 unmanned aerial vehicles: justifications for and against in target killing and military operations & a quantitative review of strikes in pakistan under the obama administration

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abstract

this paper seeks to analyze the effects of unmanned aerial vehicles, or "drones," and their effectiveness in counterterrorism operations in the obama administration. the paper functions as a scholarly review of drones in literature and draws upon sources from sources both and against drone usage and evaluates the reasonings of arguments for and against drone usage. these include:

- effectiveness of killing militants while limiting civilian casualties in pakistan
- drones replacing combat machines in war fighting
- drones reducing future conflict vs. causing more conflict

states' legal legitimacy of drone use and future international norms precedent for using drones.

the effectiveness of drones has original research in the form of time series charts of targeted killings in pakistan from 2001-2012 to test the hypothesis presented as an argument for drones that drones eliminate terrorists effectively.

methodology

1. targeted killing and effectiveness

2. areas of drone strike attacks in pakistan in 2011-2012

3. drone attacks in pakistan from 2011-2012 in khyber and fata region

background and history

document of times for drones between revolution and current drones - this paper analyzes large-scale combat drones such as the predator and global hawk.

us drone fleet and statistics from 2013 - total 350 - up by 75% since 2010, spending increased from $133 million in 2008 to $1 billion in 2013 - total 200 in 2008 - 750 in 2012

questions are known to have taken:
- how many "missions" legal missions
- when and where?

drones fighting terrorism

arguments for:

- drone strikes are legal under article 51 of the un charter
- civilians safer
- lower collateral damage
- lower risk of collateral damage

arguments against:

- drone strikes are not legal
- civilians not always safer
- higher collateral damage

summary of findings

these are effective in killing terrorists through targeted killings and efficient utilization of resources. however, there are still unanswered questions: are these effective in preventing attacks? did the drone attacks lead to a decrease in terrorism levels? are there any legal implications to the use of drones?


drones and interactions in future wars

arguments for:

- new technology provides a rare and low-risk option
- technology allows for unconventional engagement - many forms
- can be used to carry out limited attacks for limited goals
- drone strikes are not limited to war zones and can be used for humanitarian aid

arguments against:

- "drone wars" are counterproductive and lead to more violence
- technology is only as effective as the skills of the people who use it
- technology is a double-edged sword and can lead to more violence
- drone strikes are not a solution to terrorism

summarizing the arguments above, there are benefits to drone use. they are effective at killing terrorists with empirical evidence to support the claim. they are cost-effective compared to other forms of military force that uses soldiers' lives on battlefields and are the best future war-fighting weapon to use. civilians. there have been efforts to make drones legitimate under normal law and a recognition of drone norms need to be set internationally.

there are also considerable risks to drone use. through they kill terrorists, they potentially multiply future terrorists through anti-americian sentiment. there is no statistical link to drones preventing civilian or terrorist violence when they were used in pakistan. drones are falsely equated as an option with other war-fighting mechanisms instead of thinking about what we are doing. the claims of legitimacy in drone strikes are broadly supported internationally and domestically that don't account for use outside of active wars and this problem unchecked can lead to a messy list of national security problems. both sides recognize the obama administration's need to be an international leader for getting preventer in drone usage. all actions with drone use, with the attacks used, but ideological differences will always remain. in the short term, drones are effective to kill terrorists without overextending, but should never be used as the sole option of fighting terrorism and wars and need to be monitored to avoid undermining war norms and determine in potential worldwide conflicts. international laws should be drafted to combat the future use to avoid escalated violence.