

# International Seminar

## THE INTIMACIES OF REMOTE WARFARE

6-7  
dec

2017

Raadszaal,  
Achter Sint Pieter 200,  
Utrecht

# PROGRAMME BOOKLET



Universiteit Utrecht

**Day 1 (6 December)**

09:30-10:00 Coffee & Registration  
 10:00-10:15 Welcome by Beatrice de Graaf (Utrecht University)  
 Introduction by Jolle Demmers (Utrecht University)  
 10:15-10:45 **Key Note: Derek Gregory (University of British Columbia)**  
*Death of(f) the Battlefield: distance, intimacy and aerial violence*  
 Discussant Marieke de Goede (University of Amsterdam)  
 10:45-10:55 Moderated discussion  
 10:55-11:15  
 11:15-11:30 Coffee break  
**Session 1: Remote Warfare and AFRICOM**  
 11:30-11:50 Jolle Demmers & Lauren Gould (Utrecht University)  
*Liquid Warfare: AFRICOM and the ‘Hunt’ for Joseph Kony*  
 11:50-12:10 Casey McNeill (Johns Hopkins University)  
*Playing the Away Game: AFRICOM in Sahara-Sahel*  
 12:10-12:40 Moderated discussion  
 12:45-13:45 Lunch break  
**Session 2: War by Conservation**  
 13:45-14:10 Bram Büscher (Wageningen University & Research)  
*From Biopower to Ontopower? Violent Responses to Wildlife Crime and the New Geographies of Conservation*  
 14:10-14:30 Esther Marijnen (University of Sheffield)  
*The multi-scalar intimacies of an ‘everybody’s war’ in Virunga National Park, DR Congo*  
 14:30-15:00 Discussant Nikkie Wiegink (Utrecht University) and moderated discussion  
 15:00-15:30 Coffee/Thee break  
 15:30-17:00 **Documentary** *Digital Civilian Detectives* (Tan 2016)  
 & panel discussion moderated by Luuk Slooter with Abigail Watson (Remote Control), Lennart Hofman (De Correspondent) and Craig Jones

**Wrap up** Georg Frerks (Utrecht University)

**Day 2 (7 December)**

10:00-10:30 **Key Note: Mark Duffield (University of Bristol)**  
*Paradox of Connectivity*  
 10:30-10:40 Discussant Casey McNeill (Johns Hopkins University)  
 10:40-11:00 Moderated discussion  
 11:00-11:15 Coffee break  
 11:15-11:45 **Key Note: Craig Jones (Newcastle University)**  
*Lawfare and the Juridical Turn in Later Modern War*  
 11:45-11:55 Discussant Katharine Fortin (Utrecht University)  
 11:55-12:15 Moderated discussion  
 12:15-13:15 Lunch break  
**Session 3: Investigating Remote Warfare**  
 13:15-13:35 Chris Woods (Airwars)  
*Armed Drones and the Military Fantasy of Absolute Precision*  
 13:35-13:55 Jessica Dorsey (Rights Watch)  
*Transparency and Accountability in the Use of Armed Drones: A European Perspective*  
 13:55-14:15 Andrew Feinstein (Corruption Watch)  
*Investigating the Global Arms Trade*  
 14:15-15:00 Moderated discussion  
 Closing Wrap up  
 16:00-18:00 Masterclass by Andrew Feinstein and Paul Holden for UGlobe MA students

## **The Intimacies of Remote Warfare**

This seminar investigates how in the highly securitized political climate of post 9/11, the resort to ‘countering threats at a distance’ by means of remote warfare intersects with notions of (in)security, citizenship, legality and human rights. It also seeks to analyze how technological advancements are making it increasingly possible for armed actors to operate across geographical borders, challenging traditional notions of the boundaries of the battlefield.

The spectacular occurrence and mediatization of ‘the terrorist threat’ has transformed Western political debates and institutional arrangements concerning retaliation, privacy, surveillance, exception, secrecy and control. We see how through the speech act of ‘securing those at home’ an expanding conglomerate of armed actors is engaged in forms of remote warfare by means of (coalition) air strikes, surveillance programs, training operations, targeted killings and manhunts, often outside conventional war zones in the Middle East and Africa. Military alliances are forged between for instance US Africa Command (AFRICOM), EU coalitions, the UN, NATO and the African Union (AU), which increasingly rely on the use of private military and security companies, remote technology (air strikes, drones) and military-to-military training. While successful at times in terms of defeating enemy combatants, operations have also led to the further militarization of particular regions and many civilian casualties.

This seminar aims to address a lack of evidence on the production, dynamics and impacts of remote warfare. The shadowy nature of remote warfare, and the mobility of its materials, practices and bodies seriously constraints independent research. It is particularly hard to assess local repercussions and trace lines of responsibility and legal accountability. An exchange of ideas, evidence and data-gathering strategies is therefore of key importance.

The Remote Warfare seminar aims to shed light on the dynamics of the instrumental role law can play in the context of contemporary military operations, but also will examine the histories and ‘intimacies’ of remote warfare as experienced by those actively engaged in, and targeted by remote military intervention, as well as the connections between remote warfare (e.g.

recent coalition airstrikes in Syria and Iraq) and blowback in the form of reprisal attacks against civilian populations in the West, and the multiple ways in which remote violence is mediated and understood by different (online) audiences.

Without tracing how creating security-ness for some, may lead to a heightened insecurity for others we run the risk of overseeing the interconnectedness of today’s battlescapes, and, importantly, how clusters of conflict cross-infect and exacerbate each other. With this in mind, we explore the following questions and topics.

### **Analytical vocabularies**

What analytical vocabularies are helpful to capture remote warfare? The origins of remote warfare are often traced politically to a lack of popular support for ground operations following the invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan, combined with major developments in military technology, in particular the development of armed drones. These phenomena have been conceptualized through vocabularies on pull-back, risk-aversion and post-interventionism, bunkering, and materiality (‘the force of matter’). Analysts also point at more fundamental transformations in late modernity, such as the redefinition of war as mobile place, and the shift from battlefield to battlescape. Here we see notions such as ‘hunting warfare’, counter-network war, and work on global security assemblages, global policing, and alliance formation.

### **Ethnographies of remote warfare**

How do military special operations play out locally? What kind of networks and relationships are established between external forces and internal armed actors, political factions, brokers, and communities, and how does this impact (disrupt, upset) existing political complexes? Although ‘remote warfare’ is partly about distancing, it also involves close contact through military-to-military trainings, political alliance formations and collaboration, but also through material manifestations such as bases, compounds, airfields, trucks, ships, supply depots, and bunkers. What are the intimacies of remote warfare?

### **Histories of remote warfare**

How are current wars different from earlier colonial military interventions or the Cold War proxy wars? Major powers such as the US (but also Russia,

France, India, China) have engaged in cases of clandestine extra-state military operations from (at least) the 1950s onwards. What can we learn from historical cases of special operations forces, and warfare-by-proxy? And how were special operations regulated by international law?

### **The business of remote warfare**

How do (alliances of) 'global' and 'local' actors aim to pursue their objectives through war and militarization? European states, but also increasingly Asian ones, have strong interests in Saharan energy exports (oil, gas, uranium) as well as trade, including arms sales. Wars have become increasingly reliant on private contracting as well, and recent research highlights 'accumulation by conservation' or 'green violence' across Africa. What is the business of remote warfare?

### **Remote warfare and blowback**

How does remote warfare upset the notion of 'war as duel', as a form of reciprocal violence? And if remote warfare allows one party to physically withdraw from the battlefield, how does this impact the ways in which the enemy directs its retaliating violence?

### **Lawfare**

How is remote warfare accounted for and legitimized? How is the battlefield re-defined for different armed actors, and how does this relate to laws of war and international law? In more practical terms, how do states deal with the issue of transparency on civilian casualties and the impact of secret operations?

### **Investigating remote warfare**

The obscure and covert nature of remote warfare and the mobility of its materials, practices and bodies seriously constraints independent research: what research strategies and methodologies may help to gather reliable data on covert operations (e.g. resume intelligence or RESUMINT, online investigation)?

## **BIO-NOTES / SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSANTS**

**Bram Büscher** is Professor and Chair of the Sociology of Development and Change group at Wageningen University, The Netherlands, and holds visiting positions at the Department of Geography, Environmental Management and Energy Studies of the University of Johannesburg and the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of Stellenbosch University, in South Africa. His research interests revolve around the political economy of conservation and development, the politics of energy and extraction, ecotourism, new media and social theory. Buscher is the author of *Transforming the Frontier. Peace Parks and the Politics of Neoliberal Conservation in Southern Africa* (Duke University Press, 2013). He is also the co-editor of *The Ecotourism / Extraction Nexus: Rural Realities and Political Economies of (un)Comfortable Bedfellows* (Routledge, 2013) and *Nature Inc: Environmental Conservation in the Neoliberal Age* (University of Arizona Press, 2014). Since 2012, Bram is one of the senior editors of the open-access journal *Conservation & Society* and a book series with the University of Arizona Press on *Critical Green Engagements: Investigating the Green Economy and its Alternatives*.

**Mark Duffield** is Emeritus Professor at the Global Insecurities Centre, University of Bristol and Honorary Professor, School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham. He has taught at the Universities of Khartoum, Aston, Birmingham, Leeds, Lancaster and Bristol. Outside of academia, he was Oxfam's Country Representative in Sudan during the latter half of 1980s. Mark has extensive experience of conflict and humanitarian disasters in Africa, the Balkans and Afghanistan. His books include *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (2001, reissued 2014 in Zed Books prestigious *Critique, Influence, Change* series) and *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of People* (2007, reissued 2013). His new book for Polity Press has the working title *Connected World: Capitalism, Disaster and Precarity*.

**Jolle Demmers** is Associate Professor and co-founder of the Centre for Conflict Studies, based within the History of International Relations section at the History Department, UU. She lectures and writes on theories of contemporary violent conflict, the securitization of 'conflict diasporas' and on

the interconnections between neoliberalism and identity conflict, network wars and urban militarism. Under the heading of Remote Interventionism, Jolle is currently engaged in research projects on new strategies of remote military and humanitarian governance and shadow warfare (with a focus on AFRICOM and armed drones). She has been directing the MA Conflict Studies and Human Rights since its launch in 2004. Her most recent book is *Theories of Violent: an introduction* (Routledge - with a second edition in 2017) and her new book for Routledge is called *Identity, Boundaries and Violence*.

**Jessica Dorsey** is an ICCT Associate Fellow, and Senior Legal and Policy Officer at Rights Watch (UK), where she carries out research and advocacy related to human rights, counterterrorism and national security issues. Previously, she was a Project Officer in the Humanitarian Disarmament department of PAX, where she focused on the use and proliferation of armed drones, the effects of armed conflict on the environment and coordinated the European Forum on Armed Drones. At ICCT, her research concentrates mainly on foreign fighters and counterterrorism-related human rights issues. In 2017, the European Parliament contracted Dorsey to publish a study outlining policy guidance for the use of armed drones for European Member States. Prior to joining PAX, she worked as a Researcher at the T.M.C. Asser Instituut and collaborated with the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on a 2013 report on the civilian impact of armed drones.

**Andrew Feinstein** is Founding Director of Corruption Watch, an NGO that uses case studies of large-scale corruption to create policy proposals for the purpose of combating corrupt behaviour by governments and corporations. He also chairs the Friends of the Treatment Action Campaign (FoTAC), campaigning for access to treatment of people living with HIV/Aids in South Africa. Feinstein was a former African National Congress (ANC) Member of Parliament in South Africa for 7 years before resigning in protest at the ANC's refusal to allow an independent and comprehensive inquiry into a multi-million dollar arms deal. Feinstein has written two books on the illicit global arms trade, *The Shadow World* and *After the Party*. Feinstein was educated at King's College Cambridge, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Cape Town and also participated in the London School of Economics Distinguished Visitors Programme. He regularly appears on a

variety of broadcast media including BBC and Al Jazeera and authored the lead article in the SIPRI Yearbook 2011.

**Katharine Fortin** is a lecturer of public international law and human rights at Utrecht University's Netherlands Institute of Human Rights (SIM). The focus of her research is the legal framework which applies to non-international armed conflicts, with a particular focus on intersections between international humanitarian law and international human rights law and armed non State actors. She is the author of *The Accountability of Armed Groups under Human Rights Law* (2017, OUP), as well as several articles on issues related to non-international armed conflict. She teaches human rights law, public international law and international humanitarian law at masters and bachelors level, as well as coaches students for the Jean Pictet and Frits Kalshoven competitions in international humanitarian law. She has a LLM (summa cum laude) and PhD (cum laude) at the University of Utrecht. She is a qualified solicitor in the UK and previously worked at Norton Rose Fulbright, the Council of Churches of Sierra Leone, the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

**Georg Frerks** is Professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management at the Centre for Conflict Studies, at the History of International Relations section of the History Department at Utrecht University, the Netherland and Professor of International Security Studies at the Netherlands Defence Academy. His latest publications include: 'Rebel Governance and Legitimacy - Understanding the Impact of Rebel Legitimation on Civilian Compliance with the LTTE Rule' *Civil Wars* (2017 – with Niels Terpstra) and *Conflict: over conflict en conflictbeheersing*. Wolters Kluwer (2016 – co-edited with Beatrice de Graaf and E.R.Muller).

**Marieke de Goede** is Professor of Political Science (with a focus on EU External Relations) at the University of Amsterdam, where she co-directs the research group 'Transnational Configuration, Conflict and Governance.' She received her PhD from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK) in 2001. She currently holds a Consolidator Grant of the European Research Council (ERC) with the theme: FOLLOW: Following the Money from Transaction to Trial ([www.projectfollow.org](http://www.projectfollow.org)). De Goede's research focuses on counter-

terrorism and security practices in Europe, with a specific attention to the role of financial data. She is author of *Speculative Security* (University of Minnesota press, 2012) co-editor (with Louise Amoore) of *Risk and the War on Terror* (Routledge, 2008). Recently, she co-edited the special issue on 'The Politics of the List,' in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. De Goede is Associate Editor of *Security Dialogue* and Academic Chair of academic-cultural center SPUI25 in Amsterdam.

**Lauren Gould** is Assistant Professor at the Centre for Conflict Studies, based within the History of International Relations section at the History Department, Utrecht University. She is currently engaged in research projects on new strategies of remote warfare and transnational governmentality. She focuses specifically on the US military command's (AFRICOM) extra-state military activities in east Africa. Gould lectures in the minor Conflict Studies and the MA Conflict Studies and Human Rights at the Centre for Conflict Studies. Gould studied 'Social Psychology' (BA Cum Laude, 2006) and 'Conflict Studies and Human Rights' (MA Cum Laude, 2007) at Utrecht University. In March 2016 she completed her PhD at Utrecht University on international criminal law enforcement and the governing of the northern Ugandan conflict. Her PhD research culminated in a number of publications that focus on some of the different types of judicial institutions and military interventions that have been implemented to address the violence perpetrated.

**Beatrice de Graaf** holds the Chair of History of International Relations & Global Governance at Utrecht University. She was co-founder of the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at Leiden University, Campus The Hague in 2007, where she was appointed professor of Conflict and Security History in 2011. Her book *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance* (2011) was internationally ranked amongst the top 150 terrorism books. Together with an international team of researchers she currently investigates the origins and makings of a European security culture in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century. She is member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, member of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), science columnist of *NRC Handelsblad*, and sits on the editorial boards of *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* and *Terrorism and Political Violence*. Together with Alexander Rinnooy

Kan, she was appointed as chair of the Dutch National Research Agenda in 2015.

**Derek Gregory** is Peter Wall Distinguished Professor and Professor of Geography at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He graduated from the University of Cambridge with a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in 1981. He has honorary doctorates from the University of Heidelberg and Roskilde University, and he was awarded the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 2006. His particular concerns are in the production of spaces that make war possible and permissible via practices of locating, inverting and excepting and in the production of imaginative counter-geographies through artwork, drama and literature. His current research is on late modern war and on the cultural/political histories and geographies of bombing.

**Paul Holden** is a South African-born and London-based historian, researcher, writer and activist. He has published five books to date on issues related to corruption, governance and democratic practice, and the arms trade. Holden was most recently published in 2017 as the lead author of *Indefensible: The Seven Myths that Sustain the Global Arms Trade*. Since 2009, Paul has worked closely with Andrew Feinstein, acting as the lead researcher for Feinstein's *The Shadow World* and as co-author, along with fellow colleague Barnaby Pace, of the lead article in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) 2011 Yearbook. Paul and Andrew Feinstein have also recently authored an explanatory article on the nature of arms trafficking for the Oxford Handbook for Organised Crime. Paul has appeared regularly on South African and international news platforms discussing issues related to corruption and its impact on development and democratisation in developing countries.

**Lennart Hofman** is war correspondent for the Amsterdam-based investigative journalism platform *De Correspondent*. He holds a degree in Anthropology and Religion Studies and completed a post-doctoral programme Journalism at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He covered scores of stories from Syria, Iraq, Sudan and South Sudan to Mali, Western-Papua, Djibouti, the Western Sahara, the Philippines and Myanmar for both national and international media outlets.

**Craig Jones** is a lecturer in Political Geography at the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology at Newcastle University. He is currently working on revisions to a book, *The war lawyers: U.S., Israel and the spaces of targeting* (under consideration at OUP) about the involvement of military lawyers in lethal aerial targeting operations and the weaponisation of international law. A new strand of research investigates access to treatment for the sick and injured in a region where medical and healthcare infrastructures have been destroyed - sometimes deliberately - by military and paramilitary violence. It focuses on two conflicts that have increasingly become one – the war in Syria and the war in Iraq – and traces the systems of casualty evacuation and medical care that have emerged across the borders in Lebanon and Jordan.

**Esther Marijnen** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Sheffield, Esther's research explores the intersection of conflict studies and political ecology, analyzing various environmental issues and interventions in conflict areas, with a specific focus on Central Africa. Esther has a Ph.D. from the Free University of Brussels (VUB), and has a MA in Conflict studies and Human Rights at Utrecht University. Her PhD is entitled, 'Beyond rebels and gorillas: The multi-scalar politics of conservation and conflict in the Virunga National Park, DR Congo'. She recently published in a.o the *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *Geoforum* and *Development and Change*.

**Casey McNeill** is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, specializing in International Relations. Her dissertation evaluates the security theories shaping United States policies toward "weak states" through a study of US interventions in the Sahara-Sahel region and their relationship to security conditions in Mali and Niger.

**Abigail Watson** is Research Officer at Remote Control since July 2016. Watson holds an MA (with Distinction) in Contemporary European Studies, with a trans-Atlantic track, from the University of Bath and a BA in Politics from the University of York. Watson is also a freelance writer at Future Foreign Policy, writing on issues such as the new challenges to international humanitarian law and Britain's foreign, security and defence policy.

**Nikkie Wiegink** is researcher at the Department of Cultural Anthropology focusing on corporate sovereignty and coal mining in Mozambique, a project that is funded by the NWO Veni scheme (starting date January 2016). Previously she worked as a consultant on disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and small arms control in Sudan for the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) (2014-2015), where she is currently a research associate. She defended her PhD dissertation: *Beyond Fighting and Returning: Social Navigations of Former Combatants in Central Mozambique*, on the 20th of June 2014. Nikkie Wiegink has a Bachelor degree in Cultural Anthropology and a MA in Conflict Studies and Human Rights, both obtained at Utrecht University.

**Chris Woods** is investigative journalist and director of Airwars, which monitors international airstrikes and civilian casualties in Iraq and Syria. A conflict specialist, he worked for the BBC's Newsnight and Panorama as a senior producer for many years. Woods also set up and ran the Bureau of Investigative Journalism's award-winning *Drones Project* (2011). His book, *Sudden Justice* charts the history of armed drone use in Iraq and elsewhere since 9/11 (2015).

## BIO NOTES / ARTISTS & WORKS

### **Art van Triest - Kalashnipuzzle and Shakehands**

Visual artist Art van Triest confronts the viewer with a powerful visual language, borrowed from military and industrial contexts. Van Triest employs objects you would usually rather avoid due to their strong relation to violence and danger. With skilled craftsmanship and quirky humour, the artist transforms these into thought-provoking sculptures and installations. With his work, Art van Triest unites a raw industrial style with a poetic manner of questioning social issues: the universal human tendency to strive for control and security in order to subdue our anxieties. Van Triest's *Kalashnipuzzle*, a decomposed Kalashnikov, and *Shake Hands* are exhibited around the conference room. Reflecting the intimacies of warfare, these pieces are exposed to symbolically and visually reflect the conference themes.

### **Ruben Pater - *Sounds of Violence***

Ruben Pater, an Amsterdam based Dutch designer, desires to create visual narratives on complex geopolitical issues. By visually translating stories that largely remain untold due to their sensitivity, Ruben Pater aims to activate a large public. His projects, that appear under the artist name “Untold Stories”, approach the intersection between journalism and design. His *Drone Survival Guide*, created as an educational tool and functioning as a political statement, received wide attention in 2013. Other of Pater’s projects are the *First Dutch Flood Manual* (2011), a research on communication in times of climate change, and *Double Standards* (2012), a research on maritime trade and Somali piracy. Pater’s *Drone Survival Guide* is shown during the conference, depicting different drones on sun-reflecting material. His *Sounds of Violence*, that recreate the intrusive sound of military drones, can be listened to as well.

### **James Bridle - *Drone Shadows***

James Bridle is a British artist and writer living in Athens, Greece. His artworks have been commissioned by galleries and institutions and exhibited worldwide and on the internet. His writing on literature, culture and networks has appeared in magazines and newspapers, in print and online. He lectures regularly at conferences, universities, and other events. His formulation of the New Aesthetic research project has spurred debate and creative work across multiple disciplines.

Bridle’s art works balance on the intersection between activism and academic visualisation. An example is Bridle’s *Drone Shadows*, that have been shown in open air from London to Washington and Berlin. The visualisation of the physical reality of drones facilitates a discussion among a larger public on the social impact of drones. With his *Drone Shadow Handbook* he invites others to draw these shadows around the world. One of these *Drone Shadows* is recreated in the lunch room, reflecting the size and omnipresence of military drones.

### **COLOPHON**

The Intimacies of Remote Warfare in an initiative of the Centre for Conflict Studies/History of International Relations section, History Department, Utrecht University.

#### ***Principal organizers:***

Jolle Demmers ([j.demmers@uu.nl](mailto:j.demmers@uu.nl)) and Lauren Gould ([l.m.gould@uu.nl](mailto:l.m.gould@uu.nl)).

#### ***Conference team:***

Jolle Demmers, Lauren Gould, Luuk Slooter, Lotje van Uhm, Marrit Woudwijk.

#### ***Supported by:***

Utrecht Centre for Global Challenges (UGlobe)  
The Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law

#### ***Design:***

Manu Mehendale



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