

RACHEL METZ, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, The George Washington University

rachel.metz@gwu.edu

ORCID ID: 0009-0000-3700-3158

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

George Washington University

2023 – present *Assistant Professor* of Political Science and International Affairs

U.S. Naval War College

2021 – 2023 *Assistant Professor*, Strategic and Operational Research Department

EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

PhD, Political Science Department, Security Studies Program (conferred September 2021)

Dissertation: “The Cult of the Persuasive: The U.S. Military’s Aversion to Coercion in Security Assistance”

Committee: Barry Posen (chair), Vipin Narang, Roger Petersen

Wesleyan University

Bachelor of Arts, Phi Beta Kappa, Government (Honors), minor in International Relations, May 2011

RESEARCH IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

- 2025 “Allies and Access: Implications of an American Turn Away from Alliances,” *International Organization* 79 (S1), with Austin Carson and Paul Poast.
- 2025 “Putting the Civilian Back in Civil-Military Relations: How Civilian Leaders Condition the Effects of Security Assistance,” *International Studies Quarterly* 69(1), with Renanah Joyce.
- 2024 “Issue Linkage in Security Assistance: A Pathway to Security Sector Reform,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 47(3): 1-24, with Max Margulies.
- 2023 “The Cult of the Persuasive: Why U.S. Security Assistance Fails,” *International Security* 47(4): 95-135.
Scholarly Reviews: [H-Diplo RJISSF](#)
“Correspondence: Debating U.S. Security Assistance,” *International Security* 48(3), with Christopher Darnton.
- 2022 “Norm Diffusion through US Military Training: An Exchange,” *Security Studies* 31(3): 533-551, with Heidi Urben and Sharan Grewal.
- 2021 “The Case for Campaign Analysis: A Method for Studying Military Operations,” *International Security* 45(4): 44-83, with Andrew Halterman.

ADDITIONAL SCHOLARLY WRITING (selected)

- 2023 “Defending Taiwan: But...What Are the Costs?” *The Washington Quarterly* 46(4): 65-81, with Erik Sand.
- 2023 “Why Security Assistance Often Fails,” *Lawfare*, April 2023.
- 2023 “The Surprising Success of U.S. Military Aid to Ukraine,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 2023, with Polina Beliakova.
- 2022 Review of Erik Lin-Greenberg, Reid B.C. Pauly, and Jacqueline Schneider, “Wargaming for International Relations Research,” *H-Diplo*, April 14.
- 2022 “Nuclear Risks: Russia’s Ukraine War Could End in Disaster,” *National Interest*, July 31, with David Arcenaux.
- 2022 “Prioritizing Security Cooperation with Highly Capable U.S. Allies,” *RAND Corporation* (contributing author).
- 2021 “Why America Can’t Build Allied Armies: Afghanistan Is Just the Latest Failure,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 26.
- 2021 “All Rapport, No Results: What Afghanistan’s Collapse Reveals about the Flaws in US Security Force Assistance,” *Irregular Warfare Initiative*, August 26.
- 2021 “The Taliban has seized more cities, despite U.S. efforts to build a strong Afghan military. What happened?” *The Washington Post*, August 9.
- 2020 “How coronavirus will affect the US military,” *The Washington Post*, March 19, with Erik Sand.
- 2019 “Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War,” *RAND Corporation* (contributing author).
- 2018 “Podcast: The Future of Force,” for *War on the Rocks*, June 4, with Alex Bick, Ryan Evans, Alice Friend, Kathleen Hicks, Sara Plana, and Usha Sahay.
- 2016 “Targeted Killing: Thinking Through the Logic,” *War on the Rocks*, September 28.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Book Manuscript:

The Cult of the Persuasive: Why the United States Struggles to Build Better Militaries in Partner States

Articles in Progress:

“Contingency Access: The Overlooked Pillar of Military Cooperation” (draft paper).

“Let them in? Why States Sometimes Grant, Restrict, or Deny Access to the U.S. Military” (draft paper)

“Pathways to Conventional Civil War in the United States” (research project)

“The Data Problem: The Central Challenge of Modern Warfare” (research project)

“Wargames to Game the System: How Defense Bureaucracies Weaponize Synthetic Data for Bureaucratic Advantage” (research project).

“Beyond Secure Second Strike: Overlooked Pathways to Nuclear Use” (draft paper).

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & GRANTS

2025	Research grant, Defense Security Cooperation University (\$189,922), to support second book project, centered on the drivers of state decisions to grant, restrict, or deny access to the United States.
2025	Strategy and Policy Fellows Program, Smith Richardson Foundation (\$60,000), to support first book project, centered on U.S. efforts to build militaries in partner states.
2024-2025	George Washington University Shapiro Policy Research Scholar (\$5,000) to support book project.
2023-2024	Postdoctoral Fellow (declined) in U.S. Foreign Policy and International Security, John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding, Dartmouth College.
2020 - 2021	Predocctoral Fellowship, Institute for Security and Conflict Studies (ISCS) at the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs
2018 - 2019	World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship, Smith Richardson Foundation, to support dissertation
2019	Manfred Wörner Seminar Fellow, German Marshall Fund
2018 - 2019	Carnegie Junior Fellow, Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium and Network
2018	Fellow, New Era Foreign Policy Conference, Bridging the Gap Project
2015 - 2019	MIT Political Science Departmental Fellowship (full tuition and stipend)
2011	Phi Beta Kappa, National Honor Society
2011	Davenport Award, Wesleyan University (excellence in government and politics)
2010	Parker Prize, Wesleyan University (excellence in public speaking)

2010 White Fellowship, Wesleyan University (excellence in government)

INVITED TALKS, PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, AND MEDIA (selected)

- 2026 (scheduled) *Presenter*, “Contingency Access: The Missing Pillar of Military Cooperation,” CISAC, Stanford
- 2025 *Guest Lecture*, “Nuclear Stability Analysis,” GW Elliott School for International Affairs, Security Policy Analysis class
- 2024 *Presenter*, “Contingency Access: The Missing Pillar of Military Cooperation,” Lansing Lee/Bankard Seminar in Global Politics, University of Virginia
- 2024 *Presenter*, “Contingency Access: The Missing Pillar of Military Cooperation,” Texas A&M Albritton Center for Grand Strategy
- 2024 *Presenter*, “Contingency Access: The Missing Pillar of Military Cooperation,” Defense Security Cooperation University
- 2024 *Presenter*, “Contingency Access: The Missing Pillar of Military Cooperation,” ISSS
- 2024 *Guest Lecture*, “Nuclear Stability Analysis,” GW Elliott School for International Affairs, Security Policy Analysis class
- 2022-2024 *Guest Lecture*, “Methods for Studying Military Operations,” Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Strategy and Policy class
- 2022 *Invited Panelist*, “2022 Security Cooperation Conference,” Defense Security Cooperation University, at George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs
- 2022 *Invited Talk*, “The Cult of the Persuasive,” University of Central Florida
- 2022 *Presenter*, “The Cult of the Persuasive,” American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference
- 2022 *Invited Appearance*, “Why Building Militaries in Partner States is Hard,” On Target Interview for the Eurasia Group Foundation
- 2022 *Invited Talk*, “The Cult of the Persuasive,” Dartmouth College, Dickey Center
- 2021 *Invited Testimony*, “Lessons from Afghanistan,” European Parliament
- 2021 *Invited Talk*, “The Cult of the Persuasive,” Texas A&M, Albritton Center for Grand Strategy at the Bush School
- 2020 *Presenter*, “Fighting with Friends: Alliances and Military Effectiveness,” APSA Conference
- 2020 *Presenter*, “The Case for Campaign Analysis: A Method for Studying Military Operations,” APSA Conference, with Andrew Halterman

- 2020 *Presenter*, “The Cult of the Persuasive: Explaining the Preference for Persuasion over Coercion in U.S. Military Assistance,” International Studies Association (ISA) Conference (Conference cancelled due to Covid-19)
- 2019 *Presenter*, “Garrison States or Democratic Restraint: The Influence of U.S. Security Force Assistance on Civil-Military Relations in Recipient States,” APSA Conference, with Renanah Miles Joyce
- 2019 *Invited Talk*, “All the Guns and All the Butter: U.S. Security Force Assistance and the Preference for Persuasion over Coercion in Iraq, 2003-2014,” University of Montreal Workshop on the Politics of Foreign Military Training
- 2017 *Presenter*, Olympia Summer Academy, Conflict & Political Violence Course

TEACHING

PSC 8461: Military Effectiveness (GW doctoral)

PSC 3500: Nuclear Strategy (GW undergraduate)

SWAMOS: Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy, Columbia and Cornell (20 graduate students and university faculty), 2023 – present

DOCTORAL ADVISING

Alexander Wright, George Washington University (committee member)

Daniel Yoon, George Washington University (committee member)

Bailey Sellers, University of Central Florida, (external committee member)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2018 – present *Reviewer for International Security, Security Studies, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Conflict Resolution, European Journal of International Relations, International Interactions, Civil Wars Journal, and Naval War College Review*

2024 – 2025 GW Elliott School Security Studies Senior Search (committee member)

2024 – 2025 International Relations General Exam (examiner)

2021 - 2022 USNWC Wargaming Department Search (committee member)

2018 - 2021 *Co-Founder and Organizer*, Future Strategy Forum (FSF)

2018 - 2019 *Chair*, MIT International Relations Works in Progress

2017 - 2019 *Co-Chair, Women in International Politics and Security*

2017 - 2018 *Co-Chair of the MIT Security Studies Working Group*

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023 - present *Cohort Member, Albritton Center for Grand Strategy (CGS) Program on Grand Strategy*

2021 - 2023 Helped design, implement, and analyze Naval War College wargames and tabletop exercises including the Deterrence and Escalation Game and Review (DEGRE), Integrated Deterrence, and Naval Contested Logistics Wargame (NCLWG)

2021 - present *Participant, Military Force Analysis Seminar Series (organized by Caitlin Talmadge, Daryl Press, and Brendan Green)*

2021 - present *Research Affiliate, Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

2021 - 2022 *Eurasia Group Fellow, Eurasia Group Foundation*

2020 - present *Adjunct Fellow, Center for New American Security (CNAS)*

2018 - 2020 *Adjunct Researcher, RAND Corporation*

2015 - 2020 *Research Assistant, MIT Department of Political Science, 2017 -2020*
Conducted research and writing on nuclear strategy and diplomacy for Professor Vipin Narang and Professor Barry Posen

2012 - 2015 *Associate, Veracity Worldwide*
Advised clients operating in emerging markets on political, security, corruption, legal, and reputational risks facing prospective investments

2011 - 2012 *Research Assistant, Woodrow Wilson Center*
Conducted research for Robert Litwak's *Outlier States: American Strategies to Change, Contain, or Engage Regimes* (2012, Woodrow Wilson Center Press)