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Autonomous weapons : are you sure these are killer robots ? : can we talk about it ? / Shane R. Reeves and William J. Johnson

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Abstract:	<p>The rise of autonomous weapons is creating understandable concern for the international community as it is impossible to predict exactly what will happen with the technology. This uncertainty has led some to advocate for a preemptive ban on the technology. Yet the emergence of a new means of warfare is not a unique phenomenon and is assumed within the Law of Armed Conflict. Past attempts at prohibiting emerging technologies use as weapons — such as aerial balloons in Declaration IV of the 1899 Hague Convention — have failed as a prohibitive regime denies the realities of warfare. Further, those exploring the idea of autonomous weapons are sensitive not only to their legal obligations, but also to the various ethical and moral questions surrounding the technology. Rather than attempting to preemptively ban autonomous weapons before understanding the technology's potential, efforts should be made to pool the collective intellectual resources of scholars and practitioners to develop a road forward. Perhaps this would be the first step to a more comprehensive and assertive approach to addressing the other pressing issues of modern warfare.</p>
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