



Liudmyla Tkach

student, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University

John Kaag, Sarah Kreps, *Drone Warfare*

[Polity Press, Cambridge 2014, 195 p.]

The rapid technological development and proliferation of the unmanned aerial vehicle for only a few decades has changed the character of modern warfare. The book *Drone Warfare* deserves our particular attention by the mere fact that it raises relevant interdisciplinary questions that arose simultaneously with advancement and expansion of drones, but did not receive proper attention before.

It is only logical that such a multifaceted study was undertaken by Kaag and Kreps, scientists from completely different scientific fields: philosophy and political science. This was the only way to ensure a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the political, legal and ethical problems associated with the increased role of drones.

Kaag and Kreps neither support nor criticize the use of drones, they only peacefully draw our attention to the backwardness of research in this area and the risks associated with such recklessness. At first glance such hazards may seem to be a challenge solely of our century, but one can easily trace the disturbing parallel, intentionally left by the authors, to another powerful means of destruction. The technical characteristics of nuclear weapons at the time significantly outpaced the studies of its potential threats. The core idea here is that we don't need more advanced military technologies, what we need is to learn how to treat the existing ones in a rational and humane way. To this well-known fact, the authors add one important refinement: in the era of

rapid technical progress, we should not be tempted to delegate decision-making processes concerning ethics and morality in favor of artificial intelligence. Even if their abilities are far superior to ours, human judgment must remain a constant for debates endangering human lives. In this book Kaag and Kreps are making the initial attempt to start this debate on the present and future of drones.

The book consists of six chapters that have a clear and well-reasoned structure. The first chapter is an introductory one which offers a brief historical overview of the evolution of attitudes toward UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) that have occurred in American society since the Cold War to the present day, paying particular attention to the turning point in military policy in the post-9/11 environment. Needless to say, Kaag and Kreps pay special attention to the US experience, as this state is considered to be the largest manufacturer, user and proponent of the exploitation of UAVs in the world.

The results of surveys confirm a high level of support of drone warfare by the American society. First of all, this is due to the decrease in the death rate of American soldiers, which strongly affects the climate of opinion. Thus, drone deployment becomes a convenient manipulation in the hands of politicians. Particular attention to this issue is paid in the third chapter.

The second chapter is written in a descriptive manner and tells about the modern classification and features of the use of drones in military affairs. In order to provide a complex understanding of UAVs issues, it focuses on technical aspects. This section plays a significant role in the whole narrative, as it serves as a foundation to the next three chapters, which thoroughly examine the political, legal and ethical problems that have arisen with the spread of the UAVs.

In this chapter Kaag and Kreps have also highlighted an issue of the effectiveness of drones in a strategic long-term sense and the dangers associated with the proliferation of semi-autonomous weaponry. As they claim, there are two camps in the scientific community that have taken quite opposite sides in the debates on the effectiveness of UAVs. One side acknowledges a significant advantage of drones and its unambiguous ethics, compared with carpet bombing. Thus, accurate strikes could significantly reduce the level of civilian casualties, and practically offset a level of threat to the penetrator. Certainly, the American administration is the follower of this approach, which considers the growing role of drones as unequivocally positive and humane .

On the other hand, attention is paid not only to the futility of drones in combat, but also to the potential harm caused by them. Thus, the killed leaders of terrorist groups, which often became the target of attacks, were quickly replaced by new militants, and the use of such technologies only contributed to the recruitment of new members of illegal organizations. Regrettably, even such an obvious advantage as the preservation of the lives of soldiers, in the future could increase the number of wars, due to a decrease in the cost of war.

Another question of essential meaning discussed in the chapter is the danger of proliferation of UAVs. The main manufacturer and exporter of drones is still the United States, but an increasing concern is caused by the activation of such attacks by the governments of the UK and Israel.

In addition, the apparent tactical success of drones encourages, or even forces, other countries to adopt such a weaponry. The result was an increase in the number of the countries owning semi-autonomous weapons from 41 in 2005 to 76 in 2011.

The main responsibility for the spread of UAVs, according to Kaag and Kreps, rests with the United States, as this country used drones for the first time as a lethal weapon and then popularized them on the global scale. Therefore, the US is obliged to undertake the necessary measures related to the settlement of the international status of drones, for example, concluding agreements on the use of UAVs only with the initiative and support of the UN Security Council.

Thus, the research, conducted by the authors in collaboration with scholars of diverse areas of science, is aimed not only at education. As a matter of fact, it is mainly a message to governmental structures to revisit the limits of use of UAVs.

The third chapter is devoted to political issues that lead to dangerous drone proliferation. According to Kaag and Kreps, the reason for unanimous support of drones lies in the natural human desire of protection. Thus, an administration capable of guarding the lives of its citizens more effectively has more support among the population. It also works vice versa: unwilling to reduce its popularity, the government will use military measures with much greater reluctance and caution, bearing in mind the cost of war. The comparative security for the penetrator, which is offered by semi-autonomous weapons, protects the country's leadership from backlash from its own citizens.

In the fourth chapter, the authors consider the relevance and legality of the use of drones on the basis of existing international treaties, which put a strict limit on the use of lethal weapons. In this context two independent parts of law of war are concerned: *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

The United Nations Charter identifies two main reasons for the use of force in international relations. The first is based on the right to self-defense of the state, according to Art. 51; the second one involves pre-authorization of strikes by the UN Security Council. Thus, Kaag and Kreps question the legality of US unmanned aerial attacks in countries with whom it has no open military confrontation. Considering the fact that only antiterrorist actions on the territory of Afghanistan can fall under the "just war" criterion, the attacks in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan remain illegal from the point of view of international law. The authors pay special attention to International Humanitarian Law and carefully examine American policy in respect for *jus in bello*, the principles of proportionality and distinction.

The last essential phase of the debate on drones is about the moral hazards of UAVs deployment. The main ethical danger that followed the expansion of drones was the disturbing transformation of the environment from security to impunity.

In conclusion, the authors propose their own ideas for settling and limiting the use of semi-autonomous weapons. The solutions offered by Kaag and Kreps have caused the greatest controversy and ambiguous reaction of the audience, which I still find a positive feedback. Such an intensive reaction to the questions raised by the authors always increases interest in the given topic. This whole research was conducted in order to draw attention to the debate, so I would consider this book to be extremely successful. I would highly recommend the book to individuals, such as

Liudmyla Tkach

students, academics and experts in International Security, but also to practitioners and decision-makers. It would be useful to anyone who is concerned about the overarching threats imposed on our society by the technological progress in military affairs. For all those who are not sufficiently aware of such threats, this book would be particularly useful and serve as a great primer for this extensive debate.