

ELIZABETH NATHAN SAUNDERS

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EMPLOYMENT

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Professor of Political Science, January 2024-present
Interim Director, Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, 2025-2026

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Professor, School of Foreign Service & Security Studies Program (2023-2024)
Associate Professor, School of Foreign Service & Security Studies Program (2018-2023)
Director, Mortara Center for International Studies (2022-2024)

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, 2016-2018
Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, 2008-2016

EDUCATION

YALE UNIVERSITY

Ph.D., with Distinction, Political Science, 2007; *M.Phil.* (2004); *M.A.* (2003)
Dissertation: “Wars of Choice: Leadership, Threat Perception, and Military Interventions”
Committee: Professors Bruce Russett (Chair), Keith Darden, and John Lewis Gaddis

- 2009 Dissertation Prize, Committee for the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy (CAMOS): best dissertation in strategic studies in 2007 or 2008 (co-recipient)
- 2008 John Addison Porter Prize, Yale University, for scholarship in any field (co-recipient)

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

M.Phil., International Relations, 2001

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

A.B., *magna cum laude*, Physics and Astronomy and Astrophysics, 2000
Phi Beta Kappa, 2000

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2024. *The Insiders' Game: How Elites Make War and Peace* (Princeton University Press, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics Series).
- 2025 Best Book in Foreign Policy Analysis Award, ISA Foreign Policy Analysis Section
 - 2025 Honorable Mention, APSA Foreign Policy Book Award
2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Cornell University Press, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs Series).
- 2012 Jervis-Schroeder Best Book Award, APSA International History & Politics Section

Journal Articles and Book Chapters

2025. "The Unconstrained Future of World Order: The Assault on Democratic Constraint and Implications for U.S. Global Leadership" (with Susan Hyde). *International Organization* 79(S1), S71-S87 (issue on the Future of Global Governance and World Order).
2025. "The Elusive Role of Public Opinion" (with Jessica L.P. Weeks), in *Inside the Situation Room: The Theory and Practice of Crisis Decision Making*, eds. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Keren Yarhi-Milo (Oxford University Press).
2022. "Elites in the Making and Breaking of Foreign Policy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 25: 219-240.
2020. "The Suffragist Peace" (with Joslyn N. Barnhart, Robert F. Trager, and Allan Dafoe). *International Organization* 74(4): 633-670.
2020. "Recapturing Regime Type in International Relations: Leaders, Institutions, and Agency Space" (with Susan D. Hyde). *International Organization* 74(2): 363-395.
2019. "The Domestic Politics of Nuclear Choices – A Review Essay." *International Security* 44(2): 146-184.
2018. "Leaders, Advisers, and the Political Origins of Elite Support for War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62(10): 2118-2149.
2018. "The Ratification Premium: Hawks, Doves, and Arms Control" (with Sarah Kreps and Ken Schultz). *World Politics* 70(4): 479-514.
2017. "Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues" (with Alexandra Guisinger). *International Studies Quarterly* 61(2): 425-441.
- 2015 Best Paper Award, APSA Foreign Policy Section (for paper from 2014 meeting)
2017. "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making." *International Organization* 71(S1): S219-S247.
2016. "The Diplomatic Core: The Determinants of High-Level U.S. Diplomatic Visits, 1946-2010" (with James H. Lebovic). *International Studies Quarterly* 60(1): 107-123.
2015. "War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force." *Security Studies* 24(3): 466-501.
2014. "Transparency without Tears: A Pragmatic Approach to Transparent Security Studies Research." *Security Studies* 23(4): 689-698 (contribution to peer-reviewed symposium).
2014. "Good Democratic Leadership in Foreign Affairs: An Elite-Centered Approach." In *Good Democratic Leadership*, eds. John Kane and Haig Patapan (Oxford University Press).
2010. "The Army You Have: The Determinants of Military Mechanization, 1979-2001" (with Todd S. Sechser). *International Studies Quarterly* 54(2): 481-511.
2009. "Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy." *International Security* 34(2): 119-161.

- Reprinted in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*, 7th Ed., eds. G. John Ikenberry and Peter Trubowitz (Oxford University Press, 2014); *Essential Readings in World Politics*, 4th Ed., eds. Karen A. Mingst and Jack L. Snyder (W.W. Norton, 2010)
- 2006. “A New Electorate? Comparing Preferences and Partisanship between Immigrants and Natives” (w/ Rafaela Dancygier). *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 962-981.
- 2006. “Setting Boundaries: Can International Society Exclude ‘Rogue States’?” *International Studies Review* 8(1): 23-53.
- 2000. “Structures of the Linear Silicon Carbides SiC₄ and SiC₆: Isotopic Substitution and *Ab Initio* Theory” (second author, with V.D. Gordon, A.J. Apponi, M.C. McCarthy, P. Thaddeus, and P. Botschwina). *Journal of Chemical Physics* 113(13): 5311-5320.

Other Publications

- 2026. “Trump’s Year of Anarchy: The Unconstrained Presidency and the End of American Primacy” (with Daniel Drezner), *Foreign Affairs* (online), January 20.
- 2025. “Imperial President at Home, Emperor Abroad,” *Foreign Affairs* (online), June 16.
- 2025. “Does DOGE Pose a National Security Risk?” (with James Goldgeier), *Foreign Affairs* (online), February 7.
- 2024. “The Imperial Presidency Unleashed” (with Sarah Binder & James Goldgeier), *Foreign Affairs* (online), July 18.
- 2024. “Politics Can’t Stop at the Water’s Edge: The Right Way to Fight Over Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2024, 86-103 (adapted from *The Insiders’ Game*).
- 2022. “Follow the Leader” (with Susan D. Hyde, response to Brownlee and Miao: “Why Democracies Survive”), *Journal of Democracy* 33(4): 164-168.
- 2021. Introduction to forum on Robert Jervis, “Liberalism, the Blob, and American Foreign Policy: Evidence and Methodology,” H-Diplo/ISSF.
- 2021. “A Cynical Ploy Like Hawley and Cruz’s Looks Harmless. Until It Isn’t.” (with Henry Farrell), *Washington Post Outlook*, Section B, page 1, January 10.
- 2020. “Trump Didn’t Break Our Democracy. But Did He Fatally Weaken It?” (with Susan D. Hyde), *New York Times Opinion*, Section A, page 23, December 16.
- 2020. Essay in roundtable on “The Importance of White House Presidential Tapes in Scholarship,” H-Diplo/ISSF (with James Goldgeier).
- 2020. “Women’s Suffrage and the Democratic Peace” (with Joslyn Barnhart, Robert Trager, and Allan Dafoe), *Foreign Affairs* (online), August 18.
- 2020. Introduction to Roundtable Review of Nicholas Miller, *Stopping the Bomb: The Sources and Effectiveness of US Nonproliferation Policy*. H-Diplo/ISSF.
- 2020. “The Imperial Presidency is Alive and Well” (with Sarah Binder & James Goldgeier). *Foreign Affairs* (online), January 21.
- 2019. “Trump Doesn’t Like Traveling. That’s Bad for Diplomacy” (with James Lebovic) *Foreign Affairs* (online), January 20.

2018. “The Unconstrained Presidency: Checks and Balances Eroded Long Before Trump” (with James Goldgeier). *Foreign Affairs*, September/October, 144-156.
2018. “Is Trump a Normal Foreign-Policy President? What We Know After One Year” *Foreign Affairs* (online), January 18.
2017. “Good Foreign Policy Is Invisible: Why Boring Is Better” (with James Goldgeier). *Foreign Affairs* (online), February 28.
2017. Introduction to Roundtable Review of Matthew Baum and Philip Potter, *War and Democratic Constraint*. H-Diplo/ISSF.
2016. Review of Michael Horowitz, Allan Stam, and Cali Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*. H-Diplo.
2016. Review of Jonathan Caverley, *Democratic Militarism*. H-Diplo/ISSF.
2013. Contribution to “Ideology, Realpolitik, and US Foreign Policy: A Discussion of Frank P. Harvey’s *Explaining the Iraq War*.” *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2): 589-592.
2012. Author’s Response, H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable Review of *Leaders at War*.
2012. “Unleashing Presidential Power” (with Forrest Maltzman, James Lebovic, and Emma Furth). *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45(3): 395-400.

WORK IN PROGRESS

- “Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy” (with Susan Hyde)
- “The Leaker’s Gamble: Bureaucrats, Audiences, and Policy Shifts” (with Andrew Kydd)
- “Elites, Voters, and Democracies at War” (with Scott Wolford)
- “Race, Public Opinion, and Cooperative Friction in International Institutions” (with Alexandra Guisinger), R&R

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

External

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| 2025 | <i>Honorable Mention</i> , APSA Foreign Policy Best Book Award |
| 2025 | <i>Best Book in Foreign Policy Analysis Award</i> , ISA Foreign Policy Analysis Section |
| 2023 | <i>Emerging Scholar Award</i> , ISA International Security Studies Section (ISSS) |
| 2017-present | Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution Foreign Policy Program |
| 2017 | ISA Online Media Caucus, Best Individual Blog Post |
| 2016 | <i>Warren Miller Fund in Electoral Politics</i> , APSA (\$2,500) |
| 2016 | <i>Carnegie Grant</i> , US Strategic Nuclear Policy toward China (part of team award with members of GW’s Institute for Security and Conflict Studies) |
| 2015 | <i>Best Paper Award</i> , APSA Foreign Policy Section (with Alexandra Guisinger) |
| 2015-2018 | <i>Minerva Research Initiative Award</i> , Department of Defense (part of team award with members of GW’s Institute for Security and Conflict Studies) |
| Fall 2016 | <i>Visiting Fellow</i> , Council on Foreign Relations |

2015-2016	<i>Stanton Nuclear Security Fellowship</i> , Council on Foreign Relations
2012-2013	<i>Residential Fellowship</i> , Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
2012	<i>Jervis-Schroeder Best Book Award</i> , APSA International History & Politics Section
2011-2016	<i>Term Member</i> , Council on Foreign Relations
2009	<i>CAMOS Dissertation Prize</i> (co-recipient)
2007-2008	<i>Postdoctoral Fellowship</i> , Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Harvard University
2006-2007	<i>Visiting Scholar</i> and <i>Bryce Fund Grant</i> , APSA Centennial Center
2005-2006	<i>Brookings Institution Predoctoral Fellowship</i> , Foreign Policy Studies Program
2001-2005	<i>National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship</i> (3 years)

Internal – Georgetown/George Washington University

2020	Senior Faculty Research Fellowship, Georgetown
2020-2023	Mortara Faculty Fellow, Mortara Center for International Studies, Georgetown
2016	Elliott School Faculty Research Fund (\$2,472)
2015	Columbian College Facilitating Fund (\$7,446)
2015	Elliott School Faculty Research Fund (\$8,000)
2014	Elliott School Faculty Research Fund (\$4,500)
2014-2015	<i>Shapiro Policy Research Scholar</i> , George Washington Institute of Public Policy
2013	Elliott School Faculty Research Fund (\$6,000)
2011	Elliott School Faculty Research Fund (\$5,000)
2010	George Washington University Facilitating Fund (\$14,308)
2009	George Washington University Facilitating Fund (\$11,913)

Other Grants and Awards Prior to Georgetown/GWU

2008	<i>John Addison Porter Prize</i> , Yale University (co-recipient)
2005-2006	<i>Dissertation Research Grant</i> , Yale Center for International and Area Studies
2004-2006	<i>Smith Richardson Fellowship</i> , Yale International Security Studies Program
2004	<i>Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship</i>
2003	<i>FLAS and Yale European Studies Council Fellowships</i>
2001-2003	<i>Sterling Prize Fellowship</i> , Yale University
2000-2001	<i>Harvard-Cambridge Scholarship</i> , for study at the University of Cambridge
1999	<i>Leo Goldberg Prize</i> , for Best Junior Thesis in Astronomy, Harvard University
1998, 2002	<i>Co-Inventor</i> , US Patent No. 5,833,660 (issued 1998) and Canadian Patent No. 2,167,787 (issued 2002) for invention of a non-reusable syringe designed to help prevent the spread of HIV (with Gabriella Pollack)

- 1996 *Co-Inductee*, National Gallery for America's Young Inventors (with Gabriella Pollack)
- 1995 *Co-Winner*, First Place, NYNEX Science and Technology Awards (with Gabriella Pollack) (received a scholarship and a research grant for non-reusable syringe)

INVITED TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

- 2025 Yale University, International Relations Speaker Series
- 2024 Stanford University, Center for International Security and Cooperation
- 2024 University of Zurich, Workshop on International Cooperation and Negotiations in a Challenging Context
- 2023 Princeton Niehaus Center, Workshop on Diplomats & Bureaucrats in IR
- 2023 Hofstra University Presidential Conference on the Obama Presidency
- 2022 Brown University, Bureaucracy and International Relations Workshop
- 2022 Princeton IR Faculty Colloquium
- 2022 University of Pennsylvania, Browne Center IR Speaker Series
- 2022 MIT Security Studies Program, Wednesday Seminar Series
- 2022 University of Konstanz, International Studies Seminar Series
- 2021 University of Georgia, Center for International Trade and Security
- 2020 Oakland University, Meadow Brook Lecture in International Affairs
- 2020 Columbia University, International Politics Seminar
- 2019 UCLA, International Relations Workshop
- 2019 Princeton Workshop on "New Research on Secrecy in International Relations"
- 2019 Dartmouth (Dickey Center)
- 2019 Texas A&M (Political Science and Bush School)
- 2018 University of Cambridge
- 2018 University of California, Berkeley
- 2018 University of California, San Diego
- 2017 Rice University
- 2017 University of Texas at Austin
- 2017 Harvard University, Dept. of Government, IR Speaker Series
- 2017 Ohio State, Mershon Center, Conference on War, Media, and the Public
- 2017 Lone Star National Security Forum, University of Texas at Austin
- 2017 Temple University, Forum on International Institutions and Global Governance
- 2016 University of Chicago, Program on International Security Policy

2016	University of Wisconsin-Madison, International Relations Colloquium
2016	Notre Dame, International Security Program
2016	University of Maryland, IR/CIDCM Speaker Series
2015	Fletcher School, Tufts, Conference on Foreign Policy Ideas and Campaigns
2015	Leaders and Military Conflict Workshop, University of Mississippi
2015	Duke University, Civil-Military Relations Workshop
2015	Co-Organizer (with Susan Hyde and Jessica Weiss), Workshop on Reconsidering Regime Type in International Relations, Yale University
2015	UCLA, Preferences for Conflict Workshop
2014	Cornell University, Reppy Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies
2014	Survey Experiments in Peace Science Workshop, University of Pennsylvania
2014	Princeton University, Security Studies Colloquium
2014	American University, Global Governance, Politics, and Security Program
2014	UCSD, Workshop on the Behavioral Revolution in International Relations
2013	Columbia University, Conference on Presidential Rhetoric and Leadership
2013	University of Virginia, Conference on History, Method, and Security Studies
2013	Harvard University, Program on Global Society and Security
2013	Yale University, Conference on Good Democratic Leadership
2013	Georgetown University, GUITARS Speaker Series
2012	Northwestern University, Buffett Center Working Group on Security Studies
2012	University of Pennsylvania, Browne Center for International Politics
2012	Yale University, International Relations Speaker Series
2011	University of Virginia, Conference on the Presidency and U.S. Foreign Policy
2010	American University, School of International Service
2010	Princeton University, International Relations Colloquium
2009	Notre Dame, International Security Program
2008	University of Virginia, Miller Center of Public Affairs
2008	Princeton University, Workshop on Ideas and Rising Powers
2008	University of Chicago, Program on International Security Policy
2005	Santa Fe Institute, History and Complexity Working Group

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

“Race, Issues, and Public Support for International Coalitions” (with Alexandra Guisinger).
Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association (APSA),

September 2022, and at the annual meeting of the European Political Science Association, June 2023.

“Why Bureaucrats Leak” (with Andrew Kydd). Presented at the GWU Institute for Security and Conflict Studies Workshop, October 2018, and APSA 2018.

“The Suffragist Peace” (with Joslyn Barnhart, Allan Dafoe, and Robert Trager). Presented at APSA 2018.

“Hawks, Doves, and Arms Control” (with Sarah Kreps and Ken Schultz). Presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association (ISA), March 2016.

“Elites, Voters, and Democracies at War” (with Scott Wolford). Presented at the GWU Institute for Security and Conflict Studies Workshop, January 2017. Earlier version, “Intra-Elite Bargains and the Character of Democratic Foreign Policy” presented at APSA 2015.

“Reconsidering Regime Type in International Relations: Beyond the Democracy Dummy.” Presented at the APSA 2016 Mini-Conference on “Great Powers and Democracy.”

“Leaders, Advisers, and the Political Origins of Elite Support for War.” Presented at APSA 2016. Related paper, “The Political Origins of Elite Support for War: How Democratic Leaders Manage Public Opinion,” presented at APSA 2015; ISA, February 2015. Earlier versions, titled “The Electoral Disconnection in U.S. Foreign Policy,” presented at the Wilson Center Work-in-Progress seminar, March 2013; the GW Institute for Security and Conflict Studies Research-in-Progress workshop, November 2012; ISA 2012; and the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA), April 2012.

“Getting the Audience Right: Democratic Leaders, Elites, and the Use of Force” [earlier version of “War and the Inner Circle”]. Presented at APSA 2014. Previous version, “Vietnam, Elites, and Audience Costs: Shrinking the Size of the Democratic Audience,” presented at the ISSS-ISAC Annual Conference, October 2013.

“Mapping the Boundaries of Elite Cues: How Elites Shape Mass Opinion Across International Issues” (with Alexandra Guisinger). Presented at APSA 2014 (earlier version APSA 2013); and ISA 2014.

“The Diplomatic Core: How the United States Employs High-Level Visits as a Scarce Resource” (with James Lebovic). Presented at ISA 2014.

Selected participant, International Policy Summer Institute (Bridging the Gap Project), American University School of International Service, June 2012.

“Public Opinion and Unconventional War.” Presented at APSA 2011. Earlier version presented at MPSA 2010.

“Wars of Choice: How Leaders Shape Military Interventions.” Presented at the GW Cold War Group Workshop, February 2009.

“The Army You Have: The Determinants of Military Mechanization, 1979-2001” (with Todd S. Sechser). Presented at ISA 2009. Earlier version presented at APSA 2008.

“Wars of Choice: Leadership, Threat Perception, and Military Interventions.” Presented at the

GWU Institute for Global and International Studies Seminar, January 2008; ISA 2008; and the Olin Institute National Security Seminar, October 2007. Earlier versions presented at the APSA Brownbag Speaker Series, May 2007; the Yale International Security Studies Colloquium, October 2006; ISA 2006; and the Yale IR Workshop, March 2006 and February 2004.

Selected participant, Women in International Security Summer Symposium, June 2006.

“Selecting the Targets of Military Interventions: The Eisenhower Administration and the Middle East Crises of 1958.” Presented at MPSA 2005; the Yale IR Workshop, April 2005; and the Yale International Security Studies Colloquium, February 2005.

Selected participant, Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research, GWU, June 2004.

“The Political Attitudes of Immigrants and Natives in Germany and Great Britain” (with Rafaela Dancygier). Presented at MPSA 2004; and the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, January 2004.

“Why Do Nations Disobey International Law?” Presented at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, November 2003.

TEACHING

U.S. Foreign Policy (undergraduate; graduate); Politics of War (undergraduate); U.S. National Security Policy (graduate); Domestic Politics and International Relations (graduate); Advanced Theories of Foreign Policy Decision-Making (graduate); Military Intervention (graduate); Theories of International Relations (graduate)

UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Co-Editor, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs Series, Cornell University Press, September 2025-present

Contributor/Editor, Good Authority (formerly *Washington Post* “Monkey Cage”): Contributor 2017-present, Editor 2017-2025

Member, Historical Advisory Committee, Department of State, Office of the Historian (September 1, 2024-April 30, 2025; at-large member)

Coordinator, IR subfield, Department of Political Science, Columbia University (2024-2025)

Member, Academic Review Committee, Columbia University (September 2024-present)

Director, Mortara Center for International Studies, Georgetown (July 2022-January 2024)

Member, Working Group on the Academic Calendar, Georgetown (2021-2022)

Member, Family Care Working Group (and Faculty Subcommittee), Georgetown (2020-2021)

Editorial Board, International Organization (2018-2024; 2025-2028)

Editorial Board, Texas National Security Review (July 2017-August 2024)

Reviewer for American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, International Relations, International Organization, International Security, International

Studies Quarterly, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Politics, Political Science Research and Methods, Political Science Quarterly, Security Studies, World Politics, Cornell University Press, Harvard University Press, Princeton University Press, National Science Foundation, Time Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences

Editorial Board, Journal of Global Security Studies, 2017-2020

Chair, Lepgold Book Prize Committee, Mortara Center, Georgetown University, 2022 & 2023

Associate Editor, H-Diplo/ISSF 2016-present

Member, Award Committee, Charles E. Merriam Award, APSA, 2025

Member, Award Committee, Best Book Award, ISA Foreign Policy Section, 2018

Member, Award Committee, Waltz Dissertation Prize, APSA ISAC Section, 2016

Member, Award Committee, Best Paper Award, APSA Foreign Policy Section, 2016

Member, Award Committee, Jervis-Schroeder Best Book Award, 2014

Member, Research Advisory Board, Qualitative Data Repository, 2013-2019

Member, APSA DA-RT Working Group, Qualitative Committee, 2011-2019

Co-Organizer, DC IR Workshop, 2013-2017

Member, GPAC Proposal Review Committee, GWU CCAS, 2017-2018

Member, Chair Selection Committee, Department of Political Science, GWU, 2011

Member, International Relations Comprehensive Exam Committee, GWU, 2009-2010

Co-Instructor, Module on “Historiography and Archival Research,” Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, Syracuse University, 2009-2012, 2014-2019

Presenter, Summer Institute on Conducting Archival Research, 2008-2012, 2014-2016

MEDIA

Editor and Contributor, GA/TMC; interviewed or quoted in media including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New Republic*, Bloomberg, *Vox*, *The Atlantic*; BBC, NPR *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*; panelist on *The Diane Rehm Show*; guest host, CFR’s *The World Next Week* podcast (2016).

Updated July 2026