

Armed drones on the European media

Table of contents

2 EUROPE AND DRONES: A LOVE AFFAIR

Switzerland: the new armed drone has arrived
NATO learns to see

Predator drones come to Spain for border patrolling

The strategic importance of the Sigonella base

France carries out first drone strike in Mali

France deploys armed drones in the Sahel

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer wants armed drones to protect soldiers

Worrying crash of the last French military drone

Russia arms Kaliningrad. Drones, tanks, planes, Iskanders

5 TURKEY ENTERS THE DRONE RACE

Armed Turkish drone lands in Cyprus as regional tensions rise

Turkey to send troops to Libya at Tripoli's request: Erdogan

Turkish military get drone with precisely shooting machine gun

Turkey deploys its first armed drone in northern Cyprus

Turkey acquires machine gun-toting octocopters with anti-recoil systems

Turkey buys drones equipped with a machine gun. They can hit a man from a distance of 200 meters

How Turkey tries to claim parts of the Mediterranean

7 THE PERPETUAL DRONE WAR

US attacks militias in Iraq, Syria, and Somalia

Islamist leaders killed in drone attacks

Afghan families torn apart by drone strikes (picture essay)

Iraqi militiamen killed in air strike on headquarters

American drone killed five civilians

US bombs Shia group blamed for American's death in Iraq

Military: Terror groups' drones challenges our dominance in the air

9 A SCARY FUTURE

Are drone swarms the future of aerial warfare?

The rise of armed drones, a global challenge

Drones in huge numbers are on the way - but we are lacking defence against malicious use

Technologies that help waging war

11 HOW TO STOP DRONES

Military expert on drone defence: "Damn well no easy task"

Podcast special: How do we defend ourselves against the drones?

The drones are coming - now the question is just how we stop them

Sources

- Corriere della Sera, *Italy*
- Defence 24, *Poland*
- Die Zeit, *Germany*
- Elsevier, *The Netherlands*
- El Mundo, *Spain*
- Financial Times, *Uk*
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, *Germany*
- Ingeniøren, *Denmark*
- Innopoland, *Poland*
- Kresy, *Poland*
- Le Figaro, *France*
- Le Matin, *Switzerland*
- Le Monde, *France*
- Le Soir, *Belgium*
- Les Echos, *France*
- Reuters, *Uk*
- Telegraaf, *The Netherlands*
- The Guardian, *Uk*
- Trouw, *The Netherlands*

EUROPE AND DRONES: A LOVE AFFAIR

Switzerland: the new armed drone has arrived

9 Dec 2019

Le Matin, Switzerland

The first Hermes 900 HFE drone from Israeli manufacturer Elbit Systems has arrived in Emmen, but it is not allowed to fly. The Swiss army wants to acquire six drones of this kind, but they will not be delivered this year as planned. Certification of drones by the Israeli civil aviation authorities has not yet been issued. This is why the delivery has not yet been possible and the drone is not authorized to fly.

► <https://www.lematin.ch/suisse/nouveau-drone-armee-arrive/story/28302228>

NATO learns to see

24 Dec 2019

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

NATO's first unmanned aircraft has arrived in November at an alliance base in southern Italy, where reconnaissance missions are expected to begin next year. The Global Hawk surveillance drone is located at the Italian Sigonella Air Force Base, twenty kilometers from Catania. Three more Global Hawks are expected in 2020 and then the fleet will be complete.

► <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/wie-die-nato-ihre-bodenueberwachung-auf-sizilien-aufbaut-16551119.html?premium>

Predator drones come to Spain for border patrolling

13 Dec 2019

El Mundo, Spain

The first predator drones acquired by the minister of defence arrived at the Talavera la Real base, in the Badajoz region. These drones, bought in 2015 for 158 million euros, will be used mainly intelligence and recognition missions at the border in the Mediterranean Sea.

► <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2019/12/13/5df26e6021efa07f538b4624.html>

The strategic importance of the Sigonella base

21 Dec 2019

Maurizio Carrara, Corriere della Sera, Italy

The drones Rq-4D Phoenix, produced by Northrop Grumman, are at the center of the clash between the west, that is trying to maintain its technological advantage, and China, who's rapidly developing its drone market. For these reasons NATO is putting its Rq-4D in the base of Sigonella, Sicily. With tension intensifying in the North Africa and Middle East, this base is essential for preserving the NATO presence in the region.

► https://www.corriere.it/esteri/19_dicembre_21/dove-volano-i-droni-nato-386f69ec-242e-11ea-8330-496805e4bde5.shtml

France carries out first drone strike in Mali

23 Dec 2019

Trouw, The Netherlands

The French armed forces announced that 7 militants in Mali were killed by drone strike. The Reaper drone opened fire to support French ground troops, which were under attack by militants on motorcycles.

- ▶ <https://www.trouw.nl/buitenland/frankrijk-heeft-voor-het-eerst-een-droneaanval-uitgevoerd-in-mali-b217dac6/>

France deploys armed drones in the Sahel

20 Dec 2019

Le Monde, France

After United States, United Kingdom and Israel, Paris has joined the club of countries that use armed drones. France has deployed its first armed drones in the Sahel to track down jihadists, Minister of the Armies Florence Parly announced. The fleet of French drones should increase to twelve in 2025, then to twenty-four in 2030. Their use will be strictly supervised by France, the minister claimed. To open fire the crews will apply the same rules as airplane or helicopter pilots.

- ▶ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/12/19/l-armee-francaise-deploie-des-drones-armes-au-sahel_6023508_3212.html

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer wants armed drones to protect soldiers

4 Dec 2019

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany

The Bundeswehr is planning to use the Heron TP drone in Afghanistan to protect soldiers. The drone is armed and the Minister of Defense Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer wants to use this opportunity. The coalition partner SPD is reacting reservedly.

- ▶ <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/akk-fuer-einsatz-bewaffneter-drohnen-zum-schutz-von-soldaten-16518762.html>

Worrying crash of the last French military drone

9 Dec 2019

Anne Bauer, Les Echos, France

While Safran Electronics & Defense, the military branch of the aerospace company Safran, was preparing to celebrate the delivery of its first tactical drone “Patroller”, an aircraft crashed to the ground. The accident happened a few kilometers from the air base of Istres, without causing any casualties. The reasons are completely unknown, an investigation has been opened by BEA-E, the French accident investigation office of the Ministry of Defense.

- ▶ <https://www.lesechos.fr/industrie-services/air-defense/drones-militaires-la-malediction-francaise-1154928>

Russia arms Kaliningrad. Drones, tanks, planes, Iskanders

15 Dec 2019

Defence 24, Poland

The Kaliningrad Oblast is successively strengthened so that in case of war it can play not only defensive but also offensive roles. At the beginning of November, it was strengthened by a squad of Forpost drones. They will patrol the coast and the Baltic Sea, and in the event of an armed conflict identify targets and set fire to them. Earlier Bal missile systems was deployed covering eastern Baltic.

<https://defence24.pl/rosja-zbroi-kaliningrad-drony-czolgi-samoloty-iskandery>

CONTINUA>>

TURKEY ENTERS THE DRONE RACE

Armed Turkish drone lands in Cyprus as regional tensions rise

16 Dec 2019

The Guardian, Uk

A Turkish military drone was delivered to northern Cyprus on Monday amid growing tensions over Turkey's deal with Libya that extended its claims to the gas-rich eastern Mediterranean. The government of Turkish occupied northern Cyprus had approved the use of the airport for unmanned aerial vehicles. It followed a deal signed last month between Libya and Turkey that could prove crucial in the scramble for recently-discovered gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean.

► <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/16/turkey-delivers-armed-drone-to-northern-cyprus-amid-growing-tension-libya-deal>

Turkey to send troops to Libya at Tripoli's request: Erdogan

26 Dec 2019

Ece Toksabay and Ahmed Elumami, Reuters, Uk

Turkey will send troops to Libya at the request of Tripoli as soon as next month, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday, putting the North African country's conflict at the center of wider regional frictions. Libya's internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli has been struggling to fend off General Khalifa Haftar's forces, which have been supported by Russia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordan. The Chinese-made drones have given Haftar "local air superiority" as they can carry over eight times the weight of explosives than the drones given to the GNA by Turkey and can also cover the whole of Libya, a United Nations report said in November.

► <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-libya-erdogan/turkey-to-send-troops-to-libya-at-tripolis-request-erdogan-idUSKBN1YUoEZ>

Turkish military get drone with precisely shooting machine gun

27 Dec 2019

Thomas Djursing, Ingeniøren, Denmark

Songar, Turkish military's new drone looks like a large hobby drone, except for an attached machine gun. Turkish producer Asisguard says it can hit within an area of 15cm from a distance of 200m, with improvements expected to increase that to 400m. Previous attempts to attach shooting weapons to drones have not been able to achieve such precision. It is unclear how Asisguard achieved this, except for the use of a stabilisation system mentioned in a Youtube video.

► <https://ing.dk/artikel/tyrkisk-militaer-faar-drone-med-maskingevaer-kan-skyde-praecist-231168>

CONTINUA>>

Turkey deploys its first armed drone in northern Cyprus

16 Dec 2019

Le Figaro, France

An armed Turkish drone has landed in northern Cyprus, where it will stay amid the strong tensions between Turkey and other Mediterranean countries concerning the exploitation of hydrocarbons. The drone, type Bayraktar TB2 landed on Gecitakle airport in the Famagusta region, in the east of the divided island.

- ▶ <https://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/la-turquie-deploie-un-premier-drone-arme-a-chypre-nord-20191216>

Turkey acquires machine gun-toting octocopters with anti-recoil systems

14 Dec 2019

El Mundo, Spain

Turkey is preparing to receive its first shipment of armed multicopter drones this month, according to New Scientist. Made by the country's own Asisguard, the Songar drone can carry 200 rounds of 5.56 x 45 mm NATO class ammo, and can hit a 15-cm-square (6-inch-square) target from 200 m (650 ft) away with single shots, 15-bullet bursts or a full auto unloading.

- ▶ <https://www.elmundo.es/tecnologia/2019/12/14/5df3ac31fc6c83c86c8b462d.html>

Turkey buys drones equipped with a machine gun. They can hit a man from a distance of 200 meters

15 Dec 2019

Katarzyna Florencka, Innpoland, Poland

Songar, made by the Turkish company Asisguard, can hit a 15-centimeter area from 200 m. - and work is underway to get the same effect from 400 m.

It is very hard to hit a small aim from a drone due to the problem of setting the right firing angle and then the recoil. Asisguard has two solutions: sensors measuring the distance to the target, angle and wind speed; arms adjusting the gun after recoil.

- ▶ <https://innpoland.pl/156853,turcja-kupuje-wojskowe-drony-songar-uzbrojone-w-karabin-maszynowy>

How Turkey tries to claim parts of the Mediterranean

17 Dec 2019

Elsevier, The Netherlands

A Turkish military drone has landed on an airbase in Turkish Cyprus, which is supposed to help the quest for gas exploration in the Mediterranean. Turkey has made an agreement with Libya delineating maritime zones, which contain important reserves of gas. Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt have protested against this agreement.

- ▶ <https://www.elsevierweekblad.nl/buitenland/achtergrond/2019/12/wat-is-er-aan-de-hand-in-de-middelandse-zee-727047/>

THE PERPETUAL DRONE WAR

US attacks militias in Iraq, Syria, and Somalia

30 Dec 2019

Telegraaf, The Netherlands

The US has attacked militias in Iraq, Syria, and Somalia. In the first two countries the attacks were likely carried out with fighter aircraft. In Somalia, in consultation with the Somali government, US drone strikes killed 7 al-Shabaab members. A few days before, 79 Somali civilians were killed during terrorist attacks in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

► <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/284826675/vs-vallen-milities-in-irak-syrie-en-somalie-aan>

Islamist leaders killed in drone attacks

30 Dec 2019

Die Zeit, Germany

The Somali government has responded to the Mogadishu bombing with retaliatory attacks. Several members of the Al-Shabaab terrorist militia have been killed in US drone attacks. Somali intelligence officials say a high-ranking leader of the terrorist militia is among the dead. The attacks focused on an Al-Shabaab camp near Kunya-Barow.

► <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-12/somalia-islamistenfuerer-drohnenangriffe-bombenanschlag-mogadischu-terrormiliz-al-shabaab>

Afghan families torn apart by drone strikes (picture essay)

6 Dec 2019

Stefanie Glinski, The Guardian, Uk

The US conducted its first armed drone strike over Afghanistan in 2002, and since 2015 drone use has escalated. As of 31 August, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism had documented at least 4,251 aerial strikes in Afghanistan for 2019, more than double the total for the whole of 2018. Most are thought to be by drones, it says.

► <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/dec/06/afghan-families-torn-apart-drone-strikes-picture-essay>

Iraqi militiamen killed in air strike on headquarters

29 Dec 2019

Reuters, Uk

Several Iraqi militia fighters were killed on Sunday in an air strike on their headquarters near the western Qaim district on the border with Syria, military sources and militia commanders told Reuters. The strike was likely carried out by drones and targeted the Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah Shi'ite militia, the sources said. A U.S. official said on Friday the United States was looking into the possible involvement of Kataib Hezbollah in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base that killed a U.S. civilian contractor and wounded U.S. service members and Iraq personnel.

► <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security/iraqi-militiamen-killed-in-air-strike-on-headquarters-sources-idUSKBN1YXOGJ>

American drone killed five civilians

3 Dec 2019

Karol Kaźmierczak, Kresy, Poland

Last week, according to the New York Times, a US army UAV attacked a civilian car on its way to a medical centre. The 24 years old woman who had just, without medical help, given birth to her second child, the driver as well as her relatives were all killed. The baby left at home survived. However, the US military command in Afghanistan claims that the attack was aimed at the Taliban extremists.

► <https://kresy.pl/wydarzenia/regiony/ameryka/amerykanski-dron-zabil-piecioro-cywilow/>

US bombs Shia group blamed for American's death in Iraq

29 Dec 2019

Chloe Cornish, Financial Times, Uk

The US has bombed a Shia paramilitary group, backed by Iran, that Washington blames for a rocket attack in Iraq on Friday during which an American civilian contractor was killed.

Jonathan Hoffman, assistant to the US defence secretary, said on Sunday night that US forces had conducted five “precision, defensive strikes” against Kata’ib Hizbollah, an Iraqi militia linked to Tehran.

► https://www.ft.com/content/aadc95e2-2a6c-11ea-a126-99756bd8f45e?accessToken=zwAAAW-QAb5YkdOq3JXiKmwR6tOhJpl1a9joXg.MEYCIQDPWwZW36Kwm_oEKpYfDn63T-1jR_cbKb_XtrofoGu1fwIhAP9hTHao_Kl-slRkZezamyXawLZKam24uLztd8PS7Nmi&sharetype=gift?token=2f1fdbbb-8d38-4d35-b729-ca2d99f16cda

Military: Terror groups' drones challenges our dominance in the air

16 Dec 2019

Andreas Lindqvist, Ingeniøren, Denmark

(Subscribers only content; can't access full article). The easy access to own air capabilities changes the threat and the rules of the game. We see actors s.a. Islamic State and other protest groups using unmanned aircraft system tactics, letting them practice command and control at a level previously only available to government actors, says the chief of the Institute for Military Operations.

► <https://ing.dk/artikel/forsvaret-terrorgruppers-droner-udfordrer-vores-dominans-luften-230784>

CONTINUA>>

A SCARY FUTURE

Are drone swarms the future of aerial warfare?

4 Dec 2019

Michael Safi, The Guardian, Uk

The technology of swarming – drones deployed in squadrons, able to think independently and operate as a pack – is in its infancy, but armed forces around the world, including in the UK, are investing millions of pounds in its development. According to analysts, drone swarms of the future could have the capacity to assess targets, divide up tasks and execute them with limited human interaction.

- ▶ <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/dec/04/are-drone-swarms-the-future-of-aerial-warfare>

The rise of armed drones, a global challenge

31 Dec 2019

Nathalie Guibert, Le Monde, France

In a decade, the number of countries using “remotely piloted aircraft systems” for military purposes (95) would have jumped 58 per cent, researchers from Bard College (United States) said. They identified 171 different models, the latest of which had “rotary wings”. The world fleet reaches 21,000 operational machines, but the inventory is incomplete because of China and Iran. Furthermore, the development of terrestrial and marine robots has begun.

- ▶ https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/12/31/la-montee-en-puissance-des-drones-armes-un-defi-mondialise_6024438_3210.html

Drones in huge numbers are on the way – but we are lacking defence against malicious use

16 Dec 2019

Andreas Lindqvist, Ingeniøren, Denmark

(Subscribers only content; can't access full article). The number of medium sized drones has increased tenfold in Denmark in the course of a few years. But the authorities and airports have barely commenced surveillance. And there is no defence against attacks. A DJI Inspire 2 drone can fly 108 km/h, and can be bought freely online. If terrorists decided to fly one or more into a mass of people at a concert or market, there would be neither warning nor any way to stop them.

- ▶ <https://ing.dk/artikel/droner-hobetal-paa-vej-vi-mangler-forsvar-mod-ondsindet-brug-230760>

CONTINUA>>

Technologies that help waging war

23 Dec 2019

Thomas Casavecchia, Le Soir, Belgium

Artificial intelligence, drones, augmented reality and many other scientific advances.

These technologies can make our daily lives easier, but they can also be used to kill.

While the world's largest armies seem to be paying close attention to the tactical benefits that these technologies can bring to them, international negotiations are making little headway. 28 governments are calling for a ban on weapons using artificial intelligence.

▶ <https://plus.lesoir.be/268603/article/2019-12-23/ces-technologies-du-quotidien-qui-aident-faire-la-guerre>

CONTINUA>>

HOW TO STOP DRONES

Military expert on drone defence: “Damn well no easy task”

17 Dec 2019

Andreas Lindqvist, Ingeniøren, Denmark

(subscribers only content; can't access full article). There are a lot of different technologies offering defence against drones, but they are either risky or ineffective. One futuristic solution sets itself apart. Despite the market for anti drone technologies is expected to grow exponentially, not many current technologies are practical, especially for the civil airspace.

- ▶ <https://ing.dk/artikel/forsvarets-ekspert-civilt-droneforsvar-eddermame-ikke-nogen-nem-opgave-230969>

Podcast special: How do we defend ourselves against the drones?

28 Dec 2019

Henrik Heide with Andreas Lindqvist, Ingeniøren, Denmark

Defence systems against drones have become a million dollar industry, as the use of drones increases. Because no one can prevent that a drone with explosives is used for terrorism. In this podcast, journalist Andreas Lindqvist from Ingeniøren addresses drones, or rather, how to control them. The Danish company Mydefence has, for example, developed tools, tested in Syria and Afghanistan, to track and interfere with drones.

- ▶ <https://ing.dk/artikel/podcast-special-hvordan-forsvarer-vi-os-mod-dronerne-230706>

The drones are coming – now the question is just how we stop them

28 Dec 2019

Andreas Lindqvist, Ingeniøren, Denmark

[subscribers only content; can't access full article]. Drone prevention has become a major industry originating in war zones, but which has now reached the civil airspace, also in Denmark. We have very few tools to defend ourselves against low-flying technology.

- ▶ <https://ing.dk/artikel/dronerne-kommer-nu-spoergsmaalet-bare-hvordan-vi-stopper-dem-230836>