



Pentagon taking over drones programme from CIA may not lead to greater transparency

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The growing speculation that the White House is preparing to shift its secretive drone programme from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Pentagon is raising new questions: how much more transparency this move would bring into the use of the unmanned ariel vehicles.

The hope among critics is that this change would allow greater oversight by Congress, and, by extension, the Americans, of America's targeted killing programme.

According to the Christian Science Monitor, experts said that that could be true, adding that the Congress is generally more successful in bringing the Pentagon to heel through budget threats than is the CIA.

Moreover, the Pentagon is subject to citizen Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

But elements within the Pentagon are just as secretive, if not more so, than the CIA, meaning critics might not get the degree of openness they might want.

Jennifer Rowland, programme associate with the National Security Studies programme at the New America Foundation, said that whether transparency increases really depends on who at the DoD [Department of Defense] the program goes to.

Senator John McCain (r) of Arizona, a longtime member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, is pushing for the drone program to change addresses.

He said on Fox News recently that what they really need to do is take this whole programme out of the hands of the Central Intelligence Agency and put it into the Department of Defense.

But some analysts question whether the move to the Pentagon would truly increase oversight.

Benjamin Friedman, a research fellow in defense and homeland security studies at the CATO Institute, a libertarian think tank, said that shift in-and-of-itself does not necessarily create more transparency.

According to the report, in his article for the Daily Beast that broke the news of the reported shift, Daniel Klaidman points out that the Pentagon may choose to place responsibility for the drone programme with Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which is responsible for the Navy's SEAL Team 6, Delta Force, and other equally secretive US military strike forces.

Most vital is that this potential move could spark a deeper conversation among lawmakers and the Americans about secretive programmes that warrant far more oversight than they have been getting, analysts said.