

Drone Warfare: Should We Focus on Autonomous Weapons Or the Remote “Human Agencies” Directing Them?

By [Drone Warfare](#)

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Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

A member of [Scientists for Global Responsibility](#) has drawn attention to a report by **Peter Burt**: [Off the Leash: The Development of Autonomous Military Drones in the UK](#).

In a [Guardian article](#), **Jamie Doward** points out that though the government insists it “does not possess fully autonomous weapons and has no intention of developing them”, since 2015, the UK has declined to support proposals put forward at the UN to ban them.

[Israel Defense](#) summarises:

“The report maps out the agencies, laboratories, and contractors undertaking research into drones and autonomous weapon technology in support of the Ministry of Defence, examines the risks arising from the weaponization of such technologies, and assesses government policy in this area”.

“We have already seen the development of drones in Britain which have advanced autonomous capabilities, such as the Taranis stealth drone developed by BAE Systems, and the development of a truly autonomous lethal drone in the foreseeable future is now a real possibility,” Burt said.

A spokesman for the MoD said:

“There is no intent within the MOD to develop weapon systems that operate entirely without human input. Our weapons will always be under human control as an absolute guarantee of oversight, authority and accountability.”

[The BBC](#) reported in November that at least 6,660 Yemeni civilians have been killed and 10,560 injured in the fighting, according to the United Nations.

It is hard to imagine fully autonomous weapons inflicting much more death and destruction than current technology under human control.

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