

Armed drones on the European media

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DRONES IN THE WRONG HANDS

The new strategy of jihadists: attacks with drones and unmanned cars

24 Nov 2018

Giordano Stabile, La Stampa, Italy

According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Csis), the number of Salafi jihadists around the world – from Morocco to Philippines – is 230.000. They are now able to use advanced weapons like armed drones and unmanned cars.

▶ <https://www.lastampa.it/2018/11/24/esteri/la-nuova-strategia-dei-gruppi-jihadisti-attacchi-con-droni-e-auto-senza-pilota-wfjuFZM8P1NbGMaIWAAk7K/premium.html>

Number of Sunni militants have quadrupled since 9/11 terror attacks

21 Nov 2018

Eric Schmitt, The Independent, United Kingdom

Nearly four times as many Sunni Islamic militants are operating around the world today as on 11 September 2001, a new independent study has concluded. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the West has largely failed to address the root causes of terrorism that perpetuate seemingly endless waves of fighters who are increasingly turning to armed drones to foil the allies' conventional military superiority.

▶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/terror-militants-isis-al-qaeda-syria-afghanistan-pakistan-sunni-islamic-state-report-a8644091.html>

European Union wants to gain “strategic independence” from Nato

18 Nov 2018

Expresso, Portugal

EU is seeking military independence from Nato. Foreign and defense ministers will increase joint projects from 17 to 34, developing a new European drone and investing 13 billion euros in other projects. The creation of an European army suggested by the French president Macron will not be on the table: the goal is to solidify the integration and collaboration of national policies. Washington has criticized the deal.

- ▶ <https://expresso.sapo.pt/internacional/2018-11-19-NATO.-Uniao-Europeia-quer-ganhar-independencia-estrategica-e-ja-vai-mexendo-pecas-no-tabuleiro#gs.jiifLcY>

Spain joins six new European defense projects

19 Nov 2018

Lucía Abellán, El País, Spain

Spain is fully involved in the second phase of European defense cooperation. Madrid will join six of the most ambitious plans that will soon be approved by the defense ministers in Brussels. The drone MALE (an unmanned vehicle that should compete with the American Reaper), the new version of the Tiger helicopter and a network of bases to give logistical support to European operations, are part of those projects. The first European drone should be ready by 2025. The design of this drone, approved in 2013, is one of the milestones of European cooperation and on its development are collaborating France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

- ▶ https://elpais.com/internacional/2018/11/18/actualidad/1542567868_126571.html

Bulgarian arms maker VMZ Sopot to start drone production

15 Nov 2018

Reuters, United Kingdom

State-owned Bulgarian arms producer VMZ Sopot has signed a technology transfer contract with Israel's Aeronautics, allowing VMZ Sopot to start producing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), the economy ministry said on Thursday. Israel rivals the United States as top UAV exporter and has cooperated with Russia and India on drone technologies.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/aeronautics-bulgaria-drones/bulgarian-arms-maker-vmz-sopot-to-start-drone-production-idUSL8N1XQ5R8>

Italy's drone ambitions crash-land as Piaggio Aero loses only client

30 Nov 2018

Giulio Piovaccari and Stanley Carvalho, Reuters, United Kingdom

Europe's only commercial maker of military drones, Italy-based Piaggio Aerospace, has lost its sole customer after going into bankruptcy in a setback for Italian ambitions to challenge U.S. and Israeli firms in a fast growing industry. Piaggio, a unit of Abu Dhabi's

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sovereign fund Mubadala, competes with firms such as U.S. General Atomic, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin as well as Israel's Elbit Systems.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-piaggio-aerospace-bankruptcy/italys-drone-ambitions-crash-land-as-piaggio-aero-loses-only-client-idUSKCN1NZ12C>

EU to launch joint spy school, boost electronic warfare skills

19 Nov 2018

Philip Kaleta, Politico, Belgium

The defense ministers of 25 EU member countries agreed Monday on a joint EU intelligence school, along with 16 other new projects, as part of their military pact. Germany is slated to take the lead on a project to create a new generation of drones, expected by 2025. Italy will take charge of the development of a system to counter the threat of mini- and micro- unmanned drones, both in order to protect troops in action and for homeland defense.

- ▶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-spy-school-defense-poised-to-launch-boost-electronic-warfare-skills/>

French Air Force wants to maintain his superiority over Russian arms

29 Nov 2018

Nathalie Guibert, Le Monde, France

Philippe Lavigne, Chief of Staff of the French air force, said that Paris should react to the spread of anti-aircraft weapons manufactured by Russia and should develop new technologies with the aim of "maintaining air superiority". Lavigne presented his flight plan on November 29, explaining that French air force will use combat drones too. France will initially arm its US Reaper UAVs of medium altitude and long endurance.

- ▶ https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2018/11/29/l-armee-de-l-air-francaise-veut-garder-la-superiorite-face-aux-armes-russes_5390379_3210.html

Polish weapon supplies to Ukraine

26 Nov 2018

Zbigniew Lentowicz, Rzeczpospolita, Poland

Poland had no reason to celebrate after the last Arms&Security trade fair in Kiev. According to Sławomir Kułakowski, CEO of the Polish Chamber of National Defence Manufacturers (PGZ), Ukraine seems to be a pipe dream for the export of military equipment to Ukraine. Although PGZ struggles in this area, a private company, WB Group, is already supplying Ukraine with armed and tactical UAVs. Moreover, WB is co-creating Polish-Ukrainian „Stokrotka” (“Daisy”) rocket launch system.

- ▶ <https://www.rp.pl/Przemysl-Obronny/311269942-Stokrotka-na-drony-czyli-jak-zbroimy-Ukraine.html>

Orlik UAV programme: contract worth PLN 800 million. First deliveries in 2021

30 Nov 2018

Juliusz Sabak, Defence 24, Poland

The agreement signed on the 30th of November between the Armament Inspectorate of the Polish MoD and PGZ Group envisages delivery of 8 tactical short-range UAV packages (40 units of PGZ-19R in each set). The consortium's aim is to provide "Orlik" systems to Polish Armed Forces. PGZ-19r consists of UAVs (5 units), Mobile Take Off Launcher, Logistics Vehicle, Ground Control Station, Ground Data Terminal, Detachable Video Terminal and Portable Video Terminal.

► <https://www.defence24.pl/kontrakt-na-drony-orlik-za-800-mln-zl-pierwsze-dostawy-2021-roku>

Drones and rocket systems: EU countries take care of their security

20 Nov 2018

Sputnik, Poland

The EU countries endorsed the number of common defence projects up to 34. In accordance with the PESCO framework, the EU is about to invest in BLOS missiles development, the modular unmanned UGS system, European medium altitude long endurance remotely piloted aircraft systems (Eurodrone), Anti-UAV Defence Systems (CUAS) and electronic warfare systems JISR. The most involved countries in this process are the following: France, Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain and Hungary.

► <https://pl.sputniknews.com/swiat/201811209229026-drony-systemy-rakietowe-ue-armia-bezpieczenstwo-sputnik-wiadomosci/>

The Netherlands invests in military drones: bad idea or good opportunity?

24 Nov 2018

Frank van Summeren, SBO Blog, Netherlands

The US airforce has been bombing countries in the Middle East with drones for over several years. Why would the Dutch Ministry of Defence not buy them too? We have seen that the US killerdrone is especially bad at hitting its targets; over 98% of drone victims in Somalia, Pakistan and Yemen between 2004 and 2013 were innocent. Moreover, these strikes are in fact extra-judicial killings, carried out in the territory of another country. Lastly, they also lower the threshold for use of force, a worrying trend.

► <https://blog.sbo.nl/veiligheid/nederland-investeert-in-militaire-drones-kwalijke-of-kansrijke-situatie/>

Dutch army should bet on smart weapons

5 Nov 2018

AD, Netherlands

According to the Commander of the Dutch Army, Leo van Beulen, the military needs to

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operate differently and further automate if it wants to play a meaningful role in the future. The emphasis is on drones and smart weapons in stead of classical weapons such as tanks. According to Beulen the future will involve smart cannons steered by drones which can take out their targets hundreds of kilometers away. However, the “human will still remain central”, man and machine will have to cooperate.

▶ <https://www.ad.nl/binnenland/landmacht-moet-inzetten-op-slimmere-wapens-aea658ebf/>

BMW shareholder investing in drone defense start-up

14 Nov 2018

Michael Ashlem, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

Stefan Quandt, co-owner of BMW, will join the German start-up Dedrone. Founded by three Germans in 2014, Dedrone is based in San Francisco. The company is working with 16 US states to stop drones carrying weapons or drugs into prisons.

▶ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/diginomics/bmw-erbe-investiert-in-drohnenabwehr-start-up-15889228.html>

Smart Sky: the state wants a test space in the country

15 Nov 2018

Lidové noviny, Czech Republic

The Ministry of Transport presented a Smart Sky strategy that comprises a drone testing space that would enable a complete digitalization of the Czech airspace and thus almost full automatization and higher degree of security and safety. The country should participate on drone R&D and testing. UAV sector in general is consider as one of the key pillars of country’s economy in future.

▶ https://www.lidovky.cz/byznys/firmy-a-trhy/chytre-nebe-stat-chce-v-cesku-vytvorit-testovaci-prostredi-pro-drony.A181115_174707_firmy-trhy_ele

BRITAIN MAKES HIS MOVE ON DRONES

Britain funds research into drones that decide who they kill, says report

10 Nov 2018

Jamie Doward, The Guardian, United Kingdom

Technologies that could unleash a generation of lethal weapons systems requiring little or no human interaction are being funded by the British Ministry of Defence. The government claims that it “doesn’t possess fully autonomous weapons and has no intention of developing them”, but now a year-long investigation reveals that the MoD and defence contractors are funding dozens of artificial intelligence programmes for use in conflict.

- ▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/10/autonomous-drones-that-decide-who-they-kill-britain-funds-research>

British universities’ links to Chinese military

4 Nov 2018

Tom Harper, The Times, United Kingdom

The Times publishes a list of the British universities linked to the Chinese military. The Manchester University signed a deal with the subsidiary of a Chinese company that manufactures missiles and armed drones.

- ▶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/manchester-universitys-deal-with-missile-firm-th5znhc8>

UK government developing flying killer robots

13 Nov 2018

Anthony Cuthbertson, The Independent, United Kingdom

The UK government is actively funding the development of flying “killer robots” despite publicly stating it has no plans to develop them, according to the campaign group Drone Wars UK. The report highlighted the Taranis drone, which is capable of autonomously flying, plotting routes and locating targets. A spokesperson for the MOD claims that there is no intent to develop weapon systems that operate entirely without human input.

- ▶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/drones-robots-uk-autonomous-artificial-intelligence-ministry-defence-a8631211.html>

Future battleships could be Ai and VR controlled

30 Nov 2018

Stanislav Mihulka, VTM, Czech Republic

British defense company BAE Systems is developing a new generation of semi-autonomous battleship that would work on similar principles as today’s UAV’s. The whole crew including the captain is supposed to be land-based and control the ship in collaboration with the artificial intelligence. Such ship-drone would be much more complicated and complex than UAV’s but could bring substantial savings in the marine warfare. British defense company BAE Systems is developing a new generation of semi-

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autonomous battleship that would work on similar principles as today's UAV's.

- ▶ <https://vtrm.zive.cz/clanky/budouci-valecne-lode-by-mohly-byt-rizeny-umelou-inteligenci-a-virtualni-realitou/sc-870-a-196183/default.aspx>

THE MOST DANGEROUS DRONE

Lethal autonomous weapons: the doctrines of the states

22 Nov 2018

Maiwenn Bordron, France Culture, France

The High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons met in Geneva in late november. Among the items on the agenda, the future of lethal autonomous weapons (Laws). This weapons are able to carry out a military full targeting cycle in a military operation without human intervention. The negotiations seemed to be deadlocked as several countries refused to sign a ban treaty. Only 26 countries are explicitly calling for a ban on autonomous weapons, among them Austria, Brazil, Egypt and Marocco. There are no weapons of this kind right now. China could be the first country to use autonomous lethal weapons. US and Russia are also participating in the arms race.

► <https://www.franceculture.fr/geopolitique/armes-letales-autonomes-les-doctrines-des-etats>

Dutch fear use of killer robot by military

6 Nov 2018

René van Zwieten, Telegraaf, Netherlands

Smart cannons controlled by drones will no longer be sciencefiction in the near future. The Dutch military wants to deploy these killerrobots soon. However, according to our poll, many readers are wary of killerrobots. 60% believe the threshold for war will be lower when it is fought with robots. Others fear that these devices will be hacked and used against us, or turnng against humans on its own.

► <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/2764545/uitslag-stelling-star-wars-wordt-realiteit>

THE NEW ARMS RACE

NATO looks to startups, disruptive tech to conquer emerging threats

13 Nov 2018

Andrea Shalal, Reuters, United Kingdom

NATO is developing new hi-tech tools, such as the ability to 3D-print parts for weapons and deliver them by drone, as it scrambles to retain a competitive edge over Russia, China and other would-be battlefield adversaries. General Andre Lanata, who took over as head of the NATO transformation command in September, urged startups as well as traditional arms manufacturers to work with the Atlantic alliance to boost innovation, as rapid and easy access to emerging technologies was helping adversaries narrow NATO's longstanding advantage.

► <https://www.franceculture.fr/geopolitique/armes-letales-autonomes-les-doctrines-des-etats>

China's drone makers zero in on armed forces

9 Nov 2018

Kathrin Hille, Financial Times, United Kingdom

In early November China showed off its defence gear at the Zhuhai Air Show. Every Chinese state-owned arms company had an array of drones on display, and more than 350 Chinese private firms now make unmanned aerial, surface or ground vehicles, according to China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. "We are seeing a bubble around artificial intelligence and especially in the unmanned vehicles industry, a serious bubble," said Figo Zhang, chief executive of Yunzhou Technology, a maker of unmanned boat drones.

► <https://www.ft.com/content/4f427fa2-e284-11e8-a6e5-792428919cee>

Major NATO military exercise in Norway tests artificial intelligence

4 Nov 2018

DR Nyheder, Denmark

NATO's military exercise, Trident Juncture 18, hosted by Norway, is the largest NATO exercise in Europe since the 1980s. Danish soldiers, tanks, ships and helicopters are amongst the 50000 participants. AI systems and drones are used to guard the air base, to show how the technology can save manpower and create an overview to make the best use of troops on land. This is just early steps towards autonomous weapons systems, which may de-brutalize warfare by making better more efficient decisions. AI can process information quickly and can act free from stress or emotions.

► <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/storstilet-nato-militaeroevelse-i-norge-tester-kunstig-intelligens>

Russian army drills against small drone attacks

27 Nov 2018

Stanislav Mihulka, VTM, Czech Republic

Although Russian army does not dispose of combat drones, it has large experience in

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using small drones in real-combat operations (Crimea, Syria) for reconnaissance and currently is probably the only military in the world that is integrating a combat against groups of small drones in its tactics in all types of its units including paramedics and cooks. This is motivated by recent drones attacks against its troops in Syria.

- ▶ <https://vtm.zive.cz/clanky/cela-ruska-armada-trenuje-boj-proti-malym-dronum/sc-870-a-196107/default.aspx>