

A "System of Systems" Approach to Countering Drones: Examining Recent Operations from the Middle East to Ukraine

by [Eric Feely \(/experts/eric-feely\)](#)

Aug 7, 2023

Also available in

[العربية \(/ar/policy-analysis/nhj-nzam-alanzmt-lmwajht-altayrat-alsyrt-drast-almlyat-alakhyrt-mn-alshrq-alawst\)](#) /

[Farsi \(/fa/policy-analysis/rwykrd-samanh-samanhha-bray-mqablh-ba-phpadha-brrsy-mlyathay-akhyr-az-khawrmyanh-ta\)](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Eric Feely \(/experts/eric-feely\)](#)

Eric Feely is a research assistant in the Military and Security Studies Program at The Washington Institute. He can be followed on Twitter at [@EricHFeely](#)



In-Depth Reports

Military officials are seeking not a silver bullet but instead advances based on existing layered, interoperable systems.

Drones have proliferated over the past decade, offering a cheap, effective precision-strike capability and leading to an inflection point wherein the United States can no longer count on complete air superiority. As former U.S. Central Command head Kenneth McKenzie put it, “Until we are able to develop and field a networked capability to detect and defeat [drones], the advantage will remain with the attacker.” The United States and other countries have therefore begun investing in counter-drone systems to complement and augment legacy air defense systems that have already proven effective in the role. Conflicts in the Middle East, Ukraine, and elsewhere suggest that progress in drone technology will require corresponding adjustments in counter-drone capabilities to fill gaps and lower the costs of interception.

In this lavishly illustrated Policy Note, Eric Feely details counter-drone approaches used in recent conflicts and what they could mean for the future of warfare. Military officials, he writes, are not seeking a silver bullet on this front, but rather advances based on existing layered, interoperable systems capable of providing kinetic and nonkinetic solutions. ❖

RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

A Better Plan for Sanctioning Iranian Airlines

Apr 23, 2024



Babak Taghvaei

(/policy-analysis/better-plan-sanctioning-iranian-airlines)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Iraqi Militias Hit Two U.S. Sites in Iraq and Syria

Apr 22, 2024



Michael Knights,
Hamdi Malik,
Crispin Smith,
Alex Almeida

(/policy-analysis/iraqi-militias-hit-two-us-sites-iraq-and-syria)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Rise and Fall of the AKP's Islamist Appeal in Türkiye

Apr 22, 2024



Mustafa Gül

(/policy-analysis/rise-and-fall-akps-islamist-appeal-turkiye)

TOPICS

Military & Security (/policy-analysis/military-security)

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

[Gulf States \(/policy-analysis/gulf-states\)](#)

[Middle East \(/policy-analysis/middle-east\)](#)

[Syria \(/policy-analysis/syria\)](#)