

In The Eye Of The Beholder: Legitimacy, Drones, And US Counterterrorism Policy

Description

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Legitimacy—the public’s beliefs in the appropriateness of some behavior—is [central](#) to the sustainability of US [drone](#) strikes abroad. [Research](#) shows that the public does not generally challenge policies and actions it deems legitimate, which helps preserve space for officials to make decisions on sensitive issues like the [use of force](#). In an effort to create legitimacy, US officials extol the virtues of drone strikes. Indeed, military leaders have referred to these operations as “[righteous](#),” even when they inadvertently kill civilians. Charles Rowling and Joan Blauwkamp also [find](#) that “US officials routinely invoke polling data to enhance the legitimacy of their policy actions,” including drone strikes.

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Image credit: Senior Airman Christian Clausen, US Air Force

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