Recommendations for resolving the use of drones in warfare:

Resolving the issue of drone use in warfare is a tricky situation, one that Congress hasn’t even attempted to solve. There probably is not one “best” solution for this problem, as each policy or solution we come up with will have negative side affects to certain people. We have to come up will a multi-faceted response that covers multiple issues for a viable solution to even be considered. From the ethical analyses presented, we have found the use of drones in warfare to be unethical for several reasons. The first and foremost being that civilians are often killed with strikes, making its use unethical. Obviously, drones won’t stop being used in warfare, so we have to do our best to create a policy that makes drone use ethical in the eyes of most people.

The report from Stimson Center, a group which writes reports on international topics of war, wrote an interesting article on the US Drone Policy. This report is from 2015, a recent article, but with outdated deadlines. They offer several ideas for the reformation of drone use in warfare and how the US can use policy to use drones in a wise way. Among their ideas is to improve transparency in drone strikes, unify the responsibility from both the CIA and the military to just the military, and many more. So, using some of these suggestions and our own thoughts, we came up with what we think is a robust policy to ensure the drone use in warfare is ethical as often as it can be.

The recommendation we are making to resolve this case is as follows: firstly, we need to ensure that we are striking only the targets that need to be killed. Any civilian casualty that occurs makes this an unethical act, as this person was uninvolved with the threat we have targeted. We should verify this in several ways, like understanding where the targets are, their destination, who they are with, and when they move. We can achieve this by using x ray technology, verifying the number of potential casualties around, and using a high-definition camera coupled with artificial intelligence facial recognition to ensure we have the correct people.

Second, there needs to be more oversight and accountability for any drone strike. That way, for any circumstance in which many civilians are killed unnecessarily, we can make sure that no one person is causing repeated unnecessary strikes on civilians, and if they are, they are punished in the appropriate ways. A diverse bipartisan congress committee should oversee the drone strikes and approve or deny any strikes officials may see necessary.

Transparency is as important as anything else in this recommendation. The US should release, to the fullest extent possible, a report that addresses any strike carried out, the cost-benefit analysis of the strike, and the number of people killed in that strike. A secret drone strike should not be the norm, rather only used out of absolute necessity1.

Any drone strike should be carried out via the military rather than multiple US government organizations. This reduces inefficiency due to lack of communication between the military and any other organizations and it consolidates who can order drone strikes.

Finally, we should take responsibility for any civilians killed in any given strike. We should pay for that person’s funeral expenses and compensate the families with money or citizenship and travel to the US. This could help ensure we do not create more enemies on the battlefield because of unjustly killed civilians. Killing the civilians and just leaving will just create more opposition for the US in the long run, so we need to create a way to mitigate that justified hate and help bring the people of the world together.

This policy is achievable and realistic, as we have a way to implement all these suggestions. This policy helps the US citizens see what the government is doing, creates accountability for the death of these people killed in the strikes, and creates oversight for the drone strikes. The oversight committee allows for multiple viewpoints to be considered in carrying out a strike. Leaving the decision to one person often results in decisions being made incorrectly. A committee reduces the risk of a bad decision, with multiple people weighing with different thoughts and experiences. The person flying the drone and the engineers are unaffected. But, with increased transparency, the citizens are more in the loop with what is happening. The people targeted by the drone strike are affected in a positive way. There is less chance a drone strike targets civilians using the identification techniques noted earlier. This should address ethical concerns about drone use, but of course in a perfect world, drone use would not be necessary. The only way to stop drones from being unethical is to not use them at all, however, that would be nigh on impossible.

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