



THE PULL-OUT

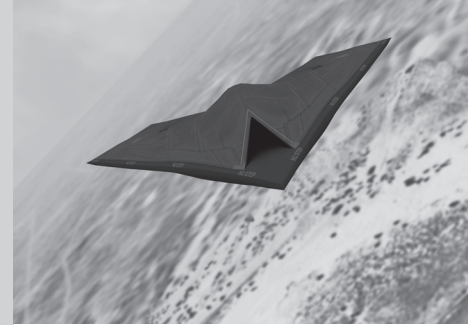
DRONE WARS

A PARADIGM SHIFT, HAPPENING IN SECRET

Drones (unmanned planes) are significantly changing the way war is waged. Enabling bombing raids without risking the lives of pilots, drones are increasingly seen as the weapon of choice for the UK Government, now and in the future. This is despite (or perhaps aided by) the lack of parliamentary scrutiny and public consultation on drones.

- Earlier this year, David Cameron promised to increase the number of RAF Reapers in Afghanistan from four to nine, at an estimated cost of £135m Guardian
- Taxpayers' money is being used by the Ministry of Defence to fund the development by BAE Systems of a new drone called Taranis Guardian
- The November 2010 Anglo-French Treaty wasn't just about sharing aircraft carriers but also "arms industries co-operating on developing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)". This treaty lasts 50 years! Guardian

OUR PRAY & POST CARD IS SIMPLY ASKING FOR THE PUBLIC AND CONCERNED PARTIES TO BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION ABOUT DRONES



Taranis, named after the Celtic god of thunder, is being developed by BAE Systems but with funding from the UK Government. Its prototype was unveiled in 2010 "against a backdrop of strobe lighting, dry ice and to pounding music". It will be fully "autonomous" – able to take off, fly, and select and attack targets without the need for human involvement, the so called 'man-in-the-loop'. Autonomous drones would further increase the distance between the participants and the victims of war. BAE Systems is also developing another autonomous drone called Mantis.

Convenient Killing Report

A NEW WEAPON

The concerns listed below illustrate that drones aren't simply a technological advancement tweaking existing practices, but a whole new weapon that we need to think very carefully about as a nation and a global community:

PLAYSTATION MENTALITY – the geographical and psychological distance between the drone operator and the target can lower the moral and operational threshold for launching an attack. Operators see mere blips on a screen, rather than human beings. Decision makers are no longer restrained by the risk to their own soldiers

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES – in a few cases drones have eventually been effective in killing some militant groups' leaders, but the untold story is that of the civilian casualties caught up in the blast radius or mistaken as targets. Accurate and reliable figures are hard to obtain, but the New America Foundation, a reputable US think-tank, estimates one third of deaths by drones in Pakistan are civilian, and Pakistan Body Count's estimate is much higher at 50 civilians per militant – even the conservative estimate is sobering. Convenient Killing Report

BREEDING RESENTMENT – wherever armed drones are used there has been a massive backlash against them. This is partly due to the heavy civilian casualties, and also the other side of the "playstation mentality" – how disempowering and alienating would it be to be one of the blips on a screen? If the "War on Terror" is aimed at preventing "radicalisation" and anti-Western sentiment and actions, then drones are not helping

RELIABILITY – Although drones are hailed as the latest super-weapon there are regular and reliable reports of technical difficulties. July 2010 the Pentagon admitted that thirty-eight Predator and Reaper drones have crashed during combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq alone. Insurgents in Iraq have also been able to use commercial software to hack into a drone's live video feed. As militants grow in technical expertise themselves, it is possible that they could gain control of their enemies' armed drones. It is also a terrifying reality that an armed drone could "go rogue" through simple software failure. Convenient Killing Report

TARGETED KILLINGS – Drones are the weapon of choice for "targeted killings", the targeting and killing of specific individuals who are not in custody; this is more commonly and simply known as assassination. This is a good example of how drones can help to change attitudes and approaches in war. Americans were outraged by reports that during the Bush Administration the C.I.A. had considered setting up hit squads to capture or kill Al Qaeda operatives around the world, while many experts argued that it would have been illegal. Hina Shamsi, a human-rights lawyer, has been struck by the inconsistency of the public response between hit squads and drones. "We got so upset about a targeted-killing program that didn't happen, but the drone program exists. These are targeted international killings by the state." Vicki Divoll, a former C.I.A. lawyer observed, "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." New Yorker

Turn over to see what you can do or read more at:
www.speak.org.uk/dehumanising-destruction
www.for.org.uk/files/drones-conv-killing.pdf



Volumize

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TAKE ACTION!

IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RISE OF DRONES AND THE ABSENCE OF SCRUTINY OR CONSULTATION, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY - HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

LOCAL: Send the Pray & Post Card to David Cameron and call for there to be an open and honest debate on drones. We're also happy to send you more, so you can get friends signing them, or do a notice in your church or other community group asking everyone to sign one.

At www.speak.org.uk/dehumanising-destruction we have loads of tips on how to share the campaign with the people around you.

INVITE SPEAKERS TO A LOCAL EVENT: SPEAK and Fellowship of Reconciliation's "Counting the Cost" Tour has been to Sheffield, Durham, Exeter, Loughborough and York so far, but we would love to come and talk to your local community group - let us know if you're interested!

ONLINE: Follow Chris Cole's blog about drones here: www.dronewarsuk.wordpress.com, including a database of all known drone crashes - there are a lot! Chris is a long-time arms trade activist who has supported SPEAK's campaigns and spoke at our Day of Actions in 2004 and 10.

NATIONAL: Every two years the biggest arms fair in the world is held in London, supported by tax-payer funded Government department the Defence & Security Organisation (DSO). At the time of going to press the next DSEi (Defence & Security Equipment international) is 13-16th September 2011. DSEi boasts that the arms fair will be "even bigger" and will host the "World's Largest Unmanned & Robotics Showcase that has over 21,000ft²".

SPEAK will be there on the 13th September with many others, to protest about the level of support the UK Government provides for the arms trade by helping to put on arms fairs like this one, as well as the dubious human rights and armed conflict records of many of the countries invited.

You could also come to Vocal Training 9-12th September 2011 to get equipped and inspired: www.speak.org.uk/vocal-training A group of Vocal Training delegates will then leave together to join the DSEi Day of Action on 13th Sept. The day will be accessible to all, whether it's your first demo or you've spent hours of your life chained to arms factory gates!

THE HISTORY OF DRONES



- 7,000 drones in the air Convenient Killing Report
- An estimated 40 countries are developing drones Convenient Killing Report and every plane in development in the west is a drone Wired for War
- Global spending on drones is predicted to double with \$94b to be spent from 2010-2020 Teal Group - a huge figure, compared to the \$3.6b given in aid globally towards conflict prevention in 2009 Global Humanitarian Assistance

DRONES RIGHT NOW

Visit www.speak.org.uk/dehumanising-destruction or contact campaigns@speak.org.uk for more information