

Armed drones on the European media

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THE ITALIAN DRONE

Armed drones, yes or not: the issue goes to special commissions

3 May 2018

Public policy, Italy

“We should consider the chance of arming drones”, said Enzo Vecciarelli, Chief of the Italian Air Force, during a hearing on the acquisition of remotely piloted aircraft before a special committee of the Italian parliament. Vecciarelli added that arming drones could help save the lives of Italian soldiers operating on the ground. These armed drones would be developed in the context of the European Male project (Medium altitude long endurance).

► <https://www.publicpolicy.it/armare-o-no-droni-questione-commissioni-speciali-79077.html>

A risky drone deal in Italy

8 May 2018

Giuseppe Oddo, Business Insider, Italy

The Italian parliament is considering purchasing twenty P.2HH drones produced by Piaggio Aerospace. These drones can fly for 24 consecutive hours and are able to collect large amounts of data. Moreover, the Piaggio contract could have large economical implications, because the financial situation of the firm depends heavily on the P.2HH program. Pasquale Preziosa, former chief of the Italian Air Force, warns that the deal could be risky, because the drone has not been designed yet.

► <https://it.businessinsider.com/guerra-dei-droni-766-milioni-a-piaggio-aerospace-per-un-progetto-a-rischio-avverte-lex-capo-di-stato-maggiore-dellaeronautica-pasquale-preziosa/>



The Piaggio drone P.1HH

THE NEW ARMS RACE

China has already won the drone war

5 May 2018

Marc Horckmans, Express, The Netherlands

For over a decade US Predators and Reapers were synonymous with armed drones. This is changing with China's progress in the drone market. Not only is China making better hardware, but the country is more willing to sell its drones to outsiders, while the US maintains strong restrictions. It is debatable whether the US can regain its dominance.

► <https://nl.express.live/2018/05/14/china-heeft-drone-oorlog-al-gewonnen>

Putin's new war threat: underwater drones with nuclear warheads

18 May 2018

La Stampa, Italy

The Russian army is developing a new drone, called Poseidon, that will carry a nuclear warhead with a maximum capacity of 2 megatons. According to Mosca, it was designed to wipe out enemy naval bases. Russia plans to have it finished by 2027. The drone will travel underwater in a special submarine currently under construction by the firm Sevmash. This weapon can travel 1 km below the surface with a speed of 60-70 knots (110-130 km/h). According to Russian leaders, these drones could be armed with both conventional and nuclear weapons.

► <http://www.lastampa.it/2018/05/18/esteri/la-russia-sta-sviluppando-droni-sottomarini-capaci-di-portare-due-testate-nucleari-da-megatoni-NhN9DBqZihiIgP1CAFOIdM/pagina.html>

Dynetics wins contract for Gremlins drone programme

28 May 2018

Pavel Ramirez, Business Insider

The US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has selected defence contractor Dynetics and its team of industry partners for the Phase III demonstration award of its Gremlins programme. The programme has been designed to strengthen the US Air Force's ability to carry out aerial launch and recovery of a number of low-cost, reusable unmanned aerial systems (UAS). The programme focuses on successfully launching groups of drones from large, fighter or small fixed-wing aircraft.

► <https://www.businessinsider.es/eeuu-prepara-ejercito-futuro-enjambres-drones-252956>

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Military drones produced by the Polish company WB conquer the world

1 May 2018

Zbigniew Lentowicz, Rzeczpospolita, Poland

The Polish company WB, producing military drones, is increasingly successful. Its loitering munition Warmate minidrones have been bought not only by the Polish army, but also by armies from five countries which are currently in war or conflict. This UAV can be used for spying missions, but also for suicide missions. Thanks to its remote guidance system, the Warmate can search for its target for up to an hour and hit with high precision, using different warheads.

- ▶ <http://www.rp.pl/Przemysl-Obronny/305049949-Drony-samobojcy-Warmate-juz-na-pierwszej-linii.html>

Big plans for drones. Czech military has been using them for reconnaissance, now wants to acquire armed drones

28 May 2018

Jan Wirnitzer, Hospodářské noviny, Czech Republic

The Czech military is supposed to acquire combat drones in 2022, i.e. three years earlier than expected. In the first stage the military will spend about 40 billion euros and will choose from US, Israeli and European UAVs. Czech arms maker Czechoslovak Group is developing a first domestic combat UAV as well. Ownership of combat UAVs is a ticket to an elite club of only 12 countries, which is increasingly less elite since many other countries worldwide are about to arm themselves with this technology

- ▶ <https://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-66151630-velke-plany-s-drony-ceska-armada-je-zatim-pouzivala-hlavne-k-pruzkumu-terenu-ved-chce-i-stroje-ktere-ponesou-zbrane>



MIHAL VOSKA - MOČR

The biggest drone used by the Czech Army

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Dutch air force ready for armed drones

22 May 2018

Telegraaf, The Netherlands

The Netherlands Royal Air Force is preparing to arm the unmanned Reaper drones, of which four will be acquired next year. Arming them will improve the usability of the Reapers, according to Commander Luyt. “The choice to use these drones for reconnaissance first is more practical than about principles.” In Dutch politics, arming drones is a politically sensitive issue.

▶ <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/2064961/luchtmacht-klaar-voor-bewapenende-drone>

DRONE FEVER IN GERMANY

Why is Germany leasing armed drones?

31 May 2018

Ben Knight, Deutsche Welle, Germany

The German military is about to achieve its long-held wish to acquire its first weaponized drones. The Heron TP has been on the German military's wish-list for years – specifically because it can be armed, though there has been no information from government circles on the type of missiles it will be equipped with. Bundeswehr currently leases drones.

In late April Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen unveiled a plan to develop a brand new MALE system with France and other European partners. The “Eurodrone,” as it is still unofficially called, will be built by a Franco-German-Italian collection of companies (Airbus, Dassault Aviation, and Leonardo).

► <http://www.dw.com/en/why-is-germany-leasing-armed-drones/a-44025798>

Drones without weapons, for the moment

29 May 2018

Von Christian Thiels, Tagesschau, Germany

Before the general election, last year, the SPD (centre-left) blocked the purchase of drones that could be armed. Now the project is back in the German parliament, and a final decision is expected in the next weeks. Spd officials agreed to proceed with leasing of unarmed aircrafts and insisting on a full debate about the ethical, constitutional and legal ramifications of arming the drones in the future. There is just one question: If the new drones will be not armed, why do you need them anyway?

► <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/drohnen-143.html>

Germany's armed forces want to buy combat drones

29 May 2018

Der Spiegel, Germany

According to reports drafted by the Süddeutsche Zeitung and the news agency Dpa, the German army requested some €900 million (\$1.04 billion) to lease five Heron TP drones from Israel over the next nine years. For the first time the Bundeswehr would have a drone that could be used as a weapon. The purchase of combat drones has been a controversial topic for several years.

► <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bundeswehr-will-kampfdrohnen-anschaffen-typ-heron-tp-a-1210207.html>

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THE MAN AND THE DRONE

Italian general speaks about the army of the future: “Drones are useful, but man counts”

3 May 2018

Maurizio Caprara, Corriere della Sera, Italy

The armed forces, just like any other sector, must adapt to technological development. According to Salvatore Farina, Chief of Staff of the Italian Army, “In the era of drones, invisible planes, elite units and cyber attacks the army have to update its training activities to understand advanced techniques, but a credible defense must include all of these elements”.

► https://www.corriere.it/cronache/18_maggio_04/farina-l-esercito-futuro-eddd92b6-4f0c-11e8-aead-38ee720fad91.shtml

The one thing robots will never learn

5 May 2018

David Langley, Financieel Dagblad, The Netherlands

According to the Stop Killer Robots campaign, international law should be created that mandates meaningful human control. This should help prevent drones, or other autonomous objects, from deciding on the life and death of humans. Even China has united with the group of countries seeking a ban on completely autonomous weapons.

► <https://fd.nl/morgen/1252090/een-ding-dat-robots-nooit-mogen-leren>

HOW TO STOP A DRONE

U.S. agency seeks new authority to disable threatening drones

15 May 2018

David Shepardson, Reuters, United Kingdom

The head of the U.S. Homeland Security Department told to the Congress that the agency needs new legal authority to track threatening drones and disable or destroy them if necessary. Government and private-sector officials are concerned that dangerous or even hostile drones could get too close to places like military bases, airports and sports stadiums. Congress said it must give additional authority to DHS to deal with drones. The bill would cover high-profile events like the Super Bowl and presidential inaugurations as well as federal installations and the protection of officials. It would authorize officials to disrupt communications of threatening drones, seize control or destroy them if needed.

▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-security-nielsen/u-s-agency-seeks-new-authority-to-disable-threatening-drones-idUSKCN1IG33G>

DANGEROUS MACHINES

The role of artificial intelligence in the use of lethal force

8 May 2018

Franco Iacch, Il Giornale, Italy

Swarm Warfare is a new tactic, developed by the US Navy, based on the ability to attack a target with dozens of low-cost drones operated by artificial intelligence. The idea behind the robotic swarm is the shoal of fish or the flock of birds. The artificial intelligence behind the robotic swarm is called by Pentagon “living brain”. The drones interact with each other in the swarm. Scientists estimate that by next ten years, technology will be ready to develop an autonomous weapon that can decide who or what to destroy.

► <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/mondo/ruolo-dellintelligenza-artificiale-nell-impiego-forza-letale-1523664.html>

How military spending hurts economic growth and democracy

22 May 2018

Raul Caruso, Avvenire, Italy

Military spending is intrinsically unproductive and represents a burden for economic growth. It causes a lower economic development, a weakening of democracy and an increase in the level of insecurity. This is why we have to commit for disarmament. Moreover, European authorities should create an independent agency dedicated to the enforcement of the treaties and the conventions on arms trade ratified by European parliaments.

► <https://www.avvenire.it/opinioni/pagine/perch-la-spesa-in-armamenti-limita-sviluppo-e-democrazia>

Google’s march to the business of war must be stopped

16 May 2018

Lucy Suchman, Lilly Irani and Peter Asaro, The Guardian, United Kingdom

Should Google, a global company with intimate access to the lives of billions, use its technology to bolster one country’s military dominance? The news of Google’s involvement in the defense department’s project Maven alarmed many who studies digital technologies. Maven is a US military program that applies AI to drone surveillance videos for the purpose of detecting “objects of interest”, which are flagged for human analysts. Google is providing not only AI technologies (potentially built in part on the personal data that Google collects), but also engineers and expertise to the DoD. These technologies are poised to automate the process of identifying targets, including people, and directing weapons to attack them. Google, a global company, has aligned itself with a single nation’s military, developing a technology that could potentially put its users, and their neighbors, at grave risk.

► <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/16/google-business-war-project-maven>

Will Google help to create smart drones for the army? Some employees leave in protest

16 May 2018

Robert Kędzierski, Gazeta Wyborcza, Poland

The US army has started work to produce a new type of drone which uses artificial intelligence, within the framework of the Maven project. The idea is to use image recognition and machine learning for analysis of pictures made by drones. In such a way, buildings, items, and people would be more quickly recognized and identified as potential threats. Several Google employees have resigned in protest over their ethical concerns.

- ▶ <http://next.gazeta.pl/next/7,151003,23405832,google-pomoze-tworzyc-inteligentne-drony-dla-wojska-czesc-pracownikow.html>

AI development could make Google a military target

30 april (Not in the april edition)

Mads Nyvold & Steffen McGhie, Ingeniøren, Denmark

When Google writes code for AI for use in war machines, the IT giant becomes a legitimate target in case of war. According to Professor Peter Lee, researchers and programmers at Google have every reason, in addition to ethical concerns, to object to being involvement in the development of war robots. According to international laws of war, dual-use facilities (developing products for both civilian and military use) may be attacked. With fully automated weapons, ethical and legal responsibility becomes blurry and will increasingly fall to researchers and others working with artificial intelligence.

- ▶ <https://ing.dk/artikel/ai-udvikling-kan-goere-google-militaert-maal-211888>

Trying to deal with killer robots

24 May 2018

Netzpolitik, Germany

We are rapidly moving towards a scenario in which machines based on Artificial Intelligence could be totally autonomous regarding the use of force. This nightmare scenario led to an international campaign to stop killer robots. But how are political leaders and the United Nations confronting this threats? This is the question at the center of the discussion held at the Heinrich Böll in Berlin in may.

- ▶ <https://netzpolitik.org/2018/diskussion-ueber-killer-roboter-optimum-waere-ein-verbot-das-ist-aber-nicht-erreichbar/>

Drones: the end of war or endless war?

29 May 2018

France Culture, France

Drone technology is transforming warfare, posing a new series of problems and threats relating to legal, moral, political and security aspects. Those are the issues of this panel held in France in March.

- ▶ <https://www.franceculture.fr/conferences/mouton-numerique/drones-de-guerre-fin-de-la-guerre-ou-guerre-sans-fin>

Security in shopping malls: drones replace security guards

29 May 2018

Jan Prokeš, Denisa Holajová, Pražský deník, Czech Republic

In the overheated Czech labor market where it is increasingly difficult for security agencies to recruit staff, modern technologies including drones are being used to monitor shopping centers.

► https://prazsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/ostraha-nakupnich-center-misto-lidi-hlidaji-zlodeje-take-drony-20180529.html

Prison besieged by drones

16 May 2018

Jean-Michel Normand, Le Monde, France

Prison authorities in many countries – from United States to France, from Canada to United Kingdom – are intensifying their efforts to stop drones from delivering drugs, porn and cellphones to inmates. In Canada, the number of drones spotted near prisons increased from 27 in 2015 to 180 in 2017. Last year in Valence, in France, a drone managed to deceive the the security system and dropped a package in the courtyard of the prison. And prisons aren't the only secure facilities grappling with consumer drones. Last year in Japan a man was arrested after landing a drone carrying radioactive material on the prime minister's roof.

► https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/la-foire-du-drone/article/2018/05/16/les-drones-se-bousculent-au-dessus-des-prisons_5299698_5037916.html

Security in shopping malls: drones replace guards

25 May 2018

Reuters, United Kingdom

Air traffic controller company ENAV has picked aerospace and defence group Leonardo to develop a platform to manage drone traffic in the Italian airspace. As part of the deal, the companies will form a newco, in which ENAV will hold a 60 percent stake, with the rest owned by industrial players led by Leonardo. The newco will help develop a management system that will enable conventional air traffic to coexist with drones. ENAV cited a study which forecast that more than 7 millions drones will be flying in European skies by 203

► <https://www.reuters.com/article/enav-drones/enav-selects-leonardo-for-drone-management-system-idUSL5N1SW3XB>

Belgium should make his move on drones

22 May 2018

Eric Renette, Le Soir, Belgium

Commercial drones will result in the creation of 1,000 new jobs in Belgium by 2020. Companies involved in the development, sale and maintenance of the drones will be good for a combined turnover of 400 million euro. The figures come from the consultancy firm PWC and the technology industry federation Agoria. This is why Belgium should intensify his effort to Unmanned aerial vehicle for commercial use, according to analyst Eric Renette. "Drones could be the vehicle of the future, and Belgium should put money into this technology".

► <http://plus.lesoir.be/158171/article/2018-05-22/pourquoi-la-belgique-doit-se-lancer-dans-le-developpement-des-drones>

Drones take center stage in Spain

28 May 2018

Sergio Jorge, La Nueva Crónica, Spain

The city of Leon, in Spain, hosted a major event on Remotely piloted aircraft systems at the end of May. The latest projects and advancement on drones were on display during the exhibition. The Spain government presented the Remote-Drive project, the first Unmanned aerial vehicle manufactured in Spain. This effort serve as a further example of the steps taken by European governments towards independence in the drones field.

► <https://www.lanuevacronica.com/leon-alberga-desde-este-martes-el-mayor-encuentro-europeo-sobre-los-drones>

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- ▶ https://prazsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/ostraha-nakupnich-center-misto-lidi-hlidaji-zlodeje-take-drony-20180529.html

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- ▶ https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/la-foire-du-drone/article/2018/05/16/les-drones-se-bousculent-au-dessus-des-prisons_5299698_5037916.html