Strategic, Operational and Tactical Considerations for Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems

Dr. Heather M. Roff
Josef Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver
Military Rationale

Technological superiority and advanced military capabilities that offer the possessor of lethal autonomous weapons strategic, operational, and tactical advantage.
Sub Goals

- Assist or replace personnel in decision making, cognitive or labor intensive tasks
- Reduce or eliminate personnel to exposure to danger and stress, while simultaneously retaining the capability to pursue mission objectives and goals
Strategic Doctrine

- AirLand Battle
- AirSea Battle
- Anti Access/Area Denial (A2/D2)
**Air**

- **Pros:** expanded intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance + strike capacity
- **Cons:** political scrutiny, high costs, interoperability, unintended or inefficacious effects from learning machines
Sea

- Pros: advantages in antisubmarine warfare, maritime security, surface warfare, joint operations, intelligence, surveillance reconnaissance, expanded standoff strike capacity
- Cons: Classification problems in maritime law; Duties to Rescue; perception and situational awareness; Testing and Verification
Land

- Pros: countermine operations; counter improvised explosive devise operations, security/perimeter defense, defensive artillery/mortar/missile systems; light agile maneuverable ground vehicles

- Cons: Targeting & Military Objectives Problems compromising or making redundant command and control; Vulnerability to decoys/deception
Figure 1. Unmanned Vehicle Teams on the digital battlefield can act as a force multiplier if they have the autonomy and collaboration capabilities necessary to operate in teams without extensive human supervision.
Long-Term Strategic Considerations

1. Arms Races
2. Proliferation