

JENNA JORDAN, Ph.D.

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
Georgia Institute of Technology
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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Georgia Institute of Technology, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs

- Associate Professor (August 2018 – present)
- Assistant Professor (August 2012 – July 2018)

University of Chicago, The Harris School of Public Policy Studies

- Post-Doctoral Research Fellow (August 2010- August 2012)

EDUCATION

University of Chicago

- Ph.D., Political Science (2014)
- M.A., Political Science (2004)

Stanford University

- M.A., Political Science (2001)

Mills College

- B.A., International Relations (1999)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Counterterrorism Policy, Cybersecurity, International Security, Organizational Theory, Statecraft, Terrorism and Political Violence, Wargaming

TEACHING INTERESTS

Terrorism, Counterterrorism, International Security, Scenario Writing, Statecraft, US National Security

INSTITUTE CONTRIBUTIONS

- Director, Online MS in International Security, Fall 2023 – present
- Director, Nunn School Workshop on Science, Technology, and International Affairs (STAIR), Fall 2023 - present
- Faculty Athletics Representative, Georgia Institute of Technology, July 2022 – present
- Vice-Chair, Georgia Institute of Technology Athletic Association Board of Trustees, July 2022 – present

- Vice-Chair, Alexander-Tharpe Fund Board of Directors, July 2022 – present
- Associate Chair, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2021 – present
- Director, Program on Emerging Technology and International Security, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2022 – present
- Director, Assessment Committee, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2020 – present
- Co-director, Graduate Certificate on International Security and Aerospace Systems (with Dr. Dimitri Mavris), Spring 2020 – present
- USG High Impact Practices Committee, Fall 2022 – Summer 2022
- School of Cybersecurity and Privacy Task Force, Spring 2020-Spring 2021
- Georgia Institute of Technology COVID Recovery Task Force, March 2020 – August 2022
- Director of Graduate Studies, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2020 – June 2022
- Ivan Allen College Faculty Advisory Board, Fall 2020 – Spring 2021
- Director, Program on Emerging Technology and International Security, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2019 – Summer 2022
- Chair, Awards Committee, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2018 – Summer 2021
- Chair, General Education Committee, Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Fall 2019
- Vice-Chair, Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Fall 2019
- Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Fall 2017 – Spring 2020
- Faculty Guide for the Stamps President’s Scholars Program, Fall 2014 – Spring 2021.
- Dean’s Internship Program, Fall 2016-Spring 2017.
- Undergraduate Committee, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Fall 2016 – Spring 2018.
- Graduate Committee, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, Fall 2012-Spring 2015.
- Recruiting Committee, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, Fall 2012, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2017, Fall 2024
- OATS Committee, Fall 2017-Spring 2019
- Awards and Prizes Committee, Fall 2017-Spring 2019

PUBLICATIONS

Book

- *Leadership Decapitation: The Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations*, Stanford University Press, 2019.
 - Book review of *Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations* in the NDU Press, by Larry Miller. May 4, 2023.
 - Roundtable in the Texas National Security Review on *Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations*. October 12, 2021. Chair: Stephen Tinkel. Contributors: Craig Whiteside, Colin P. Clarke, Megan A. Stewart
 - Winner of the 2020 Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title, sponsored by the American Library Association.

Book Chapter

- “Data on Leadership Targeting and Potential Impacts for Communal Support,” in *The Legitimacy of Drones: UCAVs for Cross-Border Counterterrorism*, Edited by Steven J. Barela, Ashgate Publishing, 2015.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- “The Non-Trivial Accomplishments of Counterterrorists,” *Security Studies*, October 2024.
- “Statecraft In US-Russia Relations: Meaning, Dilemma, and Significance,” Jenna Jordan, Adam Stulberg, and Mikhail Troitskiy. *International Trends*, 2021
- “Patchwork of Confusion: The Cyber Security Coordination Problem,” with Tarun Chaudhary, Michael Salomone, and Phil Baxter. *Journal of Cyber Security*, December 2018.
- “How small states acquire status: A social network analysis,” with Lawrence Rubin and Phil Baxter. *International Area Studies Review*, May 2018.
- “Measuring Political Violence in Pakistan: Insights from the BFRS Dataset,” with Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, C. Christine Fair, Jenna Jordan, and Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, September 2014: 536-558.
- “Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes” *International Security*, Spring 2014: 7-38.
- “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” *Security Studies*, December 2009: 719-755.

Other Publications

- “Nuclear scientists have long been targets in covert ops – Israel has brought that policy out of the shadows,” *The Conversation*, June 29, 2025.
- “The U.S. killed al-Qaeda’s leader. That might boost terrorism,” *The Monkey Cage*, August 2022.
- Review of *Covert Regime Change: America's Secret Cold War*, Lindsey O’Rourke. *H-Diplo | ISSF*, 2020.
- “The Death of Baghdadi isn’t the End of ISIS,” *The Monkey Cage*, November 2019.
- “Decapitation Is Not an Effective Counterterrorism Policy,” *The Cipher Brief*, September 28, 2017.
- “How to Give Counterterrorism a Fighting Chance,” with Margaret Kosal and Lawrence Rubin, *The National Interest*, January 17, 2017.
- “The Strategic (il)logic of Counter Terrorism,” with Margaret Kosal and Lawrence Rubin, *The Washington Quarterly*, December 2016: 181-192.
- “ISIS Containment Doctrine,” with Lawrence Rubin, *The National Interest*, June 14, 2016.
- Review of “Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns,” and “Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism.” *H-Diplo | ISSF*, October 24, 2012.
- Book Review of *Overcoming Evil: Genocide, Violent Conflict, and Terrorism*, Ervin Staub, *New Global Studies*, Vol. 6, Iss 1, (March 2012).
- “Killing al-Qaeda?” *Foreign Policy*, October 6, 2011.
- “When Leaders Die, Terror Still Thrives,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 2011.
- “Can Al-Qa’ida Survive Bin Ladin’s Death? Evaluating Leadership Decapitation” *CTC Sentinel*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, May 2011.
- “Can al-Qaida Survive Without bin Laden?” *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 2011.
- “How the U.S. Can Finish Off al-Qaeda,” (with Robert Pape), *The Atlantic*, May 4, 2011.

Works in Progress

- “Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Nuclear Scientists as a Counter-proliferation Strategy,” with Rachel Whitlark Jordan.
- “Cyber-coercion and nonstate actors”
- “When do states target terrorist leaders?” with Victor Asal

INVITED TALKS

“Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Scientists as a Counter-Proliferation Strategy,” University of Mississippi, Department of Political Science, April 2023

“Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Scientists as a Counter-Proliferation Strategy,” Seminar in Global Politics, University of Virginia, March 2022.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” American University, October 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” The International Club of Atlanta, September 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” American University, March 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” RIAC, Moscow, March 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” MGIMO, Moscow, March 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, January 2020.

“Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” UNC Charlotte, April 2019.

“Workshop on New Technologies, Nuclear Deterrence, and Strategic Stability,” Carnegie Corporation of New York, May 2018.

“Targeting Terrorist Leadership,” 2017 Symposium on Terrorism and Political Violence, University of Central Florida,” December 2017.

“Targeting Terrorist Leadership: Will it Make a Difference?” Keynote address, Department of Political Science Graduate Student Association Conference, Georgia State University, March 2017.

“Targeting Terrorist Leadership: Will it make a difference?” Atlanta Council of International Relations, February 2017.

“Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” University of North Carolina at Charlotte, April 13, 2016.

The Dynamics of Command, Control and Coordination in Cyber-Conflict Escalation: A Scenario-based Examination,” New Technologies and Nuclear Threats, Carnegie Corporation of New York, March 25, 2016.

“Does Leadership Targeting Work,” Reed College, March 8, 2016

“Efficacy of Targeting Terrorist Groups,” Peking University, Beijing China, July 2015.

“Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” TEDx Nashville, March 21, 2015.

“How Small States Influence International Politics: Positional Power and Social Network Analysis,” Lansing B. Lee, Jr./Bankard Seminar in Global Politics, University of Virginia, February 23, 2015.

“Is the Middle East Burning?” Panel discussion at the Georgia Institute of Technology, September 2014.

“Drones and Terrorism: Effectiveness, Challenges, and Legal implications,” Atlanta International Club, September 2014

“Explaining Terrorist Group Resilience to Leadership Targeting,” Emory University, Atlanta, February 2014.

“Faculty Panel Discussion on Syrian Crisis,” Georgia Institute of Technology, September 16, 2013.

“Organizational Resilience to Leadership Targeting,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, 2013.

“Explaining Terrorist Group Resilience to Leadership Targeting,” University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN, March 2013.

“Why Targeting bin Laden Won’t Work,” Institute for Security and Conflict Studies, George Washington University, Washington, DC, December 2012.

“Why Targeting Al Qaeda Won’t Work,” Program on International Politics, Security, and Policy (PISP), University of Chicago, February 2012.

“Networks and Leadership Targeting,” Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in 2011,” MIT Security Studies Program and Peace Research Institute of Oslo, November 18-19, 2011.

“Osama bin Laden and the Future of Leadership Decapitation,” The Future of Terrorism II, International Center for the Study of Terrorism, Pennsylvania State University, October 19-21, 2011.

“Leadership Decapitation Against Terrorist Organizations,” Cutting the Fuse: Moving Beyond the War on Terror, Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism and New America Foundation, Washington DC, October 2010.

“Why Decapitation Doesn’t Work,” Program on International Politics, Economics, and Security (PIPES), University of Chicago, April 2010.

“Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, April 2010.

“Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation Against Hamas,” Program on International Security Policy (PISP), University of Chicago, May 2009.

“When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” Ninth Annual New Faces Conference, Triangle Institute for Security Studies, Chapel Hill, NC, September 2008.

“When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” Lehigh University, October 2007.

“When Heads Roll: A Dynamic Model of Leadership Decapitation,” Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism Conference, University of Chicago, September 2007.

“When Heads Roll: A Dynamic Model of Leadership Decapitation,” Program on International Security Policy (PISP), University of Chicago, April 2007.

“A Dynamic Model of Leadership Decapitation,” Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism Conference, University of Chicago, December 2006.

“When Do States Give Up Territory? Attachments to Land and Interstate Disputes,” Program on International Politics, Economics, and Security (PIPES), University of Chicago, March 9, 2006.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Scientists as a Counter-Proliferation Strategy,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2025.

“Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Scientists as a Counter-Proliferation Strategy,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2023.

“Nonstate Actors and Cyber Coercion,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2022.

“Targeting the Talent: Killing or Capturing Scientists as a Counter-Proliferation Strategy,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2022.

“Why some insurgent groups are targeted for decapitation and others are not,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, April 2021.

“Nonstate Actors and Cyber Coercion,” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2019.

“Off with their heads: Why some insurgent groups are targeted for decapitation and others are not,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2019.

“Why Some Insurgent Groups are Targeted for Decapitation and Others are Not,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2018.

“War Gaming for International Studies: Exploring the Use of War Games as a Methodology,” Roundtable participant. The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, March 2018.

“ISIS 2.0: What Happens Next? Implications for Policy and Social Science Research,” Roundtable participant. Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 2018.

“Patchwork of Confusion: The Cyber Security Coordination Problem,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, February 2017.

“Fracturing Violence: Terrorist Group Splintering,” The Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, February 2017.

“Small States, Strong Ties? Qatar and its Geopolitical Environment,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, 2015.

“Drones Strikes, Leadership Targeting, and Potential Impacts for Communal Support,” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2014.

“Why Targeting bin Laden Won’t Work,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, San Diego, 2012.

“What Happens if We Get Bin Laden?” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, 2011.

“Leadership Decapitation and Organizational Resilience,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, 2010.

“Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation Against Hamas,” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, Ontario, September 2009.

“Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New York, February 2009.

“When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, September 2008.

“Territorial Disputes and the Homeland,” Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC, 2005.

“Leadership Decapitation of Terrorist Organizations,” Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, 2004.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Discipline

- *Reviewer:* American Political Science Review, British Journal of Political Science, Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, Conflict Management and Peace Science, Contemporary Security Policy, Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict, Foreign Policy Analysis, International Security, International Studies Quarterly, International Interactions, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Politics, Security Studies, Journal of Politics, Journal of Criminological Research, Journal of Global Security Studies, Oxford University Press, and Terrorism and Political Violence.
- *Editorial Board:* Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict
- *Member:* American Political Science Association, International Studies Association

- *Workshop Organizer:* Conference on “Terrorism and Technology,” with Georgia State University, April 2019.
- *Workshop Organizer:* “The Dynamics of Command, Control, and Communication in Cyber Conflict Escalation: A Scenario-Based Examination,” Washington, D.C., November 8-9, 2017.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- INTAGO, Teacher of the Year, 2019
- Ivan Allen College Teacher of the Year, 2017
- CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, 2017
- Intelligence Studies Section Student Paper Award, 2012.
- World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship, Smith Richardson Foundation, 2008.
- Morris Abrams Award in International Relations, 2007-2008.
- Dissertation Grant, Program on International Security Policy (PISP), University of Chicago.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- ACC Academic Leaders Networks, 2024-2025
- Provost’s Emerging Leaders Program, 2021-2022
- Bridging the Gap, International Policy Summer Institute, Summer 2016
- Class of 1969 Teaching Scholars Program, Fall 2014
- Philip Merrill Center Teachers’ Workshop at Basin Harbor, Basin Harbor, Vermont, Summer 2013

SELECTED MEDIA

Media Appearances (Selected)

- Interview with WSB radio, August 2025
- “New Books in National Security,” Podcast, Jan 8, 2020
- “Leadership Targeting and Drones: An Effective Counterterrorism Strategy?” Irregular Warfare Podcast, June 9, 2020
- Interview with BBC World Service Radio, September 1, 2016
- Interview with CTV News Channel, August 31, 2016
- TEDx Nashville, “Leadership Targeting of Terrorist Organizations,” March 2015
- CNN appearances:
 - June 2015 (Wolf Blitzer)
 - June 2014 (New Day), September 2014 (New Day)
- CLTV’s Politics Tonight Interview, May 3, 2011
- WTTW’s Chicago Tonight, May 2, 2011
- WGN News Interview, May 2, 2011

Research Referenced in Media Discussions (Selected)

- Douglas London, “What have we learned about fighting terrorism since 9/11?,” *The Hill*, September 2024.
- Counter-Terrorism Targeted Killing of Hassan Nasrallah. Is Hezbollah Weaker?” Graid R. Klein, *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, October 2024
- Daniel DePetris, “Will Taking out Hamas leader Yehya Sinwar shorten the war?” *Chicago Tribune*, December 2023.
- Larry Miller, Book review of *Leadership Decapitation: Strategic Targeting of Terrorist Organizations*, NDU Press, May 4. 2023.
- Melissa Etehad, “Killing terrorist leaders doesn't necessarily wipe out their organizations. In some cases, it fuels more violence,” *LA Times*, August 5, 2017.
- Colin P. Clark, “Is ISIS Leader Baghdadi Still Alive?” *Foreign Affairs*, June 22, 2017.
- Rachel Tecott, “Targeted Killing Thinking Through the Logic,” *War on the Rocks*, September 28, 2016.
- Max Fisher, “Does Killing Terrorist Leaders Make Any Difference? Scholars are Doubtful,” *The New York Times*, August 30, 2016.
- “The Danger of Killing Islamic State’s Caliph.” Tobin Harshaw, *Bloomberg News*, June 16, 2016.
- “Offing the Boss: Does Killing Terrorist Leaders Make us Safer?” Doug Sanders, *The Globe and Mail*, May 28, 2016.
- “Will the Drone Killing of Mansur Bring Peace Closer?” Micah Zenko, *Newsweek*, May 23, 2016.
- “Five Years After bin Laden’s Death, al-Qaeda Lives on.” Kathy Gilsinan, *The Atlantic*, May 2, 2016.
- “Can Leadership Decapitation Strikes Defeat ISIS?” Mark Pomerleau, *The Hill*, April 26, 2016.
- David Ignatius, “Killing Top Terrorists is Not Enough,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2015.
- Kathy Gilsinan, “To Kill a Terrorist,” *The Atlantic*, September 7, 2014.
- Zack Beauchamp, “The Entire Basis for Obama's Drone Strategy May be Wrong,” *Vox*, May 21, 2014.
- Steve Coll, “Remote Control: Our Drone Delusion,” *The New Yorker*, May 2013.
- Steven Myers, “The ‘Wanted Dead’ Option in the War on Terror,” *The New York Times*, May 1, 2010.
- Robert Wright, “The Price of Assassination,” *The New York Times*, April 13, 2010.

Updated February 2026