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***Topic area B: "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles:
managing the implications of their
proliferation and military use"***



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Topic Area B: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: managing the implications of their proliferation and military use

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1. Welcoming Letter by the chairs of the First Committee

Dear Delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you all to the 1st Committee of the General Assembly (DISEC). At first, we would like to congratulate each and every one of you for taking part into this year's edition of the Thessaloniki International Students Model United Nations and promise that we will do anything within our powers to facilitate you throughout the conference so as to have a productive and unforgettable experience.

This year's sessions will focus on two rather pressing issues. The first topic, similar to the last year's agenda, calls for a new and comprehensive approach on cyber warfare and cyber security. The abrupt developments that took place in the summer of 2017 and the collapse of the world's main vehicle for negotiations on cyber security, call for a renewed and in depth dialogue concerning the issue, so as to surpass the existing problems and reach consensus between states.

The second topic deals with the issue of proliferation of drone technology as a military means and the various implications that may arise from its use. Being a topical matter, the weaponization of unmanned aerial vehicles, is expected to test your diplomatic "stamina" while, at the same time, requires you to be in line with the national policies set by the country every single one of you represents.

This study guide aims at helping you get a better insight into the Topic Areas of the Committee and offers you a starting point for your research. Nevertheless, it is highly advised to conduct a thorough examination on your country's position concerning the matter discussed and also elaborate on your key national policies within the context of the position paper you will be requested to deliver before the opening of the conference.

We trust in your academic and diplomatic skills and sincerely hope for a remarkable outcome.

We thank you in advance for your in-depth understanding and co-operation and look forward to meeting you in person!

The chair and co-chair of the First Committee of the General Assembly,

Ananias Kapourkatsidis

Sophia Telonaki

**DISEC**

DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

2. Introduction to the Committee

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)¹ was established in 1993 and constitutes one of the main committees of the General Assembly. The role of DISEC is circumscribed in Article 11, Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.

“The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both”. As per this article, the mandate of DISEC is highlighted as, “to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources”.

The body's pivotal responsibilities are interconnected with issues of disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace, all of which greatly affect the international community. DISEC further seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. Any arising disarmament and international security matter falls within the ambit of the Charter relating to the powers and functions of the First Committee. DISEC implements the following principles when drafting its documents or in session:

- The general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments.
- And, last but not least, the promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament while is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage .

¹ The official page of the First Committee of the General Assembly:

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/>

3. Introduction to the Topic

Drones. They have become a technological sensation. What has once been an aspiring military privilege is now dominating the marketplace and reshaping the way warfare is being conducted. However, the plethora of implications arising from their, sometimes arbitrary, use combined with the fact that only some States can obtain them has raised concerns both by the public and the academia. Furthermore, the seemingly effortless access to drones has never been more troublesome since terrorist groups and radicalists often resort to utilizing unmanned aerial vehicles to fight back.

Being a relatively new means of military weapon, there have been only some scarce attempts at regulating their use leaving room for countries with considerable drone capacity to utilize UAVs in multiple ways while their actions often go unpunished. It is an uncontested truth that drones provide us with a wide spectrum of advanced services ranging from intelligence sharing to locating insurgent groups. But that mainly depends on who has his hands on this pioneering technology.

In any case, drone market is becoming more and more popular while at the same time its impact on international security is rapidly increasing. The need to manage the implications of their use is imperative and undeniably interesting. UAVs sometimes enjoy heavy criticism whilst others are welcomed with great satisfaction. One way or another, the militarization of drones is gathering a lot of attention and is undeniably rendered a topical issue for the agenda of the 1st Committee of the General Assembly.

Definition of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)

“An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is an aircraft without a human pilot aboard²”. UAVs are a component of an unmanned aircraft system (UAS), namely an aircraft and its associated elements which are operated with no pilot on board. The flight of UAVs may operate with various degrees of autonomy: either under remote control by a human operator or autonomously by onboard computers.

² Icao.int. (2017). [online] Available at:
https://www.icao.int/Meetings/UAS/Documents/Circular%20328_en.pdf

4. Historical Context

The feasibility behind the generating idea of the creation of drones was brilliantly simplistic. Conducting warfare from above, although quite effective, turned out to be dangerous, especially during times where technological advancements still lacked the capacity to guarantee its success. In an attempt to reinforce the potency of military strikes from the skies following a not so welcome scientific effusion that dominated the 20th century and the two World Wars that preoccupied humankind, the aspiring undertaking of unmanned aerial vehicles emerged.

Even in the days of the Italian Invasion of Libya back in 1911³, the idea of transferring explosives by air and having them generating their destructive results with utmost precision was appealing enough. However, the promising project came to nothing by the end of the Great War, only to make its reappearance some years later, when WWII broke out. The quintessence of the initial plan remained unaltered: pilotless planes that could be of use to the military forces of any country that could employ them. Again, the military and political leaders that opposed each other during the Cold War, namely the Soviet Union and the United States of America, turned their backs on drones, despite its popular concept, and opted for missiles.

The idea was sidelined but never abandoned. In the late 90s, the American air force overcame any technicalities or practical issues that were hindering the utilization of drones and after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York firing missile from unmanned vehicle became a fearful reality. Since then drones have been massively used by national forces or other non-state actors in their efforts to level themselves against the enemy coming from above.

Before moving on with any further analysis, it is worthy of briefly mentioning the relatively recent story of Daraz Khan⁴. In 2002, Khan along with two other friends

³ The Nation. (2017). A Brief History of Drones. [online] Available at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/brief-history-drones/>.

⁴ LSE Human Rights. (2017). Drones in Contemporary Warfare: The Implications for Human Rights. [online] Available at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/humanrights/2016/07/07/drones-in-contemporary-warfare-the-implications-for-human-rights/>.

collected scrap metal somewhere in Southern Afghanistan under the watchful eye of the American Predator (drone). The pilotless vehicle collected information regarding the three Afghans, such as the items of clothes they were wearing. Judging by their outfits, Khan's taller height than the other two and by the fact that they were placed in an al-Qaeda suspected area, the three men we considered targets. Khan specifically was considered to be Osama bin Laden himself. All of them were killed. None of them was Osama bin Laden or anyhow linked to the terrorist group.

The above outlined story vividly portrays the unraveling, yet limited, capacities of drones. The easiness of labeling someone as a priority target, only to find out later that he was an ordinary citizen beyond any suspicion. No matter how disrupting, this story gracefully exposes the drawbacks of what till now appeared to be an only beneficial advancement of the technological progress, but above all uncovers the unpleasant surprises drones may bestow upon international security.

5. Implications arising from the use of drones

5.1. Targeted and Signature Killings

One of the essential concerns surrounding the ever-growing use of armed unmanned drones is how they generated an unprecedented expansion of targeted killings⁵. When it comes to its definition, international law scholar Ellen Mary O'Connell writes that "targeted killing is the killing of certain individuals away from battle zones using military means, including missiles, bombs and commando raids" among many others. The proliferation of drone technology, and drone warfare in general, has enabled governments, or to put it in other words, has enabled governments who already behold the capacity to obtain them (UAVs) to conduct killings against anyone or anything was deemed a *valid military objective* (meaning the person who fulfilled a list of loose criteria that could potentially label him as danger).

⁵ Drone Wars UK. (2018). Drones and Targeted Killing. [online] Available at: <https://dronewars.net/drones-and-targeted-killing/>

Signature strikes are the targeted killings of individuals whose names are not known but their behavior allegedly gives them the ‘signature’ or ‘hallmark’ of insurgents/terrorists. Parallel to targeted killings is another form of strikes exclusively operated by drones which made its appearance after the terrorist attacks in the World Trade Center in September 2001. “A signature strike is a drone strike on suspected terrorists or militants whose identities are not known, but whose “pattern of life activity” would seem to indicate that they are involved in some militant/terrorist activity. These activities could range, for example, from associating with known terrorists in an Al Qaeda hujra (guest house) to sneaking across the border into Afghanistan from Pakistan’s Taliban-controlled tribal zones with a group of Taliban insurgents”⁶.

It therefore follows that the main problematic of signature strikes is that the decision on who will be killed is determined on indications and not on certain facts. Any person who leads a “suspicious” lifestyle, as loosely and arbitrarily as suspicious is defined, is automatically considered suit for death. This admission, however, does not come without consequences. Civilian lives are put in jeopardy, depending on unsure criteria set by a small number of countries which are in possession of military drones. Simply put, nationals residing in countries that are thought to be dangerous or, for example, home to terrorist organizations and do not have the required drone capacity to fight back, are put at a disadvantage. Furthermore, even if suspicions pertaining to a target are later on proved to be correct, there are multiple times where signature strikes are conducted based on limited intelligence and without knowing for sure whether the person targeted is truly dangerous and ought to be killed. Again, the complications deriving from this type of strikes are more troublesome when, as previously mentioned, only a few countries are producing drones and even more are in the position of equipping their armies and militaries with drone technology.

5.2. Proliferation of drone technology among militant groups

It was not before long that militant groups got their hands on drone technology using it as a brand new means to wage war from above. As ominous as this may sound, it

⁶ Ibid.

should not come as a surprise. The widespread use of commercially-available uninhabited aerial vehicles did not go unnoticed by militant groups, such as ISIS or Hezbollah, which do not only employ drones so that they can effectively eliminate their enemies but also for propaganda purposes as a constant reminder of their ever-increasing strength⁷.

Besides, it is quite commonplace for radical actors to make the most out of the latest consumer technology in their attempts to gain leverage when fighting against traditional military forces or even when conducting isolated strikes. Last year's ISIS offensive strike in Northern Iraq that managed to kill two Kurdish peshmerga fighters and, at the same time, wound two French Special Operations troops sets a prime example of the threat posed to international security by the unrestricted utilization of drones⁸. Similar attacks further occurred in Syria and Ukraine, only to unveil the new tools insurgent groups have at their disposal when planning terrorist attacks against innocent civilians or opposing ground forces.

Once drone proliferation has started, there is nothing to do to prevent it, for access to technology will always be easy and most of the times unavoidable. Thus, governments are left with the sole choice of developing counter-drone policies if they want to remain unharmed by the augmented capacities of the radical militant groups.

Why is the news, however, of militants that are moving towards a drone-oriented solution to warfare so worrisome if drones are, as previously mentioned, only a new "war tool"? The answer, no matter how simple, lays on the fact that for decades, national militaries enjoyed air superiority when fighting insurgent groups⁹. Now this deliberate and convenient exclusivity is being weakened due to ability of militants to fly drones carrying lethal munitions among anyone they consider an enemy.

⁷ Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. (2017). Militant groups have drones. [online] Available at: <https://thebulletin.org/militant-groups-have-drones-now-what11089>.

⁸ Gibbons-Neff, T. (2017). ISIS used an armed drone to kill two Kurdish fighters and wound French troops, report says. [online] Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/10/11/isis-used-an-armed-drone-to-kill-two-kurdish-fighters-and-wound-french-troops-report-says/?utm_term=.5a957cb010df.

⁹ Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. (2017). Militant groups have drones. [online] Available at: <https://thebulletin.org/militant-groups-have-drones-now-what11089>.

From conducting airstrikes upon unsuspected soldiers to strapping explosive material to drones generating results of devastating magnitude militant groups are using commercial drones to cover for their impotence and advance themselves against their traditionally superior national forces. Equally troublesome would be the intrusion of military type unmanned aerial vehicles within terrorist groups, a phenomenon not so unfamiliar in the past. In the 2000s, Lebanon-based Hezbollah, one of the most operationally effective militant groups across the globe, obtained Iranian-made drones to surveil Israeli targets¹⁰. In response, some years later, Israeli fighter jets shot down an Iranian-made UAV while in 2012, a Hezbollah drone invaded Israeli airspace capturing images of sensitive nuclear facilities before it was completely destroyed by the enemy. Even recently, Israel shot down what was claimed to appear as a Hezbollah reconnaissance drone in a Syrian demilitarized zone hours before the country's prime minister would address the United Nations General Assembly¹¹.

The unprecedented weaponization of drones has far exceeded any predictions or expectations made by experts. Drones' proliferation and the impact it may have on warfare constitutes a matter of heated debates among the public and academia. For anyone can indiscriminately attack anywhere. Another cause of concern regarding the use of military-grade drones operated by insurgent groups does not only restrict to the fact that this type of lethal technology is now within their reach but mainly to the lack of responsibility. Groups such as ISIS, Hezbollah and Boko Haram, do not bear any responsibility to abide by international regulations, treaties or the Geneva Conventions which only adds to its hazardous nature¹².

Of course, obtaining drone technology does not automatically come with the necessary know-how concerning the way it operates. Nevertheless, taking into consideration its accessibility and swift pace proliferation, it is becoming more and more evident that eventually even militants will learn to properly use drones. This is

¹⁰ Beaumont, P. (2017). Israel: 'We have shot down Iranian-supplied Hezbollah drone'. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/19/israel-we-have-shot-down-iranian-supplied-hezbollah-drone>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Alyssa Sims, T. (2017). The Consequences of Global Armed Drone Proliferation. [online] The Diplomat. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/the-consequences-of-global-armed-drone-proliferation/>.

the reason why it is preferable that countries which produce or are directly affected by dronefare should focus on establishing a unilateral approach regulating the use of drones as military weaponry, rather than trying to prevent what, up until now, promises to be unavoidable.

5.3. Data Security

Closely linked to what has already been mentioned above is the issue of data security. Attributing an international extent to the matter, it is of crucial importance to examine what will occur in the event of a drone accident or hacking, due to the susceptibility of the devices to getting shot down and dismantled by aspirant hackers, where classified information is obtained to the detriment of national administrations. This weakness comes to stark contrast with the high expectations set by governmental and military leaders as regards the UAVs' role in improving their national security through combat or surveillance missions. Their evolving capabilities to store a widened range of information (environmental data, strategic operations and many more) along with the capacity to collect and process data render them a popular target for disarmament and jeopardizes their operation by exposing drones to the dangers of manipulation, attacks and theft¹³. Bearing in mind all the above, it is underlined that the use and further weaponization of drones must be delimited so that the repercussions surrounding its widespread presence can be, if not eradicated, at least minimized.

5.4. Are Swarm Drones becoming a reality?

It is undeniable that drones tend to become smaller, cheaper to make, but most importantly they can now gather in groups of hundreds, even thousands, as they are flying like a flock of birds¹⁴. As a matter of fact, UAVs have at the moment the capacity to outperform weapons and technology that militaries have used for decades.

¹³ Ccdcoe.org. (2017). [online] Available at:

http://www.ccdcoe.org/publications/2013proceedings/d3r2s2_hartmann.pdf.

¹⁴ Hambling, D. (2017). The next era of drones will be defined by 'swarms'. [online] Bbc.com.

Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170425-were-entering-the-next-era-of-drones>.

The thought becomes even more alarming with the realization that these unpiloted vehicles can be coordinated to buzz above congested cities striving to gather intelligence or that they could sweep in to attack a warship, irreversibly destroy its radar system and, finally, leave it defenseless. And all of the above, without fearing the potential of any damages caused to drones themselves.



A swarm of drones has no commander but one operator that controls the swarm as a whole, and though it may sound as a rather unusual sight, swarm drones have appeared in a number of popular occasions (for example, the American Superbowl competition)¹⁵. The spectacular phenomenon constitutes a self-organizing system in which all of the consisting elements are equal, adding to their already accurately efficient performance. Another fact, both useful and alarming, lays to the vehicles' endurance. Contrary to missiles, a swarm can lose dozens of members and still keep operating.

In spite of being in a rather embryonic phase, swarming drone technology is taking warfare by storm, evolving shockingly fast. Theoretically, swarms can defeat any available weapon, delivering enough precision firepower to engender havoc on a

¹⁵ Ibid.

massive scale, instantly rendering the enemy incapable of demonstrating the least of resistance. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that the way war is conducted nowadays may alter turning simply into a matter of who has the biggest and best drone swarms. And this competition may not diminish within the battlefield but advance to various manifestations of the everyday routine¹⁶.

6. Anti-drone technology: The antidote to drone madness?

Where there is action, there is always opposed an equal reaction and where there is drone technology, there is anti-drone technology as well. A public display of such elaborated systems was held in Taksim Square, in the Turkish capital in January 2018, where hundreds of citizens had the opportunity to witness how a mechanism can disarm and cease the operation of drones¹⁷.

Turkey has been one of the first countries to develop anti-drone technology^{18,19}, providing the international community with a new hope as regards the effective tackling of unmanned aerial vehicles. According to the General Coordinator of the firm which designed the electromagnetic anti-drone system, Aytekin Guclu, the company's products are fit for civilian use and aim at providing sustainability in production and research-and-development efforts.

Though anti-drone technology is still in its earliest phases, its development is met with great emphasis and expectations. The reason why this happens is quite obvious.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Idrones.gr. (2018). Οι τουρκικές αρχές περιφρουρούν την Ταξίμ και με όπλα αντι-drone. [online] Available at: <https://www.idrones.gr/%CE%BA%CF%8C%CF%83%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%82/%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%AE%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%B9%CF%82/1005-%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%BA%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82-%CE%B1%CF%81%CF%87%CE%AD%CF%82-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%86%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%8D%CE%BD-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%BE%CE%AF%CE%BC-%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%BC%CE%B5-%CF%8C%CF%80%CE%BB%CE%B1-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B9-drone>

¹⁸ Anadolu Agency. (2018). Turkish firm builds anti-drone system for civilian use. [online] Available at: <http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/turkish-firm-builds-anti-drone-system-for-civilian-use/941092>.

¹⁹ Middle East Monitor. (2018). Turkey builds anti-drone system for civilian use. [online] Available at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171018-turkey-builds-anti-drone-system-for-civilian-use/>

Anti-drone mechanisms, especially those targeted for military and even more civilian use, are outstandingly effective for they restore the equilibrium between countries with considerable drone technology at their disposal and those who still lack in the UAV department. We just have to wait and see what the future has in store concerning the evolution of anti-drone warfare and the implications arising from its use.

7. Legal Framework

The first side event on drones by the 1st Committee of the GA

In October 2015, the UN Headquarters after the initiative by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations hosted a discussion on the proliferation of armed drones extending to its legal, ethical, and political perplexities arising from their use. The discussion marked the first side event of the 1st Committee of the General Assembly. Many interesting conclusions were reached, one of them ascertaining the high risk involved when employing drones, especially in regards with the lives of innocent civilians, despite appearing to be as a low-cost and risk-free means of warfare. Furthermore, the extraterritorial weaponization of drones and the worrying lack of transparency concerning the decision-making of offensive missions carried out by national governments for the sake of the protection of their citizens are prime examples of some topical issues remaining unanswered.

Apart from confronting issues challenging to international law, the discussion covered ways aiming at augmenting transparency and accountability in the domain of drones while simultaneously proposing measures, such as publishing the results of investigations of alleged unlawful deaths, disclosing information on each strike, applying the applicable legal framework, as well as drafting criteria to protect civilians²⁰.

²⁰ Un.org. (2017). Discussing Drones at the UN Headquarters – UNODA. [online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/discussing-drones-at-the-un-headquarters-2/>

Riga Declaration on remotely piloted aircraft (drones) – “Framing the future of aviation”, March 2015

In March 2015, the European Aviation Community gathered in Riga, Latvia to deliberate on the new paths curved by drones in various domains and to secure its rational and reasonable utilization. The aviation community, as a whole, placed a great emphasis on the overwhelming need to safeguard the “sustainable emergence of innovative drone services”²¹, aligning with citizen’s needs. The Riga Declaration endorsed five guiding principles suggesting how a future regulatory framework should be.

1. Drones need to be treated as new types of aircraft with proportionate rules based on the risk of each operation

This principle provisions the need for safety standards to remain high when regulating drones, equal to the rules applying to civil aviation. Notwithstanding the lack of pilot on board, passengers in other aircrafts or on the ground should enjoy protection from any potential accidents that may occur that is proportionate to the operational risk the use of drones entails.

2. EU rules for the safe provision of drone services need to be developed now

The European Aviation Safety Agency along with the EU Member States and in cooperation with international bodies should join their forces when drafting safety rules referring to remote pilot and operator qualifications. Moreover, it is stressed that any regulatory attempt at European level and beyond should be actuated within the soonest time possible in order to facilitate the smoother integration of drones to the future of aviation.

3. Technologies and standards need to be developed for the full integration of drones in the European airspace

The third fundamental principle set by the Riga Declaration emphasizes the usefulness of funding, and financial support in general, that will invest the

²¹ Ec.europa.eu. (2017). [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/modes/air/news/doc/2015-03-06-drones/2015-03-06-riga-declaration-drones.pdf>

technologies necessary to integrate drones in the system of aviation and, therefore, ensure the success of drone activities and safety regulations surrounding them.

4. Public acceptance is key to the growth of drone services

The fourth declared principle explores the relation between fundamental human rights, such as the right to privacy and protection of personal data²². The enforcement of this principle is of utmost importance since a plethora of drone-operated activities involve data gathering, underlining the need to set the limit between what is acceptable and allowed or not.

5. The operator of a drone is responsible for its use

Maybe the most noteworthy of all principles set forth by the Riga Declaration. The fifth clause suggests holding the owner of the drone accountable for any implications that may derive from its use, be it an intrusion in a prohibited airspace or delivering and conducting services in an unsafe manner or against the rule of law. Gradually accepting the probabilities of having a drone accident occurred, it is equally important to plan for the implemented insurance and third-party liability regime. Given its effortless accessibility, nobody cannot deny that drone services and technologies need to be closely controlled, both monitoring its ever-growing number of operations and, at the same time, keeping track of its evolutionary novelties. Such a legislative experience could be only to the benefit of legislators who are finding themselves in uncharted territory attempting to ensure that “new technologies and drones can develop in full respect of the required high levels of safety, security, privacy and environmental protection”²³.

Introduction of a regulatory framework for the operation of drones (EASA)

Another legislative attempt was noticed once again by the European Aviation Safety Agency. In accordance with various Regulations by the European Commission, the Agency through its Notice of Proposed Amendment (NPA) lays considerable emphasis on dealing with security threats as well as acting in respect of the citizens’

²² Privacy and Data Protection are not included in the mandate of the 1st Committee of the General Assembly, thus you should refrain from proposing measures on these matters..

²³ *Ibid.*

rights to privacy and data protection. The underlying factor behind this constant rule is no other than a smooth transition to the UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) market²⁴.

8. The way forward: The future of drone warfare

As witnessed above, international law has failed to supply us with sufficient, or in fact any, documents regulating the use of drones in the contemporary battlefield. The lack of transparency in establishing a causal link between targeted killings and legal justification has resulted to defining drone attacks as a sincere violation of the international humanitarian and international human rights law, evidently characterized so by a 2010 UN report. Things are getting more complicated bearing in mind that only some countries can produce drones or even equip their military forces with this type of refined technology. The same goes, of course, for the anti-drone mechanisms that have recently resurged. Complications with international humanitarian law make an even more daunting appearance when drone strikes occur in non-conflict zones, inevitably raising issues over state sovereignty and human rights violations²⁵.

As these violations never cease to ensue, one may wonder whether justice for victims of unjust attacks and their families will ever be administered. Falling behind in accumulating the responsibility of offensive strikes and holding states responsible for their actions is already another violation of international law. It is of utmost importance for legal accountability to be practically coerced, when it comes to firing against innocent civilians, leaving no room for countries to throw themselves to the battle at the alleged altar of superficial ideals and unnecessary wars.

On the bright side of the evolving dronefare to be conducted in the near future lays the growing capacities of the commercial sector. Between military and commercial type applications there is a proportionality ratio applied, meaning that the

²⁴ Easa.europa.eu. (2017). [online] Available at:

https://www.easa.europa.eu/system/files/dfu/NPA%202017-05%20%28A%29_0.pdf.

²⁵ Any human rights related issues should not be specifically addressed by the 1st Committee of the General Assembly.

development of commercial UAVs and what may surround them could lead to the discovery of military-oriented technology and vice versa. For example, the sensor component segment is estimated to perform the best and the fastest, within the existing market conditions, compared to other drone departments. Sensors can serve multiple functions and tasks assigned to them such as transmitting images or detecting heat signatures, being used in search-and-rescue operations or facilitating crop analysis²⁶. On the other hand, however, the same services and even more elaborate can be provided by sensors incorporated in military drones, proving the tricky nature of UAVs and the careful monitor this nature requires.

9. Conclusion

Military or commercial, problematic or not, drones have come to stay. Their transition from the battlefield to the various military forces and finally to the hands of the everyday citizen has proved to be effortless, yet full of risks. Implications arising from their use are innumerable, but most importantly closely interwoven with international law and security. The difficulty of holding the states accountable for their actions and sometimes to even be informed of their intentions to embark on drone campaigns against their enemies is indicative of the dangers UAVs pose to the international community. The potential or de facto violations of the threats to the citizens' security deriving from commercial or military pilotless devices are only adding insult to injury. Furthermore, the legislative gap, mainly attributed to the recent utilization and systematic weaponization of drones, requires now more than ever a timely and definite response. In any case, the speculation circulating the use of drones is neither ephemeral nor inexplicable. Using drones as means of conducting war, deviates from the traditional warfare breaking all the unwritten rules that have defined martial behaviors and customs over the past centuries. Besides, since drones belong only to those who can afford them, there are countries which face dire straits –

²⁶ Ac.els-cdn.com. (2018). [online] Available at: https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0924271614000501/1-s2.0-S0924271614000501-main.pdf?_tid=157fc472-f983-11e7-b2fd-00000aacb35e&acdnat=1515972894_1ec91c921f589fdad0da3a36dedc69e1.



militarily speaking – because of their intrinsic financial fragility. The concept of attacking a foreign military force or eliminating a target without worrying the least for your own bodily integrity or facing the suffering and eventual killing of your enemy automates war, presenting it to be as something almost procedural. Removing the emotional aspect of something as horrific as war results, be it unwillingly or unconsciously, in its dehumanization. Accepting drones as an integral part of the revised status quo is of crucial importance. Making it, however, one's number one priority to regulate the side effects their use may entail is infinitely more significant.

10. Points to be addressed

1. How does the use of military and commercial use endanger the security of international community?
2. How can implications from the use of drones, mainly circulating issues of data protection, affect their militarization and eventually impact international security?
3. How can States be restricted from conducting signature strikes arbitrarily?
4. Are signature strikes as harmful as some claim to be, and if so, are there ways to eliminate them?
5. Are there ways to ensure that the proliferation of drones will not be within the reach of militant groups?
6. In what way can the States be hold accountable for their actions? What should the international community do to establish and further implement the principle of responsibility?
7. How could the use of UAVs by States with considerable drone capacity be rendered more transparent?
8. How will countries that do not own UAVs be protected from the ones that do?
9. Could anti-drone technology be used as a means of combatting drone use and the implications arising from its proliferation?
10. Are anti-drone mechanisms generating more problems that those they attempt to solve?
11. Is the legislation regulating Unmanned Aerial Vehicles sufficient?
12. How can the principles set out in the Riga Declaration be used in order to safeguard international security and control the proliferation of drones?

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