Forum: The First General Assembly

Issue: The question of regulating the use of UAVs in the military

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Introduction

In a rampantly evolving society, the proliferation of advanced technology in the military exceeds beyond what we can withstand. The escalation of warfare, both electronic and not, have plagued many a member state in the midst of ever-evolving machinery. A large part of our modernized weapons includes the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

UAVs are defined as remote controlled aircrafts that do not carry a pilot, but are rather, programmed and monitored by an operator. Commercially, we may perceive drones to be household devices used for photography/videography, inspections, or for security purposes. In a military context, however, UAVs have seen revolution ever since its origins in 1973, where the first reconnaissance drone was developed by Isreali forces. These unmanned vehicles have an astounding range of purposes, including intelligence collection, imaging, surveillance, and offensive action. As time moves on, armies have gained a stronger acquisition for UAVs. Militaries have moved from simply utilizing combat drones as a form of counterterrorism, but as a primary method of conventional attack doctrines. BBC reports that over 100 countries and non-state actor groups have access to drones, including the larger operators in the field, the United States and Israel, as well as numerous other growing militaries such as China, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan, and the UAE.

As we form a growing reliance on UAVs, a larger issue comes into play: how are we to regulate this to ensure international security? As of now, the guidelines with which military drones are to be employed are uncoordinated across nations, with very few being

party to official laws that prohibit certain deadly arms or obligations with which operators are held accountable for the damage caused by their product. Countries are redirecting much of their military expenditure toward the manufacturing and purchasing of UAVs and drone-related material, with little-to-no rules on how they are to be used with concern for the safety of civilians. It is definite that UAVs are the future of global protection- the question is, how are we to prevent it from devolving into global warfare?

Definition of Key Terms

UAVs

Also colloquially referred to as "drones", unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are aircrafts employed by the military, armed with sensors and electronic transmitters and accessories to carry out designated tasks. They do not hold a human pilot and are, rather, controlled remotely with wireless communication. In the common society, UAVs may be utilized for traffic control, aerial photography, agriculture, and policing. Whereas, when concerning the military, UAVs are assigned various missions, from imaging and intelligence reconnaissance, to surveillance, more notably, target acquisition and offensive action.

Anti-access/area denial

Anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) is a military technique employed to control the entry of forces on geographic and operational areas, potentially involving defensive weapons that restrict and discourage adversary threats. Such terms are utilized to describe a country's protective devices in the midst of warfare

Adversary

An adversary is any opponent or enemy in a conflict, contextually used when discussing threats to a sovereign state and methods to predict and prevent military intervention.

Improvised Explosive Devices

Containing an initiator, switch, main charge, power source, and a container, Improvised Explosive Device, or IED, is a bomb or explosivve device made to either

destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract, as per the National Academies and the Department of Homeland Security. IEDs can come in a variety of forms and comprise of both military and non-military components.

Key Issues

Inflicting harm on civilians

The proliferation of UAVs has given rise to threats on international security as such weapons are programmed to destroy enemy targets with little regard to the innocent bystanders that may stand in the way. Their normalization in the military provides an additional outlet with which offensive groups and non-state actors are to do their bidding, inciting violence in many forms.

Physical injury

Drone strikes with the aim to physically harm the receivers have posed threat to any individual within proximity to the UAV. Since legal outlines of UAV use is loosely defined, attackers have the power to impose brute force on an adversary, ranging from minor collisions against infrastructure to the deploying of explosive material, without political ties or consequence. Even unintentionally, a malfunction in the remote controlling or programming of a drone can send it off-course and into civilian territory. Targeted attacks, as they grow more prevalent, may appear as bombs, bullets, firearms, or other, depending on the goal the drone was manufactured for and the actors responsible for its creation. If not fatal, when equipped with IEDs, UAVs may still possess the potential to cause overpressure damage involving lasting effects on sensitive organs, fragment injuries, impact injuries and blunt force trauma, exposure to toxic substances that may aggravate existing illness, and third-degree burns. Detonations from the sky on unaware targets can lead to devastating collateral deaths with lack of protective protocol. According to the Bureau of investigative Journalism, United States drone strikes in a select 4 destinations from 2002 to 2020 had killed 10,000 to 17,000

individuals, 8,000 to 1,750 of whom were thought to be civilians. Such numbers exemplify the physical dangers of the use of UAVs on civilians.

Mental trauma

Though many stop at the physical implications of UAVs, recent investigations signify the severe mental trauma caused by drones and their presence in communities. Living under drones brought rise to civilians being exposed to the constant fear of being attacked or watched. Numerous reports have accounted for the terror they've experienced from the sights and sounds of the UAVs, tethering and agitated at the unforeseeable nature of future actions. Psychiatrists define this degrading fear as "anticipatory anxiety", consistently fearing for their lives whilst waiting for the drone to strike. This apprehension is contributed to by the screams of nearby civilians or the noises of the UAVs' movements, as well as the sight of UAV appearing in the civilian's peripheral. According to a study by Stanford, victims of the drone strikes in Pakistan say that, "no matter what we are doing, we are always thinking the drone will strike us. So we are scared to do anything." More interviewees commented on how the powerlessness they felt over the potential acts of the UAVs compounded their emotional and psychological distress. In extreme cases, reports display the correlation to a rise in post-traumatic stress disorder in civilians living under watch. This pertained to those afflicted having mental breakdowns and fleeing to sheltered spaces at sudden overhead movements, insomnia and nightmares, loss of appetite and physical changes, as well as startled outburst and fainting. In addition, as per a 2011 survey from the New York Times, both civillians and drone operators are found to have higher incidences of anxiety disorder, depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and suicidal ideation, putting people at existential risk by more means than one.

Lack of transparency

Legally, transparency refers to the governmental obligation to share important, yet sensitive-in-nature information to the public when it concerns them. large militaries like

that of the United States have often been criticized for withholding the exact data, statistics surrounding casualties, incidences, actions, and purposes for their UAVs. The harm inflicted on civilians is a powerful metric for the success, or lack thereof, of a drone program and regime. If many casualties occur, the international law outlining the proliferation of UAVs then erodes its credibility and effectiveness, urging for its alteration or even removal. Such judgments are, however, unable to be made due to the governments' unwillingness to provide concrete information on the militarization of their drones. Governments would then fail to take accountability for the deaths caused by their doing, but will nevertheless conceal these occurrences and continue following their military doctrine in order to obtain the most successful strategy in counterterrorism. In addition, countries are keeping secrecy on the number of drones they may produce or utilize, hence making political ties and ownership of damages obsolete. There is an, overall, lack of understanding surrounding the use of UAVs in the military which, thereby, questions the efficacy and legality of them.

Privacy

In many instances UAVs will be utilized for reconnaissance and data collection services, as per one of their primary roles in the military. Law enforcement uses this technology for the benefit of the community, providing surveillance and protection to their civilians whilst strengthening their capabilities to monitor illegal activity. That being said, a large issue arises from the imaging and storage capacities of UAVs that pertains to the privacy of civilians. When equipped with sophisticated camera devices, which is a common occurrence, UAVs have the ability to capture high-quality audiovisual data within a given radius, infringing the privacy of those it sits above. New technology has grown smarter and now has the capacity to obtain biometric data through analysis, including facial and voice recognition. If replicated and processed, such information gathered from targeted individuals can cause harsh threats to security as it poses a tool for impersonation and data exploitation. Alongside this, military groups may decide to use such variants of UAVs to monitor and scrutinize certain locations and map them out in order to decide their next geographic target, threatening the lives of all nearby civilians.

This technology can also be directed toward the federal level, surveilling governmental organizations of adversaries so that they may collect sensitive details on their operations, later planning accordingly and hatching defensive or offensive strategy.

Cybersecurity and threats to interference

The advanced capabilities of a UAV simultaneously increasing the concern for the possibility of its information being intercepted. Because drones are remotely controlled, the autonomy and power an operator has rests solely on the stability and security of their programming. Unfortunately, since drones utilize radio waves, there is an open entry path for hackers and non-state actors with malicious intent, without needing any physical ownership of the drone. In 2019, Iran was thought to have hacked into U.S. commissioned Hackers who would then have access to highly sensitive information, risking the safety of both the original controller of the vehicle, as well as the original target. In one sense, the Wi-Fi signals emitted by the drone may quickly alert the defense systems of enemy territory, rendering it redundant and taunting an adversary to host a counter strike. A Russian warning radar can detect a UAV up to 126 miles away, proving the extent of security that can demean intruding drones. Along with this, interfering signals can degrade the information that is being carried by the drone, unintentionally misleading those behind the drone and feeding false information. In a similar fashion, hackers themselves can intercept the UAV and engage in GPS spoofing, wherein a hacker feeds the drone with false coordinates or programming that could either be used to trick an adversary, or be used to retarget infrastructure or groups of individuals, causing significant damages in the process. Hackers may subsequently have access to the data within the drone and repurpose it for negative motives. If a drone is targeting a high-ranking figure and has therefore gathered large amounts of reconnaissance on the individual, such crucial information in the wrong hands can lead to catastrophe and mass destruction. Analytics yielded from cyber-attacks may sacrifice the protection of the general public as a whole. Finally, a danger posed against existing UAVs is the extent of their replicability. During Trump's administration, policies rolling back on the restrictions of the provision of material to develop UAVs had been implemented, removing the

scrutiny for laser designators, and avoiding the use of end-use monitoring (EUM). This exemplifies the manner in which non-state actors may choose to replicate the hardware used in military-grade UAVs and repurpose them for maintenance.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States

The US is the most open when it comes to their military reliance on UAVs and aerial weaponry. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has registered 867,856 of the United States' drones currently in practice. Though explicit details have been withheld from public knowledge, estimates suggest that, from 1994 to 2014, the United States authorized the export of at least 3 billion USD worth of UAVs. Historically, the US has made itself known as a global superpower in their military strength, much of which is accredited to evolving technologies like that of drones. In the past, drones had been used solely for surveillance and intelligence reconnaissance, as well as being commercially distributed. However, since the tragic terrorists attacks of 9/11 in 2001, the United States had opted to repurpose their drones for high-votality operations in order to reinforce their militance and A2/AD defense strategy. They had learned from the armed forces of Israel after their successful drone strikes, purchasing much of their earlier models or redesigning them under license. Nowadays, the US' UAV resources and models have been globally acclaimed to be leading in the field, developing intricate and notably lucrative tactical aircraft- like the MQ-1 Predator that is now considered to be the benchmark for all military drones. Such factors are what have led to the increased trade ties the States have with major exporters of UAVs and their related material, like China and Israel. Not only have UAVs been a core part of the US's past offensive and defensive systems, but the country plans on redirecting much of their arms toward the development of more advanced and capable military drones. The States have employed their drones in multiple contexts, a notable example would be in the orchestration of Osama Bin Laden's killing in 2011. In 2019, the US government had approved new guidelines for the use of uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) that encourage the export of armed aircraft, removing the

requirements for casualties caused by government drones to be reported and accounted for, and reducing the extensive end-use monitoring on the provision of drones. These adjustments are a symbol for the rapid escalation of the US's reliance on UAVs in the military.

China

Prior to former President of the United States Trump's administration, China was turned to as the primary exporter and supplier of unmanned aerial vehicles and other armed aircraft. China became known for their high-quality product as well as their unregulated market for UAVs, inciting its heavy proliferation and pertinence in their military and trade. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) acts as the strongest aerial armed service to China, with sophisticated fighter jets and combat drones alike. PLAAF have utilized their extensive army of drones in UAV squadrons, building up their border defense and counterterrorism doctrines. As of now, China believes the existing treaties for the controlled use of armed aircraft to be unsuitable to their ideals, rather focusing on developing a rapid production line that benefits both themselves as well as any clientele, with few restrictions to their extent of weaponry. There are, currently, very few criteria that outline who China is of the capacity to provide their combat drones to, restricting their sales from non-state actors and non-state actor groups, as well as prioritizing countries and clientele in crises of security and warfare. The China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation is another organization linked back to the manufacturing and export of UAVs, and their ideologies act similarly to that of the whole country, in that their technology is rapidly modernized and prepared for mass production to maximize profits and last in the interest of revolutionized armed aircraft for centuries.

Israel

Israel has been credited as the first country to utilize a form of UAV in combat, developing the Tadiran Mastiff, a surveillance drone designed with infrared cameras and targets for guided munitions. With data-link systems and advanced electronic tools to feed live, high-resolution video coverage of the designated target area to its operators,

Israel initiated a revelation that soon overtook and inspired other superpowers like the United States to follow in its footsteps. Israel drones had functions previously unknown to mankind, being the first to identify targets for strikes, as well as landing and taking off independently before eventually being tailored for the carrying and firing of arms. Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) had begun the mass manufacturing of drones in 1974, their products commonly being used in the surveillance of Lebanon, Syria and Egypt Now, Israel is known for having one of the largest drone fleets in the Middle East, being among the biggest exporters of UAV technology and material. The country prides itself on prioritizing their drone technology for both domestic use and export purposes. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 41% of the world's drones came from Israel between 2001 and 2011 (roughly 500 million USD worth of UAV-related exports), the drones now accounting for up to 10% of Israel's military exports. In addition to being the leading country in UAV provision, Israel has dabbled in anti-drone hardware, having ideated many radar-based systems to locate and destroy interfering UAVs as part of their A2/AD strategy. The country continues to invest in UAV technology with the intention of remaining the key producer of drone products and reconnaissance devices, without having been party to any binding agreement that regulates and regiments the use of armed aircraft. This means that Israel has no legal obligation to follow any pertinent laws on UAV manufacturing, despite being commonly criticized for their lack of transparency, and no particular inclination to do so.

Russia

Russia has seen the use of surveillance UAVs ever since the rule of the USSR. Soviet reconnaissance drones rigorously served the Soviet army from the 1970s to the 1980s. Drone laws in Russia are loosely regulated, with rules pertaining to the registering and use of combat UAVs and their political implications, party to the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Missile Technology Control Regime. As of now, Russia is thought to have 1,500 to 2,000 military surveillance UAVs serving themselves to various causes of protection and intelligence collection. However, Russia's relevance to the conversation of combat drones has skyrocketed as the tensions arose in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

Iranian-imported drones have recently been brought to use to send precise target strikes inside enemy territory to give Russia the upper hand in the war. As per the Russian Foreign Ministry, the ongoing collaboration is thought to be the flourishing of "Iranian and Russian technological cooperation." In the Fall of 2022, Russia was accused of using Iranian "kamikaze" or sucide drones on Ukrainian territory, programmed with GPS coordinates to hover around an assigned location before attacking a designated target. As the conflict thickens, major allies of Ukraine like the United States have threatened to wage electronic warfare if the use of, as per their laws and regulations, illegally proposed UAVs.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
1927	The Curtiss N2C-2 takes flight	The United States army developed the first radio-controlled drone known to successfully take flight. The model was reworked multiple times, as the device was prone to failure and had flawed capabilities, but had eventually sparked the idea of what are now unmanned aerial vehicles.
1973	The Tadiran Mastiff, the first surveillance UAV is deployed	The Yom Kippur / Ramadan war between Israel and a coalition of Arab nations had called for renewed defensive strategy to both parties. Israeli

		forces had purchased a model manufactured by Tadiran Electronic Systems that would allow them to spy on the adversary in order to plan a strategic attack. This model, the Tadiran Mastiff, would go on to be the first account of a modern UAV that would set the bar for drone developers and competing nations to come.
12/1985	The AAI RQ-2 Pioneer is created	Isreali manufacturers Israel Aerospace Industries collaborated closely with the American AAI Corporation to create one of the first functioning UAV to be operational in the US military. The drone was used for imaging and reconnaissance, the model inspiring later variants that were adapted for export as well as use in the Gulf War.
04/1987	Missile Technology Control Regime is established	The MTCR is established, the first organization outlining the

		rules for use and the proliferation of unmanned devices including UAVs. 35 members are now party to the guidelines specified.
03/07/1994	The MQ-1 Predator is created	The first independent American UAV is developed, with reconnaissance and imaging capabilities of a quality previously unseen. The model later was deployed for use in the Afghanistan war in 2001 as well as preceding combat conflicts involving the CIA over the next 17 years, and the Predator grew to be one of the most highly-acclaimed UAVs till date.
19/06/2004	First drone strike	The world saw its first drone strike in the beginning of the war between Pakistan and the United States. The US had initiated the kill against Talliban leader Nek Muhammad. The drone strike led an example of the

		capabilities of UAVs while additionally further establishing the dominance of the US as a drone manufacturer. Details of the civilian deaths of this event remain undisclosed.
2006	First commercial drone permit	The Federal Aviation Administration, a transportation agency of the US government, issued their first commercial drone permit. This opened the doors to civilian airspace and work in relief operations, as well as encouraging the trade of UAVs further.
2013	Drone proliferation in the MENA region	The UAE reached its first deal to purchase MQ-1 Predator XP drones from the US and Wing Loong drones from China, the Middle East emerging as developers and exporters of arms. Saudi Arabia, along with other nations such as Turkey, Algeria, and Israel, quickly began manufacturing their own

		military drones in the years to come.
24/12/2014	The Arms Trade Treaty enters the force	The ATT acts as a form of regulation of the economic consolidation of all arms and weaponry, including that of combat drones. The multilateral treaty has now been ratified by 112 states.
18/10/2022	Russia sends kamikaze drone strikes to Ukraine	In the lieu of rising tensions in the Russo-Ukraine conflict, Russia sends Iranian suicide drones to Kyiv that camped and scouted the region, before dive-bombing a specified target, causing critical damage to infrastructure and introducing the use of UAV in the war.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Wassenaar Arrangement

The Wassenaar Arrangement was one of the earliest attempts to regiment the exchange and use of conventional weapons and dual-use technologies. This aimed to replace the Cold War's Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls, and rather intended on encouraging accountability and disclosure on the export of standard arms. Established in July of 1996, Wassenaar incorporated clauses to promote

transparency in the trade and delivery of arms and was categorized with specified guidelines to ensure the safety of parties involved, recently being amended to detail the jurisdiction of the exchange of armed drones. The Arrangement was voluntarily abided by 42 members who continue to notify one another on authorized transfers and take responsibility for the trade of their munitions.

Arms Trade Treaty

Unlike the majority of the current publications outlining the use of UAVs, the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty is a legally binding document that details the regulatory guidelines for global trade in conventional weapons. The multilateral treaty "sets minimum standards that all its States Parties should introduce and implement at the national level, including comprehensive legislation, national control lists, case-by-case risk assessment of arms transfer license requests, and reporting measures." Though not explicitly covered, UAVs do fall under multiple articles under the treaty, all of which obligates the responsibility, accountability, and transparency of the drones' operators. In 2016, UAVs were seen to have been properly defined and integrated, classified as "combat aircraft and unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAV."

Though the treaty was a major step toward the appropriate regulation of military drone use, the treaty lacks mandates to analyze submitted reports and identify their inconsistencies, which immediately demeans their very purpose. Additionally, very few member states have signed and ratified the treaty, those who haven't including the United States, China, India, and Russia. The lack of commitment to the ATT indicates the need for a stronger, universal agreement to control the use of UAVs in the military.

Missile Technology Control Regime

The MTCR lies among some of the stronger and more effective passes at controlling the provision of military drones, as well as being one of the first. The U.S. The Department of State describes the Missile Technology Control Regime as an "informal political understanding", wherein countries address the destabilizing delivery system for nuclear weaponry and seek to limit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Established in 1987 by the G-7 industrialized countries, The MTCR

provides policies to control the trade and manufacturing of certain missile material that must be adhered to unilaterally. It was developed during the Cold War and contains elaborate requirements for how each classified weapon should be approached and rightfully regimented, more so than a multitude of other documents that have been criticized for their lack of defining guidelines.

That being said, the MTCR lacks an updated and explicit definition for UAVs, despite having a larger overarching umbrella it may fall under. It has allowed its ratifying members to ignore the given specifications due to its ambiguity. Along with this, because the MTCR is not legally binding, meaning any rules outlined can be undermined and politically non-inclusive, losing its overall significance. Only a handful of members have both signed and ratified the regime, which further suggests its depreciating credibility.

Possible Solutions

Developing a universal, legally binding resolution

As heavily alluded to, one of the leading issues when it comes to the use of UAVs in the military is that there exists no concrete guideline with which all countries are to abide to assure the prioritized safety of civilians and maintain the sovereignty of all states. Though various treaties and agreements have been attempted in the past, there calls for a universally-agreed upon resolution that tackles all the miscommunicated specifics of military drones and their role. This may include an all-inclusive, thorough classification system for all military drones, specifying the clarifications against reconnaissance, surveillance, and offensive-action UAVs. The resolution may restrict the provision of certain volatile dron-related material. In addition, the resolution may detail the particular instances where the provision and exchange of UAVs should be enabled or discouraged, as well as the sanctions imposed on offenders of the established regulations. The resolution may mention the ways in which transparency and accountability can be maintained with the use of UAVs and how political identifiers could be integrated into the technology. As a whole, the resolution may iron out any discrepancies and ensure a secure base with which member states may build their laws around.

Introducing a UN-affiliated portal

Given that a major issue with regard to this topic is transparency, a fix could be the integration of an elaborate system to register and track all manufactured military drones. Within this portal, there may be features to log the utilized tools and components that the drone may comprise of, its target location, its operating location, the details of its delivery/exchange and the specs of its flight capacity. With this portal, authorities may be able to effectively track and hold accountable the operator of the UAV when necessary, as well as garner previously undisclosed information on the potential impact of its use on civilians (casualties, injuries). This portal may be affiliated with a United Nations organization, like the UNODA (Office for Disarmament Affairs), in order to ensure the most secure and dedicated services. Such a portal may additionally ensure the verification and legitimacy of certain military drones, allowing the designating owner of the portal to monitor the involved drones and trace back any significant instances to the appropriate prosecutor.

Developing protection guidelines for those in drone-watched locations

In areas such as Pakistan, ardently monitored with reconnaissance and surveillance UAVs, it is crucial to consider their protection and prioritization in the debate of the extent to which military drones can be used to threaten counter strike forces. In order to ensure the safety, both physical and mental, of those in marginalized communities, guidelines may be developed and distributed. These guidelines may act as a precautionary warning to any potential future drone strikes in vulnerable regions, especially those near country borders or regularly target outskirts. whilst also detailing the suitable protocol for when foreign UAVs approach one's surrounding territory. These protocols may differ from situation to situation, depending on the kind of UAV present, all typically encouraging civilians to take shelter and subsequently protecting family and peers from impending attacks. Alongside this, the provided guidelines may offer any words of advice or warning to preserve the mental sanity of threatened civilians. This may involve suggesting activities to distract oneself, or the locations ones may seek the needed psychological guidance and aid. These guidelines may be manufactured and

locally distributed as physical copies or be taught as lessons in first response and disaster training, being adjusted to confine with the respective countries' policies and existing regulations.

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