

Kerry Chávez

U.S. Air Force Academy
kerry.chavez@afacademy.af.edu

www.kerrychavez.us
www.linkedin.com/in/kerrychavez/

ACADEMIC

U.S. Air Force Academy

APPOINTMENTS Assistant Professor, [Department of Military & Strategic Studies](#) Jun 2024 –

Irregular Warfare Initiative

Co-director for Airpower, [Project Air & Space Power](#) Sep 2025 –

Advisor, [Project Air & Space Power](#) Feb 2024 – Sep 2025

Institute for Global Affairs

Nonresident Research Fellow Jan 2024 – Dec 2024

Modern War Institute at West Point

Two-time Nonresident Research Fellow Sep 2022 – Sep 2024

Texas Tech University,

Instructor, [Department of Political Science](#) Aug 2022 – May 2024

Projects Director, [Peace, War, & Social Conflict Lab](#) Aug 2022 – May 2024

EDUCATION

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX

PhD, [Political Science](#), 2022

» Dissertation: *Militarized Conflict Intervention: Incentives, Constraints and Strategic Behavior*

MA, [Political Science](#), 2017

University of St. Andrews, St. Andrews, Scotland

MLitt, [International Security Studies](#), 2011

Biola University, La Mirada, CA

BA, [Intercultural Studies](#), 2009

DATASETS

[VNSA Innovation and Adoption \(VIA\)](#) (with Ori Swed)

[Military Operations with Novel Strategic Technologies \(MONSTR\)](#) (with J Andrés Gannon)

PEER-

REVIEWED

PUBLICATIONS

2025. “Polls and Precision Strikes: Electoral Origins of High-tech Warfighting.” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 55(4): e70014. (with J Andrés Gannon)

2024. “US Military Intervention and Presidential Framing.” *Journal of Politics* 86(4): 1495–1508.
2023. “Emulating Underdogs: Tactical Drones in the Russia-Ukraine War.” *Contemporary Security Policy* 44(4): 592-605. (with Ori Swed)
2023. “A Wiki-based Dataset of Military Operations with Novel Strategic Technologies (MONSTR).” *International Interactions*: 639-688. (with J Andrés Gannon)
2023. “The Empirical Determinants of Violent Nonstate Actor Drone Adoption.” *Armed Forces & Society*: 1-30. (with Ori Swed)
2022. “International Crisis Termination and Presidential Approval.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 18(3): 1-26. (with James Wright)
2022. “Conflict Contagion Via Weapons Proliferation Out of Collapsed States.” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 35(2): 191-227. (with Ori Swed)
2021. “The Proliferation of Drones to Violent Nonstate Actors.” *Defence Studies* 21(1): 1-24. (with Ori Swed)
2020. “Off the Shelf: The Violent Nonstate Actor Drone Threat.” *Air & Space Power Journal* 34(3): 29-43. (with Ori Swed)
2020. “Domestic Political Consequences of International Rivalry.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64(4): 703-728. (with Daehee Bak and Toby Rider)

MONOGRAPHS
& CHAPTERS

- 2026 (forthcoming). “Autonomous Weapons.” In *Oxford Handbook on Global Security and Change in Armed Conflict*. Edited by Annette Idler and Kate Tkacova. Oxford University Press.
- 2026 (forthcoming). “Autonomous Warfare Applications.” In *Military Strategy, Joint Operations, and Airpower, 3rd edition*. Edited by Ryan Burke, Paul Bezerra, Mike Fowler, and Jon McPhilamy. Georgetown University Press. (with Jayamaha Buddhika and Jon McPhilamy)
- 2026 (forthcoming). “The Continuum of Competition.” In *Military Strategy, Joint Operations, and Airpower, 3rd edition*. Edited by Ryan Burke, Paul Bezerra, Mike Fowler, and Jon McPhilamy. Georgetown University Press.
2025. “The Future of Great Power Conflict.” In *Expecting the Unexpected: Essays on Strategic Surprises in the 21st Century*, 14-24. Edited by Max Margulies and Patrick Sullivan. New York: West Point Press.
2025. “Update – The Threat of Democratized Artificial Intelligence.” In *The Political Economy of Robots*. Edited by Ryan David Kiggins. Switzerland: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan. (with Ori Swed)

2024. “Violent Nonstate Exploitation of Commercial Drones.” In *The De Gruyter Handbook on Drone Warfare*. Edited by James Patton Rogers. Boston: De Gruyter. (with Ori Swed)

2023. *UAS in Urban Attacks: Red Teaming Exercise Report*. Vienna, AT: weTHINK.

2021. “Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Threat of Democratized Artificial Intelligence.” In *Towards an International Political Economy of Artificial Intelligence*, 177-194. Edited by Tugrul Keskin and Ryan David Kiggins. Switzerland: Springer / Palgrave Macmillan. (with Ori Swed)

POLICY
COMMENTARY

2025, Aug 27. “Unintended Recipients: The Dangers of Loose Weapons.” *War on the Rocks*. (with Ori Swed)

2025, Feb 7. “Momentum Toward Operational Expertise in the USAF.” *Real Clear Defense*.

2024, Nov 11. “Yesterday’s, Today’s, and Tomorrow’s Small Wars.” *Small Wars Journal*. (with Rick Newton)

2024, Aug 15. “Small Drones for Big Militaries: The Way Ahead.” *War Room*. (with Ori Swed)

2024, Jun 28. “A Case Study on Integrating Tactical Drones: Israel.” *Modern War Institute*. (with Ori Swed)

2023, Nov 22. “Uncovering the Hidden Logic of War: Data and the Meso-level of Armed Conflict.” *Modern War Institute*. (with J Andrés Gannon)

2023, Nov 1. “How Hamas Innovated with Drones to Operate Like an Army.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. (with Ori Swed)

2023, Aug 28. “Hamstrung: Sources of and Solutions for Political-Military Mismatch.” *Modern War Institute* (MWI) and U.S. Army War College’s *Civil-Military Relations and Modern War Essay Collection* (with J Andrés Gannon)

2023, Jan/Feb. “Learning on the Fly: Drones in the Russian-Ukrainian War.” *Arms Control Today* 53(1): 6-11.

2022, Jul 12. “Weak States and Loose Arms: Lessons and Warnings, From Afghanistan to Ukraine.” *War on the Rocks*. (with Ori Swed)

2020, Aug 27. “An Allegory of the Cave: Innovation and Terrorist Drones.” *War Room*. (with Ori Swed)

WORKING
PROJECTS

“Public Opinion, Emerging Technologies, and Foreign Policy Attitudes.”
(with Ryan Shandler) - under review

“Breadth and Depth: Rebalancing Airpower for Great Power Deterrence and
Victory in Irregular Wars.” (with Charlie McGillis and Richard Newton) -
under review

“Tactical Adjuncts to Fire Ants: Possible Drone Futures in Warfare.” (with
Mike Fowler)

“Disrupting Irregular Warfare: How Nonstate Actors Reengineer Asymme-
try.” (with Ori Swed and Dev Tavares)

“N Sides to Each Story: Competing Public Narratives of US Military Oper-
ations.” (with J Andrés Gannon)

“Economy of Shells: Attrition in Modern Warfare.” (with Ori Swed)

INVITED
TALKS &
WORKSHOPS

2026, Feb 11 – “A Glimpse into the Future Fight and What It Means to SOF.”
Special Air Warfare Symposium, hosted by the Global SOF Foundation (Fort
Walton Beach, FL).

2026, Jan 28 – “[The Ethics of Drones and Autonomous Systems](#),” *Tim Talks
Politics* podcast hosted by Tim Milosch.

2025, Oct 27-28 – *The Shadow Front: Unconventional Approaches to War-
fare*,” Military Writers’ Symposium, Norwich University (Northfield, VT)
» “Unconventional Approaches to Leadership,” with Sandor Fabian, Janna
Mantua, and Simon Shuster, moderated by Lt Col (ret) Chris Cadigan.
» “Understanding War Zones.”

2025, Oct 21 – “The Use of UAS to Further NSAGs’ Agendas,” *The Use of
Emerging Disruptive Technologies by Non-State Armed Groups in the Mid-
dle East*, Joint Study Day hosted by NATO-ICI Regional Centre & NATO
Strategic Direction South-Hub (Kuwait City, Kuwait).

2025, Oct 2 – “Drones, Conflicts, and Nonstate Actors,” OrionTalks podcast
hosted by Suat Cubukcu.

2025, Aug 6 – “[Future Tech and National Security](#),” *Tim Talks Politics* pod-
cast hosted by Tim Milosch.

2025 Jun 13 – “[Agile, Adaptable, AFSOC: Building Edge in Contested Skies](#),”
with [LT GEN Michael E. Conley](#), *Irregular Warfare Initiative* podcast hosted
by Laura Jones and Henry Lavacude-Cola.

2024, Oct 22-23 – “Mapping the Threat Landscape: Detecting, Mitigating, Disrupting and Countering Legacy and Emerging Threats,” [Dialogue on Preventing Terrorist Exploitation of New, Emerging, and Disruptive Technologies](#), Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (London, UK).

2024, Oct 9 – “Israel, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis: The Middle East and What Comes Next,” [Institute for Future Conflict](#).

2024, Sep 27 – “What’s Next? Foreign Policy, Warfare, and Emerging Technologies,” British International Studies Association Foreign Policy Working Group and War Studies Working Group. Moderated by Joe Murphy.

2024 Aug – “UAVs: State and Non-state Developments;” Full Spectrum Drone Warfare 2050: Developments in Drone Deployment Across All Domains closed advanced research workshop; sponsored by [NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme](#), [ETH Zurich Center for Security Studies](#), and [Cornell Brooks Tech Policy Institute](#) (Ithaca, NY).

2024 Aug – “Dangerous Actors and Adversaries,” *War Studies Conference: Preparing for Strategic Surprises in the 21st Century* (MWI at West Point, NY).

2024 Jul – “Two Sides of the Same Coin: Exploring Benefits and Risks of (Mis)Use of Uncrewed Systems,” with [Abby Zeith](#) and Wim Zwijnenburg, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and Office for Disarmament Affairs, moderated by [Barbara Morais Figueiredo](#).

2024 Jun – “Drones are Here to Stay: The Proliferation of UAS Across the Spectrum of War,” with COL (ret) Bill Edwards, Irregular Warfare Initiative podcast hosted by Nathan Kaczynski and Laura Jones.

2024 Mar – “Drone Proliferation to Terrorist Proxies,” with LTG (ret) [Kenneth Tovo](#) and [Behnam Ben Taleblu](#), [Social Science of War](#) podcast hosted by Dr. Nakissa Jahanbani.

2024 Spring – [Junior Scholars in International Security](#) workshop

2023 Dec – “Terrorists are using consumer drones—and it’s getting harder to stop them,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. Video by Erik English.

2023 Dec – “Democratization of Emerging Technologies,” guest lecture for Industry Study: Autonomous Systems and Robotics, [Eisenhower School for National Defense and Research Strategy](#), [National Defense University](#).

2023 Dec – “Why podcasts?” guest lecture for Industry Study: Artificial Intelligence, [Eisenhower School for National Defense and Research Strategy](#), [National Defense University](#).

2023 Oct – “Drones, AI, and the Future of Conflict,” [Revolution in Military Affairs](#) podcast hosted by Amos Fox.

2023 Oct – “Opening Keynote Address,” [Second Webinar and Tabletop Exercise](#), [Global Counterterrorism Forum Initiative to Operationalize the Berlin Memorandum](#) (virtual).

2023 Sep – “Unmanned System Threats Against Critical Infrastructure and Urban Settings,” [weTHINK. UAVs in Near Future Conflict Mini-conference](#) (virtual).

2023 Aug – “Skillsets Needed in Modern War,” [War Studies Conference: Rethinking Recruitment for Modern War](#) (MWI at West Point, NY).

2023 Jul – “Unmanned VEO Threats Workshop,” [Combating Terrorism Center](#) at West Point and Defense Intelligence Agency’s Defense Combating Terrorism Office (virtual).

2023 Jun – “Current and Suggested Future Research Efforts,” [Preventing and Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems](#), United Nations (UN) Office of Counter-Terrorism (UN Headquarters, NY).

2023 Apr – “Consultation on UAS Guiding Principles on Threats Posed by Terrorist Misuses,” [United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate](#) (UNCTED).

2022 Dec – “Expert Roundtable on Future Use of Terrorist Unmanned Aerial Systems,” [UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate](#) x NYU Workshop ([NYU Center for Global Affairs](#)).

2022 Nov – “Emerging Technology and International Security: Challenges and Opportunities,” [New Voices in National Security Initiative](#) ([Bridging the Gap](#), [New America](#)).

2021 Oct – “UAV/UGVs and Near Future Conflicts,” [weTHINK](#). Working Group Kickoff Roundtable.

2021 Jun – “Armed Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles: Today and Tomorrow,” ([International Institute of Strategic Studies - Europe](#)).

2021 Jun – “The Malign Use of Drones by Nonstate Actors: Vulnerabilities and Future Threats,” [Vulnerabilities of the Drone Age](#) Advanced Research Workshop (Center for War Studies Denmark, Center for Security Studies Zurich, NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme).

MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS	2025, Sep 19. “ Is NATO Equipped to Counter Russian Tactics? ” <i>DW News</i> . Hosted by Anja Kueppers-McKinnon.
	2025, Jun 11. “ For Smuggled Drones, China Wouldn’t Be as Soft a Target as Russia. ” <i>The Strategist</i> . By David Axe.
	2025, Jun 3. “ Drones: A Propaganda Tool for Africa’s Armed Groups. ” <i>Institute for Security Studies</i> . By Karen Allen.
	2025, Jun 2. “ Ukraine Claims 40 Russian Aircraft Hit by Drone Attacks. ” <i>DW News</i> . Hosted by Amien Essif.
	2025, Jun 1. “ U.S. Learns From Ukraine Drone Experience. ” <i>Counteroffensive</i> . By David Axe and Tim Mak.
	2024, Oct 16. “ How Drones Shift the Power Balance in Warfare, Conflicts, and Global Security. ” <i>DW News Desk</i> . Hosted by Alexandra Whiting and Jared Reed.
	2023, Nov 23. “ What do Boston Dynamics’ Robots (Really) Play. ” <i>Usbek & Rica</i> . By Pablo Maillé.
	2023, Nov 17. “ Drones as Weapons: Africa Needs Better Data to Anticipate Risks. ” <i>Institute for Security Studies</i> . By Karen Allen.
	2023, Sep 28. “ Drones on the Frontlines. ” <i>IRPI Media</i> . By Raffaele Angius, Lorenzo Bagnoli, and Riccardo Coluccini.
	2022, Oct 13. “ The Race to Stop Weaponized Robots. ” <i>Vox</i> . By Rebecca Heilweil.
CONFERENCES	2026 – American Political Science Association (APSA)
	2025 – International Studies Association (ISA), ISA - South, ISSS-IS Joint Conference, Southern Political Science Association (SPSA)
	2024 – APSA virtual, SPSA
	2023 – Journeys in World Politics, ISA, SPSA
	2022 – ISA, <i>International Organization</i> Editorial Café, SPSA
	2021 – APSA, ISA, SPSA, Texas Tech University (TTU) Grad School Arts and Humanities (A&H) Conference
	2018 to 2020 – International Conference on Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, ISSS-IS Joint Conference, APSA, ISA (x3), Midwest Political Science Association, Texas Triangle (x2), TTU Grad School Conference (x3)

TEACHING	Disruptive Technologies and Future Conflict, International Security Studies, International Politics, Politics of International Military Force, Introduction to Political Analysis, U.S. Foreign Policy, Game Theory, Political Science in Science Fiction
PROFICIENCIES	regression analysis, time series analysis, game theoretic models, quantitative text analysis, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
AWARDS & HONORS	<p>Philip D. Caine Outstanding Instructor Award (2025)</p> <p>R. Guy Carter Scholarship (2021)</p> <p>William A. Jackson Scholarship (2021)</p> <p>Gordon Treadaway Scholarship (2021)</p> <p>William E. Oden Endowed Scholarship (2019, 2021)</p> <p>Outstanding TTU Graduate Research Paper (2021, 2022)</p> <p>Kent Presson Scholarship (2018, 2020)</p> <p>Professing Excellence Award nominee (2020)</p> <p>Peace, War, and Social Conflict research grant (2020)</p> <p>AT&T Scholarship Foundation fellow (2015 – 2019)</p>
SERVICE	<p>USAFA Future Conflict Minor Working Group Chair</p> <p>USAFA MSS Graduate Studies Program Committee</p> <p>USAFA Harvard Kennedy School Selection Subcommittee</p> <p>Advisor – DARPA pilot probe on autonomous MEDEVAC (AY2024 - 2025)</p> <p>Organizer – Strategy and Warfare Center Symposium on “Gray Matter in the Gray Zone: Operational Imperatives in the Cognitive Battlespace (2025), PSSI Workshop on “New Avenues in Research on Future Force Planning” (2023), ISA panel on the “Complexities of Modern Warfare” (2023), Texas Triangle Conference (2019)</p> <p>Discussant / Chair – Junior Scholars in Quantitative Conflict Workshop (2025), SPSA (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024), ISA (2023), PSSI (2023)</p> <p>reviewer for multiple journals</p>