



DRAGON DRONES - DEFENCE

NEWS: A deadly new weapon has taken to the skies in the Russia-Ukraine war. Both sides have posted visuals of drones appearing to rain down fire — earning this weapon the moniker of “dragon drone”

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

What are Dragon Drones?

Dragon drones utilize thermite, a compound of aluminum and iron oxide developed a century ago primarily for welding railroad tracks. These drones harness the fierce reactivity of thermite to perform destructive tasks.

How Do Dragon Drones Work?

- **Ignition:** Thermite is ignited, typically through an electrical fuse, initiating a self-sustaining reaction notoriously difficult to extinguish.
- **Capabilities:** Once activated, thermite can slice through virtually anything—from clothing to significant military equipment—and it can even continue burning underwater.
- **Effects on Humans:** The reaction can cause devastating injuries to humans, including severe burns and potential bone damage.
- **Tactical Use:** By pairing thermite with high-precision drones, these devices can effectively bypass conventional defenses, making them both highly effective and incredibly dangerous.

Recent Deployment

It is believed that dragon drones were first used in combat during the Russia-Ukraine conflict around September, marking a significant moment in modern warfare technology.

International Regulations

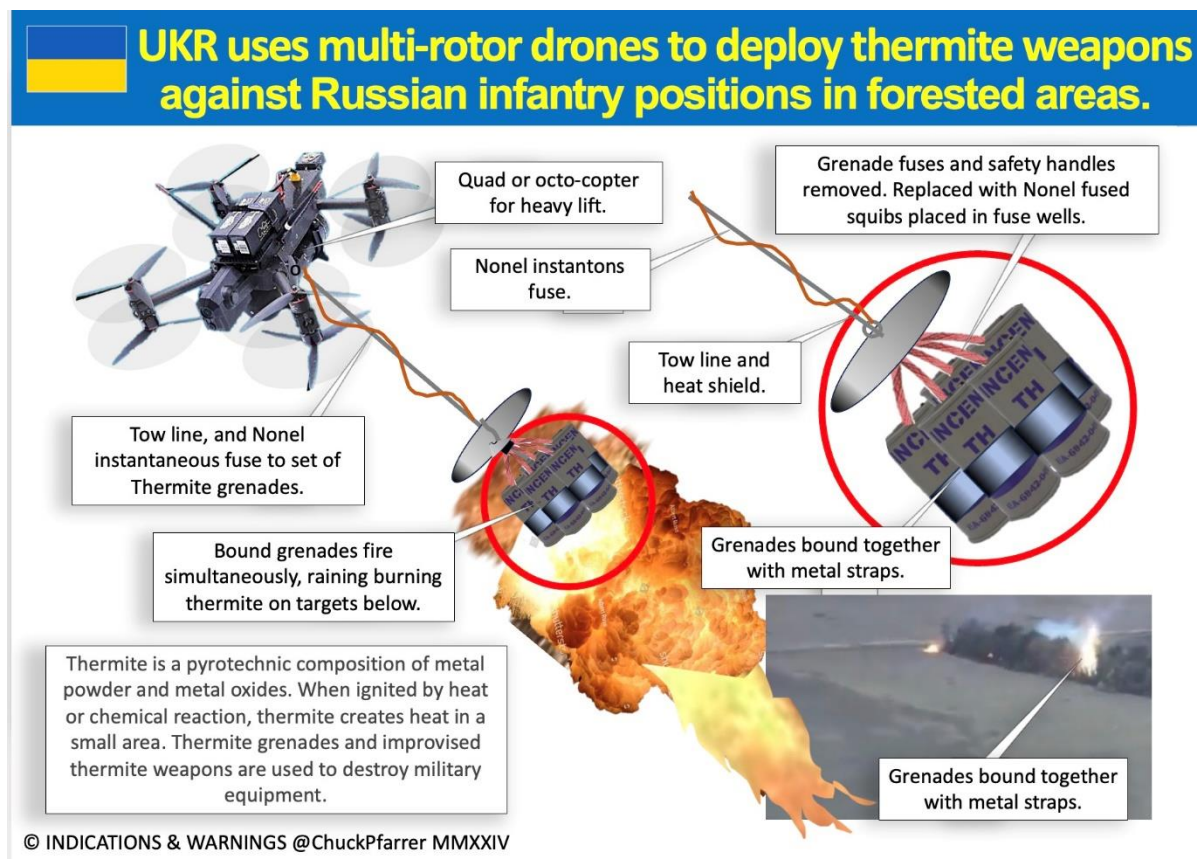
- **Legal Status:** The use of thermite in warfare is not explicitly prohibited by international law.
- **Restrictions:** However, international regulations, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, strictly prohibit the use of such incendiary devices against civilian targets. This guidance, established during the Cold War, continues to influence how nations conduct warfare under the auspices of the United Nations.

History of Thermite in Warfare: During World War I, German zeppelins (aircraft without wings) dropped thermite-laden bombs which were considered an innovation at the time.

- In World War II, both the Allied and Axis powers incorporated thermite into their incendiary bombs and hand grenades.
- Incendiary weapons are designed to ignite objects or cause burns and respiratory injuries through flame and heat.



- **Legal Status of Thermite in Warfare:** Thermite use in war is **not banned** under international law, but using incendiary weapons **against civilians is prohibited** by the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**.
 - **Protocol III** of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons restricts their use to **military targets only**.



What is the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)?

- **Breach UNIFIL Base:** Two Israeli **Merkava tanks burst through the gates** of a **UNIFIL base** in southern Lebanon and released toxic smoke, leading to the illness of 15 UN peacekeepers.
 - The Israeli Prime Minister urged the **withdrawal** of UNIFIL troops from Lebanon's **combat zones**, claiming their presence indirectly shields **Hezbollah**.
- **Violations of International Law:** UNIFIL described Israel's attacks as violations of **international humanitarian law** and **Resolution 1701**, which ensures peacekeepers' freedom of movement.
- **UNIFIL's Role:** Established in **1978**, UNIFIL is responsible for enforcing **Resolution 1701**, which mandates that only Lebanese state forces and UNIFIL be present between the **Blue Line** and the **Litani river**.



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- Resolution 1701 was adopted unanimously in 2006, and aims to end hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel.

Blue Line: The Blue Line extends 120 km along Lebanon's southern frontier and Israel's northern border.

- It is not a border, but a **line of withdrawal**. It was set by the United Nations in 2000 for confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the south of Lebanon.

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-global/dragon-drones-russia-ukraine-war-9618024/>

