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Abstract : Unmanned aerial systems comprise a rapidly growing portion of the military budget, and have been a long-term interest of Congress. At times, Congress has encouraged the development of such systems; in other instances, it has attempted to rein in or better organize the Department of Defense's efforts. Unmanned aircraft are commonly called unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and when combined with ground control stations and

data links, form UAS, or unmanned aerial systems. The use of UAS in conflicts such as Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and humanitarian relief operations such as Haiti, revealed the advantages and disadvantages provided by unmanned aircraft. Long considered experimental in military operations, UAS are now making national headlines as they are used in ways normally reserved for manned aircraft. Conventional wisdom states that UAS offer two main advantages over manned aircraft: they are considered more cost effective, and they minimize the risk to a pilot's life. For these reasons and others, DOD's unmanned aircraft inventory increased more than 40-fold from 2002 to 2010.

Descriptors : *REMOTELY PILOTED VEHICLES , DATA LINKS , MILITARY BUDGETS , UNMANNED

Subject Categories : Pilotless Aircraft

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