



The **Conflict and Security Research Group**  
invites you to a seminar by



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# I Saw It With My Drone Eyes: Digital Fantasies of Targeted Killing

**28<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 | 17:40-18:40 CEST**

**Room: QS A-419**

| Zoom link available upon request (please e-mail [ires\\_consec@ceu.edu](mailto:ires_consec@ceu.edu)) |

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**Abstract:** This article analyses how online videos of targeted killing and weaponised drones create discourses on counter-terrorism and violence. Various literatures see world politics played out within and through cultural artefacts while others see targeted killing only made possible and palpable through its own political culture. I pursue the question how deadly violence becomes a normalised part of politics. A way to understand drone warfare and targeted killing is to look at online footage of strikes and the way they circulate through digital spaces as cultural and visual artefacts that unfold their appeal through their replaying of older and more traditional visualities, such as the Western and pornography. Drone videos mix and match these two American cultures of viewing and gazing, tied together even more through video game culture and social media practices. The Western and pornography share the guarantee of a resolution through violent catharsis with videos of targeted killing. These videos are becoming enmeshed in a digital culture that makes them an entertainment product. Resolutions to conflict remain as dreamlike fantasies based on vague notions of redemption and justice while the ‘War on Terror’ continues perpetually. Digital artefacts of violence and targeted killing are contributing to this destructive logic.

**Bio:** Julian Schmid is a visiting research fellow in International Security, US Politics, Geopolitics, and Popular Culture at the Department of International Relations. His research explores a wide range of topics, many of which focus on the intersections between popular culture and world politics, geopolitics and violence.

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