



The US government has defended its use of drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and other countries in front of the UN, telling a chamber full of largely critical nations that in President Obama's view the deployment of unmanned aerial attacks against al-Qaida targets was "necessary, legal and just".

Representatives from a slew of nations, including Brazil, China and Venezuela, lined up to berate the Obama administration for its intensive use of drone strikes. But the US delegation told a plenary meeting of the general assembly in the UN building in New York the president had taken steps to introduce new guidance and standards, and to set out the legal rationale for unmanned weapons deployed in the fight against al-Qaida and affiliated threats.

The UN debate marked the first time that member nations have come together to discuss the rapidly expanding militarised use of remotely piloted aircraft and the fraught international legal issues that it raises. It came at the climax of 10 days in which the question of the legality of drones has caught the headlines, with the release of two UN reports that have sharply condemned aspects of the programmes.

The authors of the two reports addressed Friday's UN debate, beginning with Christof Heyns, the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. His study warned of the danger of proliferation of the un-piloted weapons among states and terrorist groups.

TVNL Comment: They hate us for our freedom.... yeah, right.

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