



# SciMUNC XVII

*DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE  
(DISEC)*

# The Ethics of Drones

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

*DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE*

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## Letter from the Dais

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Dear Delegates,

Hello everyone! My name is Melda Kayatekin, and I will be chairing this year's DISEC committee. I am a junior here at Bronx Science and I hope you enjoy your time spent during SCIMUNC. I look forward to seeing how each and every one of you react to situations and collaborate with each other to find solutions. I hope by the end of committee sessions we can reach a consensus on this year's topic of drone warfare. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns, in or outside of the committee. I can be reached at [meldak@nycstudents.net](mailto:meldak@nycstudents.net).

Hi delegates! My name is Steven Seo, and I will be co-chairing the DISEC committee. I'm a sophomore at Bronx Science and I'm very excited to help lead this committee for you all. During this time, I hope all of you find the opportunity to share your creative ideas and collaborate with other delegates to find and propose solutions to this year's topic, drone usage. We look forward to hearing your interesting discussions and proposals, and feel free to email me with any questions at [stevenjins@nycstudents.net](mailto:stevenjins@nycstudents.net).

Best,  
Melda Kayatekin and Steven Seo

## Committee Description

### ***DISEC***

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was established along with the formation of the United Nations itself on October 24, 1945, becoming one of the first committees introduced to the UN General Assembly. The new technology introduced to warfare, such as nuclear weapons during WWII, had devastating effects across the globe and highlighted the urgent need for international peace and security. The increase in harmful effects caused by these newly introduced weapons is what influenced the formation of the UN and more specifically, DISEC. All 193 member states of the UN can participate and vote in DISEC and together generally engage in discussions, negotiations, and resolutions related to disarmament and international security and peace. Because DISEC along with every other committee in the UN follow the core values of the UN, member states do not vote to disarm specific countries unilaterally. Rather, these committee sessions are used to find common ground and promote disarmament globally.

## Background Information

Drones, or at least the concept of modern-day drones, were initially created with the purpose of using them in warfare. As WWI commenced, countries started experimenting with new forms of technology rather than just fighting with guns and relying on having more soldiers. As weapons such as tanks and bombs became increasingly stronger, more casualties and deaths took place. Drones were invented to reduce these casualties and deaths, by replacing humans in missions that are far too dangerous for them.

The creation of drones dates back to the early 1900s when the first UAV torpedo nicknamed the “Kettering Bug” was created by Charles Kettering in 1917. This torpedo was designed to shut off at a predetermined destination and fall from the sky carrying 180 pounds of explosives. The first actual modern drone was created in 1935 as a method of aerial target practice in the UK. As drones continued to develop during the rapid advancement of warfare technology in WWI and WWII, they ended up playing a huge role in combat as drones have been

used to launch precise strikes, locate enemy targets, and reveal important information.

It is possible to view the use of drones in warfare as a reduction in casualties since for example, only wanted destinations are attacked rather than unwanted destinations that have civilians, but after drones started to come into play, they ended up creating many more casualties as it is easier to attack people with them. The creation of drones changed the way wars have been and will be fought forever.

China currently dominates the field of weaponized drone ownership. Most combat drone importation is credited to the United Kingdom and India, each accounting for 33.9 and 22.5 percent respectively. Other countries that most commonly use the aerial devices include the United States of America, Russia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. The US has a past of using these military weapons against countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and Libya, all of which do not have the same warfare. While there is a substantial number of countries with access to drone warfare, there are many who do not.

Thus, the ethics of drone warfare is placed into question.

In terms of why drone warfare is seen as beneficial to many countries, there are various reasons. For one, drone warfare typically allows for more target precision, and should therefore theoretically allow for more targeted deaths and less collateral damage. Thus, in the case of any war between multiple countries, there would be little to no harm to any civilians in the country. With the use of precision in drone warfare, the average civilian doesn't have to be involved in any political disputes between two or more countries. Additionally, the use of drone warfare would also create fewer harmful situations for militant officials and soldiers. In the case where a soldier would typically have to fly a plane to drop any bombs, or would have to fight in ground warfare, drone warfare would be able to eliminate many of those dangers. As drone warfare is powered and executed remotely, there are fewer people in harm's way.

Nevertheless, drone warfare is not theoretical. While it is beneficial to limit collateral damage, collateral damage is also its very drawback. Even if drone warfare is

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intended to not harm extensive areas and people with target precision, it is still unsuccessful in not harming any civilian. For instance, U.S. drones alone have been estimated to have killed between 22,000 - 48,000 civilian people since the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001. Drone warfare is not perfect and is still able to create significant damage for common people. This also generally brings ethical drawbacks into question, as earlier stated. Drone warfare kills people, whether or not civilian, and there are various discussions around the ethics of killing, as well as the ethics of letting an automatic drone be used in warfare. If any mistakes occur, an automatic machine will be unable to feel any remorse.

### ***Past Agreements***

A point of tension for various countries is the disparity and inequality of the accessibility of drones for warfare purposes. Thus, there have been various agreements and acts made in attempt to combat such issues. Some examples include the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the EU Common

Position on Export Controls, the Wassenaar Agreement, etc. Such acts and agreements and anything similar all fall under the purpose of building trust among the various nations regarding transparency and use of weapons and arm transfers. Anything imported and exported will be managed safely to ensure that only the right people receive such weapons. The regimes control drone usage, and amounts distributed to the countries included in the agreements.

Many UN states have signed an international agreement that essentially states that unmanned aerial vehicles are significant weaponry. It also states that drones can only be used under “responsible use.” Nonetheless, it should be noted that this agreement has been seen as flawed due to the vagueness of what was outlined. There are many points that are not clearly defined, such as what constitutes “responsible use.” There have been acts and agreements however in relation to this agreement and the states within it that are more concrete. For example, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons’ Protocol III (CCW Protocol III) restricts particular types of use and certain places where the weapons can be used. It also minimizes risks of unintended

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persons from facing harm, and outlines the importance of avoiding problematic models and using them in problematic areas. The Hague Code of Conduct on Ballistic Missile Proliferation also aids in elucidating what was outlined in the agreement, as it prevents any access to those who can use weapons for mass destruction. It allows for more “responsible use,” though it is still flawed, as there is no way of restricting a current possessor of a destructive weapon, such as a drone, from using the weapons for more unacceptable purposes.

Generally, there was an international agreement in 2012 that the international rule of law should apply to all countries equally, which should theoretically be able to combat and control any issues within flawed laws and any of the discrepancies due to ambiguity discussed earlier. The international rule of law also includes international norms and standards, meant to be kept by every country under the United Nations system. However, while all standards were created under the premise of equality and mutual agreement between all nations, there has been discourse due to some countries having more powers compared to others, an example being

China, France, Russia, the UK and the US being the only countries with veto privileges on agreements made by the Security Council. Especially considering the number of said countries that have access to drones for warfare purposes, it naturally seems to be unfair, with these states being allowed to get by weapon laws due to their power and law ambiguity.

### ***Questions to Consider***

1. What are the viable alternatives to drone warfare?
  2. How does drone warfare economically affect a country?
  3. How would drone warfare affect a society?
  4. In what cases should drone warfare be considered fair?
  5. To what extent is drone warfare ethical or unethical?
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**Bloc Positions**

Bulgaria  
Hungary  
Zimbabwe  
Denmark  
New Zealand  
Netherlands  
Sweden  
North Korea  
Russia  
Saudi Arabia  
India  
Australia  
Ethiopia  
Israel  
United Kingdom  
Jordan  
Sri Lanka  
France  
Switzerland  
Turkey  
Nigeria  
Afghanistan  
United Arab Emirates  
Thailand  
Iraq  
Lithuania  
Georgia  
South Korea  
United States

Ukraine  
Zambia  
Canada  
Liberia  
Pakistan  
Iran  
Kyrgyzstan  
Serbia  
Japan  
China  
Germany  
Taiwan  
Spain  
Indonesia  
Singapore  
Greece  
Belarus  
Syria

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