

# Army considers operating “Sky Warrior” remotely

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The Army is mulling the possibility of operating its largest UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) remotely. They’re considering “split-based” operations--part of the company would deploy in-theater, while the other would communicate remotely via satellite.

The situation exposes a cultural rift between the Air Force and the Army. Unlike the Air Force, which operates its drones from Creech AFB, Nevada (and March Air Reserve Base, California), the Army currently operates its largest UAS, the [MQ-1C Warrior](#) [1] (aka “Sky Warrior”), in-theater. The Army claims that its UAS operators need to be in-theater to be fully-responsive to conditions on the ground. In addition, the dual military/civilian lives led by drone operators in Nevada can be [mentally taxing](#) [2]. When one is deployed in-theater, they’re totally immersed in the mission. The home front is distant, both figuratively and literally. If one returns home every night, it can be difficult to maintain the fighting spirit.



**The Army’s MQ-1C Warrior, aka “Sky Warrior”, Unmanned Aerial System.**

But operating remotely carries distinct advantages. Indeed, one of the primary benefits of Unmanned Aerial Systems is reduced operator risk. Some feel this will [embolden policymakers](#) [3] to wage war, inasmuch as the threat of American casualties would ordinarily give pause. Or as William Saletan mentions in Slate, “Eliminate the costs—kill with impunity—and you can wage war forever.” *If the horrors of war are fully exposed to the public, then leaders will be less apt to wage*

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*it.* The anti-war group, Code Pink, [poses the question](#) [4] (rhetorically, one would surmise), "Is American life so much more precious than any other life on this planet that it is acceptable for us to kill remotely, to kill without direct risk to American life, to utilize robots, drones, video-operated killing machines?"

This is a morally untenable position. According to this reasoning, we should only wage war using the most primitive and brutal means available. Should we go back to trench warfare? Muskets? Edged melee weapons (i.e. swords)? It has no logical end.

Which service has the better method? That's beyond the scope of this article, but according to Col. Gregory Gonzalez, project manager for unmanned aircraft systems, the Army won't be emulating the Air Force anytime soon. "The bottom line is the Army is not rethinking its position to assign these aircraft to specific units," he said. "We're going to have a direct-support relationship. We're not considering pooling all of our resources and running them from some location back in the United States."

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<http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2010/02/army-considers-operating-%E2%80%9Csky-warrior%E2%80%9D-remotely>

### Links:

[1] [http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/pdf/Sky\\_Warrior.pdf](http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/pdf/Sky_Warrior.pdf)

[2] <http://www.military.com/cs/Satellite?c=maArticle&cid=1199423239718&amp;pagename=News%2FnwsLayout>

[3] <http://www.slate.com/id/2135969/>

[4] <http://nodrones.com/actions.htm>