

Can Drone Use Be Dangerous?

By Lois Troxell

In the next few years growth in drones is expected to explode to 2.4 million drones. Drone use in war leads to long-term radicalization and increased recruitment for extremists. Killing leaders that include civilian deaths creates more militants. Drones have on-board cameras for real-time targeting, but they frequently fail to distinguish between combatants and civilians. Although President Trump has cancelled casualty reports, estimates are 7,000 to 13,000 civilians killed since 2004 in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, and Afghanistan.

Constant fear of a drone strike leads to mental health issues in non-combatants. Pilots of drones in war suffer from emotional disengagement and exhaustion, burn-out, and PTSD. Civilian use of drones can lead to attackers injecting their own malicious codes. A single drone can shut down an airport. Hacking, noise, and spying are frequently reported but the most common hazard is a drone crashing into someone or something.

Are there political solutions to be tried in the countries where our drones are killing more civilians than combatants? Could we elect leaders who will try?