
Armed drones on the European media

Table of contents

2 DRONES WITHOUT TRANSPARENCY

Trump revokes Obama rule on drone strikes
The dark side of the drones
Trump cancels Obama policy on drones
Trump says CIA can hide drone victims

3 WHEN DRONES COMMIT WAR CRIMES

U.S. Airstrikes In Somalia May Amount To War Crimes
The hidden US war in Somalia
US airstrikes in Somalia are killing civilians
Syria: "A drone killed my brother-in-law and a grenade my husband"
Germany have to monitor US drone mission
Why three Yemenis and one Somali are taking legal action against Germany?

5 DANGEROUS DRONES

AI will take over your job — maybe
Who's responsible for drone strikes?
We must control lethal weapons
About the Kalashnikov kamikaze drone
UK, US and Russia oppose killer robot ban

7 THE NEW COLD WAR

The US wants to conquer the world with their cheap, massive, and intelligent combat drone
The Russian army manufactured a flying rifle
Google's benefiting China's military
A Russian flying automatic shotgun to shoot down other small drones

Kalashnikov suicide drone will carry up to 3 kilograms of explosives

Trump's strategy risks exacerbating west African conflict

NATO to receive first Northrop surveillance drone

Russia introduces new kamikaze drone

10 DRONES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chinese, local drones reflect changing Middle East
SPD ready to allow some arms exports to Saudis
The growing appetite for armed drones
Saudis shoot down drone aimed at kingdom

12 THE FRENCH DRONE

Drones for military and civilian operation
The France era of armed drones
Startups and the French army

13 NEW ACTORS IN THE DRONE RACE

Turkish combat drones in Ukraine
Reapers for Dutch reconnaissance squad
Here is the Military's shopping list
The Danish Military is poorly equipped for tomorrow's warfare
Combat helicopters or drones?

Sources

- Altinget, *Denmark*
- Berlingske, *Denmark*
- Chip, *Poland*
- CM Jornal, *Portugal*
- Corriere della Sera, *Italy*
- Defence24, *Poland*
- E15, *Czech Republic*
- The Economist, *United Kingdom*
- El País, *Spain*
- Gazeta, *Poland*
- Il Giornale, *Italy*
- The Independent, *United Kingdom*
- The Guardian, *United Kingdom*
- La Repubblica, *Italy*
- Le Figaro, *France*
- Le Matin, *Switzerland*
- Le Monde, *France*
- Le Soir, *Belgium*
- Les Echos, *France*
- Mare, *Netherland*
- MF Dnes, *Czech Republic*
- Open Democracy, *United Kingdom*
- Politico, *Belgium*
- Nos, *Netherland*
- Der Spiegel, *Germany*
- Der Tagesspiegel, *Germany*
- Stern, *Germany*
- Reuters, *United Kingdom*
- Up in the sky, *Netherland*
- VTM, *Czech Republic*

DRONES WITHOUT TRANSPARENCY

Trump revokes Obama rule on reporting drone strike deaths

9 mar 2019

El País, Spain

President Donald Trump has revoked a policy set by his predecessor requiring US intelligence officials to publish the number of civilians killed in drone strikes outside of war zones. The 2016 executive order was brought in by then-President Barack Obama, who was under pressure to be more transparent.

► https://elpais.com/internacional/2019/03/07/estados_unidos/1551993926_700239.html

The dark side of the drones

16 mar 2019

Nos, Netherland

Drones have a dark-side. Their use causes civilian casualties, and innocent people on the ground are fearful of being targeted. To keep track of civilian casualties of drone strikes, the CIA had to publish a report every year on this topic. But this obligation has now been terminated, rendering an obscure war even more invisible.

► <https://nos.nl/op3/artikel/2276189-hoe-de-onzichtbare-oorlog-met-drones-nog-onzichtbaarder-wordt.html>

Trump cancels Obama policy of reporting drone strike deaths

9 mar 2019

Gerry Freda, Il Giornale, Italy

President Donald Trump will no longer require U.S. intelligence officials to publicly disclose the numbers of people killed in drone strikes and other attacks on terrorist targets outside of war zones. The administration is convinced that releasing those information could damage the reputation of the Us Army without helping the cause of transparency.

► <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/mondo/trump-impone-segreto-stato-sulle-vittime-civili-dei-droni-1659286.html>

Trump says CIA can hide drone attacks' civilian victims

7 mar 2019

Le Soir, Belgium

President Donald Trump canceled a decree signed by Obama in 2016, which imposes the obligation for CIA to report air strikes' civilian victims. Human rights groups protested against that decision, claiming that it's against transparency efforts on drone attacks, one of the main weapons of the nation.

► <https://www.lesoir.be/210753/article/2019-03-07/trump-autorise-la-cia-dissimuler-les-victimes-civiles-de-ses-frappes-de-drones>

CONTINUA>>

WHEN DRONES COMMIT WAR CRIMES

U.S. Airstrikes In Somalia May Amount To War Crimes

20 mar 2019

La Repubblica, Italy

The British defence secretary has revealed plans to invest £7m in a swarm squadron. The United States may have committed war crimes as it bombed al-Shabab militants in Somalia, a new report Amnesty International alleges. Researchers for the human rights group investigated five U.S. airstrikes and found that they had resulted in 14 civilian deaths. The U.S. has “indiscriminately killed some of these civilians,” Abdullahi Hassan, a Nairobi-based researcher for Amnesty, said in an interview.

- ▶ https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/diritti-umani/2019/03/20/news/somalia_sugli_attacchi_aerei_degli_usa_in_somalia_possibili_crimini_di_guerra_avvolti_dal_segreto-222067307/

The hidden US war in Somalia: over 100 air strikes in two years

20 Mar 2019

Riccardo Noury, Corriere della Sera, Italy

US forces have “dramatically increased” the number of air strikes in Somalia with several civilians killed by the powerful missiles, Amnesty International says, reports denied by the military. The Africa Command claims it killed ZERO civilians – but Amnesty said data it had analyzed revealed that isn’t the case. “More than 100 strikes carried out since April 2017, civilians were killed and injured but no acknowledgment, no justice for victims,” Amnesty stressed.

- ▶ http://lepersoneeladignita.corriere.it/2019/03/20/la-guerra-nascosta-degli-usa-in-somalia-oltre-100-attacchi-aerei-in-due-anni/?refresh_ce-cp

US airstrikes in Somalia are killing civilians

20 mar 2019

The Guardian, Uk

There is credible evidence that US military airstrikes in Somalia have killed or wounded nearly two dozen civilians, an international human rights group said Tuesday, charging that the Pentagon is not adequately investigating potential casualties. The report came the same day that a Somali intelligence official and two local residents said a US drone strike on Monday killed civilians.

- ▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/19/somalia-us-airstrikes-civilian-deaths-amnesty-international>

CONTINUA>>

Syria: “A drone killed my brother-in-law and a grenade my husband”

5 mar 2019

Le Matin, Switzerland

Jean-Michel Clain’s wife has confirmed that her husband (a french jihadist) has dead in Syria last February, two days after her brother-in-law, Fabien, had been killed by a drone attack. About the presence of other French serving the IS, the woman showed some doubts: “There may be others, but there are not so many, anyway”.

▶ <https://www.lematin.ch/monde/drone-tue-beaufreere-obus-mari/story/22425968>

Germany have to monitor US drone mission

19 mar 2019

Der Spiegel, Germany

Three Yemenis have partially won in a lawsuit against the german federal government. In the future, the government must actively examine if the US drone missions in Yemen, carried out using the Ramstein American military base, violate international law. This was decided by the Münster Higher Administrative Court (OVG).

▶ <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/deutschland-muss-drohneneinsaetze-der-usa-aus-ramstein-pruefen-a-1258647.html>

Why three Yemenis and one Somali are taking legal action against Germany?

14 Mar 2019

Von Helge Hommers, Der Tagesspiegel, Germany

Germany is on trial for two drone strikes departed from the American military base in Ramstein. One attack was in Yemen and the other one was in Somalia. Three innocent civilians was died, so their families suing the german government. According to the European Centre for Constitutional Human Rights, Germany should prevent the American attacks.

▶ <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/verhandlung-am-oberverwaltungsgericht-muenster-warum-drei-jemeniten-und-ein-somalier-deutschland-verklagen/24104808.html>

DANGEROUS DRONES

AI will take over your job — maybe

14 mar 2019

Eline Schaart, Politico, Belgium

Militaries and manufacturers worldwide are working on weapons that could one day be deployed to fight on their own. Fully autonomous weapons, also known as killer robots, can select and engage targets without human intervention, rendering humans on the frontlines obsolete.

▶ <https://www.politico.eu/article/artificial-intelligence-robots-will-take-over-your-job-maybe/>

Drones don't commit crimes, so who's responsible?

21 mar 2019

Bart Braun, Mare, Netherland

We need international agreements on the use of drones, and an agency that can enforce compliance, according to former commando and promovendus James Welch. 'We need clear and common language to discuss the use of drones, because one country's preemptive self-defence is the other's aggressive interference. The law on their use should count for everyone, or it counts for no-one.

▶ <http://www.mareonline.nl/archive/2019/03/21/drones-plegen-geen-misdaden>

World must keep lethal weapons under human control, Germany says

15 mar 2019

Reuters, Uk

Germany's foreign minister on Friday called for urgent efforts to ensure that humans remained in control of lethal weapons, as a step towards banning "killer robots". Heiko Maas told an arms control conference in Berlin that rules were needed to limit the development and use of weapons that could kill without human involvement.

▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/germany-arms/world-must-keep-lethal-weapons-under-human-control-germany-says-idUSL1N2120QZ>

May I have a word about... the Kalashnikov kamikaze drone

3 mar 2019

Jonathan Bouquet, The Guardian, Uk

Kalashnikov has just announced a kamikaze-style drone. Given the reputation of the Kalashnikov AK-47, the chosen weapon for terrorists and insurgents the world over, it seems likely that the company's drone will prove equally effective and desirable and therefore something that should be actively negated than drooled over.

▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/commentisfree/2019/mar/03/may-i-have-a-word-about-kamikaze-kalashnikov-drone>

UK, US and Russia among those opposing killer robot ban

29 mar 2019

Damien Gayle, The Guardian, Uk

The UK government is among a group of countries that are attempting to thwart plans to formulate and impose a pre-emptive ban on killer robots. Delegates have been meeting at the UN in Geneva all week to discuss potential restrictions under international law to so-called lethal autonomous weapons systems, which use artificial intelligence to help decide when and who to kill. The UK is among a group of states – including Australia, Israel, Russia and the US – speaking forcefully against legal regulation.

► <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/mar/29/uk-us-russia-opposing-killer-robot-ban-un-ai>

CONTINUA>>

THE NEW COLD WAR

The US wants to conquer the world with their cheap, massive, and intelligent combat drone

12 mar 2019

Maciej Kucharczyk, Gazeta, Poland

On March the 5th in Yuma (Arizona) XQ-58 Valkyrie was submitted to trials for the very first time. This stealthy unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV) was manufactured to accompany bigger and more expensive aircrafts F-35 alike. The US is motivated to gain a competitive advantage over China and Russia by providing the whole new standards. XQ-58A is a low price solution which enables keeping pilots way from danger during a mission.

► <http://next.gazeta.pl/next/7,151243,24540903,takim-sprzetem-usa-chca-zawojowac-przyszlosc-tani-masowy-i.html>

The Russian army manufactured a flying riffle

27 mar 2019

Konrad Siwik, Chip, Poland

Firearms manufacturer from Russia, Almaz Antey, designed a UAV equipped with AK-47. The “flying assault rifle” is able to hit the target from 300 meters away and launch 600 rounds per minute. Its main mission would be to hit small targets (like commercial quadcopters and reconnaissance drones) on lower altitudes. The Russian gun drone will be either human- or AI-controlled. By now, the major disadvantage of the drone is the necessity to regularly head back to the base to reload.

► <https://www.chip.pl/2019/03/rosyjska-armia-stworzyla-latajacy-karabin/>

Google’s work in China benefiting China’s military: U.S. general

14 mar 2019

Idrees Ali and Patricia Zengerle, Reuters, Uk

Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Us Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on Thursday that the Chinese military was benefiting from the work Alphabet Inc’s Google was doing in China, where the technology giant has long sought to have a bigger presence.

► <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-google/googles-work-in-china-benefiting-chinas-military-u-s-general-idUSKCN1QV296>

CONTINUA>>

A Russian flying automatic shotgun to shoot down other small drones

31 mar 2019

Jan Grohman, MF Dnes, Czech Republic

Russian arms manufacturer Almaz Matay has constructed a drone with mounted Vepr 12 automatic shotgun. With a take-off weight of 23 kg, a wingspan of three meters, the drone is able to take off vertically and fly like an airplane hunting down other smaller drones. It is controlled by an operator using a visor. This CUAS (Counter Unmanned Aircraft System) is a successor of a bigger drone Carnovora and fits into a growing number of technologies to combat enemy drones.

- ▶ https://www.idnes.cz/technet/vojenstvi/rusky-dron-brokovnice-vepr-12-almaz-antej.A190329_140257_vojenstvi_erp

Kalashnikov suicide drone will carry up to 3 kilograms of explosives

31 mar 2019

Stanislav Mihulka, VTM, Czech Republic

Well known Russian arms manufacturer Kalashnikov is entering a segment of disposable kamikaze drones with its KUB-UAV drone. It is able to carry 3 kilograms of explosives on board and hit a destination defined by geographical coordinates or simple photos. It should also be able to operate in any terrain and overcome enemy defense system. The company claims the drone has already passed all necessary tests and is ready to be deployed.

- ▶ <https://vtm.zive.cz/clanky/sebevrazedny-dron-kalashnikov-ponese-az-3-kilogramy-trhaviny/sc-870-a-197506/default.aspx>

Trump's troop withdrawal risks exacerbating west African conflict

11 mar 2019

Paul Rogers, Open Democracy, Uk

In the second decade of the “war on terror”, the United States’s anti-insurgency efforts have increasingly moved into the shadows: fewer boots on the ground, more drones and special forces. This can make the US-led coalition’s operational failures easier to conceal while hiding the cost of its deeper strategic retreat.

- ▶ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/trumps-troop-withdrawal-risks-exacerbating-west-african-conflict/>

CONTINUA>>

NATO to receive first Northrop surveillance drone, years late

18 mar 2019

Andrea Shalal, Reuters, Uk

NATO is to receive the first of five Northrop Grumman high-altitude drones in the third quarter after years of delays, giving the alliance its own spy drones for the first time, the German government told lawmakers. Thomas Silberhorn, state secretary in the German Defence Ministry, said the NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) drone would be delivered to an air base in Sigonella, Italy.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-drones/nato-to-receive-first-northrop-surveillance-drone-years-late-idUSKCN1QZ2oM>

Russia introduces new kamikaze drone

3 Mar 2019

Stern, Germany

“Accurate, deadly and unrivaled”. This is how Russian weapons maker Kalashnikov describes his armed drone (video).

- ▶ <https://www.stern.de/digital/technik/kub-bla--russland-stellt-neue-kamikaze-drohne-vor-8601304.html>

CONTINUA>>

DRONES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Chinese, local drones reflect changing Middle East

6 mar 2019

Peter Apps, Reuters, Uk

Ever since 9/11, drones have been amongst the most visible, and often controversial, signs of American power in the Middle East and beyond. But as regional powers look to chart their own course, a new generation of cheaper unmanned aerial vehicles - Chinese or locally built, with far fewer restrictions on their use - are taking to the skies. The last five years have seen a dramatic rise in their use.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/apps-drones/column-chinese-local-drones-reflect-changing-middle-east-peter-apps-idUSL5N2oS5UZ>

Germany's SPD ready to allow some arms exports to Saudis

27 mar 2019

Reuters, Uk

Germany's junior coalition party is prepared to allow some arms exports to Saudi Arabia, a softening of its position which may defuse a row with its conservative partners in power. Such a move by the Social Democrats (SPD) would also ease concerns in Britain and France that Germany's current ban on arms exports to the kingdom, imposed after the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-arms-saudi/germanys-spd-ready-to-allow-some-arms-exports-to-saudis-rnd-newspapers-idUSKCN1R8oT7>

The growing appetite for armed drones in the Middle East

9 mar 2019

The Economist, Uk

Armed drones have become ubiquitous in the Middle East, say Aniseh Bassiri Tabrizi and Justin Bronk of the Royal United Services Institute, a British think-tank, in a recent report. This is a consequence of China's growing influence in the region: Beijing has few hang-ups about human rights and no pesky Congress to block deals. It has sold missile-toting drones to Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

- ▶ <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2019/03/09/the-growing-appetite-for-armed-drones-in-the-middle-east>

CONTINUA>>

Saudis shoot down drone aimed at kingdom

8 mar 2019

Reuters, Uk

Saudi Arabia's air defense systems shot down a drone over the kingdom on Friday, the Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen said, and it accused the country's Houthi fighters of launching the aircraft and targeting civilians. Some civilians suffered light injuries from debris when the drone was shot down, coalition spokesman Colonel Turki al-Maliki said, according to Saudi state television.

- ▶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security/saudis-shoot-down-drone-aimed-at-kingdom-saudi-tv-reports-idUSKCN1QP1CY>

CONTINUA>>

THE FRENCH DRONE

A duo of drones for military and civilian operation

29 mar 2019

Jean-Michel Normand, Le Monde, France

A partnership between two french companies, Drone Volt e Nexter, seeks to create a duo-drone, composed by a land drone (a rover) and an air one, for military and civilian application. This combination allows to widen considerably the actions of the Nerve, a multi-mission light robot.

- ▶ https://www.lemonde.fr/la-foire-du-drone/article/2019/03/29/un-duo-de-drones-terrestre-et-aerien-pour-des-operations-militaires-et-civiles_5443276_5037916.html

The France era of armed drones

21 Mar 2019

Nathalie Guibert, Le Monde, France

France air force is finalising the Reaper drone that will be used in Niger against jihadists, in the end of 2019. The number of these drones of “medium height long resistance” will rise from 5 to 12 in 2025. Then to 24 in 2030.

- ▶ https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/03/21/la-france-entre-dans-l-ere-des-drones-armes_5439209_3210.html

Defense: startups are making their way to the French army

29 Mar 2019

Anne Bauer, Les Echos, France

The minister of French Armies Florence Parly presented the Defense Innovation Agency, which should serve as a one-stop shop for companies interested in defense. Many companies, like Cerbair and Diodon, have seen in this project an opportunity.

- ▶ <https://www.lesechos.fr/industrie-services/air-defense/defense-les-start-up-se-fraient-une-route-vers-larmee-francaise-1005036>

CONTINUA>>

NEW ACTORS IN THE DRONE RACE

Turkish combat drones in Ukraine

7 mar 2019

Defence24, Poland

In January 2019 president Peter Poroshenko announced that Ukraine was about to test the Bayraktar TB2 combat drones after the conclusion of the contract between Ukrspecexport and Baykar Makina. The platform was designed for conducting reconnaissance and intelligence missions. TB2 reaches 27,000 feet altitude and stays in the air for 24 hours and 34 minutes. It has a maximum speed of 220 km per hour, a wingspan of 12 meters and a max takeoff weight of 650 kg.

► <https://www.defence24.pl/tureckie-bojowe-drony-sa-juz-na-ukrainie>

Reapers for Dutch reconnaissance squad

28 mar 2019

Daniel Ravenswaay, Up in the sky, Netherland

The Pentagon gave permission last week to the American company General Atomics to start the production of 4 Reapers for the Royal Air Force. The contract is worth 123 million euros. In 2022, the squadron is scheduled to be at full capacity, consisting of 130 people including pilots, analysts, and sensor operators.

► <https://www.upinthesky.nl/2019/03/28/reapers-voor-nederlands-verkenningsquadron/>

Fighter jets, SM2 missiles and drones: Here is the Military's shopping list

4 mar 2019

Andreas Krog, Altinget, Denmark

In coming years, the military will be purchasing a lot of new products for all divisions. This article details all planned purchases. Drones are amongst the army's planned purchases between 2019 and 2023.

► <https://www.alinget.dk/artikel/kampfly-sm2-missiler-og-droner-her-er-forsvarets-indkoebliste>

The Danish Military is poorly equipped for tomorrow's warfare with urban warfare and drones

20 mar 2019

Niels Jespersen, Berlingske, Denmark

[subscription only piece, can only summarise the initial paragraph]: An opinion piece discussing the characteristics of modern warfare, specifically with reference to Islamic State, and the importance of urban warfare. It is emphasised that the Danish military is poorly equipped and trained for this type of warfare.

► <https://www.berlingske.dk/kronikker/det-danske-forsvar-er-darligt-rustet-til-fremtidens-krigsforelse-med>

Combat helicopters or drones? The Defense shall decide within five years

15 mar 2019

E15, Czech Republic

By 2024, the Czech Ministry of Defense will decide whether or not the armed forces will purchase new combat helicopters or replace them with drones. The Czech Air Force currently uses Russian-made Mi-24 combat helicopters that need to be replaced by more modern alternatives. As a growing range of ways of conducting combat operations and unconventional weaponry has to be taken into account, the armed forces expect to make greater use of automated and remotely controlled systems in order to protect soldiers' lives.

- ▶ <https://www.e15.cz/domaci/bojove-vrtulniky-nebo-drony-ministerstvo-obrany-rozhodne-do-peti-let-1357195>