Autonomous Weapons Systems

WAI Talk - The Dark Side of AI
ICT4Peace and ZHET
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Why am I here?

A. What are AWS?

B. Why to develop AWS?

C. Why are they problematic?

D. The international political debate on AWS

E. What is missing?
A. What are AWS?
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1. Identity
2. Select
3. Track
4. Attack (= use force against, neutralize, damage or destroy)

With little or no human involvement

ICRC, Views of the ICRC on autonomous weapon systems, paper submitted to the CCW on LAWS, 2016.
B. Why to develop AWS?

- No safeguards for human operator
- Smaller, lighter, cheaper
- Operational necessity
- Outsourcing of dull, dirty and dangerous work
- Scaling down of human casualties
- Compliance with IHL?
C. Why are AWS problematic?

- Technologically: Black box problem of highly complex learning algorithms
- Legally: Accountability and responsibility, reflection and evolution
- Ethically: Reduction of space for human responsibility, reflection and algorithms
- Scalability: Swarms of AWS as a weapon of mass destruction
Current international political answer to AWS.

Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, 2019. CSKR.

E. What is missing?
Thank you
A. What are AWS?
C. Why are AWS problematic?

Politically: Risk-free and untraceable attacks => lower threshold for war; arms race