

Press release

New report lifts the lid on the development and spread of armed drones around the world

LONDON (20 September 2013) – A major new study from Open Briefing, *Remote Control War*, reveals that more than 200 different unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are in use or in development by China, India, Iran, Israel, Russia and Turkey, with 29 of these being unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAVs), otherwise known as armed drones.

The authors, Rob O’Gorman and Chris Abbott, have identified key developments in drone technology and conclude that the lines between missiles and drones at one end and drones and aircraft at the other are increasingly blurred. Furthermore, several countries are seeking to develop a range of UAV countermeasures in response to the proliferation of drones to state and non-state adversaries.

Military planners face numerous challenges with the rise of armed drones. Chief among them, O’Gorman argues, ‘is the development of sound operational doctrine in order to successfully integrate these systems’ capabilities.’ The speed and extent of UCAV developments is ‘far surpassing the imaginations of military planners.’

Abbott, Executive Director of Open Briefing, noted that ‘armed drones are being used for missions that would not likely be approved if more traditional aircraft systems were being used,’ adding that ‘the use of remotely-piloted systems has sidestepped international law.’ Abbott argued, ‘The use of armed drones is viewed as a grey area when, in fact, no such ambiguity really exists. They are weapons platforms. The usual rules should apply.’

Chris Cole, the founder of Drone Wars UK, said, ‘Open Briefing’s *Remote Control War* shines a much needed spotlight on the development and use of drones by a raft of countries beyond the usual suspects and shows that the development of armed drones is spreading rapidly.’

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, said, ‘Armed drones may have become weapons of choice for the United States and Britain but what this report shows is that they are already proliferating across the world. The implications of this are huge for international security but have been almost entirely ignored so far.’

The report was commissioned by the Remote Control Project, a pilot project initiated by the Network for Social Change and hosted by Oxford Research Group.



open briefing
the civil society intelligence agency

Open Briefing
27 Old Gloucester Street
Bloomsbury
London WC1N 3AX

t 020 7193 9805
info@openbriefing.org
www.openbriefing.org

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Notes to editors

1. *Remote Control War: Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles in China, India, Iran, Israel, Russia and Turkey* by Rob O'Gorman and Chris Abbott will be published by Open Briefing on Friday 20 September 2013. **An advance PDF copy can be downloaded from <http://bit.ly/remotecomtrolwar>.**
2. Report co-author Rob O'Gorman is available for interview and comment. Please email pathfinderrob@gmail.com or Skype [robogorman](#) to arrange. Mr O'Gorman is based in Ontario, Canada.
3. Paul Rogers is available for interview and comment. Please call +44 (0)7867 982 061 or email p.f.rogers@bradford.ac.uk to arrange. Professor Rogers is based in West Yorkshire, United Kingdom.
4. Please address any questions about Open Briefing or the study to Chris Abbott. Please call +44 (0)20 7193 9805, email chris.abbott@openbriefing.org or Skype [openbriefing](#). Mr Abbott is based in Cornwall, United Kingdom.
5. Rob O'Gorman is a contributing analyst at Open Briefing. A former Canadian Forces intelligence officer, he has over 20 years' experience providing tactical, operational and strategic assessments. As a Mission Support Officer, he was also involved in arms control verification operations around the world. O'Gorman is now an independent security and intelligence consultant, writer and lecturer.
6. Chris Abbott is the founder and Executive Director of Open Briefing. He is an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow in the School of Social and International Studies at the University of Bradford and was the Deputy Director of Oxford Research Group until 2009. Abbott is also a writer and consultant on international security issues and the author of two popular books on security and politics.