

CYBER SECURITY & INFO TECHNOLOGIES

Zachary Zwald: AI and Decision-Making in International Security

OCTOBER 8, 2024

In this episode of *Orion Talks*, Suat Cubukcu sits down with Dr. Zachary Zwald, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Houston, to explore the critical intersection of advanced technology and international security. Dr. Zwald, an expert in AI, decision-making, and security, shares insights from his current research. The conversation begins with a discussion of how public perception of AI changes when the technology is applied to military decision-making, especially in critical areas such as nuclear command and control. Dr. Zwald delves into the unique challenges of assigning accountability when AI makes errors on the battlefield—whether the blame should fall on humans or the systems themselves. He also examines key differences in public trust between AI and human decision-makers in military contexts, particularly in light of the technological competition between the U.S. and China. The episode concludes with Dr. Zwald’s perspective on the need for regulating and controlling AI in military decision-making and the potential limits to its integration.

Dr. Zwald is an Instructional Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Houston (UH). Before joining UH, Zachary Zwald was an Assistant Professor jointly appointed in the US Air War College and the USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies. He has served as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at Ohio State University and, during the 2013-2014 academic year, as the Stanton Foundation Nuclear Security Junior Faculty Fellow at MIT. Zwald has presented his research to agencies throughout the US government.