When evaluating the ethics behind unmanned aerial vehicle use in warfare, one of the best ways to evaluate was Act Utilitarianism. Since Act Utilitarianism wants the greatest good for the greatest number of people, it seems to be the right method for evaluating how ethical a war machine is. When using Act Utilitarianism, it is helpful to create a stakeholder table to better understand how actions would affect each stakeholder. For this reason, we decided to create a stakeholder table so that we could look at the pros and cons of using unmanned vehicles in warfare.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Stakeholder | Weight | Net Utility | Reasoning |
| Drone engineers | 1 | -1 | The creators of the drones: could feel some remorse for what they have created |
| Possible victims of drone strike | 5 | -5 | Could be innocent civilian casualties |
| The public | 5 | 3 | Understand that drone strikes are sometimes necessary, however, they still have empathy for the civilian casualties |
| Targets | 3 | -5 | Would be targeted by the drone, likely death |
| Government | 2 | 4 | Using a safe technology that does not put their military personnel in harms way and takes out potential threat to the country |
| UAV pilot | 2 | -2 | They are doing what they are told, however, ~25% of all drone victims are civilians and not their target |

Utilitarian analysis: (1)(-1) +(5)(-5) + (5)(3) + (3)(-5) + (2)(4) + (2)(-2)

= -1 + (-25) +15 + (-15) + 8 + 0 = -22

After constructing the stakeholder table and analyzing the net utility and weight, we can conclude that unmanned drone usage in warfare is unethical when using Act Utilitarianism. While unmanned vehicle usage has positives, the negatives heavily outweigh them. According to the Journal of International Relations, there were an estimated 2200 civilian deaths between 2002 and 2013 caused by drone attacks. [2] Since we are using Act Utilitarianism, we are looking to ensure that the greatest good for the greatest number of people is occurring. With the amount of civilian casualties that have been caused by drone strikes in the past, we can not ensure that unmanned aerial vehicles offer the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

After analyzing unmanned aerial vehicle usage in warfare using Act Utilitarianism, we decided to use Rule Utilitarianism as well. In this method, a basic rule is defined, and it must be followed. Being another utilitarianism method, the goal is to bring the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

For our rule we chose that: War strategies should be used if they bring the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Using this rule, we must judge if unmanned aerial vehicle usage should be allowed in warfare by looking from both sides of war. One side that is using the drones and the other side that is being attacked by the drones. For the country using the drones, the strategy is very beneficial. The drone pilot is not being put in harm’s way and can also complete their mission by eliminating their target. For the citizens of country that is using drones it is also a great method for ensuring their safety and that they are being protected. It may seem the drones are very beneficial, however, due to the number of civilian casualties for the opposing side there are also some negatives. Drone pilots might feel guilty for being the cause of civilian casualties and citizens might also feel remorse for the lives lost due to the drones being used to protect them.

Another group that is impacted using drones is the governments of both sides. Civilian casualties caused by a non-approved drone strike could cause conflict between two countries [2]. The role of a government is to make sure their citizens are safe and looked after. If another government were to launch a drone strike without approval and cause civilian casualties, this could cause conflict between the two sides.

<https://spectrum.ieee.org/to-protect-against-weaponized-drones-we-must-understand-their-key-strengths>

[2] <http://www.sirjournal.org/op-ed/2019/1/28/the-ethical-concerns-of-drone-and-automated-warfare>