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**Drones, A Watchful Protector?**

**Abstract**

Use of unmanned aerial vehicles for military and non-military purpose has become a controversial topic. The critics of the use of drones for military purpose point to the cost of Drones, the collateral damage caused by Drones, the erasure of lines of battlefield and clear boundaries between combatants and non-combatants, the constitutional complications around executive authority to order killing of individual targets. In this paper I argue that Drones are a highly efficient technology that saves money and lives. I also show that unlike what the critics assume, operators of Drones experience a significant psychological trauma. I discuss the ethical and legal questions raised by the use of Drones but argue that these issues can be addressed and overall Drones have saved money and lives of American soldiers and decreased the collateral damages caused by counter-insurgency operations.

Unmanned aerial or ground vehicles have been used since World War I. Chris Red states, “Unmanned aircraft have been around nearly as long as piloted planes. UAV history goes back to 1916, when one of the first recorded unmanned aircraft, the Sopwith AT, was developed for the British Royal Flying Corps during World War I”.[[1]](#footnote-1) Drones have been around for almost a century, but it was not until the war against terror after September 11, 2001 that drones have made a big impact. The American military have always relied on the latest technology to create better equipment to make soldiers’ jobs easier and reduce war time causalities. This has been seen from the development of the first tank, to the development of the fighter plane, and now to unmanned military drones. According to William J. Broad, the U.S. military was starting to test and use pilotless drones in the late 1970’s and 1980’s.[[2]](#footnote-2) The United States military is continuing to develop machines to give them an edge over everyone else. Armies have always had to adapt their tactics when fighting wars. From trench warfare in World War I to air combat in World War II. Today the war on terror demands a new style of fighting to combat the enemy. The use of Improvised Explosive Devises (IED’s) and snipers to pick off soldiers make the battlefield hard to navigate. It is also hard for the American military to determine who the enemy is because the people they are fighting do not wear uniforms. Some people see drones as an answer to the new and more complicated battlefield faced by American soldiers today.

With these highly sophisticated weapons comes great controversy. On one side you have people that believe the drones are benefiting the military by making the jobs of the soldiers easier and more efficient. They also believe that drones are the answer to finding and getting rid of terrorists. Those who support drones argue that drones are doing the job of fighting against terrorists with precision and success. They believe that because of the precision and success, the jobs of the soldier will be much easier. The soldiers will be able to get intelligence and find targets easier with the use of drones.

But there are also those who see drones as creating more problems than solutions. The anti-drone group does not believe drones are the answer. They believe that drones are not as precise as the designers and users say they are. A lot of people from this side feel that drones are taking and will take the jobs away from the soldiers, and the cost to make them are too high. They also feel that drones violate moral and ethical rules because it is a machine that strikes without warning. Drones cannot be seen at the moment of attack. Drones do not care who lives and who dies. Yes, they may get the target, but who else died that was in the area. This side believes drones also go against due process and international law because the U.S. is violating the sovereignty of countries where we are using drones even though we are not at war with those countries. This issue pertains to cost of life not just soldiers, but civilians too. This is a debate that has been going on since the outbreak of the war on terror. Both sides of the argument have valid points. Despite the opposition of drones they can be seen as an effective solution to help fight terrorism. What makes drones so effective are their many uses, they save lives which cannot have a monetary value, they have the ability to minimize causalities, and are more ethical than the skeptics seem to believe.

Positive Contributions of Drones to the United States Military

Drones provide the United States military with many uses. Kenneth Anderson points out that “Drone warfare offers ethical advantages as well, allowing for increased discrimination in time, manner, and targeting not available via any other weapon platform”.[[3]](#footnote-3) Drones have given the military a new way to fight the problems they face on the battlefields. According to Amitai Etzioni, the two main features drones are used for are collecting intelligence and for delivering a pay load to a target.[[4]](#footnote-4) Drones are used for surveillance like the predator drone. Mark Bowden states, “A typical Predator can stay aloft for about 20 hours; the drones are flown in relays to maintain a continuous Combat Air Patrol”.[[5]](#footnote-5) This has been beneficial to the U.S. military because before we used manned air craft to get surveillance and they could not stay up that long because of fuel. Fatigue was also a factor when piloting a plane for that long. Also the manned aircraft we used before were much faster and louder than the drones we use now. Mark Bowden states, “The Predator gives military and intelligence agencies a surveillance option that is both significantly less expensive and more useful because it flies unmanned, low, and slow”.[[6]](#footnote-6) This gives the U.S. military the advantage of not having to stop surveillance to refuel the jets. This also means that the surveillance will be clearer due to the fact that the predator drone can fly low and slow. The predator is a much quieter aircraft than its predecessor which is another advantage. There is no fear of being detected. That is only one example of the many advantages drones give the military.

The same drone platform is also used to kill and destroy targets. The military uses a bigger drone called the reaper to destroy targets. The U.S. military has made different drones for different missions. There is one drone called the Packbot. This ground drone is used mainly to defuse or detonate IED’s. They can also be used to find people in destroyed buildings. This drone platform comes in many different shapes and sizes. There is another drone that is used to provide covering fire for the soldiers. The Modular Advanced Armed Robotic System (MAARS) is again a ground drone. This drone can be equipped with machine guns, grenade launchers, and other weapons. This drone is meant for entering buildings that look like there could be an ambush. [[7]](#footnote-7) One of the greatest uses of drones is that they can go just about anywhere and survive almost any condition. P. W. Singer stated, “Unmanned systems can also operate in “dirty” environments, such battle zones beset by bad weather or filled with biological or chemical weapons.”[[8]](#footnote-8) Before drones there were limitations to where the U.S. military could go. Drones can go to places where the conditions would kill or severely hurt a human. Drones are also capable to take off of aircraft carriers. This gives the drones a huge range. Amy Butler states, “The service has been deployed an early version of its newest unmanned aerial vehicle (UAS), the small rail-launched Block 1 RQ-21 Blackjack to begin operations in Afghanistan in April in response to a Central Command urgent need for signals-intelligence collection there”.[[9]](#footnote-9) This small drone give the U.S. military another way to get intelligence.

Soldiers on the battlefield use small UAV’s to help them see what is ahead of them in a mission or if they need a target destroyed. Michael Brooks points out, “Now soldiers routinely deploy drones for surveillance or missile strikes sending commands to them from bases thousands of kilometers away”.[[10]](#footnote-10) The drones give the soldiers a better advantage to fighting on the battlefield. For example, if there is an enemy convoy ahead of a patrol of soldiers, without risking the mission, the soldiers can get the intelligence and if need be destroy the enemy with drones. Confusing the enemy is another use of drones as pointed out by Lieutenant Matthew Hipple, “Some drones could be full-body decoys –structures specifically designed for long range radar returns”. This would confuse enemies that have radar capabilities. Drones have come a long way from the predator drone used in the beginning of the war on terror. The U.S. military has helicopter drones that can be used as a surveillance or combat. There are even drones that are as big as jet fighters and designed to be interceptors to fight other jets. Chris Red from the article *The Outlook For Unmanned Aircraft* lays out the four uses of drones. “Target Drones – UAVs that simulate enemy missiles or aircraft in the demonstration and testing of antiaircraft and antimissile systems”.[[11]](#footnote-11) This is beneficial to the military in testing their new weapon systems as well as seeing what works and what doesn’t. Red goes on to say, “Radar Drones – Unmanned decoy aircraft deployed from a larger manned aircraft and designed to subvert, confuse or fool enemy radar systems”.[[12]](#footnote-12) This helps the U.S. military in covert operations in blinding or tricking the enemies of the soldier’s position. Red went on to say, “Information, Surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft- UAVs that perform a variety of surveillance, observation and data-relay missions incomplete thought here”.[[13]](#footnote-13) Drones give soldiers that eye in the sky to find targets and possible threats. Red goes on to state, “Unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) - Aircraft designed to provide unmanned weapons capabilities and support manned aircraft”.[[14]](#footnote-14) These drones are designed for taking out targets on the battlefield. If soldiers are in danger and need back up, these drones can provide support. These drones are also used for helping soldiers hunt down terrorists. Drones have many uses for the soldiers on the battlefield. Drones are designed to make the jobs of the soldier easier and safer. Drones will keep adapting for whatever the U.S. military needs them. Drones help achieve a cost efficient way to stop terrorism and saves lives of American soldiers.

Drones are starting to be used more than any other weapon platform. Shaw goes on to say, “Since Barack Obama took office in 2009, drone strikes have accelerated, and now total over 340”.[[15]](#footnote-15) The president and the military are backing up the use of drones. They feel that drones are the best way to fight terrorists. A lot of people have to remember that drones are manned by pilot’s miles away from the battlefield. According to Fred Kaplan, “They pinpoint targets by watching streams of real-time video, taken by cameras strapped to the bellies of the UAVs”.[[16]](#footnote-16) A lot of people in the military believe this is better than using a jet with a camera because the jets move too fast and the pilot of the jet has other distractions while in the jet. Kenneth Anderson stated, “Remoteness—the fact that the drone user is nowhere near the target, as the pilot is probably sitting in an air-conditioned room in Nevada—actually enables precision”.[[17]](#footnote-17) This makes sense because there are no distractions for the drone pilot like there are for the manned pilot. The drone pilot’s environment is calmer and the drone pilot can make better decisions. Anderson goes on to say, “The pilot of a manned craft is often far away from the target, as would be a drone pilot—over the horizon or many miles away. Unlike the drone pilot, however, he might have minimal situational awareness of the actual events on the ground at the target—his knowledge may be nothing more than instrumental data”.[[18]](#footnote-18) The drone pilot has a better advantage to seeing everything that is going on than the pilot of a jet. The sensors on a drone are more advance and the drone pilot has a lot of videos he can observe.

Accuracy of Drones and psychological impact on operators

One of the biggest reasons against drones is that drone pilots are not on the battlefield. For the case of drones, their operators are most likely not near the battlefield. In the article “The Killing Machines”, author Mark Bowden talks about a case where a young drone pilot helps out U.S. soldiers that would be killed by a group of Al Qaeda. Mark Bowden writes what the young pilot said after he killed the terrorists: “I could see exactly what kind of gun it was in back, “the pilot told me later. “I could see two men in the front; their faces were covered. One was in the passenger seat and one was in the driver’s seat, and then one was on the gun, and I think there was another sitting in the bed of the truck, but he was kind of obscured from my angle”.[[19]](#footnote-19) This shows how accurate the cameras of the drones are. They can pin point what type of close and weapon the enemy is carrying. Then Bowden hears what the young pilot said after the engagement. Bowden writes, “I was kind of freaked out, “the pilot said. “My whole body was shaking. It was something that was completely different. The first time doing it, it feels bad almost. It’s not easy to take another person’s life. It’s tough to think about. A lot of guys were congratulating me, telling me, ‘You protected them; you did your job. That’s what you are trained to do, supposed to do,’ so that was good reinforcement. But it’s still tough”.[[20]](#footnote-20) This is tough on a lot of the pilots because they are not at the battlefield they are just pushing a button. That goes with anything in war though. Taking the life of another person, whether it is a drone or a gun, is tough. The soldier did his job to protect his men. The U.S. soldiers are trained to do this. Another author brings something similar up. Kenneth Anderson says, “As one drone operator told me, it is not as if one sees the terrible things the target is engaged in doing that made him a target in the first place; instead, it feels, after a few weeks of observation; as though you are killing your neighbor”.[[21]](#footnote-21) Again this operator is saying that is tough. Drone operators are similar to what snipers have to do. Snipers observe there targets for months sometimes before pulling the trigger. War is not a fun place and not for everyone. The first time may shake them up, but then they get used to it.

A major issue that is seen in soldiers is post dramatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is caused by the events that take place during war. Events that change the soldier and make them break down. A person can only take so much before they break down. Drone pilots may very well feel more emotions because they are nowhere near the battlefield. Drone pilots are usually thousands of miles away in an air conditioned room and not in any danger. The military and government thinks that using drones is the best way to help the war on terror, but there is still psychological impact on drone pilots. The drone pilots feel the same way if not more than the soldiers on the ground. It is a hard job for drone pilots because they are not anywhere near the battlefield and are not in any danger. All the drone pilot has to do is push a button and the target is gone. They way drones are operated is exactly like a video game. Is this the way war should be fought, like a video game with no sense of fear or danger, just taking out a target? The military will say that the drone pilot is just doing his or her job. They will also say that military is not for everybody. The soldiers are human, which means that they all have a conscience and feelings... On the battlefield it makes sense to kill or be killed, but it is much harder for someone that is not on the battlefield to have this mentality. This may put greater psychological pressure on the drone pilots. They will never know how many lives he or she saved by killing that one target. The drone pilots also do not know who else they killed when pushing the button. There may be innocent people in the building where the target is and the drone pilot just took their life. What is a life worth? These drone pilots have a lot of weight on their shoulders every time they push that button. With doing their job they do save a lot of lives. A lot of U.S. soldiers would not be alive today if they did not have drones watching over them. War is a terrible thing that brings the worst out of people. As human beings it is not normal to kill somebody. This puts a toll on everyone involved in war.

One of the big arguments about against drones is that they are not ethical. A lot of critics believe drones are unfair to the enemies which the U.S. military attacks. Author, Mark Bowden talks about a drone operator and his reaction to his first target kill. Bowden stated, “One of the things that nagged him, and that was still bugging him months later, was that he delivered this deathblow without having been in any danger himself. The men he killed and the marines on the ground were at war. They were risking their hides. Whereas he was working his scheduled shift in a comfortable office building on a sprawling base in a peaceful country”.[[22]](#footnote-22) This story and many like it are a reason for drones not being ethical. It is hard on a lot of drone operators when they are not on the battlefield. A lot of people believe ~~feel~~ that wars should be fought with men not machines. Bowden goes on to say, “If the soldier who pulls the trigger in safety feels this, consider the emotions of those on the receiving end, left to pick up the body parts of their husbands, fathers, brothers, friends. Where do they direct their anger? When the wrong person is targeted, or innocent bystander killed, imagine the sense of impotence and rage”.[[23]](#footnote-23) The people that are being attached by drones cannot fight back because there is no one they can attack. Drones are a machine so killing a machine does nothing for them. Those that like drones would say that people would say the same about other machines the U.S. military uses. The U.S. military uses carpet bombing, long range missiles, and even artillery. No one really complains about using those machines/weapons. Killing is a part of war. As mentioned in the above paragraph, war always has civilian casualties. Drones are the more ethical answer because they are more precise.

One of the many benefits of Drones is their cost efficiency. Joe Pappalardo states, “While automated systems are expensive to develop, they’re cheaper to support than humans—they don’t need training, healthcare, or condolence letters”.[[24]](#footnote-24) Maintaining boots on the ground to fight counter-insurgencies is very costly. P.W. Singer states, “Each predator costs just under $4.5 million, which sounds like a lot until you compare it to the price of one new F-35, the Pentagon’s next generation manned fighter jet (which hasn’t even taken flight yet), you can buy 30 predators”.[[25]](#footnote-25) That is only compare one drone to one fighter jet, but if you compared all the drones to all the tanks, jets, and other equipment the army uses drones are just a fraction of the costs. The cost of a life is something that does not have a price tag on it. Drones have helped save lives for the U.S. military. They can do so many things that would be too dangerous otherwise for the average soldier. Drones make it easier for the military to conduct high value operations. Yes it is true that it was not a drone that killed Bin Laden, but the Navy Seals. That mission raised an important question. What is the value of a life? Sure the mission was a success, but what if something went wrong. Drones are designed to make sure soldiers’ jobs are safer and easier. If it wasn’t for drones many soldiers would be killed

Drones are a tool used to make the job of soldiers more effective and easier. Drones are designed to give an advantage to the soldiers on the battlefield. Michael O’Hanlon states, “Consequently, ground forces will still need to establish a strong and dense presence in many situations”.[[26]](#footnote-26) Drones are not taking away the soldiers from the battlefield. Drones work with soldiers to get the missions done. Drones actually provide more jobs for soldiers. There has to be soldiers to train new soldiers to operate the drones. There has to be a force of soldiers that go and get down drones from the enemy. Drones are not going to take the job of the soldier away. Drones are going to make the soldier better because drones are just another tool for them. Drones do not cause as much collateral damage as the critics say.

The most serious criticism of drones is that it causes a lot of collateral damage. There first has to be an understanding of what collateral damage really is. Collateral damage by definition is deaths, injuries, and damage to the property of people who are not in the military that happens as a result of the fighting in a war.[[27]](#footnote-27) The big thing that critics do not get is that collateral damage is not avoidable. In the modern age of fighting there still is going to be collateral damage, which is what war brings.[[28]](#footnote-28) Daniel Byman stated, “The United States simply cannot tolerate terrorist safe havens in remote parts of Pakistan and elsewhere, and drones offer a comparatively low risk way of targeting these areas while minimizing collateral damage”.[[29]](#footnote-29) The critics don’t realize that the other options are too dangerous and would cause more collateral damage than the drones do. Byman states, “Critics of drone strikes often fail to take into account the fact that the alternatives are either too risky or unrealistic”.[[30]](#footnote-30) The alternatives to drone strikes would be putting more of the U.S. soldiers on high value risky missions. This in turn could cause more casualties to the U.S. military and could cause more to civilians. Another alternative would be more strikes from piloted planes that don’t have the best field of view.

A big issue that critics have is that drone operators choose and pick targets to kill. Etzioni stated, “When a predator drone detected three militants planting an improvised explosive device in a road in Afghanistan on February 17, the strike was aborted after the drone’s cameras revealed children in the area”.[[31]](#footnote-31) This shows that the U.S. military is doing their best to minimize the collateral damage. Etzioni goes on to say, “However, Baitullah Mehsud, head of the Taliban in Pakistan, was considered an asset of such high value that the presence of his wife and father-in-law were not enough to abort a strike that killed all three on August 5 last year”.[[32]](#footnote-32) No civilian causality would be great, but that is something that cannot be accomplished at this time. Drones are better than a lot of the alternatives especially carpet bombing or full on invasion. Michael J. Boyle stated, “No one - among either advocates or critics-really knows the number of deaths caused by drones in these distant, sometimes ungoverned, lands. In the absence of official government statistics, a number of independent organizations have produced data on drone

strikes based largely on newspaper reports and intelligence sources”.[[33]](#footnote-33) The critics that argue that drones cause more causalities than other means are not really reliable because no one knows how many are actually killed. It is hard to get accurate data when a lot of those areas where drone strikes are happening do not have accurate census data. It is also hard to tell how many are killed when there are no bodies at the strike area. It is fair to say that any civilian causality is unacceptable, but the alternatives are not better than drone strikes. The soldiers operating the drones do make mistakes sometimes due to bad intelligence and hit the wrong area, but it is fair to say that if it was not for drones than the causalities would be much higher than they are now not just civilian but U.S. soldiers as well.

Who is the Enemy and Where is the Battlefield?

As I have shown above there are many benefits to the use of drones in warfare but because these are relatively new weapons they raise concerns regarding proper legal and ethical boundaries for using drones. One of the big things with using drones is that the U.S. military has them all over the world. R Ian G.R. Shaw stated, “Unmanned aerial vehicles have now become the primary weapons of an increasingly paramilitarized U.S. foreign policy. In the decade following the attacks on 11 September 2001, CIA-operated drones, military drones, “Special Force” drones, and even U.S. State Department drones, now fly in the skies above Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia”.[[34]](#footnote-34) Critics of drones ask the question why and how the U.S. military has the authority to fly drones in air space that is not involved in military activity. They wonder how that is legal to fly drones over areas where there is no conflict. The military says that they fly over these areas to observe these areas just in case they are planning anything to start a conflict. The military also flies drones over these areas to look for terrorists. The majority of drones that are in the air are strictly for surveillance. Professor Mary Ellen O’Connell stated, “Within states, international human rights law prohibits governments from using excessive force against rebel groups; governments may only resort to military force if armed opposition involves significant force”.[[35]](#footnote-35) This would mean that the U.S. cannot be using drones for combat in countries that are not showing aggression Against the U.S. Professor Mary Ellen O’Connell goes on to say, “Despite this clear law, U.S. officials argue that because the 9/11 attacks involved significant force, the U.S. can target Al-Qaeda members and other suspected terrorists and militants without warning, wherever they are found.”[[36]](#footnote-36) The 9/11 attacks justify the U.S. actions toward terrorists. Those attacks were so sever to the U.S. which gives the U.S. the right to use force to take down the terrorists. The problem with this is what the Bush administration stated and that was a global war on terror. The Obama administration has kept this up too. What makes this a problem is that terrorism is an ideal. Terrorists do not have a country to call their own. Terrorists can be any person in the world. This raises problems because terrorists literally can be in any country around the world. Where does the line get drawn with the U.S. using drones in other countries? Any country that harbors terrorists is a threat to the US. The U.S. also gets permission from a lot of countries to use drones in their country. The situation with terrorists is not perfect nothing ever is. This is the best the U.S. administration can offer in order to keep the U.S. a safe environment. Another criticism of using drones is that the U.S. will not be the only one using them in the future. Authors Sarah Kreps and Micah Zenko state, “So far, the United States has had a relative monopoly over the use of such drones, but it cannot count on maintaining that for much longer. Other states are quickly catching up”.[[37]](#footnote-37) One of the main issues that have to be addressed is the legality for using drones. There has been a lot of controversy with how the U.S. is using drones, where they are being used, and if drones violate international norms of warfare. Milena Sterio the author of the article “The United States’ Use of Drones in The War on Terror: The (IL) Legality of Targeted Killings Under International Law” discusses what Harold Koh thinks of using drones. Sterio states, “Target Killings, according to Koh, are justified because they are performed in accordance with the laws of war. In other words, the United States conducts target strikes consistent with the well-known principles of distinction and proportionately to ensure that the targets are legitimate and collateral damage minimized”.[[38]](#footnote-38) Milena Sterio discusses Koh’s four reasons regarding legality for using targeted drone strikes. Sterio states, “First, enemy leaders are legitimate targets because they are belligerent members of an enemy group in a war with the United States…Second, drones can constitute appropriate instruments for such missions, so long as their use conforms to the laws of war…Third, “enemy targets are selected through “robust” procedures; as such, they require no legal process and are not “unlawful extrajudicial” killings. Finally, Koh argued that using drones to target “high level belligerent leaders” does not violate domestic law banning assassinations”.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Another important issue raised by use of drones is: “where is the battlefield?” Most people would say that the battlefield is wherever the U.S. military is fighting the enemy. After 9/11 the Bush administration announced that the U.S. was in a global war on terror. Sterio states, “Under this expansive approach, the war had no geographic constraints, and the battlefield was a global nature”.[[40]](#footnote-40) Terrorism is an ideal. There is no country that calls terrorists home, they are found all over the world which makes the use of drones very tricky. The Obama administration made the first statement by the Bush administration a little better. Sterio stated, “Moreover, the Obama Administration has claimed drones can be used in countries that harbor terrorist enemies and unwilling or unable to control territory where such enemies are located”.[[41]](#footnote-41) That being said this gives the U.S. the right to go after terrorists in other countries where troops are not on the ground. The U.S. military has been conducting drone strikes in countries like Somalia, Pakistan, and Yemen. These are all places where the U.S. does not have troops deployed, but these countries have terrorists.

The final part of the controversy with the legality of using drones is who the targets are. The war the U.S. and other countries around the world are fighting is unlike any war they have seen before. The U.S. is fighting an ideal not a country. It was easy in WWII to know who the enemy was and even in Vietnam. The War that is being fought today is so much harder. The U.S. military has a very hard time depicting who is friend and who is the enemy. Terrorists will do just about anything to strike fear even if that means using women and children. According to Sterio, “If the United States is engaged in an armed conflict and the laws of war apply, then lawful combatants can be targeted, unless they have surrendered and are hors de combat”.[[42]](#footnote-42) This raises questions of knowing when a person surrenders or not. It is really hard to tell if someone is surrendering or if someone would surrender if it not been for the drone strike. Sterio goes on to say, “Lawful combatants are defined in the Geneva Convention and the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions as all members of the armed forces of a state party to a conflict”.[[43]](#footnote-43) This is tricky because terrorists are generally non-state actors and thus fight against them cannot be confined to a particular territory. Sterio states, “Under the laws of war, al-Qaeda members can be targeted if they qualify as lawful combatants; if not, then they are civilians and are protected from military strikes”.[[44]](#footnote-44) Legally we can declare members of terrorist groups like al-Qaeda or ISIL as enemy combatants which then can allow us to target them wherever we find them. Civilians also play a role as well. Civilians can only be targeted if they partake in hostile activities that can cause harm to the military. Otherwise civilians are to be protected. This war is hard to fight because it is hard to distinguish who the enemies and civilians are. These laws and rules can help the military better identify the targets and the civilians and ultimately get rid of the enemy.

The last criticism that critics of drones have is that they think it that terrorists should be treated as prisoners. Author F.S. Naiden states, “If drones are used to the exclusion of short-range weapons, American forces will be unable to take or interrogate prisoners, accept surrenders, and occupy positions”.[[45]](#footnote-45) The thing that is wrong with drones is that they cannot talk to the terrorists. Drones are just a machine used by the military. A lot of critics believe that the high valued terrorists should be captured and interrogated because that is the humane way of doing things. The problem with this is that it causes a lot of risk for the soldiers. Soldiers would have to go most behind enemy lines to get these high value terrorists. That is completely dangerous and would cause a lot of U.S. casualties. Another author brings up the same argument. Author Amitai Etzioni stated, “Another line of criticism takes the opposite view-point, treating terrorists not as if they were criminals but as if they were soldiers. They hence are to be treated in accordance with the rules of warfare, such as the Geneva Conventions. These rules require that America strike terrorists only in “declared theaters of War”, and treat those in captures as prisoners of war”.[[46]](#footnote-46) Critics would rather risk the safety of soldiers than use drones to help the soldiers take out there enemies. It is fair to say that the U.S. military strikes terrorists in areas that are not declared theaters of war, but the threat of those high value terrorists are too valuable to pass up. Another author brings up the human rights law and how drones violate that. Frederic Megret states, “A weapon that leaves very little chance of survival to the target is unlikely to pass the onerous test of human rights law that loss of life is only justifiable as result of reasonable use of force in the pursuit of a lawful arrest; conversely it will easily pass the test under the self-defense/national security framework, which is relatively indifferent to means used on account of the significance of the goal and has log justified covert violent action”.[[47]](#footnote-47) Although drones violate human rights laws it is justified because of threat to security and defense. Any high valued terrorist that is not killed or captured is a threat to the U.S. military and the U.S.

As analysis of documents captured from raid on Osama Bin Laden’s hideout in Pakistan show, “a major theme of the documents is how much punishment the CIA drone program was inflicting on al Qaeda. Al Qaeda officials considered moving to Nuristan, a remote mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan,”[[48]](#footnote-48) drones are an extremely effective and valuable tool for fighting terrorism. Use of drones raises new questions regarding the legality and morality of this lethal use of force but rather than demonizing drones we need to carefully address these issues. Drones are the answer to the problems the U.S. military is facing over in the Middle East. Drones help protect the lives of not just the civilians, but the soldiers too. The two sides to this argument are very strong with their opinions. What makes drones so effective are their many uses, they save lives which cannot have a monetary value, they have the ability to minimize causalities, and are more ethical than the skeptics seem to believe. Drones are the future for warfare. They truly are “A Watchful Protector”.

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