawe.

Al-Shabab, whose name means “the youth” in Arabic, is an Islamist movement affiliated with al¬Qaeda. Although the group is based in Somalia, it has also carried out attacks in Uganda and Kenya, including the Westgate Mall attack. Sixty-seven people died during a four-day standoff at the mall between four ¬al-Shabab gunmen and Kenyan security forces.

Security analysts identified Garaar as a well-known member of the group who has been involved in the planning of a number of recent attacks across East Africa.

“Adan Garaar was one of the key planners behind the assault on the Westgate mall, just as he has been behind a number of other high-profile attacks, both carried out and foiled, including the attempted major bombing in Kampala last year,” said J. Peter Pham, director of the Atlantic Council’s Africa Center. “He may not be as well-known generally as other Shabab leaders but is certainly no stranger to those tracking the terrorist group’s activities elsewhere in East Africa outside Somalia.”

His death, along with a series of targeted killings over the past year, analysts said, helps to weaken the organization as it struggles to maintain its strongholds across Somalia.

“Targeting the leadership is degrading their capacity. They are basically on the run,” said Abdirashid Hashi, executive director of the Mogadishu-based Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. “But they are still doing their operations. I wouldn’t call this the final act. There are different cells, and the leaders who are killed are replaced.”

*Sieff reported from Nairobi.*

**Obama to release details of US drone-strike killings**

White House to publish data ‘in the coming weeks’ in effort to improve transparency

Tue, Mar 8, 2016, 19:27

By Simon Carswell, Washington Correspondent

The US government plans to release details of the number of militant suspects and civilians killed in drone strikes since 2009 in an effort to increase transparency around the controversial remote killing method. Fulfilling a commitment by Barack Obama in 2013 to be more open about his administration’s strikes against militants, the US president’s counter-terrorism and homeland security adviser Lisa Monaco has said that the details would be released “in the coming weeks”.

The report will include details of alleged combatants and civilians the United States believes were killed in the strikes but will not cover theatres of war such as Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan – only areas where extremists operate in Pakistan, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and other parts of north Africa.

The information, which the administration planned to release on an annual basis, would reflect the “latest intelligence from all sources” and information from human rights groups that track US military strikes, including by unmanned drones and other attacks, she said. “There will obviously be some limitations about where we can be transparent, given a variety of sensitivities, including diplomatic ones,” Mr Obama’s press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters on Monday.

The disclosure that there would be greater transparency around the use of drones coincided with the announcement by the Pentagon that more than 150 militants were killed in strikes on a training camp operated by al-Shabab militants in Somalia by manned and unmanned aircraft. The Pentagon said that the air strikes, conducted on Saturday, struck a site called Raso Camp about 120 miles north of Mogadishu as the militants were, according to US military officials, preparing to leave the camp to carry out an attack against US or African government forces.

The extremist group, which pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, has carried out attacks across east Africa, including the massacre of 67 civilians during a four-day siege at the Westgate shopping center in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2013 and the attack on Garissa University College in eastern Kenya in April 2015 which killed almost 150 people.

The Long War Journal, a project by the Washington think tank, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, that tracks US drone strikes in Pakistan found that 2,797 Taliban, al-Qaeda and other extremists and 158 civilians are estimated to have been killed in 388 attacks since 2006. The group has monitored 135 US air strikes in Yemen that are estimated to have killed 657 combatants and 105 civilians. An analysis by human rights group Reprieve in 2014 found the US killed 1,147 people in Pakistan and Yemen in attempts to kill 41 men.