**The Effects of Drones on Counter Terrorism**

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Since the beginning of campaigns on the war on terror in wake of the new Millennium, and especially after the September 11 attack, there have been numerous counter-terrorism strategies intended to curb and prevent terrorism. One of the modern counter-terrorism methods used is Artificial Intelligence (AI) drones which involves fitting drones with explosives and detonating it on the targeted terrorists. Introduction of Drones as counter terrorism measure bring diverse effects not only on the terrorist but also on the civilians.

Drones ease the task of locating terror cells holed in remote areas hence reducing direct contact between terrorists and ground troops (Byman, 2013). With AI drones, counter-terrorism personnel overcomes geographical barriers brought by rugged mountains and hills where terrorists create their base and strike them. It makes it easier for the troops to locate terrorists even in thick forests, deter their activities and prevent planning attacks.

Drones lower the risk of troop casualties and firefights since there is little contact with the terrorists. Drones significantly reduce direct contact between troops and terrorists hence reducing injuries and deaths of soldiers (Byman, 2013). According to Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2019), since the use of drone in 2004 the number of successful strikes on terror groups have increased tremendously successfully striking more than 100 targets and killing more than 8,000 terrorists. Investigative findings show that the use of targeted Drones has greatly reduced troop casualties and damages of the property while increasing the number of terror targets and terrorists.

When evaluating the effectiveness of drones in combating terror, it is important to highlight the influence it brings on the growth and spread of terror groups. According to Boyle (2013), drone strikes deter the growth and slows the spread of terrorist organizations by targeting and eliminating experienced terror leaders hence hampering the growth of terror organizations. Furthermore, according to Byman (2013) killing experienced terror leaders using targeted drone attacks give leadership opportunity to young and lower-ranked leaders; this affects terror organizations because inexperienced leaders commit myriad of errors and miscalculations. For this reason, the terrorists do not expand their activities while the scope of their operations significantly reduces. Besides, Byman notes that the targeted drones hurt terror cells because they kill terror operators in lower ranks thereby impacting negatively on the operations of the organizations.

While examining the impact of the drones in combating terror activities, it is also necessary to highlight the dangers it brings on the civilians. There are several accusations against the unrestrained use of drones to fight terrorist groups. Major concerns meted against the use of drones are uncounted civilian casualties including deaths and injuries of women and children. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2019) “6,786 drone strikes, killing between 8,459-12,105 targets, of which 769-1,725 were civilians”. Since most of the targeted drone attacks are usually directed towards ungoverned and inaccessible areas, it is difficult to ascertain the real impact of drones on civilians. Byman notes that while drones aim at striking individuals and identities threatening American people, it is difficult to distinguish the civilians and the combatants.

In conclusion, the use of targeted drones has significantly hampered terror activities by killing terror leaders and influence their growth. Because drones can be used remotely it reduces troop casualties. Nonetheless, civilian casualties related to drones remain high and their unrestrained use has an uncounted effect on civilians.

**References**

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