

Case study : drone attacks in counterterrorism

[Government](#), [Military](#)



Drone Attacks in Counterterrorism Drone Attacks in Counterterrorism The war against terrorists has reached a new turn when the US government has resorted to the policy of targeting terrorists. The government has given the authority to the military and agencies to carry out drone attacks on the terrorists who can harm citizens and cannot be neutralized by using other forms. It is because of this reason that many terrorists have been killed from a long distance. And nowadays these terrorists are being targeted by drone attacks which have become a controversial issue. Many argue that these attacks are immoral and target the innocent civilians however the military and agencies defend these attacks on the basis of moral principles. Nowadays it is seen that aerial bombing has become common in warfare. Drone attacks in the third world countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan can be taken as examples of this aerial bombing. Aerial bombing is done on the instructions of intelligence and military when suspects of high profile are hidden in the remote areas. The morality of these drone attacks is being questioned these days. The moral principles of aerial bombing in warfare revolve around the categories laid down by the military itself. The military responds to the aerial bombing in a positive way by defending it on different grounds. They put forward the moral assessment known as Jus ad bellum to defend these aerial bombings. According to this principle the nature and threat of the terrorist would determine the type of action against them. The terrorists living in the remote areas of these third world countries are known to belong to the terrorist organization which threatens the United States. Thus the nature of the terrorists living here determines the reaction of the United States against them. The calamities that are done with these drone

attacks are also morally justified by these people. They believe that innocent people harboring terrorists are equally involved in the activities of the terrorists because they are aware of the wrongs that they have committed. Moreover aerial bombing would also discourage the people who would be holding these terrorists. Similarly *jus in bello* is also given as a moral justification to the aerial bombings that are happening. This moral principle states that the attacks should be discriminate and proportionate. The aerial bombings that are happening are targeted on certain people who are terrorists and mostly harm them. In this process some of the innocents may be harmed too but the proportion of the harm that these terrorists might cause is considerably higher. Some policies can be implemented to ensure that the drone attacks are morally accepted. These policies include the restrictions on aerial bombing where civilians are also cited along with the terrorists. These restrictions should only apply in situations where a large contingency is not involved. The proportionality should also be checked upon by these policies so that these drone attacks become morally acceptable. The International Humanitarian Law applies on the armed conflicts where target killings occur. The people who are participating in the war are the lawful targets of the military whereas those who are not participating are unlawful targets. The targeted killings in a war are not measured on the basis of the numbers but are rather based on the proportion of the harm done to the civilians. A good military is one which maintains this proportion to its advantage and makes the least harm on to the civilians. All these rules apply in international and non international conflicts within the states (Alston, 2010-05-28: 9-10). President Obama has taken major steps in

curbing the roots of terrorism in the world. The CIA has used 400-500 drones under his regime to kill the suspected terrorists. During these drone attacks around 20 civilians were also reportedly killed. However this official figure has been denied by many claiming that a lot more lives have been taken in this process. Pakistan on the other hand states that around 700 civilians were killed and only 14 terrorists were killed during these attacks. This clearly shows that the drone attacks in the Frontier region of Pakistan are immoral and biased. These attacks are not following the moral principles of jus in bello as the casualties of civilians is greater than the casualties of the terrorists. Similarly an American Foundation states that the strikes in the northwest region of Pakistan killed almost 1210 individuals out of which two thirds were militants. The overall situation of drone attacks has still been challenged by many organizations all over the world. The organizations and leaders argue that the drone attacks are violating the international law of war. I personally believe that the drone attacks against terrorists should be stopped as they do not comply with the international humanitarian law. The civilians are not protected from these drone attacks and are rather harmed during the conflict. Aerial warfare does not include rules like Hague regulations and Protocol I but this does not mean that it should be used in sovereign countries to harm their civilians within their own territory. The drone attacks should comply with the humanitarian laws in order to be functional. Proportionality is being denied by this aerial warfare and thus it can said to be immoral. The aerial warfare currently being conducted is an attack on the sovereignty of the state without being useful enough to harm a large militant coup. References U. S attacks militants in Pakistan as pressure

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