

US “Robot Warriors” to Fight against Iraqi Resistance

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, January 24, 2005

ISN SECURITY WATCH 19 January 2005

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

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US robot warriors to head for Iraq in spring

Eighteen robot warriors equipped with cameras and operated by remote control are scheduled for deployment in Iraq this spring, where they are expected to be used by the US military to help fight insurgents, the US Army reported late last week.

The 1-meter high robots are based on a previously designed robot warrior, the Talon, used to disarm bombs. According to the US Army, the robot soldier, known as the SWORD ([Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection Systems](#)), will be fitted with automatic rifles and will be capable of tracking enemies swiftly.

SWORDS will be operated by human soldiers, who will order the robot to fire by remote control. According to the BBC, the robot warrior has four cameras with night-vision and zoom capabilities, can travel over rocks and barbed wire, and can run on batteries for up to four hours. The remote control device has two joysticks and a video screen.

The robot soldiers cost US\$200'000 each. The SWORD will be the first robot soldier used in actual combat situations.

Their deployment is expected in March or April, according to The Associated Press. Meanwhile, security fears continue ahead of Iraq's parliamentary elections this weekend.

While US Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte on Sunday promised “elaborate security” for voters, insurgents have threatened attacks on those attempting to cast ballots on 30 January. And securing the more than 5'000 polling stations across the country will be difficult. US military commanders have already said that four of the country's 18 provinces are not safe for voters. And those provinces house one-quarter of Iraq's population. On Monday, a suicide car bombing near the offices of Iraqi interim prime minister Iyad Allawi wounded at least 10 people.

The primary purpose of the Armed/Weaponized Talon Robot/SWORDs would seem to be to significantly mitigate the risk of serious injury and/or death to our infantry combat forces on the ground, primarily in urban warfare environments. It's no secret that the U.S. Army is currently embroiled in a difficult public relations (PR) war against the U.S. media. Every soldier killed in combat OCONUS (Outside the Continental United States) creates more difficulty for the Bush Administration and U.S. Armed Forces. Robots can't be killed. So, why use human warfighters, when you can conduct reconnaissance operations and kill the enemy with remote-controlled, (unmanned) mobile robotic weapons platforms/systems? Basically,

why put a human in harm's way, when you can put a robot on it?

According to www.DefenseReview.com

The logic and impetus behind the development of the Armed/Weaponized Talon Robot/Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection System (SWORDS) infantry combat/urban warfare mobile robotic reconnaissance/weapons platform is thus the same as that behind the development of [Unmanned Aerial Vehicles \(UAV's\)](#) /[Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle's \(UCAV's\)](#) . Since our infantry is still embroiled in heavy urban warfare and counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, and the media shows no signs of downplaying combat casualties, the need for Armed/Weaponized Talon Robots/Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection Systems (SWORDS) is currently greater than ever. The U.S. Army's Stryker Brigade is in luck, because they're going to receive 18 of them in Iraq, very soon.

<http://www.defensereview.com/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=657>

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca