US ARMY - New Attack Drone P550 Red Dragon. Ideal for the Cavalry.

Published on 30/03/2026

The United States Army has formalized the purchase of the **Red Dragon**, an innovative unmanned aerial system (UAS) designed for long-range one-way attacks. The agreement, valued at over **17 million dollars**, marks a turning point in tactical air force projection capability, with supply completion expected by April 2026.

The Capabilities of the Red Dragon

The Red Dragon represents the extreme evolution of "kamikaze" drones or loitering munitions. Compared to previous generation models like the *Switchblade 600*, this system offers significantly superior performance in terms of persistence and range:

- **Range:** Exceeds **400 kilometers** (about 250 miles), providing battlefield coverage four times greater than current standard systems.

- **Payload:** Can carry a warhead up to **10 kg**, making it effective against armored vehicles and critical infrastructure.
- **Electronic Resilience:** The system is based on a software-defined architecture, optimized to operate in **GPS-denied** or degraded communication environments, typical of modern electronic warfare scenarios.
- **Intelligent Autonomy:** Thanks to the *SPOTR-Edge* perception system, the Red Dragon can autonomously detect and classify targets, transmitting data to command centers via advanced radio links.

Although the Red Dragon is described as a "fully capable of autonomous flight" system, the Department of Defense's doctrine maintains a cautious line: for lethal operations, it is expected that a human operator remains "on the loop" (in the decision-making cycle) to confirm target engagement.

US ARMY - New Attack Drone P550 Red Dragon. Ideal for the Cavalry.

Enhancing Reconnaissance: the P550

In addition to the attack setup, the Army has invested **117 million dollars** in the **P550** drone. It is a Group 2 vertical take-off and landing platform (**eVTOL**), dedicated to long-range reconnaissance.

The P550 is designed to ensure maximum operational flexibility thanks to the ability to change batteries and sensors "hot-swapping", allowing maneuver battalions to maintain constant

surveillance without prolonged interruptions.

Strategic Scenario

These acquisitions are part of the **"Drone Dominance"** initiative, aimed at rapidly expanding the arsenal of low-cost but high-impact technological unmanned systems. The integration of systems like the Red Dragon reflects the experience gained in recent global conflicts, where the ability to strike hundreds of kilometers away with surgical precision has become a fundamental requirement for tactical superiority.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5H7g7oKJVw0

An Innovative Resource for the Italian Cavalry

In a perspective of modernizing European forces, the characteristics of the **Red Dragon** are particularly promising for the **Exploratory Cavalry Regiments**. The ability to operate in depth (over 400 km) would allow these units to transform from simple reconnaissance sensors to true lethal force multipliers, capable of striking high-value targets well beyond the contact line, without exposing the crews of armored vehicles or new combat systems. The integration of such organic UAS systems would provide the Italian cavalry with that autonomous "engagement bubble" necessary in modern multi-domain scenarios, where the timeliness of intervention is crucial for mission success.

News link: https://www.avinc.com/images/uploads/product_docs/P550_Datasheet_1.pdf