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Drone-Enable Security: Advancing an Operational Framework for Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020 demonstrated the unprecedented paradigm shift in aerial warfare, with Azerbaijan successfully utilising attack drones to destroy enemy troops and defence systems. This study underscored the prominence of comprehending and keeping pace with the evolving trends of drone technology in the security realm. The study addressed the knowledge gap by providing valuable insights into defining an operational framework and integrated approach for drone operations in Sri Lanka. It emphasized the importance of aligning drone utilization with the operational framework to achieve favourable outcomes in military engagements. Besides, the study established a statistical correlation between the integrated approach and the employment of drones in the security realm, highlighting the significance of collaboration between different state agencies and the military. The research methodology employed a mixed-method approach, combining primary data collection through questionnaires and interviews with secondary data from literature and doctrines. The sample size was determined using the stratified sampling technique, ensuring representation from relevant stakeholders involved in drone operations. The conceptual framework is based on the review of theoretical studies. The study explored that the operational framework must be based on purpose, time, space, and resources in land and maritime domains. Further, centralised command and integrated operational environment must be established whilst enhancing the collaboration in research and development projects to advance the drone industry in the country.

Keywords: *Drone, Operational Framework, Integrated Approach, Centralised Command*