

# FRAMING THE ENEMY'S THEORY AS AN EQUATION: THE USE OF MILITARY DRONES AND ITS MORAL IMPLICATIONS IN MODERN WARFARE

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to analyze both the ontological and moral consequences stemming from the use of military drones in modern warfare. More specifically, through the analysis made by the philosopher Glenn Gray, we will focus on the dangers lurking in the creation of an “abstract enemy”, through his dehumanization in our vocabulary and thought; in addition, emphasis will be laid upon the moral challenges the use of military drones might generate with reference to the noncombatant civilians in modern warfare and the radical changes this use might entail for our approach towards military ethics.

KEYWORDS: drones, enemy, “ontological” distance, Glenn Gray, military ethics, noncombatant civilians.

## RESUMEN

“Enmarcando la teoría del enemigo como una ecuación: el uso de drones militares y sus implicaciones morales en la guerra moderna”. El objetivo del presente artículo es analizar las consecuencias ontológicas y morales que surgen del uso de los drones militares en la guerra moderna. Más concretamente, a través del análisis llevado a cabo por el filósofo Glenn Gray, discurrirémos acerca de los peligros que yacen en la creación de un “enemigo abstracto”, que nace como consecuencia directa de la deshumanización del enemigo en nuestro vocabulario y pensamiento. Además, se subrayarán los desafíos morales que el uso de los drones militares podría provocar a los ciudadanos no combatientes en la guerra moderna, así como los cambios radicales que dicho uso puede acarrear en nuestra manera de concebir la ética militar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: drones, enemigo, «distancia ontológica», Glenn Gray, ética militar, civiles.

The aim of this article is to analyze both the possible ontological consequences of the use of military drones in modern warfare and the drastical changes their use may entail for the way modern wars are waged.

In the first part, we will see how the moral legitimizing of the use of military drones primarily requires a change in our perception of what the enemy is;



more specifically, making use of an abstract vocabulary we run the risk of creating a kind of an “ontological distance” that might result in the rising of an impersonal, abstract and absolute enemy deprived of the most basic feature of the recognition of his human being’s essence. In the second part, we will see how this “ontological distance” between the combatant and the enemy paves the way for the emergence of an ontical distance which is fully materialized in the use of drones. We will further examine how through the ontical distance and the use of drones, a second form of ontological distance is taking place, based no longer on the sentiment of hatred and dehumanization, but, on the contrary, transforming the enemy into a simple parameter, a simple factor which can be eliminated thanks technology’s use. Finally, in the last part, we will show how the use of drones greatly jeopardizes our perception of what justice and enemy are, whereas putting into danger the life of the enemy country’s innocent civilians, may be treated as a necessary evil in the States’ effort to protect their soldiers and keep them away from any possible loss of lives an on ground military invasion could cause.

### 1. THE ENEMY AND THE “ONTOLOGICAL DISTANCE”: GLENN GRAY AND THE ABSTRACTION IN WAR

There can be no doubt that when a State sends its soldiers to war it expects that there will be death; either the death of the enemy or of its own soldier. But when it comes to the killing of the enemy(ies), before the soldier’s becoming able to pull the trigger and kill another person he must have previously developed some “moral resistances” that would serve as a “compass of justice” during the maelstrom of war. The realization of the killing of a fellow human being may be destructive for the soldier’s psyche, leading to a total mental collapse in many cases, which arises the necessity of creating a kind of distance between the soldier and his enemy, an “ontological distance” which will enable him to distance himself from the enemy, intending to close the door to every possible moral kickback that would unable him from continuing doing so. The enemy must become something more than a simple enemy; he must become the Enemy. Concerning the issue of what the enemy in the war is, or could be, Glenn Gray in his significant work *The Warriors* is giving us an excellent account of the issue at stake:

we seem to mean a unified, concrete universal, whereas in fact the enemy is probably not more unified than our side and possesses many other characteristics than those that are hostile to us<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn GRAY, *The Warriors: Reflections on men in battle*, University of Nebraska Press, 1998, pp.134.



There can be no doubt that what Glenn Gray mentions is a simple fact that we all manage to understand. The enemy is not a priori a monster whose *modus vivendi* is a direct threat to our life or our ideas and values. It is more probable that, exactly just like us, he has been forced to enter into a context/situation whose control lies not in his hands. He is not a universal maxim, not a pure abstraction, but, on the contrary, a very concrete reality, a person like us, sharing the same needs, the same fears, the anxiety of losing his life and his family. Of course, the above-mentioned characteristics and fears cannot generate inside us the urge, or even worse, the lust to eradicate him. He is our enemy because of the circumstances; not because of moral or existential issues. But thinking like that, as we can easily understand, would be “counter-productive” during war, since it would be really difficult for the soldier to take the life of someone he believes to share many characteristics with. This is why a great abstraction has to take place, an abstraction fabricating an “ontological distance” between us and “the enemy”, an abstraction which will oblige us to see the enemy

as sufficiently evil to inspire hatred and repugnance.....it is abstract hatred and not the greater savagery of contemporary man that is responsible for much of the blood lust and cruelty of recent wars. This word “abstract” signifies in origin to “draw out from”, to take from any larger whole one particular feature or aspect<sup>2</sup>.

What can be deduced from the above is that a “drawing out from” must take place if we want to be able to morally justify our actions and our taking away lives during the war. The enemy must become something less than a human being; he has to lose this most basic essence just because he is “the enemy”, and this depriving can only occur through an abstraction which will transform the enemy into an object; an obstacle which has to be eliminated for the sake of achieving our “just” goals. As a matter of fact, in this case the enemy does not become simply an object, as when it comes to drones-we will later see- but there is an ontological change happening, a change which transfigures the enemy, through the abstraction, to a kind of a lesser human being, the mere incarnation of what we consider unjust and immoral:

No one should underestimate the cruelty and delight in cruelty when a soldier-or a civilian- is impelled by such personal abstract hatred. For this reason, civil wars are usually replete with refinements of personal torture and are commonly more terrible than international wars<sup>3</sup>.

The afore mentioned ontological change has, thus, as consequence, the transmogrification of what we so far believed that modern warfare is. If, through the use of the abstract vocabulary, the enemy has finally been changed into something lesser than a human being then this paves the way for an analogous treatment

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, 133-134.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, 140.



from the part of the soldiers. If the enemy is not worthy of any kind of respect then every action against him is justified along with all the means approved. So, what was considered a military struggle seems, now, to be transformed into a dark kind of “beast hunting”. This strong effect of the abstraction on the psyche of the combatants is vividly depicted by Glenn Gray when describing some atrocities made by the American soldiers in Japan during the WW2:

On first reflection, the enemy conceived as beasts might be thought to be morally the most satisfactory of any image, since it avoids feelings of guilt. Granted the fact of war, the pursuit of killing without compunction could be considered the most healthy and rational possible. We will be a dirty job, but with this attitude the compulsion exercised on soldiers to carry out the unpleasant work of extermination will be minimal and bad psychological effects will be reduced both during the operation and in the postwar world<sup>4</sup>.

As we understand through the abstraction we see the appearance of the enemy as a beast, and as such he is to be treated. This approach towards the enemy should not to be limited, of course, to the case of the American soldiers in Japan, or to the atrocities made by the Nazis and the victims of the Soviet gulags. Dehumanizing the enemy, making of him a beast, depriving him from his most basic human essence mostly aims at creating soldiers/machines that have a clear insight of their goal and they understand at every moment which their actions should be in the context of war. Nevertheless, this “machine-making” process also aims at something much more primordial and profound, which is no other than the suffering felt for the loss of a fellow human being. This suffering may lead us to deny orders when directly attacking our moral codes. Of course, this moral disobedience in war may lead to unpredictable situations. This is the reason why the suffering has to be muted one way or another. In the cases we have seen the abstraction was used so as to silence the suffering and dehumanize the enemy. What is most disturbing and alarming than denying following the orders of killing someone, would be the blind obedience to orders of killing fellow human beings “knowing” that this is the right thing and that we may go back home strongly believing that the loss of life of the fellow man killed was not only necessary but just as well. If we ever reach this point of losing the feeling of the other’s suffering, then we will be facing the direst consequences of our own dehumanization.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 150-151.



## 2. “PROJECTING POWER WITHOUT VULNERABILITY<sup>5</sup>”: A MORAL EVALUATION OF THE USE OF MILITARY DRONES

The above mentioned “strategic danger” of soldier’s feeling empathy in war, of seeing the enemy as a fellow human being could easily lead to a loss of efficiency when in the battlefield. Having warrior machines on the battlefield, absolutely concentrated on their goal of eliminating the enemy is, of course, much more promising and efficacious, than to have on the battlefield human soldiers, feeling fear of killing, empathy for the enemy, and a capacity to emphatically merge in the recognition of the enemy’s human essence. This is the reason why, the “ontological distance” is becoming so important in modern warfare, and this is exactly why the “ontological” distance of dehumanizing the enemy has to be followed by an ontical distance, through the capability of creating greater distances between the soldier and his enemy. Of course, war through distance, has always existed and been a strategic goal- although, not always morally approved. This progressively augmented use of the long distance weapons is very well depicted by Professor Mockaitis (2016) in the following passage:

New weapons, especially those that have allowed military personnel to kill from a safe distance, have always been controversial. In the fourteenth century, French knights railed against the immorality of the English long bow, which allowed a commoner to knock a knight off his horse at over 100 yards. When cannon appeared on the battlefields of Europe, the Vatican imposed a ban of excommunication on artillerymen as punishment for employing their infernal machines, which killed civilians during sieges. In the early days of the First World War, the allies railed against the immorality of submarines, which could sink ships without warning. Anger over the sinking of the luxury liner *Lusitania* helped propel the U.S. toward war with Germany. Few at the time realized that the ship had been carrying military supplies and was thus arguably a legitimate target. Outrage lasted until the allies developed their own submarines. Manned bombers capable of leveling cities also provoked moral outrage, which did nothing to stop both sides using them with devastating effect during World War II<sup>6</sup>.

Distance in war, as we can easily understand, has diachronically been sought for, since the larger the distance is, the less danger will be faced by our State’s soldiers. In addition, to the strategical impact of the use of long distance weapons, the really important psychological role of the factor of distance should be stressed. Dave Grossman, in his famous opus *On Killing* explains:

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<sup>5</sup> This sentence is an thorough summary of the significance of the military drones of Grégoire Chamayou in his book *Drone Theory*: Grégoire CHAMAYOU, *Drone Theory*, Trans. Janet Lloyd Penguin, Random House, London, 2015, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Tom MOCKAITIS, “Drones and the Ethics of War”, *Huffington Post*, 01/12/2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-mockaitis/drones-and-the-ethics-ofb8961510.html>



Throughout World War II bomber crews on both sides killed millions of women, children, and elderly people, no different from their own wives, children, and parents. The pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunners in these aircraft were able to bring themselves to kill these civilians primarily through application of the mental leverage provided to them by the distance factor. Intellectually, they understood the horror of what they were doing. Emotionally, the distance involved permitted them to deny it. Despite what a recent popular song might tell us, from a distance you don't look anything like a friend. From a distance, I can deny your humanity; and from a distance, I cannot hear your screams.<sup>7</sup>

It would not be, thus, hyperbolic to say that thanks to the use of the military drones this advantage offered to us by the factor of distance is fully exploited since an everyday more accurate targeting of people can be performed, disengaged from the massive killings and casualties- as was, for example, the case in Yugoslavia during the attacks by the air NATO forces when the bombing aircrafts, in some occasions, in order to effectively protect the aircraft and the pilot had maintained a "safe" distance of 15.000 feet, although knowing that it was impossible for them to be aware of the presence or not of any innocent civilians<sup>8</sup>. But in our days, modern warfare, through the use of military drones is coming closer than ever to the most wanted goal allowing us "to project power without projecting vulnerability"<sup>9</sup>. Of course, the fact that no vulnerability is presented does not mean that the innocent civilians of the enemy state/organization are protected as well. Even though the killing capacity of a military drone cannot be compared to the one of a stealth bomber or an atomic bomb, this does not mean that there can be no "collateral damage". According to data by the human-rights group *Reprieve*, the selected killing by military drones in Yemen and Pakistan is very far from been characterized a success. More specifically:

In total, as many as 1,147 people may have been killed during attempts to kill 41 men, accounting for a quarter of all possible drone strike casualties in Pakistan and Yemen. In Yemen, strikes against just 17 targets accounted for almost half of all confirmed civilian casualties. Yet evidence suggests that at least four of these 17 men are still alive. Similarly, in Pakistan, 221 people, including 103 children, have been killed in attempts to kill four men, three of whom are still alive and a fourth of whom died from natural causes<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> David Grossman, *On killing*, Little Brown, Boston, 1996, p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> *Amnesty International*, NATO/FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA "COLLATERAL DAMAGE" OR UNLAWFUL KILLINGS? Violations of the Laws of War by NATO during Operation Allied Force, *Amnesty International*, June 2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/140000/eur700182000en.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Grégoire CHAMAYOU, *Drone Theory*, Trans. Janet Lloyd Penguin, Random House, London, 2015, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> *Reprieve*, "You never die twice: multiple kills in the US drone program", *Reprieve*, 2014, pp. 1-16. Retrieved from: [http://www.reprieve.org/wp-content/uploads/2014\\_11\\_24\\_PUB-You-Never-Die-Twice-Multiple-Kills-in-the-US-Drone-Program-1.pdf](http://www.reprieve.org/wp-content/uploads/2014_11_24_PUB-You-Never-Die-Twice-Multiple-Kills-in-the-US-Drone-Program-1.pdf)

Apart from the collateral damage and the significance of killing civilians, an issue which we will analyze more in the last part, another important question is raised concerning the way modern warfare is transformed through the use of the military drones. It seems that it resembles much more a manhunt and the relation between a predator and its prey, than a military combat where the opposite sides are ready to fight face to face through tactical or asymmetry struggles. This difference between hunting and military strife is vividly depicted by the French philosopher Grégoire Chamayou:

While warfare is defined, in the last analysis, by combat, hunting is essentially defined by pursuit. Two distinct types of geography correspond to the two activities. Combat bursts out wherever opposing forces clash. Hunting, on the other hand, takes place wherever the prey goes. As a hunter state sees it, armed violence is no longer defined within the boundaries of a demarcated zone but simply by the presence of an enemy-prey who, so to speak, carries with it its own little mobile zone of hostility<sup>11</sup>

This feeling of taking part in a hunt seems to be proven by Lieutenant-Colonel Chris Gough in an interview to Afshin Rattansi when explaining the process and the advantages of the “hunt”:

unlike all the other weapons systems out there, I can control collateral damage to a much greater degree in this and I can minimize it and negate it because if I see a high-value individual — one of those jackpot guys — that I want to prosecute an attack on I'm not limited by gas. I'm not limited by the physiological constraints of the air crew. I'll swap another air crew out. I'll bring another plane out and have them run in there and get a new GCUS and I will stay with that individual until the time is right by my making<sup>12</sup>

It is easily understood that in this kind of modern manhunt, since the predator runs after the prey, the latter is the one constantly experiencing the stress and the anxiety of his imminent elimination without knowing how, when, where and, probably, why he is going to die. There seems to be an already decided enactment of justice on the part of the predator safe in place far from the one where the killing is going to happen; so, the military drone becomes the tool of “executing” justice. The other part, of course, trapped within this unilateral decision making and allotting justice process can only try to hide from the machine above his head. This way of acting and deciding, though, brings forth, once again, our own point of view and perception about what the enemy is, in the case of the use of military drones; he is

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<sup>11</sup> Grégoire CHAMAYOU, *Drone Theory*, Trans. Janet Lloyd Penguin, Random House, London, 2015, p. 52.

<sup>12</sup> Afshin RATTANSI, “Meet Lt. Col. Chris Gough: Killing by Drone and Proud of It”, *Counterpunch*, 02/04/2010. Retrieved from: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2010/04/02/meet-lt-col-chris-gough-killing-by-drone-and-proud-of-it/>



the one limited to being the upcoming object of extermination. A human being, even if he is a terrorist, is deprived of every right to defend himself, even see the face of his killer. Instead of being treated as a human being he simply becomes “the enemy that will die”. Even worse case would constitute for his eventual death, to be considered in such a state of fact, moral and just. The philosopher Bradley Strawser, in his renowned interview in *The Guardian* made the following point concerning the use of military drones:

It’s all upside. There’s no downside. Both ethically and normatively, there’s a tremendous value... You’re not risking the pilot. The pilot is safe. And all the empirical evidence shows that drones tend to be more accurate. We need to shift the burden of the argument to the other side. Why not do this? The positive reasons are overwhelming at this point. This is the future of all air warfare. At least for the US<sup>13</sup>

For the US, at least, it may be the case. Nevertheless, we do have some serious doubts concerning the moral monopoly of the US decision making and acting. In addition, the way the American philosopher supports his idea is striking since it is of a tremendous value, ethically speaking, to kill a human being not the slightest aware of the fact that he is going to die, probably before his family’s or friends’ very eyes. Sticking to an extreme utilitarian thinking we could consider the death necessary, but no one could boast about the ethical value of the killing provoked by the use of a military drone<sup>14</sup>. It is quite hard to speak about ethics, moral values and justice in war. What we can do, nevertheless, is to shed light on the important issue raised by the increasing use of the military drones, which is no other than our recognition of the enemy as a human being and not as a simple object waiting for its extermination time

the drone system radically homogenizes these identities into a single cluster of racialized information that is used for remote-controlled processes of control and harm. Bodies below become things to track, monitor, apprehend, and kill, while the pilot and other allies on the network remain differentiated and proximate, at least culturally if not physically<sup>15</sup>

The above passage explains in depth what the enemy is becoming via the use of the military drones. The enemy is the enemy as a category, as a parameter which

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<sup>13</sup> Rory CARROLL, “The philosopher making the moral case for US drones”, *The Guardian*, 02/08/2012. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/aug/02/philosopher-moral-case-drones>

<sup>14</sup> Truth be told, the philosopher after the criticism he has received concerning his ideas tried to further explain his point of view concerning the use of drones for a just cause, etc. See: Bradley Strawser, “The morality of drone warfare revisited”, *The Guardian*, 06/08/2012. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/aug/06/morality-drone-warfare-revisited>

<sup>15</sup> Tyler Wall & Torin Monahan, “Surveillance and violence from afar: The politics of drones and liminal security-scapes”, *Theoretical Criminology*, 15(3), 2011, p. 246.





can be located by the help of coordinates. The necessity of creating an “ontological distance”, as seen in the first part, through the dehumanization of the enemy can be distinctly seen in this case as well, although in the first case the enemy had to be seen as an absolute enemy, dehumanized and even demonized, while in the second case, the enemy is a simple part of a morbid equation between the drone user the drone and the death of the object. It could be said that the “ontological distance” has reached its full impact, since it no longer relies on a sentiment such as hatred, but it has finally become an homogenizing process, a bureaucratic affair of a chain of decisions which lead to the physical extinction of the enemy, of the enemy as an object, of the enemy as a sum of pixels. Drones, of course, are only gathering information according to the criteria that are told to follow and apply by the operators. The process, thus, of the homogenization of the enemy is a twofold relation where the operator applies to the drone the criteria according to which the enemy is to be sought for, and the drone brings the feedback to the operator of the enemy; an enemy, or better said a sum of enemies, totally homogenized and presented to the operator not that much as a living human being but rather as a parameter, as a factor and as a necessary element for the equation of killing:

Drones may perform predominately in the discursive register of automated precision and positive identification of known threats, but in practice, these surveillance systems and their agents actively interpret ambiguous information that continuously defies exact matches or clear responses. In the process, UAV systems may force homogenization upon difference, thereby reducing variation to functional categories that correspond to the needs and biases of the operators, not the targets, of surveillance<sup>16</sup>

Probably never before had the “art” of killing become so sophisticated and organized. This explains why important moral issues may arise; if technology is finally giving us the power to become to a great extent invincible, then would we be prepared to make some moral sacrifices, such as downgrading the importance of the life of the innocent civilians of the other states, so as to maintain our soldiers safe? This is what we want to examine in the last part of this article.

### 3. OUR SOLDIERS, THEIR CIVILIANS: MILITARY BENEFITS AND MORALITY IN THE USE OF DRONES

In this last part of the paper we will mainly focus on a polemical article by Asa Kasher and Amos Yadlin (2015) called *Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli Perspective*. The reason of our giving emphasis to this specific article is that it brings into light some important issues concerning not only the way we understand the Just War Theory, but, in addition, it makes us see through a different

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 240.



perspective what the enemy is in war and which is the significance of the life of the innocent civilians' life in a fight "against terror". After the analysis is made, we will effort to trace the possible consequences these ideas may involve as regards the use of the military drones and their moral legitimation in the eyes of the States and of the population in general.

We will embark our analysis referring to a somewhat extensive, but essential, as well- at least, for our own understanding- presentation of what we consider to be the most important ideas for our article concerning the way modern warfare should be engaged against terrorists. Thus, Kasher and Yadlin say:

According to the ordinary conception underlying the distinction between combatants and noncombatants, the former have a lighter package of state duties than the latter. Consequently, the duty to minimize casualties among combatants during combat is last on the list of priorities or next to last, if terrorists are excluded from the category of noncombatants. We reject such conceptions, because we consider them to be immoral. A combatant is a citizen in uniform. In Israel, quite often he is a conscript or on reserve duty. His blood is as red and thick as that of citizens who are not in uniform. His life is as precious as the life of anyone else.....The fact that persons involved in terror are depicted as noncombatants is not a reason for jeopardizing the combatant's life in their pursuit. He has to fight against terrorists because they are involved in terror. They shoulder the responsibility for their encounter with the combatant and should therefore bear the consequences<sup>17</sup>

What we can easily deduce at this point is that there is a dangerous distinction between the combatants and the noncombatants as well as their behaviour in the combat. A soldier, of course, has red and thick blood as the rest of all of us, but he is also well equipped so as to engage in a military struggle. He is trained to do so as he is also trained to avoid any possible "berserk" attacks losing totally, thus, the control of himself and of the situation as well. The terrorists, on the other side, are of course aware that the presence of innocent noncombatant people will surely provoke a massive scale attack against them that would jeopardize the life of the innocents. There is a very thin line, thus, where the fight is played on: the way to eliminate the terrorists while not harming the civilians. But this thin line is what differentiates an organized military activity from a massacre where everyone dies and afterwards responsibilities are assigned to each party according to each one's concept of what just is. Margalit and Walzer, when criticizing the above passage, thoughtfully explain:

the crucial means for limiting the scope of warfare is to draw a sharp line between combatants and noncombatants. This is the only morally relevant distinction that all those involved in war can agree on. We should think of terrorism as a concerted

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<sup>17</sup> Asa Kasher & Amos Yadlin, *Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli Perspective*, *Journal of Military Ethics*, 4(1), 2005, p. 16.

effort to blur this distinction so as to turn civilians into legitimate targets. When fighting against terrorism, we should not imitate it<sup>18</sup>

Ashar and Yaldin further develop their ideas concerning the priority/duty that soldiers should have in the fight against terror (Priorities on Grounds of Duties) in the following schema:

Military acts and activities carried out in discharging the duty of the state to defend its citizens against terror acts or activities while at the same time protecting human dignity, should be carried out according to the following priorities which reflect the order of duties the state has toward certain groups:

(d.1) Minimum injury to the lives of citizens of the state who are not combatants during combat;

(d.2) Minimum injury to the lives of other persons (outside the state) who are not involved in terror, when they are under the effective control of the state;

(d.3) Minimum injury to the lives of the combatants of the state in the course of their combat operations;

(d.4) Minimum injury to the lives of other persons (outside the state) who are not involved in terror, when they are not under the effective control of the state;

(d.5) Minimum injury to the lives of other persons (outside the state) who are indirectly involved in terror acts or activities;

(d.6) Injury as required to the liberties or lives of other persons (outside the state) who are directly involved in terror acts or activities<sup>19</sup>

Briefly said, what we can understand is that following the priority presented above there is a distinction between “ours” and “theirs”, a distinction in which the lives of the combatants of the State attacking terrorism are more important than the non-terrorist, noncombatant citizens of the State/actor receiving the attack. This distinction, of course, explicitly described, in this case, blurs even more than thin

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<sup>18</sup> Avishai MARGALIT & Michael WALZER, “Israel: Civilians & Combatants (online format)”, *The New York Review of Books*, 56(8), 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2009/05/14/israel-civilians-combatants/>

<sup>19</sup> Asa Kasher & Amos Yadlin, “Military Ethics of Fighting Terror: An Israeli Perspective”, *Journal of Military Ethics*, 4(1), 2005, pp. 14-15.



line between the combatants and the noncombatants creating a very dangerous fog regarding what is permitted and not in modern warfare.

Even though this way of perceiving modern warfare may provoke a lot of criticism, as in the case of Walzer and Margalit presented above; nevertheless, our goal in this last part is not to evaluate the ideas expressed per se, but to see the possible consequences that their implementation would evoke in the use of military drones.

Simply said, our main concern lies on the mere fact that we are not far away from considering that the use of military drones, is, without any doubt, closely tied to the life of the State's soldiers. So, following the schema of Kasher and Yuldin, we would find ourselves morally obliged to use the military drones even when we are not absolutely sure whether innocent noncombatant civilians are going to die or not. Nevertheless, if the noncombatant civilians of the enemy State are going to die, we could be thinking that we are still taking a moral decision due to the fact that the lives of our soldiers are of higher importance than the life of the citizens of the State attacked (see in the previous schema d.3-d.4). Of course, the above mentioned situation would lead us to a moral paradox where it would be considered ethical to kill people safely and from a great distance while they would have no possible way to react, harm us, or even take a glimpse of the person who is going to take away their life. The protection of each State's soldiers' lives is beyond any doubt of capital importance; the problem is that in the case of the use of military drones we reach a point where some people believe that there exists a moral obligation to convert modern warfare to a manhunt where the invincible/invisible predator can do anything he wants, whenever and wherever he wants with the prey. What should also concern us- apart from the crucial issue of the death of innocent people during drone attacks<sup>20</sup>- is the way their deaths are presented by the governments and the media. Of course, if 1000 of our own soldiers were killed during an invasion there would be a public outcry of such a level that would gravely discompose every government; on the other side, if innocent people are killed during a military drone attack, then this piece of news could be easily hidden behind the great benefit of protecting our own people and of avoiding that a military invasion would entail. This is how we have reached the point of being confronted with a situation-looking at the truly tragic figures presented above- where 1147 people were killed when the number of the (wanted) targeted enemies was no bigger than 41. No matter whether the other is the enemy, no matter if we consider him as a member of a terrorist state, just killing people so as to make more precise the military drones does not seem right. The human being- being a terrorist or the absolute enemy- cannot simply become dehumanized; such a dehumanization does not only affect him but also the rest of victims till and if we can finally reach him. Through the use of drones it appar-

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<sup>20</sup> For more thorough analysis and presentation see: Jeremy SCAHILL, *The assassination complex*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2016 and Alice Ross, "Counting the bodies in the Pakistani drone campaign", *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, 15/12/2012. Retrieved from: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2012-10-15/counting-the-bodies-in-the-pakistani-drone-campaign>



ently becomes easier to create a distance, both ontological and ontical, between the soldiers, the public opinion and the enemy State/actor. This distance, though, may eventually become the distance dragging us far away from the recognition of our own humanity through our not recognizing the humanity of the enemy.

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Alberto Durero, hacia 1506.