

The United States' War on Terror in Pakistan: The Change in the Conduct of War and Implications for International Norms

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Abstract: Based on the current trends in technology, the US is now capable of using drones with weapons to attack its enemies since 2001, and it has progressed more under the Obama Administration. This paper, then, will look into how drones changed the conduct of war, and how the use of drones affect international norms by probing into the case of the US' War on Terror in Pakistan. To explain how this particular phenomenon has changed the conduct of war, a case study research design will be utilized. The paper will be using secondary data provided by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism on the number of drone operations during 2004 – 2015, and existing literature on drone warfare. As far as drones use are concerned, the paper was able to find out that there are positive and negative changes this particular technology has brought in the current times. The use of drones in the War on Terror has changed how military operations, and by extension warfare, are conducted. Drone warfare differs from the earlier types as combatants need not to be physically present within the area of conflict as they are operated remotely. However, there is a caveat as they do not discriminate combatants from civilians. In the case of the US War on Terror in Pakistan, there were reported many civilian casualties. Moreover, by focusing on Pakistan's case, scholars have argued that the use of drones in Pakistan has implications for international norms such as international law, sovereignty, and human rights.

1 INTRODUCTION

The United States (US) first used its drone technology capabilities as a tool for surveillance during the Vietnam War (Enemark, 2011; Shaw 2016). It later became a tool for weaponry in 2001 in Afghanistan (Sifton, 2012), and was also used in Pakistan starting in 2004. (Callam, 2010; Shaw, 2013).

Given the said premises, this paper looks into how drone technology altered the conduct of warfare, by conducting a case study of the US's war on terror in Pakistan. Specifically, this paper will look into three particular problems. The first is how technology improved US's capabilities in its conduct of warfare and its implications for the international norms. The second is how drone technology affect the population of Pakistan. And the third is how drone technology challenges international norms with regard to its use in the US' War on Terror.

This paper has three objectives. First, by probing into the case of Pakistan, this paper seeks to help understand the concerns and the issues of the US's war on terror. Second, this paper also seeks to find

out how the use of drone technology affects the international norms in the international system. Lastly, this paper also seeks to raise awareness and to add knowledge on how the US's utilization of drone technology affected Pakistan's society.

This study acknowledges that as the most powerful military in the world, the US can employ this kind of warfare almost anywhere in the world. Drone technology was already used in other states such as Iraq and Afghanistan. However, studying the US's conduct on the war on terror is still broad. To limit its scope, this paper will specifically focus on the context, effects of the improvement of technology in warfare on both the US and Pakistan, and concerns arising regarding the usage of drone technology in Pakistan. Given the scope of the study, this paper will use a case study design, and qualitative content analysis as the paper's method of data analysis (Flick, 2009). The materials used in analyzing the role of drones in altering the conduct of warfare will be analyzed qualitatively. More of this, however, will be discussed in the methodology section of the paper. By looking into the case study of the US's war on terror in Pakistan, the paper

hopes that it will be able to examine these concerns: 1) how the technological advancement improved the US's capability of conducting warfare; 3) how Pakistan's population is affected by the US's utilization of drone technology in Pakistan, and 4) how this particular example helped challenge the norms due to the change in the conduct of war.

2 DRONES AND USE IN WARFARE

Drones, specifically classified as unmanned autonomic vehicles (UAVs), have altered the conduct of warfare by removing combatants from the battlefield, and inflict damage to the enemy (Manijikan, 2014). As mentioned in the paper earlier, drones require coordinates in order to make it work. Like in any computer system, it was argued that drones require data in order for it to work (Clarke, 2014).

Particularly for the US, drones use as weapons have been observed since 2004 in Pakistan (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016). In this section of the paper, it will explore how drones are being used by military forces, and what are the dangers that it poses, in connection with its use.

With regard to state security, drones in general can serve as deterrent for states not to use violence as a state policy, in fear of retaliation against states which can use the same kind of technology (Straub, 2016). Aside from its practical uses for states, Straub (2016) also pointed out that non-state actors can also benefit from drones. For the one using drone technology, it makes combatants safe as it does not require the physical presence of soldiers in the combat zone (Warrior, 2015). However, it should be pointed out also that while it makes its users safe, it inflicts more damage to the recipient as drones do not discriminate between combatants and civilians (Henriksen and Ringsmose, 2015).

Drones were first used by the US forces during the Vietnam War as tools for surveillance against North Vietnam forces, but the inspiration for drones came from the ideas of bomber planes used during the Second World War (Enemark, 2011). Like in any piece of technology, Enemark (2011) pointed out that the US was able to improve on it, by making it lethal. The lethal power of drones were first used by the US on its war on terror in Afghanistan in 2001 (Sifton, 2012; Shaw, 2013), and was used in Pakistan starting 2004 by targeting Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs).

(Callam 2010; Shaw, 2013) However, the degree of drones use increased under the Obama Administration (Shaw, 2013).

Based on what was discussed, there are many functions that drones were known for: particularly for observation purposes. Operating drones to observe will ensure the safety of those operating in hostile areas. Another is the role of drones that is used as a weapon. Because of its efficacy, strong military powers are using its advantage in order to protect their own military assets.

3 THE US DRONE OPERATIONS IN PAKISTAN: CONTEXT AND THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND

Drone use in Pakistan has been one of the strategies implemented by the US as one of its efforts in combatting terrorists outside its territory after the onset of the September 11, 2001 attack by the Al Qaeda (Aslam, 2012). However, it was in 2004 when the first airstrike by drones was conducted by the US in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATAs) in Pakistan (Callam, 2010; Shaw, 2013). Even after the term of the Bush Administration, the war on terror in Pakistan continued under the Obama Administration (Aslam, 2012). While the US claims success in its war on terror in Pakistan as a measure of curbing up threats in its internal security, however, critics argue that the US war on terror in Pakistan is a failure (Shaw, 2013). Given the said dilemma, this paper will probe further how drones were used by the US on its war on terror in Pakistan, by using the data provided by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism from 2004-2015.

This paper is going to use the value provided by the BIJ as there is no reliable data on its measurement (M. Ahmad, 2014b), and usual government data do not accurately account for these concerns. Given the limitations on available data, the author, in this regard, is inclined to use data not provided by the government as government data tends to be skewed in their favor generally.

Moreover, using these data will give the paper an insight as to how the technology was used through time. Moreover, the data will also show how the US became more reliant with the use of drones through a particular time period. The full breakdown of the US's utilization of drones, and the number of deaths are provided below:

Table 1. Drones use in Pakistan by the US

Year	CIA Drone Strikes	Minimum people killed	Maximum people killed	Minimum civilians killed	Maximum civilians killed	Minimum children killed	Maximum children killed	Minimum people injured	Maximum people injured
2004	1	6	8	2	2	2	2	1	1
2005	3	16	16	5	11	4	5	1	1
2006	2	94	105	90	100	73	76	3	3
2007	5	36	56	11	46	1	1	20	37
2008	38	252	401	59	173	26	45	146	228
2009	54	471	753	100	210	36	39	266	404
2010	128	755	1,108	89	197	23	23	351	428
2011	75	362	666	52	152	6	11	158	236
2012	50	212	410	13	63	1	2	100	212
2013	27	109	195	0	4	0	1	43	89
2014	25	115	186	0	2	0	2	44	67
2015	13	60	85	2	5	0	0	25	32
TOTAL	421	2,488	3,989	423	965	172	207	1,158	1,738

Source: Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016

According to the data provided by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the US conducted during 2004-2015 a total of 421 airstrikes in Pakistan (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016). Out of these drone operations carried out by the US, it was estimated that at least 2,488 people (and a maximum number of 3,989 people) were killed by the US's use of drones in its war on terror in Pakistan (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016). Out of these people, it was found out that at least 423 people (and up to 925 people) that were killed by these drones operations were civilians, and from the total number of deaths, at least 172 children (with a maximum number of 207 children) were killed (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016).

The ratio of the number of civilian deaths vis-à-vis the combatants is around 17%-23%, and for the children, 5.20% - 6.91%. The damage that was caused by the use of drones is not limited to the number of deaths. For those who were able to survive the ordeal, at least 1158 people are injured,

with a maximum value of 1738 people (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016).

While there are no deaths noted from the side of the US as drones are controlled remotely, however, the extent of the damage caused by drones is reflected on the side of Pakistan. Based from the abovementioned data, it can be argued that for every four targets of drones, at least one of them are civilians. The abovementioned data likewise showed that that for every sixteen targets, one of the victims are children. To sum it up, while drone technology gives advantage to those who use it, however, they should also think about the repercussions as they were also killing those who were not supposed to be killed.

4 THE USE OF DRONES IN PAKISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EXISTING NORMS

Notwithstanding the tactical advantages drones have to offer to its users, there are issues that need to be discussed, particularly in the context of Pakistan. For instance, the literature has out that its use has implications for the legal system and on sovereignty. Furthermore, the use of drones for military operations have implications for the norms that have been established by the international community, particularly on human rights, security. This section of the paper will therefore highlight how drones affect the promotion of international norms. Given that drones as a tool of war is not yet discussed extensively by international bodies, some scholars argue that there are legal implications with regard to its use. M. Ahmad (2014a) argued that the drones use on the US's war on terror in Pakistan challenged international laws and norms, since the US uses drones within Pakistan under the guise of addressing its internal security issues. He also pointed out that this posed a problem as the US attack on Pakistan challenged the non-interference norm in International Relations.

Boyle (2015), in his article, discussed that some policymakers argue that drones are far less dangerous than nuclear technology. Despite the differences of damages both technologies can do, he pointed out that norms and international rules were challenged because of drones' proliferation. Issues such as legal authority, nature of targets, deployment, state accountability, and state sovereignty must be resolved by parties involved before drones can be used (Boyle, 2015). In connection with the discussion earlier, the use of drones outside a particular state's borders have impact on a state's sovereignty. For instance, Henriksen and Ringsmose (2015) have pointed out that while drones can be used for attack and surveillance purposes, however, the use of drones undermine one state's sovereignty, particularly with the idea of control within one's territory. As an example, Henriksen and Ringsmose (2015) have cited the example of the United States where it operates in the context of war on terror as a local issue; but they were able to point out that in effect, the US' use of drones outside its border affects the sovereignty of others as operations were conducted on other states' borders.

Because of the use of drones by the US in Pakistan, some scholars have also argued that the use of drones of the US in Pakistan's territory has undermined a state's sovereignty (I. Ahmad, 2010; Rafique and Anwar, 2014). Specifically, I. Ahmad (2010) argued out that drones are indiscriminate when it comes to its targets, which makes drones operations by the US in Pakistan as negative by Pakistan's citizens. By implication, the collusion made both by US and Pakistan is seen as a negative action as Pakistan is seen by its citizens as a state allowing other states to cause damage within its territory (I. Ahmad, 2010).

Other scholars such as Aas (2012) argued out that security issues are becoming more global and not merely confined within the borders of states as it was before, such as the war on terror and the war on drugs. He argued for the recalibration of existing ideas as issues of transnational crimes are not limited by the confines set by conventions. Given that states are fighting against these issues, he further argued that because of the changing contexts of crimes, the idea of sovereignty, in the current times, is disaggregating. Another issue that must be discussed as far as drones use in warfare is concerned is the issue on human rights. Lee (2015) argued that human rights are inherent and should be recognized. By looking into drone warfare, he used three points in order to argue that drones negatively affect people's human rights. The first point he made looked into the improbability of states to justify the war on terror as a just action. The second point argued that even if the war on terror is legitimate, its conduct, for him, is wrong as drones use does not discriminate between combatants and civilians, a point shared by Wilcox and Enemark. Lastly, the relatively risk-free use provided to states can remove the constraints on states on drones use (Lee, 2015). In this regard, he pointed out that the lack of constraints is can be used as an impetus for further conflict if not regulated.

Despite the improvements on drone technology, specifically by the US, Enemark (2011) pointed out that concerns on drones use are arising. Citing the case of the US's drone program, he questioned whether drones use fall into the categories of a just war – in terms of benefits, discrimination, and proportion (Enemark, 2011). Even if drones provide advantage to its users, it was noted that the technology left many people dead, and drones do not discriminate between combatants and civilians (Enemark, 2011), thus making the violence caused by drone technology one sided (Wilcox, 2015). In connection to that idea, Wilcox (2015) argued that

drone technology made violence one-sided as the operators are safe within the confines of their control rooms, while those who were targeted are unable to retaliate. Due to this impact of drones on people's lives, it was pointed out that people usually associate drones with fear as they made the whole population vulnerable (Wilcox 2015). In order to avoid the excesses of drone technology in warfare, transparency and accountability are important with drones use (Enemark, 2011). Using 'biopolitics' as a conceptual lens in looking into the issue of drones in warfare, it was argued that the US use of drones do not make both US and Pakistan safe (Shaw, 2013; Shaw, 2016). Further to that point, it was also raised that due to the indiscriminate nature of drones as weapons in warfare, people are worried about their security, even if the US claims success over the war on terror by using drones in its security architecture (Shaw, 2013; Shaw, 2016). Thus, in this regard, Shaw (2013; 2016) has pointed out that people are ambivalent as far as drone technology on warfare is concerned.

Aside from the damage to non-combatants, it was discussed that even if drones improve the US capabilities in conducting warfare, they negatively affect the morale of its air force (Warrior, 2015). Warrior (2015) discussed further that operation of drones contribute to the lowering morale of the US Air Force as they suffer psychologically because the operators can still see reality even if they are not physically present in the site of combat. Aside from seeing the actual condition of drones use from their control room, Warrior (2015) also pointed out the use of drones also demoralized the members of the air force as they were trained in using combat weapons and machinery, and are now sidelined because of the use of this particular kind of technology. Like what Enemark argued earlier, she also echoes out that the officers should also be transparent and accountable for drones use in warfare.

To point out this section's discussion, there are at least four areas that are being challenged by the development and use of drones for warfare: international law, sovereignty, human rights, and individual security. In this regard, the use of drones as a military tool, while affecting the conduct of war, also has an impact on the existing norms.

5 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

As far as drone use is concerned, the literature was able to establish that drone technology enhanced the

US's capability to conduct warfare. The use of drones lessen the risk of putting soldiers in the battlefield as drones are remotely operated on in a control room (Warrior, 2015). It has been recognized also that the use of drones in the battlefield is more efficient than conventional weapons in warfare (Aslam, 2012; Henriksen and Ringsmose, 2015), and can target enemies usually deemed unreachable by state authorities (Williams, 2010). Aside from its practical uses on the battlefield, it was also argued that aside from technological advancement, drones can also serve as possible deterrents for other states not to attack (Straub, 2016).

However, using drones are not free from issues and concerns. From a personal standpoint, Warrior (2015) discussed that drone usage negatively affects its users psychologically. This is due to the fact that while it was operated like a remote-control vehicle, its users can still see what is happening despite not being physically there. She also mentioned that its utilization also negatively affects the morale of US air force as they were not forced to use conventional weapons such as airplanes, to which they were trained in its use (Warrior, 2015).

Aside from negatively affecting its users, drones also negatively affect the people being targeted. Drones, while able to kill its targets, were also able to kill the civilian population as well as they do not discriminate targets (I. Ahmad, 2010). Drone use also undermines one state's sovereignty as it weakens a state's capacity to protect its own population from external attacks (M. Ahmad, 2014b). And in the case of Pakistan, it was clearly reported by the BIJ that many of its citizens have perished under the US war on terror within its territories. It was found out that in the number of deaths due to the US drones, 17%-23% of the total number are civilians (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016). Within the number of deaths of civilians, 5.20% - 6.91% of them are children (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016).

Regardless of the outcome of its use in military operations, drone warfare has already challenged established norms and conventions on warfare. For instance, the norms on the idea of a just war is challenged, as discussed earlier by Enemark (2011). In connection with the changing dynamics in terms of military warfare, it has also brought concerns with other norms aside from the conduct of war. As an example, Lee (2015) has pointed out that the use of drone technology also challenges human rights norms (Lee, 2015).

Aside from concerns on war and individual security, several authors have highlighted that the

US's drone use in its war on terror undermines Pakistan's sovereignty (I. Ahmad, 2010; Nawaz, 2011; Henriksen and Ringsmose, 2015). The undermining of Pakistan's sovereignty makes Pakistan lose its monopoly on the use of violence due to the presence of US drones within their territory (M. Ahmad, 2014a; M. Ahmad, 2014b).

Notwithstanding the issues and concerns with the US's war on terror in Pakistan, however, some of the scholars cited in this paper have acknowledged that not all views the war on terror in Pakistan as a bad idea. For instance, Williams (2010) has argued that there are three points to ponder on the drones used by the US in Pakistan and its implications for Pakistan's security: 1.) drones are the only piece of technology that can reach the FATAs, 2.) drones use can cause unnecessary deaths to Pakistan's population, however, 3.) its use are regarded by some actors within Pakistan's society as a tool in ensuring their security against threats. Particularly for the third point, it highlights Williams' discussion that the appreciation of Pakistani people on drones use within its borders is at best, complex in nature.

Considering both the advantages and the concerns attributed to the use of drones on military operations and warfare, scholars and students of International Politics have to rethink about the implications of this emerging technology. The change in the capability of the conduct of war shows that as technology advances, its lethality is also increasing. This is particularly seen in the case of Pakistan, as there are many recorded casualties.

However, the biggest challenge that has been brought by the use of this technology is that it is currently challenging the norms in the conduct of international affairs. This is an area of concern for scholars and students of International Politics since international rules and norms do not adapt easily to the changes happening in the international system. Thus it is incumbent upon scholars and students, including officials from different states and international organizations, to think about this ongoing development carefully.

6 CONCLUSION

Given the discussion on the topic of this paper, drone technology was able to alter how warfare is conducted. The use of drones clearly has tactical advantage to its user as it does not require its operator to be physically present at the site of conflict.

The paper was also able to find out that there are challenges as far as its use is concerned. The issues that were affected by the use of drones fall mostly with issues on ethics, morality, and the idea of a just war. In this regard, the use of drones was able to alter how warfare is conducted as it gives undue advantage to its users and great disadvantage to drones' targets. As far as Pakistan's case is concerned, the literature provided insights on the US's war on terror in Pakistan, and their implications for Pakistan's security. Likewise, the data cited in this paper shows that the US was able to undermine its targets in Pakistan with the use of modern technology such as drones.

However, this tactical advantage has its price. The data shows that there are serious repercussions with regard to its use. It was found out that one out of every four killed were civilians, and one of sixteen people that were killed are children (Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016). Even if there are issues as far as the US's drones use is concerned, there are some actors still recognizes the impact of the technology in promoting Pakistan's security against terrorist groups within their borders. Given the complexity of the ideas (both positive and negative) on the use of drone technology on warfare, the world should recalibrate its policies towards drones as their use challenge existing norms on the conduct of war.

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