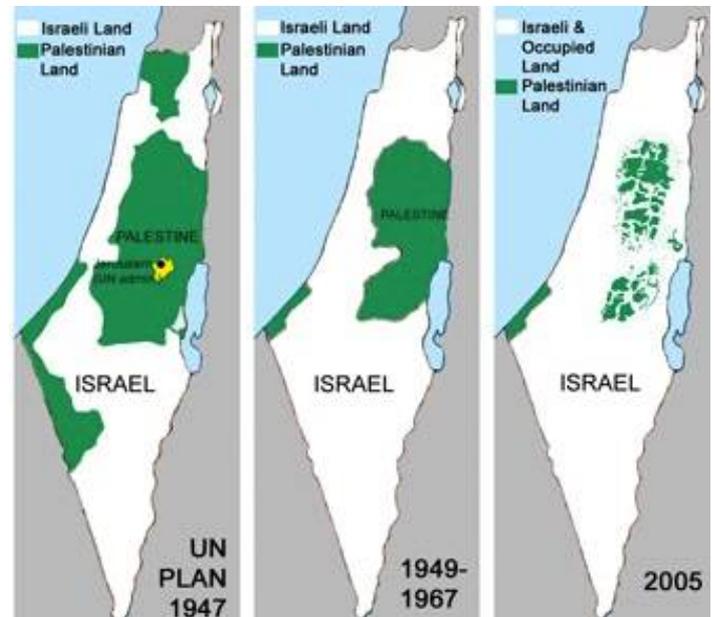


The Conflict in Israel and Palestine

By Stefan Sultan and Kyle Tuverson

Few people would disagree that the area of land west of the Jordan River, north of the Sinai Peninsula, and south of the Golan Heights has caused more conflict, devastation, and controversy than nearly anywhere else on the planet. This small plot of land, roughly the size of New Jersey, has been occupied by the Egyptians, Assyrians, Judaic tribes, Babylonians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, and British, just to name a few. After the Second World War, in the late 1940's, the United Kingdom gave control of Palestine over to the United Nations, who, in return, created the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine to decide what to do with the territory. In a report, a majority of the members of the committee proposed that: Palestine was to be constituted into an Arab State, a Jewish State and the city of Jerusalem. The Arab and the Jewish States were to become independent after a transitional period of two years beginning on September 1, 1947. The city of Jerusalem was to be placed under the International Trusteeship System by means of a trusteeship Agreement designating the United Nations as the Administering Authority¹.

With a subsequent resolution approved by the general assembly, Israel was created at midnight of May 14th 1948. Since its independence, Israel has been in discontinuous conflict -including a war with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq right after its creation- with neighboring states as well as the Palestinian Territories, which it currently occupies. To say the least, the conflict in Israel and Palestine is complicated.



(continued on pg. 5)

Why Everyone Needs Better Research Methods

By Caroline Bartholomew

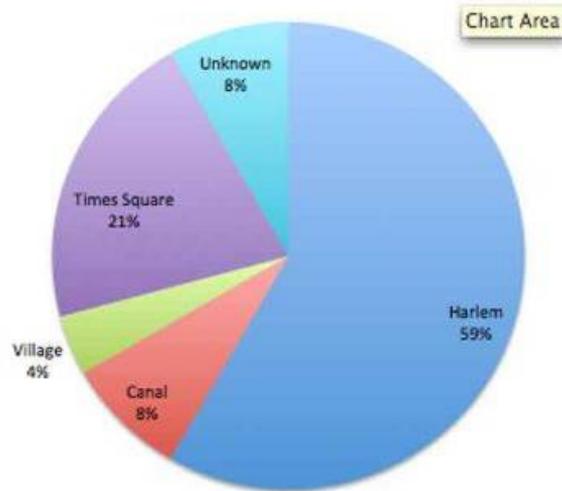
About two months ago, a video was released of a white woman walking around New York City for ten hours with a camera, which allowed her to capture all kinds of verbal street harassment on film. At the end of the two minute video, text appears on screen saying "100+ instances of verbal street harassment took place within 10 hours, involving people of all backgrounds". However, in the two minutes of the ten hours of total footage included in the viral video, most of the verbal harassment came from black men.¹

The video did not have a hypothesis to begin with, but more of an open-ended, unofficial research question of "do conventionally attractive white women get verbally harassed in New York?" Zeynep Tufekci, a sociology professor and author of the article "Why Everyone Needs Better Research Methods" from medium.com, says this video is a perfect example of why in order to accurately view and analyze data, you must understand the importance of research methods, and the methodology itself. (continued on next page)

She makes an interesting point about how data without a theory or hypothesis can be misleading, and that the same data can be compatible with multiple hypotheses. The two hypotheses she has for this data are: "Men of color are disproportionately more likely to catcall, especially to a white, conventionally attractive female" and "All men are equally likely to catcall but the makers of the video were biased, consciously or unconsciously, against black men (and edited out men of other races on purpose.)"²

The main issue this article addresses is whether or not the video is an accurate representation of the harassment the subject of the video actually experienced. While there is clearly evidence that she was harassed, this study may not be legitimate because it claims to

Street Harassment by Neighborhood



have covered all of New York City, but more than half of the data (60% of the footage in the two-minute clip) is from the predominantly black neighborhood of Harlem.³ Tufekci thinks that the first hypothesis (men of color are disproportionately more likely to catcall) appeals to more people because of already existing prejudices, and therefore, they would believe that this video is in fact a representative sample. The only way to know for sure would be to view all ten hours of footage and map out every shot in the video to see if it covers all of New York City, but all of the footage has not been released.

When questioned about whether the video is a truly representative sample, the producer claimed "We got a fair amount of white guys, but for whatever reason, a lot of what they said was in passing, or off camera, or was ruined by a siren or other noise... The final product is not a perfect representation of everything that happened."⁴ This study is flawed. An ethical researcher would have done the study again because if what he claims is true, the data is inaccurate since noise in non-minority neighborhoods could be a confounding variable and needs to be addressed.

From a statistical standpoint, there are multiple sampling and non-sampling errors that may have affected the results. The deeper issue however is the racism that pervades America, consciously or subconsciously. This video, because of its statistical unsoundness, plays to people's biases, supports stereotypes, and worsens the problem, as it is based off of chosen anecdotes rather than a legitimate hypothesis and a systematic study.

Today, the internet has an unbelievable amount of power, and anyone can post anything anywhere without getting it approved - this video is a perfect example. The whole point of making the video was so that it would go viral, and the disturbing question we can only wonder about is if the video had consisted of mostly white guys, would it have gotten nearly as much attention?

*in the 2 minute video (the locations from all 10 hours has not been released)

¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1XGPvbWn0A>

²<https://medium.com/message/that-catcalling-video-and-why-research-methods-is-such-an-exciting-topic-really-32223ac9c9e8>

³ibid.

⁴ibid.

...And Your Enemies Closer

By Austin Margulies

President Barack Obama announced in a news conference on December 17th that the United States trade embargo against Cuba would end, and that a freeze on diplomatic relations, dating back more than 50 years, would discontinue. The history of this rocky relationship between the US and Cuba began with events occurring before more than half of our current population had been born.¹

After its separation from Spain in 1899, Cuba remained a country very much in the “back pocket” of the United States, with the U.S. holding close control of most of Cuba’s decisions. America required full involvement in Cuba’s domestic affairs, including assistance in appointing their Head of State. Fulgencio Batista, through a series of takeovers and elections, held power both as a President and a Dictator in Cuba from 1940 to 1959. In 1959, a regime led by Fidel Castro seized control of Cuba by way of coup, overthrowing President Batista, and turning the country into a Socialist state. The following year, Castro began to execute his political agenda, laying heavy tax hikes on the importation of American goods, as well as diplomatically befriend the communist Soviet Union. In response to these anti-US actions by Castro, President Dwight Eisenhower set into motion the beginning of a trade embargo with Cuba, deeply cutting sugar imports from Cuba to the U.S., and freezing Cuban bank accounts in America, a policy that would effectively stop any trade or commerce between the two countries. Although a complete and all-stopping embargo was not put into effect until President Kennedy in 1962, 1960 is considered to be the end of any healthy economic relation between the United States and Cuba.²

Although poor diplomatic relations and economic sanctions were the underlying tensions between the U.S. and Cuba, two early 1960’s events acted as the sticking points for the 54 year freeze to follow. When taking office in 1960, President Kennedy was informed of CIA plans from Eisenhower’s administration that would involve a covert invasion of Cuba, with the intent of sparking an anti-Castro uprising, as well as destroying the small air force Castro had assembled. On April 17th, 1961, 1,400 Cuban exiles, trained by the CIA, stormed the beaches at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, hoping to carry out the attack.³ However, Castro received word of the invasion, and Cuban troops forced the invaders to surrender after less than a day of fighting, killing 114 men, and taking over 1,000 captive in the process. More than a year later, after tension continued to build in response to the Bay of Pigs failure, U.S. intelligence discovered military missiles in Cuba, stationed there by the Soviet Union. The missiles had enough range to fire into the United States, along with their observed position: pointing directly towards Florida, a part of the U.S. just 90 miles north of Cuba. This new intelligence put Kennedy into a 13 day standoff with the USSR and Cuba. On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy went on national television to tell the American public of the newly discovered missiles, and explained the United States plan to put a naval blockade around Cuba, and his own intentions of using whatever military force necessary to ensure domestic safety. Feeling the brink of another World War, this announcement incited panic among Americans.⁴ A naval blockade was put around Cuba until Fidel Castro and Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed to destroy the missiles, with the US agreeing to do the same to their own. The blockade ended a month later, but the resulting embitterment between the United States and Cuba carried on for the next several decades.

Numerous acts passed in the decades following the early 1960’s debacles, up until the Clinton administration made the embargo on Cuba more restrictive and even included restrictions on travel. However, when Fidel Castro handed his position of leadership over to his brother, Raul Castro in 2008, things began to change. This shift in power marked the beginning of a movement towards what would eventually lead to the President’s announcement in December. At the time of his assuming leadership of Cuba in 2008, Raul Castro faced a mountain of international debt and economic hardships domestically caused by the international recession. Castro was forced to find solutions, sparking the more liberal agenda to follow.⁵ (continued on next page)

After taking office in 2009, Barack Obama removed some of the more stringent restrictions with respect to Cuba, now allowing for Cuban Americans to send unlimited amounts of money to their family members in Cuba, as well as opening the opportunity for travel to Cuba for religious and educational reasons. However, after these steps forward, relations took a step backward when U.S. government subcontractor Alan Gross was arrested in Cuba for distributing various electronic devices to Cuban citizens, and sentenced to 15 years in prison for trying to “undermine the integrity and independence of Cuba.”⁶ Gross’ arrest presented a reminder that Cuba still saw the United States as a threat, and not a nation it favored to participate in travel and trade with. More recently, in efforts to allow more freedoms for his people, Raul Castro in 2012 removed many of the requirements and difficult standards for obtaining a travel visa in order to leave the country.

After a stalemate of over 50 years, Tuesday December 16th marked the first time of sustained diplomatic contact between Cuba and the United States, when President Obama and Raul Castro spoke on the phone for 45 minutes. This concluded an 18 month process of secretive talks between the two nations, reportedly facilitated by Pope Francis. Ultimately, the two sides brokered a prisoner swap, with the U.S. promising to release three Cuban spies captured in 1998 while working in America, in exchange for Cuban born Rolando Sarraff Trujillo, who was sentenced to prison twenty years ago in Cuba for working as an agent to U.S. intelligence.⁷ Castro also agreed to release Alan Gross after six years in prison, although he was not technically part of the trade.

Working with the diplomatic momentum from this contact, the president also announced sweeping changes that will be made in our foreign policy with Cuba by way of executive action. Barack Obama spoke about the future plans of opening a U.S. embassy in Havana, Cuba, as well as lifting current restrictions on financial transactions between the two countries, travel, and some trade. American companies will now be able to open accounts in Cuban banks and U.S. travelers now have the ability to import goods back to their country when traveling, among many other changes. The President has also instructed Secretary of State John Kerry to remove Cuba from the U.S. list of countries that sponsor terrorism.⁸ The embargo will technically remain in place, however, as lifting it completely would require Congressional approval through vote. Members of Congress have already begun voicing their concerns for the President’s actions, with second-generation Cuban Senator Marco Rubio speaking out against any plans to lift the embargo. “This entire policy shift announced today is based on an illusion, on a lie, the lie and the illusion that more commerce and access to money and goods will translate to political freedom for the Cuban people,” said Rubio. “All this is going to do is give the Castro regime, which controls every aspect of Cuban life, the opportunity to manipulate these changes to perpetuate itself in power.”⁹ Rubio’s opposition to the president’s decision is based on the predicted outcome of these policy changes. While many believe that opening trade will positively affect the Cuban economy in favor of the Cuban people, others, including Rubio, have predicted that this new policy will only give the Castro family more power, and that any positive effects will not trickle down to the citizens.

Although the outcome of economic and diplomatic future of the U.S. - Cuba relationship is unsure, we can be certain that both nations have bridged the gap, and ended the half century long freeze. Look for both President Obama and Raul Castro to remain on speaking terms, willing to continue to negotiate towards the opening of trade, and a healthy diplomatic bond.

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 2. CFR Timeline <http://www.cfr.org/cuba/us-cuba-relations/p11113>
 3. JFK Library <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/The-Bay-of-Pigs.aspx>
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 5. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/world/americas/us-cuba-relations.html?_r=1
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/17/world/americas/cuba-sanctions.html>
 9. Ibid.

Israel and Palestine Conflict (Continued)

This past summer, tensions between Israel and one of its neighbors were reignited when three Israeli teens -Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah- were kidnapped and killed by members of the Al-Qassam Brigades, the militant wing of Hamas,² a pro Palestinian independence group that governs the Gaza Strip. In response, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) conducted raids in the West Bank, arrested over four hundred Palestinians, severely restricted freedom of movement, used administrative detentions, fatally shot at least four Palestinians,³ and began airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, a Palestinian boy, was abducted and killed in a suspected revenge killing.⁴ In response, Hamas conducted rocket strikes against Israel, which Human Rights Watch described as, "indiscriminate or targeted at civilian population centers."⁵ In a move that Israel claimed was in self defense, the IDF launched Operation Protective Edge, which involved airstrikes and an eventual ground invasion of Gaza. Over the course of this war many atrocities were committed, by both sides. The rocket attacks and original kidnapping of the Israeli teens by Hamas have been derided as war crimes,⁶ yet Israel is not free of guilt. A recent report by Amnesty International accuses the Israeli



government of committing war crimes and human rights abuses against Palestinians. These crimes include airstrikes on homes which the government knew had civilians in them, and in some cases, there was "doubt in some of these attacks on civilian homes of whether a military objective was present."⁷ Furthermore, the IDF had targeted hospitals⁸ and schools, and, in one case, targeted a UN school that was holding refugees, in an act which the State Department denounced as "shameful."⁹ By the end of the war 64 Israeli soldiers and 6 Israeli civilians had been killed,

including a 4 year old boy, Daniel Tragerman. On the Palestinian side, 2,142 were killed (70% of whom were civilians, according to the UN),¹⁰ including nearly 500 children,¹¹ in addition to destroying 20,000 homes¹² and displacing a quarter of the population.¹³

Since the most recent events over the summer, there has been continued conflict between Israeli forces and the Palestinian residents of the West Bank. The West Bank makes up the majority of Palestinian land outlined in the treaties surrounding the creation of Israel in the 1940's. This land, if we look to the previous map, accounts for the large dark area surrounding Jerusalem. In this land, there has been increased effort by Israeli forces to seize privately owned Palestinian land, culminating most recently in a deal proposed to build new settlements in Palestinian lands.¹⁴ In early September, Israel made the decision to seize more than 400 hectares (~4 square kilometers) of land in the West Bank, prompting outrage in Palestine and condemnation and the suggestion of reversal by the United States.¹⁵ Along with this, there has been an almost constant police presence in the West Bank by Israeli forces, leading to increased anti-Zionist feelings by residents.¹⁶ Due to these recent deals, in early November of 2014 there was an outbreak of violence in the West Bank including the burning of a West Bank mosque and a shooting in a Jerusalem Synagogue.

Due to the increased widespread violence in this area over the past months, the world has seen protests around the globe in support of peace between Israel and Palestine. Major protests over the summer took place in cities like London, Paris, Mumbai, Tel Aviv, Vienna, and Santiago. Holding signs with slogans like "Free Palestine," "Stop violence on both sides," and "Boycott Israel," protesters marched in city streets toward government buildings and embassies alike demanding action be done to stop the killing.¹⁷ This kind of protest shows that the issue of peace in the Middle East is prevalent in countries around the globe, that people are concerned with the idea of justice no matter their religious affiliation. (continued on next page)

In late December Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, signed the Rome Statute and other documents in an attempt to join the International Criminal Court. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has accepted the application and said that they would be able to join the ICC on April 1st. The Palestinian ambassador to the UN, Riyad Mansour, announced that when Palestine officially joins the court they will prosecute Israel for the war crimes that they committed in Gaza this summer.¹⁸ In response to this action Israel has frozen the transfer of \$127 million in taxes that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.¹⁹ The United States has also threatened to withhold \$400 million of aid due to these actions. Despite these threats Palestine still plans to join the ICC and prosecute Israel under international law.

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They Suffer'd Chains and Courted Death

By Stefan Sultan

This past December the Senate Intelligence Committee released a long awaited report on the post 9-11 torture methods of the C.I.A.. In her foreword in the torture report, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), who was the chair of the Intelligence Committee at the time the report was released, wrote that the report was "highly critical of the C.I.A.'s actions, and rightfully so" and that "pressure, fear, and expectation of further terrorist plots do not justify, temper, or excuse improper actions taken by individuals or organizations in the name of national security." She further added that she believes, "that, under any common meaning of the term, C.I.A. detainees were tortured... the conditions of confinement and the use of authorized and unauthorized interrogation and conditioning techniques were cruel, inhuman, and degrading."

The unclassified report, which was released to the public, was 528 pages and included several incriminating facts. The report revealed that the C.I.A. treated its prisoners in a brutal manner. According to one senior investigator, "a detainee could go for days or weeks without anyone looking at him," and that there was one detainee who, "as far as we could determine, had been chained to the wall in a standing position for 17 days." This testimony is especially shocking when one considers that, according to the interrogation guidelines, "CIA officers (including personnel not trained in interrogation) could, at their discretion, strip a detainee naked, shackle him in the standing position for up to 72 hours." This means that the above prisoner was chained to a wall for nearly six times the limit used under interrogation guidelines. The use of wall standings was among a list of ten other torture techniques approved of by John Ashcroft, the United States Attorney General at the time. These other techniques included the use of cramped confinement, the stress position, diapers, and insects. Unfortunately, these practices were hardly the worst aspects of the report. It was only two days later, on July 26, 2002, that Ashcroft also approved the use of waterboarding. After it was approved, waterboarding was a common method of torture use by the C.I.A., as can be seen in the story of Abu Zubaydah, who interrogators waterboarded 2-4 times a day for 17 straight days. (continued on next page)

During the waterboarding sessions Zubaydah often coughed, vomited, and had “involuntary spasms of the torso and extremities.” Furthermore, during this time interrogators also used other torture techniques, including, “walling, attention grasps, slapping, facial hold, stress positions, cramped confinement, white noise and sleep deprivation.” These tactics were carried out 24 hours a day for the first 17 days. It was later on, during the next three days, in the “aggressive phase of interrogation,” that Zubaydah was placed in the coffin-like, large confinement box for 266 hours as well as 26 hours in the small confinement box, which was 21 inches wide, 2.5 feet deep, and 2.5 feet high. The C.I.A. officials also told Zubaydah that “the only way he would leave the facility was in the coffin-shaped confinement box.” In response to this torture, “Abu Zubaydah frequently ‘cried,’ ‘begged,’ ‘pleaded,’ and ‘whimpered,’” and continually told his torturers that he did not have any information in addition to what he had already told them. On the sixth day of torture, the interrogators reported that “it was unlikely Abu Zubaydah ‘had actionable new information about current threats to the United States’” and on the next day that it was “‘highly unlikely’ that Abu Zubaydah possessed the information they were seeking.” Despite this, as well as an assessment that showed Zubaydah’s compliancy with his torturers, the C.I.A. headquarters still believed that he had information and ordered the continuation of his torture.

After this, Zubaydah was often described as “hysterical” and “distressed to the level that he was unable to effectively communicate.” The waterboarding sessions “resulted in immediate fluid intake and involuntary leg, chest and arm spasms” as well as “hysterical pleas.” After one of these sessions Zubaydah was reported to be “completely unresponsive, with bubbles rising through his open, full mouth.” Although they continued to torture Zubaydah, many of the C.I.A. interrogators were “disturbed” by the techniques they were using.

According to C.I.A. personnel at the facility, “Several on the team profoundly affected...some to the point of tears and choking up” and that, “Today’s first session...had a profound effect on all staff members present.... It seems the collective opinion that we should not go much further.... Everyone seems strong for now but if the group has to continue...we cannot guarantee how much longer.” According to the report, after the use of torture on Zubaydah had ended, the C.I.A. concluded he “had been truthful and that he did not possess any new terrorist threat information.” Despite this, the interrogation of Zubaydah was “viewed as a success” and recommended that the torture techniques used on Zubaydah be used as a template for future interrogations, not because it provided the C.I.A. with new information, but because it showed that Zubaydah did not have the information the C.I.A. believed him to have.¹

However, the report is not without controversy. Many conservatives have been criticizing the report, saying that it was too harsh on the interrogators and that the torture program helped to dismantle Al Qaeda. In their minority report, Republicans rebutted the full report by saying that it was based on “flawed analytical methodology” and that the torture techniques used by the C.I.A. did help to collect intelligence, such as with Hassan Ghul. Their report states that after the “enhanced interrogation techniques”² were used on Ghul, he gave up more concrete information. Furthermore, in an editorial for the Wall Street Journal, entitled, “Interrogations Save Lives,” three former C.I.A. directors stated that the Senate report was filled with inaccuracies and distorted key facts. They further said that a perfect example of the torture program’s effectiveness was with the case of Abu Zubaydah, who they believed would not have talked if it wasn’t for the torture program.⁴ Despite the near universal condemnation of the report by conservatives, there were a few Republicans who spoke out in favor of the report. The most notable defender of the report was John McCain (R-AZ), who himself had been captured and tortured by the VietCong for five and a half years during the Vietnam war, where he was beaten and tied up in ropes and left in the stress position. While speaking on the floor of the Senate about the report, Senator McCain stated that torture, “compromises that which most distinguishes us from our enemies” and that these tactics “stained our national honor.”

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Drones: The best way to go?

By Anthony C Moraglia

Do you remember those remote controlled helicopters you had when you were younger? Imagine that device much larger, with a high end camera, and sometimes even a firearm of sorts. This tool is called a drone, and they have become a staple of both the American military and our personal lives. In the past 10 years, the usage of drones has skyrocketed, in both military and personal use. And why not? For the military, they're (relatively) inexpensive, they give great views of the area you're searching, and they're not hard to control. Plus, they're much safer for our soldiers to use for combat than physically attacking the enemy. However, a lot of people also find negatives to using drones, saying that drones aren't safe from a mental health standpoint and even unconstitutional in America. Do these concerns outweigh the positives? Let's take a closer look:

Pros:

- Drone use saves the US military millions of dollars, as they are much more affordable than sending our forces overseas. This could save American taxpayers *a lot* of cash; as the military budget could use its resources for drones, rather than both planes and sending soldiers overseas. This means that our tax funded military budget could shrink by *billions* of dollars¹
- Drone use is also safer for our soldiers, as they can search and even shoot the enemy target rather than risking their life overseas. With this logic, drones could actually *save* lives of our soldiers. The safety of our soldiers is critical, and drones help safeguard our population of those fighting in wars.²
- Drones are good for personal use. With them, you can film aerial shots all around and scout whole new areas you could never see before. This gives a whole new perspective on the world we live in. Drones could be a great personal tool. In fact, drone use is expected to become a future bedrock of shooting movies in the film industry.³

Cons:

- Drones could hurt the mental health of our soldiers who use them. Many feel that by searching and even killing the enemy with a drone, you're taking the humanity out of killing. Some have even compared drone use to playing a video game (former soldiers themselves have admitted the similarity),⁴ as you see what you want to search/shoot right on a screen in front of you. In other words, it's much easier to pull a trigger from the comfort of an American Army base than when you are in enemy territory.
- Drones inflict a lot of fear for innocent civilians. Whether or not you're for or against drones, it's hard to say it isn't heartbreaking to see small children afraid of *the sky* because of work drones have done. Comedian John Oliver recently said "Its pretty bad when the blue sky, one of the last remaining universal pleasant images in the World, is now dreaded and feared by young children."⁵
- Drones could also be considered unconstitutional in America. People have complained that personal drone use has interfered with their fourth amendment right of privacy. A lot of it comes down to whether or not the purpose of the drone is used for a legal endeavor itself. Using a drone on your own property is fine, but what about if you're on another person's?⁶ These are the types of questions that need to be answered by our government to make sure that our rights aren't being infringed upon.

So in the end, are drones a safe tool for our military and ourselves? There probably isn't a correct answer, as the pros and cons are very equally balanced, and a lot of it comes down to personal opinion. However, it's worth noting that if you are ever controlling a drone, please keep the lives and welfare of others in mind!

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