



## Självständigt arbete (15 hp)

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<p><b>THE GOOD AND THE BAD: UCAV COUNTERINSURGENCY –HOW ARE THE UCAV THEORIES REFLECTED IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN?</b></p> <p><b><u>ABSTRACT:</u></b> The modern battlefield is a changing environment where new ideas and technology are being tried and implemented. One such technology that has brought recent changes to the battlefield is the Unmanned Aerial Combat Vehicles (UCAV), commonly (and often incorrectly) referred to as “drones”. UCAV can be considered the new weapon of choice to deal with irregular opponents or terrorist organisations, such as those in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the use of UCAV is not without contradictory elements and leads to debate. It is within this debate that this study takes foothold. This study will be analysing the debate and issues surrounding this by evaluating four contrasting variables, measuring impact through different means and aiming to increase the understanding of UACV in the field.</p> <p>There are several crossovers in the analysis of all four variables citing the strengths and weaknesses of UCAV provisions in conflict. The analysis, however, conclude that a sole, holistic use of UCAV strikes would not resort in a termination of threats, such as the Taliban or Al-Qaida. This means that both the positive and the negative aspects of UCAV are seen in the conflict and do not contradict one another. Regretfully, this implicates that even if the Taliban and Al-Qaida becomes less effective due to the UCAV strikes, they will not perish.</p> <p><b><u>Keywords:</u></b> UAV, DRONES, UCAV, PAKISTAN, FATA, AFGHANISTAN, CHAMAYOU, CRONIN, JORDAN, BYMAN, COUNTERINSURGENCY, AL-QAIDA, TALIBAN</p>								

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The modern battlefield is a changing environment where new ideas and technology are being tried and implemented.<sup>12</sup> Since early days we have sought new ways to protect ourselves from different threats, or ways to defeat our enemies. Sometimes developing these skills came naturally since they resembled hunting in the earlier days<sup>3</sup>. Without going back as far as 10 000 B.C., it is still possible to find that our means and methods have changed quite drastically over the times. After, and during, the Napoleonic wars great changes were made not only consisting of leaps in technology made from the ongoing industrial revolution between 1760s to 1840s, but also in the way warfare was viewed. War changed from being, greatly simplified, the business of regents and their soldiers. The invention and birth of the total-war, later used during World War I, included included every citizen<sup>45</sup>.

Changes such as the total-war and the industrial revolution, among many others, created leaps in inventions. This in turn, brought the constantly changing battlefield viewed today. Inventions such as the jet-engine, the machine-gun, the radar, the tank or the atomic-bomb, were all in their own ways game-changing for the battlefield. New inventions lead to new tactical appliances and countermeasures. Modern weapons, and their accuracy, turned conflict into a struggle for information. The range and accuracy now allows targeting and destruction well beyond the sight of eye. To avoid being targeted, units have to disperse, since large units gathered in one place becomes a promising target for indirect fire.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Strachan, Hew. & Herberg-Rothe, Andreas (red.). *Clausewitz in the twenty-first century*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007 p. 2-4

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 207

<sup>3</sup>Coker, Christopher. *Warrior geeks: how 21st century technology is changing the way we fight and think about war*, Hurst: London, 2013 p. 39

<sup>4</sup>Paret, Peter, Craig, Gordon Alexander & Gilbert, Felix (red.). *Makers of modern strategy: from Machiavelli to the nuclear age*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J, 1986 p. 124-125

<sup>5</sup>Smedberg, Marco. *Krigföring: från Austerlitz till Bagdad*, [Ny utg.], Historiska media: Lund, 2005 p. 16

<sup>6</sup>Berkowitz, Bruce D. *The new face of war: how war will be fought in the 21st century*, Free Press: New York, 2003 p.3-4

The dispersion of troops can also be observed in the increasing asymmetric wars of today. Conventional forces intervention against smaller irregular opponents, forces the use of guerrilla tactics. Superior technology and size, has changed the means of fighting compared to conventional wars.<sup>7</sup> With this transition to asymmetric wars, the political climate in the intervening countries also affects the means used. Public opinion may result in thwarting a military campaign or lead to a change in government. One example of this would be the Vietnam War, where the U.S. was forced to withdraw due to the loss of public support. To avoid public opinion changing in a negative direction, it is of great importance to avoid one's own casualties.<sup>8</sup>

New inventions are being implemented on the battlefield to gather more intelligence about our enemies' whereabouts, strengths, and weaknesses. Together with the political climate forcing the military to avoid casualties, the rise of remotely operated vehicles might seem natural. One such invention that has brought recent changes to the battlefield is the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), also commonly (and often incorrectly)<sup>9</sup> known as a Drone.

### 1.1 THE ORIGIN AND RISE OF THE UAV

UAVs are not a new phenomenon. Depending on the definition of an UAV, the first UAV could be anything from a kite, to a Chinese rocket back in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> UAVs more similar to those of today were produced during WWI and WWII. These UAVs took many different forms, ranging from remotely controlled air-planes used as targets for the Royal Air Force, to the V-1 rockets.

After WWII, a series of UAV's called the Ryan Firebee was created. These were used during the Vietnam War and were able to perform reconnaissance missions. Launched from a plane and landing by deploying a parachute, this UAV differs from most contemporary versions. The development and use of the contemporary UAV was initially developed by the U.S. but developed further by Israel. Israel developed several new types of UAV and used these during the Yom Kippur War. Some of the Israeli UAV systems such as the Pioneer and the Gnat were later exported to the U.S. and used in Operation Desert Storm<sup>11</sup>. Developed even further they gave birth to some of the UAVs still used today, such as the Predator.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Fahlstrom, Paul Gerin & Gleason, Thomas J. *Introduction to UAV systems*, 4th ed., Wiley: West Sussex, 2012 p. 159

<sup>8</sup>Smedberg, 2005 p. 41

<sup>9</sup>Fahlstrom & Gleason, 2012 p. 7

<sup>10</sup>Fahlstrom & Gleason, 2012 p. 4

<sup>11</sup>Fahlstrom & Gleason, 2012 p. 6

<sup>12</sup>Kreps, Sarah E. *Drones: what everyone needs to know*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2016, p. 9-13

Modern conflicts have seen various uses of the UAV; ranging from reconnaissance, target acquisition for indirect fire, to pure offensive missions. The UAV now have the capability to carry the payload, acquire a target, and destroy it. Much like a regular manned aircraft. Armed UAV are called, Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV).

The UCAV was first used on the battlefield in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Deployment was rapid, and by November 2001 around 40 strikes had been made by UCAVs. While the data of the strikes in Afghanistan are classified, there is information that suggesting that nearly 1,000 strikes were carried out by UCAVs in Afghanistan in the period 2008-2012.<sup>13</sup> The use of UAV can be observed by looking at the increase of UAV pilots. Between 2008 and 2013, the amount of UAV pilots in the U.S Air force increased from 3.3 to 8.5 percent. Beginning at 2014, the U.S Air force now trains more UAV pilots than fighter and bomb pilots<sup>14</sup>.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study is about Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV) and the current debate regarding its benefits and risks. It aims to increase the understanding of the role and contribution of UCAV in solving irregular asymmetric conflicts, as well as the risks entailed.

The U.S began using UCAV in 2001. Making it possible to strike against enemies of the state without any risk for the pilot. With the introduction to the UCAV in 2001 the areas engaged shifted as well. The U.S expanded to areas outside of the conflict in order to strike against suspected terrorists.

The UCAV have been stated to be a potent weapon against terrorism, and are being used frequently by both the U.S and the UK in the fight against terror. It is often used in areas outside of conflict, to prevent terrorist/insurgent organisations to simply relocate over the borders to avoid pursuit, or to hinder their spread into new areas. The UCAV is seen as effective to that degree that has been stated, by the United States president Barrack Obama, that there is a risk of it being seen as a “cure-all” for terrorism.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Kreps, 2016 p. 18-19

<sup>14</sup>Hoagland, Bradley T. *Manning the Next Unmanned Air Force / Developing RPA Pilots of the Future*. Brookings Institution, 2013 p. 3

<sup>15</sup>Kreps, 2016 p. 2, 12-13

Regardless of the weapons efficiency when it comes to killing terrorists and destroying designated targets it seems as if the efficiency of solving irregular conflicts with UCAV is highly debated. As an example, Audrey Kurth Cronin the author of the book *How Terrorism Ends (2011)* believes that the use of UCAV undermines the goals set by the U.S government. Even though the weapon might be effective in the short-run, it cannot defeat a terror organisation such as Al-Qaida<sup>16</sup>.

Daniel Byman, a Professor in Security Studies at Georgetown University, on the other hand, sees the question off efficiency more pragmatically. He argues that the UCAV strikes have killed literary thousands of Jihadists, devastated groups associated to the Al-Qaida and hindered Al-Qaida from operating and spreading. All without any risk to American lives.<sup>17</sup>

It is within this debate that this study takes foothold, and what makes this study relevant. By using the different theories in the debate. Measuring effect through several different means, and creating a solid base founded on the statistics. Not only focusing on the body counts, but aiming for a slightly broader understanding of the UCAV impact. The effectiveness of the UCAV against Al-Qaida and the Taliban is being debated and questioned. Some consider it ineffective and that the risks outweigh the benefits. By researching some of the aspects from the debate, this study hopes to bring clarity in the debate regarding the effectiveness, risks and impact of the UCAV.

### 1.2.1 PURPOSE & RESEARCH QUESTION

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the U.S began arming the Predator type UAV, transforming the way war against their irregular opponent was fought. The old-fashioned “boots on the ground” motto when fighting an irregular opponent seems to have changed into a more pragmatic and perhaps more controversial method due to U.S politics, among other factors<sup>18</sup>. Seeing how the U.S War Against Terror now involves countries outside of conflict areas, and how the use of UCAVs has increased explosively during the recent years. This study aims to examine the impact and risks of UCAV in an irregular conflict. Contributing to the understanding of benefits and risks when using this relatively new weapon of choice.

The UCAV could now be somewhat considered the new weapon of choice when dealing with insurgent and terrorist organisations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, its use is not completely

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<sup>16</sup>Cronin, Audrey Kurth. Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 92.4 (2013): 44-V.

<sup>17</sup>Byman, Daniel. Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice. *Foreign Affairs* 92.4 (2013): 32-43

<sup>18</sup>Cronin, 2013

without contradiction and is clouded in debate. As an example, there are theories that support the idea that UCAV strikes actually increases the number of terrorists, making such strikes unwise on the strategical level.<sup>19</sup> Such theories, found in the debate regarding the use of UCAV, created the urge of the author to further research the subject in order to create more clarity. With the increasing use of UCAV, it is of importance that the benefits and risks are verified and shown clearly. If properly verified, the benefits and risks can be weighted to create a more efficient use of UCAV.

The aim of this study is to explain the impact of using UCAV in an irregular conflict. The purpose is to further the understanding regarding the risks and benefits of the UCAV in irregular conflict. This might be used in our understanding of the future application of UCAV. The research question that will be answered to help understand the phenomenon is;

*How are the theories reflected by the use of UCAV in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and what implications might it hold to the counterinsurgency?*

To help answer the research-question a couple of sub-questions must therefore be answered;

*-How could UCAV be used in counterinsurgency, and what are the benefits, according to the theories?*

*-What are the potential risks and complications of using UCAV in counterinsurgency against the Taliban and Al-Qaida according to the theories?*

*-How have the four chosen variables of UCAV been used in the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaida?*

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<sup>19</sup> Kaag, John J. & Kreps, Sarah E. *Drone warfare*, Polity: Cambridge, 2014 p. 49

### 1.3 DISPOSITION

The study is structured as follows.

- Initially, the subject is introduced through a brief historical review. This enables the understanding of the concept UCAV, and the reasons to its appearance. The problem statement, the purpose, the aim, the research question, are presented to understand the subject.
- In chapter two the ongoing debate regarding the use and effectiveness of UCAV, together with the different theories discovered, is explained. The contributors to the theories are briefly presented. so that the reader receives a sense of understanding from where these theories derive. Hopefully bringing a sense of credibility to the subject. This chapter also contains the variables identified from the different theorists and the answer to two of the research questions.
- In the third chapter, the methodology is explained. The the process of choosing material is briefly described to the reader. The chosen material is presented, and any concerns regarding credibility will be addressed. In the end of the chapter, uncertainties regarding the method is explained, together with the limitations of the study. Finally, the frame-work of the study will be explained.
- The fourth chapter contains the analysis, and will go through the findings in the material based on the variables. This part answers the final sub-question: *-How have the four chosen variables of UCAV been used in the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaida?*
- The fifth chapter presents the results of the analysis, conclusions, and the answers to all the research questions. Suggestions for continued research, discussion regarding the choice of method and the authors final statement will be presented.
- The last chapter contains the references.

## 2. THEORY

The current debate can be separated into two different groups. Those who claim that UCAV strikes contributes to fighting the War Against Terror, and those who claim that it has a negative effect which do not support the strategic goals of the U.S. By choosing three researchers for each standpoint and analysing the gathered material from their perspectives. It will be possible to see which perspective is supported by the material. This will help clarify the debate and reveal the impact of using the UCAV.

The debate regarding the UCAV is vast and touch upon many different aspects. It is not possible for this study to examine all of the theories and aspects of UCAVs. Therefore, this study focuses solely on four chosen variables that the author has identified as central in the debate.

### 2.1 PRO UCAV STRIKES

Representatives on the pro UCAV side could be claimed to be supporting a strategy called “mowing the lawn”. A strategy largely based on eliminating upcoming threats before they can pose any serious threats against the U.S. They also consider the gain from UCAV strikes against high value targets (HVT), to be greater than the eventual losses caused by collateral damage.

On the pro UCAV side chosen by the author is Javier Jordan, an Associate Professor at the University of Granada. He is the director of the Strategic studies and International security program, as well as leading the research project ‘International Terrorism’s Organizational Structure: Analysis of its Evolution and Implications for the European Security’.<sup>20</sup> His study *The Effectiveness of the Drone Campaign against Al Qaeda Central* is pointing to many of the positive effects of the U.S UCAV campaign. The study reaches, among many other, the conclusion that the U.S campaign is achieving its purpose.

The second supporter on the pro side is Daniel Byman. A Professor in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University. Author of the article “Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice”, posted in Foreign Affairs in 2013. One of his claims was that even though the UCAV might be a controversial weapon, it is still effective and necessary and that it prevents Al-Qaeda and its affiliates from acquiring a safe haven from where they can operate and plot new terrorist attacks.

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<sup>20</sup> Javier, Jordan. *The Effectiveness of the Drone Campaign against Al Qaeda Central: A Case Study*. Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2014

The third supporter would be President Barack Obama, who said that the UCAV could be viewed as a potential cure-all for terrorism. During his presidency, UCAV's have been heavily relied upon<sup>21</sup>. He has empathized the positive effects of using the UCAV rather than troops, such as the reduced loss of U.S citizen lives. As well as, actions taken with UCAV will not lead to the same amount of public scrutiny and can keep Al-Qaida occupied with surviving rather than plotting new terrorist attacks.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.2 CON UCAV STRIKES

Representatives against the use of UCAV's, claims they have created much more collateral damage, and that it creates more insurgents than it kills. That it is not only an ineffective method of defeating the Al-Qaida and the Taliban, but also undermines the U.S abroad. Two books and one paper have been chosen to represent these views in this study. Below is an introduction to the authors of these papers, books and studies.

One argument comes from Ian G. R. Shaw at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. His paper *Predator Empire: Geopolitics of U.S Drone Warfare* will be one of two guiding articles for the theory arguing that UCAV does not solve the irregular conflicts it is used in but rather backlashes on its user, in this case the U.S government. Among many other conclusions, he identifies that the UCAV strikes are like "mowing the lawn". He warns that the perpetuation of that process sustains a permanent continuation of the conflicts .<sup>23</sup>

Audrey Kurth Cronin wrote the book "How Terrorism Ends". Her two papers *Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy* and *The 'War on Terrorism': What Does it Mean to Win?* are two important foundations in the theory against the current use of UCAV. Professor Kurth have advised the U.S. Congress in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S, and have served in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Her conclusion is that UCAV strikes might be effective out of a tactical stand-point, but not from a strategic one. That the weapon might be effective in killing, but not in solving

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<sup>21</sup> *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. CIA and U.S military drone strikes in Pakistan, Available:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NAfjFonM-Tn7fziqiv33HIGt09wgLZDSCP-BQaux51w/edit#gid=846726498>  
(Saved 2016-05-28)

<sup>22</sup> *The White House*. Government of United States of America. Remarks by the President at the National Defense University, 2013-05-23, Available: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/23/remarks-president-national-defense-university> (Saved 2016-05-17)

<sup>23</sup> Shaw, G.R Ian. *Predator Empire: Geopolitics of U.S Drone Warfare*. Geopolitics, Vol 18, Issue 3, 2013 p. 536 & 551-554

the conflicts. She is also raising a concern that these strikes are undermining the U.S by creating animosity abroad and setting a bad example<sup>24</sup>

Grégoire Chamayou's book, *Drone Theory*, is used in this study. It creates part of the foundation that the anti UCAV theory rests on. Chamayou is a research scholar in philosophy at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. He also wrote the book *Manhunts: A Philosophical History*. He questions the use of UCAV through many different aspects in his book and offers many different perspectives on the use of UCAV and its implications.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3 VARIABLES

Books from the afore mentioned authors, four variables where chosen to be used in the analysis to find the answers to the research questions. These four variables represent key aspects of the pro and con side and answers the first two sub questions.

PRO UCAV	CON UCAV
Preventing the creation and sustainability of safe havens for insurgents/terrorists, disrupting their lethality and efficiency. <sup>2627</sup>	Creates animosity among the population and might create more enemies in the long-run. Risk of creating an endless spiral of targeted killings. <sup>2829</sup>
Highly potent and accurate weapon, causing less collateral damage than other types of strikes. Should be used in areas that are hard or dangerous for the U.S to enter <sup>30</sup>	Al-Qaida and the Taliban are resilient against HVT strikes and can replace lost leaders. Without proper strategic goals the insurgency might be lost in the long-run. <sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Audrey Kurth Cronin. *The 'War on Terrorism': What Does it Mean to Win?*, Journal of Strategic Studies, (2014): 37:2, 174-197

<sup>25</sup> Chamayou, Grégoire, *Drone theory*, Penguin Books: U.K, 2015 p.1-18

<sup>26</sup> Javier, 2014 p. 25-27

<sup>27</sup> *The White House*, 2013

<sup>28</sup> Chamayou, 2015 p. 65-71

<sup>29</sup> Shaw, G.R Ian, 2013 p.553

<sup>30</sup> Byman, 2013 p. 32-34

<sup>31</sup> Cronin, 2013 p. 1-3

### 3. METHODOLOGY & MATERIAL

By using four different variables on a case limited in both time and geographically, supported by relevant material, the author wishes to clarify the research debate between two perspectives. Reaching conclusions regarding which of these theories of UCAV can be observed, and what impact it has on the conflict.

#### 3.1 QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The primary method used in this paper to answer the research question is qualitative content analysis. With the qualitative content analysis as the primary choice of method, firstly, a general literature review is conducted to find suitable material that contains information that allow the research question to be answered. The material gathered will then be analysed through the variables to see if any conclusions on the subject can be drawn through reoccurring themes or phenomena<sup>32</sup>. The complicated nature of the material reviewed creates the need to understand it as a whole. This makes the qualitative content analysis better suited than a quantitative analysis<sup>33</sup>.

The qualitative content analysis can be easily influenced by subjectivity from the author. The interpretation of the data could be read in a way that comforts to the ideas of the author. This forces the writer to have a critical mind-set not only regarding the choices of data but also towards himself.<sup>34</sup> To prevent such subjectivity, the amounts of collected data will need to be slightly larger than perhaps originally intended. By the end of this paper, findings pointing towards another conclusion than that reached by the writer will be presented to create credibility through transparency.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Denscombe, Martyn. *Forskningshandboken: för småskaliga forskningsprojekt inom samhällsvetenskaperna*, 2. uppl., Studentlitteratur: Lund, 2009 p. 321

<sup>33</sup> Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson, Henrik & Wängnerud, Lena (red.). *Metodpraktikan: konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*, 4., [rev.] uppl., Norstedts juridik: Stockholm, 2012 p. 210

<sup>34</sup> Fejes, Andreas & Thornberg, Robert (red.). *Handbok i kvalitativ analys*, 1. uppl., Liber: Stockholm: 2009 p.32, 219-220

<sup>35</sup> Denscombe, 2009 p.385-386

### 3.2 THE CASE STUDY

The case study is focused mainly on revealing the correlation between certain events to phenomenon that might be causal. This study focuses on finding casual connections between the theories of UCAV, and the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Since the study is limited in time and place it is possible to make a deeper analysis on the chosen subject and hopefully reaching more specific conclusions. The case study is supposed to be limited in time and space, which fits the scope of this study.<sup>36</sup>

The scope might be large, ranging from 2004-2014 covering both Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the phenomenon studied (UCAV) and the four variables, are not. Allowing the study to draw specific conclusions regarding UCAV based on facts drawn from a larger period of time. This suits the case study, since one of its uses are to research a small part or phenomenon in a larger event.<sup>37</sup>

The case study is used when researching something that occurs naturally, without the researcher creating an event to be able to study it. The War on Terror, conducted by the U.S in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is such an event. The case study also emphasises the use of several sources and data, which suits this research, since there is not just one source for all the information needed. It is preferably used when trying to unveil *why* something has occurred, rather than *how* which is what this study tries to achieve.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.3 MATERIAL

Material used for this paper consists of scientific reports, UN reports, books and articles from renowned authors and persons of interest to the subject. The strive is to use as many primary sources as possible regarding the use of UCAV in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but due to the nature of the subject, the primary sources might not always be available. Analysis of the credibility of the material will be considered and take into account three criteria; authentication, credibility and representation. Material and data gathered from science reports, books and articles from renowned authors will be used primarily.

To ensure the relevance of the material gathered, the search is conducted in several steps. Initially, many articles and research papers containing seemingly relevant information, are gathered. Thereafter, a more thorough reading is conducted. While still not an in-depth reading, this creates a

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 2009 p. 59-60

<sup>37</sup> Ejvegård, Rolf. *Vetenskaplig metod*, 3., omarb. uppl., Studentlitteratur, Lund: 2003 p. 33-34

<sup>38</sup> Denscombe, 2009 p. 59-64

better comprehension of the material. Still relevant material is placed into a specific folder and await further review. Initially gathered material that did not fit the scope, is stored away but not erased. The process is then repeated. This time the selected material is read more thoroughly, and parts that could be used in the research is selected.

An example of such a process is the United Nations (UN) reports used in this study. Containing hundreds of pages, but only a few pages concerning the specific subject. After selection, the remaining pages will be used in the study. Since the subject is quite specific, such narrow selection will create the need for many different sources to create enough material to conduct the study. Un-selected material will be stored separately in case further review is necessary. In the end, the gathered relevant material will be read thoroughly and analysed with the four variables chosen from the theories. Finally, the relevant material will be presented in a matter that is easily understood and grasped by the reader during the analysis.

### 3.3.1 CHOSEN MATERIAL

The chosen material are eleven different documents and five electronical sources. Ranging between official documents from the UN, to unofficial documents gathered from the WikiLeaks organisation. The different sources are listed and reviewed separately below so the reader is able to understand on which material the analysis is conducted upon. Some of the material has been used to build a base of statistics to be able to show the raw effect of UCAV. While other material consists of other studies as a continuation of previous research. Such material is used to test the variables that requires a more in-depth earlier research to be answered.

Seven reports from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) *Annual Report on Protection of Civilians* have been reviewed. The source is deemed reliable since its main purpose is to support the Afghanistan government in the many steps it is required to take to create a sustainable democratic future. UNAMA supports the government with the peace and reconciliation process while it also promotes and monitors the adherence of human rights in the conflict.<sup>39</sup> This material is important since it shows the conflict in Afghanistan through a civilian causality/suffering perspective and can be used to observe some of the impact of UCAV. The material also contains numbers and estimates that are important to build the base of this study.

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<sup>39</sup> *United Nations*, UNAMA. Mandate, Available: <https://unama.unmissions.org/mandate> (Saved 2016-04-07)

Two articles posted in *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* were chosen. Both articles were found in the Taylor & Francis database and have been peer-reviewed. The articles cover the CIA assassination program in Pakistan and the relation between the Al-Qaida propaganda output and UCAV strikes. Both are considered highly relevant articles when researching the four chosen variables.

The RAND National Security Research Division is a non-profit U.S based organisation. It aims to make the world safer, healthier and more prosperous. They offer advice on decision-making through analysis and research<sup>40</sup>. It is U.S based and could therefore be biased even though it claims not to be. The study *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* has been reviewed and no reason was found to believe that this organisation, aiming to improve decision-making of the U.S, would be untruthful in this research.

The material gathered from the WikiLeaks organisation is a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) document. WikiLeaks is an organisation that gathers, analyses and distributes material that have been restricted or censored. WikiLeaks is funded by its publisher, the publication sales and the general public<sup>41</sup>. The material leaked is often controversial, but no allegations have been made to claim that the published material is fake. The material is deemed trustworthy. However, as a precaution against one-sidedness, several different sources are used. The chosen material is a study made by the CIA assessing effectiveness of high-value targeting. The material is of special interest since the study derives from the CIA's own experience of using UCAV and targeted killings. Other relevant leaked material where reported by *The Intercept* regarding operation Haymaker. An operation in Pakistan that relied heavily upon UCAV. Since it shows the use of UCAV in one specific operation it was deemed relevant. Even though it is not possible to generalise upon just one operation, it gives some indications of how the UCAV is used.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ) is a non-profit organisation funded by the David & Elaine Potter Foundation. The BIJ's purpose is to report, investigate and analyse subjects beneficial to society. One of their main concerns is the undermining of democracy due to the lack of transparency. UCAV strikes conducted by the U.S are often made in secret, and not reported to the media. BIJ have therefore taken upon themselves to create that transparency. BIJ is now covering these strikes, reporting them, and gathering the data on their website.<sup>42</sup> This coverage together with

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<sup>40</sup> RAND. About, Available: <http://www.rand.org/about.html> (Saved 2016-04-07)

<sup>41</sup> WikiLeaks, What is WikiLeaks, Available: <https://wikileaks.org/What-is-Wikileaks.html> (Saved 2016-04-07)

<sup>42</sup> The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, About the bureau, Available: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/who/>

the New America Foundation (NAF), another non-profit organisation trying to create transparency, have proven essential to create insight regarding the use of UCAV<sup>43</sup>. Two different sources are used to create greater redundancy and certainty.

### 3.4 LIMITATIONS & UNCERTAINTIES

Due to the immense amounts of data and material that could be used in researching the benefits and risks of UCAV in irregular conflicts, the research question is narrowed down. Enabling it to be answered within the assigned timeframe. This causes the study to be less extensive, and its contribution to the subject of UCAV smaller. For example, this study does not examine the economic, the psychological, nor the ethical debate regarding the use of UCAV. The debate is very vast, and to study every aspect of it is not possible due to limitations in time. The study focuses only on its potential benefits, risks, and earlier use of the UCAV, to be able to confirm or deny the four chosen theories on the subject.

Secondly the author is compelled to limit the scope of the research. The research only entails the risks and benefits of UCAV, and not, for example, other operations and actions taken by the U.S within the frames of counterinsurgency. This study will hence, only focus on the use of UCAV by the U.S in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the scope is limited to researching just four theories. The long timeframe is necessary to create a suitable sample size. Even though the time frame may seem long, the material to research it is available and necessary. It does not always require an in-depth analysis year per year, rather a summary showing trends of the UCAV usage. By creating this framework, it becomes possible to finish the research on time. Regretfully also creates uncertainties in the correlation between cause and effect, since there are more factors than the use of UCAV that affects the conflict. Such uncertainties discovered during the study will be reported separately later in this paper.

Finally, since the main method is a qualitative case study it is easily influenced by the authors subjective ideas. Therefore, it is necessary to be transparent with the methods and criteria used to select the material. Since the amounts of material is quite immense, the material will be selected, compressed and concluded so that it becomes comprehensible to the reader<sup>44</sup>. In the process of

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(Saved 2016-04-19)

<sup>43</sup> *The New America Foundation*, Our Story, Available: <https://www.newamerica.org/our-story/> (Saved: 2016-05-20)

<sup>44</sup> Nylén, Ulrica, *Att presentera kvalitativa data: framställningsstrategier för empiriredovisning*, 1. uppl., Liber ekonomi,

concluding and presenting the material in a comprehensible manner, there is a risk that subjectivity influences the process. Creating a need for the study to be undertaken whilst constantly reviewed with criticism. The transparency and the presentation of the material becomes of great importance to create credibility to the research<sup>45</sup>.

### 3.5 OPERATIONALIZATION

The operationalization of the method above will be described to create transparency. The aim is to create an understanding of how the method and theory have been used in the analysis, so that the work could be remade by another part.

The theoretical approach to this study is the four different variables identified as central in the debate regarding the use of UCAV. These variables were chosen from six different authors who have written books or reports on the subject. Through thorough review of the works of these authors, the variables were chosen. The variables fit the scope of the study, because they create some of the most central arguments in the debate without dealing with the psychological, ethical or economical aspects. This helps to keep the study narrow and within the frame. It is also possible to study the material through these variables. Basically, meaning that the variables fit the material and makes it possible to perform the analysis.

The material was chosen through the method described in chapter 3.3. Variables are used as filters when reading through the chosen material. Then, categories are created based on the variables. Content that fits the study is placed in these categories. When all the material has been reviewed, with the variables as filters, and all relevant content been placed within the categories, the analysis can begin.

The analysis uses the variables to find supporting or opposing findings in the relevant material. Through filtering the material in this manner, the material can be revised and conclusions drawn. If there is much material supporting the variables, it will not be possible to present all those findings in the analysis. In such a case, material that is of a similar character will be reduced, to present as much different evidence as possible. Since there are two sides to this debate, material that supports any of the sides will be placed under that category. Material that does not fit the scope of this study will be ignored. Any material that might question the theories will be presented on the appropriate chapter.

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Malmö: 2005 p. 9 & 18

<sup>45</sup> Nylén, (2005) p. 13-14

PRO UCAV	CON UCAV
Preventing the creation and sustainability of safe havens for insurgents/terrorists, disrupting their lethality and efficiency. <sup>4647</sup>	Creates animosity among the population and might create more enemies in the long-run. Risk of creating an endless spiral of targeted killings. <sup>4849</sup>
Highly potent and accurate weapon, causing less collateral damage than other types of strikes. Should be used in areas that are hard or dangerous for the U.S to enter <sup>50</sup>	Al-Qaida and the Taliban are resilient against HVT strikes and can replace lost leaders. Without proper strategic goals the insurgency might be lost in the long-run. <sup>51</sup>

## 4. ANALYSIS

Below the material have been analysed through the variables stated above and aims to answer the research question: *-How have the four chosen variables of UCAV been used in the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaida?*

### 4.1 SUPPORT OF PRO UCAV THEORIES

This chapter will answer the question through the two variables on the pro UCAV side.

#### 4.1.2 NO SAFE HAVEN, DISRUPTION OF EFFICIENCY

Since Afghanistan borders Pakistan, the Taliban and the Al-Qaida are known to have been using the Pakistani FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Agencies) region as a safe haven. This causes the conflict to transcend the border. From the FATA the Taliban have fired upon coalition forces across the border and used it as a safe place to retreat. The FATA also have served as a training and recruiting ground for the insurgents and have given the insurgents the possibility to reorganise and plot acts of

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<sup>46</sup> Javier, (2014) p. 25-27

<sup>47</sup> *The White House*, 2013

<sup>48</sup> Chamayou, 2015 p. 65-71

<sup>49</sup> Shaw, G.R Ian. 2013 p.553

<sup>50</sup> Byman, 2013 p. 32-34

<sup>51</sup> Cronin, 2013 p. 1-3

terror.<sup>52</sup>

The Pakistani government have been unsuccessful in its attempts to capture persons of significance in the FATA region. Meaning that the FATA would still be a safe place for insurgents and terrorists unless the U.S were to intervene. U.S UCAV strikes have been the most efficient in taking out HVTs in the FATA. Meaning that the UCAV is playing a crucial role in preventing the FATA from becoming a breeding ground for insurgents and terrorists.<sup>53</sup>

By using the UCAV, the previous safe haven of the FATA has been turned into a hunting ground for the UCAV. The former CIA chief Michael Hayden are to have said that the Al-Qaida no longer views the FATA as a safe haven. The number of HVT killed in the FATA is proof that the FATA could not be considered a safe haven anymore.<sup>54</sup> Adding the number of strikes killing regular combatants not on the HVT list, only makes the FATA seem even less safe.

In the FATA region, many different groups as well as the Taliban and Al-Qaida exists. Many of these groups give their support to the Taliban or Al-Qaida. Occasionally supporting groups such as Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) have rallied up against 8000 volunteers to fight with the Taliban against the coalition forces in Afghanistan. Sometimes these groups have tried to join together, or increase their support to Al-Qaida and the Taliban. When this happens their leaders can be targeted by an UCAV and killed. Preventing the organisations from joining together in the FATA.<sup>55</sup>

An example of such disruption against the various organisations in the FATA is the strike against Baitullah Mehsud conducted in 2009. During 2007, Mehsud managed to convince many commanders of the various groups active within in the FATA to gather under a unified banner, Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan.<sup>56</sup> Mehsud was considered the most wanted man in Pakistan and as the head of the Pakistani Taliban he was prime responsible for many suicide bombings. One resulting in the death of the Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, among many others.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Williams, Brian, Glyn, *The CIA's Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004–2010: The History of an Assassination Campaign*, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, (2010): 33:10 p. 871-874

<sup>53</sup> RAND, *Counter Insurgency in Pakistan*, RAND Corporation, 2010, p. 125

<sup>54</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 877-878

<sup>55</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 25-27

<sup>56</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 26-27

<sup>57</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 878-879

#### 4.1.3 HIGHLY POTENT WEAPON & LESS COLLATERAL DAMAGE

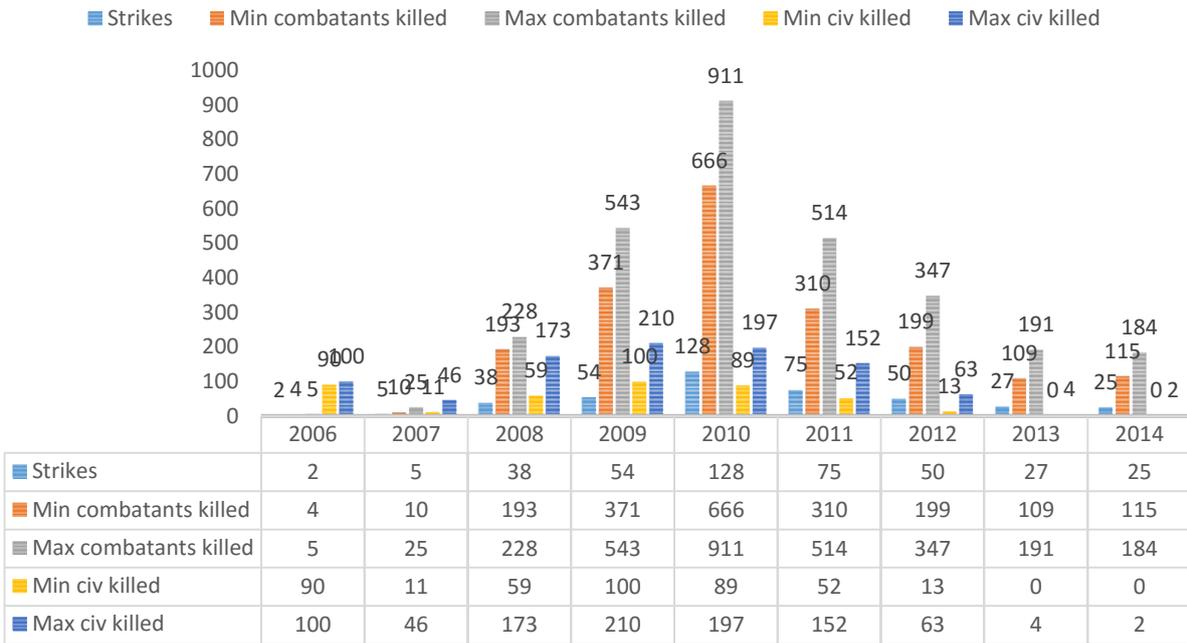
This part of the analysis is twofold. The first part deals with the potency of the weapon. The second deals with the amount of collateral damage, and puts it in relation to killed combatants and other weapon systems. When searching for reports showing collateral damage, there is instantly the problem with transparency. The CIA are very secretive regarding their operations in Pakistan making this analysis difficult.

There is also a question of labelling. It would seem that it is complicated to reveal whether or not a person was a combatant or a civilian. This is understandable since there are certain problems with objectivity in this matter. The U. S's Central Intelligence Bureau (CIA) naturally do not want to label the dead as civilians since it is harmful for public relations. While human rights groups (or even journalists) might not be completely impartial in the matter. There is also the problem of entering and confirming identities of the casualties in a hostile area. Which leads to the problem of resolving whether or not an individual was an insurgent or a civilian.

#### HIGHLY POTENT WEAPON

Below, two different sources have been used to find data on the amount of combatants killed. Showing a perspective of theUCAV effect. Two diagrams are shown to verify statistics and to contribute with material from more than one source. Counting the amounts of combatants killed is one way of measuring potency of the weapon. Another way is to compare the amount of civilians injured in comparison with combatants killed. This shows the raw potency of the weapon per se, but would not be enough to draw conclusions regarding its overall efficiency in counterinsurgency. However, by examining the raw potential, one stepping stone to revealing the impact and use ofUCAV is uncovered.

### UCAV STRIKES PAKISTAN BIJ



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### UCAV STRIKES PAKISTAN NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION



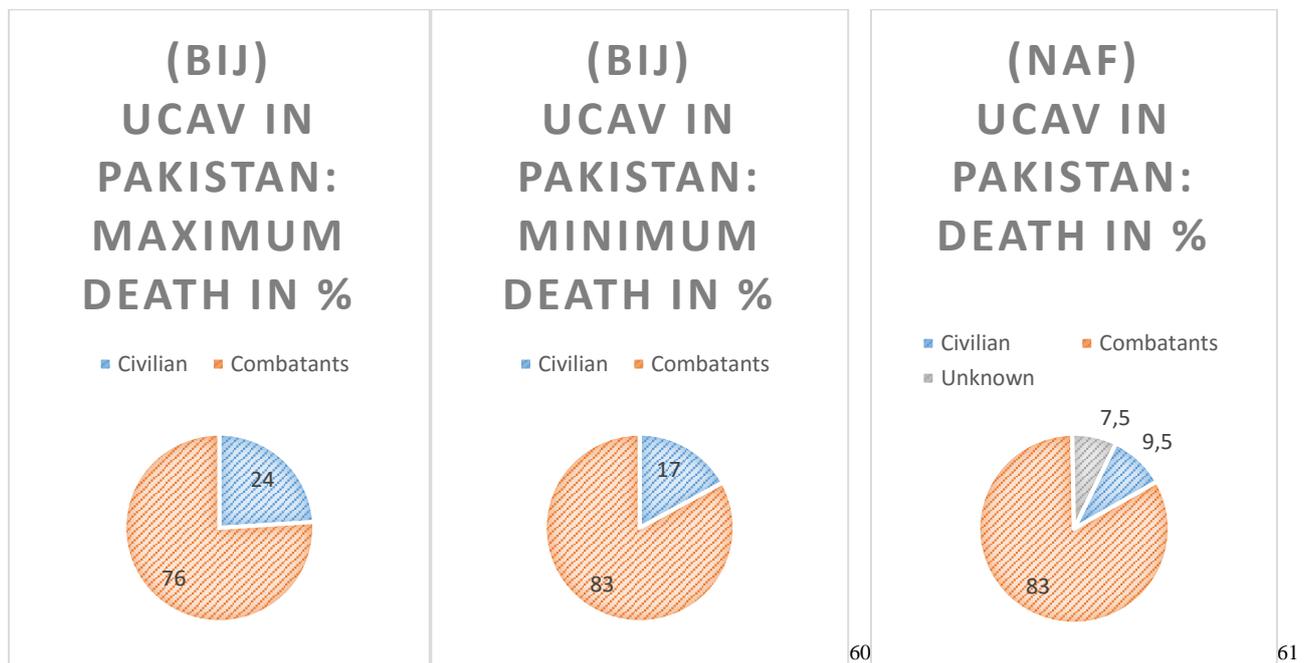
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<sup>58</sup> The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2016-04-28)

<sup>59</sup> New America Foundation, Drone Wars Pakistan: Analysis, Available:

<http://securitydata.newamerica.net/drones/pakistan-analysis.html> (2016-04-26)

The two sources differ slightly, in part due to the differences in the classification of the dead. The NAF have the category called “unknown” where the BIJ instead uses a minimum and maximum amount to handle such uncertainties. Even though these numbers may differ, the trend is the same with a peak during 2008 which subsides after 2011. The diagrams show a great improvement in the civilian to combatant ratio with only four civilians and zero unknowns during 2013-2014. The civilian/combatant death ratio in the beginning of the period started out as very high, with 90-100 civilians killed in relation to only 4-5 combatants killed. The ratio was then improved during the years, resulting in only 0-2 civilians and 115-184 combatants killed during 2014. Even though sources from two different organisations have been used, both report similar trends.



As shown the maximum number of deaths caused by UCAV in Pakistan is less than one third of the total number of deaths, but still causing between 416-952 civilian deaths over the period 2006-2014. The BIJ estimate of the minimum amount of deaths shows similar results to the NAF when combining the categories of unknown and civilian deaths. The combatants killed are 83 percent, and the unknown together with the civilian deaths become 17 percent. the same as BIJ's 83 percent combatants and 17 percent civilian deaths.

Earlier studies claim that strikes with UCAV could prove useful in a counterinsurgency as long as it is part of a greater strategic plan. A well-executed High value targeting (HVT) mission/programme could disrupt the insurgency through the loss of their leaders, reducing their efficiency, lowering their

<sup>60</sup> *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, (Saved 2016-04-28)

<sup>61</sup> *New America Foundation* (2016-04-26)

morale and even split/fragment the groups<sup>62</sup>. Assuming that the UCAV operations performed in Pakistan 2010, killing between 666-911 combatants, would have been targets specifically chosen according to the strategic goals of the U.S. then the 17-197 civilians could be considered an understandable loss. A slight contradiction found, is that during Operation Haymaker (a five-month long operation in Pakistan), only one out of ten was on the target list. The results of that particular operation do not support the idea that UCAV strikes mainly claims the lives of those specifically chosen, but rather that it could be an indiscriminate weapon<sup>63</sup>. However, it can be argued that eliminating a HVT might be worth such losses and that it kills associates, not innocent bystanders. Considering this, HVT strikes do not necessarily undermine the goals of eliminating these organisations.

### LESS COLLATERAL DAMAGE

In Pakistan, between 421-960 civilians were killed from UCAV strikes between 2001-2014 according to the BIJ<sup>64</sup>. In Afghanistan approximately 2892 civilians were killed due to airstrikes according to UNAMA reports, however the numbers differ slightly between each report<sup>65,66</sup>. Below, civilian casualties in both Afghanistan and Pakistan due to airstrikes are shown. In Pakistan the registered casualties are solely from the use of UCAV. The casualties in Afghanistan, on the other hand, were created from both conventional air strikes and from UCAV.

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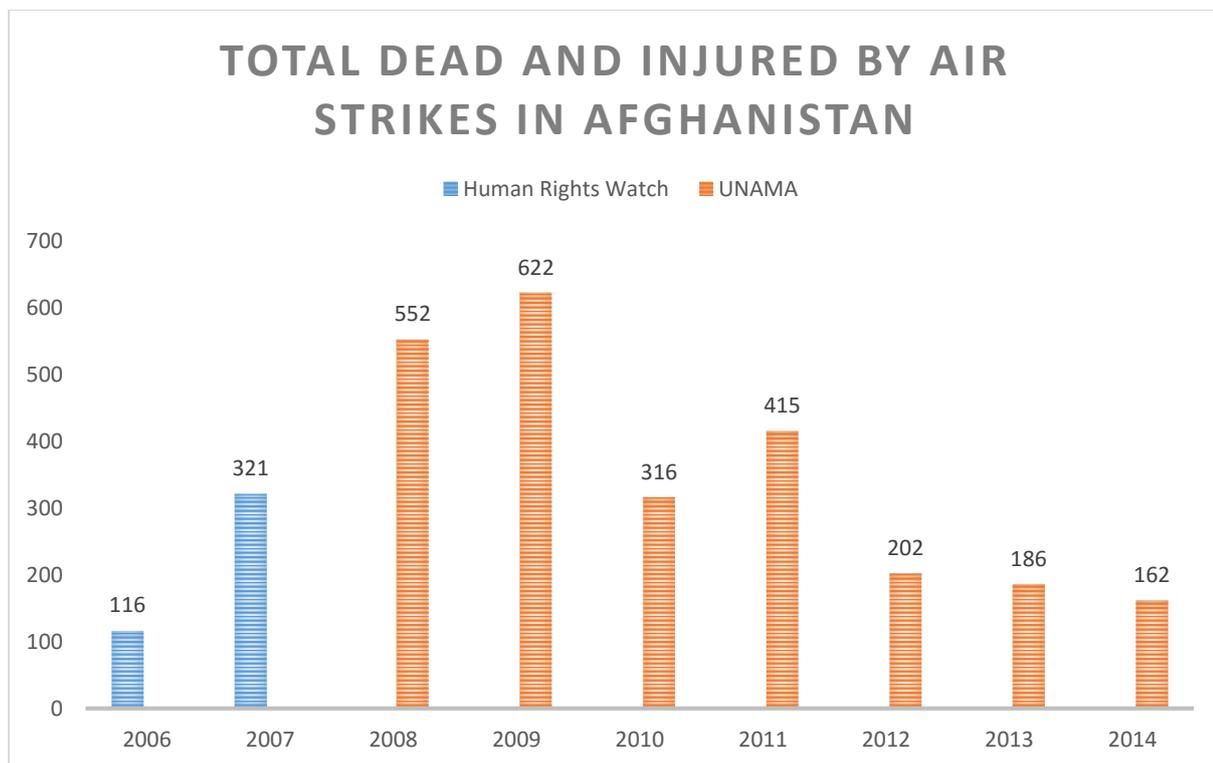
<sup>62</sup> CIA, Best Practices in Counterinsurgency, *Making High-Value Targeting Operations an Effective Counterinsurgency Tool*, 2009 p. i

<sup>63</sup> *The Intercept*, The Drone papers, Available: <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/manhunting-in-the-hindu-kush/> (Saved 2016-05-01)

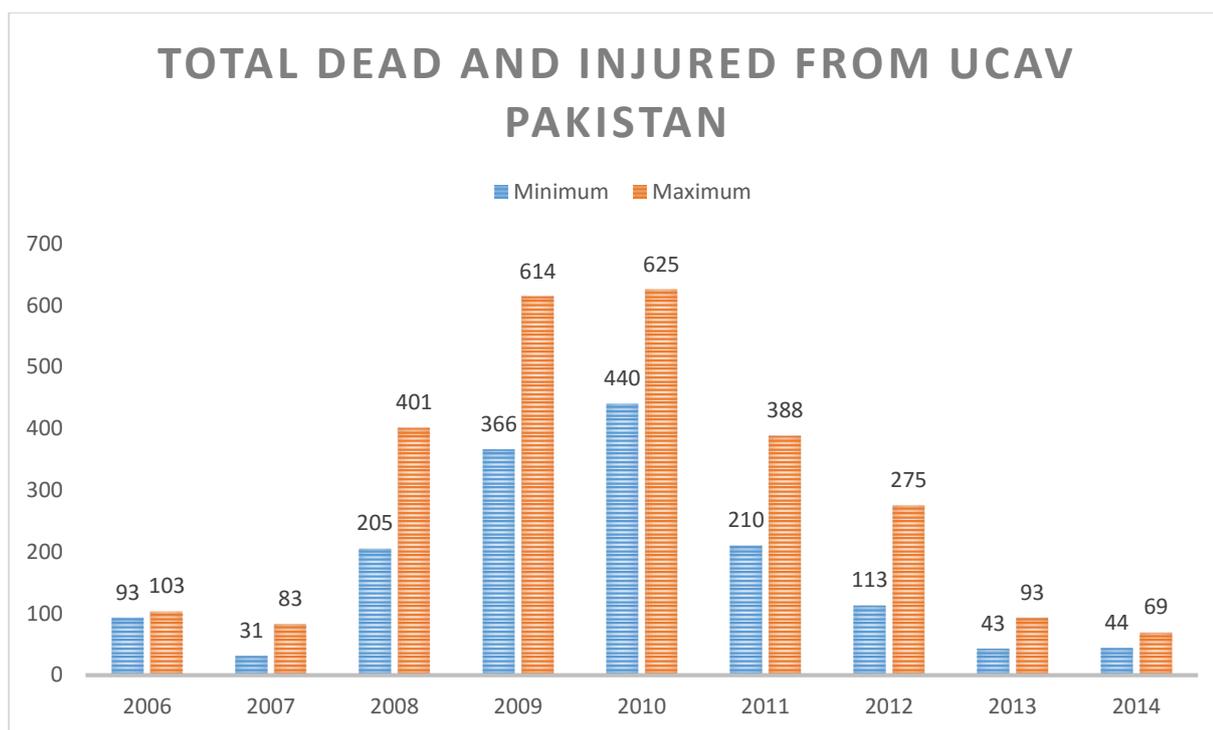
<sup>64</sup> *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, (Saved 2016-04-11)

<sup>65</sup> UNAMA, 2014 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians, Kabul, 2015 p. 94

<sup>66</sup> UNAMA, 2009 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians, Kabul, 2010 p. 17



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<sup>67</sup> *Human Rights Watch*, Afghanistan: Civilian death from Airstrikes, Available: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2008/09/08/afghanistan-civilian-deaths-airstrikes> (Saved 2016-04-19)

<sup>68</sup> UNAMA 2009, 2010 p. 23-24

<sup>69</sup> *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, (Saved 2016-04-19)

The weapon releases from UCAV in Afghanistan increased from 294 in 2011 to 506 in 2012, a 72 percent increase. At the same time, the number of civilian deaths caused by air strikes decreased from 415 to 202<sup>70</sup>. This quote is regarding the increase in the use of UCAV during the same period.

*“A need to review tactical and operational policy relating to targeting to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law may be of particular relevance with the expansion of the use of unmanned combat aerial vehicles (drones) in pre-planned attacks in Afghanistan.”<sup>71</sup>*

With the decrease in civilian casualties, and the increased UCAV weapon releases, this would support the idea that such tactical review might have taken place. This could be interpreted, that if used according to this policy, the weapon can be more accurate and create less collateral damage than other systems. Regrettably, this decrease in civilian casualties did not continue in the same pace throughout the entire period. However, it decreased from 202 to 162 casualties over the next two years. Unfortunately, the total amount of UCAV strikes in Afghanistan during that time period is unknown. Even so, the quote below is indicating UCAV strikes started claiming more lives in comparison to the amount of strikes conducted.

*“Of the 54 aerial operations recorded as causing civilian casualties, UNAMA documented 19 incidents of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) strikes resulting in 59 civilian casualties (45 civilian deaths and 14 injured) more than tripling civilian casualties from such strikes recorded in 2012”<sup>72</sup>*

During 2013, the percentage of casualties caused by air elements decreased and amounted to 19 percent of the total civilian casualties attributed to the pro-government forces. UCAV accounted for 32 percent of those casualties, creating more casualties than both helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.<sup>73</sup> While data from just 2013 might not be enough to generalise upon for the entire period, and since the amount of regular air strikes is unknown. The only fact observable is that the UCAV are creating collateral damage in some extent, and have at times done so more than regular air strikes.

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<sup>70</sup> UNAMA, 2012 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians, Kabul: 2013 p. 33

<sup>71</sup> UNAMA 2012, 2013 p. 33

<sup>72</sup> UNAMA, 2013 Annual Report on Protection of Civilians, Kabul: 2014 p. 28

<sup>73</sup> UNAMA 2012, 2013 p. 46

## 4.2 SUPPORT OF CON UCAV THEORIES

### 4.2.1 CREATES ANIMOSITY

The lack of transparency from the U.S has proven not only to complicate this study; it also leads to the risk of the U.S being accused of performing illegitimate killings. This could cause them to be seen as an equally unjust part in the conflict as the Al-Qaida or the Taliban. By not disclosing any information regarding the strikes, it leads to speculation among the populations of Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Pakistan the perception that UCAV claims the lives of too many non-combatants is widespread and the U.S seem to be doing little to counter this perspective. Due to the lack of transparency the actions of the U.S end up being seen as unjust and unethical.<sup>74</sup> This might be a contributing factor to the lack of support and the decline of U.S popularity in Pakistan<sup>7576</sup>.

In Pakistan, more than three quarters of the population opposes the U.S UCAV operations against Al-Qaida and the Taliban within their country<sup>77</sup>. Between 2006 and 2009 a survey was conducted regarding whether or not Pakistan should cooperate with the U.S in the War on Terror. The result showed that more than 40 percent opposed the cooperation in 2006. In 2009, after the increase of UCAV strikes and civilian casualties, as many as 80 percent opposed the cooperation<sup>78</sup>. With such strong opposition to the U.S, it is not hard to imagine that repeated strikes with civilian casualties might drive the popular opinion towards one of the groups. In the least, the U.S will lose the will of the Pakistani to assist them in the fight against enemies of the U.S. The CIA have warned that this might happen if HVT operations are carried out carelessly<sup>79</sup>.

There is a steady trend in Pakistan, with an increase in terrorist attacks during 2006-2009, supporting the idea that the counterinsurgency efforts are inefficient. In 2009 the terrorist attacks claimed 3021 lives and injured 7334, which was a 48 percent increase from the year before. Attacks have been conducted against the U.S consulate in Pakistan, but have not been limited to within Pakistan. Attempts have been made to detonate bombs in the U.S, and on planes traveling between the U.S,

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<sup>74</sup> Enemark, Christian. *Drones over Pakistan: Secrecy, Ethics, and Counterinsurgency*, Asian Security, 7:3, 2011 p. 232-234

<sup>75</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 887

<sup>76</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 107

<sup>77</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 105

<sup>78</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 107

<sup>79</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 1

U.K and Canada as well.<sup>80</sup>

The U.S is losing the support and provokes the population of Pakistan by the use of UCAV in the FATA. This makes it more likely Pakistanis will join with the Taliban or Al-Qaida, or creating new groups altogether<sup>81</sup>. Loss of public relations should be an undesired strategic goal for any nation. It has been shown that HVT operations might, if used without caution, might escalate the violence in the conflict<sup>82</sup>. Such an escalation could be what is being portrayed in Pakistan through the diminishing public support and the rise of terrorist attacks.

#### 4.2.2 TALIBAN AND AL-QAIDA RESILIENCE

UCAV strikes in both Afghanistan and Pakistan have killed a number of Taliban leaders and function holders<sup>83</sup>. The question is whether or not it is effective against the Taliban. Organisations that have decentralized command structures have proven more adept at taking losses amongst their leadership. The Taliban have a centralized command structure, but it is very flexible and they have a clear plan for succession in the leadership, which makes it robust even in case of the loss of their leaders.<sup>84</sup> Al-Qaida, have a decentralized command structure making them even more resilient to HVT attacks.

*“Groups are most susceptible to leadership losses when they are centralized and personality driven[...], and organizations with more decentralized structures, such as HAMAS and al-Qa’ida, usually have more capacity to adapt and regenerate after suffering losses from HVT operations.”<sup>85</sup>*

Both the Taliban and the Al-Qaida are able to replace their leaders, and they have several leaders overseeing their operations which makes the impact of losses among the leadership relatively small, especially among the intermediate level of leadership.<sup>86</sup> HVT operations, such as UCAV strikes, should be focused on the higher level of leadership and towards vital specific functions that are hard to replace. If used accordingly, HVT operations should reduce insurgent support, will, and

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<sup>80</sup> RAND, 2010 p. 1-2

<sup>81</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 1-3

<sup>82</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 1

<sup>83</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 887

<sup>84</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 9

<sup>85</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 12

<sup>86</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 8

effectiveness. Which would lead to dividing the organization or fragmenting it which might favor the U.S or the host nation.<sup>87</sup>

This quote from a RAND study of the counterinsurgency efforts in Pakistan, suggests a change in methods.

*“[...] governments have won only 31 percent of counterinsurgencies since 1945. Insurgents have won 28 percent; 22 percent ended in a draw; and 18 percent are ongoing. [...]Pakistan will not be able to deal with the militant threat over the long run unless it does a more effective job of addressing the root causes of the crisis [...], rather than destroying the enemy, its top priority.”<sup>88</sup>*

Even though such a quote reflects a grim prognosis, it is clear that the CIA's secret HVT programme in Pakistan has effected both the Taliban and Al-Qaida through the elimination of key figures and leaders. Their operations have been disrupted in one way or another through the assassination of their leaders and key personnel.<sup>89</sup>

The Al-Qaida and Taliban resilience against attacks on their leadership, their proven ability to regenerate the organization and recruit new members, the U.S loss of popularity, and the increase of the insurgency, creates the risk that the chain of killing will be continuing endlessly. There is nothing in the material gathered, showing that these organisations are going to stop fighting the U.S, but rather the opposite.<sup>90</sup>

#### 4.3 COMPLICATIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

There is one main uncertainty when studying the effects of UCAV. The foremost complication is the fact that many sources of information are classified. The lack of transparency regarding the UCAV strikes has made analysis troublesome and has demanded that the study is performed in a roundabout way. Civilian reports or leaked material have been analysed to find clues on the use, effect and efficiency to be able to answer the research question. Furthermore, it is hard to evaluate to which extent the organisations have been disrupted by the strikes. Since there is no way of knowing what

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<sup>87</sup> CIA, 2009 p. 1

<sup>88</sup> RAND, 2010 p. Xiii

<sup>89</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 887

<sup>90</sup> Williams, 2010 p. 888

these organisations would have achieved in case the UCAV strikes did not take place. However, it has been possible to evaluate this to some extent, but with less precision.

#### 4.4 RESULT OF THE ANALYSIS

The results of the analysis will be presented under each topic.

##### 4.4.1 PRO UCAV

This analysis shows that UCAV strikes can effectively prevent the existence of safe havens for insurgents or terrorists. Strikes against the Taliban and Al-Qaida have prevented the FATA to be a safe haven and have by doing so disrupted their efficiency. The UCAV's raw ability has been confirmed. It is a very lethal weapon that has been used extensively in regions that are dangerous for the U.S to enter. The analysis could not find enough support in the material proving that it creates less collateral damage than other types of strikes. It was found that during 2013 it created more damage than other air elements. However, since the number of strikes of the different air elements could not be confirmed, no firm conclusion could be drawn regarding the matter of creating more or less collateral damage than other types of strikes.

##### 4.4.2 CON UCAV

Strikes in the FATA region have created animosity among the Pakistani population. The U.S now have very low support among the Pakistani which will create problems in future counterinsurgency campaigns. A steady increase in terrorist activities in Pakistan supports the theory that more enemies have been created, or at the least, they now have become more determined. This means that in order to prevent insurgents or terrorists from organising themselves and becoming efficient, more HVT strikes will be needed. The analysis also found that the Al-Qaida and the Taliban have a strong resilience against HVT strikes and the ability to replace lost leaders. Even though they are resilient, the amount of lost leaders and function holders have greatly disrupted them making them less efficient. However, even if they are preoccupied with replacing leaders and function holders, they show no signs of ceasing to exist as organisations.

## 5. ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS, DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS

This chapter will provide the answers for the research questions provided through the earlier analysis. Thereafter, a discussion regarding the research subject, the aim, the problem and the need for this study will be presented. During the discussion, the benefits and foremost its contribution to the military profession will be argued as well. Finally, a reflection regarding the methods and theories used in the study will be presented together with a suggestion for continued studies of the subject.

### 5.1 ANSWER TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions will be answered in the same order they were studied. Beginning with the two sub-questions examined during the theory chapter.

*-How could UCAV be used in counterinsurgency, and what are the benefits, according to the theories?*

The UCAV could be used to prevent safe havens for insurgents or terrorists, disrupting their lethality and efficiency.<sup>91</sup> It is a highly potent weapon that causes less collateral damage than other types of strikes. The system should be used in areas that are hard or dangerous to enter to avoid risks to the personnel <sup>92</sup> See 2.Theory for a more extensive explanation.

*-What are the potential risks and complications of using UCAV in counterinsurgency against the Taliban and Al-Qaida according to the theories?*

It could create animosity among the population and might create more enemies in the long-run. There is a risk of creating an endless spiral of targeted killings to be able to keep up with the increase in insurgents. Al-Qaida and the Taliban are resilient against HVT strikes and can replace lost leaders. This means that without a proper strategic goal the insurgency might be lost in the long-run since the organisations never perish. See the theory chapter for a more extensive explanation.

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<sup>91</sup> Javier, 2014 p. 25-27

<sup>92</sup> Byman, 2013 p. 32-34

*-How have the four chosen theories of UCAV been used in the fight against the Taliban and Al-Qaida?*

UCAV have been used extensively in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has been used according to the pro UCAV theories. Disrupting safe havens and hindering the Taliban and Al-Qaida in areas dangerous for the U.S to operate in. At the same time the negative effects claimed by the con side can be seen as well. For a more in-depth answer see chapter 4.4 Result of the analysis.

*How are the theories reflected by the use of UCAV in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and what implications might it hold to the counterinsurgency?*

The theories can be observed through the four variables chosen. All four variables could be observed but to differing extents. The disruption of safe havens and the diminishing efficiency of Al-Qaida and the Taliban can be observed in several cases. The raw potency of the system could be observed in the conflict. The UCAV strikes in both regions have disrupted the insurgent's efficiency to plot new attacks on the U.S. The attacks in Pakistan have struck against the safe-havens of the Taliban and Al-Qaida, creating problems for them to operate both in Afghanistan, Pakistan and against the U.S abroad. The UCAV have killed thousands of insurgents which could, if viewed from a tactical standpoint, be considered a success. The strategic contribution of the UCAV strikes still remains being the disruption of the Al-Qaida and Taliban efficiency through the targeted strikes against functions and leadership.

Regarding whether or not UCAV creates more collateral damage than other systems. The answer would be that; collateral damage could be observed, and in *some occasions* it superseded the regular systems. However, a very promising trend was shown towards the end of the examined period showing that armed UCAV can be very accurate, avoiding collateral damage to an extent that could be considered an impressive feat.

The creation of animosity against the U.S has been confirmed with the decrease in support from the population, and the increase in terrorist activity in Pakistan. The study could not prove to what extent this might drive people to actually joining an organisation fighting the U.S. Regardless, such a decrease in popularity surely would not aid the U.S in their fight against terror.

In the case of Al-Qaida and the Taliban resilience, attacks on their leadership shows less effect than

perhaps expected. This is since they have clear succession plans. In Al-Qaida's case, they also utilize a decentralized command which increases their resilience further. Though resilient to such strikes, the combination of strikes against key personnel, such as cashiers and bomb makers, have disrupted them greatly. Leaving them with unexperienced leadership and a constant need to recruit new key personnel.

## 5.2 DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis shows that all four theories from the debate are reflected in the conflict to some extent. Showing both some benefits of using UCAV as well as confirming some of the negative aspects. The results would suggest that it will be difficult to defeat the Taliban and the Al-Qaida with UCAV only. There is a risk of the conflict continuing for a very long time, ruining the U.S foreign relations with Pakistan in the process. Even so, the Taliban and Al-Qaida might be rendered inefficient by UCAV strikes making them less dangerous to the U.S. However, there are many other aspects to be studied in order to reach clarity regarding the efficiency of UCAV, and this study only focuses on four aspects. This creates a need for further research.

The study shows that both the benefits and risks of UCAV can be observed. The paradox of fighting Al-Qaida and the Taliban in this manner should be attended. These organisations are resilient to the UCAV strikes, the strikes create collateral damage and animosity and there is little showing that the conflict will be resolved. The Al-Qaida and the Taliban might become less effective in their more elaborate plots, and perhaps they will have a harder time affecting the U.S. At the same time, the acts of terror through road bombs and suicide attacks are increasing throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan. Surely, these attack will not reach or affect the U.S directly, but it raises questions of how much more the U.S values the safety of its own population over others. In the long-run, would this kind of warfare not undermine the U.S abroad?

The lack of transparency from the U.S made this study difficult and creates further questions. This new kind of war, that involves less and less U.S citizens, and zero risk to the pilots, one would question the amount of insight available to the general public. In a war without risks, with few in the U.S being affected, and with no insight, is there not a risk of strikes and wars being fought in secret and with less consideration? Questions such as these were raised during this study but there is a need of further research to answer them. Even so, it was considered noteworthy and therefor brought up.

The aim of this study was to explain the impact of using UCAV in an irregular conflict, and to further the understanding regarding the risks and benefits of the UCAV. From two theories, four variables

where created, then used to find answers to the research the question. The purpose of the study is considered fulfilled, since it was possible to show how the theories were reflected in the conflict. The contribution of this study is the confirmation of these theories, and how it shows that the use of UCAV can have both positive and negative effects if not used carefully. Hopefully, together with many other aspects and studies, this will contribute to a more effective use of UCAV.

There were several problems with finding relevant material causing this study to be less accurate. The study was made to be smaller than initially intended, which makes the contribution to the field smaller. Even so, the study could perhaps have narrowed the scope even more, enabling a more thorough analysis.

### 5.3 REFLECTION

Analysing such a wide subject showed itself to be difficult, and resulted in only being able to research four theories of the UCAV debate. Even though the study was downsized to four theories, it was still difficult to find material that could support the study of these four quite different variables. In the end it would perhaps have been better to choose only two variables and put them against each other. Then a more in depth analysis would have been possible, and more absolute answers could have been provided. Now the study shows that UCAV can be both good and bad, but perhaps it would have been more fruitful to focus on only one aspect. Another critique would be against the theories and variables, that they are simplified versions of the different authors original opinions and statements. If asked, they might not wish to belong to neither of the sides. However, during the initial research, their opinions and theories were found central in the debate and could be placed in categories supporting or opposing the use of UCAV.

Using the qualitative analysis was the right choice. The material was of such character that it would have been very difficult to use a quantitative approach. Even if possible, the quantitative analysis would have required more time. The qualitative analysis allowed a deeper study of the chosen material allowing the author to really understand the material. However, it also allows for misinterpretations and subjectivity. Trying to avoid this, the subject was approached with an open and objective mind-set. Even so, such a risk could not completely be eliminated in the analysis. By focusing on the facts available, and criticizing the conclusions reached. It was possible to reach conclusions that are based on the facts, and not by preconceived assumptions.

#### 5.4 CONTINUED RESEARCH

A suggestion of continued research would be the other aspects of UCAV in counterinsurgency warfare. To verify other variables and theories. Creating a complete picture of the UCAV possibilities and risks. With a complete picture it could be possible to weigh the pros and cons against each other, figuring out how to best use UCAV, and how to limit its side-effects. As an example, the ethical/humanitarian, psychological or economic aspects would be of interest for the future use of UCAV.

The use of UCAV and airpowers in counterinsurgency is a relevant subject to study since modern wars are turning into more and more irregular asymmetric wars. The will to send soldiers to fight in these conflicts and risk their lives, is becoming more and more of a political dilemma. Using airpowers is a safer way of fighting. Using UCAV is even safer. However, the efficiency and the effects of using mainly airpowers must be researched further to be able to create effective means to end insurgencies. This new, safe way of fighting creates many new aspects that needs to be researched. Such research can prevent that this relatively new system from becoming a double-edged sword.

#### 5.5 FINAL STATEMENTS

This study has tried to show how the theories from the debate are reflected in the current conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The study is by no means an absolute truth but rather an interpretation of events through the theories. It is but one contribution to the subject, further studies on the benefits and risks of using UCAV in counterinsurgency is needed. Especially since the Al-Qaida and Taliban still remains, and conflicts like these are becoming more common.

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