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Drone Warfare in the Middle East and Counter-Drone Defense

Vancouver, British Columbia, March 6th, 2026. Modern conflicts in the Middle East, especially recent encounters involving Iran, the United States and Israel, have been characterized by the widespread use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS). Adversaries are deploying low-cost kamikaze drones and loitering munitions to overwhelm defenses. For example, Iran's HESA Shahed-136 drones (unmanned gliders packed with explosives) have become infamous. They can be launched in large waves to saturate air defenses, and each costs only around US$20K - US$50k, which is a fraction of a ballistic missile. These cheap UAVs (derived from Israel's 1970s Harpy loitering munition) have been used by Russia against Ukraine and were later used by Iran in strikes across the Gulf. Likewise, U.S. forces have responded by rapidly fielding similar systems. The Pentagon's new LUCAS drone (Low-Cost Uncrewed Combat Attack System) is explicitly modelled on the Shahed design. LUCAS is a truck-launched, expendable attack drone with an open architecture, designed to accept different payloads or even serve as a target drone. Notably, LUCAS leverages commercial satellite networks for communications, illustrating how modern UAS link to global communication systems.

Beyond kamikaze drones, the region also sees more traditional UAV use. Israel's military routinely uses reconnaissance and armed UAVs for surveillance and precision strikes, though most public reporting focuses on the combat drones above. In all cases, the new trend is the swarm approach. A large number of coordinated drones that can overwhelm defenses. Analysts note that Iran's recent drone barrage (in retaliation for U.S./Israeli strikes) was "violent in scale," enabled by this cheap swarm tactic. These attacks often include hundreds of drones flying in one strike, forcing defenders to counter each small UAV. Against this backdrop, defense planners must anticipate not just isolated UAVs but mass attacks using guided gliders, multi-rotor loiterers, and even counter-radar "suicide" drones.

Types of Drone Threats

- **Kamikaze/Loitering Munitions**: Drones like Iran's HESA *Shahed*-136 (and its variants) are essentially inexpensive gliders with warheads. They can loiter on targets, then detonate. Each costs on the order of tens of thousands of dollars. The U.S. has fielded LUCAS drones (costing ~US$35k each) to strike targets in Iran with similar tactics. Russia also locally produces Shahed copies (sometimes called Geran-2) with improved range and jamming resistance, showing how proliferating designs have evolved.
- **Swarming UAVs**: Adversaries deploy large swarms of small drones simultaneously. By attacking in numbers, they overwhelm air defenses and inflict damage at very low cost. This saturation tactic forces defenders to use expensive missiles or guns against each drone, straining resources. In some operations, hundreds of cheap drones have been launched in a single night.
- **Satellite-Linked Drones**: Advanced UAS are using satellite links. For example, the American LUCAS drones are reported to use Viasat networks for control. This means modern UAVs can be coordinated over vast distances and can remain connected even when traditional radio links fail.
- **Anti-Radar UAVs**: Loitering anti-radar drones (Harpy-style) have been around for decades. Iran's Shahed itself is believed to be a copy of Israel's Harpy loitering anti-radar weapon. Such drones can autonomously seek and crash into radar emitters. Warzones now see renewed use of these anti-radar UAVs as part of combined strikes with missiles and ballistic rockets.
- **Swarm Defense Drones**: Even defenders use UAS to intercept. For instance, Ukraine has deployed small interceptor drones and the U.S. is building them too to counter incoming UAVs. These "hunter" drones can detect and physically intercept kamikazes.

The net effect is that drone warfare has transformed modern battles. As one security expert put it, drones offer "persistent surveillance and high-precision strike" capabilities. Because one ballistic missile may cost over a million dollars,

states increasingly complement them with cheap UAV waves. In the recent Gulf attacks by Iran, for example, dozens of Iranian drones reached as far as UAE cities, Kuwait, and even a UK base in Cyprus. The drones are slower (around 180 km/h) but extremely low-cost. Undefended civilian facilities like ports, poorly secured infrastructure, and oil terminals have proven vulnerable to these cheap swarms, since they lack the dense air defenses of military bases.

Bravo Zulu's Counter-UAV Role

Bravo Zulu Drone Defense Inc. part of INDROTEK's ecosystem, is a Canadian defense-technology company focused entirely on countering such emerging drone threats and is not deploying them. Its mission is to consult, research and develop customized counter-UAV systems that can detect and defeat hostile drones before they can strike. Bravo Zulu does not manufacture kamikaze drones. Rather, it works with clients (military, law enforcement and critical infrastructure) to protect against them. The company constantly monitors the latest UAV threats from Iranian swarm tactics to advanced navigation systems to develop countermeasures and stay ahead of the curve.

Multi-Sensor Detection for Early Warning

Bravo Zulu emphasizes layered, multi-sensor detection to spot threats early. Its architecture fuses radar, optical/IR cameras, RF analyzers and even acoustic sensors to cover each other's blind spots. Defense analysts note that "layered sensor networks with multiple sensor types can overcome environmental and target profile limitations," integrating radio-frequency (RF), radar, electro-optical/IR and acoustic inputs yields "superior operational awareness" compared to any single sensor. For example, passive acoustic arrays equipped with microphones can hear the unique rotor and motor sounds of small drones, even when those drones emit no radio signals. While acoustic detection has a limited range (hundreds of meters) and performs best in quiet, rural settings, its passive nature makes it invaluable as

a gap-filler. Bravo Zulu's systems can automatically cue optical cameras or jammers once an acoustic contact is confirmed, achieving robust early warning of low-flying UAS. In practice, modern counter-UAS networks like this are designed to minimize false alarms and track targets accurately by combining all data feeds in real time.

Rick Unrau, CEO of Aether Global Innovations Corp., which entered an exclusive Canadian Agency Agreement with Bravo Zulu at the end of January, stated: "Bravo Zulu's approach is bespoke, system-level defense. The Aether Board and leadership team are uniquely positioned to leverage both Canadian and international strategic relationships with regard to prospective deployment of the Bravo Zulu C-UAS solutions. We are excited to introduce and demonstrate the Bravo Zulu suite of products to the Canadian military, law enforcement and commercial markets." (more here). Instead of "off-the-shelf" kits, each deployment is engineered for the specific site and threat profile. The company's catalogue of sensors and defeat tools is modular, but the real value comes from how they are combined and tuned for a given mission. For example, a seaport facing small drone incursions will have a different mix of radar, radio-frequency (RF) scanning, and jamming antennas than a fixed base under long-range UAV threat. Bravo Zulu architects these systems using multi-domain sensors (radar, RF receivers, electro-optical/infrared cameras) fused together, plus directional jamming and spoofing devices. In short, they "integrate radar, RF, optical sensors and electronic countermeasures" into a unified shield.

In practice, Bravo Zulu's product portfolio includes fixed and mobile counter-UAS systems, hand-portable jammers, and specialized equipment. It offers things like 3D Ku-band radars and AESA X-band radars, wideband RF direction-finders, and so-called "DroneRifle" jammers that infantry can carry. An aerospace distribution partner notes that Bravo Zulu's offerings span fixed and mobile C-UAV systems, radio frequency (RF) detection technologies, jamming and spoofing tools. Bravo Zulu distributes systems like Drone Ranger and Drone Rifle, which use wideband receivers to locate drones and high-power directional antennas to block their links. Because drone threats evolve rapidly, Bravo Zulu emphasizes research and testing. The company's engineers regularly participate in exercises that simulate the newest

UAV tactics. Its custom designs are engineered around real sites, real missions, and real threats, meaning Bravo Zulu tracks how groups modify commercial drones for combat or deploy new stealthy models. This R&D focus ensures that Bravo Zulu's defense solutions can detect and jam unwanted drones using cutting-edge methods. For example, if an adversary starts using GPS jam-resilient guidance, Bravo Zulu might emphasize non-GPS tracking (optical or RF fingerprinting) in its systems. If swarms grow more autonomous, Bravo Zulu can integrate faster data links or counter-swarming tactics. In this way, the company helps clients anticipate and adapt their defenses as drone warfare advances.

Award-Winning Technology

Bravo Zulu's counter-drone technology has received industry recognition. In competitive evaluations, its systems have come out on top against dozens of global competitors. Notably, in 2016, a Bravo Zulu-associated system DroneRanger was named Best Detection and Determination System and Best End-to-End System at the MITRE Counter-UAS Challenge. More recently, the company's modular architecture of radar + RF + EO/IR + jamming tools took top honours at another MITRE C-UAS contest, outperforming 41 other international entrants. Such awards reflect that Bravo Zulu's solutions are not off-the-shelf. They are custom-tailored, thoroughly tested and battle-worthy. Because Bravo Zulu's systems have won top MITRE awards, clients can have confidence in their effectiveness. For example, the MITRE judges praised the integrated hardware/software approach of the DroneRanger system. Today, Bravo Zulu builds on that pedigree. Its counter-UAS architectures have been deployed (through partners) to protect ports, marine vessels and event venues under drone threat. The company's sales and training teams work closely with end users (from navies to stadium security) to configure systems to each environment. The bottom line is that Bravo Zulu doesn't simply sell boxes. It delivers custom counter-drone solutions, continuously updated as threats like Shahed-136 swarms or new GPS-spoofing drones appear.

Comprehensive Counter-Drone Suites

In summary, the current conflict environment employs a mix of drone technologies:

- Cheap kamikaze UAVs (e.g. Iranian Shahed-136 and Russian/US clones) that can fly long distances, loiter, and crash into targets for a few tens of thousands of dollars.
- Satellite-linked drones using Starlink or similar networks for long-range command.
- Drone swarms designed to overwhelm air defenses, requiring new tactics like multi-layer detection and interceptor UAVs.
- Anti-radar loiterers (Harpy-type UAVs) and high-end strategic drones that can operate at higher altitudes or carry heavier payloads.

Defending against this spectrum of threats requires multi-layered countermeasures. Bravo Zulu's expertise is in tailoring those countermeasures. By staying aware of each new UAV capability, which starts from ultra-low-cost swarm tactics to AI-guided drones. Bravo Zulu ensures its radar arrays, RF scanners and jammers are tuned to intercept or disable them. This means training personnel on drone identification, running field demos of custom systems, and constantly updating software for new drone signatures. Analysts warned that defenders must do more ASAP to institutionalize defensive lessons from Ukraine, and Bravo Zulu's consulting, R&D and deployed technology are part of that effort.

About Bravo Zulu

Bravo Zulu is a leader in integrated counter-drone defense systems. It develops and deploys multi-sensor C-UAS architectures with advanced detection and mitigation tools to protect critical assets and airspace. Its award-winning Swiss-designed hardware and software serve military, security and commercial customers worldwide.

About INDROTEK

INDROTEK is a Vancouver-based group of robotics companies (including InDro Robotics, Bravo Zulu, and Stratocom) that designs, integrates and operates AI-powered air and ground systems for defence, critical infrastructure and commercial customers. The group develops cutting-edge autonomous systems for customers such as government agencies and critical infrastructure operators. INDROTEK's mission is to bridge commercial and defense technology needs while adhering to all regulatory and security requirements.

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Enhanced Disclaimer & Risk Language

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- Variability in government procurement priorities and defence budgets.
- Regulatory developments and compliance requirements in Canada and other jurisdictions.
- Competitive pressures, technology adoption rates, and operational execution risks.
- Geopolitical events and supply chain disruptions.
- Market conditions and demand for INDROTEK's products and services.

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