GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Pentagon Developing AI Drone Swarms to 'Deter' China

A top US admiral said the weapon could create a "hellscape" for Chinese forces

By Will Porter
Global Research, September 08, 2023
Antiwar.com 7 September 2023

Region: Asia, USA
Theme: Intelligence, Militarization and WMD

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name.

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), click here.

Click the share button above to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

***

The US military is devising a new system designed to field thousands of drones controlled by artificial intelligence, deputy Pentagon chief Kathleen Hicks said on Wednesday, voicing hopes the tech would help to overcome Beijing's "advantage in mass."

Speaking at the yearly Defense News conference in Arlington, Virginia, Hicks outlined the Pentagon's new "Replicator Initiative," which aims to develop a fleet of low-cost, AI-powered drones that will operate in 'swarms' in the air, land and sea.

> "With Replicator, we're beginning with all-domain, attritable autonomy, or ADA2, to help us overcome the PRC's advantage in mass: more ships, more missiles, more forces," she said, adding that the military plans to deploy the drones "at a scale of multiple thousands, in multiple domains, within the next 18-to-24 months."

The official did not specify costs for the new project, but insisted the Pentagon would not draw any additional funds from Congress. Instead, she said Replicator would use "existing funding, existing programming lines, and existing authorities," although she offered few other details.

While Hicks said conflict with China "is neither imminent nor inevitable," she went on to stress the need for "deterrence" against the People's Republic – including "across the Taiwan Strait," in Beijing's back yard.

> "Our goal always is to deter, because competition does not mean conflict. We must ensure the PRC leadership wakes up every day, considers the risks of aggression, and concludes, 'today is not the day' – and not just today, but every day, now and for the

foreseeable future," she continued.

The Pentagon deputy proposed several potential uses for the new drone system – including for surveillance and reconnaissance, missile defense, logistics support, and combat itself – saying the UAVs could be deployed in "constellations" or "flocks" to overwhelm enemy defenses.

Hicks first unveiled the Replicator program at another military conference in Washington, DC last month, where she told attendees the Pentagon would "counter the PLA mass with mass of our own." At the same event, US Indo-Pacific Command head Admiral John Aquilino said the military is seeking the capability to identify and strike 1,000 targets in 24 hours, adding that the drone system would create a "hellscape" for Chinese troops in the event of a conflict.

Earlier this year, the US, UK, and Australian militaries held a "capabilities trial" to demonstrate new AI-powered drone systems, which were used as a "collaborative swarm to detect and track military targets," the Pentagon said. While it is unclear exactly how artificial intelligence will factor into the Replicator program, the three allies have placed increasing focus on Beijing in the Indo-Pacific, repeatedly pledging to deploy new military capabilities in the region to counter China.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share button above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Will Porter is the assistant news editor of the Libertarian Institute and a staff writer at RT.

Featured image is from InfoBrics

The original source of this article is Antiwar.com
Copyright © Will Porter, Antiwar.com, 2023

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Will Porter

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted

material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.
For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca