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**A LETHAL WEAPON THAT BECAME THE CURE-ALL
FOR TERRORISM: DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF
U.S. DRONIFIED WARFARE**

MASTER'S THESIS

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SEPTEMBER – 2016

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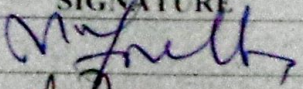
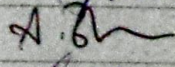
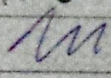
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"This thesis was adopted on the 9 of September 2016 by the following jury in majority vote."

MEMBER OF THE JURY	DECISION	SIGNATURE
Murat Yayıllar	successful	
Ali Balci	successful	
Mustafa Yetim	successful	

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the elaboration of this thesis complies with scientific ethics, and refers to the appropriate scientific standards in case of utilization of others' works, as there has not been any tampering of the quoted data. This thesis is my original work and any part of this thesis has never been presented as another thesis in this university or any other university.

Gloria SHKURTI

09. 09. 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The highest acknowledge will be to God for His blessings, so this thesis could be finished to fulfill one of my important steps in life. This thesis became a reality with the kind support and help of many individuals and I would like to extend my honest acknowledgments to them.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat Yeşiltaş for his patience, help and encouragement, which helped me in the completion of this thesis. My latest achievements have been the result of his support throughout this time.

I am highly indebted to Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities as for approximately three years they have provided the possibility to live and study in Turkey making my personal development easier.

I would like to whole-heartily thank my family and friends for their encouragement who have been supportive to me throughout my life and made me the person who I am today.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all the people who have helped me during this process and have made the writing of this thesis easier through their emotional support.

Gloria SHKURTI

09. 09. 2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQAP	:	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AUMF	:	Authorization of Use of Military Force
CENTCOM	:	United States Central Command
CIA	:	Central Intelligence Agency
DARPA	:	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
EKIA	:	Enemy Killed In Action
HVT	:	High Value Target
IHL	:	International Humanitarian Law
ISAF	:	International Security Assistance Force
ISIS	:	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISR	:	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
JSOC	:	Joint Special Operations Command
LME	:	Legality, Morality and Effectiveness
NAI	:	Named Areas of Interest
NATO	:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	:	National Security Strategy
UAS	:	Unmanned Aerial Systems
UAV	:	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UK	:	United Kingdom
UN	:	United Nations
U.S.	:	United States
USAF	:	United States Air Force
WWII	:	Second World War

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Title of the Thesis: A Lethal Weapon that Became the Cure-all for Terrorism: Discursive Construction of U.S. Dronified Warfare

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Murat YEŞİLTAŞ

Date: 09 September 2016

Nu. of pages: x (pre text) + 106 (main body) + 1 (App.)

Department: International Relations **Subfield:**

In the last years, drones have become the successors of the American soldiers and the target killings have become determinant as a counterterrorism strategy of the U.S. An increase in eccentric rate of drone strikes after Obama became the U.S president resulted in an immediate need for a rationale to legitimize the ‘dronified’ warfare. While Obama administration – and drone skeptics as well – mainly tend to elucidate the legality, morality and effectiveness (LME) of drone strikes, this paper focuses on discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism, which serve as foothold in legitimization of the dronified warfare. By tackling these discourses it is possible to understand how the Obama administration vindicated the drone program in front of the Americans. As the dronified warfare proliferates it is important to comprehend properly the discourses used by the U.S. – as a pioneer of this program- which indubitably will be used and reformulated by other states.

Keywords: Drone, U.S., Terrorism, Geopolitics, Realism

Tezin Başlığı: Terörizme Çare Olarak Bir Öldürücü Silah: ABD'nin Dronlaştırılmış Savaşının Soylemsel Yapısı

Tezin Yazarı: Gloria SHKURTI

Danışman: Doç. Dr. Murat YEŞİLTAS

Kabul Tarihi: 9 Eylül 2016

Sayfa Sayısı: x (ön kısım) + 106 (tez) + 1 (ek)

Anabilimdalı: Uluslararası İlişkiler

Bilimdalı:

Son yıllarda, İnsansız Hava Araçları (İHA) Amerikan askerlerinin varisi olmanın yanı sıra, hedeflerin ortadan kaldırılması ile ABD'nin Terörle Mücadele stratejisinde belirleyici faktör haline gelmiştir. Obama döneminde İHA saldırılarının kullanım oranındaki sıradışı artış, İHA temelli (dronified) savaşın meşrulaştırılması için hızlı bir zemin arayışıyla sonuçlanmıştır. Obama yönetimi sürecinde, -şüpheli kesimler dahi- başlıca İHA saldırılarının hukuksal, moral ve etkilik oranını izah etmeye odaklanmışlardır bu çalışma; İHA temelli savaşın meşrulaştırılmasında dayanak noktası olarak gösterilen Terörizm söylemleri, jeopolitik ve realizm üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Tüm bu söylemler ile mücadele sürecinde, Obama Yönetimi'nin İHA programını tüm ABD halkı önünde doğruluğunu nasıl kanıtlayabildiğini anlamak mümkündür. İHA temelli savaşın silahlanmaya yol açması dolayısıyla, ABD tarafından kullanılan ve diğer ülkeler tarafından da şüphesiz ki tekrar formüle edilerek kullanılacak söylemlerin-bu programın öncüsü olarak- doğru anlaşılması önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İnsansız Hava Araçları, ABD, Terörizm, Jeopolitik, Realizm

INTRODUCTION

Among others, the technological innovations persistently have been the point of convergence for different areas –such as industry, economy, education, entertainment, etc. Nevertheless, in the last decades the military has been seeking the incorporation of these novelties within the conventional war. A concoction between the technology, entertainment and military has resulted in a ‘new’ kind of warfare, which has started to determine the American counterterrorism strategy, *the dronified warfare*. Unlike the nuclear weapons, where many states have argued against their proliferation and aim their destruction, drones have become a favorite tool that would provide many states the possibility to achieve their goals without projecting any vulnerability and in low costs. In this regards, there has emerged a need for an apposite discourse that would help the states, which use drones (especially the U.S.) to legitimize their “dronified warfare.”

The need for such a new and different discourse came as a result of the changes that the “dronified warfare” brought in the battlefield and of the criticism done towards it. Usage of drones has challenged the symmetrical form of warfare where gallant men and armies stand in front of each other with similar weapons. With everything equal, the battle used to be determined by the personal skills of each soldier. Currently, as the drones are becoming the determining tool against the terrorism, a new asymmetrical warfare has emerged. The attacker and the attacked live in different environments; while the attacker is safe and has one of the most modern weapons under its disposal, miles away there is the other side, not armed and what is worse not even aware that may be attacked. Found in two different worlds, the two sides represent the today’s reality: how the battlefield transformed into a ‘hunting game’ where the drone pilots are the hunters and the targets are the prey.

The U.S. for a long time now has been the leader in the production and usage of armed drones. Until now, it is known that the U.S. has been targeting individuals in at least seven states: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. It is important to state that drones started to be used directly after the 9/11 attacks to neutralize the terrorists that were affiliated with al-Qaeda or that pose a threat to the American national security. Nevertheless, the number of strikes reached its peak soon

after Obama became the President of the U.S. Since then, drones have become a determining tool in the U.S. war against terrorism. Only in Pakistan, the strikes conducted during Obama presidency have increased by 631 percent in comparison with the strikes conducted by Bush, while the number of people killed has increased by approximately 472 percent.¹ This has resulted in a lot of criticism for the “dronified warfare” and left no other choice to the Obama administration, but to create a new rationale that would result in the legitimization of this warfare.

Making allowance for the fact that discourses play a crucial role in the creation of new policies, this thesis focuses on discourses used by the Obama administration regarding the drone usage. More specifically it focuses on the fact that while the number of strikes and civilians killed remains at its peak,² the Obama administration is successfully legitimizing the “dronified warfare.”

Providing safe heaven for the attacker and low costs have been the main reasons behind the widespread usage of drones. Removing the vulnerability from the attacker has been the main goal of the military strategist and drones have made the dream come true. Nevertheless, this technology has not reached its final capability yet. Some states intend to create tiny nano drones that would not only serve for surveillance purposes but may be used as kamikaze as well.³ Undeniably the future of the drones and the evolvement of the technology are an important integral part of the ‘dronified’ warfare; however, for the purpose of this study these topics will not be analyzed in details.

In the last years, drones have become the U.S.’ ‘God’s eye’ in different states mainly localized in the Middle East. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen are the states that have suffered the most the consequences of ‘dronified’ warfare. The U.S. has been the main responsible behind these attacks, in some cases acting alone and in the others accompanied by its allies such the UK. Currently the U.S.

¹ “CIA and US military drone strikes in Pakistan, 2004 to present,” The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, retrieved 29 August 2016 from <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NAfjFonM-Tn7fziqiv33HIGt09wgLZDSCP-BQaux51w/edit#gid=694046452>.

² Covered War Drones Archives - The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/>.

³ Grégoire Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, (NY: The New Press, 2015), Chapter 9.

possesses at least 7000 drones⁴ and most of them have the capability of firing Hellfire missiles. Three are the main drones used by the U.S.: Global Hawk, Reaper and Predator. Global Hawk is the most powerful one and can stay in the sky for approximately two days, while the Predator is the one, which is mostly used. These drones are controlled from the pilots who are located generally in Creech Air Force Base in Nevada.⁵ This is how Michael Hass, a former drone pilot, describes his 'hunting day' and the reasoning behind the actions they were compelled to do:

In the control room they had a picture of the September 11 of the second plane hitting the building, just to try to make you pissed off all over again, right before you got to do your job. *These guys have to die. These guys deserve to die. And you have to make it happen.* You do not know who you are killing because you never see their face. You just have silhouettes and it is easier to have that detachment, that lack of empathy for human life. *And is easier to really think of them as something else, they are not people, they are just terrorist*⁶

Drones have been hunting people for the last decade with the excuse of the terrorist threat and little is considered whether the people who die are high targets or civilians. They are just terrorist who deserve to die. This has been the mantra of the Obama administration during his eight years as president of the U.S.

After 9/11, the emergence of a new threat required prompt and explicit action. Most of the states took preventive steps against the 'new' threat of terrorism; nonetheless, the U.S., considering this threat as directed mainly towards the American values and citizens, pursued critical changes regarding its counterterrorism strategy. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security and voting of the Authorization of the Use of Military Force (AUMF) were some of the immediate steps that Bush administration undertook. While the 'new' threat of terrorism directly challenged the international

⁴ "Understanding Drones," *Friends Committee on National Legislation*, retrieved 4 August 2016 from http://fcn.org/issues/foreign_policy/understanding_drones/.

⁵ Nick Turse, "America's Secret Empire of Drone Bases," *TomDispatch.com*, 16 October 2011, retrieved 4 August 2016 from http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/175454/nick_turse_america's_secret_empire_of_drone_base.

⁶ "Drone Wars: The Gamers Recruited to Kill – Video," *The Guardian*, 2 February 2015, retrieved 1 July 2016 from <http://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2015/feb/02/drone-wars-gamers-recruited-kill-pakistan-video> (emphasize added).

order, the U.S. counterterrorism strategies started to challenge the norms of conventional wars. The ‘dronified’ warfare, despite the fact that it became the pillar of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy, under the Obama administration it spread at an eccentric rate. This legacy of Obama has become so visible and debatable that some analysts ironically have argued that Obama should entitle his speech in the inaugural ceremony on memorializing King's birthday (2013) as “I have a drone.”⁷

The main arguments regarding the dronified warfare – being this pro or against it – evolve around the legality, morality and effectiveness (LME)⁸ of the drone usage. As a result this has become a very controversial topic; however, it can be said that in the U.S. the drone usage has a bipartisan support and for this reason the motions regarding the legalization of dronified warfare are very resilient. Academicians and journalists (with a very small number of politicians) are mainly those who claim that drones are not legal, moral or effective. As it will be discussed in this thesis, it is asserted that the U.S. drone strikes violate the main principles of the international human right. Moreover, many express their concerns regarding the woeful future that the U.S. drone strikes may bring.

This thesis intends to challenge these arguments, not in the sense to claim the legality of the drones, but it aims to look deeper than what is offered to us until now. Focusing only on the LME does not allow seeing the real picture behind the legalization of the ‘dronified’ warfare. It would be logical to ask how it is possible that a weapon that by many experts is claimed to be illegal or not moral is still widely used and approved by the public, especially the one in the U.S. As it will be discussed below this is going to be the focal point of this thesis. However, it is necessary to include the LME arguments within this thesis, as the discourses of the Obama administration are mainly a response to these arguments. As mentioned previously, the drone strikes started to be used since 2001; nevertheless, the government started to speak out loud only in the last years. Obama himself spoke publicly about drones in May 2013. So it seems fair to argue that predominantly the criticisms towards the “dronified warfare” urged the Obama

⁷ Glenn Greenwald, “MLK's Vehement Condemnations of US Militarism Are More Relevant than Ever,” *The Guardian*, 21 January 2013, retrieved 4 August 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/21/king-obama-drones-militarism-sanctions-iran>.

⁸ Hereafter “Legality, Morality and Effectiveness” will be denoted as LME.

administration towards a new rationale that would pave the path to the legitimization of the “dronified warfare.”

Research Question and the Study Contribution

The drone literature has been dominated by questions such as: “Are drones legal or moral?” or “What is going to be the feedback of such strategy?” However, what is missing is the ‘How’ question....How did drones become the tool that determines the U.S. counterterrorism strategy especially in the Middle East? The answer to this question is obscured from the secrecy behind what I like to call as the ‘dronified’ warfare; however, a thorough analysis of the U.S. officials’ discourses about the terrorism and drones, which is the main intention of this paper, would give a few hints in this regard.

This thesis tackles the main features of the ‘dronified’ warfare and how the U.S. under the Obama administration successfully is trying to legitimize drones as an effective tool of its counterterrorism strategy. The Obama administration has efficaciously justified the ‘dronified’ warfare, even why the casualties from the drone strikes are in their peak and the strikes –by killing the civilians – have instigated radicalization among citizens⁹ of the states where drones are used. Such a politics has resulted in a wide support of the U.S. citizens for the drone strikes.¹⁰

Through the lenses of critical geopolitics and critical terrorism studies, this thesis aims to provide a framework regarding the legitimization of ‘dronified’ warfare from the Obama administration. By taking into consideration that the argument of the ‘dronified’ warfare is what U.S. makes of it, the thesis deals with discursive construction of U.S. counterterrorism strategy and critically unpacks three main discourses that have been

⁹ See: Medea Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, (NY and London: Verso, 2013); Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone*, (USA: Brookings Institution Press, 2013).

¹⁰ “Public Continues to Back U.S. Drone Attacks,” *Pew Research Center*, 28 May 2015, retrieved 20 May 2016 from <http://www.people-press.org/2015/05/28/public-continues-to-back-u-s-drone-attacks/>.

used by the Obama administration in shaping and framing the U.S. imagination of war, territoriality, and terrorism. Particularly, the thesis touches upon three domains of Obama administration's politics of 'dronified' warfare: *Geopolitics*, *Realism*, and *Terrorism*. The main hypothesis of this thesis would be the disclosure of the 'invisible' aspects that many tend to ignore while criticizing or supporting the drone strikes. More specifically it is argued that the Obama administration has used the discourses of Geopolitics, Realism and Terrorism in order to respond to the criticism on the LME of drones. At the end, these discourses have resulted at the legitimization of the "dronified warfare."

By challenging the threefold quagmire of legality, morality and effectiveness that are discussed by many scholars, the thesis seeks to understand how drones became so important, how borders became meaningless and how the individual's body turned into a battlefield. This being the main intention, the thesis aims to contribute with a new perspective in the way that 'dronified' warfare is analyzed. Therefore, rather than focusing on the debates of LME aspects of 'dronified' warfare and 'right/wrong, legal/illegal, moral/immoral' dichotomies, the main objectives of the paper is to deconstruct the way in which how the Obama administration constructs the discourse of security to gain the support of their audience about the 'dronified' warfare, legitimizing this 'new social reality' by excluding a specific geographical space namely the Middle East – the Other-, as a result of the changes of the national interest.

Another contribution of this thesis would be the term 'dronified.' Unlike many studies that prefer to use the term 'drone warfare' this thesis intends to add another meaning to this new type of warfare. The reason for this usage rests behind the two accounts provided at the beginning of this thesis. The first account while describing a kind of archetypal combat creates a sense that the events occur naturally. Not trying to justify the war, but the main idea remains the decision to go to war for the Trojan and Achaean army is a natural instinct, is an action done with a purpose. Those fighting are all humans and are faced with each other on equal basis. But what we have in the second account is everything but natural. It is an asymmetrical and artificial war conducted without a clear purpose. In a world where people are killed by machines, in some way

the human element is extracted from the battlefield. First, drones lack the human element of facing the enemy and looking at his eyes, and that – as it will be discussed below- results in a dehumanization of the warfare. Second, in its way of legitimizing this kind of warfare, the U.S. tends to ignore that the targets are people. Constantly it is reiterated the fact those killed are terrorists giving to the target a label similar to that of an object rather than a human being. Lastly, many argue that the wars now are not conducted as the last resort or the last choice; but drones have given the chance to the leaders to pursue wars at their caprice, which can be called also as a ‘war of choice.’¹¹ More specifically, the use of drones have opened the path to the state leaders to pursue war and argue that they are not at war leaving them a free hand with the decisions as long as their soldiers are not at risk, while the target (perceived as an object) on the other side is destined to be killed.

Aiming to emphasize this artificial aspect of this warfare, the term ‘dronified’ will be used through the thesis. In this way this thesis may be the first of many studies that are interested in highlighting the fact that the ‘dronified’¹² warfare has not only challenged the limits of warfare but has erased the human boundaries.

Methodology and Study Limitations

Since this thesis elucidates on the main discourses of the Obama administration on the legitimization of the dronified warfare rather than the LME of the dronified warfare it is clear that the qualitative method will be the one of the methods applied in this thesis. Nevertheless, there is also necessary to use the quantitative method, in order to complement the first method and to have a better snapshot of the effects of the dronified warfare. In order to convey the goals mentioned previously, in this thesis will be implemented two main research methods: (i) literature study, (ii) data collection and analysis. Most importantly, the main methodology of this thesis is the discourse analysis

¹¹ Laurie Calhoun, *We Kill Because We Can: From Soldiering to Assassination in the Drone Age* (London: Zed Books, 2015), Introduction.

¹² Hereafter the term dronified will be used without the quotation marks.

of the primary sources such as speeches or the official documents released from the Obama administration.

The literature review of the thesis will not dive into theoretical perspectives as until now no such debates have evolved about the dronified warfare. For this reason it will be based mainly on secondary sources with a limited number of primary sources, as we need to first establish lucidity of the general background of drone evolution and the main discourses on dronified warfare. The review of drone warfare includes the evolution, innovations, and proliferation. Each one of these subjects is elaborated providing like this a general background, which is necessary to understand the U.S.' dronified warfare. Moreover, to get deep insight and understanding of the U.S. dronified warfare, it is necessary to explain how the dronified warfare is organized in the U.S. followed also by the main discourses on the LME.

Beside the literature review, this thesis consists also of data collection and analysis. This is done, as we need to understand why the U.S. drones operate in a limited limited territory, specifically in the Middle East and some other states close to it. The data collection will be based on primary sources. It is important to mention that the U.S. does not provide any information about the drone strikes and the people (being this civilians or terrorists) so this information can be found only on the databases created by some of the organizations such as *New America* or *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. Many organization attempt to provide information about the U.S. drone strikes and their casualties; however, they are not so coherent. The databases of *New America* and *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* are the most well organized databases, which provide information about the strikes in a daily basis. In some cases the data provided by the *New America* is not similar with the data provided by *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. For this reason in some cases I have presented the data provided by both of the organization and did the analysis accordingly. Another limitation of this thesis is the fact that data analysis covers only 4 states leaving Syria, Iraq and Libya aside. The main reason behind this is the lack of information from the U.S. government.

Discourse analysis is the main methodology of this thesis. As Martin Muller in his article “Doing discourse analysis in Critical Geopolitics” the discourse analysis, more than only a method, it is a methodology. Accordingly, “it integrates them [data collection and analysis] with a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effect of language and social practice.”¹³ Muller in his article presents three different core dimensions of approaches to discourse analysis in critical geopolitics. The third dimension is the political stance of analysis, which is a coalescence of interpretative-explanatory and post- structuralist analytic forms. According to van Dijk, this critical, political stake tends to answer how phenomena termed as dominance, hegemony or social inequality is created¹⁴. Taking this as a starting point, this thesis – by taking in consideration all the official speeches and documents released by the Obama administration – tends to answer how the argument that drone is the best tool to fight the terrorism became dominant and how this new social reality created by the Obama administration started to be widely accepted.

Finally, the main contribution of this thesis is the discursive construction of the U.S. dronified warfare. Unlike many other topics, drones are not analyzed on the bases of theoretical perspectives and this remains the main limitation of this thesis. The scholars are mainly focused on the legality, morality and effectiveness of the drones and their main conclusions revolve around the fact whether the drone usage should be banned or not. This thesis, aiming to create a break from this path is focused on the discourses used by the U.S., which helped in the legalization of the dronified warfare. For this part, there are used mainly primary source such as the speeches of Obama (and Bush), different briefings of Harold Koh, John Brennan, Jeh Johnson and Eric Holder. The analysis of these speeches and briefings will be accompanied with an analysis of other official documents such as the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Strategy for Counterterrorism, Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), etc. All these primary sources will provide the bases for an analysis of the main U.S. discourses which will be based on the combining of three different perspectives – critical

¹³ Martin Muller, “Doing Discourse Analysis in Critical Geopolitics,” *L’Espace Politique*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2010), p. 4.

¹⁴ Teun A. van Dijk, “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Discourse and Society*, No. 4 (1993), pp. 249-283.

geopolitics, critical security and critical terrorism studies – within the broad area of war studies. Through such a method this thesis aims to challenge the existing literature, which, by focusing on visual effects, has failed to see the source of power for those who are aiming to create a ‘new social reality.’

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters complemented by the introduction and conclusion. The introduction discusses the main research question of the thesis, the contribution of this study and the methodology used through the thesis. The following chapter provides an overview of several features that help in creating a general background regarding the dronified warfare. To that end, the drone evolution, its proliferation and innovations that drone technology has brought will be addressed. Moreover, at the end of the chapter there are provided data analyses regarding the drone strikes and their casualties in Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia. This would serve in better understanding the main arguments provided in the forthcoming chapter.

Chapter 2 is focused only on the U.S. dronified warfare, which is the main focus of this thesis. In order to understand better the main discourses that facilitated the legitimization of dronified warfare, Chapter 2 analyses the main arguments of scholars and politicians regarding the legality, morality and effectiveness of dronified warfare. The current literature review is dominated by these arguments and it is important to address them within this thesis.

In connecting all the aforementioned areas of inquiry, Chapter 3 constructs the U.S. dronified warfare based on three main discourses: Terrorism, Geopolitics and Realism. This chapter discussed how these three main discourses are used by the U.S. officials as bases for the LME arguments therefore resulting in the legitimization of the dronified warfare. Accordingly, through the lenses of the post-structural debate of the ‘power-knowledge’ relationship, this chapter examines how the Obama administration

constructed security discourse to gain the support of the audience about the dronified warfare, legitimizing this ‘new social reality’ by excluding the Middle East – the Other – and attempting to conceal the failure of its Middle East policy.

Tying all the pieces of this study together, the conclusion will recapitulate the main goals and arguments of the thesis. Further, the conclusion will provide a short list of recommendations for the future of the dronified warfare and the states that will be part of it.



CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE DRONIFIED WARFARE

In the last decade the dronified warfare has determined the American counterterrorism strategy. Drones have become a favorite tool for many states as they provide the possibility to achieve their goals without projecting any vulnerability and in low costs. A striking narration of the dronified warfare, is opined by P.W. Singer, senior fellow at the Washington, D.C. Brookings Institute, thus: “There has always been a connection between the world of war and the world of entertainment, I call this phenomena as “militainment,” where the military world is now actually pulling tools from the world of entertainment to do its job better.”¹⁵ According to him, Pentagon spends billion of dollars in “the latest game technology for training and practice. Almost by accident it has become the manufacturer of *America's Army*.”¹⁶ Furthermore he opines that the game technology has become a successful recruiting tool.

Faced with such a development, many – including scholars, journalists, activists and a few politicians – have rushed into condemning the dronified warfare due to their fear from the eerie fallouts –being this in long or short term. Yet, this has neither stopped the U.S. from heavily depending its counterterrorism strategy on drones and nor has made other states to cease their drone developing programs. On the contrary, the U.S. in the last years has focused on the creation of a rationale that would pave the way to the legitimization of the dronified warfare. Without doubt, it can be asserted that these strategies will be emulated by many other states, making it necessary to analyze the main discourses behind this rationale.

This chapter, serving as a literature review of the thesis, aims in presenting the fundamental discussions about the dronified warfare, as they are crucial in

¹⁵ “Drone Wars: The Gamers Recruited to Kill – Video,” *The Guardian*, 2 February 2015, retrieved 1 July 2016 from <http://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2015/feb/02/drone-wars-gamers-recruited-kill-pakistan-video> (emphasize added).

¹⁶ PW Singer, “The Rise of Militainment,” *ABC*, 12 April 2010, retrieved 10 July 2016 from <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/counterpoint/the-rise-of-militainment/3039346#transcript>.

understanding the security discourses which are the main focus of this thesis. Initially it is intended to bring a brief introduction of what drones are and how they are used in the contexts of the war against terrorism. Drones, produced long before 9/11 attacks, in the last decade became the main legacy of the Obama administration in terms of the war strategy against terrorism. Based on the latest data about the drone production this chapter delves into the states that currently produce or use drones. Doing this it tackles the so argued issue of the proliferation of the dronified warfare. Moreover, there will be outlined the innovations and challenges that drones as a tool and their proliferation bring to the laws of war and warfare itself. At the end, it will be provided a thorough analysis for the drone strikes and their casualties in four states: Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia.

1.1 Drone Evolution

A science fiction turned into science reality...

Even why the drones have attracted the attention of many in the last years –triggered mainly by the excessive use of drones by the Obama administration – they have been thought and constructed long time ago. It has taken more than a century for drones to come at the current form but it has taken just a couple of years to transform the world into a ‘droneworld.’ As Ian Shaw argues “[t]he Droneworld is the evolution of Baseworld¹⁷ by other means.”¹⁸ Such an assertion connotes that drones are the successors of the American soldier and an increase in the former has led gradually to a decrease in the latter.

¹⁷ Chalmers Johnson, author of the book *Blowback*, wrote back in 2004 that “[t]his vast network of American bases on every continent except Antarctica actually constitutes a new form of empire – an empire of bases with its own geography not likely to be taught in any high school geography class”.

¹⁸ Ian Shaw, “Intervention–From Baseworld to Droneworld,” *Antipode Foundation*, 14 August 2012, retrieved 10 July 2016 from <https://antipodefoundation.org/2012/08/14/intervention-from-baseworld-to-droneworld/>.

A timeline of the drone evolution has been the main intention of many experts, such as Ann Rodgers and John Hill in their book entitled *Unmanned: Drone Warfare and Global Security*, Richard Whittle in his book *Predator: The Secret Origins of the Drone Revolution* and Ian Shaw in his article *The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones*, etc. These experts trace the prints since 1849 when two Austrian brothers launched balloon containing 30 lb bombs against Venice.¹⁹ Such a tactic was used as well during the World War II; however, long before that other attempts were done from the Americans resulting in 1898 with the first aerial reconnaissance photos coming from a kite on which was placed a camera.²⁰ Moreover, Nicola Tesla's discovering of radio technology proved crucial for the remote controlled vehicles and in 1898 he was able to control an unmanned boat with radio signal. At this time, not only the U.S., but England, Germany and Soviet Union as well focused on this new technology. During the WWI was developed the first drone, which was "controlled by an operator looking at a six-inch television screen on an accompanying aircraft."²¹

Considering the fact that drones were perceived as less provocative, the U.S. started using them for spying missions especially in Cuba,²² North Korea,²³ North Vietnam²⁴ (during the Vietnam war) or even Soviet Union.²⁵ The Vietnam War was considered as the "first technowar"²⁶ and according to Paul Dickson: "Often unknown to both those

¹⁹ Ann Rodgers and John Hill, *Unmanned: Drone Warfare and Global Security*, (NY: Pluto Press, 2014), p. 13.

²⁰ Michael Hastings, "The Rise of the Killer Drones: How America Goes to War in Secret," *Rolling Stone*, 16 April 2012, retrieved 11 July 2016 from <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-rise-of-the-killer-drones-how-america-goes-to-war-in-secret-20120416>.

²¹ Rogers and Hill, *Unmanned: Drone Warfare and Global Security*, (NY: Pluto Press, 2014), p. 16.

²² Ian Shaw, "The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones," *Understanding Empire*, 2014, retrieved 23 June 2016 from <https://understandingempire.wordpress.com/2-0-a-brief-history-of-u-s-drones/>.

²³ David Irvin, *History of Strategic Drone Operations*, (U.S.: Turner, 2003), p. 34.

²⁴ See: James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam*, 2nd ed. (NY: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).

²⁵ Christopher Jones, "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs): An Assessment of Historical Operations and Future Possibilities," *Air Command and Staff College*, p. 2.

²⁶ See: Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam*.

who looked at them and those that published them, many of the aerial views of North Vietnam that appeared in the American press were taken by the drones.”²⁷

The interest on the drones remaining constant, year 1973 is important as Philco-Ford Corporation could attach a laser to a Ryan BGM-34B Firebee drone. The laser would provide the possibility to conduct the attacks on a specific target. The real evolution of drones came with the project of Abraham Karem, a Jewish immigrant in U.S. who presented ‘Albatross’ and was financed by DARPA, the military’s research and development department. In difference from the U.S. drones of that time, which could fly in a specific route for approximately 2 hours, Albatross could flight for approximately 56 hours. Amber, the second drone of Karem, despite its achievements was cancelled due to the impatience of Congress regarding the Pentagon’s slow pace on drone program.²⁸ However, Karem’s company was bought by *General Atomics* and through the contribution of Karem they started to produce GNAT-750.²⁹ This drone was used in the Balkans during the Bosnian war and was directed from a pilot placed in Albania. The successor of GNAT-750 is the Predator, which is the current modern drone. Unlike the former, the Predator did not have a limited range, meaning that a drone pilot found far away from the operating area could control the drone. Specifically, a pilot somewhere in the U.S. could direct a drone operating the Balkans. Predator was used as a reconnaissance tool for the first time in 1994 in Bosnian war. This success of the Predator attracted the attention of the U.S. Air Force and USAF took control of the program in 1998.³⁰ In 2000 CIA started to discuss the option of adopting Hellfire missiles into Predator.³¹ As such on February 2001, a Predator was fitted with a Hellfire missile, but was not used until after the 9/11 attacks. According to the statement of the

²⁷ Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*, (Takoma Park: FoxAcre Press, 2012), p. 188.

²⁸ Bill Yenne, *Birds of Prey: Predators, Reapers and America's Newest UAVs in Combat*, (Minnesota: Specialty Press, 2010), pp. 37-40.

²⁹ Peter Finn, “Rise of the Drone: From Calif. Garage to Multibillion-dollar Defense Industry,” *The Washington Post*, 23 December 2011, retrieved 20 June 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/rise-of-the-drone-from-calif-garage-to-multibillion-dollar-defense-industry/2011/12/22/gIQACG8UEP_story.html.

³⁰ Rogers and Hill, *Unmanned: Drone Warfare and Global Security*, p. 33.

³¹ Written Statement for the Record of the Director of Central Intelligence before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 24 March 2004, retrieved 29 October 2015 from https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2004/tenet_testimony_03242004.html.

former CIA Director, George Tenet, CIA was authorized to deploy the missiles in the Middle East after 11 September; nevertheless, it would be used just for reconnaissance purposes.³²

Even why CIA already possessed armed drones, such a program was not widely supported by the America officials. At that time Israel had already used the armed drones against Palestinians and just a couple of months before the 9/11 attacks the American Ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk condemned the target strikes by saying: “The United States government is very clearly on record as against targeted assassinations. . . . They are extrajudicial killings, and we do not support that.”³³ Few knew Mr. Indyk that drones would become the determinant of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy.

9/11 attacks resulted to be the turning point regarding the future of the armed drones. Just a few days after the attacks, armed Predators were send in Afghanistan and President Bush approved a list of High Valued Targets (HVT) which could be killed with drone strikes. The first strike was conducted soon after; however, different dates between October and February are given regarding the date of the first strike, mainly due to the secrecy of the program.³⁴ As the drones strikes continued, an important decision was taken in 2008 by the Bush administration. CIA was allowed to conduct ‘signature strikes’ according to which people outside the kill list could be targeted only on bases of their ‘pattern of life’ and their doubtful diurnal behavior. Specifically, this

³² In early September, only the system with weapons-capable aircraft was authorized to be deployed. The shipment of missiles was not authorized as the host nation (Afghanistan) did not accept it. However, short after 9/11 attacks, the missiles were shipped in Kabul and Qandahar on September 16, 2001.

³³ Jane Mayer, “The Predator War: What Are the Risks of the C.I.A.’s Covert Drone Program?,” *The New Yorker*, 26 October 2009, retrieved 19 October 2015 from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/10/26/the-predator-war>.

³⁴ See: Chris Woods, “The Story of America’s Very First Drone Strike,” *The Atlantic*, 30 May 2015, retrieved 15 January 2016 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/america-first-drone-strike-afghanistan/394463/>; Chris Cole, “Rise of the Reapers: A Brief History of Drones,” *Drone Wars UK*, 6 October 2014, retrieved 4 July 2016 from <https://dronewars.net/2014/10/06/rise-of-the-reapers-a-brief-history-of-drones/>; Shaw, “The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones,” etc.

meant that a person, even why not identified as one of the high targets could be targeted and killed just in accordance to his/her actions. As Obama came in power, a large part of the budget is put on the further development of the drones, which would make this weapon even more sophisticated.

As it can be seen, drones have been aimed by many states for years; however, there has been a possibility to produce them earlier. Richard Whittle in his book *Predator: The Secret Origins of the Drone Revolution* argues that, had not been the technological and organizational hurdles the drone producers faced, armed drones would have been long used. Nevertheless, he asserts that the armed droned has irrevocably changed the warfare and he calls this a the age of “intercontinental sniper rifle.”

To conclude, Ian Shaw through a well-designed table has provided the main phases of the U.S. drone evolution, which visualizes the obfuscation of the territories and the future of drones in the state organizations, besides the military. Accordingly, from a tool used as a bomb or used for reconnaissance purposes, drone after the 9/11 attacks due to the combination of the surveillance and killing has become a *predator*. However, not only have been these drones used by the military but police has merged them into its operation. Such a practice will trigger many changes in the international and national jurisdiction; however, for the purpose of this thesis I will not focus in detail on this issue.

Table 1: The Evolution of U.S. Drone Warfare

<u>EVOLUTION OF US DRONE WARFARE</u>	<u>Phase 1</u>	<u>Phase 2</u>	<u>Phase 3</u>	<u>Phase 4</u>	<u>Phase 5</u>
	The Target Drone	The Flying Bomb Drone	The Surveillance Drone	The Hunter-Killer Drone	The Police Drone
Time period	Early twentieth century	Interwar period	Cold War, particularly after the Cuban Missile Crisis	Post-September 11, 2001	Post-September 11, 2001
Institutions	U.S. Army	U.S. Air Force	U.S. Air Force and Strategic Command	U.S. Air Force, CIA and JSOC	Police forces, Customs and Border Patrol
Military logic	Drones were used as practice dummies	Drones were used to deliver ordinance across enemy lines	Drones were used to photograph denied or dangerous areas	Drones were used in a military “manhunt” during the war on terror	Drones are being used by police forces in the U.S and Europe
Key Geographies	Developed in UK and US military shooting ranges	Trialed across English Channel	Drones were used across North Vietnam, Cuba, China	Afghanistan (AF), Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia (CIA and JSOC)	Cities in the global North, used by hobbyists and criminals
Spatial Logic	-	Cross the Battlefield, Bomb the Nation State	Surveil the Battlespace, Capture photos	Hunt the Battlespace for dangerous individuals	Swarm the Street, protect VIP buildings
Iconic drones	Hewitt-Sperry Automatic Airplane, Kettering Torpedo	Glide Bomb, Modified B-17 bomber (Aphrodite)	Various Firebee drones, also known as Lightning Bugs	Predator, and later Reaper drone, also the hand-held Raven	Various quadcopter drones

Source: Ian Shaw, “The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones”³⁵

³⁵ Shaw, “The Rise of the Predator Empire: Tracing the History of U.S. Drones.”

1.2 Drone Production and Their Proliferation

*Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-Calif.) has said that the drones are so popular that a Predator could be elected president.*³⁶

The U.S. has been the leader in the production and use of the drones for more than a decade now and the program is expanded in territory and scope. Drones represent a successful intersection of the low cost and ‘efficient weapon’ in terms of protecting the lives of the soldiers of the state that is using them. These elements have made drones attractive not only to developed states; but due to their low cost drones have been pursued as well by the developing states, under-developed states and the (violent) non-state actors. While not many states blatantly accept the production/use of drones a few think tanks and organizations have tried to give estimated number regarding the states and non-state actors that produce, possess and use drones.

According to the data collected from *New America – The International Security Program* approximately 86 states have certain drone capabilities (being this armed or not).³⁷ For the time being, thirteen states and non-state actors have already developed armed drones while eleven others are still developing them. Of the states and non-state actors that have already developed armed drones, eight of them have already used the drones to shoot specific targets: Israel (which is also the first state to do so³⁸), U.S., UK, Hezbollah, Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria and Iraq.³⁹ What is more important –and as well preoccupying – four non-states actors have already used drones and ISIS is one of them.⁴⁰

³⁶William Booth, “More Predator Drones Fly U.S.-Mexico Border,” *The Washington Post*, 21 December 2011, retrieved 4 July 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/more-predator-drones-fly-us-mexico-border/2011/12/01/gIQANSZz8O_story.html.

³⁷ “World of Drones,” *New America*, retrieved 10 August from <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/world-drones.html>.

³⁸ Rogers and Hill, *Unmanned: Drone Warfare and Global Security*, p. 25.

³⁹ “World of Drones,” *New America*.

⁴⁰ Caleb Weiss, “Islamic State Uses Drones to Coordinate Fighting in Baiji,” *The Long War Journal*, 17 April 2015, retrieved 5 May 2016 from <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/islamic-state-uses-drones-to-coordinate->

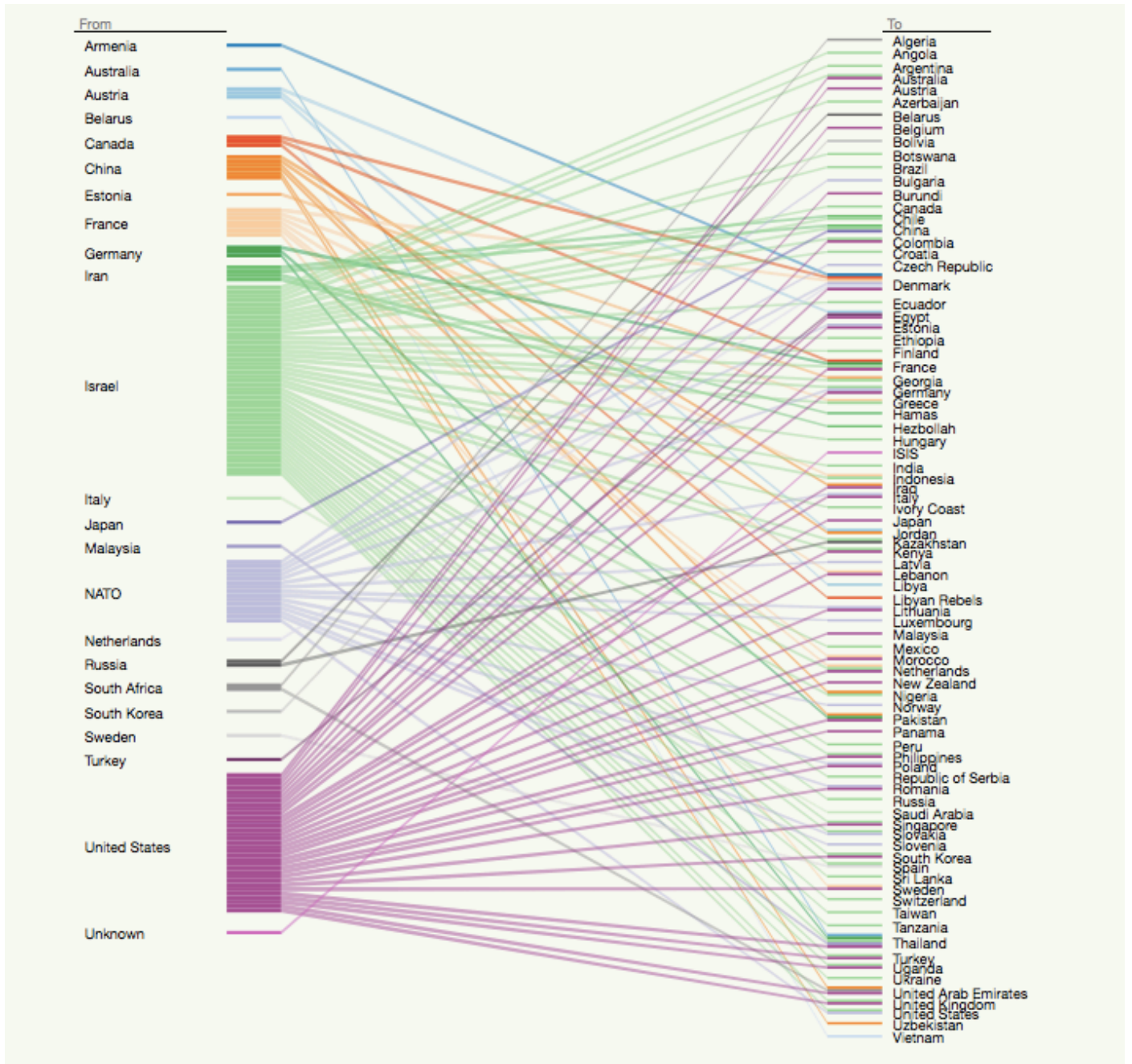
Not only do the states produce drones for their own usage, but also the drone market has been thriving during the last years. The U.S. allowed a limited exportation of drones only in 2015. According to the declaration released by the U.S. Department of State⁴¹ the exportations would be conducted only towards the ally or friendly countries. At the same time, Israel and China have been among the leading states in terms of the drone exportation. The import and export of drones reminds us of the threat of proliferation of drones. A graphic of New Americana visualizes the estimated drone market, and a quick look at it would be enough to understand that there is no way back when it comes to the drone program and its proliferation.



[fighting-in-baiji.php?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=%252ASituation%2520Report&utm_campaign=SitRep0417](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237541.htm).

⁴¹ “U.S. Export Policy for Military Unmanned Aerial Systems,” *U.S. Department of State*, 17 February 2015, retrieved 5 May 2016 from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/02/237541.htm>.

Table 2: Import and Export of Drones



Source: New America⁴²

⁴² “World of Drones,” *New America*.

Proliferation of drones has been one of the main arguments of the drone skeptics. According to them, as the drones proliferate, their control and supervision on the states that use them would become impossible. The advancement of drone technology, which will result not only in big drones such as the Predator but when combined with the nanotechnology the results would be eerie. The drone size would vary from the size of an insect, which would be invisible to many, to the big size Reaper or Predator drones. Nevertheless the lethal impact and the threat they pose would just increase. Benjamin Wittes and Gabriella Blum argue: “imagine a world composed of billions of people walking around with nuclear weapons in their pockets.”⁴³ According to them the proliferation of the technologies of mass empowerment –drones being a part of it – “renders all of us, at once, naked, vulnerable, menacing, and essential to security.”⁴⁴ At this point, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the world would turn into a war against all, with drones controlled from different part of the world and the attacked to never know what or who attacked.

Micah Zenko, one of the main experts on drones, opines that the proliferation of drones would erode the American monopoly and challenge the U.S. interests and values.⁴⁵ Moreover, he asserts that the only way to control this proliferation would be a reform and transparency of the policies of U.S. regarding the drone program. On the contrary he asserts “[w]ithout reform from within, drones risk becoming an unregulated, unaccountable vehicle for states to deploy lethal force with impunity.”⁴⁶

Similarly, Medea Benjamin⁴⁷ –a main known political activists that has been against the use of drones – in her book stated “Watch out America – what goes around, comes around.” While talking about the proliferation of drone, she states that not only friendly states to the U.S. such as Israeli and Britain pursue the development of armed drones. Benjamin brings attention to the states or non-state actors that are perceived as not so

⁴³ See: Benjamin Wittes and Gabriella Blum, *The Future of Violence: Robots and Germs, Hackers and Drones—Confronting A New Age of Threat*, (NY: Basic Books, 2015).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Micah Zenko, “Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policies,” Council on Foreign Relations, January 2013, p. 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 4.

⁴⁷ See: Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*.

friendly or nemesis of the U.S. such as Iran and Hezbollah, and she asserts that it would not be a surprise if these weapons (drones) find the way back to the U.S. Michael Boyle, former Counterterrorism Expert Group Advisor at Obama for America, for a long time now has argued that the proliferation of drones would result in an armed race for drones. Such an armed race –among others –would have two main consequences that may shake the today’s orders and laws. “First, the proliferation of drones will reset the rules and norms governing surveillance and reconnaissance and invite new counter-measures that may paradoxically increase uncertainty between regional rivals over the long run. Second, as a low-cost, apparently low-risk form of technology, drones will become increasingly useful to governments in testing the strategic commitments and the nerves of their rivals.”⁴⁸

Despite many calls from the experts on the dronified warfare, the U.S. government has not taken any important steps that would result in a proper use of the drones and would stop their proliferation. President Obama at the beginning of 2016 promised the publication of a report on which they would publish the number of the civilians killed. The so expected report was published in July 1, 2016; however, what strikes the most was the lack of a general guideline or policy based on which the strikes were conducted. Obama had one of his last chances to ‘put some order’ in the chaos that he triggered during his presidency, however, these hopes were lost as the report was “big in numbers, short in details.”⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Michael Boyle, “The Race for Drones,” *Orbis*, January 2015, retrieved from http://www.fpri.org/article/2015/01/the-race-for-drones/#_ftnref5.

⁴⁹ Paul McLeary and Dan De Luce, “White House Drone Release Is Big on Numbers, Short on Detail,” *Foreign Policy*, 1 July 2016, retrieved 1 July 2016 from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/01/white-house-drone-release-is-big-on-numbers-short-on-detail/>.

1.3 Drone's Innovations

Drones are often considered as a revolution in the warfare. The lack of the pilot has been perceived as more protection of the American lives. This assumption associated with the low cost of drones has been the two main reasons why America has embraced the drone program. However, the removal of the pilot from the battlefield has resulted in an asymmetrical war and its 'respatialization.'⁵⁰ While the targets remain in a hostile environment, most of the cases unaware that are being followed, their targeters are placed in another continent sitting safe in their comfortable chairs, watching the target through the TV and control the drone with a joystick – being just one 'push' away from killing the target. This respatialization of the war has placed the drones as 'the eye of the God,' which is able to observe a long range for a long time without risk. As USAF Lt. Gen. David Deptula has stated "The real advantage of unmanned aerial systems is they allow you to project power without projecting vulnerability."⁵¹

The debate about the removal of the pilots from the battlefield and the dehumanization of the war divides into two camps. The first consist of those who argue that drones have "blurred the line between the virtual and the real worlds."⁵² Being away from the battlefield, the pilot does not consider the target as a person, but as a silhouette that must be stroked. Moreover, they argue that as the life of the pilots is not at risk anymore, leaders –freed from the public pressure – may conduct wars at their caprice and the "war of necessity is replaced by the war of choice."⁵³ In contrast are those who assert that as the drone pilots monitor the targets and their families for a long time

⁵⁰ Hugh Gusterson, "Toward an Anthropology of Drones: Remaking Space, Time, and Valor in Combat," in Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue, *The American Way of Bombing*, (U.S.: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 196- 198. Respatialization, according to Gusterson, means that the drones have removed the combatant from the battlefield, resulting in a projection of power without projecting vulnerability.

⁵¹Nic Robertson, "Remote Warfare Ushers New Kind of Stress," *CNN*, 24 July 2009, retrieved 4 July 2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/07/23/wus.warfare.pilots.uav/index.html?iref=24hours>,

⁵² See: Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*.

⁵³ Calhoun, *We Kill Because We Can: From Soldiering to Assassination in the Drone Age*, Introduction.

before conducting the strike that makes them more connected with the person that they are going to kill, unlike the conventional wars where the first contact with the enemy is in the battlefield. The former CentCom spokesman, Josh Rushin, stated: “Man has never experienced this before... watching someone from above for so long without them knowing it.... Then one day the decision comes down that you have got to take them out. You hit the button and kill them. But you knew these people in a way, so it can become quite personal.”⁵⁴

“The revenge of the nerds”⁵⁵ or “the video-game type of warfare” is not the only novelty of the dronified warfare. Another argued topic is how the maxim that politics defines the technology and military strategies was reversed with the drones. Metin Gurcan argues that the traditional Clausewitzian view that political goals determine the character of war and its military strategies is not applicable anymore when considering the dronified warfare. On the contrary he states that the new technologies have begun to dictate the military strategies.⁵⁶ Laurie Calhoun, furthermore states that as the public has been quite regarding the drone strikes conducted by the U.S. in the non declared war zones it can be said that technology has guided the policies.⁵⁷ John Kaag and Sarah Kreps⁵⁸ elaborate further this issue. According to them, previously the modern democracies confined the leaders’ use of force as the costs of war may have an impact on their electorate, which may cause the loss of power. However, with the development of the new technologies such as drones, which have reduced the costs of war minimally, gives the possibility to the leaders to act freely. Kaag and Sarah even assert that in some cases the people in need to feel secure may be the driving force behind leaders and policy makers to develop new technologies. The result of this would be a ‘state of perpetual war.’

⁵⁴ “America’s Use for Domestic Drones,” Al Jazeera Youtube, 7 December 2011, retrieved 4 August 2016 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTLtNgSRXyc>.

⁵⁵ “Drone Wars: The Gamers Recruited to Kill – Video,” *The Guardian*, (emphasize added).

⁵⁶ Metin Gurcan, “Drone Warfare and Contemporary Strategy Making: Does the Tail Wag the Dog?,” *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*, Vol. 6, No. 1-3, 2013, pp. 153-167, DOI: 10.1080/17467586.2013.859284. (Gurcan, 2013)

⁵⁷ Calhoun, *We Kill Because We Can: From Soldiering to Assassination in the Drone Age*, p. XXII.

⁵⁸ John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, *Drone Warfare*, (UK: Polity Press, 2014), Chapter 3.

1.4 Data Analysis

Drones have been used from the U.S. since 2001 starting firstly in Afghanistan and Iraq to continue later in the states around such as Yemen, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria. It is a fact now that since Obama came in power the strikes in these states increased in eccentric rates leading to a number of civilians killed. In this chapter I aim to present the latest data regarding the strikes in some of the above-mentioned states. As the conducted strikes are not made public from CIA or Pentagon, the data provided in here is based on the information provided from different databases that have been following the strikes for a long period. Nevertheless, drone strikes in Iraq, Syria and Libya are not included in this chapter as there is no available date.

1.4.1 Afghanistan Drone Strikes and Casualties

In Afghanistan, drones have been used since 2001 and the strikes are still persistent. Even why Obama promised the withdrawal of the American troops when he came in power, it seems that drones will keep operating at least until 2017.⁵⁹ It is important to state that the allied forces have accompanied the American drones until 1 January 2015. UN mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been the companion of the Americans; nevertheless, NATO has followed a transition policy towards the Afghan police and army, which lasted from 2011 until December 2014.⁶⁰ As ISAF was withdrawn, the American troops remained in Afghanistan and drones strikes continued as well.

⁵⁹ Dan Roberts, Spencer Ackerman and Sune Engel Rasmussen, "Barack Obama Delays Withdrawal of US Troops From Afghanistan," *The Guardian*, 15 October 2015, retrieved 10 May 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/15/obama-delay-withdrawal-us-troops-afghanistan>.

⁶⁰ "NATO and Afghanistan," *NATO*, 14 June 2016, retrieved 5 July 2016 from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm.

It is since January 2015 that organizations started to focus on the drone strikes conducted in Afghanistan. Compared with other states it can be said that Afghanistan is the least observed one and has attracted the attention of a few. The information presented in this thesis regarding Afghanistan has two different sources (i) *U.S. Air Forces Central Command* and (ii) *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. While the first data are official ones, which are provided by the Air Forces monthly the second data are the ones collected from *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, which is the only organization that has included Afghanistan in its drone warfare database.

Table 3: U.S. Strikes in Afghanistan, 2015 - July 2016

	U.S. Strikes in Afghanistan 2015		U.S. Strikes in Afghanistan 2016	
	Strikes Reported by U.S. Air Force	Strikes Reported by BIJ	Strikes Reported by U.S. Air Force	Strikes Reported by BIJ
Total reported strikes	411	235-236	178	116-120
Total reported killed	-	989-1441	-	773-855
Civilians reported killed	-	60-81	-	15-40
Children reported killed	-	3-17	-	1
Total reported injured	-	142-147	-	37-40

Source: U.S. Air Forces Central Command and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁶¹

As it can be seen from the table above, the U.S. has not provided any information regarding the casualties of the strikes. Moreover, there is done no distinction between the drone strikes and air strikes. However, *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* has provided estimated information –even why it does not include all the attacks that the U.S. Air Force has declared – regarding the number of drone strikes in 2015 and 2016.

⁶¹ Table is compiled based on the data received from the *U.S. Air Forces Central Command* website <http://www.afcent.af.mil/AboutUs/AirpowerSummaries.aspx> and “Afghanistan: US Air and Drone Strikes,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Q1eBZ275Znlpn05PnPO7Q1BkI3yJZbvB3JycywAmqWc/edit#gid=1997258237>.

Table 4: Casualties from Drone and Air Strikes during 2015

	Total Number of Strikes	Total Killed	Civilians Killed
Drone and Air Strikes	235-236	989-1441	60-81
Drone Strikes	104	705-970	14-31
Air Strikes	131-132	284-471	46-50

Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁶²

Table 5: Casualties from Drone and Air Strikes until July 2016

	Total Number of Strikes	Total Killed	Civilians Killed
Drone and Air Strikes	116-120	773-855	15-40
Drone Strikes	87-91	740-822	15-40
Air Strikes	29	33	0

Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁶³

As it can be seen from the table 4, in 2015 drone strikes are approximately 44 percent while airstrikes have the lead. Moreover, the number of targets killed is larger when drones strikes are used and the number of civilians killed is lower. Unfortunately, the same thing cannot be said for the strikes conducted in 2016. During the last 7 months the number of drone strikes is triple the number of air strikes and approximately 76 percent of the total strikes. When comparing the number of the civilians killed, there is no civilian killed from the air strikes, but a maximum of 40 people are killed from the drone strikes. Moreover, it needs to be emphasized that the number of civilians killed during 7 months in 2016 (15-40 civilians) outdoes the total number of civilians killed during 2015 (14-31 civilians).

Indeed, considering that drones' technology evolves as time passes, someone would expect that casualties coming from the drone strikes must be lower, something that is contradicted by the number of civilians killed in 2016. On the other hand, a triple increase in the number of drone strikes can be explained with the Obama's policy, as he has aimed for a long time to remove the boots from the ground. As far as it can be

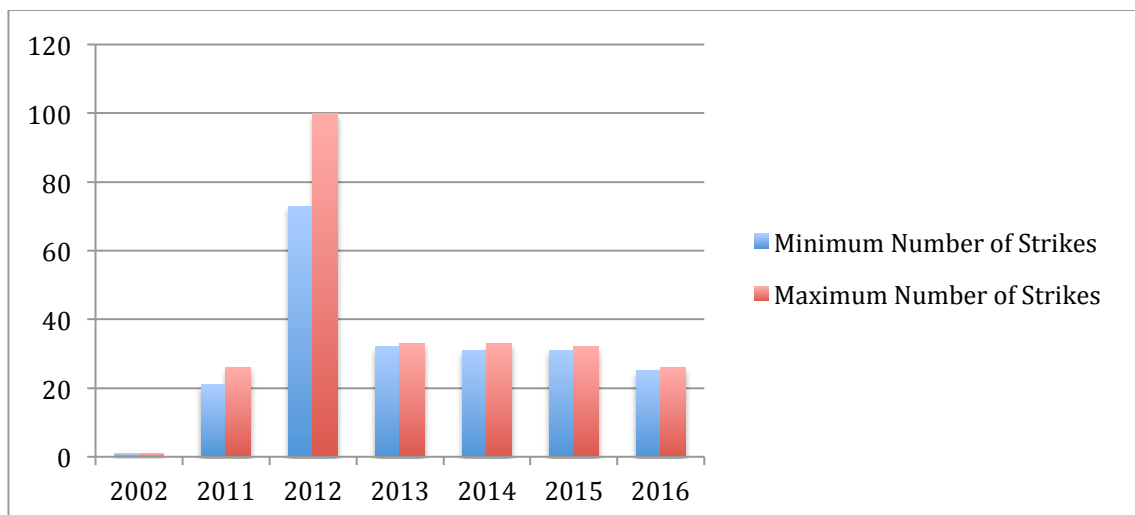
⁶² "Afghanistan: US Air and Drone Strikes," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*.

⁶³ Ibid.

understood, drones are being used to fill the vacuum left from the withdrawal of the American soldiers.

1.4.2 Yemen Drone Strikes and Casualties

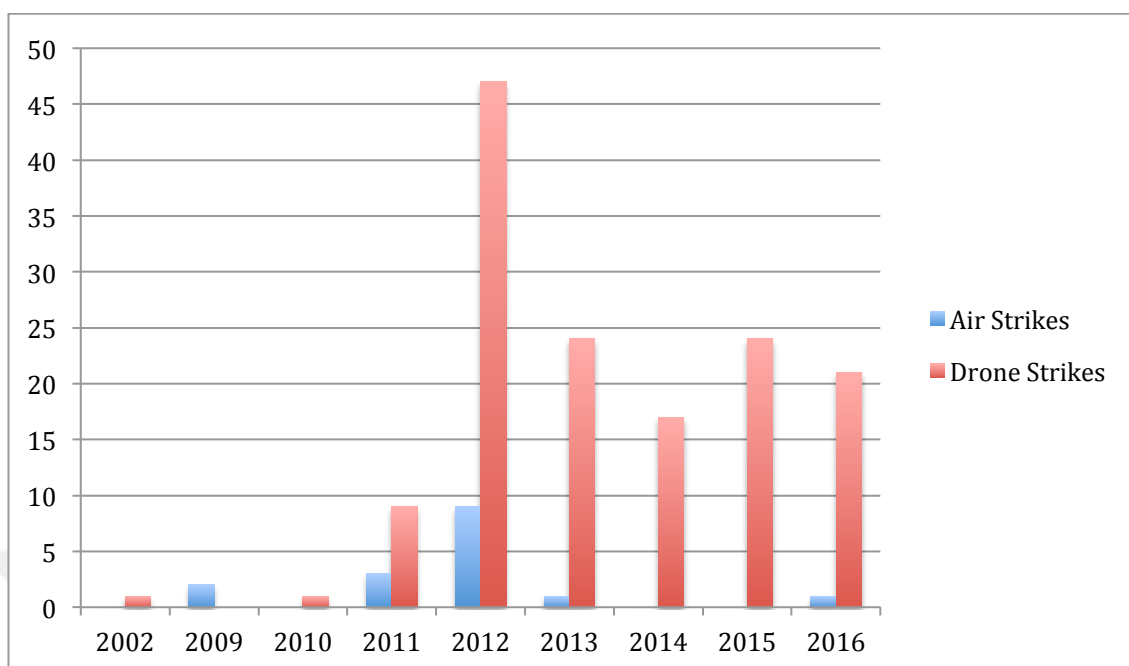
Drone strikes conducted in Yemen have been closely followed by many organizations; and even why the U.S. has not given a clear number regarding the number of strikes or victims, estimated figures are provided. *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* and *New America* have followed Yemen closely and have reported all the strikes, starting from the first one, which was conducted in 2002. In some cases the information provided by both organizations does not totally match; however, if we would look at the general trends of the drone strikes the data provided by *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* coordinated with the data given by *New America*. Aiming to create a broader visualization of the dronified warfare and its casualties in Yemen, data from both organizations is made available.



Graph 1: Minimum and Maximum Number of Drone Strikes in Yemen

Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁶⁴

⁶⁴ “US Strikes in Yemen,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lb1hEYJ_omI8lSe33izwS2a2lbiygs0hTp2A1_Kz5KQ/edit#gid=323032473.



Graph 2: The Number of Air and Drone Strikes
Source: New America⁶⁵

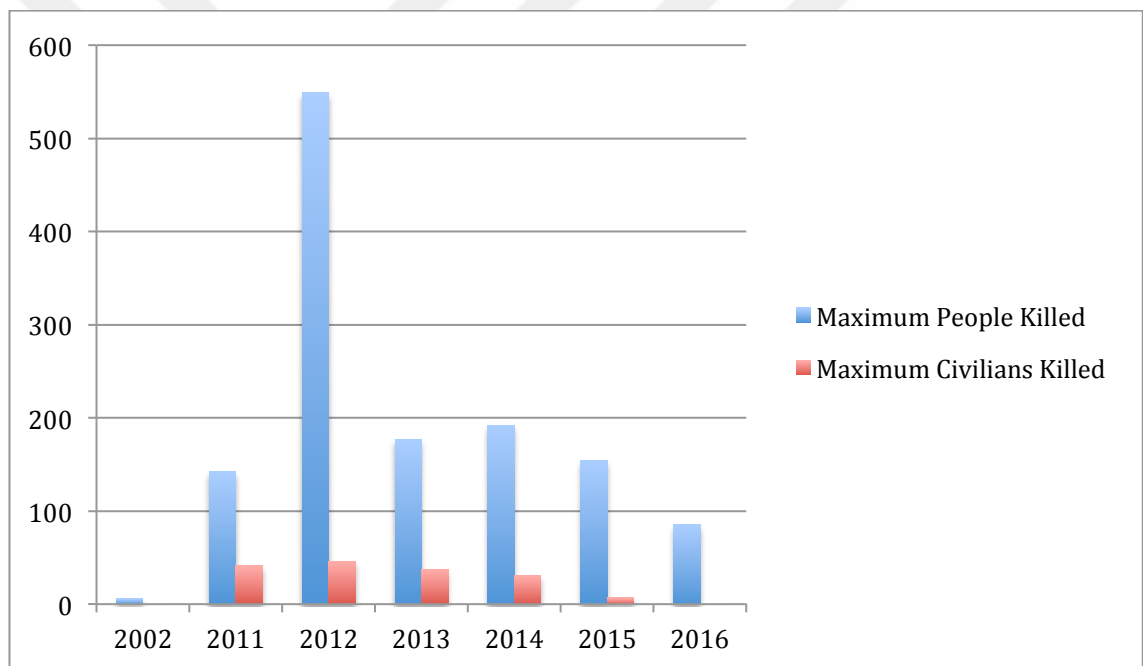
As it can be seen from both Graph 1 and 2 the first drone strike in Yemen took place in 2002. Afterward, during a period of approximately 7 years no strikes were conducted in Yemen. According to *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* the second strike occurred on 2011; nevertheless, based on the data provided by New America the first strike – after the one in 2002 – occurred in December 2009 but was not conducted by a drone. Only in May 2010 drones started to be used again in targeting high value targets and since than the U.S. has heavily relied on them. If we would take in consideration Graph 2, it is obvious that drone strikes have been widely used in comparison with the air strikes, unlikely the case of Afghanistan (with exception of 2016).

Important enough to be mentioned is also the fact that in Yemen during Bush administration drones have been used only one time. As Obama came in power, and intensification in the strikes is apparent after Obama came in power. In 2012 the strikes reached their peak as Obama administration supported the Yemeni government in their fight against Al-Qaeda’s branch - al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). According to

⁶⁵ “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis,” *New America*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/yemen-analysis.html>.

New America in 2012 there were conducted 47 drone strikes; nevertheless *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* presents a number between 73-100 strikes.

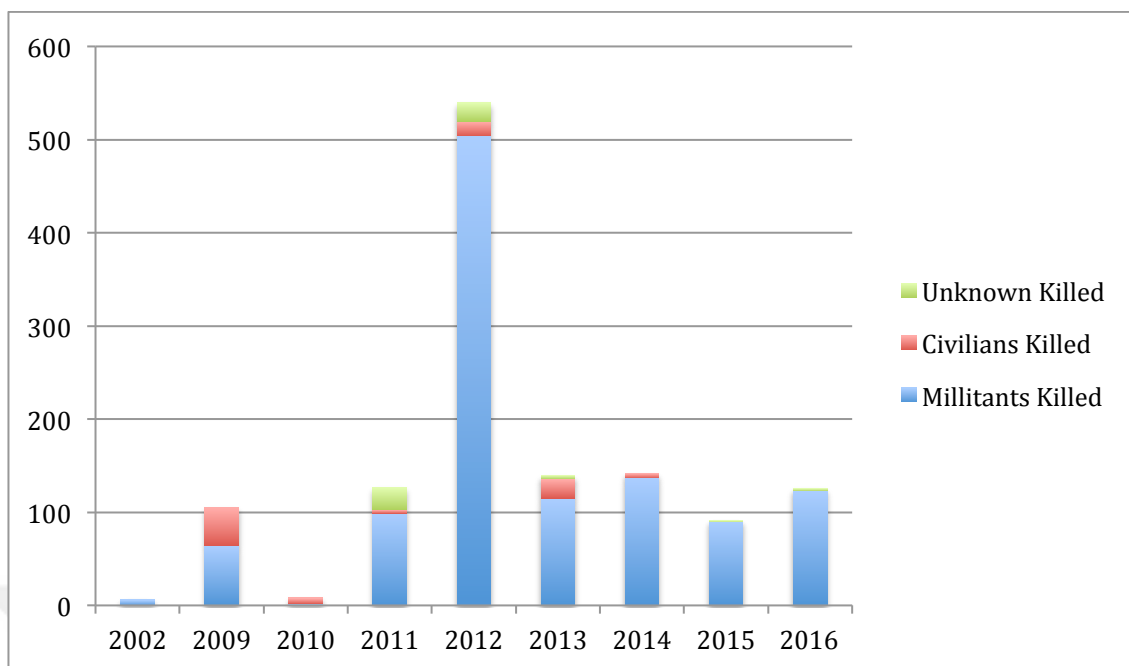
Strikes in Yemen and Pakistan started with a difference of 2 years, 2002 and 2004 respectively. In Pakistan the strikes reached their peak in 2010 and 2011, followed by a gradual decrease in the following years. However, as strikes in Pakistan decreased, the strikes in Yemen started to intensify. If we were to give a total number of strikes conducted in Yemen by the U.S. – taking in consideration the data of both organizations – there is approximately a minimum of 144 and a maximum of 252 drone strikes.



Graph 3: The Maximum Number of People and Civilians Killed in Yemen

Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁶⁶

⁶⁶ “US Strikes in Yemen,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*.



Graph 4: Maximum Number of Militants and Civilians Killed in Yemen
Source: New America⁶⁷

Even in terms of the number of people killed, Yemen remains one of the controversial states. If data provided from both *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* and *New America* would be taken in consideration the total death toll ranges from a minimum of 901 people killed to a maximum of 1305 people losing their lives from the strikes. Among them there are killed approximately 87-162 civilians. Despite the fact that the number of militants killed seems quite high when comparing with the number of civilians who were killed, it must be said that only 35 key al-Qaeda figures were killed – among them Anwar al-Awlaki and Fahd al-Quso.

Anwar al-Awlaki was killed in Yemen with a drone strike in September 2011, which led to a lot of discussions that questioned the legality of drones as for the first time an American citizen outside the homeland was killed without due process.⁶⁸ Just two weeks after the son of Anwar al-Awlaki (16 years old) – also an American citizen – was killed from another drone strike the target of which was the person accompanying

⁶⁷ “Drone Wars Yemen: Analysis,” *New America*.

⁶⁸ “Anwar al-Awlaki Killed in Yemen - As It Happened,” *The Guardian*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/blog/2011/sep/30/anwar-al-awlaki-yemen-live>.

Abdulrahman al-Awlaki.⁶⁹ Another very discussed strike in Yemen took place in December 2012 when a drone strike hit a wedding convoy and approximately 15 civilians were killed.⁷⁰

1.4.3 Pakistan Drone Strikes and Casualties

Drone strikes in Pakistan started in 2004 under the Bush administration and since then the strikes have been constant. Indeed Pakistan is the only state where Bush administration has mostly used drones unceasing. Nevertheless, when Obama became president the strikes increased peculiarly having their peak in 2010 with a 128 strikes. Since then, as it can be seen from Graph 5 the strikes have decreased continuously. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the drone strikes in Pakistan have been carried out only from CIA, unlike other states such as Yemen or Somalia where American military was included. Nevertheless, as Obama in June 2016 declared the transfer of drone program from CIA to Pentagon, it is left to see what the future for Pakistan will look like. In 2010 a senior Obama administration official stated that “the CIA was running the drone campaign in Pakistan mainly because the agency was first to develop the technology after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and because Pakistan’s government insisted on secrecy so that it could deny any U.S. operations on its soil.”⁷¹

When it comes to the stance of Pakistan’s government towards the U.S. drones strikes, it can be said that it has been very antagonistic. For many years the government publicly

⁶⁹ Craig Whitlock, “U.S. Airstrike that Killed American Teen in Yemen Raises Legal, Ethical Questions,” *The Washington Post*, 22 October 2011, retrieved 6 July 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-airstrike-that-killed-american-teen-in-yemen-raises-legal-ethical-questions/2011/10/20/gIQAAdvUY7L_story.html.

⁷⁰ Iona Craig, “What Really Happened When a US Drone Hit a Yemeni Wedding Convoy?,” *Al Jazeera America*, 20 January 2014, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2014/1/17/what-really-happenedwhenausdronehitayemeniweddingconvoy.html>.

⁷¹ Greg Miller, “Obama’s New Drone Policy Leaves Room for CIA Role,” *The Washington Post*, 25 May 2013, retrieved 6 July 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obamas-new-drone-policy-has-cause-for-concern/2013/05/25/0daad8be-c480-11e2-914f-a7aba60512a7_story.html.

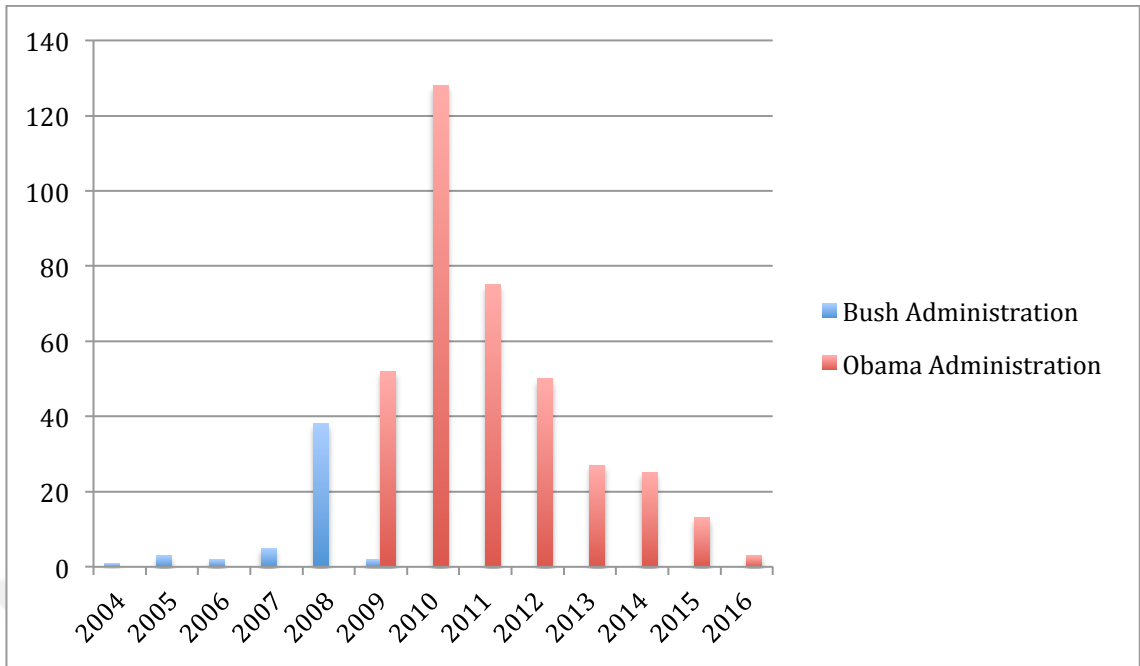
has condemned the drone strikes and has declined any possible cooperation with the U.S. in these strikes. Nevertheless, documents published from WikiLeaks proved the contrary. According to this document, the former Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani had said to the former U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan – Ann Patterson – that the U.S. could continue with the strikes “...as long as they get the right people. We'll protest in the National Assembly and then ignore it.”⁷²

The contradiction between the U.S. and Pakistan's government regarding the drone strikes still goes on even today. One of the latest strikes –on May 23, 2016 – targeted the Taliban chief, Mullah Akhtar Mansoor. He has been considered as the highest value target after bin Laden and the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, argued that Mansoor was a continuing imminent threat to the U.S. personnel in Afghanistan.⁷³ Despite this, the Pakistani's government publicly condemned the strike and argued that the U.S. had violated its sovereignty, as the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was not acknowledged earlier. Moreover, this strike is expected to have a negative impact on the Pakistan-Taliban peace talks that were going on, and it is translated as a sign that the Obama administration is becoming less patient regarding the inability of Pakistan to control the Taliban.⁷⁴

⁷² “Pakistan and US: Hand-in-Hand on Drone Deaths,” *Al Jazeera*, 18 December 2013, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/pakistan-us-hand-hand-drone-deaths-20131127145212604294.html>.

⁷³ “Pakistan Says US Drone Strike Violated Its Sovereignty,” *Al Jazeera*, 23 May 2016, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/pakistan-drone-strike-violated-sovereignty-160522204312754.html>.

⁷⁴ Mujib Mashal, “Taliban Chief Targeted by Drone Strike in Pakistan, Signaling a U.S. Shift,” *The New York Times*, 22 May 2016, retrieved 6 July 2016 from http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/23/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-leader-mullah-mansour.html?_r=0.



Graph 5: Drone Strikes Conducted in Pakistan
Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁷⁵

If we would have a look at the main targets of the U.S. Strikes, being this under Bush or Obama Administration, Taliban and al-Qaeda remain the focus. Despite that Haqqani and IMU militants have been struck as well, even why less frequently. In addition individuals such as Baitullah Mehsud (15 strikes) and Maulvi Nazir (2 strikes) have been targets of the American drones until they were fatally shot in 2009 and 2013 respectively.

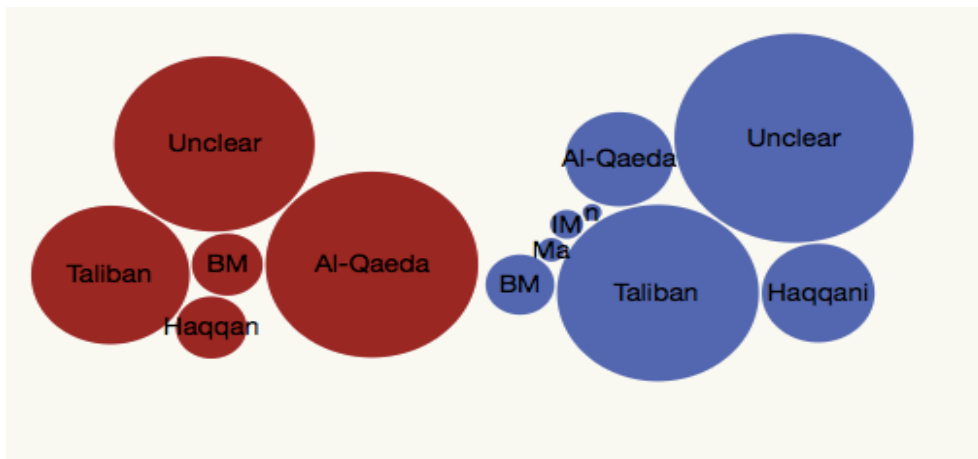
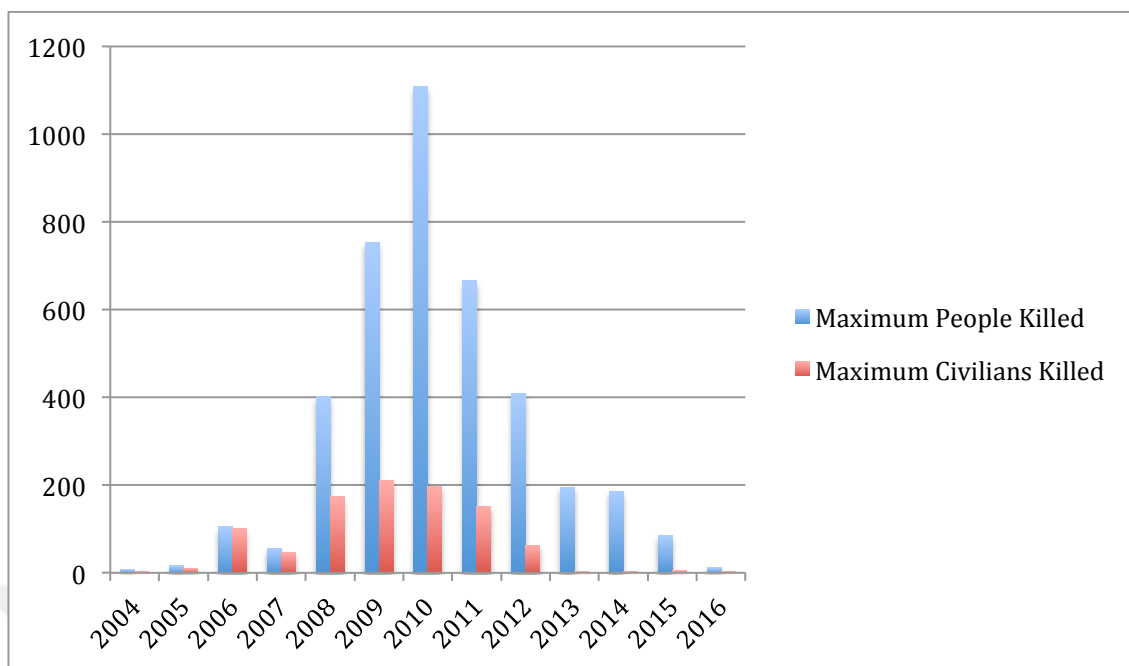


Figure 1: Distribution of the Drone Strikes Conducted from Bush and Obama
Source: New America⁷⁶

⁷⁵ “CIA and US Military Drone Strikes in Pakistan,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NAfjFonM-Tn7fziqiv33HIGt09wgLZDSCP-BQaux51w/edit#gid=694046452>.



Graph 6: Maximum of People and Civilians Killed by Drone Strikes in Pakistan
Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁷⁷

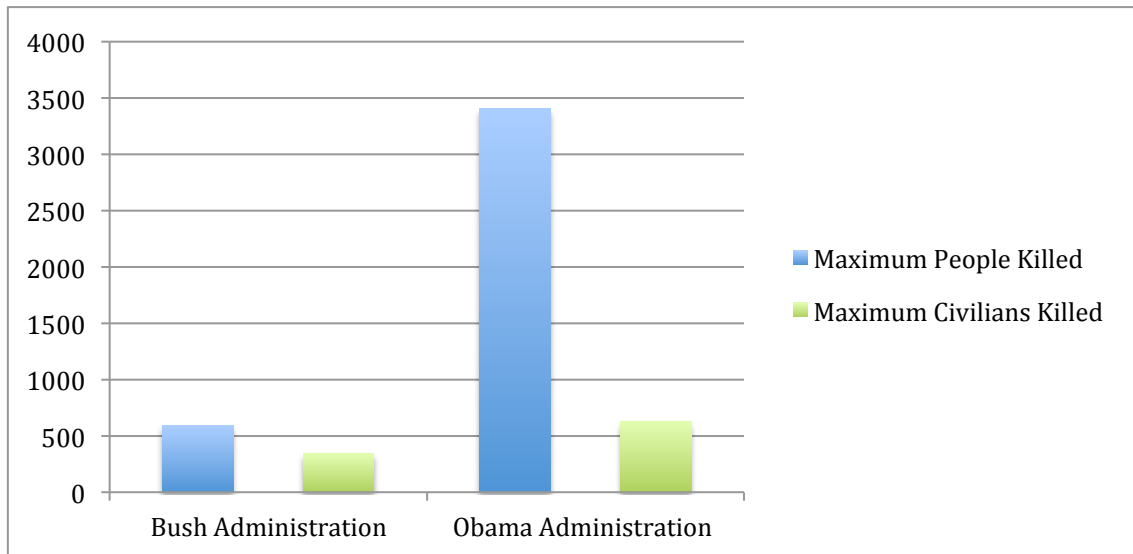
Lastly, it is estimated that out of 4000 people that have been killed in drone strikes, approximately 900 of them are civilians. Also it is important to underline that fact that only 58 high profile militants have been killed, and this comprises only 2 percent of the total death toll. The other people killed are civilians, children and alleged combatants.⁷⁸ One of the most fatal strikes was conducted in October 2006 when a drone missile stroked the building of a madrassa –it was assumed as a Taliban training camp – and at least 69 children were killed. Nevertheless, as the strikes increased the death toll also increased and as it can be observed from Graph 6 the civilian casualties had their peak in 2009 and 2010. However, since then there has been a constant decrease. If we were to compare the total and civilian causality rate between Bush and Obama, taking in consideration Graph 7, it can be said that even why the total causality rate still remains high (8.7 percent and 5.6 percent respectively), the civilian causality rate has visibly

⁷⁶ “Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis,” *New America*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html>.

⁷⁷ “CIA and US Military Drone Strikes in Pakistan,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*.

⁷⁸ “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: A Visualization of Drone Strikes in Pakistan since 2004,” retrieved 6 July 2016 from <http://drones.pitchinteractive.com>.

decreased – from 3.3 percent during Bush administration to 0.7 percent during Obama administration.⁷⁹



Graph 7: Comparison between the Bush Administration (2004 - 19 January 2009) and Obama Administration (20 January 2009 - July 2016)

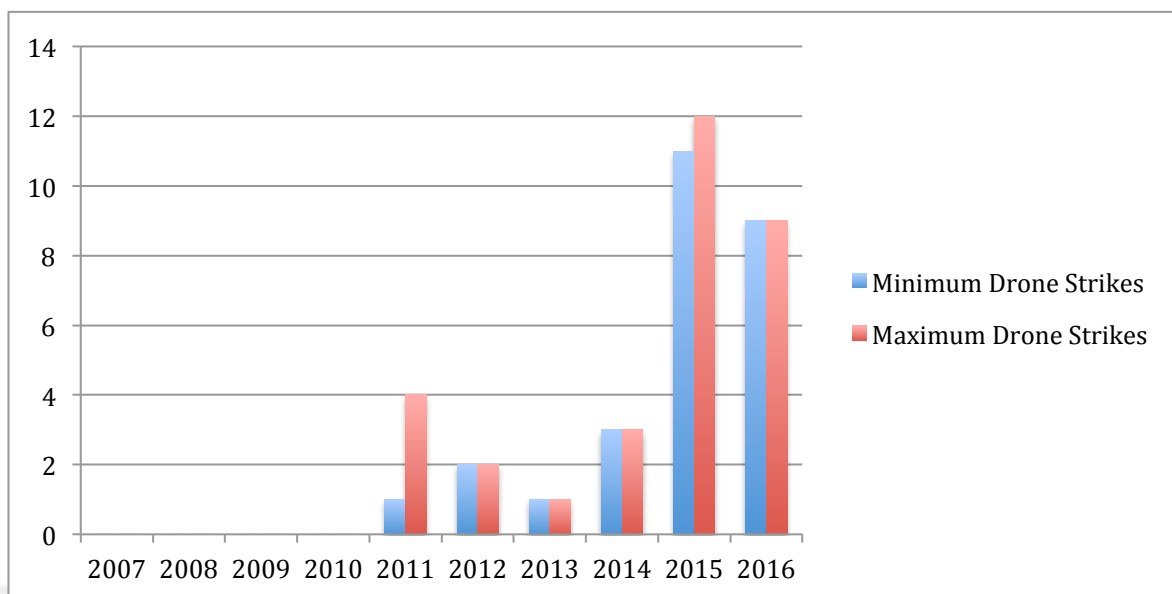
Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁸⁰

1.4.4 Somalia Drone Strikes and Casualties

Somalia is one of the countries with less number of drone strikes. The U.S. has started its operations in Somalia since 2003, nevertheless drones strikes were used only by Obama in 2011 and afterward. In a period of 6 years there have been conducted approximately 31 drone strikes. Unlike Pakistan, the strikes in Somalia have increased in the last two years, and conversely the number of civilians killed has lessened.

⁷⁹ "CIA and US Military Drone Strikes in Pakistan," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*.

⁸⁰ Ibid.



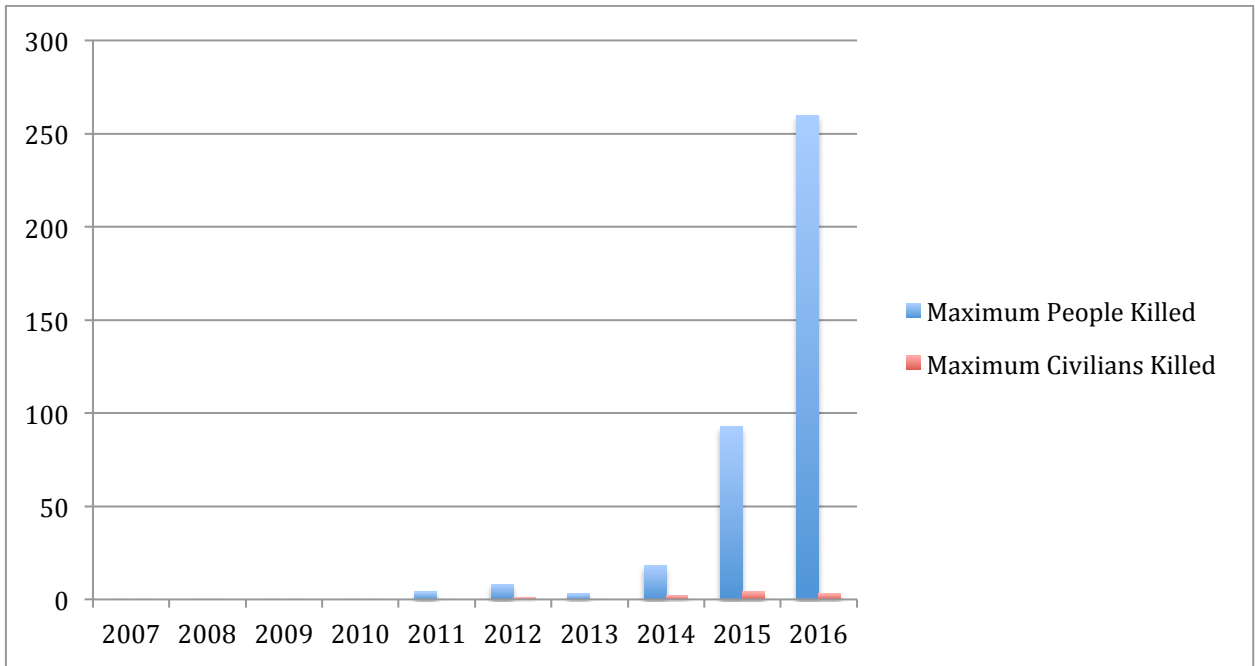
Graph 8: Number of Drone Strikes in Somalia
Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁸¹

The main target of the U.S. in Somalia has been al-Shabab militants. The main strike was conducted on March 2016 where the U.S. military claimed to have killed more than 150 al-Shabab fighters while they were training.⁸² For this reason, as it can be understood also from Graph 10, in 2016 the number of people killed reached their topmost. Even why the Obama government considered this a big achievement towards terrorism, many have question whether the people killed were really militants. These doubts increased even more when the U.S. failed to provide the identities of the people killed from the drone strike.⁸³

⁸¹ “US Strikes in Somalia,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, retrieved 6 July 2016 from https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-LT5TVBMy1Rj2WH30xQG9nqr8-RXFVvzJE_47NlpeSY/edit#gid=0.

⁸² “US: More than 150 al-Shabab Fighters Killed in Air Raid,” *Al Jazeera*, 8 March 2016, retrieved 7 July 2016 from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/drone-strike-somalia-kills-150-fighters-160307170607675.html>.

⁸³ Gleen Greenwald, “Nobody Knows the Identities of the 150 People Killed by U.S. in Somalia, but Most Are Certain They Deserved It,” *The Intercept*, 8 March 2016, retrieved 7 July 2016 from <https://theintercept.com/2016/03/08/nobody-knows-the-identity-of-the-150-people-killed-by-u-s-in-somalia-but-most-are-certain-they-deserved-it/>.



Graph 9: Maximum Number of People and Civilians Killed in Somalia
Source: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism⁸⁴

⁸⁴ "US Strikes in Somalia," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*.

CHAPTER 2: DEBATING THE U.S. DRONIFIED WARFARE

This chapter aims to provide a general background, now focusing only in the case of the U.S. drone program. There will be provided a timeline of when and where did the U.S. use drones to fight the terrorism, by making a distinction between the drone strikes conducted in the war zones and those conducted in states that the U.S. is not in war. This division proves to be crucial in the arguments of many scholars while analyzing the legality or morality of the dronified warfare.

Furthermore, there will be outlined the so-called 'kill-chain,' in other words, the 'kill-chain' constitutes the list of the officials who decide who is going to live and who is going to die from a drone strike. At this point, it is necessary to focus also on the institutions that conduct the strikes, namely CIA and Pentagon, and the clash between these two.

Having set the stage for the analysis of dronified warfare, this chapter turns to the much-pondered debates on the legality, morality and effectiveness of the drone program. This thesis does not intend to focus and develop any of these arguments; however, as the Obama administration's discourse has been developed mainly as a response to the LME arguments, it is important to provide a general background. Many scholars and journalists strongly argue that drone strikes violate the domestic and international law. However, Obama administration exonerates the drone strikes by claiming that it is exactly the domestic and international law that legitimize the usage of drones. The discussion on the morality of using drones strikes to kill suspected terrorists is another fundamental issue that needs attention while analyzing the dronified warfare. The morality stands behind most of the legal principles that govern the drone strikes. These discussions are mainly focused on the arguments that drone strikes do not respect many of the principles of the International Humanitarian Law. At the same time the focus remains on the double start of the drone program: while there is intended to lower the risk for the U.S. soldiers, the life of many innocent people is taken as they are considered as suspected terrorist.

Lastly, there will be assessed also the debates regarding the effectiveness of the dronified warfare. While in short term drones strikes seems to be effective many allege that in the long term, non only isn't the drone program effective but it will backfire to the U.S. with more radicalization which will become a greater peril to the U.S. security. For the purpose of this paper, some topics such as the psychological impacts and analysis in detail of the legal framework of the dronified warfare will not be included in the literature review as they would discombobulate the reader from the main context.

2.1 A Timeline of Drone Strikes

The U.S. has conducted drone airstrikes (from what is known) in seven states: Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan, Libya, Somalia and Syria. After the Afghan government granted permission, the first armed mission was conducted on October 7, 2001 in the city of Qandahar. This attack was directed against the Taliban Supreme Commander Mullah Mohammed Omar. Notwithstanding, the strike was not accurate and instead of striking the building where Omar was, it attacked a vehicle outside it, giving Omar the possibility to escape (his destination is still unknown even nowadays). This operation was directed from three main institutions: Air Force, CENTCOM, and the CIA; but none of them is clear on how and who ordered the strike, which was a failure for the War on Terror. Approximately in the same time with Afghanistan is considered that drone strikes have been conducted in Iraq. Between 2005–2007 the number of strikes was higher; however, there was a shift of the strikes from Iraq mainly towards Afghanistan.⁸⁵ When ISIS started to gain power, especially in Iraq, U.S. restarted the drone flights over Iraqi territory mainly on Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) mission on June 2014. Afterwards, approximately two months

⁸⁵ “Armed UAV Operations 10 Years On,” *Stratford Global Intelligence*, 12 January 12, 2012, retrieved October 30, 2015 from <https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/armed-uav-operations-10-years>.

later Obama allowed the air strikes over Iraq against ISIS, and in September they were also supported from the UK drones.⁸⁶

In Yemen the first drone attack was conducted in 2002 to be followed from a second strike on 2009. The strikes in Yemen are controlled from both Pentagon and CIA and they are conducted from Camp Lemmonier in Djibouti and another base in Saudi Arabia whose exact location is not known. June 2004 was the starting date for the strikes in Pakistan, but unlike Yemen, the strikes are controlled directly from CIA. The first strike was launched from a base inside Pakistan, but in 2011 the relations between two nations became fragile and consequently the drones were transferred in Afghanistan. During Bush presidency the strikes were sporadic with the exception of last year of his presidency (2008) when there is noticed an increase of the strikes. When Obama came to power the intensification of the strikes is dramatically more obvious.

Two other states that have lived under the drone-controlled skies are Somalia and Libya. In both of the states the strikes started in 2011 and while in the former the attacks are conducted by JSOC and CIA, in the latter the attacks are conducted only by Pentagon. In Libya the attacks were conducted against Qaddafi regime and mainly aimed to support the rebel forces. While in Somalia, one of the latest attacks was carried on March 2016 when the U.S. claims that killed 150 al-Shabaab fighters,⁸⁷ however, the identities of the targets are not made public and many scholars and journalists have questioned the U.S.'s claims. The last state where the U.S. carried out drone strikes is Syria. The first strike was done on August 05, 2015 against the ISIS. Conducted by the Pentagon, these strikes are supported also by the drone strikes of United Kingdom.

⁸⁶ Chris Cole, "Drones in Iraq and Syria: What We Know and What We Don't," *Drone Wars UK*, 7 November, 2014, retrieved 30 October 2015 from <http://dronewars.net/2014/11/07/drones-in-iraq-and-syria-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont/>.

⁸⁷ "US: More than 150 al-Shabab Fighters Killed in Air Raid," *Al Jazeera*.

2.2 The Invisible Hand behind the Lethal Tap

The U.S. has been using drones for approximately 20 years now; however, the armed drones started to be used after the 9/11 attacks. Since then the CIA has been the leader in terms of the conducted operations and Pentagon has tried to get the lead executive authority. Nevertheless, this has been also a battle about the resources in terms of the counterterrorism funding. Currently it is estimated that CIA has more than 80 armed drones, the Air Force has around 470 and the Army has 110 drones.⁸⁸ The main difference between the operations conducted by the CIA and Pentagon is that while Pentagon has to make public its operations and their results, CIA does not have such a responsibility. As Micah Zenko puts it: “Strikes by the CIA are classified as Title 50 covert actions, defined as “activities of the United States Government . . . where it is intended that the role . . . will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly, but does not include traditional . . . military activities. . . . JSOC operations are guided by Title 10 “armed forces” operations and a publicly available military doctrine.”⁸⁹

Dividing the program between CIA and Pentagon has resulted into a turf battle between these two institutions. While the Pentagon argues that the lack of transparency of CIA operations makes the drone program even more controversial, CIA on the other side argues that Pentagon does not have the capabilities and the necessary technology to be successful in the target strikes. Indeed, both of these statements may be considered as true at some extent. The Obama administration has not made any declaration regarding the strikes conducted by CIA and this has raised many questions regarding the legality and morality of the strikes as it is not possible to have a clear number of the civilians that are killed.⁹⁰ Still, the argument that Pentagon lacks the required means to conduct

⁸⁸ David Axe, “Just How Many Predator Drones Does the CIA Have?,” *War is Boring*, 15 October 2014, retrieved 20 March 2016 from <https://warisboring.com/just-how-many-predator-drones-does-the-cia-have-ac9f5830196b#.nnxs38h5p>.

⁸⁹ Micah Zenko, “Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 31,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 16 April 2013, retrieved 20 March 2016 from <http://www.cfr.org/drones/transferring-cia-drone-strikes-pentagon/p30434>.

“Lack of Transparency in US Drone Killings Muddies Legal Status, says UN,” *Al Jazeera America*, 18 October 2013, retrieved 20 March 2016 from

successful operations may be valuable as well. Pentagon has tried not to make public, but according to the reports about 20 drones have been destroyed or crashed.⁹¹ This is an indicator of the juvenile phase in which Pentagon is operating for the moment.

Richard Whittle in his book primary condemns the bureaucracy at Pentagon and its clash with CIA, which hindered the killing of Osama bin Laden. According to him if bin Laden would have been killed maybe the 9/11 attacks would have been stopped or at least would not have been disastrous for the U.S.⁹² The negative impact of the internal war between CIA and Pentagon was seen even during the first drone strike conducted against Taliban Supreme Commander Mullah Mohammed Omar on Kandahar region in October 2001. The operation was directed from both of the institutions and an erroneous strike was taken as a result of which civilians were killed. The most important issue is that neither CIA nor Pentagon knows who ordered the strike, which raises even more questions for the responsibility of both institutions. Rachel Stohl stands in the same page with Whittle, even why for different reason. According to her having separate programs makes the process difficult to manage. Stohl properly argues: “Who do you look to get information from? It makes it far more challenging for a congressional committee, or the Justice Department or the public to know what is happening and where.”⁹³

Many experts, when considering these negative impacts of the clash between CIA and Pentagon, have written extended reports marshaling the reasons why the drone program should be passed to Pentagon.⁹⁴ Micah Zenko in his report states that “[t]he main

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/18/u-n-urges-transparencyoverusdronedeaths.html>.

⁹¹ Craig Whitlock, “The Pentagon’s Most Advanced Drone Keeps Falling Out of the Sky,” *Business Insider*, 20 January 2016, retrieved 20 March 2016 from <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-pentagons-most-advanced-drone-keeps-falling-out-of-the-sky-2016-1>; “Drone Crash Database,” *Drone Wars UK*, retrieved 4 July 2016 from <https://dronewars.net/drone-crash-database/>.

⁹² See: Richard Whittle, *Predator: The Secret Origins of the Drone Revolution*, (NY: Henry Holt and Co., 2014).

⁹³ Bryan Bender, “I Don't Think the CIA Should be in the Business of Carrying out Wars,” *Politico*, 23 April 2015, retrieved 5 July 2016 from <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/04/drone-strikes-cia-pentagon-war-defense-117294>.

⁹⁴ See: Lack of Transparency in US Drone Killings Muddies Legal Status, says UN,” *Al Jazeera America*; Zenko, “Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 31,” p. 1.

obstacle to acknowledging the scope, legality, and oversight of U.S. targeted killings beyond traditional or "hot" battlefields"⁹⁵ has been the division between CIA and Pentagon. Moreover, he argues that the drone program is endangered by the lack of transparency for the CIA operation. For this reason, a shift of the program to Pentagon is requisite. Another reason is related with the fact that the U.S. cannot directly contact with the governments where the CIA operates and vacuum created may be misused by those governments for their own purposes. This would result in hostility in the civilians toward the U.S.

As a response to these requests, Obama⁹⁶ in 2013 discussed for a transition of the drone program from the CIA to Pentagon and the White House had prepared a two-year program for the transition. According to the Stimson Report it was maintained that the Obama administration has abandoned the plan and aspires to create a dual command structure between the CIA and the Pentagon.⁹⁷ However, after approximately three years, on 16 June 2016, Obama decided for the shift of the drone program to the U.S. military, still the CIA is going to have some role.⁹⁸ Specifically, while the U.S. military will have a full control on the drone war, CIA will continue to operate in Pakistan and Yemen. The main reason behind this is claimed to be the fact that in Pakistan the strikes have decreased. While in Yemen, CIA will be able to use their drones for surveillance; however, the strikes will be totally under the control of the JSCOC.

While many may be taken by surprise from this decision considering the fact that CIA has had a strong support from the Capitol Hill.⁹⁹ This support resulted mainly because

⁹⁵ Zenko, "Policy Innovation Memorandum No. 31."

⁹⁶ Colleen McCain Nelson, Adam Entous and Julian Barnes, "Obama Resets War on Terror," *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 May 2013, received 5 July 2016 from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323975004578501360528403172>.

⁹⁷ Rachel Stohl, "Grading Progress on U.S. Drone Policy," *Stimson*, February 2016, retrieved 1 March 2016 from <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/196113/grading-progress-on-us-Drone-Policy.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Adam Entous and Gordon Lubold, "Obama's Drone Revamp Gives Military Bigger Responsibility, Keeps CIA Role," *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 June 2016, retrieved 5 July 2016 from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/barack-obamas-long-awaited-drone-program-revamp-preserves-a-cia-role-1466088122?mg=id-wsj>.

⁹⁹ Mark Mazzetti and Matt Apuzzo, "Deep Support in Washington for C.I.A.'s Drone Missions," *The New York Times*, 25 April 2015 retrieved 5 July 2016 from

the operations covered by the CIA are not open to the public, which gives possibility to the government to cover its actions. While on the other hand, the actions now taken by the military are prone to the public opinion. However, it can be seen that the Obama administration is finally taking a few steps when it comes to the drone program. A few days after the decision to shift the program to the military, Obama administration released a 3-page report in which was provided information about the number of the civilians killed by the drone strikes.¹⁰⁰ It was the first time that the government provided such information – even why the numbers presented are highly questioned. Besides, still there is no information regarding the guidelines that are followed before the targets are stroked. The moves of the Obama administration can be understood as two folds: (i) As Obama is leaving office, he is trying to place order in his sole controversial legacy, (ii) After 15 years that armed drones started to be used, the public may be ready to accept the drone program along with its imperfections. As Obama administration accepted that there were approximately 116 civilians killed the impact it had on the public is not the same with the impact of the public if this information would have been given in 2002 or 2005. So the discourses used for the legitimization of the dronified warfare have proved to be successful in gradually convincing the public about drone legitimacy.

Whilst the final tap is the responsibility of CIA or Pentagon, other individuals including here the president decide who is going to be killed. This process has not been disclosed by the Obama administration; however, the drone program was shaken in October 2015 when *The Intercept* with the information provided by a whistleblower made public – among others – what is called as the ‘kill chain.’ Persons that are part of this chain have access to the ‘disposition matrix’ – the list containing the names of suspected targets across the world – which is composed of ‘baseball cards.’ These cards incorporate the patterns of life of each objective.¹⁰¹ Based on the documents published by *The Intercept*, there are two main steps that are followed and result in the final neutralization

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/26/us/politics/deep-support-in-washington-for-cias-drone-missions.html?_r=0.

¹⁰⁰ “Summary of Information Regarding U.S. Counterterrorism Strikes Outside Areas of Active Hostilities,” *Obama Administration*, 1 July 2016, retrieved 5 July 2016 from <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/DNI+Release+on+CT+Strikes+Outside+Areas+of+Active+Hostilities.PDF>.

¹⁰¹ Josh Begley, “A Visual Glossary,” *The Intercept*, 15 October 2015, retrieved 7 July 2016 from <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/a-visual-glossary/>.

of a target. The first step – ‘developing a target’ to ‘authorization of a target’ starts with the creation of the baseball cards from JSOC and at the end are controlled from the presidents. The names that are approved pass to the second stage, which is ‘authorizing’ to ‘actioning.’ After the president has authorized the target, JSOC or CIA has 60 days to hit the target. In case that the strike does not take place within these days than the process should start from the beginning. For the final strike it is needed the approval of Geographic Combatant Command, Ambassador of the respective country and the CIA station chief in that country.¹⁰² For a person to be targeted it needs to pose a ‘continuing, imminent threat to American people.’¹⁰³ Nevertheless, according to the official secret reports presented by *The Intercept*, these requirements are met from a very small number of High Value Targets (HVT).

¹⁰² Cora Currier, “The Kill Chain,” *The Intercept*, 15 October 2015, retrieved 7 July 2016 from <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/the-kill-chain/>.

¹⁰³ Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President at the National Defense University,” *The White House*, 23 May 2013, 7 July 2016 retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/remarks-president-national-defense-university>.

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

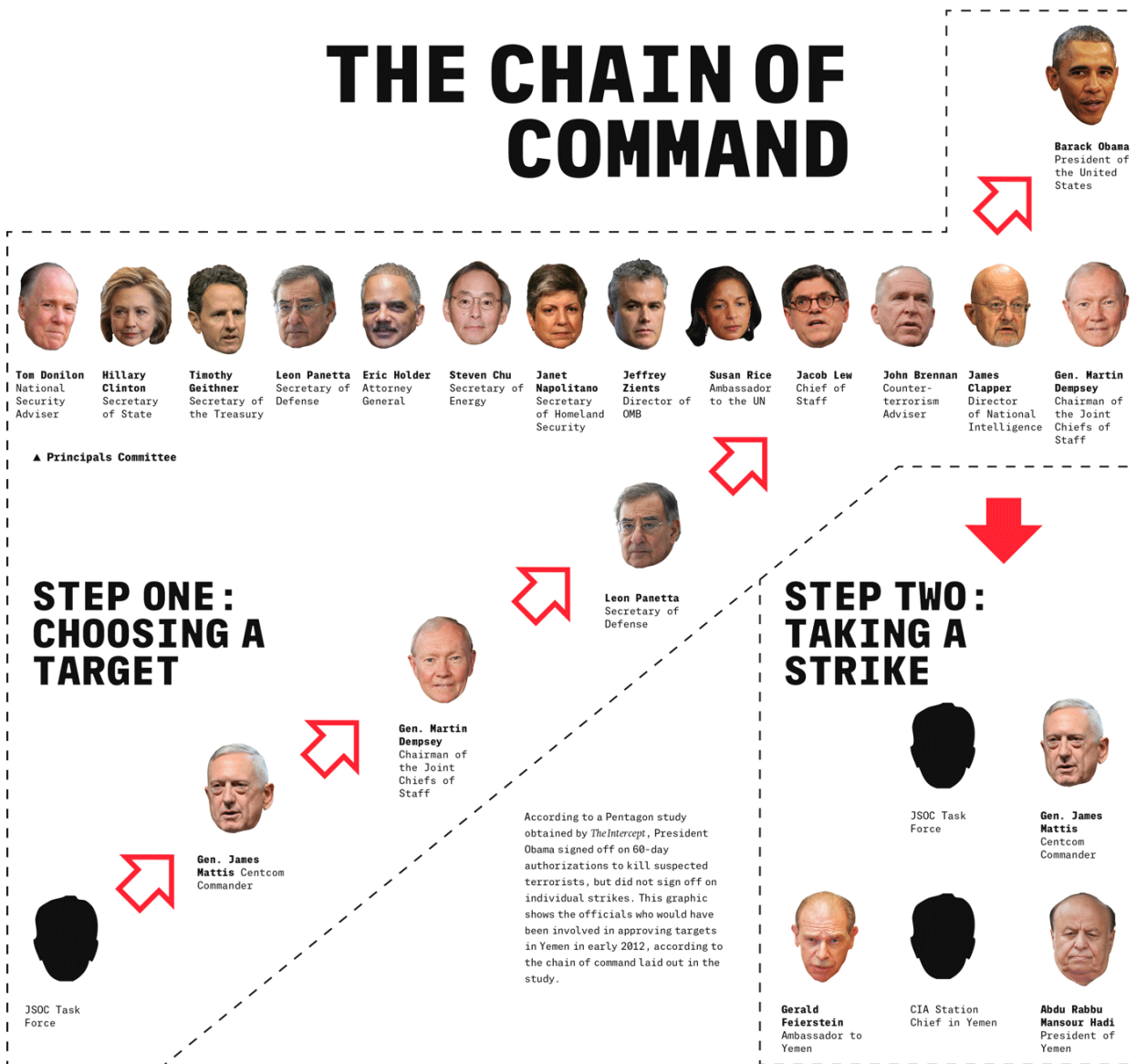


Figure 2: The Kill Chain/ The Chain of Command¹⁰⁴
Source: The Intercept

¹⁰⁴ Currier, "The Kill Chain."

2.3 Legality of Drone Strikes

*If you do something for long enough, the world will accept it International law progresses through violations. We invented the targeted assassination thesis and we had to push it.*¹⁰⁵

Whilst the drone usage stretched through Africa, the Middle East and regions around it, the critics against it amplified as well, as a result the legality of drone strikes has been the reference point of the drone-skeptics. Many argue that the drone strikes and target killings violate the international law, as they have resulted in a huge number of assassinations. Moreover, they aptly stress the fact that drone usage has expanded the U.S. operations in many regions, including here the non-combat areas. Controversially, the drone advocates argue that due to developed technology of drones, that allows them to be very precise. This makes drones more legal and moral than other weapons.¹⁰⁶ Both of the principles are codified in the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. Explicitly, the principle of distinction is defined as: “The parties to the conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants. Attacks may only be directed against combatants. Attacks must not be directed against civilians;”¹⁰⁷ while the principle of proportionality is defined as: “Launching an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, is prohibited.”¹⁰⁸ Controversially, the drone advocates argue that due to developed technology of drones, that allows them to be very precise. This makes drones more legal and moral than other weapons.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Yotam Feldman and Uri Blau, “Consent and Advise,” Haaretz, 29 January 2009, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://www.haaretz.com/consent-and-advise-1.269127>.

¹⁰⁶ Bradley Jay Strawser, “Moral Predators: The Duty to Employ Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles,” *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (2010), pp. 342-368, retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15027570.2010.536403>.

¹⁰⁷ Rule 1, *Customary IHL*, retrieved from https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter1_rule1.

¹⁰⁸ Rule 14, *Customary IHL*, retrieved from https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter4_rule14.

¹⁰⁹ Strawser, “Moral Predators: The Duty to Employ Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles.”

Seen from the perspective of the international laws, the dronified warfare is discussed based on *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. While the former is related with the reason/recourse that led to the use of force, the latter is related with the way the force is conducted. Firstly, when considering *jus ad bellum*, the Obama administration argues that the drone strikes are conducted as a self-defense based on the Article 51 of the UN Charter. The interpretation of this argument maintains that those who are part of al Qaeda or even affiliated with them can be considered as belligerents, and can be targeted no matter where he/she is located. Therefore, the strikes are taken as a result of the necessity due to the imminent threat posed by the terrorists. Based on the domestic law, AUMF has served as “a legal rationale for worldwide operations against terrorist operations.”¹¹⁰ Accordingly, the president has the right to use all the possible means against those who are directly connected with those who “planned, authorized, committed or aided” the 9/11 attacks or any affiliated person. It is argued that such a resolution gives power to the president to conduct a war with no geographical borders (or as it is called by skeptics, the everywhere war¹¹¹) and no time limits.

Inimical to the self-defense argument, according to drone skeptics, a belief that a nation or someone intends to harm the U.S. is not enough neither to take action in self-defense and nor to legitimize the lethal force.¹¹² Another argument used to prove the illegality of drone strikes is focused on the zones where the U.S. is using the drone strikes. As mentioned previously, based on the AUMF there is no geographical limitation for the use of force as the U.S. is engaged in a global war against al-Qaeda and other terrorist organization affiliated with the former. For this reason, the U.S. has conducted most of its strikes in non-combat zones. However, many oppose the everywhere war

¹¹⁰ Michael J. Boyle, “The Legal and Ethical Implications of Drone Warfare,” *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2015), pp. 105-126, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2014.991210.

¹¹¹ See: Derek Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 177, No. 3 (2011), pp. 238–250, DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-4959.2011.00426.x.

¹¹² Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, Chapter 6.

justification and argue that using drone strikes outside the combat zones is illegal.¹¹³ This assertion if followed from the arguments on the violation of the national sovereignty where the strikes are conducted.¹¹⁴ As Laurie Calhoun points out “a glaring problem with the pretext of national self-defense is the vast power asymmetry between a single supposedly threatening individual and the state itself.”¹¹⁵ The history has shown that even in the cases when the states where drones are used oppose the strikes, the U.S. has kept going on with the attacks. An example for this is the case when Pakistan passed a resolution against drone strikes, but the U.S. did not take it in consideration. At that time, the Pakistani High Commissioner to London Wajid Shamsul Hasan said: “What has been the whole outcome of these drone attacks is that you have directly or indirectly contributed to destabilizing or undermining the democratic government. Because people really make fun of the democratic government – when you pass a resolution against drone attacks in the parliament and nothing happens. The Americans don't listen to you, and they continue to violate your territory.”¹¹⁶

Focusing on the *jus in bello*, the compliance with the principles of the IHL is compulsory. Philip Alston, then Special Rapporteur of UN, in a report on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions asserted: “a missile fired from a drone is no different from any other commonly used weapon, including a gun fired by a soldier or a helicopter or gunship that fires missiles. The critical legal question is the same for each weapon: whether its specific use complies with IHL.”¹¹⁷ In this regard, the legality of

¹¹³ Samit D’Cunha, “(Un)leashing the Drones: Legal Motives for a Geographic Limitation of Drone Warfare,” *International Affairs Review*, retrieved from <http://www.iar-gwu.org/sites/default/files/articlepdfs/%28Un%29leashing%20the%20Drones%20-%20Samit%20D%27Cunha.pdf>.

¹¹⁴ See: Michael Boyle, “The Costs and Consequences of the Drone Warfare,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (2013); Ian Shaw, “Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare,” *Geopolitics* (2013), DOI:10.1080/14650045.2012.749241; Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, etc.

¹¹⁵ Calhoun, p. 115.

¹¹⁶ Chris Woods, “CIA Drone Strikes Violate Pakistan's Sovereignty, Says Senior Diplomat,” *The Guardian*, 3 August 2012, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/03/cia-drone-strikes-violate-pakistan>.

¹¹⁷ Philip Alston, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions,” *United Nations General Assembly*, 28 May 2010 retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/A.HRC.14.24.Add6.pdf>.

drones is discussed mainly based on two main and concomitant principles of IHL: the principle of distinction and the principle of proportionality.

Then CIA director, Leon Panetta in 2009 – by calling drones as ‘the only game in town’ – argued that drone is “very precise, it’s very limited in terms of collateral damage.”¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, after the Nuclear Summit in April 2016 Obama – talking in past tense – accepted that drones have killed civilians. In this regard he stated: “It wasn’t as precise as it should have been, and there’s no doubt civilians were killed that shouldn’t have been. ... We have to take responsibility where we’re not acting appropriately, or just made mistakes.”¹¹⁹ What Obama accepted with just one sentence drone skeptics have been arguing for years. A simple math would be enough to understand that drones may be precise but it does not mean that civilians are not killed. Gregorie Chamayou states: “[it] is estimated that the AGM-114 Hellfire fired by the Predator drone has a ‘kill zone’ of 15 meters – which means that all those who happen to be within the radius of 15 meters around the point of impact even if they are not the designated target, will die together with the target.”¹²⁰

Another debated issue that is based on the above-mentioned principles is related with the differentiation between civilian and combatant. Today the distinction between the civilians and combatants has been blurred as the combatant do not have distinct clothing and they leave in areas populated by civilians. This has resulted in equivalence between combatants and civilians, which are suspected as terrorists, making the latter a possible target. According to Gregoire Chamayou, “this equivalence has the effect to extend the right to kill well beyond the classic legal boundaries and conferring an indefinite elastic on the concept of a legitimate target.”¹²¹ Many opponents of the drone program argue that due to this blurred distinction the possibilities to attack civilians are higher,

¹¹⁸ Noah Shachtman, “CIA Chief: Drones ‘Only Game in Town’ for Stopping al-Qaeda,” *Wired*, 19 May 2009, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <https://www.wired.com/2009/05/cia-chief-drones-only-game-in-town-for-stopping-al-qaeda/>.

¹¹⁹ Nicole Gaouette, “Obama: ‘No Doubt’ U.S. Drones Have Killed Civilians,” *CNN*, 2 April 2016, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/01/politics/obama-isis-drone-strikes-iran/>.

¹²⁰ Grégoire Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, p. 142

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 145

especially in the cases when the U.S. uses ‘double tap strikes’¹²² or ‘signature strikes.’ The Obama administration has strongly opposed this argument by emphasizing the developed technology of drones; however, it can be said that as long as the killed individuals who have not been targeted are considered as enemies in action (EKIA)¹²³ until proved that they are innocent, it would be quite difficult to prove wrong the arguments of Obama administration.

Despite the distinction between the civilians and combatants, the drone opponents argue that the due to the lack of due process the target killings are assassinations.¹²⁴ Jeremy Scahill shortly puts it as: “Drones are a tool, not a policy. The policy is assassination.”¹²⁵ Nevertheless, Harold Koh – Obama’s legal advisor – argued that as the U.S. is in war with al-Qaeda and its affiliates, thus: under domestic law, the use of lawful weapons systems—consistent with the applicable laws of war—for precision targeting of specific high-level belligerent leaders when acting in self-defense or during an armed conflict is not unlawful, and hence does not constitute “assassination.”¹²⁶

Lastly, questions are raised whether IHL is strong enough to restrain or to make illegal the drone strikes. According to Klem Ryan, the drones’ unique capabilities have made IHL impotent. As drones have blurred the distinction between the civilian and combatant or the distinction between the combatant zones and non-combatant zones it is

¹²² Double tap strike is a second attack that is conducted directly after the civilians are gathered to help those killed or injured after the first drone strike.

¹²³ Josh Begley, “A Visual Glossary,” *The Intercept*.

¹²⁴ Jeremy Scahill, “The Assassination Complex,” *The Intercept*, 15 October 2015, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/the-assassination-complex/>; Bill Quigley, “Five Reasons Drone Assassinations are Illegal,” *Counter Punch*, 15 May 2012, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/05/15/five-reasons-drone-assassinations-are-illegal/>; Pam Bailey, “Assassination Drones: A New Type of Warfare,” *Washington Reports on Middle East Affairs*, (January/February 2013), pp. 34-35, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://www.wrmea.org/2013-january-february/assassination-drones-a-new-type-of-warfare.html>; Mnar Muhawesh, “How The Drone King Turned Assassination Into Counter-Terrorism Policy,” *MintPress News*, 14 June 2016, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <https://www.mintpressnews.com/obama-drone-king-assassination-policy-explained/217181/>, etc.

¹²⁵ Jeremy Scahill, “The Assassination Complex.”

¹²⁶ Harold Hongju Koh, “The Obama Administration and International Law,” *U.S. Department of State*, 25 March 2010, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <http://www.state.gov/s/l/releases/remarks/139119.htm>.

very difficult to argue about their legality or morality.¹²⁷ Ryan aptly argues that the fact that sometimes drones or new technological weapons are considered as independent from the normative critique, in most of the cases it is assumed that these weapons do not violate the law.

2.4 Morality of Drone Strikes

*“The further removed we are from the victim, the more we are likely to act harshly.”*¹²⁸

Questions regarding the collateral damage and the killing of the innocents constantly have challenged the ethics of dronified warfare. However, the dehumanization of the warfare has become the main focus when it comes to morality of the drone strikes. The so-called ‘psychology of the distance’ has a direct impact on how the war is conducted due to its influence on the psychology of those who give the orders and those who conduct the orders. According to a former drone pilot the fact that the targets are seen as a silhouette generates a detachment from the human life and as the human element is taken from the war there is nothing that would stop the attacker to exert lethal violence. Klem Ryan defines this situation as ‘disassociation’ and according to him the distance between the attacker and the victim is reflected in the violent acts conducted from the former.¹²⁹ Moreover, the analogy and similarity between the drone controlling and a PlayStation game plays a significant role in dehumanizing the drone program. This analogy makes the killing more appealing and the drone pilot thinks himself/herself as powerful in that extend that may decide who can live and who has to die.

‘Projecting power without vulnerability’ has been the aim of the military for decades and that has become possible with the usage of drones. Such strategy while making the

¹²⁷ Ryan, “What is Wrong with Drones? The Battlefield in International Humanitarian Law,” pp. 207-223.

¹²⁸ “Drone Wars: The Gamers Recruited to Kill – Video,” The Guardian, (February 02, 2015) retrieved July 01, 2016 from <http://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2015/feb/02/drone-wars-gamers-recruited-kill-pakistan-video>.

¹²⁹ Ryan, “What is Wrong with Drones? The Battlefield in International Humanitarian Law,” pp. 207-223.

attacker omnipotent leaves the victim impotent. Specifically, the attacker is removed from the hazardous environment, has a powerful weapon and knows every step and capability of the victim. On the other hand, the victim remains within the hazardous environment, unarmed and with no knowledge of who is his enemy. According to Ian Shaw the soldiers have been updated to lethal bureaucrats.¹³⁰

The lethal bureaucrat, nevertheless, has been associated with question regarding the moral hazard. “Moral hazard is a concept common in economic and philosophical circles; it describes a situation in which a party engages in risky or morally questionable behaviors because he or she does not have to face the consequences of the actions.”¹³¹ Accordingly, the lack of threat would have a threefold impact: (i) people would support easier a war conducted with drones which would lead to encouragement of new wars,¹³² (ii) a drone pilot killing with ease as he can not be attacked and (iii) leaders pursuing wars even why they are not necessary as the public’s pressure is not the same when lives of their people are in danger. Laurie Calhoun pertinently describes the situation as “the last resort has become the first resort, self-defense has become naked aggression and just war has become blind slaughter.”¹³³

Despite these critiques, there are some supporters of the drone program according to whom as the drones are more advanced, efficient and precise than the other weapons, and then their use is morally obligatory.¹³⁴ Similarly, Obama himself while accepting the Nobel Prize – even not directly speaking about drones – stated: “There will be times when nations -- acting individually or in concert -- will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Shaw, “Predator Empire: The Geopolitics of US Drone Warfare,” p. 2.

¹³¹ Kaag and Kreps, *Drone Warfare*, Chapter 5.

¹³² James Igoe Walsh and Marcus Schulzke, “The Ethics of Drone Strikes: Does Reducing the Cost of Conflict Encourage War?,” *U.S. Army War College Press and Strategic Studies Institute*, September 2015, retrieved from <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=788652>.

¹³³ Calhoun, *We Kill Because We Can: From Soldiering to Assassination in the Drone Age*, pp. XV- XVI.

¹³⁴ Bradley Strawser, “Moral Predators: The Duty to Employ Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles,” pp. 342-368.

¹³⁵ “Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize,” *The White House*, 10 December 2009, retrieved 8 July 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize>.

2.5 Effectiveness of Drone Strikes

*Be afraid ... Be very afraid.*¹³⁶

A well-known phrase originated from the movie *The Fly* when Seth Brundle started to experiment with teleportation. Unfortunately, the experiment goes wrong and Brundle turns into a man half-person and half-insect. ... Has drone program gone wrong and should we be afraid of that? Many argue that we should be very afraid of what future is holding. According to the drone skeptics, the drone program not only is not legal or moral but it is not even effective.

The main argument – which many tend to agree – is that the use of drone strikes has resulted in radicalization¹³⁷ of the people affected from the strikes. Moreover, the radicalization itself has led to an ‘endless war without victory.’ Quoted in the book of Andrew Cockburn - *Kill Chain: The Rise of the High-Tech Assassins*¹³⁸ – a field commander stated: “Even if I kill one, it only took two weeks before the next guy came in. They didn’t miss a beat. You replace one guy, chances are the guy that’s coming in is more lethal, has less restraint and is more apt to make a name for himself and go above and beyond than if you had just left the first guy in there.” Not only are the high targets replaced when killed, but also due to the high number of civilians killed the animosity towards the U.S. is increased even more. Bruce Riedel –former CIA analyst and Obama counterterrorism adviser – argued: “[the] problem with the drone is it’s like your lawn mower. You’ve got to mow the lawn all the time. The minute you stop mowing, the grass is going to grow back.”¹³⁹ However, this does not seem as a problem

¹³⁶ (Movie) David Cronenberg, *The Fly*, 1986.

¹³⁷ See Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2013); Calhoun, *We Kill Because We Can: From Soldiering to Assassination in the Drone Age*; Michael J. Boyle, “The Legal and Ethical Implications of Drone Warfare,” pp. 105-126; etc.

¹³⁸ Andrew Cockburn - *Kill Chain: The Rise of the High-Tech Assassins*, (U.S.: Henry Holt and Co., 2015).

¹³⁹ Greg Miller, “Plan for Hunting Terrorists Signals U.S. Intends to Keep Adding Names to Kill Lists,” *The Washington Post*, 23 October 2012, retrieved 8 July 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/plan-for-hunting-terrorists-signals-us-intends-to-keep-adding-names-to-kill-lists/2012/10/23/4789b2ae-18b3-11e2-a55c-39408f6e6a4b_story.html.

for the U.S. as long as the threat is contained and with the help of the drone strikes they can always kill the enemy and the new recruits before they turn into a great threat. Nevertheless, what the Obama administration never mentioned is that the everywhere war has updated and turned into a global endless war, the end of which is seen by no one. One thing is for sure, there is no way back in the drone program even if the Pentagon's budget shrinks,¹⁴⁰ but it seems that there is no way back for the radicalization as well. As Scott Shane specifies, in the case of the Anwar al-Awlaki – he is the first American citizen killed outside the homeland with a drone strike – he was killed but now he is considered as a ‘posthumous mentor’ for many – among them also the attackers of Sharlie Hebdo. Moreover, his lectures through *YouTube* are delivered in the whole globe and today ISIS is using them as well.¹⁴¹

The lethal strikes of the U.S. drones have had an impact on the internal affairs of the states where they are used. In most of the cases they retrograde the power of the governments but the vacuum created sometimes is filled from the tribal warfare or national armies attacks. In this case even more people are killed and many are obliged to leave the country.¹⁴² Another important critique regarding the effectiveness of the drones is related with their flaws. Based on the documents provided by The Intercept, drones are prone to three main flaws, which affect its accuracy. Firstly, drones aim the phones, they track the targets on the bases of the signal that they receive from their phone and the strike aims to hit the phone rather than the person itself. Secondly, it is impossible to supervise the “Named Areas of Interest (NAIs)” 7/24. When one drone has to move and there is no other drone to replace it, there is created a so called “blink” during which the observation is stopped. Lastly, U.S. is concerned about the “tyranny of distance” which means the distance that the drones have to travel until Yemen or Somalia is quite long and a drone would spend most of the time travelling towards

¹⁴⁰ Nick Turse, *The Changing Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare*, (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), p. 30.

¹⁴¹ Scott Shane, *Objective Troy: A Terrorist, a President, and the Rise of the Drone*, (NY: Tim Duggan Books, 2015).

¹⁴² Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*.

NAIs rather than surveilling the specific targets.¹⁴³ Even why still fragile, drones technology is assumed to threaten the humanity and doubtless the world promptly will face a different and harsh armed race. When trying to predict the future William M. Arkin concurred: “I see drones and the Data Machine they serve — the unmanned with all of its special and unique ways — as the greatest threat to our national security, our safety, and our very way of life.”¹⁴⁴ Ian Shaw also talks about *dronepolis* – the city of drone and according to him drones will be used from the police as well in order to control the population.¹⁴⁵ The appropriateness of this assumption is verified in 9 July 2016 when the police in Dallas used a drone robot as a suicide bomber to kill one of the armed suspects of the police shooting; yet, without any trial.¹⁴⁶ However, it seems that technology does not know how to stop as lately BAE Systems has been focused on creating an autonomous drone, which would not need the human decision to kill its target.¹⁴⁷

Lastly, it is exactly the ‘effectiveness’ of the drones in the short term that may result in a disaster in the long term. Drones have become attractive for many states and it seems that the U.S. soon may lose its leadership. Consequently, it would not take too much time for the drone armies to be fighting with each other. As it is quoted by Medea Benjamin, according to Mark Gubrud, an expert in robotics “What lurks behind this is the specter of drone-vs.-drone warfare or possibly robotized military standoffs, where the potential exists for automated responses to initiate or rapidly escalate warfare between major powers and between nuclear-armed states.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Begley, “A Visual Glossary,” *The Intercept*; see also Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁴ William M. Arkin, *Unmanned: Drones, Data, and the Illusion of Perfect Warfare*, (NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), Introduction.

¹⁴⁵ Ian Shaw, “Empire in an Age of Robots and Drones,” *Understanding Empire*, 25 July 2016, retrieved 25 July 2016 from <https://understandingempire.wordpress.com>.

¹⁴⁶ “Dallas Shooting: Police Used Bomb-disposal Robot to Kill Armed Suspect Micah Johnson,” *The Telegraph*, 9 July 2016, retrieved 9 July 2016 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/08/dallas-shooting-robot-used-to-kill-armed-suspect-micah-johnson-d/>.

¹⁴⁷ Kate Wathall, “The RAF Drones That Could Kill Without Human Approval,” *Forces TV*, 17 June 2016, retrieved 9 July 2016 from <http://forces.tv/19026421>.

¹⁴⁸ Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: CONSTRUCTING THE U.S. DRONIFIED WARFARE: THE DISCOURSE OF TERRORISM, GEOPOLITICS AND REALISM

The construction of the social reality and the creation of ‘the Other’ –associated with the identity- remain two main focuses of the postmodern studies. If we think of the social reality, ‘the Other’ and the identity within a vicious circle motored by the discourses, it can be asserted that on one hand the created social reality and ‘the Other’ construct a new identity. At the same time, on the other hand the identity can construct a new social reality and ‘the Other’ especially in terms of the domestic identity.

In analyzing the formulation of the created social realities, ‘the Other’ and identities, discourse plays a fundamental role as discourse itself is considered a *source of power*. According to Dalby:

“discourses have institutional origins and commitments. The knowledge they produce and encompass are thus political products; discourses are implicated with power Discourses are about how reality is specified and how social practices are structured in the terms of these realities.”¹⁴⁹

In addition to this, Foucault has examined the discourses in regard to the creation and construction of the identity based on ‘the Other.’ He argues that “each discursive practice implies a play of prescriptions that designates its exclusions and choice.”¹⁵⁰

The identity plays a crucial role, especially in the Western thought, in the creation of a new social reality and ‘the Other.’ The dichotomy of ‘I/we/the Same’ and ‘they/the Other’ is concerned with the debates about differences and identity, where the former is defined in terms of the later. In this perspective the identity is more favored and decisive than differences. The geopolitical discourses of American practitioners and theorists in the last years have been focused mainly in demonizing the terrorist and placing them within the territories of the Middle East creating like this a spatial exclusion. Despite a geographical separation –our territory/space and their

¹⁴⁹ Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 199.

territory/space, the discourse used by the U.S. has led to an exclusion of people –our citizens/American citizens and the others/terrorists and their affiliates.

‘The Other’ on the other hand helps in determining and consolidating the domestic identity. Specifically, by demonizing the terrorists the U.S. creates its own identity opposite to the one of the terrorist. While the terrorists are visualized as wild humans, who can kill anyone and does not respect the main human rights, the U.S. is envisaged as the protector of the people and in some cases as their savior. Moreover, the states in the Middle East and around it are represented as states where the rule of law does not exists, creating like this the idea that people in there live in a kind of ‘state of nature’ where anyone can kill and can be killed. This argument is mainly associated with the fact that on the contrary the U.S. is a standard bearer in terms of the rule of the law.

Said, in his book *Orientalism*, maintains that Orientalism is a “Western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the Orient.”¹⁵¹ With a few changes this statement would still be accurate even nowadays: Terrorism is a Western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the Middle East and the regions around it.

Discourse of terrorism accompanied also by the discourses of geopolitics and realism, have served to the intention of the U.S. on legalizing the dronified warfare. More specifically, the U.S. has constructed a new social reality in the Middle East presenting it as ‘the Other’ on bases of the identity differences with the U.S. In this regard the discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism has served in creating ‘The Other’ which is called as terrorist and a threat to the American values. Such a representation has smoothly paved the way to the wide acceptance of the drone usage, legitimization of the dronified warfare and killing of the people in states such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria Libya, etc.

This chapter aims in presenting in detail the three main discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism, which would help in better understanding how the U.S.

¹⁵¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 3.

managed to legalize the dronified warfare in the eyes of the many. Such an analysis would have no impact on what the U.S. has already achieved, meaning that the drones will still remain the determining tool of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and maybe in the future drones will be used for other purposes. However, now that the proliferation of drones is inexorable similar discourse will be used by the states that soon are going to include drones as a weapon in their military ranks. A focus on these discourses would provide us the possibility in better understanding the real aims if the U.S. or later on of the states that will follow the U.S. example.

3.1 The Discourse of Terrorism: From ‘War on Terror’ To Drones as the Cure-All for Terrorism

According to Shapiro, the U.S.’s “foreign policy discourse as a whole becomes a vindication ... for purposes of US strategic and domestic interest.”¹⁵² Seen from such a perspective, the war on terror has been one of the main security discourses used for the justification of dronified warfare. War on terror successfully served in creating an identity based on which the U.S built its own ideologies in terms of terrorism. The vicious enemy/terrorist – the Other – which was presented as *yin* of the American *yang*, helps in creating a political ideology on which the U.S. has based its foreign and security policies.

With Obama as president there occurred an important shift in terms of the counterterrorism. While trying to keep on his promises on ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama started to focus on a remote-controlled counterterrorism strategy which required a few – not to say none- troops on the ground. In this way Obama removed the American soldiers from the hostile areas and placed them in safe environments from where they could persevere with the killing of the terrorists. However, this shift in the strategy required a rationale that would provide the necessary

¹⁵² See Dalby, *The Creation of the Second Cold War*.

support to legitimize the use of drone strikes. The war on terror discourses played a crucial role in the formulation of this rationale and it is important to understand *how*. This is done through a three steps process: *Necessity*, *Effectiveness* and *Legalization*. The identity and ideology discourses paved the way for a new social reality, which excluded any other possibility and articulated the military interference as a necessity and the sole possible way to defeat the enemy.

3.1.1 The ‘Other’ and the War on Terror

In the popular serial, *House of Cards*, the central character Frank Underwood while aiming to conceal the truth about his past actions –which could determine his candidacy for President- declared war on terror intending the intimidation of the population. “We do not submit to terror...we make the terror,” was the last sentence of Underwood in the last episode of fourth season, as he, his crew and all American citizens watch a video where ICO radicals decapitate an American citizen. It is no exaggeration to propound that the American counterterrorism strategy *per se* has been creating and constructing the terror during the last decades. The Presidents come and go, the policies change continuously, enemies turned in friends but nothing changed when it comes to the policies towards terrorism.

After the 9/11 attacks, the American freedom was sensationalized offering a backdrop for the scrutinization of the nature of terrorism and the policies of the U.S. In his speech, Bush claimed that terrorists are “heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism.”¹⁵³

Symbolized with al-Qaeda and its affiliates and personified in Osama bin Laden, the callous practices of terrorism –with the hate towards the West, atrocities against

¹⁵³ Ibid.

innocent people, the aim to overthrow the governments in Muslim countries, ideological extremism, etc. – admittedly constructed the perception and policies toward the terrorism and indirectly towards the Middle East. As it rightly asserted by Richard Jackson,

The ‘war on terrorism’ is both a set of institutional practices (military and intelligence operations, diplomatic initiatives, special government departments and security bodies, standard operating procedures), as well as an accompanying discursive project. That is, it is a simultaneously limited range of possible statements which promote a limited range of meaning; or a special political language of counter-terrorism with its own assumptions, symbolic system, rhetorical modes and tropes, metaphors, narratives and meanings, and its own exclusive forms of knowledge.¹⁵⁴

Elucidating the terrorism in these labels spearheaded to a preemptive war under the Bush administration and to a “politics of ignoring”¹⁵⁵ accompanied by a covered ‘dronified warfare’ by the Obama Administration. Obama limited the ‘war on terror’ discourses and the scope of the war only against those organizations that aim to destroy the U.S. As such it was asserted that any terrorist organization similar or affiliated to al-Qaeda is inevitably an imminent threat to the U.S. and its national security. Nevertheless, Obama, while explaining his moderate counterterrorism strategy of no boots on the grounds, continuously has argued that the intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan has been nothing more than a failure which has caused not only loss in economic terms but has cost the life of many innocent American soldiers.

What we call as ‘policy of ignoring’ is primarily concerned with the Obama’s perception that Middle Eastern states are just a headache for the U.S. and is consuming the later. Such kind of insight has manifested itself during the reconstructing of the

¹⁵⁴ Richard Jackson, “Language Power and Politics: Critical Discourse Analysis and the War on Terrorism,” *49th Parallel*, (2014), retrieved 20 June 2016 from <https://fortyninthparalleljournal.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/1-jackson-language-power-and-politics.pdf>, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ See: Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine,” *The Atlantic*, April 2016 Issue, retrieved 27 May 2016 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>.

American counterterrorism into a so-called remote-controlled counter-terrorism, mainly based to the Obama's 'favorite tool,' drones.

The interpretation of terrorists as an unfettered evil fighting against the American freedoms contains within a crucial ideological move excluding the possibility of no action. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates are considered as the tumor of the Middle East and the dronified warfare is justified morally by this image of vicious enemy that *abides no rules and has no borders*. In this perspective it is removed from consideration any likelihood of ground intervention and no boots on the ground is considered to be the best solution. Inasmuch as the terrorism threat to the American national security persist and the safety of the American troops remains impermeable to the normal politics considerations, the use of drones has been considered to be a wise choice from the Obama administration¹⁵⁶ and as the 'cure-all' for terrorism.¹⁵⁷

Therefore, the moralization and legalization of the dronified warfare contains as a central principle a move that impedes other discursive practices –as in the case of ground intervention, capturing, etc.- about the war on terror. In this context, this modern warfare has been a covert war most of the times and the information given by the Obama administration is very limited. However, the people close to Obama as well as other policy makers have tout loudly to the audience –especially the American one- the morality, legality and effectiveness of drones and target killings. This thesis is used to support the policies against terrorism and to normalize and conventionalize the target killings. In this framework, in the speeches of main figures of Obama administration the dronified warfare is used in connection with the terrorism and through legal documents any possible criticism is deadened or muted.

¹⁵⁶ John Brennan, "The Ethics and Efficacy of the President's Counterterrorism Strategy," Council on Foreign Relations, 30 April 2012, retrieved 28 May 2016 from <http://www.cfr.org/counterterrorism/brennans-speech-counterterrorism-april-2012/p28100>.

¹⁵⁷ Jason Koebler, "Obama: Administration Saw Drone Strikes as 'Cure-All' for Terrorism," *U.S. News*, 23 May 2013, retrieved 28 May 2016 from <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/05/23/obama-administration-saw-drone-strikes-as-cure-all-for-terrorism>.

As Dalby puts it: “In security matters the enemy is specified in a series of security discourses, tied to the functioning of the state security and defense agencies [...] To deal with discourses one has to deal with their political conditions, to look at their audience, as well as practitioners, and to understand how the practices of the discourse also legitimize the authority of the practitioner.”¹⁵⁸ Briefly, while focusing in the security discourses one has to focus on the practitioners as their “specialized knowledge gives them power to act in positions of authority.”¹⁵⁹ This stands true in the case of drone discourse during Obama administration. As mentioned previously, the Obama administration has been very reserved; however, while trying to create a new social reality and legalizing the dronified warfare, the special knowledge of legal advisors, general attorneys and other officials who are directly concerned with the homeland security and terrorism has played a crucial role while these practitioners try to elucidate and persuade the American audience.

As Obama came in power, there was a proliferation of the drone strikes in the Middle East. Even why a covert war, these kinds of attacks cannot remain secret for a long time and there was a need for a rationale behind these attacks. As more question marks were being raised, in 2010 “the lawyers were given the job of coming up with an acceptable public justification for the strategy. The task fell to Harold Koh...”¹⁶⁰ Koh, then the legal advisor of the U.S Department of State, spoke out in details about the drone legality in 2010 and his speech was followed by others. Those speeches were mainly conducted in briefings and the public debates were generally avoided. Such a tendency can be seen even today –not only from the Obama administration but also from the presidential candidates- making this ‘new’ warfare even more controversial.

Until 2013 Obama has bypassed giving information regarding drones, leaving people from his team to lay the ground for the legalization of drone strikes. Those who ‘broke the ice’ were: John Brennan (then assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counter-terrorism, and currently CIA director), Attorney General Eric Holder, Jeh

¹⁵⁸ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ David E. Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*, (NY: Broadway Books, 2012), p. 155.

Johnson (General Counsel of the Department of Defense), Stephen Preston (then General Counsel of CIA) to be followed in 2013 by the Obama's remarks at the National Defense University in which he spoke out about the dronified warfare publicly. With the exception of John Brennan all the other officials who have spoken about the dronified warfare have law background, including here President Obama. It is not a surprise then, that all the remarks have legal basis which explain very carefully the legality of drone strikes leaving a little (not to say not at all) space for critics to question the legality of the tool that came to define the Obama's counter-terrorism strategy in the Middle East.

3.1.2 Drones: A Tool That Defines Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Why?

The effectiveness of the drone warfare in the fight against terrorism has been the central purpose of the main pro-drone discussions. Principally the speeches of Obama and John Brennan constantly recur different alternatives in this regard which hinge to the necessity to use this lethal force, and which in turn is used to legitimize the drone warfare. In this regard there have been used two main assumptions. First, the use of force in some specific cases is necessary as the only tool that can lead to peace. Secondly, calling drones as a wise choice has given to the Obama administration the opportunity to tout the effectiveness of targeted strikes. Both of these assumptions are clearly reiterated in the speeches of Obama and John Brennan –the first one considered as a drone-lover and the latter as the Obamas's drone warrior.¹⁶¹

During his speech for the Nobel Prize, President Obama argued that a non-violent movement would not have stopped the Hitler's army and through such a analogy he asserted that even in the case of terrorist that would be futile; as such the use of force is not only necessary but also morally justified. Obama and his officials draw on this crucial description of the difference between the America and the terrorists: America as

¹⁶¹ "John Brennan, Obama's Drone Warrior," *CNN*, 9 January 2013, retrieved 26 May 2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/01/07/opinion/bergen-brennan-drones/>.

a standard bearer that while using force has followed all the rules of conduct even in ‘the wars that America did not seek,’ endorsing like this the global security for many decades with the blood of the American citizens. Terrorist are presented as vicious adversaries that abide no rules and went in America to kill as many American citizens as they could. Thus, found in this situation leaves no other choice for America than to defend itself and go to war.

Elucidating Otherness in this perspective triggers the first and paramount assumption that in some cases *only* the use of force can bring peace and the war tools play a significant role in preserving the peace. Thereupon, such a picture triggers indirectly also the legitimization for the use of a lethal force against *small men* who due to the technology development can kill American citizens on a *horrific scale*.

The second assumption –drone as the wise choice in the counterterrorism strategy–brings us closer in understanding how such a controversial, modern and still developing tool became the only legacy that may remain from President Obama. John Brennan points to the fact that drones are a smart choice here: “It's this surgical precision—the ability, with laser-like focus, to eliminate the *cancerous tumor* called an al-Qa'ida terrorist while *limiting damage to the tissue around it*—that makes this counterterrorism tool so essential (emphasize added).”¹⁶² Furthermore, Brennan in his speech presents 6 main reasons on why drones are a wise choice. Specifically, geography, time, reduction of danger for U.S. personnel and innocent people, effective attacks and consequences of the war make drones a necessary and practical tool against the terrorist, a tool that would cause loses only to the enemies and no risk is posed for the U.S.

Persuading the audience (mainly the American citizens) about the necessity and effectiveness of the drone strikes on bases of the ‘otherness’ of the terrorist identity has served positively to the Obama administration. Nevertheless, such discourses have been accompanied by geopolitical and realist discourses, which have have been persistent – even why in some cases indirectly – throughout out the process of legitimizing the dronified warfare.

¹⁶² Ibid.

3.1.3 A Weapon That Kills Civilians 90% of the Time, but Still Is Legal. How?

The discourse on drone warfare is formulated in the form of a puzzle where each piece combined together help to create a new hegemon social reality. The discourses on the necessity and effectiveness of targeted strikes lay the foundations for the legalization of the drones. The Obama administration has been harshly criticized from many regarding the legality of the target strikes and the most noteworthy critiques came from the papers published from *The Intercept* in which was asserted that in 90 percent of the cases, the drone strikes kill the innocent civilians,¹⁶³ violating like this the laws of war and consequently querying the legality of the dronified warfare.

Despite this objection of the drone strikes, the Obama administration remains stoic when it comes to the legality of drones. Being cautious to conceal any possible legal gap that may cause denunciations of this strategy, Obama had his main officials –who have a law background- to vindicate the targeted strikes by the critics who claim their illegality. The briefings of Harold Koh (2010), John Brennan (2011 and 2012), Jeh Johnson (2012), Eric Holder (2012) and Obama himself (2013) assert the legality of dronified warfare on bases of both domestic and international law.

As it is claimed from Eric Holder and John Brennan, domestically the President of United States is empowered from both the U.S. constitution and Authorization of the Use of Military Force (AUMF) to conduct drone strikes against al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Obama administration strongly argues that the constitution gives the right to the president to protect the American citizens against any imminent threat. Accordingly, even why Al-Qaeda and its affiliates are weakened, still they are an imminent threat that is disseminated in the Middle East. On the other hand, directly after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government authorized the use of military force (AUMF) according to which “the President is authorized to use *all necessary and appropriate force* against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or

¹⁶³ Scahill, “The Assassination Complex.”

persons, *in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism* against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.” While the geographic limitation of AUMF is strongly questioned, in the above mentioned speeches, it is alleged that AUMF is not limited within the territory of Afghanistan, on the contrary it is stated that the use of military force is legal against al-Qaeda and its affiliates with no regard to their location as this enemy has *no borders*.

The discourse on legality of drones within the perspective of international law remains within the claim that international law and UN charter give the right of self-defense against such a vicious enemy. Furthermore Koh in his briefing argues that the resolutions of United Nations Security Council allows the U.S. to “use all the necessary measures” against this national threat.

Brennan, Johnson, Koh and Holder have explained in details how the drone strikes are precise and respect all the principles of laws of war, i.e. principle of distinction, principle of humanity, principle of necessity and principle of proportionality. While doing these assertions, all officials are careful to emphasize the fact that they are fighting against an enemy that does not abide any rules; however, the U.S. makes sure not to do the same thing and aims to be an example for the others. By creating such a dichotomy, the Obama administration clearly aims to justify the usage of any possible tool they possess against terrorism.

3.2 The Discourse of Geopolitics: They Are Not People - They Are Terrorists

Geopolitical discourses, according to O’Tuathail,¹⁶⁴ are found at the micro level of the geopolitical structure and it gains a lot of importance, as it is more prone to changes and manipulations. The need to control and manipulate the discourses comes as a result of the need of the states to justify the power that they exercise, borrowing O’Tuathail’s

¹⁶⁴ Gearoid O’Tuathail, “Geopolitical Structures and Cultures: Towards Conceptual Clarity in the Critical Study of Geopolitics,” in: Lara Tchantouridze (ed.), *Geopolitics: Global Problems and Regional Concerns*, (Manitoba: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, 2003).

phrase “Geopolitics is not a language of the poor but of the powerful.”¹⁶⁵ Moreover, according to Agnew and Corbridge, the geopolitical discourses are used to spatialize the world of politics.¹⁶⁶ More specifically, the main aim of practitioners and theorists of the geopolitical discourse is the mastering of the space to construct identities that are associated with a determined space that effects the construction of that identity.

The dronified warfare not only challenges the current international laws but it also challenges the international order when considering the territory and sovereignty of the states. Therefore in addition to the discourse of terrorism, the U.S. has also particular discursive construction of geography in justifying dronified warfare. Unlike non-state actors, that defy the territory horizontally and blur the borders, drones add another dimension to the territory. Thus, the territory can be perceived as “three-dimensional,”¹⁶⁷ and the usage of drones means that power is exerted from above or as it is called the “verticalization of power.” The drone pilot never violates the territory of another state physically; however, with the so-called ‘eye of the God’ (considering the fact that the drone’s cameras can surveil for a long time their target) it gives enormous power to the pilot, whose life is safe and away from any threat. Thus Chamayou correctly puts it as: “it now becomes a matter not so much of occupying a territory as of controlling it from above by ensuring its mastery of the skies.”¹⁶⁸

Ratzel in his book *Politische Geographie* argues that borders are a manifestation of the power of one state. Nevertheless, at a time when the borders seem to have lost their meaning at some extend, mastering the skies through the usage of drones has become the main intention of the U.S. (and not only). As mentioned previously, the practitioners

¹⁶⁵ Gearoid Ó Tuathail, “Post-Cold War Geopolitics: Contrasting Superpowers in a World of Global Dangers,” in: Johnston, R. J., Taylor, P. J., Watts, M. (eds.): *Geographies of Global Change*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

¹⁶⁶ John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 48, retrieved from http://www.untag-smd.ac.id/files/Perpustakaan_Digital_2/POLITICAL%20ECONOMY%20Mastering%20space%20hegemony,%20territory%20and%20international%20political%20economy.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Alison Williams, “A crisis in Aerial Sovereignty? Considering the Implications of Recent Military Violations of National Airspace,” *Area*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2010), pp. 51–59. DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-4762.2009.00896.x.

¹⁶⁸ Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, p. 53.

of the drone program need a rationale that would make normal the use of drones by legitimizing and vindicating it. While pursuing this aim, the Obama administration used geopolitical discourses based on *identity* in order to create a double exclusion: *spatial exclusion* and *exclusion of people*. At this point, it is important to understand how specific discourses shaped the political practices and social reality, and how, by eliminating particular ideological ploys, these political discourses make hegemonic (one or some) other specific ideological ploys that would serve their purposes. In our case, the Obama administration, created a new social reality due to a double exclusion and as a result the necessity for the use of drones and its legitimization became hegemonic.

The identity plays a crucial role in the creation of ‘the Other.’ The dichotomy of ‘I/we/the Same’ and ‘they/the Other’ is concerned with the debates about differences and identity, where the former is defined in terms of the later. In this perspective the identity is more favored and decisive than differences. The geopolitical discourses of American practitioners and theorists in the last years –especially when it comes to legitimizing the dronified warfare- have been focused mainly in demonizing the terrorist and placing them within the territories of the Middle East creating like this a spatial exclusion. Despite a geographical separation –our territory/space and their territory/space, the discourse used by the U.S. has led to a exclusion of people –our citizens/American citizens and the others/terrorists and their affiliates. Such a double exclusion proved to be vital in legitimizing the dronified warfare.

3.2.1 Spatial Exclusion

In 1994, Robert Kaplan in his article *The Coming Anarchy* depicts Africa as the home of tyranny, crime, illnesses, where states are ungovernable. According to him, these elements will create boundaries around the continent, which will isolate it from the rest of the world.¹⁶⁹ In the case of Africa, while previously it was based on biological

¹⁶⁹ Robert Kaplan, “The Coming Anarchy,” *The Atlantic*, February 1994, retrieved 10 June 2016 from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/>.

elements, the spatial exclusion started to be based on the social and cultural elements.¹⁷⁰ If we would create an analogy between the Western discourse towards Africa and the today's war against terrorism the spatial exclusion discourses remain the same. The spatial exclusion can be defined as a division constructed by the hegemon discourses – where the political, social and cultural elements serve to associate a defined space with a specific identity. Such a division is used to express the supremacy of the side that creates these discourses, which results in the legitimizations of its policies in the defined space.

Not surprisingly, the association of the identity with a defined space is the driving force behind the geopolitical thinking of the U.S.' statecrafts. The security of the U.S. after the 9/11 has been constructed mainly around the terrorist threat to the national security of the U.S. The main focus has been placed in the war that the U.S. and its allies are conducting for the sake of the security. When it comes to the legitimization of the dronified warfare, the U.S., based on a state of exception, has created a spatial exclusion as the object 'the Other' is defined in spatial terms as located in the Middle East and the other states where drone strikes are currently used.

EYES OF THE ARMY U.S. ARMY ROADMAP FOR UAS 2010-2035



Figure 3: UAS Nano Swarm Vignette

Source: Eyes of the Army: U.S. Army Roadmap for UAS 2010-2035, p. 65.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (UK: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 191, retrieved from

http://www.angelfire.com/cantina/negri/HAREMI_printable.pdf.

Figure 3 is taken from the report *Eyes of the Army: U.S. Army Roadmap for UAS 2010-2035*,¹⁷¹ released from the U.S. Army and it is a striking example how a particular geopolitical discourse is operationalized and circulated by the security establishments. While projecting the future of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), what attracts the attention in this picture is its similarity with the Middle Eastern cities. The presence of the minaret and the construction of the buildings straightforwardly create the impression that it is a city somewhere in Syria, Iraq or close to that territory. By placing a Middle Eastern/Arab city at the center of this vignette, where nano-drones fly all over, it visualizes the Other which not accidentally has a Muslim identity (based on the presence of the mosque) and lives amongst chaos and war (based on the presence of flames and the men with guns). The existence of the chaos and war is what creates a state of exception, which as it will be discussed below, removes all the legal hurdles for the use of drone strikes.

Aforementioned geopolitical discourse is not limited with representation of threat with reference to the Middle East. It is also possible to speak about the discursive techniques of state of exception as the integral part of a particular geopolitical construction of US dronified warfare. As Giorgio Agamben argues in his book *State of Exception*, in state of emergencies the government or the leader is empowered with an authority that lays beyond the authority the leader has normally, creating a *state of exception*. Moreover, he argues that such a state of exception may be prolonged in an unlimited time. This can be applied on the U.S.' discourse of the dronified warfare. AUMF gives the unlimited right to the president of the U.S. to use all the necessary force due to the state of emergency that is created by the threat of terrorism. Moreover, as AUMF is not limited on time and space, it results in a continuous state of exception. In terms of the dronified warfare, the spatial exclusion is based on this state of exception. States, where drones are used, are presented to be exceptional geographical places where the international laws and politics are not and cannot be applied fully. In this context, there is created a discursive process of normalization that seeks to represent the Middle East (and the

¹⁷¹ *The US Army UAS Roadmap (2010-2035)*, retrieved 28 May 2016 from <https://fas.org/irp/program/collect/uas-army.pdf>.

other regions where drones are used) as geographically and politically abnormal due to existence of terrorism. On February 2013, Senator Rand Paul wrote a letter to John Brennan where he asked whether the president can authorize a strike towards a U.S. citizen within the U.S. soil. General Attorney, Eric Holder responded that it could be a possibility in extraordinary conditions; however, he emphasized that: “As a policy matter, moreover, we reject the use of military force where well-established law enforcement authorities in this country provide the best means for incapacitating individuals located in our country who pose a threat to the United States and its interests abroad.”¹⁷² Holder in his statements stressed the fact that in the U.S. there is a well-established law, implying that as in the states where drones strikes are conducted there is no well-established law that would incapacitate the terrorists, it is a state of exception, which can lead to the legitimization of the drone strikes.

Focusing on the spatial exclusion, it can be said that it has been conducted in two steps: (1) ‘otherization’ of the terrorists and (2) threat of expansionism of terrorism. During the Bush administration the dichotomy between the good and the evil was very obvious and it was expressed mainly in terms of a battle of light against darkness. Bush in his address to the nation after the 9/11 attacks stated: “America was targeted for attack because we’re the *brightest beacon for freedom* and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that *light from shining*”¹⁷³ (emphasizes added). In his speech during the joint session of Congress in 20 September 2001 Bush said “Our nation, this generation, will lift the *dark threat of violence* from our people and our future”¹⁷⁴ (emphasizes added).

With the good and evil dichotomy remaining as the main theme, Obama administration’s counter-terrorism strategy has been constructed and expressed mainly in terms of the American democratic values vs. the failed states of the Middle East. By

¹⁷² “Attorney General Responds to Paul On Drone Strikes,” *Think Progress* 7 March 2013, 28 May 2016 retrieved from <http://thinkprogress.org/security/2013/03/07/1687721/holder-paul-drones/>.

¹⁷³ George W. Bush, “9/11 Address to the Nation,” 11 September 2001 retrieved 28 May 2016 from <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911addresstothetation.htm>.

¹⁷⁴ “Transcript of President Bush’s Address to a Joint Session of Congress,” CNN, (September 20, 2001), retrieved 28 May 2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>.

creating an image of a region where weak government, widespread grievance, violent non-state actors, poverty, instability, radicalization (elements these that mainly lead to the strengthening of terrorism) are present, not only does the Obama administration express the regional state of exception, but at the same time it presented itself as the other side of the coin that can bring prosperity and stability is the region through its commendable values. John Brennan, one of the leading figures behind the strategy of the drone intervention, , in order to emphasize the differences between the U.S and terrorist argued that “Where terrorists offer injustice, disorder and destruction, the United States and its allies stand for freedom, fairness, equality, hope, and opportunity.”¹⁷⁵ Moreover, he also stated “al-Qa’ida and its affiliates often thrive where there is disorder or where central governments lack the ability to effectively govern their own territory.”¹⁷⁶ As a complementary to this way of thinking, in his Union Address in 2014, Obama asserted: “no other country in the world does what we do to free other nations from tyranny and fear; to promote justice, and fairness, and equality under law, so that the words set to paper by our founders are made real for every citizen.”

As mentioned previously the discourses are focused as well on the need to contain the expansion of the terrorism. The political discourse about the dronified warfare maps the battle between the good and the evil with imaginary, particularly the images of *tumor cell* that aims to expand and infect the other cells around it. As the tumor grows –in spatial terms, not in number- the threat to the U.S. national security grows as well. After the evil becomes visual and observable, than drones serve as an injection –which is directed to a specific cell- and does not intend to harm the other healthy cells around it, on the contrary it aims to contain the spread of the tumor and destroy it. Brennan, while talking about the efficacy of the dronified warfare emphasized that:

In addition, compared against other options, a pilot operating this aircraft remotely —with the benefit of technology and with the safety of distance— might actually have a clearer picture of the target and its surroundings, including

¹⁷⁵ John O. Brennan, "Strengthening our Security by Adhering to our Values and Laws," *The White House*, 16 September 2011, retrieved 28 May 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/16/remarks-john-o-brennan-strengthening-our-security-adhering-our-values-an>.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

the presence of innocent civilians. It's this surgical precision—the ability, with laser-like focus, to eliminate the cancerous tumor called an al-Qa'ida terrorist while limiting damage to the tissue around it—that makes this counterterrorism tool so essential.¹⁷⁷

Such a declaration was reiterated by Obama after the San Bernardino terror attack where he stated that the Americans are asking whether “we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure.”¹⁷⁸ So, as this cancer keeps having no borders and at the same time emerging in different areas in the Middle East and North Africa –Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Arabian Peninsula, etc.- it makes difficult, non-sense and devastating war footing. But drones are the perfect tool that could stop the threat from spreading and prevent the terrorist from plotting against the U.S.

The spreading tumor/cancer is a clear theme of the classical geopolitics, where geography plays a crucial role. Remaining within the classical geopolitical terms, the geography and terrain in the Middle East is considered as an element, which helps the terrorism to flourish. Obama argued that:

But despite our strong preference for the detention and prosecution of terrorists, sometimes this approach is foreclosed. Al Qaeda and its affiliates try to gain foothold in some of the most distant and unforgiving places on Earth. They take refuge in remote tribal regions. They hide in caves and walled compounds. They train in empty deserts and rugged mountains. In some of these places -- such as parts of Somalia and Yemen -- the state only has the most tenuous reach into the territory.¹⁷⁹

Using similar terms, Brennan explained that the inhospitable terrain makes the usage of drones not only necessary but obligatory to be used. Thus:

these terrorists are skilled at seeking remote, inhospitable terrain—places where the United States and our partners simply do not have the ability to arrest or capture them. At other times, our forces might have the ability to attempt capture, but only by putting the lives of our personnel at too great a risk. Often

¹⁷⁷ Brennan, "The Ethics and Efficacy of the President's Counterterrorism Strategy."

¹⁷⁸ Barack Obama, “Address to the Nation by the President,” *The White House*, 6 December 2015, retrieved 28 May 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/06/address-nation-president>.

¹⁷⁹ Obama, “Remarks by the President at the National Defense University.”

times, attempting capture could subject civilians to unacceptable risks. There are many reasons why capture might not be feasible, *in which case lethal force might be the only remaining option to address the threat and prevent an attack.*¹⁸⁰

According to these discourses, terrorism is destined by geography to expand in the region, and a knowledge of the region better than the U.S. gives to the terrorist a superiority and power towards the American soldiers. However, through drones and target strikes, U.S. can gain back its superiority and prevent the expansion of terrorism, which would result in containing the threat.

3.2.2 Exclusion of People

Alongside the spatial exclusion, the legitimization of the dronified warfare is based also on the exclusion of people. Agamben in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* argues that in the state of exception there emerges the appearance of *homo sacer*. *Homo Sacer*, a person abandoned and isolated from the political life becomes a legitimate target “to be killed and yet not sacrificed.”¹⁸¹ Accordingly, if the citizenship of an individual is removed, then that individual is expelled to the bare life – becoming a *zoe* – and therefore he/she can be killed even if he/she did not commit any crime. In this regard, a perception that the individual threatens the nation state is enough to expulse him/her.

Following this thinking, the Middle East and states close to the region where terrorist operate are physical spaces, which exist in a state of exception, which directly results into an exclusion of people. Consequently, the right of the peoples who live in these spaces can be removed –as they are considered as a possible threat to the U.S.- leaving them vulnerable in front of the drone strikes. On the other hand, the Obama

¹⁸⁰ Brennan, "The Ethics and Efficacy of the President's Counterterrorism Strategy."

¹⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 8.

administration can easily claim the legitimacy of the drone strikes while most of those who are killed are considered as combatant until proved otherwise. It is necessary to mention that in the case of drone strikes, as the spaces that exist in a state of exception are found outside the borders of the U.S., removal of the citizenship is not possible. As a result, the affiliation of the individual with a terrorist organization is argued to be enough for him/her to be considered as a belligerent; thus, the individual -ripped of his rights- becomes a legal target.

The exclusion of the people creates a dichotomy between the valuable life of the American citizens towards the valueless life of those affiliated with terrorism. This perception is implied deeply in drone pilots who argue that killing was easier when they consider the targeted individual as a terrorist, not a person. Such a representation turns the terrorist in an object, whose value of life is hollow; on the contrary, saving American life becomes a priority. As it will be seen in the next section, the protection of the American lives has been a driving force of the drone program. Sweetman, an aerospace and defense journalist in late 90s argued that: “in the first place, drones save “our lives”; in this respect, we are told, they are already “moral”.... Nobody dies-except the enemy.”¹⁸²

However, the ranks of the enemies ‘increased’ after 2008. Before that, the U.S. used only ‘personality strikes’ against individuals, whose identity was known by the drone pilots. After 2008, with the request of the former CIA director, Michael Hyden, Bush authorized the ‘signature strikes.’ “For the first time the CIA no longer had to identify its target by name; now the ‘signature’ of a typical al Qaeda motorcade, or of a group entering a known al Qaeda safe house, was enough to authorize a strike.”¹⁸³ More specifically, the individual’s patterns of life were enough for him/her to be considered as a terrorist. Even if someone is not directly affiliated with al-Qaeda or ISIS, just because he/she may accompany someone affiliated with these terrorist organizations, is therefore excluded and his/her rights are taken, becoming a possible target to be included in the killing list.

¹⁸² Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, p. 136.

¹⁸³ David Sanger, *The Inheritance: A New President Confronts the World* (London: Bantam Press, 2009) p. 236.

Even why Obama administration strongly emphasizes that military-male age are those who are considered as possible targets,¹⁸⁴ other informal sources have shown that even the children are not spared as they are considered as possible future terrorist (they are called as ‘fun sized terrorists’ so there is a need to cut the grass before it grows too long).¹⁸⁵

Whilst above there was seen a discourse that created an indirect analogy between the Middle East and terrorism, now a new dimension is added to it –the individual. Therefore it can be said that, the dronified warfare is a warfare directed against the individual itself rather than the state. Consequently, the gap between the ‘terrorists’ and ‘not terrorist’ within the borders of the Middle East start to shrink –considering the fact that just because someone’s patterns of life are similar with that of a terrorist, he/she is directly considered a legitimate target or belligerent. Concurrently, the gap between the ‘not terrorist’ living in the West and ‘terrorists’ who live in the Middle East region extends, and the exclusion of people becomes more visible.

3.3 The Discourse of Realism: Battlefield Turned Into A “Hunting Game”

Realism has been one of the dominating theoretical frameworks in the study of the international relations in terms of security competition. Even why such an argument was questioned after the Cold War,¹⁸⁶ it can be said that realism still is the motor behind state actions in the international system. As Mearsheimer puts it “Despite the end of the

¹⁸⁴ Jo Becker and Scott Shane, “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will,” *New York Times*, 29 May 2012, retrieved 8 May 2016 from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?_r=0.

¹⁸⁵ Murtaza Hussain, “Former Drone Operators Say They Were “Horrorified” by Cruelty of Assassination Program,” *The Intercept*, 19 November 2015, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <https://theintercept.com/2015/11/19/former-drone-operators-say-they-were-horrified-by-cruelty-of-assassination-program/>.

¹⁸⁶ See: John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), p. 4; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of the History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

cold war, the basic structure of the international system remains largely unchanged. States are still the key actors in the world politics, and they continue to operate in an anarchic system.”¹⁸⁷

Based on the core beliefs of realism, the main actors in the world politics are the states, which are sovereign political entities and no higher authority stands over them. The lack of such higher authority results in the so-called anarchy. More specifically, the egoist human nature combined with the anarchy necessitates the predominance of power and security in all political life.¹⁸⁸

E.H. Carr, in his book *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, aimed to criticize the idealist postulates that ignored the role of the power in the international politics. He argued that states are motivated by power and liberal ideals at the same time and that politics are made up of utopia and reality.¹⁸⁹ According to Carr, states use the idealistic discourses to cover their selfish actions and he argues that “morality is the product of power.”¹⁹⁰

The exposure of the real basis of the professedly abstract principles commonly invoked in international politics is the most damning and most convincing part of the realist indictment of utopianism . . . What matters is that these supposedly absolute and universal principles were not principles at all, but the unconscious reflections of national policy based on a particular interpretation of national interest at a particular time.¹⁹¹

Coming to the foreign policy of the U.S., it may be said that what Carr argues can be fully applicable. As Chomsky straightforwardly asserts the U.S. foreign policy, ‘obscured by ideological obfuscation,’ follows a realist foreign policy, which is driven

¹⁸⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, “Realism, the Real World and the Academy,” *University of Chicago*, retrieved from <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0029.pdf>.

¹⁸⁸ Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), retrieved from <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam032/99053676.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, 2nd ed., (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 14, 87.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 63, 75.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 80

by the ‘national interest.’¹⁹² Chomsky did such an assertion in the aftermath of Vietnamese War, but even later when he speaks on the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East he reiterates the same arguments. Accordingly, “the protection of *our* [U.S.] resources, which happen, by geological accident, to lie in other lands” is the main impetus of the U.S. foreign policy ‘noble rhetoric.’¹⁹³

Drones provide the ability to project power in a distant region without being exposed to any threat. This has been the main reference of the Obama administration, which has constructed the legitimacy of dronified warfare on bases of the national security and national interest. Alongside the discourse of geopolitics that promotes a particular view of geography and people, the discourse of realism is also integral part of U.S. dronified warfare strategy that underlined liberal values while using realist rhetoric. As it was pointed out previously Carr argues that the states use the idealistic discourses to cover their selfish actions and he state that “morality is the product of power.”¹⁹⁴ However, Dalby, not only accepts the fact that the ideological façade covers the U.S. realist foreign policy, but he goes further arguing that the *concoction of idealism and realism* offers a justification of the military interventions. “Power politics,” he states, “is based on idealist principles and these in turn are used to legitimate power politics.”¹⁹⁵

These discourses are present as well when we consider the legitimization of the dronified warfare. The assertions that the main target of the terrorist are the democratic values and freedoms of the U.S. and that the national security is at risk, were important to the Obama administration (Bush administration at some extends as well) in its efforts to legitimize the usage of drones and targeted strikes.

¹⁹² Noam Chomsky, *Toward a New Cold War: U.S. Foreign Policy from Vietnam to Reagan* (New York: The New Press, 1982), Chapter seven, retrieved from <http://www.kropfpolisci.com/cold.war.critical.chomsky.pdf>.

¹⁹³ Noam Chomsky, “After the Cold War: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East,” *Cultural Critique*, No. 19 (Autumn 1991), pp. 16-17.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 63, 75.

¹⁹⁵ Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War*, p. 89.

3.3.1 The Discourse of Realism and Legitimization of the Dronified Warfare

Drones started to be used in masses especially after Obama took his oath of the office. It needs to be mentioned that he ordered the first strike only three days after his inauguration.¹⁹⁶ Since then, the drone target strikes have escalated in such a degree that a few months before Obama leaves office, target strikes are considered as the only legacy of the Obama administration in the Middle East.¹⁹⁷ The dronified warfare and its discourse make no exception from the concoction of idealism and realism, which –as stated above- is mainly used to justify the military interventions of the U.S. In this case not only Obama needed to justify the use of the military intervention, but most importantly he needed to legitimize the tool itself, namely drones.

The basic points are moderately clear in the briefings of those officials that were responsible to justify the drones and target strikes to the audience, in the union addresses of Obama, and as well as in the governmental records, namely the National Security Strategy reports. Based on the discourses used in the above-mentioned documents, it can be asserted that the perceived threat towards the U.S. democratic values and freedoms was complemented by the threat towards the national security. While the threat towards U.S. democratic values and freedoms remains an unchanged variable, the threat towards the national security is perceived in two different ways: (1) threat from terrorism within the U.S. territory (homeland) and (2) threat to the lives of U.S. soldiers who are deployed in the Middle East. As it will be argued in the next section, it can be asserted that the discourses focused on the terrorism as a threat to

¹⁹⁶ “Almost 2,500 Now Killed by Covert US Drone Strikes since Obama Inauguration Six Years Ago: The Bureau’s Report for January 2015,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, 2 February 2015, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2015/02/02/almost-2500-killed-covert-us-drone-strikes-obama-inauguration/>.

¹⁹⁷ See: Micah Zenko, “Obama’s Embrace of Drone Strikes Will Be a Lasting Legacy,” *The New York Times*, 12 January 2016, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/01/12/reflecting-on-obamas-presidency/obamas-embrace-of-drone-strikes-will-be-a-lasting-legacy>; James Downie, “Obama’s Drone War Is a Shameful Part of His Legacy,” *The Washington Post*, 5 May 2016, retrieved 8 May 2016 from https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obamas-drone-war-is-a-shameful-part-of-his-legacy/2016/05/05/a727eea8-12ea-11e6-8967-7ac733c56f12_story.html.

national security were used to legitimate the ‘war on terrorism’ itself, or as Obama calls it ‘Countering Violent Extremism.’ Whereas, the discourses focused on the threat posed to the lives of U.S. soldiers who are deployed in the Middle East served as an important argument in legalizing the usage of drones and target strikes. When putting on a balance the life of American citizens and those of the terrorist, it never failed to gain the support of the American audience (and not only), especially if we consider that the Americans were tired hearing about the casualties of the previous wars.

In the National Security Reports and the Obama’s speeches, the U.S. is considered to be an example to be followed by the others, a superpower which must promote peace and security. However, such a perspective is threatened primarily by al-Qaeda, ISIS and its affiliates, which stand against the U.S. freedoms and democracy. Obama strongly argues that the failed states serve as a catalyst for the terrorism and offers safe heavens to al-Qaida, ISIS and its affiliates.¹⁹⁸ Accordingly, it is the American duty to preserve the peace and protects its own citizens at the same time. In 2010, Obama clearly stated:

Let’s reject the false choice between protecting our people and upholding our values. Let’s leave behind the fear and the division, and do what it takes to defend our nation and forge a more hopeful future – for America and for the world.¹⁹⁹

Obama in his Nobel Prize speech targets the tension between moral action and the requirement of political action. He argues that the concept of the ‘just war’ emerged as a need to control the wide spread violence and the war itself is considered as a last resort or in self-defense. With the concept of the ‘just war’ rarely taken in consideration during the WWII, America in order to keep peace and prevent another war had to architecture the Marshal Plan and the UN. However, he argues that the current terrorist threat make it necessary to “think in new ways about the notions of the just war and the

¹⁹⁸ Barack Obama “State of the Union Address As Delivered,” *The White House*, 13 January 2016, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery-state-union-address>.

¹⁹⁹ Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address,” *The White House*, 27 January 2010, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>.

imperatives of a just peace.” He goes further arguing that in some cases “the use of force is not only necessary but morally justified.” Seen from this perspective, the political actions are thus the product of necessity, not a moral choice. However it becomes moral as these political actions are used to protect the American lives and values.

3.3.2 A Change in the Course of Counterterrorism Strategy: The Value of American Lives

Since Obama came in power, he has strongly supported a change in the strategy against the extremism.²⁰⁰ As stated in the NSS 2015, “the U.S. has shifted away from a model of fighting costly” and has pursued a “more suitable approach that prioritizes targeted terrorism.” This resulted in withdrawal of the American soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan and an increase in the usage of the drones. The reasons about this change go further than the assertions that sending troops in the Middle East is a policy of appeasing the terrorists and a policy that tremendously impacted the U.S. negatively as Obama often reiterates. As Chomsky in his severe critiques reveals, after the Cold War, the U.S. was interested in the resources of the Middle East, so there was a necessity to control and be powerful in the region. However, the states, which were not powerful enough to control their own people, were a threat to the U.S. interest.²⁰¹ In this regard, the national interest was considered alongside the national security and the U.S. started to increase its defense budget.

Obama considers the Middle East as not strategically important for the national interest of the U.S. and his focus shifted towards the East Asia and bilateral relations (i.e. Cuba or Iran). Consequently, the national interest was not considered anymore alongside the national security. The Middle East and especially al-Qaeda, ISIS and its affiliates

²⁰⁰ Barack Obama, “Transcript: Obama's First State of the Union Speech,” *CNN*, 28 January 2009, retrieved 8 May 2016 from <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/01/27/sotu.transcript/>.

²⁰¹ Chomsky, “After the Cold War: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East,” pp. 16-17.

remained just a threat to the national security. Considered like this, spending huge amount of money on military interventions and losing American lives proved to be unnecessary when drones can keep the enemy weak –in such extend that would not be a threat for the U.S. security- and save the lives of the American citizens.

At this point it would be fair to argue that instead of avoiding war, Obama just reformulated it based on realist discourse. A warfare that would appease the American interest was an asymmetrical war, which would remove the American troops from inhospitable environment and secure them within the homeland, while the terrorists remain miles away in an insecure space.

Such an assertion is visible when Obama during his speech at the National Defense University –where he spoke for the first time about the drone program to the public-states:

So it is false to assert that putting boots on the ground is less likely to result in civilian deaths or less likely to create enemies in the Muslim world. The results would be more U.S. deaths, more Black Hawks down, more confrontations with local populations, and an inevitable mission creep in support of such raids that could easily escalate into new wars.²⁰²

The national security –understood through the protection of the lives of American citizens- became the determinant factor while the Obama administration tried to legitimize the dronified warfare. The historical analogy played an important role. Thus the Obama administration relied on the fact that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan had weakened the terrorist, but the threat still persists. Even why the ‘drone’ word is not directly used, they argue that currently the U.S. possesses a “military whose might, technology and geostrategic reach is unrivaled in the human history.”²⁰³ For this reason keeping the soldiers away and using this developed technology has made possible that terrorist now are more focused on protecting themselves and do not have enough time to plot against the U.S. The developed technological military which reach is unrivaled is a

²⁰² Obama, “Remarks by the President at the National Defense University.”

²⁰³ National Security Strategy 2015, *The White House*, retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

key tactic. All this assumes that, drones are the answer for the national security and the protection of the American soldiers, while the latters can now come back in the U.S.

Based on these arguments follows in the Obama administration's conceptualization. Thus the liberal ideologies –American values, freedom and democracy served as the main driving force for the terrorist attacks. However, the threat to the national security – a possible attack within the U.S. territory- is translated in necessity to fight the terrorism. On the other hand, still within the perspective of the national security, the necessity to protect the lives of the American soldiers points to the need to use drones and target strikes as they effectively weaken/destroy the enemy even in the most rough areas and at the same time limit the American casualties .

CONCLUSION

*There is inherent sadness in the fact that war remains one of those things that humankind is especially good at... Sadly, our machines may not be the only thing wired for war.*²⁰⁴

In setting out to elucidate the discursive construction of the U.S. dronified warfare, this thesis has validated the importance of the discourses in understanding the legitimization of the drone strikes and their proliferation. Taking these discourses into account indicates how the discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism will (and should) replace the LME arguments and like this reframing the way in which we think of the dronified warfare. As Chapter 1 argues drones have been the aim of many military strategists due to its innovations in the warfare: drones are cheap, saves the life of the soldiers, and drones make the warfare easier. It is important to state that only one part benefits from these innovations, and that is the attacker. While the other side, from what we see until now, is totally undefended and has no tools to stop the strikes even when innocents are targeted. In the same chapter is indicated also the fact while the U.S., especially after Obama came in power, increased the number of drone strikes in at least seven states (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen), the other states and violent non state actors as well are pursuing to develop their drone program – and some of them have even used drones (just for surveillance or even to attack their nemesis). Currently, around 86 states have certain drone capabilities²⁰⁵ and thirteen states and non-state actors have already developed armed drones while eleven others are still developing them; eight of them have already used the drones to shoot specific targets.

As the drone production and usage continues to proliferate, the arguments of legality, morality and effectiveness will become less and less vocal as the states and their

²⁰⁴ Peter Singer, *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*, (US: Penguin Books, 2009).

²⁰⁵ “World of Drones,” *New America*.

government will start to use them and the legitimization of dronified warfare will come naturally. If we were to do an analogy between the nuclear weapons and drones – considering the fact that the LME arguments are similar – the voices that claim the illegality of dronified warfare (being this scholars or politicians) are still present; however, the fact that most of the great powers possess nuclear weapons makes these voices unnoticed. On the other hand, drones will not be possessed only by the great powers, but all the actors in the international arena will start to use them and this is why there will remain very few people who will argue for the illegality of the drones. While the great powers will see drones as a weapon of choice, for the other states drones will see drones as the last choice, which will provide them the possibility to protect themselves. It is logical to argue that the arguments of LME – discussed on Chapter 2 - will lose their importance and for this reason it is important to focus on the discourses that the U.S. is using to legitimize the drone warfare. This has been the main focus of this thesis, and by analyzing the discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism used by the U.S. it is aimed to indirectly foresee also the pathway that will be followed by the other states in terms of the dronified warfare legitimization.

Seen from this standpoint, this thesis as a whole has made a major move. Using a post-structural perspective, this thesis has deconstructed the U.S. arguments on LME and maintains that behind these arguments stand the discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism that indirectly create a ‘new social reality’ and legitimize the dronified warfare.

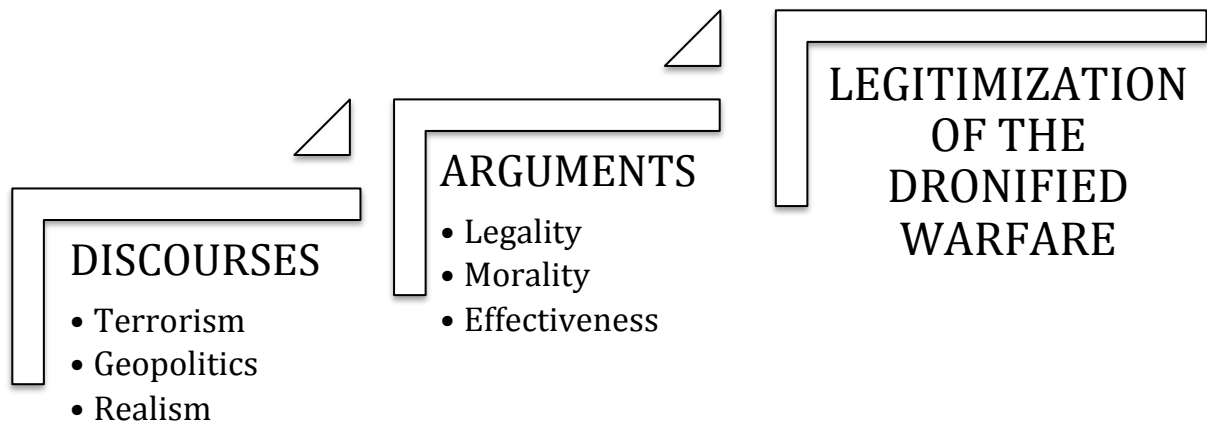


Figure 4: The Legitimization of the Dronified Warfare

The discourse of terrorism is articulated on bases of a three-step process: *Necessity, Effectiveness and Legitimization*. Obama has strongly argued to withdraw the troops from Iraq and Afghanistan since he came in power. However, presenting the terrorists as a persistent threat to the national security, has kept alive the necessity to continue the fight towards the terrorist. Obama considers the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as unnecessary and destructive for the U.S., so he pursued a foreign policy, which mainly aimed less American casualties and more killed terrorist. Accordingly, such a goal is achieved effectively when drones are used. Such ploy paved the path to the arguments regarding the legality of drones.

Secondly, the discourse of geopolitics used by the Obama administration is based on a double exclusion: spatial exclusion and exclusion of people. By maintaining the reasoning that terrorism results in a state of emergency, indirectly there emerges – putting it in Agamben’s terms – a *state of exception*. Based on this, the U.S. has created a spatial exclusion where ‘the Other’ defined in spatial terms is located mainly in the Middle East and the regions around it. ‘The Other’ is mainly presented as the opposite of the American identity and values and is visualized through the authoritative regimes and failed state. Found amidst the chaos in these states, the Obama administration

argues that there is no other choice left then to target the terrorists individually as long as the home state is not able to capture/kill them. Moreover, the state of exception results in the exclusion of the people who live in the territories where the state of exception is extant. The Obama administration presents to the audience the necessity to choose between the lives of the American citizens and the live of those who live in the Middle East and regions around –considered in many cases as possible terrorist. In front of this choice, the discourses praising the value of American citizens prevail resulting in devalue of the lives of those people living in the Middle East and the regions around. The concept of valueless life makes it easier to justify furthermore the dronified warfare.

Lastly, the discourse of realism is build upon the American liberal values of promoting democracy and freedom in a region where chaos persists by using realist rhetoric regarding the national security. The threats towards the national security are perceived as twofold: (1) threat from terrorism within the U.S. territory and (2) threat to the lives of the U.S. soldiers deployed in the Middle East. Accordingly, while the threat to U.S. territory served to the legitimization of the war on terror, the threat posed to the live of the U.S. soldiers was an important argument in legitimizing the drones and target strikes.

As it can be seen, a common threat that runs through these discourses is that the U.S. has ‘othernized’ the states and the people who live in the states by using justification i.e. lack of law, the existence of authoritative regimes – that give the U.S. to intervene with drones even why it is not a declared warzone. Identification of these territories and people with brutality and undemocratic values triggers the ‘othernization’ and makes it easier for the U.S. to control the region, legitimize the dronified warfare and abstruse its mistakes in the region.

3.4 Recommendations

Drones and dronified warfare is and it will in greater extend become part of the everyday life. For some this idea may scary and for others it may not be; however, all agree that at some points drones will drive our life. This thesis aimed to challenge the current discussions and bring something new to this study area. Nevertheless, other steps are necessary to be taken. Below there are presented two main recommendations; while the first is mainly directed to the scholars and journals, the second one is directed to the politicians and governments which are the main actors in this issue.

First, looking forward, there are some areas of further research that develop out of this thesis. The main goal of this thesis was the construction of the U.S. dronified warfare based on the discourses of terrorism, geopolitics and realism, and is asserted that these will be used by the other states in the future. Nevertheless, it can be assumed also that as the proliferation of drones advances, terrorism will not remain the main threat. In this regard even why the framework of the discourses may remain similar, its content will need to be analyzed in detail. An example for this is one of the latest conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia when both of the states used drones against each other. During the conflict drones were used as a sign of strength and media coverage was widely used.²⁰⁶ In this regard, even why there does not exist any terrorist such was bin-Laden for the U.S. this threat is replaced by a life long nemesis for each of the states.

Second, at the point where we are it is too late to argue for the non-proliferation or stopping the production and development of drones. Faced with such a situation many call for a legal framework to be created, according to which the use of military drones will be conducted. This is a crucial step to be taken. It is difficult to think of the drone strikes within the framework of the current international law as drones have challenged all the possible limits in this regard. The United Nations and especially the United

²⁰⁶ Emil Sanamyan, "UAVs Contribute to Spike in Armenia-Azerbaijan Fighting," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 6 January 2016.

Nations Security Council have to understand the fact that even why for the moment the U.S. is leading the industry this will not last for long. The power of a state will not be measured with how many drones does one own, one small drone would be enough to cause more damage than the crashes in the Twin Towers in September 2001. This new legal framework, which should be drafted by the UN, must rise the awareness of all the states about the risks that drones bring and most importantly there should specified the difference between civilians and military forces. As for the moment something like this is not available, many innocent children, women and men are killed and what is worse they are called as ‘enemies killed in action’ whose name is not even know, but whose life is considered worthless.



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