Forum:	*General Assembly One (GA1)*
Issue:	*Addressing the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in the Middle East*
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Introduction

Living in the so-called "era of technology", the sophisticated technological advances will and already do, bring many benefits to our lives. However, many of these new technologies raise the attention of individuals regarding moral conundrums. One of these highly debated topics includes the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), which are also commonly known as drones. While supporters of these vehicles claim that its use would highly beneficial if put into "humanitarian use", the blurring line between humanitarian and military response creates a paradox.

To date, more than a dozen countries employ armed drones in modern warfare. While concerns regarding the rapid proliferation of drone threat spread as more and more countries employ such strategies for their security, the most worrisome region of all has been in the Middle East. Originally, drones were only used in military operations, but the situation has grown out of control after evidence has proved that several Middle Eastern terrorist groups are building up their own drone capabilities. Though drone producing countries has been extremely careful with their export destinations with a strict system of trade partner selections for these weapons, such a case show the insecurity in the trade network UAVs has put of citizens of countries possessing such weapons at a greater risk, even to the extent of their neighboring countries or a farther scope with the ability of flight distances these drones are capable of.

The use of these UAVs in the Middle East is divided into two separate branches of topics: the danger individual nations currently possess with these items available to terrorist groups, as well as the mobility area and easy control these vehicles allow one to access that could potentially raise the question of the privacy. Without one solid framework that successfully limits the boundaries one can access through these vehicles, delegates would have to come up with a nationally agreed set of rules that could properly balance freedom with security in face of the growing drone threat.

Definition of Key Terms

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have been referred to by many different names such as RPV (remotely piloted vehicle), drone, robot plane, pilotless aircraft, etc. Most often called by the term UAVs, they are defined by the Department of Defense (DOD) as powered, aerial vehicles that do not carry a human operator, use aerodynamic forces to provide vehicle lift, can fly autonomously or be piloted remotely, can be expendable or recoverable, and can carry a lethal or nonlethal payload. UAVs are machines that solely operate on behalf of commands of "sense", "think", and "act". These "manless" operators act on behalf of these three operations with its sensors that carries information about the environment around them, a processor that uses such information obtained to make appropriate decisions, and the effectors that create change in the environment around the machine with actions such as by moving or firing a weapon. Although the vehicle accident rate (when the aircraft are lost or damaged) is currently 100 times more than a manned vehicle, with the rapid development of modern technology where these drones are becoming cheaper and more versatile than ever, a drone attack in a major population center seems inevitable unless attention and effective countermeasures are implemented.

Caption #1: A UAV owned by militant groups flying over the Middle Eastern continents

Hezbollah

The Hezbollah, or translated directly from Arabic as "Party of Allah", is a Shi'a political party and militant group based in Lebanon. Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Israel-backed militia South Lebanon Army (SLA) controlled the Israeli occupied strip of South Lebanon. Hezbollah was founded by the Muslim clerics (religious leaders) and funded by Iran primarily to intimidate the Israeli occupation. Hezbollah first entered upon the international scene in 1983, when they simultaneously bombed the United States Marine barracks and French paratrooper base in Beirut. 241 Americans-- the largest loss of American military personnel in a single incident since World War II, and 58 Frenchmen were killed in the attack. But it was just the start. More bombings followed shortly, the death toll of 24 people at the US Embassy annex in Beirut in 1984, 85 at Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires in 1994, and 19 at a complex for American oil executives in Saudi Arabia at 1996. Not only so, the Hezbollah hijacked TWA Flight 847 in 1985, during which they beated passengers, separated those with Jewish-sounding names, and murdered US Navy diver Robert Stethem. In addition, the Hezbollah also supplied roadside bombs and helped organize groups who committed terror against American forces during the Iraq War. The group routinely assassinated political rivals, most notably the former prime minister of Lebanon Rafic Hariri in 2005. Furthermore, the Hezbollah provoked numerous border clashes with Israel, which in turn escalated into a war in 2006, where the group launched thousands of rockets and civilian targets in the meantime. Today, the Hezbollah is considered a military force, a political party, a terrorist group, and a transnational criminal organization engaged in drug trafficking, money laundering, and drug smuggling.

Houthi Rebels

The Houthis make up around 25% of Yemen's population. Although they belong to the Shi'a sector of Islam, they are Zaidis, a branch that is different from the Twelver Shi'a Islam (the dominant practice in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon). The Zaidis have lived in the mountains of former Northern Yemen for a thousand years, in what is present-day Saada province bordering Saudi Arabia. A Zaidi, Ali Abdullah Saleh, came to power in 1978 at North Yemen. North Yemen and South Yemen united into one country 12 years later. Immediately afterwards, the Zaidis felt marginalized when Saudi funded Salafi institutes were established in the north of Yemen with state support during the late 80s, therefore respond with trying to revive their religion and culture under the leadership of Houssain Badreddin al Houthi, which created the Houthi Movement. However, it was the 2003 War in Iraq that made the group more politically active. While Hussain al Houthi criticized Saleh by calling him a "US-backed dictator", which led to the movement of some Houthis protesting at mosques in the capital Sanaa. Saleh tried to crack down on the movement by sending troops to arrest Hussain al Houthi, that triggered the first armed conflict between the government and the Houthis. As Saudi Arabia backed the government, Iran began

supporting the Houthis despite religious differences, where an agreement was reached since the Iranians only needed the Houthis as a counterforce to Saudi interests.

As the Houthis achieved initial military success, more Saudi-backed government forces were provoked. Finally, the parties reached a ceasefire agreement in 2010. However, the conflict did not end here with the Houthis. As the Arab Springs arrived in Yemen, the Houthis were one of the several groups that called for Saleh to step down. In fact, Saleh did step down and the Houthis joined a national dialogue, but was then unhappy with the outcome that would reduce their territorial autonomy. Furthermore, the new President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi (also backed by the Saudis) had trouble stabilizing the country, where he couldn't stop Al Qaeda attacks additionally with fuel prices and unemployment starting to skyrocket. Consequently, a new rebellion was provoked, where the Houthis surprisingly aligned with former president Saleh due to the fact that he still had military forces loyal to him. By 2015, Houthi rebels have toppled the government and gained control of Yemen's major cities. Across the Northern border, Saudi Arabia's new power to the throne, King Salman bin Abdulaziz saw the Houthis as a danger with the proxy war against Iran. With that, Saudi Arabia formed a coalition with other Arab states backed by the US, United Kingdom (UK), and France and began strikes on the Houthis. Despite this, the Houthis still control large parts of the country to date.

Hamas

The Hamas is designated a terrorist organization by Israel and several other Western Governments. The group currently control the Gaza Strip with its political leader as Khaled Meshaal, and its political wing has held a majority in the Palestinian Parliament since 2006. Currently, they are united with Fatah, who control the West Bank. Meshaal leads the organization from exile in Doha, where he last visited Gaza two years ago to mark Hamas' 25th Anniversary and explained that Hamas "won't recognize Israel or concede over territory". Due to the fact that the Hamas' military wing constantly targets major Israeli cities with rocket fire, hopes of a ceasefire have been frustrated despite rising casualties, additionally with Meshaal saying that there will be no peace without "an end to the siege on the Gaza".

Background Information

The Aviation Revolution

The Aviation Revolution began with the shocking performance with the Wright brothers' first flight in 1903. After the showcase, the rapid development in the field of manned aviation moved faster than ever before. More and more specialized individuals started to go into engineering, as entrepreneurs and innovators started to put more interest in developing these technologies, human technology became

more sophisticated in which it allows pilots, passengers, and freight to move in a shockingly short amount of time between destinations. Moving on to the modern era, a century later, the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) has brought us back to a similar picture back in the innovation periods where business in the aviation industry started to thrive. In the same way, these vehicles have seemingly limitless potential that allows delivery of medical supplies to remote areas (war zones), surveying private land and national borders, or even delivering the Internet to far-flung locals. Be that as it may, the balance between the security and freedom regarding the usage of these vehicles worries the international community. These items cannot be treated the same way as the old technologies, as needless to say that manned vehicles already possess risks if the vehicles were controlled by terrorists such as in the 911 attack, where the risks for these vehicles controlled via coding could be easily hacked and unnoticed.

The Law that Defines "Aircraft"

Following the birth of the powered flight in 1930, the federal government did not rush to start regulations on the rapidly developing aircraft industry. However, when the Post Office that just begun to operate a federal airmail service in 1918 started allowing private companies the option for bidding on contracts with the service turned over to the winning bidders, the Congress finally took action. In 1926, the Congress enacted the "Air Commerce Act of 1925", which is aimed to "promote safety and reliability in the commercial aviation industry". To achieve this goal, a new branch of aeronautics within the Commerce Department, designated with regulatory authority over commercial aviation. In the end, a requirement regarding the establishment of uniform air traffic control rules was made, and as well as the registration and certification system for both aircraft and pilots. In addition, the act also set forth a single, broad definition of an aircraft: "*any contrivance, now known or hereafter invented, used or designed for navigation or flight in the air, except a parachute or other contrivance designed for such navigation but used primarily as safety equipment.*" To date, the definition of such term has hardly changed, where the most significant changes made were merely the striking of safety equipment clauses. In the short-run, such a broad definition avoided the necessity for the Congress to have to go back and modify the term once a new innovation has come out. In the long-run, the danger of a vaguely defined term stands evidently for criminal penalties, for that lawmakers cannot reference to a term that does not cover the case. And this is the problem we face with drone operators today.

Drones: A Leap Beyond Aircraft

The remotely operated model aircraft, the former model to the modern UAVs, were recognized to be beyond the reach of federal aviation regulators' authority for decades. As an

example, even the FAA's own publication document of guidance for aircraft operating standards from 1981 to 2015 left out the reference for drones from their laws. With that, the FAA has started to try to force an additional legal framework onto these vehicles over the course of the century as the blurry lines to the extent of access owners possess is posing a greater threat than ever. In recent cases, the FAA asserted that drones would fall within the category with the definition of an "aircraft", and therefore within all framework that was set forth. The organization's officials have also indicated for several times that the drones are "subjected to all federal aircraft related laws as well as the aircraft provisions contained within the Federal Aviation Regulations". However, their approach would make little sense to which it would not place an adequate standard that restricts the activities that should be prevented, for that these vehicles differ drastically from regular "manned" aircraft. While traditional aircrafts are designed to travel as high as 35,000 feet and mostly have facilities sufficient to cross continents of ocean, drones are limited by the capacity of onboard batteries and the range of their radio control signals. In short, a drone's ability of flight is no more than a few hundred feet and could only operate for a few minutes before their power fails. Once more, drones do not carry human occupants as either passengers or crew, where the human involvement in their flight is restricted to remote control of the vehicle. With that, it is therefore incorrect to say that the current aviation laws and regulations can or should be applied to drones, for that the vast majority of federal aviation laws and regulations were written to apply specifically to manned aircraft.

Key Issues

Non-state actors with drone capabilities: potential threat from terrorist groups

As mentioned in the introduction section, the situation of the UAVs has become ever more dangerous due to the fact that several non-state actors have now incorporated drones into their operations. While rebels groups from South America to the Middle East have only used "commercial available rotary-winged drones" for the purpose of surveilling enemy positions, other militant groups such as the ISIS has taken advantages of these beneficial freedom of these vehicles by using them in combats.

ISIS

ISIS, the militant group headquartered in Syria and Iraq, has officially announced their establishment of a formal drone unit- "Unmanned Aircraft of the Mujahadeen"- which would be used to organize UAV campaigns on the field, in January 2017. Identical to other groups, ISIS

also traffics in commercial drone technology, where they would attach munitions to over-the-counter quadcopters and small fixed-wing drones. However, ISIS does not yet have access to military-grade unmanned aircraft like the Hamas or Hezbollah. Even so, the high organizations of their drone campaigns still resulted in casualties. For example, a Kurdish forces shot down and confiscated an ISIS quadcopter, artificially armed with explosives on October 2016. The quadcopter later exploded and killed two Kurdish fighters, which became the first known incident of the group killing troops on the battlefield with their UAV system.

Caption #2: An Iraqi Security Force officer holding the ISIS' weaponized commercial quadcopters they deploy to the defense force. However, these drones are currently still battery operated and small, which means they could be taken down by the forces using signal jammers.

Houthi Rebels

Houthi Rebels, the Iran-backed rebel group in Yemen, presented their new drone capability when it struck a Saudi warship in the Red Sea with an armed unmanned maritime craft on Jan. 30, 2017. This incident resulted in the death of two Saudi Navy sailors and injury of three others. Just like the popular armed commercial drones amongst the other militant groups, these drones are controlled through remote operation. From suggested evidence, the group is currently acquiring these vehicles from Iran, where the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force assisted

Arab Coalition Forces in destroying an Iranian military drone in an attempt to launch from Houthi-controlled territory.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group that launched a Misrad 1 military-grade surveillance drone into Israeli airspace on November 2004, is the first non-state actor known to possess and use military drones. According to a report from the American Federation of Science (FAS), the Hezbollah flew the drone "south from Lebanon into Israel, hovered over the Western Galilee town of Nahariya for about 20 minutes and then returned to Lebanon before the Israeli air force could intercept it.". Although the Hezbollah has long been known for their functioning military drones, the group had used them infrequently. In addition, the group has shown their preference for commercial drones where on August 2016, small quadcopters armed with munitions were launched for an attack on rebel positions in Aleppo, Syria.

Hamas

Hamas, the Palestinian group that currently controls the Gaza strip has military-grade, Iranian-made Ababil drones. On top of that, the group also claim to have manufactured drones themselves: surveillance, armed, and one to serve as a guided missile.

Other Non-state actors with drones

Apart from ISIS, the Houthi rebel group in Yemen, Hezbollah, and Hamas, there are also several other groups not mentioned above that were also reported to have used commercial drones to surveil enemy forces in combat zones. There are roughly ten groups in total: Libyan rebels, the Donetsk People's Republic, the Kurdish Peshmerga, Jabhat al-Nusra, Faylaq al-Sham and Saraya al-Khorani, both Syrian rebel groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and Colombian and Mexican drug cartels such as the Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG), a group active in Central Mexico. For instance, one of these groups conducted an alleged assassination attempt on President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela in the capital, Caracas on August 2018. According to the interior Minister Nestor Reverol, the weapons attackers used in the attempt used two DJI M600 drones that each carried 1 kilogram of C-4 explosive, but it was a relief that President Maduro escaped unharmed.

A Violation to the Privacy of an Individual

The violation of privacy to individual regarding the usage of drones isn't as threatening as the potential drone war in the Middle Eastern sector. However, the violation still sparked a lot of controversies of whether or not there needs to be stricter regulations on the control over these vehicles. For the damage and effects these vehicles brings to the public life of individuals, there are different aspects that are major concerns over the public opinion on UAVs. Firstly, drones can of course malfunction and crash into people or property. This could be due to reasons such as a flat battery, defects or poor navigation or control by the operator. In with essence, drone operators need to apply the appropriate level of care as any damage or injury caused could render them liable to pay the victim compensation under various sections of the Civil Code, which the Middle Eastern sector doesn't particularly put effort into. In like manner, the damage or potential threat these drones could make to the government is also present. For example, the filming and/or photography of government buildings, military installations and other designated sites is generally not allowed in the UAE. On October 2014, an American tourist attending a conference in the UAE was reportedly arrested and charged with "photographing within a restricted area". Even if the court found that his actions were committed "without ill intention", he was still fined $136.12 USD. However, with little to no effective enforcement and policies that strictly prohibits these actions, there is no way to ensure the safety of the government itself and its citizens.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States of America (USA)

The American military is by far the biggest and most notable operator of the UAVs. For instance, the US military inventory now includes over 7,000 unmanned drones in the air and another roughly 12,000 on the ground, which clearly illustrates the rapid growth of these vehicles as these data have been zeros back at the start of the Iraq Wars in 2003. With its advanced development in this particular field, the US has always been in the lead as a the major supplier on exporting armed drones and related technologies in regions. However, with rising concerns about the purpose these drones have been put into, the US has become more selective about exporting armed drones and related technologies particularly in the Middle East region. Even so, other suppliers such as China would eventually take on the un-selected purchase requests, and the US wishes that the international committee could all work together to prevent such actions to be taken in order to create a safer environment for our people.

China

With the void left open by the US with their selective policy, China now plays a significant role in the supply of military drones to Middle East countries, especially those that are barred from importing them from the United States. For instance, China has sold advanced armed drones to a number of Middle Eastern countries under the purpose of combating terrorism, including Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. For that, Beijing has stated for more than once, "*We do not take sides on conflicts in the region, all countries are therefore potential clients.*"

Caption #3: A model of the Wing Loong II weaponized drone hangs above the stand for the China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corp. at a military drone conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Israel

The use of UAVs has hit its highest point in the recent Gaza incursion, where they are used for carrying out scores of strikes on Hamas leadership targets and for a more accurate and updated real-time intelligence to units on the ground. However, Israel has been involved in these actions formerly where the Israel Defense Force (IDF) has already deployed their first drones against Syrian air defenses on the 1982 Lebanon war, marking the start of our industry in this particular sector. Israel has been one of the major regional operators of UAVs in the Middle Eastern region, therefore is not very happy with the recent actions of China. The cheap pricing the Chinese vehicles threatens Israel's local industries, where the danger of not screening customers thoroughly may lead to a potential misuse of such vehicles, that would threaten Israel as part of a member of the region. Israel supports the US for taking a step towards

creating a safer environment the Middle Eastern continent, and in turn would urge the international community to follow.

Turkey

Over the course of last few years, the Turkish military has made great strides in our operations against the Kurdish Worker Party (PKK) along the Northern Iraq border with the detailed intelligence provided from the US military Predators drones, which was a task put forth in an agreement to assist the Turks to reduce our once-tense relations. However, Turkey hopes to reduce its dependence on the US in the future, through bolstering its domestic production on drones. Yet, Turkey still requested the sale of the latest model Predator system, the MQ-9 Reaper, from the US in order to secure the safety of their country before any improvements has been made.

Caption #4: The latest model of the Predator system that many countries request or is looking to purchase.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

As one of the biggest defense market in the world, the UAE has also actively participated in the drone sector. As one of the UAE military officer stated, "*UAVs are an integral part of any efficient combat force. It is not a choice an*ymore." Therefore, the Abu Dhabi UAV Investment Company (Audic) was formed in 2007 hoping to build out the UAE's design and manufacturing capabilities of unmanned systems, and ultimately for expanding to an export roles. However, as one of a common buyer of the US

UAVs products, the UAE is upset with the new standing policy in the US market that resulted in a failure for finalising a deal for the Predators. Therefore, the UAE bought two different models of the Wing Loong drone manufactured by China's Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group to maintain its defensive system, and would continue to look for resources if the US decides to continue its policy.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of event
February, 2002	**First Armed Drones Flight** After the 9/11 incident, the CIA began flying armed drones over Afghanistan as part of the war against the Taliban. The first kill operation took place for the purpose of targeting a suspect thought to be Osama bin Laden, but it turned out to be an innocent man named Daraz Khan who was out collecting scrap metal. This incident raised the concern of usage of drones in modern welfare.
2006	**Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s First Commercial Drone Permit** With recognition of the potential benefits of non-military, non-consumer drone applications, the FAA issued its first permit on commercial drones. The permits lifted limitations on consumer drones used for recreational purposes, which opened up a new sector companies or professionals develop drones in.
2010	**First via-Wifi Phone Controlled Drone** The first via-wifi phone controlled drone, Parrot AR Drone by the French company, was almost immediately successful. Although there were both critics and supporters of the device, it received the 2010 CES Innovations award for Electronic Gaming Hardware, and sold up to half a million units. However, the development of such technology device has been noted with the potential risk of hacking, where it can be easily hacked by hackers with its control being via-Wifi.
2016	**Complex Advancement of Drone Capability** As one of the best drone makers on the marketplace, China's technology company DJI further introduced their smart computer vision and machine learning technology, the Phantom 4. The piece allowed the function of avoiding obstacles and intelligently track (and photograph) people, animals, or objects — rather than being limited to following a GPS signal. This advance in technology

set up a major milestone for drone photography and consumer drones in the modern era.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review, 1 July 2016 **(A/70/L.55)**
- Protection of civilians in armed conflict, 3 May 2016 (**S/RES/2286**)
- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 2014 **(S/RES/2129)**

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Without a clear situation and control over the Middle Eastern region, especially regarding the activity of the number of militant groups, there has not been much actions taken to resolve the issue. Most of the previous attempts related to UAVs has either been not within this sector or only targeting users out of the sector that has used UAVs in the sector to conduct actions that are unjust. For example, one of the UN treaties in the section above is regarding the US drone usage in Pakistan. The resolution is unanimously adopted as no country could possibly allow such an action taken against one nation, but the fact that there has been little to no major resolutions that tackles the regulations of UAVs in directly towards Middle Eastern nations shows the failure of the international committee to put effort and attention on the issue.

Possible Solutions

The Universal Definition to the term "aircraft"

Without a clear definition that blurs the laws regarding the aviation technology sector as a whole, it is impossible to restrict the usages of UAVs. The commonly categorize of the UAVs to be equal to the definition of "manned aircrafts" often times leave out details that could lead into situations where a prosecution to individuals conducting illegal actions not punished accordingly to his/ her crime, due to the fact that the broad definitions creates loopholes that allow such individuals to escape from prosecution. With that, there would never be a efficient restriction that limits such wrong usages of UAVs, and the threat from this loophole would continue to grow along with the speeding technology advancement of the modern era.

Universal Aviation Laws to Ensure the Eligible Purposes of Using UAVs

A further step for the afterwards of the universal definition on aircraft, without a more in depth approach to maintain the execution of the procedure within respective member states, the definition would not change anything. Delegates would have to come up with approaches that could be ones such as meetings held by the UN or other ones they wish for in order to achieve this goal, ensure the international community would abide to such definition defined, then respective member states would have the decision on the range they set their laws to in order to follow such guidelines. These laws should tackle the aspect of the issue in the above mentioned issues, the potential drone wars that could be escalated by the loosely controlled supply chain of the UAVs, and the usages of these vehicles that violates basic human rights.

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