Legitimacy and Drones: Investigating the Legality, Morality and Efficacy of UCAVs (Emerging Technologies, Ethics and International Affairs)

Steven J. Barela

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Unmanned combat air vehicles, or in common parlance 'drones', have become a prominent instrument in US efforts to counter an objective (and subjective) cross-border terrorist threat with lethal force. As a result, critical questions abound on the legitimacy of their use. In a series of multidisciplinary essays by scholars with an extensive knowledge of international norms, this book explores the question of legitimacy through the conceptual lenses of legality, morality and efficacy; it then closes with the consideration of a policy proposal aimed at incorporating all three indispensable elements. The importance of this inquiry cannot be overstated. Non-state actors fully understand that attacking the much more powerful state requires moving the conflict away from the traditional battlefield where they are at an enormous disadvantage. Those engaging in terrorism seek to goad the ruling government into an overreaction, or abuse of power, to trigger a destabilization via an erosion of its legitimacy. Thus defending the target of legitimacy"in this case, insuring the use of deadly force is constrained by valid limiting principles"represents an essential strategic interest. This book seeks to come to grips with the new reality of drone warfare by exploring if it can be used to preserve, rather than eat away at, legitimacy. After an extensive analysis of the three key parameters in twelve chapters, the practical proposition of establishing a 'Drone Court' is put forward and examined as a way of pursuing the goal of integrating these essential components to defend the citizenry and the legitimacy of the government at the same time.

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