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Βαλεντίνα Κούμουλου

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Thesis

REMOTE WARFARE

CONCEPT, HISTORY, METHODS, POLITICIZATION OF THE TERM

Valentina Koumoulou

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Valentina Koumoulou

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Dedicated to my parents

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Valentina Koumoulou

Key words: Remote Warfare, Drone, Autonomous Weapon Systems, Clean Warfare, Narrative, Dehumanisation

ABSTRACT

Remote warfare constitutes a relatively new concept of war that has significantly changed the perception of conflict. Since the 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror narrative, weapons such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, commonly named drones, Autonomous Weapons Systems, and cyber-attacks, have played a crucial role in fighting terrorism. However, this method of warfare has attracted much criticism due to the secrecy and lack of transparency surrounding the concept. The field of remote warfare has yet to be analysed thoroughly in order to understand all the implications of its tactics as well as the narratives that are presented in support or against its use. Content analysis was deemed as the most appropriate research method for this paper, given that the empirical part constitutes of political speeches where the main goal is to convince the public of the legitimacy and precision of drone warfare. The aim of this paper is to present the reality of remote warfare in every aspect, either with regard to history, legal framework, or ethics, in order to have a complete understanding of the reasons behind certain narratives promoted by officials.

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- On War, Carl Von Clausewitz

INTRODUCTION

War has undoubtedly been an instinct of human beings since the beginning of time. It constitutes an essential tool for civilizations to develop and evolve. In his era, the infamous Miguel de Cervantes considered that those who avoided hand-to-hand combat were cowards, calling artillery *"a devilish invention,"* a weapon that allowed *"a base, cowardly hand to take the life of the bravest gentleman"* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 24). Throughout the centuries, different cultures have developed various perspectives on warfare, the most common among them being that fighting from afar is an act of cowardice. However, since the invention of the crossbow, soldiers involved in an armed conflict were no longer restrained from engaging in hand-to-hand combat, but they also had the choice to attack and kill an enemy at a distance. Author and former lieutenant colonel, Dave Grossman, has stated that *"from a distance, I can deny your humanity, and from a distance, I cannot hear you scream"* (Grossman, 2009, pg. 78). Therefore, it has become evident that as the years go by, the narratives on war and its weapons alter.

Moreover, indeed, war has always been a powerful stimulus for technological innovation. Technology has been an integral part of the evolution of warfare throughout the centuries. It has allowed warriors to be more protected when fighting battles, keeping their distance from the enemy, or even ensuring the minimization of collateral damage. The technological innovations were remarkable in the second half of the twentieth century, including the hydrogen bomb, intercontinental ballistic missiles launched from land or sea, and nuclear submarines which took the technology of war to the next level (Chaliand, 2014, pg. 92). In modern times, technology has offered states the ability to fight wars without endangering their own people's lives. This tactic has allowed decision makers in democracies to feel more secure because of the minimization of losses, given that high numbers of casualties could have negative effects on public support, while also decreasing their chance of re-election (Freedman, 2006, pg. 7).

Last but not least, in the past two centuries there has been a massive effort for the international community to abide by specific rules of conduct, something that has taken the form of what is now called *"international law"*. This area of law is not limited to diplomatic relations or commerce rules but it also applies to warfare. What is important to bear in mind though, is that international law tends to develop as a reaction to change, thus being a highly adaptive type of law. More specifically, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg notes that the laws governing armed conflict *"are not static, but by continual adaptation follow the needs of a*

changing world" (Cullen, 2019, pg. 132). Remote warfare has evolved in a world where the perpetual War on Terror has created never-ending insecurity in the West that stems from the existence of terrorism in many different parts of the world. As a result, mutual agreements between states and other actors to develop certain technologies that will enable remote warfare, including mechanisms of international law, have become the status quo of the 21st century.

i) The Notion of Remote Warfare

It is suggested that the introduction of the War on Terror narrative after the 9/11 attacks has introduced a relatively new concept of war, called *"remote warfare"*. Though it is not truly modern, the weapons that are used have become advanced and somewhat perfected within the last century. The Oxford Research Group defines remote warfare as a *"term that describes approaches to combat that do not require the deployment of large numbers of your own ground troops"* (Biegon et al., 2021, pg. 156). In general, this type of warfare is different from conventional warfare because of its physical and moral remoteness from the close-range violence on the ground (De Klerk, 2021, pg. ii). To be more specific, Biegon and Watts define it as a *"strategy of countering threats at a distance, without the deployment of large military forces"* which also *"involves a combination of drone strikes and airstrikes from above, knitted together by the deployment of Special Forces, intelligence operatives, private contractors, and military training teams on the ground"* (Biegon et al., 2017, pg. 1). This type of war has been used for the past 30 years mostly regarding proxy wars that states are not typically fighting within their borders.

According to the International Humanitarian Law, a state engaging in armed conflict should be an act of self-defence, meaning that it should have either been attacked or suspected of an imminent threat (Cullen, 2019, pg. 111). Even though proxy wars do not fall under this category, the United States of America has enabled its allies to claim that the War on Terror is an ongoing act of global self-defence against terrorism. In fact, from Afghanistan to Somalia, the US is operating in regions where it has a limited understanding of the complexity of those multicultural societies (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 24). The distance that exists between the operator and the weapons platform when it comes to conducting remote warfare in these regions makes it much easier to release a bomb that will supposedly hurt only the target and limit collateral damage. More importantly, the narrative surrounding this type of warfare is with regard to human security, broadly defined as *"a freedom from want and a freedom from fear"* that was promoted to balance against the narrow state-centric focus of *"security of territory from*

external aggression, or as protection of national interests" (White et al., 2019, pg. 216). Nevertheless, it seems that the narrative is focusing on security concerns on the micro-level (on the everyday lives of citizens) which has now been merged with state security in order to justify the return to a focus on the macro-level by presenting uses of force as targeting people that present a general threat to a state's citizens and their daily lives (ibid.).

There has been a significant influence on the willingness of national leaders to employ military force as a tool of national security which the concept of remote warfare has enabled. The dehumanisation of warfare is supported by the technological progress the military has to offer. Drones and autonomous weapon systems allow the operator to be within a safe distance from the target or even in the comfort of their own sofa. Therefore, public opinion will most assuredly support not having their compatriots get killed in a foreign land. When it comes to the public's support, ever since Vietnam and the publication of the Pentagon Papers, the battle for gaining it has become as central to military success as a victory on the battlefield (Chaliand, 2014, pg. 435). On the one hand, humanitarian aid does not constitute a plausible reason for continuous proxy wars. On the other hand, self-defence is a legitimate reason for people to accept the use of force in other countries.

Moreover, by legitimizing the use of force through claiming self-defence, governments are able to maintain their position without people protesting against unfair deployment outside the borders. Public opinion accepts the use of force as a way the government is fulfilling its duty. By having this kind of support from the public, heads of states and governments would be able to choose more easily to participate in a war, given that what they seek in order to maintain their position is approval from the people who are voting. This narrative creates the idea that it will be much safer to conduct wars in the future and could possibly take the ethical factor out of the equation. However, what does safer really mean? The characterisation of something that is "safe" depends on very subjective points of view. Dehumanising warfare is safe for which side, the one that has the technology to conduct war without endangering its soldiers' lives or the one that will suffer the consequences of not having the luxury of such technologic accomplishments? What is more important, will the concept of remote warfare make the heads of states and governments get involved in proxy wars with less reluctance?

The most appropriate theory of international relations to answer these questions would be Constructivism. Alexander Wendt declared that *"anarchy is what states make of it"* (Wendt, 1999, pg. 42). Just like anarchy, the way states act is surrounded by subjectivity. Wendt's whole theory is based on the fluid nature that characterises the field of international politics. Politicians and heads of states and governments are people who have their own views on how the world works or should work, while at the same time they are undoubtedly responsible for their state's

security. Nevertheless, security could be used as an excuse for other interests to be satisfied. Constructivism along with content analysis will help in the pursuit of the reasoning behind the use of remote warfare tools and weapons concerning how ethical it will seem to public opinion in the future. Last but not least, the use of speeches made by officials concerning the use of remote warfare weapons and their analysis will allow viewing the evolution of the narrative surrounding this concept as well as the reluctance behind governments opening up to the public about military programmes using these weapons.

Lastly, the field of remote warfare has yet to be explored, given that new elements and information keep coming to light. While there are international norms applicable to drone use, a great deal of the law is underdeveloped, indeterminate, or ineffectual, and has been subject to artful manipulation of the boundaries between the jus ad bellum and jus in bello, with little regard to the right to life of the target (White et al., 2019, pg. 225). However, officials in charge or retired officials seem more reluctant than ever to share the specifics of military programmes involving drones or other types of remote warfare weapons. It is evident that there is a great effort to make this type of war more logical in the minds of the public and this will only be achieved by actually talking about it and being open about the ways it works. What is more important though, is to consider the ethical dilemmas stemming from such a war tactic. It is not a matter of pros and cons, but it becomes an issue that if not already, in the future might constitute the sole way of conducting warfare. Therefore it is critical to ensure that the people in charge of the choice to go to war will be completely informed about the repercussions of their actions. Technology, whereby an operator from the comfort of their sofa thousands of miles away, can in real-time and with great precision kill an individual, could mean that individual drone strikes outside of an armed conflict might challenge our conceptions of when the use of force is legally justifiable. As Jeremy Scahill would ask in February 2014, *"How does one "surrender" to a drone?"* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 3).

ii) Outline

In the first chapter, *War* as a concept is analysed through an amalgamation of its history, the philosophical questions that arise from its existence, as well as the regulations and social conditions that surround the term. It is undeniable that war has been a part of human nature since the beginning of time, bringing about the more animal side of people. In the name of war, entire nations have been created and destroyed, while all have been mere prey in the hunt for power. Geopolitics plays a significant role in the reasons behind warfare considering that the

geographical positions of countries constitute elements of power. This first chapter will provide a general overview of the evolution of war in order to present in the following chapters the different aspects of a relatively modern type of warfare, namely remote warfare, as well as to show that some elements of war have not changed in their core.

In the second chapter, the *Theory of Constructivism* is presented in order to explain how important society's understanding of a concept is. When new ideas are introduced not only to the academic world but also to the public, the way people will try to characterise them plays a significant role in its future. The narrative around a concept will determine whether it will be viewed in a positive or a negative way. That is the reason Constructivism seems to be the most appropriate of the grand theories of international politics, given that it allows for interpretation while at the same time it offers different perspectives. Polyphony is much needed in academic research, especially when new concepts and ideas are introduced. Remote warfare certainly belongs in the newly introduced concepts category, as well as the connotations surrounding the term.

In the third chapter, the research method that will help support the argument of the thesis is introduced. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods has been taken into account, though in this particular subject it seems that the category of qualitative methodology is more suitable. More specifically, the method of *Content Analysis* was found to be the most appropriate in order to recognise the different narratives surrounding the term "remote warfare". Examining political speeches or ones made by government officials will help to break down the vocabulary that is used and the messages the senders wish to deliver. Moreover, a tactic often used by the media in collaboration with governments, namely "perception management", will also be examined with the tools of content analysis, offering a more fresh perspective on how political speech works.

After presenting the theoretical part of the thesis, an analysis of the concept of remote warfare will follow, serving as a start of the empirical part. *Introducing remote warfare in the 21st century* will provide a more detailed presentation and explanation of how this relatively new type of war has dominated the warfare arena. Its characterisation as a "clean" type of warfare has created quite a hype in the international community as it gives the idea of a way of waging war without having significant casualties or collateral damage. What is noteworthy, is the fact that even though the technological breakthroughs that allowed for remote warfare weapons to be developed took place in the 20th century, the concept of this type of war gained more transparency in the 21st century. The Cold War played a significant part in the evolution of such weapons, namely Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, as well as cyber weapons. Technological advancement is always a part of warfare, given that as society progresses, so do other aspects

of everyday life. What will be explored throughout this chapter are the significance of remote warfare in the 21st century, its relation to the tactical level, social, legal, as well as ethical aspects of this type of war, and last but not least, the narratives surrounding this concept. To be more specific, the two sides concerning the debate on remote warfare, namely its supporters, as well as the sceptics, have played a major role in the way it is portrayed in the public.

In the fifth and final chapter of the thesis before reaching a conclusion, speeches of high profile people, such as government officials with positions in the decision making concerning remote warfare strategy, politicians, heads of states or governments, and even people dealing with the legality of this whole concept, will be presented. Throughout the chapter, comments on the specific choice of particular vocabulary or speech style and attitude toward the receivers of the message will take place in an attempt to illustrate how political speeches could be the decisive factor in whether the public will support a resolution of a government to enter the war if presented in a rather smart way. Bearing in mind that the notion of remote warfare is relatively fresh in the minds of civilians, the way it will be depicted as reality plays the most critical role.

1. ON WAR

Ever since the city-state was made the norm, war, both as an act of offence and as an act of defence, has been a constant feature of civilizations (Chaliand, 2014, pg. 39). The first battle documented in global history is that of Megiddo, which took place in Palestine in 1469 B.C.E. (Chaliand, 2014, pg. 35). War has never been one-dimensional and while the weapons and technology may change, it is undeniable that the whole narrative around it keeps taking different forms. Since the beginning of time, there have been wars entirely dependent on survival but as the centuries go by, it is evident that even though society has evolved in terms of aggression provoked by instinct, it has not made wars much less deadly. As technology progressed, so did the ways of conducting war, given that they could be fought with greater weapons, close combat amongst warriors was not vital, or even the fact that the biggest percentage of wars today are fought remotely. This first chapter will present a view on warfare in general.

According to Clausewitz, *"War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means"* (Clausewitz, 2007, pg. 28). It is undeniable that many centuries have passed before being in the position of reaching such a conclusion on war. In fact, war appears to be one of the first acts within an organised community, given that issues of power were as dominant then as they are now. However, war has evolved through many stages as has civilization and the way relations between states are formed is very different. Politics are much more visible when it comes to international relations and it has become more evident that before entering a war there has been a significant amount of negotiations between the involved parties. What Clausewitz understood in the 19th century, now constitutes one of the most undisputed arguments on war that became more obvious in the 20th as well as the 21st centuries.

Another claim by the military theorist that encloses the possible reasons behind warfare is that *"war can be of two kinds, in the sense that either the objective is to overthrow the enemy—to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace we please; or merely to occupy some of his frontier-districts so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations"* (Clausewitz, 2007, pg. 7). There can be many different aspirations that lead to war but the prevailing one is to gain the leverage over the enemy, either political, military, territorial, or economic. When negotiation does not reach the desired result, both parties might feel the need to pursue their own goals via an armed conflict believing that at one point the enemy will back off and bargain its way out of the war. Therefore,

it becomes evident that war could be characterised as an act of force in order to compel the enemy to succumb to one's will.

Furthermore, one of the more essential legal obligations regarding war is to guide lethal force solely against combatants while, at the same time protecting civilians (Rothenberg, 2014, pg. 441). International law regulates how wars are characterised and even though armed conflict is always illegal, there are situations where it becomes unavoidable. To be more specific, according to Article 51 of the UN Charter, *"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security"* (Chapter VII: Article 51 — Charter of the United Nations — Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs — Codification Division Publications, 2022).

Article 51 of the UN Charter is one of the most significant ones, given that it provides the international community with a legal framework concerning armed conflict management. The self-defence clause plays a great role in characterising a state's actions as legal or not when an armed attack has already occurred or there is a threat of one. Though an armed attack could never be deemed legal, there are indeed some situations where a state is found in a position where it needs to defend its territory and people. The UN Security Council has been appointed by the international community as the warden of the Charter concerning an armed conflict. However, this does not mean that all the active warzones are considered legal and abiding by not only the UN Charter but also the Geneva Conventions. In addition, every type of war has its own rules and causes as well as various actors who are not immediately involved in an active war.

The nature of war is complex and changeable, according to Clausewitz, and this has not transformed significantly over the centuries. The decisions leading to war as well as the actions that openly provoke a party to get involved in an armed conflict have always been about power and authority, from the ancient world to today's technologically advanced democratic states. Apart from power though, fear of changing one's status is also something that causes unease within a state and more specifically, fears that the states close to it might be more powerful, thus creating a type of military antagonism. This is what Allison characterises as "the Thucydides trap", meaning an evident tendency towards war when an emerging power threatens to remove an existing great power as a regional or international hegemon (Allison,

2015). This creates a vicious cycle of power-grabbing and status quo changing while civilians are caught in the fire. In fact, the war that is currently happening in Ukraine is a great example of the Thucydides' trap. Ukraine is a former Soviet Union's state that the West tried to incorporate into its alliances, namely the EU and NATO, thus making Russia feel the unease that a country within its influence that is supposed to be a buffer zone is trying to engage in an alliance that has traditionally been an enemy power. Russia having a state at its borders that is influenced by the West and more specifically the USA, creates the fear of losing its military advantage in the case of imperialistic tendencies the enemy parties might show in the future. Therefore, the solution presented by Russia's head of state was to make the first move by exploiting the element of surprise and waiting for the West's reaction. A modern world war starting from the outskirts of Europe would not be a new concept but given the fact that the global economy has not yet recovered from the pandemic, it would be devastating for every party involved, thus making the heads of states respond with economic sanctions to Russia's war until its own resources become scarce.

While the response of the West to Russia's actions might not seem courageous or even truly supportive of Ukraine's people, it could be explained by the Democratic Peace theory that was introduced by Kant. According to the philosopher, *"Democracies rarely fight each other because (a) they have other means of resolving conflicts between them and therefore do not need to fight each other, and (b) they perceive that democracies should not fight each other"* (Russett, 2001, pg. 4). This statement represents the modern world with regards to conducting war between allies, something that was not the case in previous centuries. However, this does not mean that wars will cease to exist if every state in the world claims to have a democratic government. The phrase that plays a great role in how democracy is portrayed by Kant is that democracies should not fight *each other*. This last part is what makes a difference between world peace and existing wars. The fact that there is a clear distinction with whom democracies should engage in war makes more evident the idea that war with any other type of state is more acceptable.

In addition, the role of the narrative that is built for each war is undoubtedly decisive when it comes to the support from the public, something that is vital for a government in a democracy. There has come to light the idea that if wars between civilized nations are far less cruel and destructive than wars between savages, it is a result of the social conditions of the states themselves and their relationships with one another (Galliott, Macintosh and Ohlin, 2021, pg. 180). Nevertheless, in a war, the endgame is to emerge victorious and most of the time no matter the cost, whether being considered a civilized country or not. Society, as well as international law, have created rules that nations should follow even in the event of an armed conflict, though the legality of such an event is still under much debate. Public opinion also plays a great role

in the way governments are presenting war engagement, given that the support will allow them to keep their positions and continue their work. Therefore, it is not necessarily the social conditions that differentiate *"civilised"* from *"not civilised"* states, but merely the art of deception that politicians have perfected over the centuries.

In fact, there are specific tactics that government officials use in order to avoid showing the true image of a war the government might be engaging in. The power of public support is critical to politicians given that voters are the decisive factor in whether a government is elected or not. Therefore, it is important to mention some of these tactics, especially bearing in mind that they are not only being used currently rather they have been perfected over the centuries with the help of technology and its evolution. One of the most common tactics is denial which mostly serves as a way to divert or stall, *"with the initial denial buying time to develop more sophisticated ways in which to manage problematic situations"* (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 5). According to McGoey, *"denial is intertwined with feelings of self-respect and moral righteousness at a deeply personal level, as people are taught the norms of conduct of their social surroundings at an early age and told, often well-meaningly, that it is impolite to speak aloud about distressing or hurtful things"* (McGoey, 2019, pg. 56). As a result, it is believed that denying acting in a harmful way towards others, in this case engaging in a proxy war in order to satisfy a government's ambitions, somehow negates the action. In addition, a very well-known phrase, namely "plausible deniability" was created in the mid-20th century, and constitutes a useful concept for interpreting the reasons why leaders might avoid or at least seem to avoid information that could be politically damaging to admit knowing (ibid.). A great example that will be used throughout this paper is remote warfare weapons, and more specifically their use for targeted killings outside the borders of states, such as the USA, France, or the UK.

Another tactic that government officials use when it comes to the subject of war is claiming ignorance. According to Gould and Stel, *"ignorance is both more elusive and more open-ended, thus politically convenient in different ways"* (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 9). This type of fluidity can prove very effective in situations where politicians are faced with ethically challenging issues. Furthermore, there are three types of ignorance that are mainly used in order to avoid getting involved in politically damaging debates. The first type is *defensive ignorance* which also refers to denying knowledge, feigning, or claiming ignorance (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 7). This is a relatively mild mechanism where the person using it simply pretends not to know significant pieces of information that could possibly be used against them. A more intense tactic is *offensive ignorance* which constitutes an expression of power considering it shapes the general politics of truth in society, creating specific narratives (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 8).

This plays a major role in how public opinion is bombarded not only by politicians but also by the media with narratives that are built meticulously and can have great power over the truth.

The final type of ignorance is *strategic ignorance* which could characterise any action that mobilises, synthesises, or exploits unknowns in a wider environment in order to avoid liability for earlier actions. According to McGoey, the term could also be used to refer to situations *"where people create or magnify unknowns in an offensive rather than a defensive way, to generate support for future political initiatives rather than to simply avoid liability for a past mistake"* (McGoey, 2019, pg. 3). Engaging in warfare has been the main field where strategic ignorance is observed, especially when considering that government leaders and heads of states need to convince their voters that they are doing what they deem best for a nation's or state's interests. Feigning ignorance, in general, allows someone to avoid liability, responsibility, and ultimately accountability, something that has proven quite helpful to authorities. It is argued that *"claiming ignorance involves imposing ignorance that entails obstructing investigation and accountability potentially indefinitely"* (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 9). The intensity one exudes when denying knowledge of something is very important because it gives the idea that the person speaking is highly confident of the words they are using, thus making the receiver less sceptical.

In conclusion, it is undeniable that war will not cease to exist. As technology progresses, new means of warfare are emerging. However, as the Prussian General, Karl von Clausewitz, notes, *"no other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance"* (Clausewitz, 2007, pg. 26). No matter how technologically evolved weapons a state possesses, there is always the unknown that is manipulated by chance. There are many examples in history of battles won by not the most competent or most powerful party but by the party that knew the grounds better, was favoured by the weather, or simply understood the importance of chance. There have been many types of war since the beginning of time, but this paper does not aim to present an overview of already known and established theoretical knowledge. By contrast, it aims to analyse a current method of warfare that will have a central place in the way future wars will be conducted, as well as present the means with which this type of warfare is introduced in the international community.

2. THE THEORY OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

"An object is defined not by what it is in itself - not by its essential properties - but by its relationship in a structure."

- Social Theory of International Politics, Alexander Wendt

International relations and politics are characterised as *"socially constructed"* by Alexander Wendt (Wendt, 2003, pg. 1). This is supported by the fact that it is the society that allows governments to behave in a certain way or denies them in some cases to move forward with actions that might turn out disastrous. However, one cannot deny that politics in general could most of the time create an image of a situation and promote a narrative that would shift the public's opinion or support. In addition, when it comes to international politics and relations, states, being the primary actors in this field, are much more autonomous from the social system in which they are embedded (Wendt, 2003, pg. 2). More importantly, their foreign policy behaviour is often determined by domestic politics and the narratives created according to them. Though norms and law govern domestic politics predominantly, self-interest and coercion seem to prevail in international politics.

International law and institutions exist, but what prevails is usually power and interest. This concept seems to triumph over other ideas of how international politics work and it is expressed through the most dominant theory, Realism (Heywood, 2013, pg. 114). It is evident in the academic community that of all the grand theories surrounding the field, Realism has the most academic research supporting it and it is often used to analyse events and actions in the international arena. Nevertheless, though it is dominating the grand theories field, it cannot be used as a base when it comes to the notion of remote warfare due to the absolutism of the theory. Remote warfare is a relatively new concept, especially concerning the type of technology that is used, and it has brought great upheaval to war theory. It has changed the narrative of warfare given that it is viewed as a more 'clean' type of war that does not have as much collateral damage as other types.

As a result, the most appropriate theory that could describe remote warfare and try to explain it is Constructivism, whose arrival in the field of International Relations is often associated with the end of the Cold War, something that the traditional theories such as realism and liberalism failed to account for (Theys, 2018). It seems that the everyday life of international politics and

relations is an ongoing process of states taking identities in relation to others, while also corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result (Wendt, 2003, pg. 21). The fact that these identities may be hard to change does not ensure that they are carved in stone, and it could be that sometimes they constitute the only variable actors that can manipulate a situation. Bearing that in mind, Constructivism could be characterised as a more idealistic school of thought.

According to Wendt, in Constructivism it is assured that *"the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, as well as that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature"* (Wendt, 2003, pg. 164). The first approach seems more "idealist" with regards to social life, giving emphasis on the sharing of ideas, while the second approach seems more "structuralist", given that it focuses on the emergent powers of social structures (ibid.). As a result, Constructivism could be viewed as a kind of "structural idealism". Moreover, what is important about this theory that will be very helpful when the concept of remote warfare is analysed is that it argues that reality is not necessarily detrimental to the determination of meaning and truth, but these are dominated by power relations and other sociological factors within discourse (Wendt, 2003, pg. 55). When it comes to newly explored ideas and concepts, such as remote warfare, a more fluid theory of explanation is more suitable, given that it is the society that will eventually determine the narrative it will follow and the connotations surrounding the term.

Frege argues that the notion of a term is regulated by the properties we associate with it and that *"sense determines reference"* (Wendt, 2003, pg. 54). He offers an example to make this argument more understandable is that the meaning of "dog," brings to mind a description of a "four-legged barking canine" and these in turn constitute a reference to dogs. Therefore, it is evident that meaning and truth have a function of descriptions within language without necessarily an existing relationship between words and reality. Culture also plays a great role when it comes to understanding concepts and ideas. Every culture has differences in the way people perceive reality and it is very important to respect that, especially when it comes to new fields or modern concepts. A very good example with regards to the localization of a concept is that of Montezuma in 1519 when he had to deal with the same kind of issue that social scientists face today: the proper way to call people who, in his case, called themselves Spaniards (Wendt, 2003, pg. 56). He had no previous encounter with such a people and their ways seemed very different from what he was familiar with to the point where he interpreted their presence as godlike. The materials he had available in his culture made him draw the conclusion that these foreigners were gods, and therefore should be treated as that. In the end, this false idea cost him not only his empire but also his life.

Another example that proves Constructivism plays a significant role in the field of International Relations is provided by Lauterbach who argues that the United States went to war in Iraq because the dominant strategic cultural norm at the time, namely the one pursuing geopolitical stability through multilateral deterrence, appeared bankrupt to the Bush administration after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (Lauterbach, 2011, pg. 61). After the end of the Cold War, it was deemed necessary by the US to provide a different narrative in order not to lose its hegemonic power status and the terrorist attacks of September 11 provided the appropriate event for a complete change of norms concerning warfare. A new strategic cultural vision appeared that advocated the hegemonic promotion of democracy through force, later taking the form of the War on Terror rhetoric (ibid.) The new norm of preventive hegemonic war and forceful democratisation altered completely American national security policymaking, while at the same time replacing the dominant Cold War normative paradigm (Lauterbach, 2011, pg. 62). This example shows the fluidity of the concepts and norms of international relations.

In addition, group beliefs, meaning the myths, narratives, and traditions that characterise a group and how it relates to others, are often engraved in what is called *"collective memory"* (Wendt, 2003, pg. 163). However, this does not necessarily mean that they are the shared beliefs held by individuals at any given moment, though they might be based upon them. On the contrary, these narratives contain inherently historical phenomena which are kept alive through the generations by a process of socialization and ritual enactment, otherwise called *"tradition"* (ibid.). According to Wendt, culture is more than a group of the shared ideas that individuals possess, but a *"'communally sustained' and thus inherently public phenomenon"* (Wendt, 2003, pg. 164). A more complete interpretation of cultural structure is presented by Herbert Blumer as *"[a] gratuitous acceptance of the concepts of norms, values, social rules and the like should not blind the social scientist to the fact that any one of them is subtended by a process of social interaction - a process that is necessary not only for their change but equally well for their retention in a fixed form. It is the social process in group life that creates and upholds the rules, not the rules that create and uphold group life"* (Wendt, 2003, pg. 185).

While Realism entails a correspondence theory of truth, meaning that theories should be either true or false in virtue of their relationship to states of the world, it is important to bear in mind that though mind and language help determine meaning, meaning is also regulated by a mind-independent, extra-linguistic world that constantly changes. Therefore it is almost impossible to be certain that a claim of reference is true, especially when narratives keep altering to match interests, needs, or even the status quo. Context is always important when trying to determine the meaning of a concept or an idea, even more so when these are relatively new to a field. It is argued that in recent years, postmodernists and radical feminists have adopted the belief that the existence of ambiguous boundaries constitutes an argument that things that society

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previously took as natural, like gender differences, are in fact social constructions and thus politically negotiable (Wendt, 2003, pg. 59).

As new concepts enter the arena, Constructivism seems the more appropriate theory to explore them, given that they should be first tested within society in order to decide their meaning, something that will probably be different in other parts of the world. For example, drones, an infamous platform of weapons in remote warfare, is for some a toy, for others military equipment, and for a very large part of the world, an omen of death. People in Afghanistan who have suffered attacks by drones could not think of them the same way a child who gets a drone for a Christmas present would. This is a very accurate representation of how narratives work as well as how culture or reality could mould a meaning within a concept. This is the reason that the theory of Constructivism is the most adequate in explaining the notion of remote warfare in the 21st century and exploring the ways different societies understand its use.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research methods are a challenge for students all over the world. It constitutes an integral part of a thesis, given that it makes the entire design more structured, though it takes time to find and choose the proper one for each topic. While the methodology is a highly important part of a thesis, it requires much thought in order to determine which serves best the conclusions of the paper. Choosing among qualitative or quantitative methods, such as those of case studies, content analysis, statistical analysis, and the list goes on, could be proven to be a very complex business. Academic research may be intricate but it is the research methods that allow it to be better formed on paper.

To be more specific, the topic analysed throughout this paper is found better suited to the method of content analysis, given that the narratives of politicians and other officials should be examined in order to reach a conclusion. The issue of remote warfare and how it is presented to the public by political leaders or people familiar with certain aspects of it, is better presented through an analysis of their speeches or comments. The particular vocabulary they use, their tone, or their willingness to answer questions from reporters are only a few of the elements that will be presented and explained with the help of content analysis. Given that the use of remote warfare poses many ethical dilemmas regarding how and when it is used, the convenience it portrays concerning fewer casualties, or the "no collateral damage" motto, it is significant to examine how it is presented to the public eye by the officials in charge. Therefore, content analysis seems to be the most suitable research method.

3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis today is considered a type of qualitative research, even though that was not the case before 1950 (Kothari, 2004, pg. 110). Using as sources books, articles, speeches, or any kind of documentary material, constitutes a large list of material to support a claim and give it substance. Content analysis working with this kind of material is supposed to go deeper with regard to the messages that are to be delivered, something that allows for a better understanding of the narratives. It examines how communication is achieved between the sender and the receiver, while also analysing the connotations of the vocabulary used in order to convince the receiver of the sender's arguments.

There is a variety of definitions by academics regarding content analysis, the most suitable in this context being the one by Holsti who suggested that it constitutes a *"multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating a broad spectrum of problems in which content of communication serves the basis of inference"* (Bruter et al., 2013, pg. 148). As a result, it is inferred that excerpts of communication play the most significant role in reaching a conclusion, especially when a wide range of issues is concerned. It is undeniable that communication is what builds relationships and ideas in a society and not a simple transmittance of messages from one person to another. It also builds perceptions and misperceptions with regard to concepts, something that has proven very powerful in the hands of the media, the government, and even businesses. In fact, perception management is one of the main tools used by authoritative states, such as China and Russia, in order to keep control of their peoples (Liaropoulos, 2020). This tactic is inextricably linked to political speech, in which, when analysing it, specific words are used having as a goal to create a desirable image by the sender.

Moreover, in content analysis, there are two levels that categorise the information that is drawn, namely a simple and a subtle one (Kothari, 2004, pg. 110). On the one hand, the simple level is when the content is found and measured without further research within a source, whether it is a book or an article (ibid.). For example, the most significant scientific theories could serve as the content to be analysed in a book. On the other hand, the subtle level focuses on the attitude and the nuances hiding under the content that a researcher has to analyse. A political speech where the politician has to convince the public of the necessity of a new war could serve as a great example of the subtle level. More specifically, George Bush's State of the Union speech in 2002 where he uses oppositions, such as the "civilised" and the "not civilised" world, or ominous words, such as "threatening", "axis of evil" and so on, while referring to the need to take action against the newly-made concept of the War on Terror, provide a perfect example of how words could create whole perceptions of the unknown (Leavy, 2014, pg. 362)

In addition, it is important to mention that in analysing discourse, it is necessary to identify recurrent ideological themes and the rhythm in which words and word categories are being used (Bruter et al., 2013, pg. 49). There is a certain gravity that encircles each word and it is in this element that the most important analysis occurs. Vocabulary has the power to create emotions surrounding concepts and notions. The War on Terror has become a type of war that unites not only traditional allies but also countries that might never cooperate if it were not for the concept of fighting terrorism. It is also a war without an end, a perpetual war that governments should support no matter the cost. This whole concept has been created by political speeches, not only by heads of state or government but also by government officials. Another significant example would be the concept of international law which was not formally established until the 18th century, even though it has roots since antiquity, and has been used ever since to limit actions

made by the states (international law: Definition, History, Characteristics, Examples, & Facts, n.d.). It has had a significant influence on how states behave in the geopolitical arena. More importantly, international law has put specific standards on what is considered a state and the rights as well as the obligations stemming from its new status towards the international community.

A concept that is very relevant to the issue discussed throughout the paper and that is found quite often in the speeches of government officials is that of "clean warfare". It is mostly used when someone is talking about remote warfare and wishes to promote the idea that due to the technological advances that have made it possible not to be physically involved in a war in order to win it, the lack of collateral damage and body bags make it cleaner. This is a very important example of how perception management works and content analysis is the tool to make clear to the public how creating narratives could be detrimental to the policy that will follow. It is a well-known fact that in political speeches the goal is to convince the voters and for that to happen statistics are not usually used in order for everyone to understand the message. However, it is exactly the facts according to statistics that could make a difference when discussing matters of war. Remote warfare does not ensure no casualties on both sides and as far as collateral damage is concerned, NGOs are researching the claim in war zones that allegedly do not have any collateral damage.

Last but not least, content analysis will serve as a significant research tool when trying to analyse the speeches of officials who tend to matters of warfare. It is necessary to understand why specific vocabulary is used, what messages the sender wishes to deliver to the receivers, as well as what is the significance of the public opinion with regard to the issue. In order to support the argument of the thesis, two speeches will be analysed and their content will be scrutinised so that it will become clear that narratives have great power when coming from people in charge of or experts on a topic.

4. INTRODUCING REMOTE WARFARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Remote warfare as a concept was presented to the public in the 21st century, more specifically after the 9/11 attacks when the War on Terror was introduced. However, the production of remote warfare weapons began during the Cold War (De Clerk, 2021, pg. 40). A few decades later, the first recognisably modern UAVs were deployed by the US for observation purposes in Vietnam and by the Israelis in the fight against the Syrian Air Force over Lebanon in 1982 (Turns, 2014, pg. 194). In general, war appears to have always been a powerful motive for technological innovation, and the Cold War era was considered the pinnacle of technological advancement regarding weapons. Crawford argues that the appearance of warfare conducted thousands of miles from the theatre of active hostilities, namely remote warfare, was only achievable due to the technological breakthroughs of the 20th century, such as aerial bombardment, inter-continental ballistic weaponry, and unmanned aerial vehicles (Crawford, 2019, pg. 50). In a world of constant uncertainty where the threat of a nuclear war was imminent, a significant shift in conducting warfare took place. Apart from proxy wars, a tactic of the great powers in order to avoid immediate involvement which has been happening for centuries, a type of "clean" warfare with no casualties and no "body bags" became a new trend. As a result, in the 21st century, remote warfare appears to be the most common practice of military engagement (Watson and McKay, 2021, pg. 7).

There are many definitions made by the academic community concerning the term "remote warfare". One that seems to include the most needed information in order to have a clear view of the concept is the one by Knowles and Watson, where remote warfare is presented as *"an approach used by states to counter threats at a distance. Rather than deploying large numbers of their own troops, countries use a variety of tactics to support local partners who do the bulk of frontline fighting. In this sense, the 'remoteness' comes from a country's military being one step removed from the frontline fighting"* (Knowles and Watson, 2018, pg. 1). Apart from using local security forces though, this type of warfare also involves special operations forces, either training or sometimes cooperating with local and national forces, private military and security contractors managing a variety of roles, airstrikes, and air support, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or commonly known as "armed drones", and last but definitely not least, sharing intelligence with state and non-state partners involved in frontline combat (Watson and McKay, 2021, pg. 8). It is also important to note that there seem to be three reasons that explain the governments' turn to remote warfare: a) the desire for leaders to avoid the risks associated

with warfare, b) the rise of technological developments, and c) the networked character of modern warfare (Watson and McKay, 2021, pg. 36).

Looking into further detail, the first reason why politicians prefer remote warfare seems to be the most significant, given that in order for a government to remain in power, it needs the public's support. The "body bag syndrome" that came as a result of the many wars the US was involved in was detrimental to the political career of those who supported engagement in proxy wars all over the world. Therefore, the concept of remotely participating in the ongoing War on Terror with the help of technology, thus not directly endangering soldiers seems to be more widely accepted by the public than sending your own children to a war on the other side of the world. A politician's power stems from the support of the public that votes, so the fact that one would choose to promote a relatively riskless war in order not to lose voters, is understandable.

Moreover, with regard to the second reason, the rise of technological developments, it has been already mentioned that technology plays a crucial role in the war arena. In fact, without never-ending technological achievements, new aspects of war, such as cyber warfare, would not be viable. The technology that gave birth to remote warfare weapons ensures immense increases in accuracy both of information about the theatre of operations and the ability to discriminately strike targets, advances in sensor and computing technology, thus removing weapons from direct human control in time and space (Schaub Jr., 2019, pg. 191). Extracting the human factor from weapon use on the ground constitutes one of the greatest achievements of technology and as such, it is portrayed to the public.

Finally, the networked character of modern warfare constitutes one of the main advancements of the 21st century, bearing in mind that the concept of security has gained an international character. Now more than ever, apart from intertwined economies, states all over the globe have pledged their allegiance to different organisations in order to fight for security. Working towards building a safer reality appears to have a significant influence on the willingness of national leaders to exercise military force as a tool of national as well as international security (Corn, 2019, pg. 247). A great example of using security in order to promote remote warfare would be the introduction of the War on Terror when Americans launched UAVs for a variety of missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, presenting it as a "new" way of waging warfare against international terrorist organisations, something that was often illustrated in the mainstream press or academic journals as a high point in the evolution of war.

What is noteworthy about the introduction of remote warfare as a general practice, is the fact that in a 21st-century western society, violence, and subsequently war, should never be an option, given that democracies are not supposed to fight democracies. At least the traditional idea of heroic warfare where soldiers die serving and are addressed as heroes. In this day and

age, war is viewed as unnecessary and disrupting with the public fiercely opposing the governments to enter one. As a result, a new narrative had to be created in order to gain either the support of the voters or their apathy. Indulging in the innovations of technology and ensuring that no more soldiers have to die in the operational theatre but they could simply be soldiers from the safety of their own home would be a win-win situation.

However, there are always two sides of the reality to it. While remote warfare is presented to be a no casualties and no collateral damage type of war, it is argued by NGOs and human rights organisations that follow the aftermath of drone attacks that the numbers reported to the media do not reflect actual figures. To be more specific, organisations, such as Airwars, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, have produced new remote sensing techniques in order to calculate the number of civilian casualties from Western airstrikes (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 36). The technology they use includes open-source intelligence (such as social media posts and satellite imagery) to track, triangulate and geolocate, in real-time, local claims of civilian casualties (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 40). At the same time, they monitor and archive official military reports on munition and strike statistics to cross-check them against the public record. A very significant example of this technique would be when Amnesty International and Airwars joined forces to monitor the impact of the 2017 US-led bombing campaign to retake the Islamic State-held city of Raqqa in Syria (IS conflict: Coalition strikes on Raqqa 'killed 1,600 civilians', 2019). The resulting death toll is outstandingly different. Airwars estimates a minimum of between 8,214 and 13,125 civilian deaths, whereas the Coalition acknowledges a mere 1,335 (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 40).

It appears that the debate surrounding the practices of remote warfare is one of great validity, given that the differences between reality and image pose significant questions about how society reacts in critical situations such as war when the human factor is amiss. Therefore, in this chapter, the weapons used in remote warfare will be presented before introducing the tactical level, as well as the legality of the practices of this type of war. Moreover, the two narratives that dominate the discussion of this new face of war will be analysed, along with an in-depth analysis of the ethics surrounding the issue in order to make clear the reasons why it has gained support from government leaders in the 21st century. Concluding the chapter, it will have become evident that this new type of warfare has attracted attention for good reason.

4.1 Weapons of Remote Warfare

Every type of war has its own innovations with regard to weapons. The crossbow, gun powder, or nuclear weapons, all played a critical role in the outcomes of a conflict, whether an actual battle or a pending one. As technology progresses, so do the weapons used in any kind of conflict. What makes remote warfare special though, is the fact that it has become possible to not involve the human factor in the dangerous process of being on the ground. While the operators of the weapons are human, it is not necessary anymore to be placed where an attack on the enemy will be realised. To be more specific, remote warfare is associated with three types of weapons, namely Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) commonly known as drones, weapons linked to cyber operations, and autonomous weapon systems (Cullen, 2019, pg. 110). These methods of attack have revolutionized the industry of warfare given that they presumably allow a higher level of accuracy and risk avoidance. More importantly, they achieve the dehumanization of warfare, thus making states going to war a much easier affair without governments finding themselves at the peril of dismantlement due to disagreement of the public. The paradox that *"with military intervention becoming more remote and 'sanitised', in the end, it becomes uncared for, and even ceases to be defined as war"* is presented by Demmers and Gould (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 34). It becomes evident that this way of thought could make government officials tread dangerous waters when it comes to choosing carefully the wars that need a foreign state's intervention.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), or as they are more commonly called drones, constitute one of the greatest achievements of modern military technology. Looking into further detail, it is argued that the merging of sensor technology with advanced computational and processing power has permitted military platforms to gain better awareness of their environment and interact with it even in the absence of human control (Schaub Jr., 2019, pg. 187). This physical distance between the operator and the weapons platform is the main advantage of this type of warfare and the drone is the epitome of it. More specifically, drones constitute a new kind of technology that allows an operator, thousands of miles away, to kill in real-time and with great precision an individual or a group of people (White et al., 2019, pg. 244). For instance, drone operators based in the US have an everyday routine of driving to a Nevada military base from their nearby homes before engaging in 10 or more hours of remote warfare and at the end of the day, stepping back into their cars to drive home (Lifton, 2013, pg. 15). The risk factor has significantly decreased for these operators given that they do not find themselves on the ground fighting for their lives.

A drone is simply a weapon system that permits military commanders to employ lethal combat power against an enemy, highly effective weapon system, precise, and situationally aware (Corn, 2019, pg. 246). It is argued that no other existing weapon system has offered national and operational-level leaders a similar capability, namely the ability to seek out, identify, and engage a target with a high degree of precision, all while posing little to no risk to friendly force (ibid.). Another great advantage is that it has the ability to linger for extended periods of time over a suspected target, while at the same time collecting highly precise information to support both target verification and identification of the ideal attack options and situations (Corn, 2019, pg. 248). What is also noteworthy, is that these platforms can be used for a wide variety of tasks apart from combat, including those that assist military operations, such as observation and reconnaissance, intelligence collection, target acquisition, but also search and rescue, delivery of humanitarian aid, and transport of equipment (Turns, 2014, pg. 199). Nevertheless, even though drones, in general, are used mainly as assisting tools, armed drones have somewhat different functions. To be more specific, they are used in the three following ways: a) they provide air support to ground troops when they are prepared to attack or come under attack, b) they inspect the skies looking for suspicious activity and, if found, they attack, and c) they conduct targeted killings of suspected militants (Watson and McKay, 2021, pg. 8).

The most renowned drone models are the MQ-1 Predator and the MQ-9 Reaper which have already been used by the USA in a number of proxy wars. In fact, there has been so much demand for both the Predator drones and the Reaper drones that their manufacturer, General Atomic Aeronautical Systems, had a difficult time fulfilling orders (Hasian, 2016, pg. 1). It is argued that it was the 9/11 attacks that led to a burst in the US military's use of drones and a host of other robotic weapons (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 18). After the attacks, the War on Terror narrative allowed the US government to justify not only proxy wars it was engaging in but also a significant bloom of remote warfare technology. More specifically, during Bush's office, at least two different drone systems were developed and evolved, one that would be overseen by the CIA and one that would be regulated by the US Department of Defense (Hasian, 2016, pg. 55). Moreover, a significant reason that drones were in such demand was the nature of the Afghan and Iraqi wars. The US military had a hard time tracking its enemies, given that many local fighters blended in among the civilian populations. Therefore, drones offered the military the opportunity to conduct persistent surveillance and to strike faster than usual (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 19). By October 2002, according to Hasian, *the US Air Force had already started to patrol the skies over Iraq's southern no-fly zones with Predators that were armed with two Hellfire air-to-ground laser-guided missiles, and some officials estimated that somewhere between seventy and eighty missiles had already been fired by either CIA or military drones in Afghanistan or Iraq* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 66). The drone technology had been so successful that

while in 2000, the US Pentagon had fewer than 50 drones, ten years later, it had reached approximately 7,500 (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 7). However, it was not only the US military that had been using drones in military operations, as the Israeli military had also had a long history of using them with the purpose of gathering intelligence, as decoys, and for targeted killings. Israel's use of drones dates back to the occupation of the Sinai in the 1970s, and further evolved in the 1982 war in Lebanon as well as the ongoing conflicts in the Palestinian territories (Turns, 2014, pg. 194).

Today, with regards to national security operations, Predators and Reapers have been routinely flown by US Customs and Border Patrol across Mexico and Canadian borders in order to ensure that no violation will take place (Shaw, 2017, pg. 456). In total, with regard to international security operations, countries that have experienced the appearance of US drones include Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Germany, Italy, Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Niger, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates (Shaw, 2017, pg.461). This outstanding surge in using drones in remote wars has completely changed the balance of powers.

Last but not least, there are two types of drone strikes, namely "personality strikes", where a specific person is being targeted due to the fact that they have been placed on a "kill list" for being characterised as a threat to the United States, while the second type, named "signature strikes," appears to be based not on the presence of a known terrorist suspect, but on whether the targeted person's or persons' "way of life" fits that of a militant in the eyes of a drone operator on the other side of the globe (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 58). According to Benjamin, it appears that the biggest amount of drone strikes falls into the second category (ibid.). Using drones in such a way has drawn a rather significant amount of attention, given the ambiguity both types of strikes are surrounded with. The paradox is that even though it is debated that the human factor is not a main component of drones when it comes to placing soldiers on the ground, it is a human that observes and decides whether someone has to be eliminated.

Cyber Operations

The remoteness factor of this new type of warfare is dominant when it comes to cyber operations. In fact, cyber warfare has been characterised as *"the quintessential example of remote warfare"*, given that the attacking party needs nothing more than a computer and internet access in order to launch their attack, which can be undertaken from no matter where

in the world (Crawford, 2019, pg. 72). A definition that facilitates understanding of this field of remote warfare is given by the International Committee of the Red Cross which defines *"cyber warfare"* as *"operations against a computer or a computer system through a data stream, when used as means and methods of warfare in the context of an armed conflict"* (Cullen, 2019, pg. 121). It appears to take the form of information warfare, using technological advancement and various other methods of warfare with the goal of influencing, disrupting, or corrupting the decision-making of enemy parties, while at the same time using those methods to protect one's own decision-making and war-fighting capabilities (Corn, 2019, pg. 246).

According to Tabansky, there is a great number of categories of cyber operations, some of which include *"a) hacktivists, more specifically individuals attacking websites in order to implant a political message, or expose secrets, b) hackers, which are individuals who break into a computer system remotely through a communications network, c) writers of malware or collectors of personal user data, d) botnet herders, namely individuals who break into computers remotely through a communications network, but obtain partial control over many other computers in order to turn them, without their knowledge, into a means of carrying out a future task, e) organized crime organizations using hackers, mainly botnet herders, for purposes of profit, f) employees belonging to inner circles of a closed organization posing as an insider threat, and g) terrorists and radicals who take advantage of cyberspace in order to convey encrypted messages, recruit supporters, acquire targets, gather intelligence, camouflage activity"* (Tabansky, 2011, pg. 75).

The capability to attack another state's security through cyber operations plays a great role in the advancement of technology for such purposes, given the fact that it has become a highly profitable area of warfare. What is noteworthy is that the technology created for the field of cyber-hostilities takes the form of precisely engineered software or computer code that has the ability to target and disable very specific objectives, ensuring that only these are affected by the attack, leaving other systems untouched (Crawford, 2019, pg. 52). In addition, the difficulty in deciphering the exact character and nature of the source of the attack or its subject could result in making the proper, lawful response more perplexing and challenging (ibid.). Cyber warfare as a part of remote warfare holds a rather high place in states' many fears of attacks, given that a cyber-attack might not even be detected at the time it is happening, but only be identified later if at all. Cyber operations seem to be also preferred by terrorist groups, activists, criminal organisations, or even people wishing to undermine one's security measures, whether the attacked is a private company or an entire state. The reason cyber-attacks could be characterised as brilliant is that most times nobody is willing to acknowledge them due to the fact that they leave the attacked with an image of weakness and vulnerability, an image no head of state or government, or even a CEO would desire on their résumé.

There are various examples of cyber-attacks that have become known to the public. However, even releasing the event of such an attack in the news could have its own purpose to serve with regards to strategy. Firstly, Titan Rain in 2005 is one of the most infamous cyber-attacks, where the US government discovered Chinese computer network operations that had successfully penetrated a variety of secure systems, including but not limited to the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Domingo, 2016, pg. 154). Another incident that caused Europe significant worry and uneasiness was the attack in Estonia in 2007 and in Georgia in 2008, where the prime suspect was the Russian Federation's Foreign Military Intelligence Agency and Federal Security Service despite the extensive denial of implication (ibid.). Last but not least, the Stuxnet attack that established control over remote systems in an Iranian nuclear facility at Natanz in 2010 has been considered by states to be an offensive military operation in cyberspace, making it quite obvious that cyber threats can result in complete destruction (Domingo, 2016, pg. 166).

Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS)

There is no doubt that both drones and cyber warfare share a common characteristic of their remoteness that is unique to the process of this relatively new type of warfare. They both allow the attacker to act from anywhere in the world, far removed from the location of the attack as well as from any active hostilities (Crawford, 2019, pg. 77). However, while these two types of weapons share the fact that the main component in their function remains the human factor, the operator, another type of remote warfare weapon, namely the Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS), does not depend on a person controlling it. To be more specific, the International Committee of the Red Cross defines Autonomous Weapon Systems (AWS), also known as Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS), as *"any weapon system with autonomy in its critical functions. That is, a weapon system that can select (i.e. search for or detect, identify, track, select) and attack (i.e. use force against neutralize, damage or destroy) targets without human intervention"* (Cullen, 2019, pg. 123). This type of weapon triggers a new era in warfare in general, as the action of attacking no longer falls under the scope of human logic and analysis, rather it depends on solely the evaluation of a machine.

It has been argued that weapon systems with autonomous functions will permit greater persistence, range, mass, daring, speed, and coordination among military forces, while at the same time limiting the risks to military personnel by removing them from the weapons that

occupy the battlefield (Schaub Jr., 2019, pg. 185). Bearing in mind the above-mentioned aspects, it becomes evident that they share many similarities with the other two main weapons of remote warfare, given that the idea behind their evolution has been to gradually put an end to sacrificing soldiers in wars spanning continents far away from each other that will draw the public's negative reaction towards the government. AWS appears to have taken a step further by presenting a much more surgical and objective model of function which, solely by analysing data and intelligence feeds, attacks the target chosen by facts and figures. The autonomy factor remains rather vague, given that these weapons possess specific algorithms programmed by a person before evolving into completely autonomous machines. In addition, it might seem the safest choice to have full autonomy regarding a weapon and ensure the safety of one's soldiers, however, there are parameters in every situation that might need the human factor to analyse the data.

Moreover, apart from removing a human from the act of attacking other people, AWS also excludes a person from the burden of making the choice to kill which consequently leads to the same psychological issues that an actual face-to-face attack would create. This is an element that drones do not possess, considering that there is always an operator behind them who is constantly watching the targets, something that usually results in post-traumatic stress disorders, depression, and various other mental issues. In addition, the autonomy that defines AWS has been a result of many trials before reaching the appropriate level of objective function stemming from analysing data. Arriving at such a high level with regards to technological advancement could certainly change the way wars are conducted, not only immediate wars but also never-ending ones, such as the Global War on Terror. What is thought-provoking about autonomous weapons is whether, bearing in mind the fact that they allow for a high amount of precision in attacking, they are only used for conflicts and wars or their use has expanded in areas deemed illegal under international law, such as targeted killings. While there are many benefits of autonomous weapons, the question remains of who is doing their programming and to what end will the algorithms lead.

Targeted Killings

Targeted killings constitute a different kind of weapon, one that is not considered a weapon in the exact technical sense. Its complex nature is the reason why no official definition yet exists, given that it has become a practice unofficially by governments during the last decades. The

core idea behind targeted killings is to employ lethal force in order to kill a specific target with the goal of having no collateral damage. Moreover, it ensures that detection of the attacker becomes more difficult, thus it is harder to attribute accountability even when it can be quite obvious who it is to blame. In remote warfare, the ability to strike and accomplish a targeted killing becomes even more effortless, given that technology offers the capacity for someone to be targeted by a person watching from the other side of the planet. For instance, in using drones for such a mission, one could be reviewing 24/7 footage from the comfort of their own home, learning every detail about a target's everyday routine, and eventually, based on the data they have analysed, eliminate the target.

However, this tactic does not bear any legitimacy, considering that the application of lethal force is not permitted under any circumstances other than in the context of self-defence. Targeted killings could never be recognised as an act of self-defence as they have mostly been used by intelligence agencies in the context of proxy wars. For example, in the USA, it is the CIA, not the Pentagon, that handles most drone strikes in Western Asia, with no accountability (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 7). What is noteworthy, is the fact that drones have made feasible a program of targeted assassinations that are justified by the US in the context of the War on Terror, though otherwise in defiance of both international and US law (ibid.). Even though targeted killings have been employed in the past, it might be the first time someone attempts to justify it as a legal type of action for deterrence purposes. More specifically, according to White and Davies-Bright, the US has adopted a more liberal approach when it comes to the legality of this practice, namely a) to carry out 'signature' strikes on the basis that the targeted individual is performing suspicious activities, b) to target funerals where there is a concentration of Taliban leaders, c) to target drug lords (who are criminals, not combatants), and d) sometimes to order strikes outside of a conflict zone, for example, in Yemen in 2002 and in 2011 (White et al., 2019, pg. 224). These reasons do not necessarily include cases of immediate conflict but they provide examples where lethal force has been used and attempt to justify it.

The USA though is not the only country that has made use of this type of weapon. In fact, the United Kingdom was responsible for the killing of Reyaad Khan, a British member of the Islamic State, in 2015, whereas the country was not engaged in an armed conflict in Syria at the time, therefore the law of armed conflict was not applicable (MacAskill, 2017). To be more specific, it was not until December 2015 that the House of Commons approved airstrikes in Syria, while the RAF drone strike that eliminated him took place on the 21st of August, 2015 while he was travelling in a vehicle in the area of Raqqa in Syria (Watson and McKay, 2021, pg. 40). White and Davies-Bright argue that *"the justification of his assassination becomes an even broader jus ad bellum one, namely that Reyaad Khan's killing was both an act of individual self-defence of the United Kingdom and an action in collective self-defence of Iraq,*

and, moreover, was a strike against ISIL, an armed group that is more likely to be able to mount attacks of the scale and effects required to trigger the United Kingdom's right of self-defence of the state under Article 51 of the Charter" (White et al., 2019, pg. 221). This narrative effectively came to be the position of the United Kingdom after the terrorist attacks that took place in Paris in November 2015 (ibid.). What is important to note is the fact that there is a significant lack of detailed information concerning this case. As a result, it allows the UK Prime Minister to build an image of a country under siege from terrorist attacks, without being restricted by the details (White et al., 2019, pg. 227).

This shows that weapons could be created even from a narrative and it is the way they are being introduced to the public that allows them to take the form of a weapon. Targeted killings have the characteristic of targeting people for reasons of geographical location or whom they are found in the company of (Crawford, 2019, pg. 66). Drones send the data to be analysed and the operators decide when to strike based on this data, however it might not always contain accurate information, such as video or sound recordings. To conclude, even though targeted killings might be a different kind of weapon, it remains one that has been used in many cases and that remote warfare has allowed being evolved in such a way that it appears much easier to choose for eliminating threats with no one asking for accountability.

4.2 Tactical Level

First of all, it is of great importance to explain what the tactical level means in order to be able to make clear how remote warfare weapons are used in this level of warfare. According to Koliopoulos, tactics in general refer to the "battle", while strategy has to do more about the "war" (Κολιόπουλος, 2008, pg. 45). To be more specific, the various operations that comprise a campaign include a significant amount of manoeuvres, engagements, and battles. Bearing that in mind, the tactical level *"translates potential combat power into success in battles and engagements through decisions and actions that create advantages when in contact with or in proximity to the enemy"* (Maxwell, 1997, pg. 2). Tactics is the sector that manages the details of prosecuting engagements and is to a great degree susceptible to the changing environment of the battlefield. Thus, in all types of warfare, namely conventional, nuclear as well as remote warfare, the focus of the tactical level is largely on military objectives and combat.

Having shed light on the meaning of the tactical level, it becomes quite simpler to understand how it is incorporated into the remote warfare arena. The weapon systems used in this type of warfare bring significant advantages to the tactical level, using technology in a way that will

not only allow for safer battles but will also make it easier to win the war. Having weapons one could direct from a safe position close to home is one of the biggest advantages of remote warfare concerning the tactical level. What is noteworthy, is the fact that these platforms collect data and analyse it even without the engagement of a human, ensuring complete objectiveness and organisation skills in order to be able to act when necessary. Moreover, when it comes to drones that are mostly controlled by a person, they provide security and distance from an imminent threat of attack, while at the same time secure that a target is hit with the least collateral damage possible.

In addition, the fact that drones have the ability to linger for extended periods of time over a suspected target, while at the same time collecting highly precise information to support both target verification and identification of the ideal attack options constitutes one of the main advantages of a remote warfare weapon (Corn, 2019, pg. 248). It allows for strategies to be thought out well before acting in a matter that might endanger an entire operation. Apart from ensuring precision and efficacy at the tactical level which makes them ideal to strike the non-state enemy's centre of gravity, i.e. leadership, concerning the Global War on Terror, drones also allow the use of deadly combat power within the sovereign territory of another state (Corn, 2019, pg. 259). Furthermore, according to Demmers and Gould, the main benefits of remote warfare weapons are that *"machines can operate in hazardous environments; they require no minimum hygienic standards; they do not need training; and they can be sent from the factory straight to the frontline, sometimes even with the memory of a destroyed predecessor"* (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 38).

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned, it becomes evident that these weapons help matters play out faster and safer, while at the same time feeding the operators with data in order for the next phases to be mapped out. Even though drones are practically unmanned, they are indeed controlled by teams comprising a pilot, with the appropriate knowledge of how to fly the aircraft, as well as a sensor operator, who governs the cameras, data collection instruments, lasers, and targeting systems (Rothenberg, 2014, pg. 443). These teams are to communicate with commanders, intelligence analysts, and others who may be stationed in multiple sites around the world in order to link these intelligence capacities with the ability to target and attack opponents, thus drones enable a relatively sensitive mechanism of targeting (ibid.). The fact that these actions take place in parallel brings many advantages to the tactical level, ensuring quick response and regrouping without endangering soldiers' lives on the ground. Moreover, what seems to be considered by the companies building remote warfare weapons, such as drones, is a type of tiny pocket-sized drones for 'over the hill' surveillance, which would enhance survivability and lethality of the machines, possibly revolutionizing infantry tactics (Shaw, 2017, pg. 456).

Last but not least, the tactic level being the one regarding immediate battles and requiring not only a quick response but also a rather immediate analysis, plays a major role in the way a war is likely to take its course. Remote warfare weapons have revolutionized the way commanders and soldiers have the capability to form a defence or offense plan having acquired the most critical data and information through weapons platforms in close proximity to the theatre of operations. It is therefore evident that this relatively modern type of warfare has significantly facilitated the way of conducting war, at least for those countries with the technological and military capabilities of such an operation.

4.3 *The Legality of Remote Warfare*

All in all, no type of war could be characterised as legal, considering that the most basic human rights are violated as soon as a conflict takes place. However, given that war has existed since the beginning of time, it was deemed necessary to regulate how conflicts should unravel causing the minimum damage possible to human life. Therefore, international law was created and a list of international organisations was made guardians of its regulations. Nevertheless, as technology and society evolve, so do the types of warfare, thus making it necessary to consider whether the newest practices still adhere to international law or adjustments need to be made. Remote warfare, like nuclear warfare or simply the threat of it, certainly poses many questions with regards to its weapons and the characteristics of its nature. More specifically, while the US drone program has been significantly effective in eliminating senior al-Qaeda leaders, the administration needs to put more effort to explain and defend its use of remote warfare weapons as lawful and appropriate both to allies and critics, especially if it wants to keep receiving international support and potentially exposing administration officials to legal liability (Bellinger III, 2011).

The most crucial part of international law is invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter, which is the right of a state to self-defence in the face of an armed conflict. The fact that this article exists shows how important it is to protect a state's right to self-determination making it acceptable to the global community to fight back using lethal force in order to defend its borders. To be more specific, the right of self-defence *"can be invoked only against a danger which is serious and actual or imminent"* (White et al., 2019, pg. 234). The notion of necessity plays a fundamental role in regards to the doctrine of self-defence not only in domestic but also in international law. Nevertheless, it is a rare occasion in the chaotic arena of international relations and politics to follow the regulations of international law, given that, especially

concerning armed conflicts, nothing could be entirely planned by both the attacker and the defender.

Moreover, a relatively new question that arises in regards to the Global War on Terror is the exact nature of the protocols for fighting a stateless enemy. There might not be an imminent attack on a state in an official way but there has been a call for defending the West's ideals regardless of an actual armed attack against a specific state. This has made many academics, journalists, and even the public to question whether this motive is enough to create an entire army deployment to other parts of the world. Remote warfare has helped in the public's appeasement, especially when it comes to proxy wars and sending 'boots' on the ground of other countries far away, given that it is now possible for soldiers to control an attack from the safety of their homes.

Nevertheless, some argue that remote warfare requires specific treatment by the international legal system, while others suggest that its weapons constitute a mere platform that does not entirely exclude the human factor from the striking process, thus it becomes needless to create new regulations. On the one hand, it is the omission of crucial details about the lethal violence used in some parts of the world by predominantly western governments that have raised questions about the accountability and legality of this type of warfare (De Klerk, 2021, pg. 14). On the other hand, according to Schaub Jr., *"there is no point of legal distinction, in terms of the precautions that must be taken in attack, between a weapon system that is operated by a human inside it compared to one that is operated by a human remotely"* (Schaub Jr., 2019, pg. 185). It is argued that there is a distinction to be made when no humans are generally involved in an attack but instead have enabled it through prior decisions and actions. Bearing in mind all of the above, it is undeniable that the different types of remote warfare weapons or platforms have permitted the emergence of a discussion concerning their nature and to what extent are they included in the never-ending list of new technological advancements in the face of an armed attack or if there needs to be a new set of regulations specifically adjusted to remote warfare.

Starting with the use of drones, it is argued that an individual drone strike outside of an armed conflict might challenge the public's conceptions of when lethal force is legally justifiable. However, the international community supports the idea that outside of an active war zone, no one has the right under international law to launch a drone strike (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 90). International law strongly advocates that for the use of drones to be lawful as a form of remote warfare, *"the context must be one of armed conflict"* (Cullen, 2019, pg. 115). This is something that applies to all types of warfare, given that in order to use the self-defence clause, there needs to be an attack or an imminent threat of an attack. No matter the nature of the weapons,

international law does not allow for a state to get involved in a fight outside its borders without having proof of a threat.

However, fear has emerged concerning the possibility that there will be drone strikes in the future with no immediate link to an armed conflict, where the standard against which the action should be measured is one of self-defence before assessing whether the claim can be founded under the UN Charter, essentially as a defence of the state, or under human rights law, as a defence of individuals (White et al., 2019, pg. 244). Nevertheless, given that the drones themselves are not entitled to the right of self-defence bearing in mind that their operators are not under imminent threat of attack, and the targets are at a safe distance away from the state using them, the dynamics of self-defence action through the use of drones hold significant differences (White et al., 2019, pg. 221). Even though the Global War on Terror posed the dilemma of engaging in war in a completely different part of the world far from western states, international law does not allow exceptions from the clause of self-defence. However, the US position, under the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, has been that drone strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders are lawful under US and international law. In fact, they are permitted by the September 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force Act, which empowered the president to use *"all necessary and appropriate force against nations, organizations or persons who planned, committed or aided the Sept. 11 attacks"* (Bellinger III, 2011).

Bearing in mind the importance of remote warfare weapons in the fight against terrorism though, on 28 March 2014, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) passed Resolution A/HRC/25/L.32 entitled "Ensuring use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones in counter-terrorism and military operations in accordance with international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law" (UN Human Rights Council, 2014b), provision on transparency and investigations, which *"[c]alls upon states to ensure transparency in their records on the use of remotely piloted aircraft or armed drones and to conduct prompt, independent and impartial investigations whenever there are indications of a violation to international law caused by their use"* (Cullen, 2019, pg. 122). Transparency became the main concern of the international community regarding the use of drones, given that they should not be handled carelessly and without following the legal course of action.

Furthermore, apart from UAVs and AWS which work generally in a similar way thus having the same legal implications, cyber operations are also required to follow international law regulations. To be more specific, as a form of remote warfare, they must comply with the relevant rules of international humanitarian law, including but not limited to prohibitions on indiscriminate attacks or attacks likely to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering

(ibid.). What makes cyber operations more perplexing though, is the fact that transparency and accountability are hard to be respected even by official governments. This has to do not only with the legality of a cyber-attack from the attacker's perspective but also with whether it is in the best interest of the attacked to acknowledge the existence of one, given that to the public eye it will be depicted as weakness. Therefore, it might seem more complex to limit cyber operations in the context of international law.

To conclude, the legal framework surrounding remote warfare is yet to be explored before moving to further advancements in its weapons. Even though the countries that are already using remote warfare weapons argue that it does not constitute an entirely new type of warfare and therefore, no new legal regulations are needed, others suggest that the distance of the operators from the actual theatre of war is an element that significantly alters the meaning of Article 51 of the UN Charter. The details of the necessary changes in international law in order to adapt to this new war-making practice remain to be examined by the relating field academics.

4.4 Socio-psychological Implications

The emergence of remote warfare has also implications concerning society and the psychological state of not only the operators of UAVs, AWS, or cyber operations but also the public, including civilians being immediately affected by imminent attacks. The psychological and mental state of people that are living in countries that are suffering from remote warfare attacks could play a great role in the way the younger generations perceive the reality of warfare. In addition, the way governments using remote warfare weapons present it to the public eye, could alter the narratives surrounding war and eventually dehumanize warfare entirely, thus making it easier for people to either support or simply become apathetic towards its repercussions.

To be more specific, there are two sides when it comes to the socio-psychological implications. One is from the perspective of the pilots controlling UAVs or simply the operators of cyber-attacks and AWS, while the other deals with the perspective of those who are under the constant surveillance of drones living with the fear of attack on a daily basis. Both sides have to deal with psychological issues stemming from highly stressful situations, even though they come from an opposite position. Starting with those that operate remote warfare weapons, and more specifically drones, it is considered that they fight from the safety of their homes, thus eliminating the dangers they would come across while fighting on the ground. In fact, adding to this narrative, Pakistani-American attorney Rafia Zakaria wrote that *"Somewhere in the*

United States, a drone operator sits in a booth with a joystick and commandeers a pilot-less aircraft armed with deadly bombs. Much like in a video game, he aims, shoots and fires at targets he sees on a satellite map…. Sometimes the target is killed and sometimes the intelligence is faulty and a sleeping family or a wedding party bears the brunt of the miscalculation. At all times, however, the Taliban capitalize on the ensuing mayhem and gain new recruits and re-energize old ones. Terror thus spreads not simply in the village where the drone attack has taken place but far and wide in the bazaars of Peshawar and the streets of Lahore and the offices of Islamabad where these recruits avenge their anger against the drone attacks" (Benjamin and Mancias, n.d.).

While this argument is backed up by many NGOs working on the sites of attacks in an effort to ensure complete transparency, it is suggested by others that drone operators still suffer from mental issues after conducting an attack and that even though they are not in the theatre of the war, they share the burden of killing all the same. According to Lindlaw, *"while those who fired deadly missiles from the "safety" of Southern California were some seven thousand miles away from their targets, he was sure that they were suffering some of the same psychological stresses as their comrades on the battlefield"* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 117). In fact, many US Air Force studies now indicate that either PTSD or types of "operational stress" that almost rise to the level of PTSD, are caused by either the conditions at work or by the lack of "decompression" while telecommuting to the war zone (Hasian, 2016, pg. 118). There is a strong possibility that this happens due to the fact that drone crews have little or no time to process what they have been through, thus accumulating a significant amount of stress.

Furthermore, operators of remotely piloted aircrafts *"may stare at the same piece of ground for days,"* which results in witnessing some of the havoc (ibid). In addition, they are also responsible for patrolling the everyday routine of a specific target before deciding whether to fire an attack or not, something that makes them empathize with the person they are watching, thus feeling the burden of the kill much deeper than simply shooting an unknown enemy on the ground. The fact that a crew simply "shoots a missile," kills "a handful of people," and then, when the shift is over, goes home to their family does not mean that psychological repercussions cease to exist. The shift of personality that is required in this type of work falls heavily on the psychological state of the person in question.

On the other hand, there are those who live every day under the surveillance of foreign equipment targeting their families, hovering over their heads while they are trying to move on from the carnage of previous attacks. Even something as simple as the sound of a drone flying over a neighbourhood could trigger traumas caused by the use of lethal force. What is also noteworthy, is the fact that drone victims receive no assistance from the governments who are

responsible for the attacks, despite the existence of compensation efforts for other conflict victims (Gregory, 2011, pg. 242). According to Benjamin, in one village in Afghanistan, the Americans assumed that a wedding party was a Taliban gathering, an assumption that resulted in a tragic incident of collateral damage (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 10). What is unknown to most Americans, is that in the short period of three months, between October 7, 2001, and January 1, 2002, over 1,000 Afghan civilians were directly killed by the US-led bombing campaign and at least 3,200 more had died of *"starvation, exposure, associated illnesses, or injury sustained while in flight from war zones,"* according to the Project on Defense Alternatives (ibid). This number accounts for more people than those killed in the 9/11 attacks. It becomes obvious that suffering all of the above that occur not only within the timeframe of an attack but remains as open wounds many years after, has serious effects not only on the psychological state of the victims but also on society as a whole.

While for rhetorical purposes, the narrative of remote warfare psychologically assures the public that *"there is some 'methodical' targeting process or that this American process works, and that some of the mistakes that have been reported during strikes can be linked to situations wherein human actors did not follow the appropriate preplanning"*, it leaves the changes that occur on the ground after such a planned attack out of the picture (Hasian, 2016, pg. 43). The aesthetics that surround these heroic tales of virtuous pilots may help the public humanize and understand the motives of those who pre-plan or carry out raids, but more importantly, it may also deflect attention away from the dehumanization of the enemy, which could eventually lead to an utter shift of society's view of warfare and its outcomes (Hasian, 2016, pg. 47). Mumford suggests that *"developments in communications and information technology have the potential to nullify the twentieth-century belief in "boots on the ground" as a proxy-war necessity"*, thus removing the human factor from face-to-face combat almost completely (Mumford, 2013, pg. 458). This could result in the belief that without soldiers fighting directly with one another, the damage created from war would be eliminated, though that is not the case.

In conclusion, if people get used to the idea that governments getting involved in proxy wars is not harmful, given that their own soldiers would not die in combat, there is a possibility that they will accept war as a status quo. The most recent example of how habit alters people's beliefs and routines is the Coronavirus pandemic that caused panic and fear in the beginning, with entire states getting into lockdowns and views on everyday life-changing immensely, while at the moment, even though the cases have not significantly decreased, measures in most places are not implemented. The force of habit constitutes a perplexing matter with regards to society and the psychological state of human beings, thus needing careful thought before influencing a concept such critical as war.

4.5 Narratives

Perception management plays a significant role when it comes to narratives. Speeches can create an utterly different image of something than that of reality. In politics, this is not a rare occasion, given that the public has quite a strong grip on the way their representatives should act on behalf of them. In order to remain in power, it is not always the case to reveal details on specific matters, one of which is undoubtedly war. Remote warfare is also included in these issues as it constitutes a new perplexing way of waging war, especially in the field of proxy wars. In addition, the weapons of remote warfare have attracted both support and worry from the academic community, given that its relation to international law seems to be a matter of perspective. This constitutes the biggest issue when it comes to the introduction of a relatively new and innovative concept.

Looking into further detail, it is important to understand what remote warfare means to each related party. Starting with a military commander, this type of weapon symbolises precision lethality that can prove game-changing against an enemy, whereas for the enemy, it depicts a terrifying silent killer, necessitating constant caution to avoid detection and attack (Corn, 2019, pg. 246). Furthermore, for the field of law, national security, and social science it symbolises everything from the inherent illegitimacy of expansive notions of war and authority to kill, to the critical tool for rattling international terrorist organisations, to simply a tool of war, no different than any other weapon (ibid). More importantly though, for political leaders, it embodies flexibility and risk prevention in the strategy of leveraging national power to destroy or disrupt national and international threats.

Bearing in mind that it is politics that dominate the national as well as the international arena, it becomes clear that the burden falls to politicians when it comes to creating a narrative on such a thought-provoking subject as is remote warfare. This type of warfare is considered to be asymmetrical, given the fact that it has been the result of extremely innovative and evolved technological progress. Therefore these weapons are not available to everyone depriving states of the right to self-defence. The governments of states which have acquired remote warfare weapons appear to be in favour of using them when they suspect a threat from another state. By contrast, the ones who do not have the capability to carry these weapons argue that it leaves them unprotected in attacks where it might also be impossible to track the source. Throughout this chapter, the two opposing sides will be presented in depth in order to comprehend all arguments and the significance of the issue. One cannot choose sides given that technological

advancement will always bring these debates to light, however it is of great importance to obtain a well-rounded knowledge of such an issue. The debate that emerges, in this case, is a very serious one, considering that the two opposing sides are questioning whether the use of lethal drone attacks outside 'hot' or 'active' areas of combat operations abides by the rules of international law, or whether applying deadly force as a measure of first resort is a violation of international law (ibid).

"People are a lot more comfortable with a Predator strike that kills many people than with a throat-slitting that kills one, but mechanized killing is still killing"

Vicki Divoll, Former CIA Lawyer

In Support of Remote Warfare

Many politicians, when it comes to justifying the enormous amounts of public funds that are being distributed to the defence sector, use remote warfare in order to convince the public of its great benefits. The narrative they are trying to formulate is built immensely upon the remoteness of violence which has many other branches that help attract supporters. First and foremost, the loss of the physical asset, whereby the operator remains unaffected from the impact of any such attack, appears to be one of the main advantages of remote warfare weapons. It is evident that the 'body-bag' syndrome has not been erased from the memory of the American public more specifically, something that has cost many politicians' careers, considering that sending US troops, for example, in proxy wars taking place on the other side of the world did not gain support when families received their relatives dead instead of being able to reunite with them. Therefore, remote warfare weapons, such as drones, AWS, or cyber operations, ensuring that their operators are safely positioned close to their homes create a highly alluring narrative, especially for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one who fought abroad.

When it comes to drones, the supporters of their existence suggest that they indicate a shift in the nature of warfare with significant legal and policy implications, given the fact that they accumulate data through 24-hour surveillance, ensuring the intelligence is valid in order to regulate precision attacks from a safe distance without endangering their lives. The narrative of 'precision' is also one with great power considering that politicians cannot have significant amounts of collateral damage attributed to their name, especially when fighting a war that is

not immediately threatening to their borders. Distance, as well as precision, become 'political', thus they are used very often in order to describe this new tactic without attracting much criticism (Trenta, 2021, pg. 472). Furthermore, the 'political distance' of remoteness allows policymakers to deploy more and more force outside the limits of public and parliamentary scrutiny (ibid). In fact, according to McKay, *"recent practices of remote warfare are characterised by "opacity." They tend to develop beyond the reach of public and parliamentary scrutiny"* (McKay 2021b). It seems that this opacity truly benefits those supporting remote warfare, given that it offers room for more complex operations.

What is also noteworthy, is that there is speculation that future pilots might direct swarms of intelligent drones with a geographic information system (GIS) program, thus appearing to be on the loop but not in the loop (Shaw, 2017, pg. 459). According to Shaw, *"the end result would be a revolution in the roles of humans in air warfare"* (ibid). In the future, remote warfare weapons could remove almost completely the human factor from war in general, at least for those who can afford them. The soldiers will no longer be required to face the enemy up close nor deal with the devastation created by an attack they caused. It is argued that drone operators specifically, do not have to deal with the same psychological issues stemming from the act of killing, considering that their targets are positioned at a great distance from their own physical location.

Moreover, the three key obligations that apply to all parties involved in conflicts, namely that *"they must distinguish between combatants and civilians, they must direct attacks only against combatants, and they must take precautions to minimize collateral civilian casualties"*, also apply to remote warfare regardless of the distance between the two opposing sides (Rothenberg, 2014, pg. 446). Therefore, when it comes to the legal obligations of those conducting remote warfare, there is not much difference from those of traditional warfare that is regulated by international law. In addition, there is the 'basic rule' of distinction, according to which *"in order to ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects, the Parties to the conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives"* (Turns, 2014, pg. 203). Bearing this in mind, intelligence gathering via drones or cyber operations is being done with extensive care in order to ensure their validity before engaging in lethal force actions.

An example of a successful remote warfare operation was the assassination of Baitullah Mehsud, a leading terrorist in Waziristan, Pakistan, by a Predator strike in August 2009 (Gregory, 2011, pg. 241). As technology progresses, it becomes evident that the precision required to reach success in this type of operation is constantly evolving and ameliorating. To

be more specific, across Iraq and Syria, US drones have been essential to over 19,600 coalition airstrikes against Islamic State between August 2014 and April 2017 (Airwars, 2017). While the hunt for terrorists and the Global War on Terror continue, remote warfare weapons play a crucial role in the narrative supporting it to the public, bearing in mind the significance of distance to people who have lost family and friends not only on the ground of foreign lands but also those who have suffered losses outside their own home caused by terrorist attacks.

In Opposition to Remote Warfare

According to Peter W. Singer, remote warfare weapons create the idea of riskless warfare, which as a result, *"appearing to lower the human costs of war, may seduce us into more wars"* (Lifton, 2013, pg. 15). This constitutes the most important argument the critics of remote warfare possess, given that narratives have the power to change how people feel about a situation which in any other case they would strongly oppose instead of supporting. The lure of riskless warfare is a highly dangerous narrative as well as a truly unrealistic one. War always has casualties no matter the side. Even though drones or AWS limit the numbers of casualties on the side that operates them, they do not have the power to ensure a no casualty scenario on the opposite camp.

In fact, despite arguments that drones are more precise in targeting, thus being able to reduce civilian casualties, there is still evidence that armed drones may actually lower make the use of lethal force easier, especially outside of armed conflict, and at the same time encourage their use in a way that questions international legal standards, resulting in an increase in the number of individuals affected by drone strikes (Dorsey and Bonacquisti, 2017, pg. 7). Bearing in mind the chaos created by a drone strike in a region, the damage does not solely include the number of deaths that occurred, but also the issues that will emerge with regard to the financial losses, the infrastructure destruction, as well as the physical and mental health of the population. Furthermore, some critics argue that drone attacks violate the sovereignty of the territorial state where the strikes occur, an issue that has yet to be resolved by the international community in order to be included in the regulations of international law (Ohlin, 2019, pg. 22).

In addition, the socio-psychological arguments of remote warfare's critics include the fragile psychological state of drone operators after a strike, as well as the public's detachment from the reality of lethal violence. To be more specific, Gusterson argues that *"because drone operators can develop an intimate understanding of the daily routines and social interactions of their targets, the violence they experience is in some ways more psychologically proximate*

than that of other soldiers, who are physically closer to the enemy but may get only a brief glimpse of, or never see at all, the people they kill" (Gusterson, 2016, pg. 72). This point of view fights the arguments supporting remote warfare weapons on the principle of soldiers not being exposed to the act of killing, while at the same time exposing the mental issues that could stem from the close surveillance of targets that drone operators end up killing. The PTSD with which soldiers on the ground return to their homes is not limited to them, but is also a very common mental issue among UAV operators. Moreover, with regard to the public, the socio-psychological detachment from the realities of political violence is labelled by Brunck as *"psychological remoteness"* (Brunck, 2020, pg. 516). This type of remoteness is caused due to the fact that people have a difficult time dealing with critical events and use this as a defence mechanism, something the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to light recently.

Another point of the opposing remote warfare side is the targeted killings technique which, according to Gabriella Blum and Philip Heymann, *"of all the coercive counterterrorism techniques employed by the United States, targeted killings have so far attracted the least public criticism"* (Blum and Heymann, 2010). In fact, the use of drones for the targeted killing of suspected terrorists has caused a major debate among scholars of international law, especially since the killing of Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, a suspected al-Qaeda operative, in November 2002 (Cullen, 2019, pg. 114). Even though the Global War on Terror has united several Western states in a common fight against terrorism, it remains debatable whether lethal force outside of the context of an armed conflict is legal under international law. Jane Mayer of the New Yorker claims that *"the embrace of the Predator Program has occurred with remarkably little public discussion, given that it represents a radically new and unbounded use of state-sanctioned lethal force"* (Mayer, 2009). The lack of criticism, the secrecy around remote warfare operations, their depiction as 'precise' and 'surgical', as well the asymmetrical distribution of death and suffering they impose, impedes democratic political deliberation on contemporary warfare (Demmers and Gould, 2021, pg. 34). In fact, people argue that it is these qualities of remote warfare that will push Western liberal democracies closer to war.

The issue with the images the media and politicians are trying to create around remote warfare is that nobody has the chance to find out the truth about these operations. The public is presented with information that only benefits the politicians in charge and the media is following their lead, given that whoever tries to uncover the truth ends up losing everything, including their lives in some cases. In fact, after every drone strike alleging to kill a handful of militants, an anonymous US government official offers comments to the press, calmly reassuring reporters that only the poorly portrayed enemies die in America's drone wars and the press wilfully echoes it (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 70).

A great example of the above-mentioned is the case of Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and alleged mastermind of the assassination of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was killed in a drone attack in the village of Zanghara in South Waziristan on August 7, 2009 (ibid). According to the report, he had been at the home of his father-in-law receiving intravenous treatment for diabetes when a missile fired from a Predator drone landed on the building resulting in his death. There was no mention in the media of his wife, father-in-law, and eight others who were victims of the attack as well. In addition, there was no mention that this strike succeeded after fifteen previously unsuccessful strikes against Mehsud, which resulted in the death of between 204 and 321 victims, from low-level Taliban to elderly tribal leaders to children (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 71). However, the information shared with the American public was that justice had been done and that the target was rightly eliminated.

4.6 Ethics

After having explored a wide variety of factors with regards to the concept and practices of remote warfare, before moving to the political speeches that will be analysed, a highly significant question remains unexplored. Is remote warfare ethical? Ethics has been taunting the human mind ever since the dangers of nature were taken care of. Given that war came long before that, though in a different sense during the early ages, it appears quite a dilemma to either support or oppose a seemingly bloodless and 'clean' type of warfare. Bearing in mind that political leaders reassure the public of the limited risks and collateral damage ensued by contrast to the traditional 'boots on the ground' tactics, it is rather perplexing to question such a cleverly constructed narrative. However, remote warfare remains a type of conducting war, which apart from being illegal under international law, is also a highly destructive action on every level of life.

To begin with, the asymmetrical nature of remote warfare constitutes one of the major debates on ethics. The technological advancements that have led to the remote warfare arsenal are not shared with every state, rather they remain in the hands of those who possess the power and wealth to provide for them, thus making every enemy without the respective equipment unable to respond to an equal level. Unlike nuclear weapons that if used could mean the end of the world, therefore those who possess them are very reluctant to actually use them, remote warfare weapons have been in use for decades, triggering forever wars in states who are not capable to respond due to their fragile status as well as lack of resources. To be more specific, using drones

to conduct warfare, there is no need to unite the country behind a conflict, no need to justify shared sacrifice, no need for continuous debates in Congress or Parliament. The public does not feel as opposed to remote warfare tactics as to traditional ones.

Nevertheless, Mandel wonders, *"if indeed remote technologies help to overcome democracies' casualty-sensitivity, and if 'bloodless war' becomes a reality, will these democracies then not become less 'cautious' in commencing the 'poor game' of war?"* (Mandel, 2004). When the choice to engage in a war without having suffered an immediate attack becomes easier and perhaps less costly in the public's point of view, the question of who would stop a government that has the support it needs to conduct remote warfare is born. The border between taking a part in a war due to imminent threat and due to power accumulation is very thin in the mind of every state leader even in the 21st century, something that is witnessed at the time of writing this thesis bearing witness to an ongoing war in Ukraine. The narrative of using remote warfare weapons to avoid havoc and disaster is one that falsely creates the image of a war with no casualties making it appear more ethical. That is never the case with any type of war.

In addition, drones are considered to be a type of *"bureaucratic killing machines"* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 78). However, they are built and defended by motivated human actors who use rhetorical techniques that compile politics and technology, military planning, and cultural assumptions about honour and sacrifice, thus resulting in convincing the public of the nobility as well as the necessity of the cause, rather than the reality of human suffering. The fact that targeted killing is done with drones instead of soldiers on the ground does not mean that it can be characterised as more ethical, especially considering that there is always someone watching, analysing, and in the end, making the decision to strike a target no matter the cost. What is noteworthy is that in order to succeed in a mission and eliminate a high-ranked terrorist in the fight against terrorism, for instance, more than one attempts are likely to happen, not only ending up terrorizing and traumatizing the local population but also causing collateral damage that might remain unreported.

Finally, it is highly important to question all the narratives surrounding a new concept that is introduced to the public, especially when the field it correlates with is the one of warfare. There is always a new perspective to examine in order to ensure the most objective attitude towards something as perplexing as war. It is not possible to choose a side and claim whether remote warfare is in fact ethical because, in every piece of information that is being declassified, there are new elements. In the end, it is grey areas that characterise the concept of remote warfare as in fact every aspect of warfare in general.

5. POLITICAL SPEECH ANALYSIS

Remote warfare has attracted much criticism and attention during the past decade, which is concerning, bearing in mind that it has been used by the military since before the Cold War. In many languages, the terms surrounding the concept of remote warfare have not even been translated yet, even though almost a decade has passed since the US government started to open up about the existence of such programs within their own military. However, other states have also engaged in remoted warfare tactics, especially after the surge of terrorist attacks in Europe. To be more specific, since the US Central Intelligence Agency increased the number of Predator drone strikes under the Obama administration, there has been a rise in interest in remote warfare and the weapons that are correlated to it (Shaw, 2017, pg. 453). In fact, a mere decade ago, the Pentagon was reported to be equipped with a fleet of well over 12,000 aerial drones medium-altitude Predator and Reaper drones that have been deployed outside of 'hot' battlefields in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia (Shaw, 2017, pg. 456).

What comes to mind after reviewing several articles and papers within the academic community debating the existence of remote warfare weapons and tactics though, is a ponder on the reasons it gained popularity in the media only after many years of being used. Even before these weapons were used for war purposes, they would be referred to as mere surveillance devices and the information surrounding them would be scarce. More specifically, it is argued that *"during the early years of George W. Bush's first administration drone attacks could be rationalized as surveillance tools or armed weapons that would take out high-value detainees who threatened coalition troops on the ground, but by the end of his second administration Bush supporters were talking about the need to unleash both the CIA and the JSOC outside of traditional warzones"* (Hasian, 2016, pg. 53). This shift contributed to the evolution of remote warfare weaponry, while also preparing the ground for the future president of the US in establishing their use as a standard proxy war tactic. The narrative of the Global War on Terror Bush created allowed him and his successors to make a case for getting involved in wars not only outside the borders of the country but also without the threat of imminent attack or an actual attack, which is justified under the UN Charter.

What is noteworthy, is that though President Barack Obama who took office in 2009 planned for the reduction of conventional forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, he escalated the tactic of drone wars, in some cases even quadrupling the number of lethal strikes (Hasian, 2016, pg. 128). Moreover, after members of his administration suggested eventually ending these

overseas contingency operations, he implied that the war against al-Qaeda and its affiliates needed to be geographically expanded so that the CIA and the JSOC could respond to *"new, emerging threats around the world"* (ibid.). The narrative of emerging threats played a major role in expanding remote warfare and introducing it to the public as a necessary tool in order for security to be ensured. While during the 2008 presidential campaign, many anti-war activists supported the election of Barack Obama, they came to discover that the peace candidate had turned into the "war president" (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 12). He only withdrew US troops from Iraq in December 2011 due to an agreement signed under President Bush, while at the same time he escalated the number of troops in Afghanistan (ibid.). This was a revelation that became more evident after many years of Obama's presidency when he eventually started to acknowledge the CIA's drone program. However, President Obama carried out his first drone strike three days after his inauguration, in Pakistan on January 23, 2009, though instead of striking a Taliban hideout, the missiles landed on the home of Malik Gulistan Khan, a tribal elder, and member of a local pro-government peace committee (ibid.). It was not until three years later that he even admitted publicly that the US had a covert drone program in Pakistan.

The power of political speeches and perception management lies in the proper use of vocabulary, something that government officials, as well as leaders, have perfected over the years of their careers. The US presidents' withholding information about military expeditions is nothing new. The support of the public plays a great role in the re-election of politicians, thus speech tactics, such as feigning ignorance, using plausible deniability, or mere secrecy are essential to them. In the case of the US, while the most extensive and lethal drone program outside a war zone is run by the CIA, publicly, nobody even acknowledges its existence (Benjamin, 2012, pg. 10). According to Benjamin, *"when the ACLU tried to get information about the CIA's drone killings, the agency argued - and the court agreed - that even the 'fact of the existence or non-existence' of such a program was classified"* (ibid.). This proves that even the legal implications of remote warfare have yet to be clarified. What is noteworthy is the fact that even the US Attorney General, Eric Holder, who addressed the issue of drone strikes in a speech in March 2012, stated that the US government's *"legal authority is not limited to the battlefields in Afghanistan"* and that there were circumstances under which *"an operation using lethal force in a foreign country, targeted against a US citizen who is a senior operational leader of al-Qaeda or associated forces, and who is actively engaged in planning to kill Americans, would be lawful"* (Casey-Maslen, 2018, pg. 389). Holder based his arguments on the nature of the stateless enemy that was al-Qaeda and other terrorist organisations, using it as the main reason to eradicate borders in the fight against terrorism.

Furthermore, the tactics used by several government officials, as well as President Obama who truly advanced the drone programmes, were denial, secrecy as well as strategic ignorance. In fact, when it comes to remote warfare, the Obama administration has kept most of its activities out of the gaze of Congress, the courts, and the independent media, refusing to discuss key aspects of its drone program, while a significant amount of information about the number of drone strikes or casualties from these strikes remains unknown (Boyle, 2015, pg. 118). To be more specific, the politicians and officials who had access to this information, first denied the existence of these casualties and later their knowledge of them. According to Gould and Stel, *"such maintaining, feigning and imposing ignorance is a central component in upholding dominant legitimations of remote warfare as being particularly precise and just"* (Gould and Stel, 2021, pg. 2). Moreover, from Washington's perspective, drones are attractive because, despite the significant psychological intimacies experienced by drone pilots, the use of drones does not generate the kind of political opposition that comes with more conventional interventions (Mayer, 2015, pg. 767–8).

What has helped the remote warfare narrative given that nowadays drone strikes are frequently in the news, is the light footprint of drone technology that enables governments to escape public scrutiny over their decisions to expand counterterrorism activities around the world. The years of secrecy and denial have long passed and Obama's last tactic before leaving office was strategic ignorance. A good example would be the fact that he insisted that death tolls from US drone strikes were substantially lower than many scholars of US military policies believe, stating in 2016 that *"between 64 and 116 civilians were killed by drone strikes during his tenure as president"*, something that is not the case (McGoey, 2019, pg. 91). Even in his early years of presidency, according to Gross, *"by the time the Norwegian Nobel Committee decided to award President Obama the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2009, after merely ten months in office, he had already authorized more drone attacks in Pakistan than President Bush authorized 'during the entirety' of his presidency"* (Gross, 2016, pg. 4).

The analysis of the following two speeches by Barack Obama and John Brennan will help to understand the creation of the narratives supporting remote warfare weapons, especially drones. Having a thorough understanding of the concept of remote warfare, it is important to be able to detect specific words or style that serve the purpose of shifting the public's attitudes towards a certain side, whether supportive of something or not. Language in general has always served as a tool to promote ideas and beliefs. Political language has perfected the persuasion tactic, creating very convincing arguments, while also managing perspectives. In some cases, it is more obvious than in others but the goal is still achieved.

Remarks by John Brennan at the Woodrow Wilson Centre

John Brennan, the White House's top counter-terrorism expert and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, made a speech at the Woodrow Wilson Centre on April 30, 2012, on the topic of "Efficacy and Ethics of U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy" (The Efficacy and Ethics of U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy, 2012). It was only a year after Osama bin Laden had been killed, that Brennan discussed at the Director's Forum the Administration's ongoing efforts to destroy al Qaeda and its affiliates, as well as the standards and practices surrounding them. There, he acknowledged the use of drone strikes against terrorists as well as targeted killings overseas. Therefore, he was asked to deliver a speech at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in order to explain and discuss these new to the public methods of remote warfare with the help of which, a major threat to the world was eliminated. Having managed to effectively accomplish such a challenging operation, it will certainly be easier to create a narrative in support of not only drone strikes but also of other remote warfare weapons, based on the success previously mentioned without a significant amount of casualties. As the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, John Brennan constitutes the most suitable advocate for the methods the US was using at the time in the war against terrorism.

To begin with, he states that *"it is fitting that we have this discussion here today at the Woodrow Wilson Centre. It was here in August of 2007 that then-Senator Obama described how he would bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end and refocus our efforts on 'the war that has to be won,' the war against al-Qaeda, particularly in the tribal regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan"*. It becomes evident that Brennan wishes to create an image that he is close to his audience by using the pronoun 'we', while also making the people there feel like they take part in the decision-making process even indirectly. Moreover, this statement refers to the political past of the President when as a Senator, he was convinced to end the suffering stemming from terrorist groups. Mentioning the fact that it was at the same place Obama had fiercely supported in a speech the need to win the War on Terror brings to the minds of the audience a type of poetic justice, as well as a reassurance that the main goals of the administration have not changed after Obama's election.

To support the fact that the Administration is keen on not simply winning such a perplexing type of war but also not forgetting the US's values in the meantime, Brennan refers to the words of Obama where *"he said that we would carry on this fight while upholding the laws and our values, and that we would work with allies and partners whenever possible. But he also made it clear that he would not hesitate to use military force against terrorists who pose a direct threat to America. And he said that if he had actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist*

targets, including in Pakistan, he would act to protect the American people". By repeating this part of the speech the President made, he is trying to appease the public that no illegal actions will take place in the war against terrorists unless a direct threat to America presents when there will be no hesitation. However, mentioning that allies and partners will have the opportunity to help when it is possible, serves as a reminder that US's actions will adhere to international law and be recognised by other countries as well. In addition, by putting the verb 'hesitate' followed by 'military force' in the same sentence, he wishes to establish that if needed, there will be a strict stance towards those who are considered to be enemies of the US. Lastly, given that until then, the operations against al Qaeda took place mainly in Afghanistan, by mentioning Pakistan, it becomes known that there will be an expansion of the theatre of operations.

Brennan continues in his own words to comment on the elimination of the founder of al Qaeda by saying that *"the death of bin Laden was our most strategic blow yet against al-Qaeda. Credit for that success belongs to the courageous forces who carried out that mission, at extraordinary risk to their lives; to the many intelligence professionals who pieced together the clues that led to bin Laden's hideout; and to President Obama, who gave the order to go in"*. In this statement, he is certainly praising not only the decision itself by the President to authorize this action but also all the professionals who were involved at all levels. To be more specific, he characterises this targeted killing as the 'most strategic blow', a very strong claim considering he is talking about an assassination. More importantly, though, he makes a point about the courage all these professionals had as well as the high level of risk they had to consider in order to engage in such an operation. By choosing to present this side of the operation, he is attempting to bring up empathy to his audience and feelings of pride, respect, or even worry for those who risked their lives on the ground.

Nevertheless, while it is important to acknowledge that a grave threat has been removed, Brennan has to promote the image that such is the nature of this threat in total that taking out the head of the organisation is not enough to put an end to it. In fact, he claims that *"we've always been clear that the end of bin Laden would neither mark the end of al-Qaida, nor our resolve to destroy it. So along with allies and partners, we have been unrelenting. And when we assess that al-Qaida of 2012, I think it is fair to say that, as a result of our efforts, the United States is more secure and the American people are safer"*. This statement aims both to create some level of fear for the future with regards to al Qaeda despite the fact that the organization's most important member no longer lives, as well as to reassure that the administration will do anything in its power to dismantle it. More importantly, Brennan is trying to create a feeling of safety by using the words 'secure' and 'safer' one after the other, even though they essentially have the same meaning. This calculated repetition is very common in political speeches, aiming to enhance the legitimacy of the concept that is to be communicated to the audience.

Brennan continues his speech by claiming that *"the dangerous threat from al-Qaida has not disappeared"* and that *"despite the great progress we've made against al-Qaida, it would be a mistake to believe this threat has passed. Al-Qaida and its associated forces still have the intent to attack the United States. And we have seen lone individuals, including American citizens, often inspired by al-Qaida's murderous ideology, kill innocent Americans and seek to do us harm"*. He appears to be repeating the word 'threat' when he uses al Qaeda in a sentence, something that aims to link to the minds of the public which these two concepts correspond, thus creating an immediate negative connotation. Moreover, he suggests that the operations against the organization will not stop, given that the threat to the US remains. What is noteworthy is the fact that he refers indirectly to the case of an American citizen with roots in Yemen who was killed by the CIA due to suspicions of partnership with al Qaeda, something that drew significant attention from the media, NGOs, and activists. By including American citizens in the targeting of enemies of the state, Brennan wishes to make clear the fact that nobody will escape the punishment that will come from cooperating with terrorists against the US. Another interesting point is the use of the phrase 'al-Qaida's murderous ideology', which has very intense connotations, thus aiming to create feelings of aversion to the audience. Such an emotionally charged word as 'murderous' builds up the pattern of the 'evil' ideology the US is trying to present the one al Qaeda adheres to.

Furthermore, he wishes to add more legitimacy to his presentation of remote warfare tactics to the public, therefore he mentions officials such as Jeh Johnson, the general counsel at the Department of Defense, who *"has addressed the legal basis for our military efforts against al-Qaida"*, as well as Stephen Preston, the general counsel at the CIA, who *"has discussed how the agency operates under U.S. law"*. He also mentions Harold Koh, the State Department legal adviser, who noted in a lecture that took place two years before the previous statements that *"U.S. targeting practices, including lethal operations conducted with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, comply with all applicable law, including the laws of war"*. To begin with, the positions of these people create a sentiment of admiration in the audience, given that they are highly ranked officials who are responsible for the rule of law and military operations. This tactic is used to generate levels of legitimacy for the actions of the administration, especially considering that to the eyes of the public, representatives of the US legal department constitute safeguards of the law with no political ties. Moreover, when the State Department legal adviser speaks openly about the UAVs use being used in lethal operations, while also claiming that they do not violate the US law, it brings a certain feeling of transparency in opposition to the secrecy experienced in the previous years.

Brennan's next interesting point is that *"in the course of the war in Afghanistan and the fight against al-Qaida, I think the American people expect us to use advanced technologies, for*

example, to prevent attacks on U.S. forces and to remove terrorists from the battlefield. We do, and it has saved the lives of our men and women in uniform. What has clearly captured the attention of many, however, is a different practice, beyond hot battlefields like Afghanistan, identifying specific members of al-Qaida and then targeting them with lethal force, often using aircraft remotely operated by pilots who can be hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away". He starts by expressing certainty about the expectation of US citizens for their government to use the advanced technologies available in the military in order to deter attacks. This is an effort to indirectly establish what he actually wishes to promote as a given, even though it is mere speculation. Bearing in mind that every year the budget of the military field is significantly higher than others which are more important domestically, such as education or health, this statement is somewhat bold as a given.

In addition, the verbs 'prevent' and 'remove' are used many times throughout the speech in order to reassure the audience that this is the ultimate goal of the administration, to deter danger in the country. He also mentions 'men and women in uniform' in an attempt to generate sentiments of sympathy and compassion, so that the public will react less intensely to the use of lethal force that follows. What is also important in this statement is the mention of the pilots operating the UAVs who will be significantly far away from the ground and the dangers that emerge from being in the field. This plays a critical role in the narrative the US government wishes to create in support of remote warfare weapons, considering that the factor of safety for US army soldiers weighs heavily on the minds of American citizens, especially after the large deployment of troops in Afghanistan that has resulted in the deaths of many.

Brennan continues his building up of the narrative by admitting that *"in full accordance with the law, and in order to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States and to save American lives, the United States Government conducts targeted strikes against specific al-Qaida terrorists, sometimes using remotely piloted aircraft, often referred to publicly as drones. And I'm here today because President Obama has instructed us to be more open with the American people about these efforts"*. By confirming not only that what has been communicated by the media about targeted killings is true but also that the President has authorized him to inform the public of the facts, he is aiming to convince the audience that transparency and honesty are the main priorities of the administration with regards to the presentation of drone strikes. The insistence of President Obama to be more open with the public concerning targeted killings might persuade the public of the legitimacy these efforts ensure.

Furthermore, enhancing the narrative of adherence to the rule of law, Brennan refers to domestic law by claiming that *"the Constitution empowers the president to protect the nation from any imminent threat of attack. The Authorization for Use of Military Force, the AUMF,*

passed by Congress after the September 11th attacks authorized the president 'to use all necessary and appropriate forces" against those nations, organizations, and individuals responsible for 9/11'". Referring to the Constitution and Congress strengthens the perception of the audience about the use of such tactics, given that these institutions offer an additional level of validity. Apart from domestic law, there is also international law which governs the international community's actions. Therefore, he does not fail to mention that *"as a matter of international law, the United States is in an armed conflict with al-Qaida, the Taliban, and associated forces, in response to the 9/11 attacks, and we may also use force consistent with our inherent right of national self-defence. There is nothing in international law that bans the use of remotely piloted aircraft for this purpose or that prohibits us from using lethal force against our enemies outside of an active battlefield, at least when the country involved consents or is unable or unwilling to take action against the threat"*. The 9/11 attacks are presented as the action that triggered the self-defence clause that in international law justifies the use of lethal force against terrorist groups. What is noteworthy is the claim that the use of remotely piloted aircrafts as well as lethal force is not prohibited in the context of an armed conflict even if there is no specific theatre of conflict. However, given that the UN Charter only mentions the existence of a previous attack or an imminent threat, the fact that the Obama administration supports that there is no law strictly banning the use of remote warfare weapons, shows that there are loopholes that require the renewal of the legal framework concerning the use of such advanced technologies on the battlefield.

Brennan continues his speech by presenting the principles surrounding the targeted strikes with the help of drones in an attempt to convince the public of the attention the administration pays to the ethical implications of such tactics. To be more specific, firstly he states that *"targeted strikes conform to the principle of necessity, the requirement that the target have definite military value"*, then adds that *"targeted strikes conform to the principles of distinction, the idea that only military objectives may be intentionally targeted and that civilians are protected from being intentionally targeted. With the unprecedented ability of remotely piloted aircraft to precisely target a military objective while minimizing collateral damage, one could argue that never before has there been a weapon that allows us to distinguish more effectively between an al-Qaida terrorist and innocent civilians"*. These first two principles aim to reassure the commitment to the values of the US supporting that no collateral damage and civilian casualties should result from the US military's actions. Mentioning that targeted strikes strictly take place after thorough research and data collection in order to protect civilians, while also claiming the precision and effectiveness with which these weapons work constitute the most crucial arguments in support of remote warfare. These could be characterised as the winning arguments

that will draw the endorsement by the public that the government needs, especially after being criticised due to the secrecy behind these operations.

He continues with *"the principle of proportionality, the notion that the anticipated collateral damage of an action cannot be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage"* and ends with *"the principle of humanity which requires us to use weapons that will not inflict unnecessary suffering. For all these reasons, I suggest to you that these targeted strikes against al-Qaida terrorists are indeed ethical and just"*. The two last principles build up his conclusion on why targeted killings are ethical and fair. The way he makes the arguments and presents the principles carefully creates the idea that they are indeed true and his tone leaves no room for questioning. Furthermore, leaving the principles that concern the loss of human lives last, serves in creating the idea that justice is the main goal of these tactics in order to ensure that no additional damage will be done.

After having proved to the audience that targeted strikes are the result of ethical decisions, he proceeds to present the need for them in the war against terrorism by claiming that they are wise. He justifies this by saying that *"remotely piloted aircraft in particular can be a wise choice because of geography, with their ability to fly hundreds of miles over the most treacherous terrain, strike their targets with astonishing precision, and then return to base. They can be a wise choice because of time, when windows of opportunity can close quickly and there just may be only minutes to act. They can be a wise choice because they dramatically reduce the danger to U.S. personnel, even eliminating the danger altogether. Yet they are also a wise choice because they dramatically reduce the danger to innocent civilians, especially considered against massive ordnance that can cause injury and death far beyond their intended target"*. The factor of geography is mentioned not only so that the long distance between the piloted aircrafts and the battlefield is emphasised, but also due to the fact that it will highlight the narrative of precision that is promoted by the Obama administration. Moreover, time plays a significant role in convincing the public, bearing in mind that it ensures effectiveness and immediate response by contrast to sending an entire team on the ground. Most importantly though, the concept of diminishing danger both to US soldiers and to civilians constitutes the strongest point in this statement, considering that it will draw feelings of compassion from the audience, thus attracting more support to the tactics.

He continues to build up the argument of precision by claiming that "*it's this surgical precision, the ability, with laser-like focus, to eliminate the cancerous tumour called an al-Qaida terrorist while limiting damage to the tissue around it, that makes this counterterrorism tool so essential*". The adjective 'surgical' before the word 'precision' is very carefully chosen in order to put emphasis on the statement. Furthermore, calling al Qaeda a 'cancerous tumour' carries

negative connotations linking a devastating type of disease with a terrorist organisation to the minds of the audience.

Another interesting point Brennan notes is that *"countries typically don't want foreign soldiers in their cities and towns. In fact, large, intrusive military deployments risk playing into al-Qaida's strategy of trying to draw us into long, costly wars that drain us financially, inflame anti-American resentment, and inspire the next generation of terrorists. In comparison, there is the precision of targeted strikes"*. The argument about creating feelings of resentment towards America or the West in general in the case of sending troops and conducting a costly war generates the idea that using remote warfare weapons eliminates this risk and weighs less in terms of cost. He also adds that *"the United States is the first nation to regularly conduct strikes using remotely piloted aircraft in an armed conflict. Other nations also possess this technology, and any more nations are seeking it, and more will succeed in acquiring it"*. This statement reassures the audience that these methods will continue to exist and evolved, as well as that not only the US is operating in such a way, but rather that it is already a reality in other countries.

In addition, he confidently assures the public that *"there have indeed been occasions when we decided against conducting a strike in order to avoid the injury or death of innocent civilians. This reflects our commitment to doing everything in our power to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means having to come back another day to take out that terrorist, as we have done previously"*, something that aims to convince of the respect for life that the administration advocates. However, even though he is assertive about the justice of the administration's methods, he acknowledges that there is the error factor by saying that *"there have indeed been instances when, despite the extraordinary precautions we take, civilians have been accidently killed or worse -- have been accidentally injured, or worse, killed in these strikes. It is exceedingly rare, but it has happened. When it does, it pains us, and we regret it deeply, as we do any time innocents are killed in war. And when it happens we take it very, very seriously. We go back and we review our actions. We examine our practices. And we constantly work to improve and refine our efforts so that we are doing everything in our power to prevent the loss of innocent life. This too is a reflection of our values as Americans"*. This is an attempt to make the public believe that transparency is also highly important both to the administration and to the President himself.

Finally, he closes his remarks by stating that *"we are at war. We are at war against a terrorist organization called al-Qaida that has brutally murdered thousands of Americans, men, women and children, as well as thousands of other innocent people around the world. In recent years, with the help of targeted strikes, we have turned al-Qaida into a shadow of what it once was.*

They are on the road to destruction". This entire statement has every element needed in a political speech to establish the desired narrative, given that even the tone of the speaker has a dramatic flair. The reassurance that even though many innocent people have been killed in this war against terrorism, these new methods will make sure that no more casualties will take place and the enemy will be destroyed play the most important role in the conclusion Brennan wishes to make in order to promote the administration's side and put a stop to the criticism they have attracted.

Remarks by President Obama at the National Defense University

In a speech at the National Defense University on May 23, 2013, President Barack Obama addressed openly the use of drones in support of the Global War on Terror that began years before his first term (Remarks by the President at the National Defense University, 2013). Until that date, US government officials and various people working for different aspects of the US drone programme had not engaged in communicating information to the public, reaching high levels of deniability and secrecy which attracted much criticism on remote warfare tactics. What is noteworthy is that even though President Obama carried out his first drone strike three days after his first inauguration in Pakistan on January 23, 2009, it was in 2013 that he addressed the issue more openly to the public (ibid.).

Starting his speech with a reference to September 11, 2001, stating that *"we were shaken out of complacency"*, using the pronoun 'we' to refer to the USA, it becomes evident that even though this terrorist attack happened more than a decade ago, it would serve as a basis for the never-ending war against terrorism. It appears that 9/11 is often mentioned in political speeches that concern the use of lethal force in countries with which the US is not directly at war. Moreover, the claim that *"a group of terrorists came to kill as many civilians as they could"* following the previous statement is adding up to the narrative that was created by President Bush supporting the war against terrorism. The word 'kill' alongside 'civilians' builds on the image of terrorists being criminals who simply kill innocent people. As a result, the public has already formed a negative impression, if not loathing, of terrorist groups and is ready to accept any act of defeating this harmful enemy.

President Obama continues with a statement that should create a sense of pride in his audience claiming that *"we strengthened our defences -- hardening targets, tightening transportation security, giving law enforcement new tools to prevent terror. Most of these changes were sound. Some caused inconvenience. But some, like expanded surveillance, raised difficult questions*

about the balance that we strike between our interests in security and our values of privacy". This illustrates the effort the US government has put in not only combating terrorism but also in creating the proper ground for the legality of its newest tactics, namely remote warfare weapons, such as drones. However, given the fact that he is aware of the existing criticism of these methods, he is sure to appease any sentiment of distrust by attempting to ensure transparency and respect for the traditional values democracy should offer, namely privacy and security. While the word 'security' plays an important role throughout this speech, it is not only used to alleviate worries about an imminent threat but also to create a positive attitude towards methods that should be used in order to ensure its existence.

In an attempt to sum up his statement about ensuring safety, he claims that *"we are safer because of our efforts"*. However, he continues in a different tone in order to not completely shut down the need for further engagement in proxy wars by urging the public to not be mistaken, given that *"our nation is still threatened by terrorists"*. Using the diptych 'safety-threat', the President creates the idea that everything happening on the war front has led to a safe environment within the US, while at the same time reminding the public that there is still a looming threat by terrorists who live in the other side of the world, thus making it necessary to fight back in order to eradicate this threat. Politicians need the public's support to be able to continue their work and voters should believe in the necessity of the new methods one suggests in order to be convinced.

The President's next point gets right into the topic he wishes to introduce and elaborate on, namely the use of drones and other remote warfare weapons in the fight against terrorism. More specifically, he argues that *"with a decade of experience now to draw from, this is the moment to ask ourselves hard questions -- about the nature of today's threats and how we should confront them"*. After the word 'threat', the verb 'confront' follows and the speaker's tone suggests the urgency that lies beneath the statement. In addition, there is a hint of change regarding the nature of the threats, which makes the shift in the nature of warfare easier to deduce. The previous statement served as an introduction to the main topic at hand, while the following dives into it, claiming that *"from our use of drones to the detention of terrorist suspects, the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation -- and world -- that we leave to our children"*. The issue of drones was highly controversial at the time, given that information about targeted assassinations by UAVs was leaked to the public, thus the first sentence with the word 'drone' is followed by 'children', possibly to deescalate the tension that had been built up. Referring to children's future is surely something that would convince the public of the methods that need to be used in order to provide a better future.

An effort to appeal to the more emotional side of the public follows the previous statement, claiming that *"we will never erase the evil that lies in the hearts of some human beings"*. The use of the word 'evil' has been used before by President Reagan to describe the USSR, thus creating a connection to the minds of older voters who might not quite understand the implications of remote warfare, but the link to the Cold War era could convince them more easily to accept it. Moreover, by stating that there are people who have evil in their hearts which results in forming terrorist groups and threatening the nation's security, the speaker leaves no room for mediation efforts, rather than removing the logical thinking from terrorists' minds and somewhat dehumanizes their behaviour. This could be characterised as the most brilliant move on the part of the US President as it allows him to not only justify but more importantly, rationalize the use of lethal force by drones, without even endangering the country's armed forces, in order to eliminate not people, rather than targets. Dehumanisation is the key in every type of war, but in remote warfare, it serves the narrative of 'clean warfare' that the Obama administration was trying to promote.

After emphasising the danger that lies for the US and the world within terrorist groups, the President presents a significant issue that he needs to convince the receivers to support, considering that it is about continuing engagement in other countries without being formally at war with or threatened by them. He claims that *"what we've seen is the emergence of various al Qaeda affiliates. From Yemen to Iraq, from Somalia to North Africa, the threat today is more diffuse, with Al Qaeda's affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula -- AQAP -- the most active in plotting against our homeland"*. By suggesting that al Qaeda has managed to gather supporters from other countries, especially coming from the Arabian Peninsula, he is trying to convince the public that it is absolutely necessary to use lethal force, violating the sovereignty of these countries in an indirect way, given that the legal framework is yet unclear with regards to drones. He would not suggest sending more soldiers to these countries as it would create discontent and possibly riots, something that would have a toll on his popularity ratings. He continues by stating that *"unrest in the Arab world has also allowed extremists to gain a foothold in countries like Libya and Syria"*, widening, even more, the theatre of war.

President Obama also adds that *"beyond Afghanistan, we must define our effort not as a boundless 'global war on terror,' but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America"*, building up to his next statement which will reach to the point he wishes to make. *"So it is in this context that the United States has taken lethal, targeted action against al Qaeda and its associated forces, including with remotely piloted aircraft commonly referred to as drones"*. This is the first time that POTUS refers to drones officially to the public and informs the people of the US engagement in specific operations in countries not directly at war with the US. This speech was

delivered two years after an American citizen of Yemeni descent was killed by a drone strike ordered by President Obama, something that had already caused much unrest in the public. When more drone strikes and targeted killings became known to the people and were investigated by NGOs and reporters, it became evident to the administration that remote warfare tactics should be addressed to the public in order to limit the damage. However, bearing in mind that Obama authorized his first drone strike in 2009, whereas he spoke as transparently as he was allowed to about drone warfare in 2013 for the first time, it brings up many questions about the true numbers of deaths, collateral damage, or failed attempts that caused havoc in different regions.

In an effort to gain the public's support after revealing the use of lethal force by using drones, he mentions the ambiguity of the technology used by saying that *"as was true in previous armed conflicts, this new technology raises profound questions -- about who is targeted, and why; about civilian casualties, and the risk of creating new enemies; about the legality of such strikes under U.S. and international law; about accountability and morality"*. The key words in this sentence are 'civilian casualties', 'legality', 'accountability', and 'morality'. These serve as a way to convince the public that the government is always trying to have these in mind when operating, even when the results suggest otherwise. The President has mentioned all these as the questions that are raised with regards to remote warfare tactics in order to later break them down and present the government's legitimacy and effectiveness in using drones in proxy wars.

Starting with effectiveness and transparency, he claims that *"our actions are effective. Don't take my word for it. In the intelligence gathered at bin Laden's compound, we found that he wrote, "We could lose the reserves to enemy's air strikes. We cannot fight air strikes with explosives." Other communications from al Qaeda operatives confirm this as well. Dozens of highly skilled al Qaeda commanders, trainers, bomb makers and operatives have been taken off the battlefield. Plots have been disrupted that would have targeted international aviation, U.S. transit systems, European cities and our troops in Afghanistan. Simply put, these strikes have saved lives"*. He carefully presents bits of information gathered by intelligence agencies that help in the narrative of remote warfare being not only effective but also intimidating to the enemy. In addition, by using the name that all Americans both feared and despised before his elimination, Osama bin Laden, he fortifies the argument of efficacy, given that it was not an easy task to find him.

The President continues with legitimacy by stating that *"America's actions are legal. We were attacked on 9/11. Within a week, Congress overwhelmingly authorized the use of force. Under domestic law, and international law, the United States is at war with al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces. We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as*

many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war -- a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defence". He does not allow for contradiction but he is confident in his claim that these actions are legal, something that could be communicated to the public as established, even though there has not yet been a clear legal framework for the use of remote warfare weapons. By referring once again to 9/11, he aims at not allowing the receivers of the message to forget the feelings of anger, fear, and grief, rather than hold on to them and feel more passionate about the new tactics for killing terrorists. Even though 12 years have passed since then at the time of the speech, 9/11 remains the cornerstone of the never-ending war on terror, something that keeps being reminded to the people in order to justify deployment in other parts of the world. Moreover, President Obama, by characterising the fight against terrorism as a 'just war' and linking it with 'self-defence', is trying to enhance the narrative of legality not only with regards to domestic law but also to international law which only allows the use of lethal force in the context of self-defence. However, the UN Charter suggests that there should have been an attack or an imminent threat should exist in order to use lethal force, something that might have been the case in 9/11 but more than a decade later, it was ambiguous that the same argument had validity.

The President is determined throughout this speech to convince the public of the proper regulations that encircle remote warfare weapons, especially drones whose ambiguity has occupied the media. Therefore, he continues by claiming that *"over the last four years, my administration has worked vigorously to establish a framework that governs our use of force against terrorists –- insisting upon clear guidelines, oversight and accountability that is now codified in Presidential Policy Guidance that I signed yesterday".* To begin with, by saying that he signed a framework governing the use of force against terrorists only yesterday, he wishes to ensure the public that he is working constantly to protect human rights, even those of terrorists. Moreover, mentioning the fact that the signature took place the day before is a way to show the urgency of such a framework. What is noteworthy is the fact that drone strikes have started long before delivering this speech, thus this statement should provoke the public's discontent if not anger, though the President's tone and style create the exact opposite effect, at least to those who have not been exposed to media articles and reports about the aftermath of the strikes. In addition, the words 'clear', 'oversight' and 'accountability' are key words that help to enhance the legality of drone strikes in people's minds, given that where there are guidelines and regulations, the idea is to strictly follow them in order not to endanger innocent lives and cause collateral damage. It becomes evident that President Obama uses the technique of association, trying to link words to ideas or historical facts in order to bring up an emotional state that will allow him to convince more easily. Connecting in a speech past trauma and historical events that shook the entire world, namely the 9/11 attacks, to future threats and

challenges terrorism continues to pose to humanity makes the receivers more prone to agree to any method that will ensure the end of this feat and insecurity.

Nevertheless, it is not sustainable to be engaged in a forever war and the President understands that even though remote warfare tactics have managed to significantly reduce boots on the ground, the costs of these wars weigh immensely on the American taxpayer. Therefore, his next point is a reassurance that this situation is not bound to continue forever at this rate. More specifically, he suggests that *"by the end of 2014, we will no longer have the same need for force protection, and the progress we've made against core al Qaeda will reduce the need for unmanned strikes"*. Even though this statement does not convey the total elimination of drone strikes, it offers a very short window of time, considering that it was 2013 at the time of the speech, within which significant progress will have taken place to the point of a decrease of UAVs against al Qaeda. He makes a commitment to the American people that he will have accomplished such progress after only a year that it will be possible to reduce significantly drone strikes, given that safety in these regions will have increased, and consequently in the entire world.

He continues in the same spirit by declaring that *"beyond the Afghan theatre, we only target al Qaeda and its associated forces. And even then, the use of drones is heavily constrained. America does not take strikes when we have the ability to capture individual terrorists; our preference is always to detain, interrogate, and prosecute. America cannot take strikes wherever we choose; our actions are bound by consultations with partners, and respect for state sovereignty"*. Bearing in mind that Obama spoke earlier about engagement in other countries that are not immediately involved in an armed conflict with the US, he begins by reminding the public once again that the war against terrorism goes beyond the borders of Afghanistan. This is mainly because much criticism has emerged following drone strikes and the evidence of collateral damage that have reached the media. Moreover, using the verb 'constrain' with regards to drones is an effort to create the idea that there are specific guidelines and legal framework before every strike is authorized. In addition, this statement strongly supports that the US does not engage in drone strikes deliberately, rather than takes surgically performed ones aiming to cause as less collateral damage or mistakes as possible. The mentioning of partners and respect for state sovereignty aims to fortify the narrative in support of remote warfare by creating an image of a complete and utter agreement between the leaders of states in the use of drones. The international support for this new tactic of warfare stemming from the fear of terrorism enhances the legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

Remaining on the same issue, the President claims that *"we act against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the American people, and when there are no other*

governments capable of effectively addressing the threat. And before any strike is taken, there must be near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured -- the highest standard we can set". The phrases 'near-certainty', 'no civilians will be killed or injured' and 'highest standard' keep building up the cleanness argument about remote warfare, suggesting that with the help of drones, their operators are capable of properly and accurately identifying the targets without endangering innocent people's lives. This constitutes the most significant argument the Obama administration is trying to promote in order to increase support for these operations and, as a result, it is being directly as well as indirectly mentioned throughout the speech.

His next arguments have the goal to convince the public that the administration is aware of the criticism that exists concerning drones and targeted strikes and he is making an effort to appease these feelings of distrust. To be more specific, he claims that *"this last point is critical, because much of the criticism about drone strikes -- both here at home and abroad -- understandably centres on reports of civilian casualties. There's a wide gap between U.S. assessments of such casualties and nongovernmental reports. Nevertheless, it is a hard fact that U.S. strikes have resulted in civilian casualties, a risk that exists in every war. And for the families of those civilians, no words or legal construct can justify their loss. For me, and those in my chain of command, those deaths will haunt us as long as we live, just as we are haunted by the civilian casualties that have occurred throughout conventional fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq"*. The topic of civilian casualties is the reason why remote warfare has attracted much tension even though it is not an entirely new concept in warfare. The President addresses the chasm that exists between official government reports and those conducted by non-governmental organisations in a way to show that he does not need to hide from what the press has revealed. He accepts publicly for the first time that, even though drones are supposed to be as infallible as possible, it is a fact that there has been collateral damage. However, by stating that this is a risk in every war, he is trying to minimize the issue and create the image that this is a reality no matter the weapon. Moreover, the verb 'haunt' he uses to ensure to those listening that these deaths do not go unnoticed by officials has very strong connotations and aims to transmit feelings of sorrow for these losses.

President Obama finishes his speech with the following claims and assurances: *"The very precision of drone strikes and the necessary secrecy often involved in such actions can end up shielding our government from the public scrutiny that a troop deployment invites. It can also lead a President and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism. And for this reason, I've insisted on strong oversight of all lethal action. After I took office, my administration began briefing all strikes outside of Iraq and Afghanistan to the appropriate committees of Congress. Let me repeat that: Not only did Congress authorize the use of force, it is briefed on every strike that America takes. Every strike"*. Firstly, the concept of 'precision'

is the protagonist of the entire speech, which is why he decides to mention it in the end as well. Furthermore, he lists the dangers that remote warfare weapons could have with regards to non-transparency and exploitation by the leadership, while at the same time he claims that due to these dangers, he is decided to be aware of every new action a drone operator takes. In fact, he emphasizes how important it is to him to be briefed on each and every drone strike, aiming to reassure the public of the significance of these tactics. He is then met with applause coming from the public, having successfully promoted the narrative of effectiveness his administration needed to push in order to limit the amount of controversy and criticism that had been built up.

Statements by the Obama Administration Officials

Remote warfare weapons and more specifically, drones, have drawn a lot of criticism given the secrecy with which they are surrounded. Even though remotely piloted aircrafts have been introduced in the theatre of war since the 20th century, it was not until the Obama administration that they drew attention from the media, NGOs, as well as UN bodies concerning the legitimacy and transparency they offered. What is noteworthy is the fact that at the beginning of Obama's first term, the guideline for government officials was to deny even the existence of the drones programme, something that is revealed by Robert Gibbs, a former White House spokesperson, who has admitted that he was told to not even admit that such a programme exists (Boyle, 2015, pg. 118).

However, after a few years and many cases of targeted killings making headlines, the communication strategy changed. It was not possible to hide reports about the real numbers of collateral damage. Therefore, the narrative about how precise and just remote warfare weapons are started to build up. A statement by Jeff Hawkins from the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour that *"there's a war going on and drones are the most refined, accurate and humane way to fight it"* significantly enhances support, especially considering his addition of humanity to the narrative (Chamayou, 2015, pg. 135). The choice of words appears to be very carefully chosen in order to briefly present the advantages of such tactics.

Nevertheless, an example of true transparency constitutes a statement by Jeffrey Addicott, former senior legal adviser to the US Army Special Forces, who, in response to low civilian casualty claims, told Reuters that *"based on my military experience, there's simply no way so few civilians have been killed. [F]or one bad guy you kill, you'd expect 1.5 civilian deaths because no matter how good the technology, killing from that high above, there's always the*

'oops' factor" (Human Rights Clinic at Columbia Law School and the Centre for Civilians in Conflict, 2012, pg. 31). Having the practical understanding and knowledge required to deal with such tactics, he does not hold back presenting the reality of collateral damage. In the end, it is a matter of careful planning and execution where the factor of civilian casualties cannot be utterly alleviated.

These were a few statements that allow further consideration with regards to the reality depicted by either governments or the media. Each and every official has a specific guideline concerning what they are allowed to divulge to the public. There are many sides to the same concept, the important thing is to cross-reference the facts. Along with the remarks both from John Brenna and President Obama himself, it becomes very clear that words and tone play a major role in convincing the public of a side of reality. Political speeches and rehearsed statements by government officials aim at bringing the public opinion closer to their side of the facts, ensuring the next term. It falls upon an individual's thought process and personality whether they will allow being convinced based solely on speeches.

CONCLUSION

Remote warfare has a central place in how most conflicts take place in this day and age. The most common battlefields of remote warfare are the ones related to terrorist groups, given that the Global War on Terror has been the main context for the introduction of such tactics to the public. Even though the concept of remote warfare is not new, the technological advancements that have allowed it to become somewhat of a norm are certainly the most up-to-date. A great example is the evolution of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, more commonly called the drone, which was also used during the 20th century, though the models then cannot compare with today's Predator or Reaper. Moreover, the Autonomous Weapons Systems, as well as cyber warfare operations have significantly evolved, while also their theatre of operations has expanded.

While remote warfare weapons started as surveillance tools, as the technology progressed, they also took part in other activities, such as targeted killings and strikes. This tactic attracted much criticism from the public, given that despite advocating for minimum collateral damage and civilian casualties, the true numbers that emerged from NGO-produced reports were significantly bigger than what was presented in the official reports. What is noteworthy, is the fact that even though drones, for instance, had been in use since the Bush administration and evolved substantially during the Obama terms, the Obama administration became more transparent about the drone strike program after the President's re-election in 2012 (Crawford, 2013, pg. xv). Until the re-election, government officials would not even engage in questions concerning the issue nor admit the existence of such programmes. The secrecy and denial that surrounded remote warfare tactics played a crucial role in the emergence of people opposing it, claiming that without true transparency, the US government along with the CIA were free to act regardless of legality in any case they deemed necessary.

However, remote warfare weapons have started to progressively be included in European states' military operations. More specifically, countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and even several smaller European states such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Denmark have incorporated remote warfare tools (McInnis, 2016). Many of these states have trained local forces in parts of Africa and the Middle East and organised airstrikes as part of the anti-ISIS Coalition (ibid.). This surge of interest in drone warfare especially has created sentiments of unease among European citizens, given that this technology is not available to all EU member-states. For example, according to Cole, as of 2018, four French Reaper drones have joined the

airbase in Niamey, in order to increase Operation Barkhane's capabilities, and in 2020 six more were planned to join the mission (Cole, 2018). Furthermore, Charpentreau notes that *"France is now using its drones while awaiting the development of the European project Eurodrone, which would also equip Italian and German forces and should be operational by 2025"* (Charpentreau, 2018). This could cause worry among southern European states who have not yet been able to acquire drones.

Indeed, *"there have been recent calls for a more robust EU Common Defence and Security Policy as was advanced in the EU Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe', including a call to increase investment in remotely piloted systems, though at the time of publication the European Defence Agency (EDA) has only invested in a Medium Altitude Long Endurance drone development project for surveillance purposes"* (Dorsey and Bonacquisti, 2017, pg. 7). Therefore, it becomes evident that most member-states are willing to adopt this relatively new type of warfare and enhance their presence in the war against terrorism.

Nevertheless, this does in no way mean that the basic rules of law and transparency should be overlooked. In fact, in 2014, the European Parliament adopted Resolution 2014/2567(RSP) on the use of armed drones, which indicated concern over the use of such technology outside the recognised legal framework and called on the Council *"to set forth a Common Position (now referred to as Council Decision) on the use of armed drones, called on the HR/VP, Member States and Council to oppose and ban extrajudicial targeted killings, encouraged follow-up on the two reports by UN Special Rapporteurs Christof Heyns and Ben Emmerson, and called for more transparency and accountability in the use of armed drones"* (Dorsey and Bonacquisti, 2017, pg. 13). This shows that not all aspects of remote warfare are to be incorporated into Europe's version. Despite the need for reformation within European states' militaries, the values that characterise Europe as a whole, especially the ones supporting the respect for human life, still work as a compass while navigating the new aspects of remote warfare.

Another important factor that remains one of the most debated issues concerning remote warfare is accountability. Apart from drone warfare, the use of fully autonomous weapons also creates an accountability gap as there is no clarity on who would be legally responsible for a robot's actions, namely the commander, programmer, manufacturer, or robot itself (Galliott, Macintosh and Ohlin, 2021, pg. 2). Furthermore, it is clear that without accountability, the parties involved would have less motivation to ensure robots would not endanger civilians and victims would be left unsatisfied that someone was punished for the harm they experienced (ibid.). This plays a great role in the narratives presented to the public.

To be more specific, throughout this paper the narratives both in support and in opposition to remote warfare are presented in order to make it more understandable how perception management works when a new concept is introduced. The speeches made by President Obama, as well as by John O. Brennan, constitute great examples of how narratives work. Both of them attempted to convince the public of the cleanness and precision remote warfare weapons offer on the battlefield. Their persistence in how distance favours those who operate drones, or cyber warfare tools aims at creating the idea that it is a safer choice in conducting war. Bearing in mind that these speeches took place many years after the establishment of the US drone programme and that before them, it was mostly denial that surrounded statements regarding this issue, it becomes evident that the information released to the public by NGOs concerning the true numbers of civilian casualties that resulted from targeted strikes was the driving force behind the attempt to transparency.

An interesting point of view from the other side of events, namely those constantly persecuted by drones in their everyday lives, a southern tribal sheikh from Yemen, Mullah Zabara, confessed to Jeremy Scahill that *"the US sees al Qaeda as terrorism, and we consider the drones as terrorism. The drones are flying day and night, frightening women and children, disturbing sleeping people. This is terrorism"* (Cohn, 2015, pg. 17). This constitutes a narrative that western media rarely or never present to the public. The power of representation and perception management lies within governments and the media, something that has been thoroughly analysed throughout this paper. This is the reason the theory of Constructivism was chosen from the beginning to explain the concept of remote warfare. Bearing in mind its ambiguous nature, it was important to present all the aspects leading up to the perceptions cultivated around the world.

In conclusion, the aim of this paper was to offer a wholesome view of this relatively new method of warfare in order to make more understandable the aspects of how war has been conducted for many years now despite not being as communicated to the public, as well as how it will perhaps be the central way of war in the future. While the epicentre of the thesis is the United States of America, remote warfare tactics are spread around the world, thus making it imperative for the academic community to examine all the factors pertaining to the concept. Given the fact that at the time of writing the war in Ukraine burst, it is highly important to take a closer look at the current events and how they are illustrated by the media, as well as what kinds of tactics are used within the war fronts.

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APPENDIX I

Transcript of Remarks by John O. Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, on April 30, 2012

"The Ethics and Efficacy of the President's Counterterrorism Strategy"

Jane Harman:

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the Wilson Center, and a special welcome to our chairman of the board Joe Gildenhorn and his wife Alma, who are very active on the Wilson - - who is very active on the Wilson council. This afternoon's conversation is, as I see it, a great tribute to the kind of work we do here. We care intensely about having our most important policymakers here, and in getting objective accounts of what the United States government and other governments around the world are doing. On September 10th, 2001, I had lunch with L. Paul Bremer. Jerry Bremer, as he is known, had chaired the congressionally chartered Commission on Terrorism on which I served.

It was one of three task forces to predict a major terror attack on U.S. soil. At that lunch, we lamented that no one was taking our report seriously. The next day, the world changed. In my capacity as a senior Democrat on the House intelligence committee, I was headed to the U.S. Capitol at 9:00 a.m. on 9/11 when an urgent call from my staff turned me around. To remind, most think that the Capitol, in which the intelligence committee offices were then located was the intended target of the fourth hijacked plane. Congress shut down. A terrible move, I thought, and 250 or so members mingled on the Capitol lawn, obvious targets if that plane had arrived. I frantically tried to reach my youngest child, then at a D.C. high school, but the cell towers were down.

I don't know where John Brennan was that day, but I do know that the arch of our lives came together after that when he served as deputy executive director of the CIA, when I became the ranking member on the House intelligence committee, when he became the first director of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, an organization that was set up by then-President Bush 43, when I was the principle author of legislation which became the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, a statute which we organized our intelligence community for the first time since 1947, and renamed TTIC, the organization that John had headed, the National Counter Terrorism Center, when he served as the first director of the NCTC, when I chaired the

intelligence subcommittee of the homeland security committee, when he moved into the White House as deputy national security advisor for homeland security and counterterrorism, and assistant to the president, and when I succeeded Lee Hamilton here at the Wilson Center last year.

Finally, when he became President Obama's point person on counterterrorism strategy, and when the Wilson Center commenced a series of programs which as still ongoing, the first of which we held on 9/12/2011 to ask what the next 10 years should look like, and whether this country needs a clearer legal framework around domestic intelligence.

Clearly, the success story of the past decade is last May's takedown of Osama bin Laden. At the center of that effort were the senior security leadership of our country. I noticed Denis McDonough in the audience, right here in the front row, and certainly it included President Obama and John Brennan. They made the tough calls.

But I also know, and we all know, how selfless and extraordinary were the actions of unnamed intelligence officials and Navy SEALs. The operation depended on their remarkable skills and personal courage. They performed the mission. The Wilson Center is honored to welcome John Brennan here today on the eve of this first anniversary of the bin Laden raid. President Obama will headline events tomorrow, but today we get an advance peek from the insider's insider, one of President Obama's most influential aides with a broad portfolio to manage counterterrorism strategy in far-flung places like Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia. Activities in this space, as I mentioned, at the Wilson Center are ongoing, as are terror threats against our country.

I often say we won't defeat those threats by military might alone, we must win the argument. No doubt our speaker today agrees that security and liberty are not a zero sum game. We either get more of both, or less. As Ben Franklin said, "Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." So, as we welcome John Brennan, I also want to congratulate him and President Obama for nominating the full complement of members to the Privacy and Civil Liberties Board, another part of the 2004 intelligence reform law, and a key part of assuring that America's counterterrorism efforts also protect our constitution and our values. At the end of today's event, we would appreciate it if everyone would please remain seated, while Mr. Brennan departs the building. Thank you for coming, please welcome John Brennan.

[applause]

John Brennan:

Thank you so much Jane for the very kind introduction, and that very nice and memorable walk down memory lane as our paths did cross so many times over the years, but thank you also for your leadership of the Wilson Center. It is a privilege for me to be here today, and to speak at this group. And you have spent many years in public service, and it continues here at the Wilson Center today, and there are few individuals in this country who can match the range of Jane's expertise from the armed services to intelligence to homeland security, and anyone who has appeared before her committee knew firsthand just how extensive and deep that expertise was. So Jane, I'll just say that I'm finally glad to be sharing the stage with you instead of testifying before you. It's a privilege to be next to you. So to you and everyone here at the Woodrow Wilson Center, thank you for your invaluable contributions, your research, your scholarship, which help further our national security every day.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss President Obama's counterterrorism strategy, in particular its ethics and its efficacy.

It is fitting that we have this discussion here today at the Woodrow Wilson Center. It was here in August of 2007 that then-Senator Obama described how he would bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end and refocus our efforts on "the war that has to be won," the war against al-Qaeda, particularly in the tribal regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He said that we would carry on this fight while upholding the laws and our values, and that we would work with allies and partners whenever possible. But he also made it clear that he would not hesitate to use military force against terrorists who pose a direct threat to America. And he said that if he had actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets, including in Pakistan, he would act to protect the American people.

So it is especially fitting that we have this discussion here today. One year ago today, President Obama was then facing the scenario that he discussed here at the Woodrow Wilson Center five years ago, and he did not hesitate to act. Soon thereafter, our special operations forces were moving toward the compound in Pakistan where we believed Osama bin Laden might be hiding. By the end of the next day, President Obama could confirm that justice had finally been delivered to the terrorist responsible for the attacks of September 11th, 2001, and for so many other deaths around the world.

The death of bin Laden was our most strategic blow yet against al-Qaeda. Credit for that success belongs to the courageous forces who carried out that mission, at extraordinary risk to their lives; to the many intelligence professionals who pieced together the clues that led to bin Laden's hideout; and to President Obama, who gave the order to go in.

Now one year later, it's appropriate to assess where we stand in this fight. We've always been clear that the end of bin Laden would neither mark the end of al-Qaida, nor our resolve to destroy it. So along with allies and partners, we have been unrelenting. And when we assess that al-Qaida of 2012, I think it is fair to say that, as a result of our efforts, the United States is more secure and the American people are safer. Here's why.

In Pakistan, al-Qaida's leadership ranks have continued to suffer heavy losses. This includes Ilyas Kashmiri, one of al-Qaida's top operational planners, killed a month after bin Laden. It includes Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, killed when he succeeded Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaida's deputy leader. It includes Younis al-Mauritani, a planner of attacks against the United States and Europe, until he was captured by Pakistani forces.

With its most skilled and experienced commanders being lost so quickly, al-Qaida has had trouble replacing them. This is one of the many conclusions we have been able to draw from documents seized at bin Laden's compound, some of which will be published online, for the first time, this week by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. For example, bin Laden worried about, and I quote, "The rise of lower leaders who are not as experienced and this would lead to the repeat of mistakes."

Al-Qaida leaders continue to struggle to communicate with subordinates and affiliates. Under intense pressure in the tribal regions of Pakistan, they have fewer places to train and groom the next generation of operatives. They're struggling to attract new recruits. Morale is low, with intelligence indicating that some members are giving up and returning home, no doubt aware that this is a fight they will never win. In short, al-Qaida is losing badly. And bin Laden knew it at the time of his death. In documents we seized, he confessed to "disaster after disaster." He even urged his leaders to flee the tribal regions, and go to places, "away from aircraft photography and bombardment."

For all these reasons, it is harder than ever for al-Qaida core in Pakistan to plan and execute large-scale, potentially catastrophic attacks against our homeland. Today, it is increasingly clear that compared to 9/11, the core al-Qaida leadership is a shadow of its former self. Al-Qaida has been left with just a handful of capable leaders and operatives, and with continued pressure is on the path to its destruction. And for the first time since this fight began, we can look ahead and envision a world in which the al-Qaida core is simply no longer relevant.

Nevertheless, the dangerous threat from al-Qaida has not disappeared. As the al-Qaida core falters, it continues to look to affiliates and adherents to carry on its murderous cause. Yet these affiliates continue to lose key commanders and capabilities as well. In Somalia, it is indeed worrying to witness al-Qaida's merger with al-Shabaab, whose ranks include foreign fighters, some with U.S. passports. At the same time, al-Shabaab continues to focus primarily on

launching regional attacks, and ultimately, this is a merger between two organizations in decline.

In Yemen, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, continues to feel the effects of the death last year of Anwar al-Awlaki, its leader of external operations who was responsible for planning and directing terrorist attacks against the United States. Nevertheless, AQAP continues to be al-Qaida's most active affiliate, and it continues to seek the opportunity to strike our homeland. We therefore continue to support the government of Yemen in its efforts against AQAP, which is being forced to fight for the territory it needs to plan attacks beyond Yemen. In north and west Africa, another al-Qaida affiliate, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, continues its efforts to destabilize regional governments and engages in kidnapping of Western citizens for ransom activities designed to fund its terrorist agenda. And in Nigeria, we are monitoring closely the emergence of Boko Haram, a group that appears to be aligning itself with al-Qaida's violent agenda and is increasingly looking to attack Western interests in Nigeria, in addition to Nigerian government targets.

More broadly, al-Qaida's killing of innocents, mostly Muslim men, women and children, has badly tarnished its image and appeal in the eyes of Muslims around the world.

John Brennan:

Thank you. More broadly, al-Qaida's killing of innocents, mostly men women and children, has badly tarnished its appeal and image in the eyes of Muslims around the world. Even bin Laden and his lieutenants knew this. His propagandist, Adam Gadahn, admitted that they were now seen "as a group that does not hesitate to take people's money by falsehood, detonating mosques, and spilling the blood of scores of people." Bin Laden agreed that "a large portion" of Muslims around the world "have lost their trust" in al-Qaida.

So damaged is al-Qaida's image that bin Laden even considered changing its name. And one of the reasons? As bin Laden said himself, U.S. officials "have largely stopped using the phrase 'the war on terror' in the context of not wanting to provoke Muslims." Simply calling them al-Qaida, bin Laden said, "reduces the feeling of Muslims that we belong to them."

To which I would add, that is because al-Qaida does not belong to Muslims. Al-Qaida is the antithesis of the peace, tolerance, and humanity that is the hallmark of Islam.

Despite the great progress we've made against al-Qaida, it would be a mistake to believe this threat has passed. Al-Qaida and its associated forces still have the intent to attack the United States. And we have seen lone individuals, including American citizens, often inspired by al-Qaida's murderous ideology, kill innocent Americans and seek to do us harm.

Still, the damage that has been inflicted on the leadership core in Pakistan, combined with how al-Qaida has alienated itself from so much of the world, allows us to look forward. Indeed, if the decade before 9/11 was the time of al-Qaida's rise, and the decade after 9/11 was the time of its decline, then I believe this decade will be the one that sees its demise. This progress is no accident.

It is a direct result of intense efforts made over more than a decade, across two administrations, across the U.S. government and in concert with allies and partners. This includes the comprehensive counterterrorism strategy being directed by President Obama, a strategy guided by the President's highest responsibility, to protect the safety and the security of the American people. In this fight, we are harnessing every element of American power: intelligence, military, diplomatic, development, economic, financial, law enforcement, homeland security, and the power of our values, including our commitment to the rule of law. That's why, for instance, in his first days in office, President Obama banned the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, which are not needed to keep our country safe. Staying true to our values as a nation also includes upholding the transparency upon which our democracy depends.

A few months after taking office, the president travelled to the National Archives where he discussed how national security requires a delicate balance between secrecy and transparency. He pledged to share as much information as possible with the American people "so that they can make informed judgments and hold us accountable." He has consistently encouraged those of us on his national security team to be as open and candid as possible as well.

Earlier this year, Attorney General Holder discussed how our counterterrorism efforts are rooted in, and are strengthened by, adherence to the law, including the legal authorities that allow us to pursue members of al-Qaida, including U.S. citizens, and to do so using technologically advanced weapons.

In addition, Jeh Johnson, the general counsel at the Department of Defense, has addressed the legal basis for our military efforts against al-Qaida. Stephen Preston, the general counsel at the CIA, has discussed how the agency operates under U.S. law.

These speeches build on a lecture two years ago by Harold Koh, the State Department legal adviser, who noted that "U.S. targeting practices, including lethal operations conducted with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, comply with all applicable law, including the laws of war."

Given these efforts, I venture to say that the United States government has never been so open regarding its counterterrorism policies and their legal justification. Still, there continues to be considerable public and legal debate surrounding these technologies and how they are sometimes used in the fight against al-Qaida.

Now, I want to be very clear. In the course of the war in Afghanistan and the fight against al-Qaida, I think the American people expect us to use advanced technologies, for example, to prevent attacks on U.S. forces and to remove terrorists from the battlefield. We do, and it has saved the lives of our men and women in uniform. What has clearly captured the attention of many, however, is a different practice, beyond hot battlefields like Afghanistan, identifying specific members of al-Qaida and then targeting them with lethal force, often using aircraft remotely operated by pilots who can be hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away. And this is what I want to focus on today.

Jack Goldsmith, a former assistant attorney general in the administration of George W. Bush and now a professor at Harvard Law School, captured the situation well. He wrote:

"The government needs a way to credibly convey to the public that its decisions about who is being targeted, especially when the target is a U.S. citizen, are sound. First, the government can and should tell us more about the process by which it reaches its high-value targeting decisions. The more the government tells us about the eyeballs on the issue and the robustness of the process, the more credible will be its claims about the accuracy of its factual determinations and the soundness of its legal ones. All of this information can be disclosed in some form without endangering critical intelligence."

Well, President Obama agrees. And that is why I am here today.

I stand here as someone who has been involved with our nation's security for more than 30 years. I have a profound appreciation for the truly remarkable capabilities of our counterterrorism professionals, and our relationships with other nations, and we must never compromise them. I will not discuss the sensitive details of any specific operation today. I will not, nor will I ever, publicly divulge sensitive intelligence sources and methods. For when that happens, our national security is endangered and lives can be lost. At the same time, we reject the notion that any discussion of these matters is to step onto a slippery slope that inevitably endangers our national security. Too often, that fear can become an excuse for saying nothing at all, which creates a void that is then filled with myths and falsehoods. That, in turn, can erode our credibility with the American people and with foreign partners, and it can undermine the public's understanding and support for our efforts. In contrast, President Obama believes that done carefully, deliberately and responsibly we can be more transparent and still ensure our nation's security.

So let me say it as simply as I can. Yes, in full accordance with the law, and in order to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States and to save American lives, the United States Government conducts targeted strikes against specific al-Qaida terrorists, sometimes using remotely piloted aircraft, often referred to publicly as drones. And I'm here today because President Obama has instructed us to be more open with the American people about these efforts.

Broadly speaking, the debate over strikes targeted at individual members of al-Qaida has centered on their legality, their ethics, the wisdom of using them, and the standards by which they are approved. With the remainder of my time today, I would like to address each of these in turn.

First, these targeted strikes are legal. Attorney General Holder, Harold Koh, and Jeh Johnson have all addressed this question at length. To briefly recap, as a matter of domestic law, the Constitution empowers the president to protect the nation from any imminent threat of attack. The Authorization for Use of Military Force, the AUMF, passed by Congress after the September 11th attacks authorized the president "to use all necessary and appropriate forces" against those nations, organizations, and individuals responsible for 9/11. There is nothing in the AUMF that restricts the use of military force against al-Qaida to Afghanistan.

As a matter of international law, the United States is in an armed conflict with al-Qaida, the Taliban, and associated forces, in response to the 9/11 attacks, and we may also use force consistent with our inherent right of national self-defense. There is nothing in international law that bans the use of remotely piloted aircraft for this purpose or that prohibits us from using lethal force against our enemies outside of an active battlefield, at least when the country involved consents or is unable or unwilling to take action against the threat.

Second, targeted strikes are ethical. Without question, the ability to target a specific individual, from hundreds or thousands of miles away, raises profound questions. Here, I think it's useful to consider such strikes against the basic principles of the law of war that govern the use of force.

Targeted strikes conform to the principle of necessity, the requirement that the target have definite military value. In this armed conflict, individuals who are part of al-Qaida or its associated forces are legitimate military targets. We have the authority to target them with lethal force just as we target enemy leaders in past conflicts, such as Germans and Japanese commanders during World War II.

Targeted strikes conform to the principles of distinction, the idea that only military objectives may be intentionally targeted and that civilians are protected from being intentionally targeted. With the unprecedented ability of remotely piloted aircraft to precisely target a military

objective while minimizing collateral damage, one could argue that never before has there been a weapon that allows us to distinguish more effectively between an al-Qaida terrorist and innocent civilians.

Targeted strikes conform to the principle of proportionality, the notion that the anticipated collateral damage of an action cannot be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage. By targeting an individual terrorist or small numbers of terrorists with ordnance that can be adapted to avoid harming others in the immediate vicinity, it is hard to imagine a tool that can better minimize the risk to civilians than remotely piloted aircraft.

For the same reason, targeted strikes conform to the principle of humanity which requires us to use weapons that will not inflict unnecessary suffering. For all these reasons, I suggest to you that these targeted strikes against al-Qaida terrorists are indeed ethical and just.

Of course, even if a tool is legal and ethical, that doesn't necessarily make it appropriate or advisable in a given circumstance. This brings me to my next point.

Targeted strikes are wise. Remotely piloted aircraft in particular can be a wise choice because of geography, with their ability to fly hundreds of miles over the most treacherous terrain, strike their targets with astonishing precision, and then return to base. They can be a wise choice because of time, when windows of opportunity can close quickly and there just may be only minutes to act.

They can be a wise choice because they dramatically reduce the danger to U.S. personnel, even eliminating the danger altogether. Yet they are also a wise choice because they dramatically reduce the danger to innocent civilians, especially considered against massive ordnance that can cause injury and death far beyond their intended target.

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

There's another reason that targeted strikes can be a wise choice, the strategic consequences that inevitably come with the use of force. As we've seen, deploying large armies abroad won't always be our best offense.

Countries typically don't want foreign soldiers in their cities and towns. In fact, large, intrusive military deployments risk playing into al-Qaida's strategy of trying to draw us into long, costly

wars that drain us financially, inflame anti-American resentment, and inspire the next generation of terrorists. In comparison, there is the precision of targeted strikes.

I acknowledge that we, as a government, along with our foreign partners, can and must do a better job of addressing the mistaken belief among some foreign publics that we engage in these strikes casually, as if we are simply unwilling to expose U.S forces to the dangers faced every day by people in those regions. For, as I'll describe today, there is absolutely nothing casual about the extraordinary care we take in making the decision to pursue an al-Qaida terrorist, and the lengths to which we go to ensure precision and avoid the loss of innocent life.

Still, there is no more consequential a decision than deciding whether to use lethal force against another human being, even a terrorist dedicated to killing American citizens. So in order to ensure that our counterterrorism operations involving the use of lethal force are legal, ethical, and wise, President Obama has demanded that we hold ourselves to the highest possible standards and processes.

This reflects his approach to broader questions regarding the use of force. In his speech in Oslo accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, the president said that "all nations, strong and weak alike, must adhere to standards that govern the use of force." And he added:

"Where force is necessary, we have a moral and strategic interest in binding ourselves to certain rules of conduct. And even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides by no rules, I believe the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war. That is what makes us different from those whom we fight. That is a source of our strength."

The United States is the first nation to regularly conduct strikes using remotely piloted aircraft in an armed conflict. Other nations also possess this technology, and any more nations are seeking it, and more will succeed in acquiring it. President Obama and those of us on his national security team are very mindful that as our nation uses this technology, we are establishing precedents that other nations may follow, and not all of those nations may -- and not all of them will be nations that share our interests or the premium we put on protecting human life, including innocent civilians.

If we want other nations to use these technologies responsibly, we must use them responsibly. If we want other nations to adhere to high and rigorous standards for their use, then we must do so as well. We cannot expect of others what we will not do ourselves. President Obama has therefore demanded that we hold ourselves to the highest possible standards, that, at every step, we be as thorough and as deliberate as possible.

This leads me to the final point I want to discuss today, the rigorous standards and process of review to which we hold ourselves today when considering and authorizing strikes against a specific member of al-Qaida outside the hot battlefield of Afghanistan. What I hope to do is to give you a general sense, in broad terms, of the high bar we require ourselves to meet when making these profound decisions today. That includes not only whether a specific member of al-Qaida can legally be pursued with lethal force, but also whether he should be.

Over time, we've worked to refine, clarify, and strengthen this process and our standards, and we continue to do so. If our counterterrorism professionals assess, for example, that a suspected member of al-Qaida poses such a threat to the United States to warrant lethal action, they may raise that individual's name for consideration. The proposal will go through a careful review and, as appropriate, will be evaluated by the very most senior officials in our government for a decision.

First and foremost, the individual must be a legitimate target under the law. Earlier, I described how the use of force against members of al-Qaida is authorized under both international and U.S. law, including both the inherent right of national self-defense and the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which courts have held extends to those who are part of al-Qaida, the Taliban, and associated forces. If, after a legal review, we determine that the individual is not a lawful target, end of discussion. We are a nation of laws, and we will always act within the bounds of the law.

Of course, the law only establishes the outer limits of the authority in which counterterrorism professionals can operate. Even if we determine that it is lawful to pursue the terrorist in question with lethal force, it doesn't necessarily mean we should. There are, after all, literally thousands of individuals who are part of al-Qaida, the Taliban, or associated forces, thousands upon thousands. Even if it were possible, going after every single one of these individuals with lethal force would neither be wise nor an effective use of our intelligence and counterterrorism resources.

As a result, we have to be strategic. Even if it is lawful to pursue a specific member of al-Qaida, we ask ourselves whether that individual's activities rise to a certain threshold for action, and whether taking action will, in fact, enhance our security.

For example, when considering lethal force we ask ourselves whether the individual poses a significant threat to U.S. interests. This is absolutely critical, and it goes to the very essence of why we take this kind of exceptional action. We do not engage in legal action -- in lethal action in order to eliminate every single member of al-Qaida in the world. Most times, and as we have done for more than a decade, we rely on cooperation with other countries that are also interested in removing these terrorists with their own capabilities and within their own laws. Nor is lethal

action about punishing terrorists for past crimes; we are not seeking vengeance. Rather, we conduct targeted strikes because they are necessary to mitigate an actual ongoing threat, to stop plots, prevent future attacks, and to save American lives.

And what do we mean when we say significant threat? I am not referring to some hypothetical threat, the mere possibility that a member of al-Qaida might try to attack us at some point in the future. A significant threat might be posed by an individual who is an operational leader of al-Qaida or one of its associated forces. Or perhaps the individual is himself an operative, in the midst of actually training for or planning to carry out attacks against U.S. persons and interests. Or perhaps the individual possesses unique operational skills that are being leveraged in a planned attack. The purpose of a strike against a particular individual is to stop him before he can carry out his attack and kill innocents. The purpose is to disrupt his plans and his plots before they come to fruition.

In addition, our unqualified preference is to only undertake lethal force when we believe that capturing the individual is not feasible. I have heard it suggested that the Obama Administration somehow prefers killing al-Qaida members rather than capturing them. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is our preference to capture suspected terrorists whenever and wherever feasible.

For one reason, this allows us to gather valuable intelligence that we might not be able to obtain any other way. In fact, the members of al-Qaida that we or other nations have captured have been one of our greatest sources of information about al-Qaida, its plans, and its intentions. And once in U.S. custody, we often can prosecute them in our federal courts or reformed military commissions, both of which are used for gathering intelligence and preventing future terrorist attacks.

You see our preference for capture in the case of Ahmed Warsame, a member of al-Shabaab who had significant ties to al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. Last year, when we learned that he would be traveling from Yemen to Somalia, U.S. forces captured him in route and we subsequently charged him in federal court.

The reality, however, is that since 2001 such unilateral captures by U.S. forces outside of hot battlefields, like Afghanistan, have been exceedingly rare. This is due in part to the fact that in many parts of the world our counterterrorism partners have been able to capture or kill dangerous individuals themselves.

Moreover, after being subjected to more than a decade of relentless pressure, al-Qaida's ranks have dwindled and scattered. 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. Oftentimes, 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, prevent an attack, and save lives.

Finally, when considering lethal force we are of course mindful that there are important checks on our ability to act unilaterally in foreign territories. We do not use force whenever we want, wherever we want. International legal principles, including respect for a state's sovereignty and the laws of war, impose constraints. The United States of America respects national sovereignty and international law.

Those are some of the questions we consider; the high standards we strive to meet. And in the end, we make a decision, we decide whether a particular member of al-Qaida warrants being pursued in this manner. Given the stakes involved and the consequences of our decision, we consider all the information available to us, carefully and responsibly.

We review the most up-to-date intelligence, drawing on the full range of our intelligence capabilities. And we do what sound intelligence demands, we challenge it, we question it, including any assumptions on which it might be based. If we want to know more, we may ask the intelligence community to go back and collect additional intelligence or refine its analysis so that a more informed decision can be made.

We listen to departments and agencies across our national security team. We don't just hear out differing views, we ask for them and encourage them. We discuss. We debate. We disagree. We consider the advantages and disadvantages of taking action. We also carefully consider the costs of inaction and whether a decision not to carry out a strike could allow a terrorist attack to proceed and potentially kill scores of innocents.

Nor do we limit ourselves narrowly to counterterrorism considerations. We consider the broader strategic implications of any action, including what effect, if any, an action might have on our relationships with other countries. And we don't simply make a decision and never revisit it again. Quite the opposite. Over time, we refresh the intelligence and continue to consider whether lethal force is still warranted.

In some cases, such as senior al-Qaida leaders who are directing and planning attacks against the United States, the individual clearly meets our standards for taking action. In other cases, individuals have not met our standards. Indeed, there have been numerous occasions where, after careful review, we have, working on a consensus basis, concluded that lethal force was not justified in a given case.

As President Obama's counterterrorism advisor, I feel that it is important for the American people to know that these efforts are overseen with extraordinary care and thoughtfulness. The president expects us to address all of the tough questions I have discussed today. Is capture really not feasible? Is this individual a significant threat to U.S. interests? Is this really the best option? Have we thought through the consequences, especially any unintended ones? Is this really going to help protect our country from further attacks? Is this going to save lives?

Our commitment to upholding the ethics and efficacy of this counterterrorism tool continues even after we decide to pursue a specific terrorist in this way. For example, we only authorize a particular operation against a specific individual if we have a high degree of confidence that the individual being targeted is indeed the terrorist we are pursuing. This is a very high bar. Of course, how we identify an individual naturally involves intelligence sources and methods, which I will not discuss. Suffice it to say, our intelligence community has multiple ways to determine, with a high degree of confidence, that the individual being targeted is indeed the al-Qaida terrorist we are seeking.

In addition, we only authorize a strike if we have a high degree of confidence that innocent civilians will not be injured or killed, except in the rarest of circumstances. The unprecedented advances we have made in technology provide us greater proximity to target for a longer period of time, and as a result allow us to better understand what is happening in real time on the ground in ways that were previously impossible. We can be much more discriminating and we can make more informed judgments about factors that might contribute to collateral damage.

I can tell you today that there have indeed been occasions when we decided against conducting a strike in order to avoid the injury or death of innocent civilians. This reflects our commitment to doing everything in our power to avoid civilian casualties, even if it means having to come back another day to take out that terrorist, as we have done previously. And I would note that these standards, for identifying a target and avoiding the loss of innocent -- the loss of lives of innocent civilians, exceed what is required as a matter of international law on a typical battlefield. That's another example of the high standards to which we hold ourselves.

Our commitment to ensuring accuracy and effectiveness continues even after a strike. In the wake of a strike, we harness the full range of our intelligence capabilities to assess whether the mission in fact achieved its objective. We try to determine whether there was any collateral damage, including civilian deaths. There is, of course, no such thing as a perfect weapon, and remotely piloted aircraft are no exception.

As the president and others have acknowledged, there have indeed been instances when, despite the extraordinary precautions we take, civilians have been accidently killed or worse -- have been accidentally injured, or worse, killed in these strikes. It is exceedingly rare, but it has

happened. When it does, it pains us, and we regret it deeply, as we do any time innocents are killed in war. And when it happens we take it very, very seriously. We go back and we review our actions. We examine our practices. And we constantly work to improve and refine our efforts so that we are doing everything in our power to prevent the loss of innocent life. This too is a reflection of our values as Americans.

Ensuring the ethics and efficacy of these strikes also includes regularly informing appropriate members of Congress and the committees who have oversight of our counterterrorism programs. Indeed, our counterterrorism programs, including the use of lethal force, have grown more effective over time because of congressional oversight and our ongoing dialogue with members and staff.

This is the seriousness, the extraordinary care, that President Obama and those of us on his national security team bring to this weightiest of questions: Whether to pursue lethal force against a terrorist who is plotting to attack our country.

When that person is a U.S. citizen, we ask ourselves additional questions. Attorney General Holder has already described the legal authorities that clearly allow us to use lethal force against an American citizen who is a senior operational leader of al-Qaida. He has discussed the thorough and careful review, including all relevant constitutional considerations, that is to be undertaken by the U.S. government when determining whether the individual poses an imminent threat of violent attack against the United States.

To recap, the standards and processes I've described today, which we have refined and strengthened over time, reflect our commitment to: ensuring the individual is a legitimate target under the law; determining whether the individual poses a significant threat to U.S. interests; determining that capture is not feasible; being mindful of the important checks on our ability to act unilaterally in foreign territories; having that high degree of confidence, both in the identity of the target and that innocent civilians will not be harmed; and, of course, engaging in additional review if the al-Qaida terrorist is a U.S. citizen.

Going forward, we'll continue to strengthen and refine these standards and processes. As we do, we'll look to institutionalize our approach more formally so that the high standards we set for ourselves endure over time, including as an example for other nations that pursue these capabilities. As the president said in Oslo, in the conduct of war, America must be the standard bearer.

This includes our continuing commitment to greater transparency. With that in mind, I have made a sincere effort today to address some of the main questions that citizens and scholars have raised regarding the use of targeted lethal force against al-Qaida. I suspect there are those,

perhaps some in this audience, who feel we have not been transparent enough. I suspect there are those, both inside and outside our government, who feel I have been perhaps too open. If both groups feel a little bit unsatisfied, then I probably struck the right balance today.

Again, there are some lines we simply will not and cannot cross because, at times, our national security demands secrecy. But we are a democracy. The people are sovereign. And our counterterrorism tools do not exist in a vacuum. They are stronger and more sustainable when the American people understand and support them. They are weaker and less sustainable when the American people do not. As a result of my remarks today, I hope the American people have a better understanding of this critical tool, why we use it, what we do, how carefully we use it, and why it is absolutely essential to protecting our country and our citizens.

I would just like to close on a personal note. I know that for many people in our government and across the country the issue of targeted strikes raised profound moral questions. It forces us to confront deeply held personal beliefs and our values as a nation. If anyone in government who works in this area tells you they haven't struggled with this, then they haven't spent much time thinking about it. I know I have, and I will continue to struggle with it as long as I remain in counterterrorism.

But I am certain about one thing. We are at war. We are at war against a terrorist organization called al-Qaida that has brutally murdered thousands of Americans, men, women and children, as well as thousands of other innocent people around the world. In recent years, with the help of targeted strikes, we have turned al-Qaida into a shadow of what it once was. They are on the road to destruction.

Until that finally happens, however, there are still terrorists in hard-to-reach places who are actively planning attacks against us. If given the chance, they will gladly strike again and kill more of our citizens. And the president has a Constitutional and solemn obligation to do everything in his power to protect the safety and security of the American people.

Yes, war is hell. It is awful. It involves human beings killing other human beings, sometimes innocent civilians. That is why we despise war. That is why we want this war against al-Qaida to be over as soon as possible, and not a moment longer. And over time, as al-Qaida fades into history and as our partners grow stronger, I'd hope that the United States would have to rely less on lethal force to keep our country safe.

Until that happens, as President Obama said here five years ago, if another nation cannot or will not take action, we will. And it is an unfortunate fact that to save many innocent lives we are sometimes obliged to take lives, the lives of terrorists who seek to murder our fellow citizens.

On behalf of President Obama and his administration, I am here to say to the American people that we will continue to work to safeguard this nations -- this nation and its citizens responsibly, adhering to the laws of this land and staying true to the values that define us as Americans, and thank you very much.

Jane Harman:

Thank you, Mr. Brennan. As it is almost 1:00, I hope you can stay a few extra minutes to take questions, and I would just like to make a comment, ask you one question, and then turn over to our -- turn it over to our audience for questions. Please no statements. Ask questions. First your call for greater transparency is certainly appreciated by me. I think that the clearer we can make our policies, and the better we can explain them, and the more debate we can have in the public square about them, the more: one, they will be understood; and two, they will persuade the would-be suicide bomber about to strap on a vest that there is a better answer. We do have to win the argument in the end with the next generation, not just take out those who can't be rehabilitated in this generation, and I see you nodding, so I know you agree and I'm not going to ask you a question about that. I also want to say how honored we are that you would make this important speech at the Wilson Center. There is new material here, for those who may have missed it. The fact that the U.S. conducts targeted strikes using drones has always been something that I, as a public official, danced around because I knew it had not been officially acknowledged by our government. I was one of those members of Congress briefed on this program, I have seen the feed that shows how we do these things, I'm not going to comment on specific operations or areas of the world, but I do think it is important that our government has acknowledged this, and set out, as carefully as possible, the reasons why we do it, and I want to commend you personally as well as Eric Holder, Jeh Johnson, and Harold Koh for carefully laying out the legal framework, and also add that at the Wilson Center, we will continue to debate these issues, and see what value we can add free from spin on a non-partisan basis to helping to articulate even more clearly the reasons why, as you said, war is hell, and why, as you said, there is no decision more consequential than deciding to use legal force, so thank you very much for making those remarks here.

My question is this: One thing I don't think you mentioned in that enormously important address was the rise of Islamist parties, which have been elected in Tunisia, Egypt, and probably will be elected, and exist in Turkey and other countries. Do you think that having Islamist inside the tent, in a political sphere, also helps diminish the threat of outside groups like al-Qaida?

John Brennan:

Well, hopefully political pluralism is breaking out in the Middle East, and we're going to find in many countries the ability of various constituencies to find expression through political parties. And certainly, we are very strong advocates of using the political system, the laws, to be able to express the views of individual groups within different countries, and so rather than finding expression through violent extremism, these groups have the opportunity now, and since they've never had before in countries like Tunisia, and in Egypt, Yemen, other places, where they can in fact participate meaningfully in the political system. This is going to take some time for these systems to be able to mature sufficiently so that there can be a very robust and democratic system there, but certainly those individuals who are parties -- who are associated with parties that have a religious basis to them, they can find now the opportunity now to be able to participate in that political system.

Jane Harman:

My second and final question, and I see all of you with your hands about to be raised, and again, please just state a question as I'm about to do. You just mentioned Yemen, that has been part of your broader portfolio, I know you made many trips there, and you were a key architect of the deal to get Saleh to agree to -- the 40 year autocrat ruler -- to agree to accept immunity, leave the country, and then to be replaced by an elected leader, in this case, his vice president in a restructured government. Do you think a Yemen-type solution could work in Syria? Do you think there's any possibility of getting the Bashar family out of Syria and structuring a new government there, and perhaps in having the -- Russia lead the effort to do that, because of its close ties to Syria, and the fact that it is still unfortunately arming and supporting the Syrian regime?

John Brennan:

Well, each of these countries in the Middle East are facing different types of circumstances, and they have unique histories. Yemen was fortunate that they do -- did have a degree of political pluralism there, Ali Abdullah Saleh in fact allowed certain political institutions to develop, and we were very fortunate to have a peaceful transition from the previous regime to the government of President Hadi now. Certainly, there needs to be some way found for progress in Syria. It's outrageous what's happening in that country, the continued death of Syrian citizens at the hands of a brutal authoritarian government. This is something that needs to stop, and the international community has come together on it, so I'd like to be able to see something that would be able to transition peacefully, but the sooner it can be done, obviously, the more lives we've saved.

APPENDIX II

Transcript of Remarks by the President at the National Defense University on May 23, 2013

2:01 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

It is a great honor to return to the National Defense University. Here, at Fort McNair, Americans have served in uniform since 1791 -- standing guard in the earliest days of the Republic, and contemplating the future of warfare here in the 21st century.

For over two centuries, the United States has been bound together by founding documents that defined who we are as Americans, and served as our compass through every type of change. Matters of war and peace are no different. Americans are deeply ambivalent about war, but having fought for our independence, we know a price must be paid for freedom. From the Civil War to our struggle against fascism, on through the long twilight struggle of the Cold War, battlefields have changed and technology has evolved. But our commitment to constitutional principles has weathered every war, and every war has come to an end.

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a new dawn of democracy took hold abroad, and a decade of peace and prosperity arrived here at home. And for a moment, it seemed the 21st century would be a tranquil time. And then, on September 11, 2001, we were shaken out of complacency. Thousands were taken from us, as clouds of fire and metal and ash descended upon a sun-filled morning. This was a different kind of war. No armies came to our shores, and our military was not the principal target. Instead, a group of terrorists came to kill as many civilians as they could.

And so our nation went to war. We have now been at war for well over a decade. I won't review the full history. What is clear is that we quickly drove al Qaeda out of Afghanistan, but then shifted our focus and began a new war in Iraq. And this carried significant consequences for our fight against al Qaeda, our standing in the world, and -- to this day -- our interests in a vital region.

Meanwhile, we strengthened our defenses -- hardening targets, tightening transportation security, giving law enforcement new tools to prevent terror. Most of these changes were sound. Some caused inconvenience. But some, like expanded surveillance, raised difficult

questions about the balance that we strike between our interests in security and our values of privacy. And in some cases, I believe we compromised our basic values -- by using torture to interrogate our enemies, and detaining individuals in a way that ran counter to the rule of law.

So after I took office, we stepped up the war against al Qaeda but we also sought to change its course. We relentlessly targeted al Qaeda's leadership. We ended the war in Iraq, and brought nearly 150,000 troops home. We pursued a new strategy in Afghanistan, and increased our training of Afghan forces. We unequivocally banned torture, affirmed our commitment to civilian courts, worked to align our policies with the rule of law, and expanded our consultations with Congress.

Today, Osama bin Laden is dead, and so are most of his top lieutenants. There have been no large-scale attacks on the United States, and our homeland is more secure. Fewer of our troops are in harm's way, and over the next 19 months they will continue to come home. Our alliances are strong, and so is our standing in the world. In sum, we are safer because of our efforts.

Now, make no mistake, our nation is still threatened by terrorists. From Benghazi to Boston, we have been tragically reminded of that truth. But we have to recognize that the threat has shifted and evolved from the one that came to our shores on 9/11. With a decade of experience now to draw from, this is the moment to ask ourselves hard questions -- about the nature of today's threats and how we should confront them.

And these questions matter to every American.

For over the last decade, our nation has spent well over a trillion dollars on war, helping to explode our deficits and constraining our ability to nation-build here at home. Our servicemembers and their families have sacrificed far more on our behalf. Nearly 7,000 Americans have made the ultimate sacrifice. Many more have left a part of themselves on the battlefield, or brought the shadows of battle back home. From our use of drones to the detention of terrorist suspects, the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation -- and world -- that we leave to our children.

So America is at a crossroads. We must define the nature and scope of this struggle, or else it will define us. We have to be mindful of James Madison's warning that "No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare." Neither I, nor any President, can promise the total defeat of terror. We will never erase the evil that lies in the hearts of some human beings, nor stamp out every danger to our open society. But what we can do -- what we must do -- is dismantle networks that pose a direct danger to us, and make it less likely for new groups to gain a foothold, all the while maintaining the freedoms and ideals that we defend.

And to define that strategy, we have to make decisions based not on fear, but on hard-earned wisdom. That begins with understanding the current threat that we face.

Today, the core of al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan is on the path to defeat. Their remaining operatives spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us. They did not direct the attacks in Benghazi or Boston. They've not carried out a successful attack on our homeland since 9/11.

Instead, what we've seen is the emergence of various al Qaeda affiliates. From Yemen to Iraq, from Somalia to North Africa, the threat today is more diffuse, with Al Qaeda's affiliates in the Arabian Peninsula -- AQAP -- the most active in plotting against our homeland. And while none of AQAP's efforts approach the scale of 9/11, they have continued to plot acts of terror, like the attempt to blow up an airplane on Christmas Day in 2009.

Unrest in the Arab world has also allowed extremists to gain a foothold in countries like Libya and Syria. But here, too, there are differences from 9/11. In some cases, we continue to confront state-sponsored networks like Hezbollah that engage in acts of terror to achieve political goals. Other of these groups are simply collections of local militias or extremists interested in seizing territory. And while we are vigilant for signs that these groups may pose a transnational threat, most are focused on operating in the countries and regions where they are based. And that means we'll face more localized threats like what we saw in Benghazi, or the BP oil facility in Algeria, in which local operatives -- perhaps in loose affiliation with regional networks -- launch periodic attacks against Western diplomats, companies, and other soft targets, or resort to kidnapping and other criminal enterprises to fund their operations.

And finally, we face a real threat from radicalized individuals here in the United States. Whether it's a shooter at a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin, a plane flying into a building in Texas, or the extremists who killed 168 people at the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, America has confronted many forms of violent extremism in our history. Deranged or alienated individuals -- often U.S. citizens or legal residents -- can do enormous damage, particularly when inspired by larger notions of violent jihad. And that pull towards extremism appears to have led to the shooting at Fort Hood and the bombing of the Boston Marathon.

So that's the current threat -- lethal yet less capable al Qaeda affiliates; threats to diplomatic facilities and businesses abroad; homegrown extremists. This is the future of terrorism. We have to take these threats seriously, and do all that we can to confront them. But as we shape our response, we have to recognize that the scale of this threat closely resembles the types of attacks we faced before 9/11.

In the 1980s, we lost Americans to terrorism at our Embassy in Beirut; at our Marine Barracks in Lebanon; on a cruise ship at sea; at a disco in Berlin; and on a Pan Am flight -- Flight 103 -- over Lockerbie. In the 1990s, we lost Americans to terrorism at the World Trade Center; at our military facilities in Saudi Arabia; and at our Embassy in Kenya. These attacks were all brutal; they were all deadly; and we learned that left unchecked, these threats can grow. But if dealt with smartly and proportionally, these threats need not rise to the level that we saw on the eve of 9/11.

Moreover, we have to recognize that these threats don't arise in a vacuum. Most, though not all, of the terrorism we faced is fueled by a common ideology -- a belief by some extremists that Islam is in conflict with the United States and the West, and that violence against Western targets, including civilians, is justified in pursuit of a larger cause. Of course, this ideology is based on a lie, for the United States is not at war with Islam. And this ideology is rejected by the vast majority of Muslims, who are the most frequent victims of terrorist attacks.

Nevertheless, this ideology persists, and in an age when ideas and images can travel the globe in an instant, our response to terrorism can't depend on military or law enforcement alone. We need all elements of national power to win a battle of wills, a battle of ideas. So what I want to discuss here today is the components of such a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

First, we must finish the work of defeating al Qaeda and its associated forces.

In Afghanistan, we will complete our transition to Afghan responsibility for that country's security. Our troops will come home. Our combat mission will come to an end. And we will work with the Afghan government to train security forces, and sustain a counterterrorism force, which ensures that al Qaeda can never again establish a safe haven to launch attacks against us or our allies.

Beyond Afghanistan, we must define our effort not as a boundless "global war on terror," but rather as a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America. In many cases, this will involve partnerships with other countries. Already, thousands of Pakistani soldiers have lost their lives fighting extremists. In Yemen, we are supporting security forces that have reclaimed territory from AQAP. In Somalia, we helped a coalition of African nations push al-Shabaab out of its strongholds. In Mali, we're providing military aid to French-led intervention to push back al Qaeda in the Maghreb, and help the people of Mali reclaim their future.

Much of our best counterterrorism cooperation results in the gathering and sharing of intelligence, the arrest and prosecution of terrorists. And that's how a Somali terrorist apprehended off the coast of Yemen is now in a prison in New York. That's how we worked

with European allies to disrupt plots from Denmark to Germany to the United Kingdom. That's how intelligence collected with Saudi Arabia helped us stop a cargo plane from being blown up over the Atlantic. These partnerships work.

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. In other cases, the state lacks the capacity or will to take action. And it's also not possible for America to simply deploy a team of Special Forces to capture every terrorist. Even when such an approach may be possible, there are places where it would pose profound risks to our troops and local civilians -- where a terrorist compound cannot be breached without triggering a firefight with surrounding tribal communities, for example, that pose no threat to us; times when putting U.S. boots on the ground may trigger a major international crisis.

To put it another way, our operation in Pakistan against Osama bin Laden cannot be the norm. The risks in that case were immense. The likelihood of capture, although that was our preference, was remote given the certainty that our folks would confront resistance. The fact that we did not find ourselves confronted with civilian casualties, or embroiled in an extended firefight, was a testament to the meticulous planning and professionalism of our Special Forces, but it also depended on some luck. And it was supported by massive infrastructure in Afghanistan.

And even then, the cost to our relationship with Pakistan -- and the backlash among the Pakistani public over encroachment on their territory -- was so severe that we are just now beginning to rebuild this important partnership.

So it is in this context that the United States has taken lethal, targeted action against al Qaeda and its associated forces, including with remotely piloted aircraft commonly referred to as drones.

As was true in previous armed conflicts, this new technology raises profound questions -- about who is targeted, and why; about civilian casualties, and the risk of creating new enemies; about the legality of such strikes under U.S. and international law; about accountability and morality. So let me address these questions.

To begin with, our actions are effective. Don't take my word for it. In the intelligence gathered at bin Laden's compound, we found that he wrote, "We could lose the reserves to enemy's air strikes. We cannot fight air strikes with explosives." Other communications from al Qaeda operatives confirm this as well. Dozens of highly skilled al Qaeda commanders, trainers, bomb makers and operatives have been taken off the battlefield. Plots have been disrupted that would have targeted international aviation, U.S. transit systems, European cities and our troops in Afghanistan. Simply put, these strikes have saved lives.

Moreover, America's actions are legal. We were attacked on 9/11. Within a week, Congress overwhelmingly authorized the use of force. Under domestic law, and international law, the United States is at war with al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces. We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war -- a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self-defense.

And yet, as our fight enters a new phase, America's legitimate claim of self-defense cannot be the end of the discussion. To say a military tactic is legal, or even effective, is not to say it is wise or moral in every instance. For the same human progress that gives us the technology to strike half a world away also demands the discipline to constrain that power -- or risk abusing it. And that's why, over the last four years, my administration has worked vigorously to establish a framework that governs our use of force against terrorists –- insisting upon clear guidelines, oversight and accountability that is now codified in Presidential Policy Guidance that I signed yesterday.

In the Afghan war theater, we must -- and will -- continue to support our troops until the transition is complete at the end of 2014. And that means we will continue to take strikes against high value al Qaeda targets, but also against forces that are massing to support attacks on coalition forces. But by the end of 2014, we will no longer have the same need for force protection, and the progress we've made against core al Qaeda will reduce the need for unmanned strikes.

Beyond the Afghan theater, we only target al Qaeda and its associated forces. And even then, the use of drones is heavily constrained. America does not take strikes when we have the ability to capture individual terrorists; our preference is always to detain, interrogate, and prosecute. America cannot take strikes wherever we choose; our actions are bound by consultations with partners, and respect for state sovereignty.

America does not take strikes to punish individuals; we act against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the American people, and when there are no other governments capable of effectively addressing the threat. And before any strike is taken, there

must be near-certainty that no civilians will be killed or injured -- the highest standard we can set.

Now, this last point is critical, because much of the criticism about drone strikes -- both here at home and abroad -- understandably centers on reports of civilian casualties. There's a wide gap between U.S. assessments of such casualties and nongovernmental reports. Nevertheless, it is a hard fact that U.S. strikes have resulted in civilian casualties, a risk that exists in every war. And for the families of those civilians, no words or legal construct can justify their loss. For me, and those in my chain of command, those deaths will haunt us as long as we live, just as we are haunted by the civilian casualties that have occurred throughout conventional fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But as Commander-in-Chief, I must weigh these heartbreaking tragedies against the alternatives. To do nothing in the face of terrorist networks would invite far more civilian casualties -- not just in our cities at home and our facilities abroad, but also in the very places like Sana'a and Kabul and Mogadishu where terrorists seek a foothold. Remember that the terrorists we are after target civilians, and the death toll from their acts of terrorism against Muslims dwarfs any estimate of civilian casualties from drone strikes. So doing nothing is not an option.

Where foreign governments cannot or will not effectively stop terrorism in their territory, the primary alternative to targeted lethal action would be the use of conventional military options. As I've already said, even small special operations carry enormous risks. Conventional airpower or missiles are far less precise than drones, and are likely to cause more civilian casualties and more local outrage. And invasions of these territories lead us to be viewed as occupying armies, unleash a torrent of unintended consequences, are difficult to contain, result in large numbers of civilian casualties and ultimately empower those who thrive on violent conflict.

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.

Yes, the conflict with al Qaeda, like all armed conflict, invites tragedy. But by narrowly targeting our action against those who want to kill us and not the people they hide among, we are choosing the course of action least likely to result in the loss of innocent life.

Our efforts must be measured against the history of putting American troops in distant lands among hostile populations. In Vietnam, hundreds of thousands of civilians died in a war where

the boundaries of battle were blurred. In Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the extraordinary courage and discipline of our troops, thousands of civilians have been killed. So neither conventional military action nor waiting for attacks to occur offers moral safe harbor, and neither does a sole reliance on law enforcement in territories that have no functioning police or security services -- and indeed, have no functioning law.

Now, this is not to say that the risks are not real. Any U.S. military action in foreign lands risks creating more enemies and impacts public opinion overseas. Moreover, our laws constrain the power of the President even during wartime, and I have taken an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States. The very precision of drone strikes and the necessary secrecy often involved in such actions can end up shielding our government from the public scrutiny that a troop deployment invites. It can also lead a President and his team to view drone strikes as a cure-all for terrorism.

And for this reason, I've insisted on strong oversight of all lethal action. After I took office, my administration began briefing all strikes outside of Iraq and Afghanistan to the appropriate committees of Congress. Let me repeat that: Not only did Congress authorize the use of force, it is briefed on every strike that America takes. Every strike. That includes the one instance when we targeted an American citizen -- Anwar Awlaki, the chief of external operations for AQAP.

This week, I authorized the declassification of this action, and the deaths of three other Americans in drone strikes, to facilitate transparency and debate on this issue and to dismiss some of the more outlandish claims that have been made. For the record, I do not believe it would be constitutional for the government to target and kill any U.S. citizen -- with a drone, or with a shotgun -- without due process, nor should any President deploy armed drones over U.S. soil.

But when a U.S. citizen goes abroad to wage war against America and is actively plotting to kill U.S. citizens, and when neither the United States, nor our partners are in a position to capture him before he carries out a plot, his citizenship should no more serve as a shield than a sniper shooting down on an innocent crowd should be protected from a SWAT team.

That's who Anwar Awlaki was -- he was continuously trying to kill people. He helped oversee the 2010 plot to detonate explosive devices on two U.S.-bound cargo planes. He was involved in planning to blow up an airliner in 2009. When Farouk Abdulmutallab -- the Christmas Day bomber -- went to Yemen in 2009, Awlaki hosted him, approved his suicide operation, helped him tape a martyrdom video to be shown after the attack, and his last instructions were to blow up the airplane when it was over American soil. I would have detained and prosecuted Awlaki

if we captured him before he carried out a plot, but we couldn't. And as President, I would have been derelict in my duty had I not authorized the strike that took him out.

Of course, the targeting of any American raises constitutional issues that are not present in other strikes -- which is why my administration submitted information about Awlaki to the Department of Justice months before Awlaki was killed, and briefed the Congress before this strike as well. But the high threshold that we've set for taking lethal action applies to all potential terrorist targets, regardless of whether or not they are American citizens. This threshold respects the inherent dignity of every human life. Alongside the decision to put our men and women in uniform in harm's way, the decision to use force against individuals or groups -- even against a sworn enemy of the United States -- is the hardest thing I do as President. But these decisions must be made, given my responsibility to protect the American people.

Going forward, I've asked my administration to review proposals to extend oversight of lethal actions outside of warzones that go beyond our reporting to Congress. Each option has virtues in theory, but poses difficulties in practice. For example, the establishment of a special court to evaluate and authorize lethal action has the benefit of bringing a third branch of government into the process, but raises serious constitutional issues about presidential and judicial authority. Another idea that's been suggested -- the establishment of an independent oversight board in the executive branch -- avoids those problems, but may introduce a layer of bureaucracy into national security decision-making, without inspiring additional public confidence in the process. But despite these challenges, I look forward to actively engaging Congress to explore these and other options for increased oversight.

I believe, however, that the use of force must be seen as part of a larger discussion we need to have about a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy -- because for all the focus on the use of force, force alone cannot make us safe. We cannot use force everywhere that a radical ideology takes root; and in the absence of a strategy that reduces the wellspring of extremism, a perpetual war -- through drones or Special Forces or troop deployments -- will prove self-defeating, and alter our country in troubling ways.

So the next element of our strategy involves addressing the underlying grievances and conflicts that feed extremism -- from North Africa to South Asia. As we've learned this past decade, this is a vast and complex undertaking. We must be humble in our expectation that we can quickly resolve deep-rooted problems like poverty and sectarian hatred. Moreover, no two countries are alike, and some will undergo chaotic change before things get better. But our security and our values demand that we make the effort.

This means patiently supporting transitions to democracy in places like Egypt and Tunisia and Libya -- because the peaceful realization of individual aspirations will serve as a rebuke to violent extremists. We must strengthen the opposition in Syria, while isolating extremist elements -- because the end of a tyrant must not give way to the tyranny of terrorism. We are actively working to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians -- because it is right and because such a peace could help reshape attitudes in the region. And we must help countries modernize economies, upgrade education, and encourage entrepreneurship -- because American leadership has always been elevated by our ability to connect with people's hopes, and not simply their fears.

And success on all these fronts requires sustained engagement, but it will also require resources. I know that foreign aid is one of the least popular expenditures that there is. That's true for Democrats and Republicans -- I've seen the polling -- even though it amounts to less than one percent of the federal budget. In fact, a lot of folks think it's 25 percent, if you ask people on the streets. Less than one percent -- still wildly unpopular. But foreign assistance cannot be viewed as charity. It is fundamental to our national security. And it's fundamental to any sensible long-term strategy to battle extremism.

Moreover, foreign assistance is a tiny fraction of what we spend fighting wars that our assistance might ultimately prevent. For what we spent in a month in Iraq at the height of the war, we could be training security forces in Libya, maintaining peace agreements between Israel and its neighbors, feeding the hungry in Yemen, building schools in Pakistan, and creating reservoirs of goodwill that marginalize extremists. That has to be part of our strategy.

Moreover, America cannot carry out this work if we don't have diplomats serving in some very dangerous places. Over the past decade, we have strengthened security at our embassies, and I am implementing every recommendation of the Accountability Review Board, which found unacceptable failures in Benghazi. I've called on Congress to fully fund these efforts to bolster security and harden facilities, improve intelligence, and facilitate a quicker response time from our military if a crisis emerges.

But even after we take these steps, some irreducible risks to our diplomats will remain. This is the price of being the world's most powerful nation, particularly as a wave of change washes over the Arab World. And in balancing the trade4offs between security and active diplomacy, I firmly believe that any retreat from challenging regions will only increase the dangers that we face in the long run. And that's why we should be grateful to those diplomats who are willing to serve.

Targeted action against terrorists, effective partnerships, diplomatic engagement and assistance -- through such a comprehensive strategy we can significantly reduce the chances of large-scale

attacks on the homeland and mitigate threats to Americans overseas. But as we guard against dangers from abroad, we cannot neglect the daunting challenge of terrorism from within our borders.

As I said earlier, this threat is not new. But technology and the Internet increase its frequency and in some cases its lethality. Today, a person can consume hateful propaganda, commit themselves to a violent agenda, and learn how to kill without leaving their home. To address this threat, two years ago my administration did a comprehensive review and engaged with law enforcement.

And the best way to prevent violent extremism inspired by violent jihadists is to work with the Muslim American community -- which has consistently rejected terrorism -- to identify signs of radicalization and partner with law enforcement when an individual is drifting towards violence. And these partnerships can only work when we recognize that Muslims are a fundamental part of the American family. In fact, the success of American Muslims and our determination to guard against any encroachments on their civil liberties is the ultimate rebuke to those who say that we're at war with Islam.

Thwarting homegrown plots presents particular challenges in part because of our proud commitment to civil liberties for all who call America home. That's why, in the years to come, we will have to keep working hard to strike the appropriate balance between our need for security and preserving those freedoms that make us who we are. That means reviewing the authorities of law enforcement, so we can intercept new types of communication, but also build in privacy protections to prevent abuse.

That means that -- even after Boston -- we do not deport someone or throw somebody in prison in the absence of evidence. That means putting careful constraints on the tools the government uses to protect sensitive information, such as the state secrets doctrine. And that means finally having a strong Privacy and Civil Liberties Board to review those issues where our counterterrorism efforts and our values may come into tension.

The Justice Department's investigation of national security leaks offers a recent example of the challenges involved in striking the right balance between our security and our open society. As Commander-in-Chief, I believe we must keep information secret that protects our operations and our people in the field. To do so, we must enforce consequences for those who break the law and breach their commitment to protect classified information. But a free press is also essential for our democracy. That's who we are. And I'm troubled by the possibility that leak investigations may chill the investigative journalism that holds government accountable.

Journalists should not be at legal risk for doing their jobs. Our focus must be on those who break the law. And that's why I've called on Congress to pass a media shield law to guard against government overreach. And I've raised these issues with the Attorney General, who shares my concerns. So he has agreed to review existing Department of Justice guidelines governing investigations that involve reporters, and he'll convene a group of media organizations to hear their concerns as part of that review. And I've directed the Attorney General to report back to me by July 12th.

Now, all these issues remind us that the choices we make about war can impact -- in sometimes unintended ways -- the openness and freedom on which our way of life depends. And that is why I intend to engage Congress about the existing Authorization to Use Military Force, or AUMF, to determine how we can continue to fight terrorism without keeping America on a perpetual wartime footing.

The AUMF is now nearly 12 years old. The Afghan war is coming to an end. Core al Qaeda is a shell of its former self. Groups like AQAP must be dealt with, but in the years to come, not every collection of thugs that labels themselves al Qaeda will pose a credible threat to the United States. Unless we discipline our thinking, our definitions, our actions, we may be drawn into more wars we don't need to fight, or continue to grant Presidents unbound powers more suited for traditional armed conflicts between nation states.

So I look forward to engaging Congress and the American people in efforts to refine, and ultimately repeal, the AUMF's mandate. And I will not sign laws designed to expand this mandate further. Our systematic effort to dismantle terrorist organizations must continue. But this war, like all wars, must end. That's what history advises. That's what our democracy demands.

And that brings me to my final topic: the detention of terrorist suspects. I'm going to repeat one more time: As a matter of policy, the preference of the United States is to capture terrorist suspects. When we do detain a suspect, we interrogate them. And if the suspect can be prosecuted, we decide whether to try him in a civilian court or a military commission.

During the past decade, the vast majority of those detained by our military were captured on the battlefield. In Iraq, we turned over thousands of prisoners as we ended the war. In Afghanistan, we have transitioned detention facilities to the Afghans, as part of the process of restoring Afghan sovereignty. So we bring law of war detention to an end, and we are committed to prosecuting terrorists wherever we can.

The glaring exception to this time-tested approach is the detention center at Guantanamo Bay. The original premise for opening GTMO -- that detainees would not be able to challenge their

detention -- was found unconstitutional five years ago. In the meantime, GTMO has become a symbol around the world for an America that flouts the rule of law. Our allies won't cooperate with us if they think a terrorist will end up at GTMO.

During a time of budget cuts, we spend $150 million each year to imprison 166 people -- almost $1 million per prisoner. And the Department of Defense estimates that we must spend another $200 million to keep GTMO open at a time when we're cutting investments in education and research here at home, and when the Pentagon is struggling with sequester and budget cuts.

As President, I have tried to close GTMO. I transferred 67 detainees to other countries before Congress imposed restrictions to effectively prevent us from either transferring detainees to other countries or imprisoning them here in the United States.

These restrictions make no sense. After all, under President Bush, some 530 detainees were transferred from GTMO with Congress's support. When I ran for President the first time, John McCain supported closing GTMO -- this was a bipartisan issue. No person has ever escaped one of our super-max or military prisons here in the United States -- ever. Our courts have convicted hundreds of people for terrorism or terrorism-related offenses, including some folks who are more dangerous than most GTMO detainees. They're in our prisons.

And given my administration's relentless pursuit of al Qaeda's leadership, there is no justification beyond politics for Congress to prevent us from closing a facility that should have never have been opened. (Applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me, President Obama --

THE PRESIDENT: So -- let me finish, ma'am. So today, once again --

AUDIENCE MEMBER: There are 102 people on a hunger strike. These are desperate people.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm about to address it, ma'am, but you've got to let me speak. I'm about to address it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You're our Commander-In-Chief --

THE PRESIDENT: Let me address it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- you an close Guantanamo Bay.

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you let me address it, ma'am.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: There's still prisoners --

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you sit down and I will tell you exactly what I'm going to do.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That includes 57 Yemenis.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you. (Applause.) Ma'am, thank you. You should let me finish my sentence.

Today, I once again call on Congress to lift the restrictions on detainee transfers from GTMO. (Applause.)

I have asked the Department of Defense to designate a site in the United States where we can hold military commissions. I'm appointing a new senior envoy at the State Department and Defense Department whose sole responsibility will be to achieve the transfer of detainees to third countries.

I am lifting the moratorium on detainee transfers to Yemen so we can review them on a case-by-case basis. To the greatest extent possible, we will transfer detainees who have been cleared to go to other countries.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- prisoners already. Release them today.

THE PRESIDENT: Where appropriate, we will bring terrorists to justice in our courts and our military justice system. And we will insist that judicial review be available for every detainee.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It needs to be --

THE PRESIDENT: Now, ma'am, let me finish. Let me finish, ma'am. Part of free speech is you being able to speak, but also, you listening and me being able to speak. (Applause.)

Now, even after we take these steps one issue will remain -- just how to deal with those GTMO detainees who we know have participated in dangerous plots or attacks but who cannot be prosecuted, for example, because the evidence against them has been compromised or is inadmissible in a court of law. But once we commit to a process of closing GTMO, I am confident that this legacy problem can be resolved, consistent with our commitment to the rule of law.

I know the politics are hard. But history will cast a harsh judgment on this aspect of our fight against terrorism and those of us who fail to end it. Imagine a future -- 10 years from now or 20 years from now -- when the United States of America is still holding people who have been charged with no crime on a piece of land that is not part of our country. Look at the current situation, where we are force-feeding detainees who are being held on a hunger strike. I'm willing to cut the young lady who interrupted me some slack because it's worth being passionate about. Is this who we are? Is that something our Founders foresaw? Is that the America we want to leave our children? Our sense of justice is stronger than that.

We have prosecuted scores of terrorists in our courts. That includes Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to blow up an airplane over Detroit; and Faisal Shahzad, who put a car bomb in Times Square. It's in a court of law that we will try Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who is accused of bombing the Boston Marathon. Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, is, as we speak, serving a life sentence in a maximum security prison here in the United States. In sentencing Reid, Judge William Young told him, "The way we treat you…is the measure of our own liberties."

AUDIENCE MEMBER: How about Abdulmutallab -- locking up a 16-year-old -- is that the way we treat a 16-year old? (Inaudible) -- can you take the drones out of the hands of the CIA? Can you stop the signature strikes killing people on the basis of suspicious activities?

THE PRESIDENT: We're addressing that, ma'am.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- thousands of Muslims that got killed -- will you compensate the innocent families -- that will make us safer here at home. I love my country. I love (inaudible) --

THE PRESIDENT: I think that -- and I'm going off script, as you might expect here. (Laughter and applause.) The voice of that woman is worth paying attention to. (Applause.) Obviously, I do not agree with much of what she said, and obviously she wasn't listening to me in much of what I said. But these are tough issues, and the suggestion that we can gloss over them is wrong.

When that judge sentenced Mr. Reid, the shoe bomber, he went on to point to the American flag that flew in the courtroom. "That flag," he said, "will fly there long after this is all forgotten. That flag still stands for freedom."

So, America, we've faced down dangers far greater than al Qaeda. By staying true to the values of our founding, and by using our constitutional compass, we have overcome slavery and Civil War and fascism and communism. In just these last few years as President, I've watched the American people bounce back from painful recession, mass shootings, natural disasters like the recent tornados that devastated Oklahoma. These events were heartbreaking; they shook our communities to the core. But because of the resilience of the American people, these events could not come close to breaking us.

I think of Lauren Manning, the 9/11 survivor who had severe burns over 80 percent of her body, who said, "That's my reality. I put a Band-Aid on it, literally, and I move on."

I think of the New Yorkers who filled Times Square the day after an attempted car bomb as if nothing had happened.

I think of the proud Pakistani parents who, after their daughter was invited to the White House, wrote to us, "We have raised an American Muslim daughter to dream big and never give up because it does pay off."

I think of all the wounded warriors rebuilding their lives, and helping other vets to find jobs.

I think of the runner planning to do the 2014 Boston Marathon, who said, "Next year, you're going to have more people than ever. Determination is not something to be messed with."

That's who the American people are -- determined, and not to be messed with. And now we need a strategy and a politics that reflects this resilient spirit.

Our victory against terrorism won't be measured in a surrender ceremony at a battleship, or a statue being pulled to the ground. Victory will be measured in parents taking their kids to school; immigrants coming to our shores; fans taking in a ballgame; a veteran starting a business; a bustling city street; a citizen shouting her concerns at a President.

The quiet determination; that strength of character and bond of fellowship; that refutation of fear -- that is both our sword and our shield. And long after the current messengers of hate have faded from the world's memory, alongside the brutal despots, and deranged madmen, and ruthless demagogues who litter history -- the flag of the United States will still wave from small-town cemeteries to national monuments, to distant outposts abroad. And that flag will still stand for freedom.

Thank you very, everybody. God bless you. May God bless the United States of America. (Applause.)

3:00 P.M. EDT