Alec Worsnop

aworsnop@umd.edu • www.alecworsnop.com

Academic Appointments

School of Public Policy, University of Maryland—College Park
Associate Professor (with tenure), August 2026 – Present
Assistant Professor, 2017 – July 2026
Research Fellow, Center for International and Security Studies (CISSM)

Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Ph.D., Department of Political Science (2016)
Dissertation: Organization and Community: The Determinants of Insurgent Military Effectiveness
– 2017 Lucian Pye Award for best MIT dissertation in political science

Colby College
B.A., Government, *summa cum laude* (2007)

Book

Rebels in the Field: Cadres and the Development of Insurgent Military Power, Oxford University Press (2025)

Peer Reviewed Publications

"Shaky Foundations: Rebel Fighting Capacity and the Limits of Pre-Conflict Endowments." *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 63, no. 1 (2026)

"Rebels Fire and Maneuver Too: How Small-unit Combat Leaders Sustain Insurgent Warfare." *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2025)

"Veterans, Novices, and Patterns of Rebel Recruitment." *Security Studies*, volume 34, no. 1 (2025): 59–93, with Evan Perkoski

"The Rebel and the Politician: Developing a Typology of Insurgent Civil–Military Relations." *Armed Forces & Society*, volume 51, no. 3 (2023): 757–793
– Recipient of the 2024 Charles C. Moskos prize for best article published by an emerging scholar in *Armed Forces & Society*

"Who Can Keep the Peace? Insurgent Organizational Control of Collective Violence." *Security Studies*, volume 26, no. 3 (2017): 482-516

"Fatality Thresholds, Causal Heterogeneity, and Civil War Research: Reconsidering the Link Between Narcotics and Conflict." *Political Science Research and Methods*, volume 7, no. 1 (2019): 85-105, with Noel Anderson

Works In-Progress

Rebels and Politicians: Civil-Military Relations in Asymmetric Conflict

"Building Strong Militaries: Security Force Assistance in the Context of Ukraine and Iran"

"A Typology of Rebel Public Health Behavior," with Catherine Worsnop and Davin O'Regan

"The Worst Case Scenario? Assessing the Impact of a Complete ISAF Military Withdrawal from Afghanistan"

Book Reviews

2021. Theodore McLauchlin. 2020. *Desertion: Trust and Mistrust in Civil Wars*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. *Perspectives on Politics*, volume 19, no. 4.

Essays and Opinion Pieces

"What Determines Success in Guerrilla Warfare?" Irregular Warfare Podcast, with General (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal, 15 December 2025.

"What the First Week of Fighting in Ukraine Tells Us About a Potential Insurgency." CISSM Policy Brief, 7 March 2022.

"How the Taliban Exploited Afghanistan's Human Geography." War on the Rocks, 2 September 2021.

"From Guerrilla to Maneuver Warfare: A Look at the Taliban's Growing Combat Capability." Modern War Institute, 6 June 2018.

"A Closer Look at ISIS in Iraq." with Evan Perkoski (University of Pennsylvania), Political Violence @ a Glance, 16 June 2014.

"Insurgent Organizational Structure and the Control of Collective Violence." *Précis*, Fall 2013.

Grants and Awards

2026 -	Institute for Public Leadership, Senior Fellow
2022-2025	*Understanding the Link between the Recruitment and Operational Behavior of Terrorist Organizations* National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (DHS Center of Excellence), with Evan Perkoski and Meredith Loken (500k)
2021-2022	Research Excellence Program Grant University of Connecticut, with Evan Perkoski
2021	Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland Seed Grant University of Maryland
2020-2021	Faculty-Student Research Award, The Graduate School University of Maryland
2017-2018	Modern War Institute at West Point Military Academy Non-Resident Fellow
2017	Lucian Pye Award for best MIT political science dissertation
2016-2017	Belfer Center at Harvard Kennedy School Postdoctoral Research Fellow, International Security Program
2015-2016	George Washington University Institute for Security and Conflict Studies Predoctoral Research Fellow
2015-2016	Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Dissertation Fellowship
2014	Levitan Award for Excellence in Teaching
2013, 2014	MIT Center for International Studies Research Grant
2014	Smith Richardson Foundation World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship
2013	Tobin Project National Security Fellowship
2010-2015	MIT Graduate Fellowship

Teaching

– "Quantitative Aspects of Public Policy"

– "Military Intervention, Civil Conflict, and Terrorism"

– "Public Policy Analysis in Action"

– "Political Science Scope and Methods" (Teaching Assistant)

Invited Talks and Workshops

Mid-level Commanders of Non-state Armed Groups as a Heterogenous Cohort: Beyond Spoilers v. Leaders of Peace, Civil Wars Paths and Peace Operations Network (March 2026)

National Counterterrorism Innovation, Technology, and Education Center (NCITE) Envision Conference, University of Nebraska, (Omaha, NE—2024)

National Security Seminar, Army War College (Carlise, PA—2024)

Belfer Center International Security Program Seminar, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA—April 2017)

Triangle Institute for Security Studies New Faces Conference (Chapel Hill, NC—October 2015)

PRIO/MIT Conference on Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism, MIT (Cambridge, MA—November 2011)

Selected Conferences and Workshops

ISA Annual Convention (2023)

APSA Annual Meeting (September 2021)

ISA Annual Convention (2020)

APSA Annual Meeting (Washington, DC—September 2019)

ISA Annual Convention (Toronto, Canada—March 2019)

APSA Annual Meeting (Boston, MA—September 2018)

ISA Annual Convention (Baltimore, MD—February 2017)

APSA Annual Meeting (Philadelphia, PA—September 2016)

ISA Annual Convention (Atlanta, GA—March 2016)

APSA Annual Meeting (San Francisco, CA—September 2015)

ISA Annual Convention (New Orleans, LA—February 2015)

APSA Annual Meeting (Washington, DC—August 2014)

Strategic Use of Force Working Group, MIT (Cambridge, MA—May 2014)

Harvard-Yale-MIT Conference on Political Violence (April 2014)

Professional Experience

Chemonics International, Washington, D.C.

Manager, Afghanistan and Pakistan Business Development 2009-2010
Traveled to Afghanistan to assist in the development of USAID programs.

Associate/Manager, Middle East 2007-2009
Managed planning, compliance, and budgeting for USAID programs in Egypt and Jordan.

National Democratic Institute, Washington D.C.

Project Assistant, Middle East and North Africa 2007