



The emergence of new weapons has always led soldiers to question the legitimacy of their use 2/2

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The result is a morality of the rich and the intellectuals reserved for an elite of humanity that puts the other at a distance, an illusory vision of a world that is nothing but an illusion. As the philosopher Nassim Nicholas TALEB wrote: "In fact, academics and theorists want to teach birds to fly".

Dilution of linkage and liability

In the gun crew serving a gun, in the tank crew advancing, in the battle group advancing through an alley, each one is certain that he or she is dependent on the other and that the comrade is counting on him or her. Solidarity, this brotherhood of arms that the combatants are claiming is experienced on a daily basis. For the sole mission of a drone in charge of eliminating a target from the US Air Force base at CREECH in Nevada, things are quite different: a team of about 40 operators is mobilized to ensure the three eights. It is supported remotely from Virginia by about sixty specialised CIA personnel in LANGLEY. Pilots, analysts, communications specialists and image interpreters cross paths, waiting for the right moment to give the order to fire the missile. What is the share of each in the success or failure of the mission, in the elimination of the target with or without collateral damage? It is very difficult to answer this question because this splitting up of tasks over time, but repetitive, almost routine tasks in an aseptic environment can be very difficult to answer. It is difficult to answer because this splitting of tasks in time, but repetitive, almost routine tasks in a sanitized environment can be similar to working on a factory line, except that at the end of the line, it is death that is given by having placed total confidence in the robotic weapon system. In the end, it is the loss of the sense of individual responsibility when the individual is subject to a distant and unknown higher authority that can be posed as the experiments conducted at Yale by Stanley MILGRAM in 1961 showed.

This trust in the computers of a weapon system is probably the reason for the destruction of the BOEING 777 above the Ukraine in July 2014, just as it was the case for the Iranian airliner shot down in 1998 by the USS VINCENNES' Aegis radar system, in which the crew had placed their complete trust.

Strengths and weaknesses of the human factor

An internal U.S. Army report reported that UAV operators were showing signs of mental exhaustion due to a significant increase in missions, criticism of the range, and a lack of training, of their operational effectiveness, in particular collateral damage spread over the web, and the difficulty of having a private civilian life and an operational life co-exist in the same place.

It is true that former US President Barack OBAMA, who was very reluctant to commit soldiers to the field, made extensive use of this weapons system. It is then up to the command to manage operational fatigue and give meaning to missions. On the other hand, it is certainly more difficult to manage the psychological consequences of the missions on the operators, given the little hindsight we have on the impact of these images, of this on-screen war that bears a striking resemblance to a violent video game. In this respect, some studies tend to show that these games generate aggressive behaviour, a loss of empathy, a gradual shift away from the real world and a confinement in a personal bubble. But each time a cause and effect link has been sought following a tragedy, it has appeared that there was a predisposed terrain in the individual in question (family violence, suicidal tendency, desocialisation etc.). Nevertheless, we cannot exclude the consequences of a silent image of human or material destruction on its perpetrator, an image that can provoke a brutal surge of emotion when there has not been the progressive rise of good stress, stress adapted to the totally secure and air-conditioned environment.

On the other hand, as with military personnel returning from operations after several months of absence, UAV operators are faced with a brutal zapping between the world of warlike violence and the civilian world. But with an added difficulty, that of a very short rehabilitation time, which is the journey between the base and home. And this repeatedly, on a daily basis. It is in this context that the distortion between the theatre of operations, where the missile was fired, and the place where the missile was parked, the base and the nearby home, can be psychologically destabilizing. All the more so as it is out of the question to tell the wife or neighbour about "his or her workingday " covered by the DEFENCE SECRET. But one can imagine their questioning looks or their questioning when the media announce such and such an elimination or such and such a strike with collateral damage.

However, we can be sure that solutions to these difficulties that some operators may encounter are to be sought between health professionals (unit doctors, specialists, psychologists) and the command by means of selection and prevention actions in order to strengthen the moral strength of these units.

Conclusion

Unmistakably, drones mark an important step towards more or less autonomous weapons. These weapons worry many scientists who denounce this new armed form of artificial intelligence. The physicist Stephen HAWKING, shortly before his death, declared that "the development of a complete artificial intelligence could put an end to humanity".

However, the appearance of armed robots is irreversible, and to think that it is possible to ban them is an illusion, when the intelligent car and domestic robots are announced for tomorrow. Will we reach a balance of terror as nuclear weapons have produced it, or on the contrary "the third revolution of the age of war after gunpowder and nuclear weapons" without being able to imagine its consequences? To date, it is too early to

answer that question.

Finally, will this revolution mark the disappearance of the man of war who contributed to the birth of nations and civilizations? For the time being, even if he is becoming rare and if we seek to imprison him in a trivialized world, he still remains today. Today, whatever his rank, he remains the privileged spectator and actor of an existence made up of overcome risks that make him a man apart.

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