Thesis Statement: Weaponising Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses a threat to society as it lacks moral judgement and has an accountability issue. Therefore, autonomous weapons should be banned.

Elon Musk (2014) stated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the biggest threat to humanity and is more dangerous than nuclear weapons. This led to several engineers, including Musk himself, signing an open pledge to ban AI in weapons. Since 2013, over 125 nations united at Geneva for the United Nations conference and discussed the arising issue of AI. Despite majority of countries calling for a ban on weaponising AI, approximately 12 countries, including the United States (US), Australia, Russia and the United Kingdom oppose the ban of AI. Weaponising AI poses a threat to society as it lacks moral judgement and has accountability issues. Therefore, this essay will argue why autonomous weapons should be banned.

Firstly, the lack of moral judgment within AI is a concern for many engineers and ethicists who oppose the use of autonomous weapons. Although the system can rapidly detect faces, there is doubt whether the system can differentiate between the opposition and civilian, which can lead to unwanted casualties and collateral damage. In 2003, during the Iraq invasion, the US Army had deployed an autonomous air-defense missile which mistook the F-16 pilots as enemies rather than allies; causing three crewmen dead. Although the roboticist Ronald C. Arkin (2010) argued that "robotic systems can be designed without emotions that cloud their judgment" (p.333), there are still limitations in the robot. The scenario about the autonomous air-defense missile demonstrates that there is a misinterpretation within the context of the situation, which can cause miscalculations; leading to an algorithm failure. Therefore, AI should not be delegated with the choice of making life-and-death decisions as the concept of ethics is not built into autonomous weapons, hence it should be banned.

Furthermore, the lack of moral judgement in AI steers the accountability issue. This can be caused by algorithm bias, which is AI learning data from the engineers that created them (Sharma, 2018). In 2016, Microsoft launched their first AI Twitter chatbot 'Tay-the-Robot', in which became a racist and sexist AI by posting against Judaism; in favour of Hitler and anti-feminist tweets. Even though, Microsoft immediately

withdrew the tweets, the problem of accountability rises since the blame can be shifted from the people of Twitter who share this agenda to the software developer of the chatbot. This instigates the accountability issue since it is difficult to hold a robot accountable without a human in the loop, on-the-other-hand it is also difficult to hold software developers accountable since they did not commit nor directly command the action. Thus, due to the unpredictability of autonomous weapons causing an accountability issue, autonomous weapons should be banned.

Lastly, there is an increase in value for the weaponisation of AI. According to National Priorities Project (2015), the US spend 54% on their military defense. Currently, the US draft 130000 soldiers to Afghanistan, which costs the Pentagon about $11,050,000,000 a year, which is more expensive than the TALON robot which costs about $230,000 (Francis, 2013). However, it is estimated that by 2025 there will be more robots serving for the US military than humans. In 2010, the Pentagon spent approximately four-billion-dollars on AI research and applications. Moreover, in 2018, the Pentagon invested over 700 Billion to continue their research and development with weaponising AI. On the other hand, in 2018, the Trump Administration ordered to withdraw 7000 troops from Afghanistan; costing each soldier three-point-four billion per year. Hence, there is a decrease in the cost of soldiers and the budget for AI in weapons is increasing.

In conclusion, weaponising AI poses a threat to society and should be banned due to the lack of morality which should not determine one's life; unpredictable nature and accountability issues. Unfortunately, AI in warfare is inevitable and we are already seeing the consequences of how AI is changing an individual's life. Therefore, AI should be put to better use, such as healthcare and education; two sectors the US lacks spending.

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