



Drohnen-Kampagne lädt ein:

Should Germany Arm Its Military Drones?

Invitation to a Discussion with U. S. Drone Experts

Thursday, December 3rd, 2020 at 19:30 CET

**Privates Online-Gespräch für Mitglieder und Mitarbeiter*innen der
SPD-BUNDESTAGSFRAKTION**

mit

CRITICAL VETERANS OF THE U. S. DRONE PROGRAM

LISA LING & CIAN WESTMORELAND

GRUSSWORT: ELSA RASSBACH

Sprecherin CODEPINK Germany, Mitbegründerin der Drohnen-Kampagne

INTRODUCTION: What We Would Like to Share with You

By Lisa Ling and Cian Westmoreland

As former members of the US military that worked with the drone program who have witnessed the legal ambiguity and questionable outcomes caused by the use of munitions on drones, we have taken it upon ourselves to join those who advocate for the removal of weapons from remotely piloted aircraft. We believe we have compelling arguments for this position and hope this will begin an important dialog regarding the future of automated weapons. We would like to encourage discourse that will be useful in creating a global understanding and an ethical framework for how these weapons will be used. We would like to participate in these discussions because we believe Germany, through your nation's historical experience, is uniquely positioned to take a principled lead in discourse about where armed drones are situated within the international legal framework. As one of the few developed countries who have not yet decided to acquire armed drones, Germany is in a unique position among the 14 eyes countries that are opting to purchase or develop semi-autonomous drone technology. We respect the SPD for promoting this discourse and would hope that speaking to those of us who have worked within the drone program would be welcome. Although our knowledge and personal experience was in the U.S. drone program, it is not nation state dependent; we speak to the technology, not the political or bureaucratic implementations of each state's program. We offer a general, unclassified, understandable overview of the technology used in these weapons systems, it's capabilities, benefits, limitations, and pitfalls. We are open to answering any questions you may have, obviously we will not disclose anything that is classified.

QUALIFICATIONS:

LISA LING joined the military in 1991, serving as an army medic and nurse before transferring to the Air National Guard (ANG). In the Guard, she became a communications technician, working on various types of electronic equipment including DCGS (Distributed Common Ground System; the U.S. Air Force defines DCGS as its "primary intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance collection, processing, exploitation, analysis and dissemination" system).

Besides her overseas deployments and prior years in the U.S. drone program, Lisa served with the 234th intelligence Squadron and 48th Intelligence Squadron at Beale Air Force Base from Oct 2007-Sep 2009. The 48th Intelligence Squadron provides communications and logistics maintenance for the DCGS. She served more than six years on active duty and more than 15 years as both active and inactive National Guard.

She decided to speak out against the misuse of drones after traveling to Afghanistan and seeing for herself how what she participated in was not a war on terror, but a war of terror. She has spoken out against armed drones killing with inaccurate data, and the program's immense unchecked power around the world, writing for (and sometimes being featured in) the Los Angeles Times, the Daily Beast, on Cyberwar—Viceland, and ABC Australia.

Lisa is one of three protagonists from the U.S. drone program featured in the documentary film *National Bird*, directed by Sonia Kennebeck. You can follow her on Twitter: @ARetVet

CIAN WESTMORELAND is a former RF/Satcom Transmissions Systems Technician who served in the US Air Force from 2006-2010. In 2009, a then Senior Airman Westmoreland was one of the US Air Force communications personnel who built a critical component of the global communications infrastructure underlying the US drone program in Afghanistan through the 73rd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron based out of Germany. It's area of responsibility covered 621,000 square kms over Afghanistan, and assisted in networking disparate ground and air assets across coalition forces and service branches to include the Battlefield Airborne Communications Nodes, Predators and Reapers. From 2009-2014 this unit helped to connect the battlefield to the Combined Air Operations Center in Al Udeid, Qatar and Ramstein, Germany.

At the end of his tour of duty he received a document stating that his unit assisted in 200+ enemy kills, 2,400 Close Air Support Missions and 100,000 combat sorties, while the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported over 300 civilian deaths due to air strikes that year within its Area of Responsibility. He has since studied International Affairs with a certificate in European Peace and Security Studies at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussel, Belgium, and began speaking openly about his military role and the pitfalls of arming drones in November of 2015, along with three other former drone personnel. Currently he works with refugee populations on the US/ Mexican border.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE DISCUSSION Lisa and Cian have read an English translation of "*Bericht des Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung an den Deutschen Bundestag zur Debatte über eine mögliche Beschaffung bewaffneter Drohnen für die Bundeswehr*" of July 3, 2020 as well the Answer of BMVg on 25.November 2020 to the "*Kleine Anfrage der Bundestagsfraktion DIE LINKE*".