Kerry Chávez

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Academic Appointments

U.S. Air Force Academy
Assistant Professor, Institute for Future Conflict — Jun 2026 –
Assistant Professor, Military & Strategic Studies — Jun 2024 – Jun 2026

Irregular Warfare Initiative
Advisor, Project Air & Space Power — Feb 2024 –

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.

2024. "The Empirical Determinants of Violent Nonstate Actor Drone Adoption." *Armed Forces & Society* 50(4): 883-912. (with Ori Swed)

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* 49(4): 639-688. (with J Andrés Gannon)

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: *we*THINK.

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

2026, Nov. "Air *Power*: How Distribution Will Shape Future Conflict." *Small Wars Journal*.

2026, Nov 3. "Quantum's Quietest Branch: A Case for Magnetometry." *War on the Rocks*.

2026, Aug 12. "The Future of Conflict and Special Operations Forces." *Irregular Warfare Initiative*.

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 Asymmetry." (with Ori Swed and Dev Tavares)

"N Sides to Each Story: Competing Public Narratives of US Military Operations." (with J Andrés Gannon)

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

Invited Talks & Workshops

2026, Sep – "IWC Scholar's Colloquium: Irregular Warfare's Impact on Homeland Defense," hosted by the Irregular Warfare Center, National Defense University (Washington, DC).

2026, Jun – "Drones, Autonomy, and the Changing Landscape of Conflict," Global Security Threats 2026 Seminar, hosted by the Orion Policy Institute.

2026, Apr – "Air Force Doctrine 2035 Wargame," LeMay Center (Maxwell AFB).

2026, Apr – "Drones, Nonstate Actors, and the Changing Character of Warfare," *Orion Talks* podcast hosted by Suat Cubukcu.

2026, Feb – "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 – "The Ethics of Drones and Autonomous Systems," *Tim Talks Politics* podcast hosted by Tim Milosch.

2025, Oct – *The Shadow Front: Unconventional Approaches to Warfare*," 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 – "The Use of UAS to Further NSAGs' Agendas," *The Use of Emerging Disruptive Technologies by Non-State Armed Groups in the Middle East*, Joint Study Day hosted by NATO-ICI Regional Centre & NATO Strategic Direction South-Hub (Kuwait City, Kuwait).

2025, Aug – "Future Tech and National Security," *Tim Talks Politics* podcast 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, 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.

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 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," *we*THINK. 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," *we*THINK. 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?" *DW News.* Hosted by Anja Kueppers-McKinnon.

2025, Jun 11. "For Smuggled Drones, China Wouldn't Be as Soft a Target as Russia." *The Strategist.* By David Axe.

2025, Jun 3. "Drones: A Propaganda Tool for Africa's Armed Groups." *Institute for Security Studies.* By Karen Allen.

2025, Jun 2. "Ukraine Claims 40 Russian Aircraft Hit by Drone Attacks." *DW News.* Hosted by Amien Essif.

2025, Jun 1. "U.S. Learns From Ukraine Drone Experience." *Counteroffensive.* By David Axe and Tim Mak.

2024, Oct 16. "How Drones Shift the Power Balance in Warfare, Conflicts, and Global Security." *DW News Desk*. Hosted by Alexandra Whiting and Jared Reed.

2023, Nov 23. "What do Boston Dynamics' Robots (Really) Play." *Usbek & Rica.* By Pablo Maillé.

2023, Nov 17. "Drones as Weapons: Africa Needs Better Data to Anticipate Risks." *Institute for Security Studies.* By Karen Allen.

2023, Sep 28. "Drones on the Frontlines." *IRPI Media.* By Raffaele Angius, Lorenzo Bagnoli, and Riccardo Coluccini.

2022, Oct 13. "The Race to Stop Weaponized Robots." *Vox.* 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, *International Organization* 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)

Proficiencies	regression analysis, time series analysis, game theoretic models, quantitative text analysis, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
Teaching	Adversary Doctrine, 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
Awards & Honors	Philip D. Caine Outstanding Instructor Award (2025) R. Guy Carter Scholarship (2021) William A. Jackson Scholarship (2021) Gordon Treadaway Scholarship (2021) William E. Oden Endowed Scholarship (2019, 2021) Oustanding TTU Graduate Research Paper (2021, 2022) Kent Presson Scholarship (2018, 2020) Professing Excellence Award nominee (2020) Peace, War, and Social Conflict research grant (2020) AT&T Scholarship Foundation fellow (2015 – 2019)
Service	USAFA Future Conflict Minor Working Group Chair U.S. Army War College National Strategy Competition Coach USAFA MSS Graduate Studies Program Committee USAFA Harvard Kennedy School Selection Subcommittee **Advisor** – DARPA pilot probe on autonomous MEDEVAC (AY2024 - 2025) **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) **Discussant / Chair** – Junior Scholars in Quantitative Conflict Workshop (2025), SPSA (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024), ISA (2023), PSSI (2023) reviewer for multiple journals