Amy Austin Holmes, PhD

Instructional Associate Professor at the Bush School of Government & Public Service
Research Professor of International Affairs – PI on Minerva Grant
Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University
Council on Foreign Relations Education Ambassador

Bio: Former Tenured Associate Professor at the American University in Cairo, Visiting Scholar at Harvard University, Policy Advisor at the State Department through a Council on Foreign Relations Fellowship, Acting Director of the Foreign Area Officer Program, Lecturer at the Kyiv School of Economics in Ukraine, Author of three books with Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press, and current Principal Investigator on two-year Minerva-Decur research grant

EDUCATION

- Johns Hopkins University, PhD (2002-2009), Dissertation title: *Contentious Allies: Social Unrest and the American Military Presence in Turkey and Germany 1945-2005*
- Freie Universität Berlin, MA in Political Science (1997-2001)
- Lyon College, BA in International Politics and Theatre/Film (1993-1996)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023-present	Research Professor of International Affairs at the Elliott School at George Washington University (December 2023-present) and Instructional Associate Professor at the Bush School of Government & Public Service (August 2024-present)
2023-2024	Acting Director of the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Program at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University
2021-2022	Lecturer at the Kyiv School of Economics in Ukraine (summer 2023) Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow at the U.S. Department of State: Policy Advisor at the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (Levant/Iraq) and Bureau of Southern European Affairs (Turkey Desk)
2019-2020	Kuwait Foundation Visiting Scholar at the Middle East Initiative of Harvard University
2018-2019	Visiting Scholar at the Weatherhead Center at Harvard University
2017-2019	Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
2015-2020	Tenured Associate Professor of Sociology at the American University in Cairo and Chair of the Department / Unit Head (2016-2017)
2008-2015	Assistant Professor of Sociology at the American University
2018-2019	Consultant at the Council on Foreign Relations for a project on "Future of the Kurds"
2013-2014	Postdoctoral Fellow at Brown University: Watson Institute for International Studies

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Scholarly Books

Statelet of Survivors: The Making of a Semiautonomous Region in Northeast Syria, Oxford University Press, 2024

Coups and Revolutions: Mass Mobilization, the Egyptian Military, and the United States from Mubarak to Sisi, Oxford University Press, 2019

Social Unrest and American Military Bases in Turkey and Germany since 1945, Cambridge University Press, 2014

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Chapters

"Expanding Borderlands: A New Dataset on the Meta-Conflict in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran", co-authored journal article in progress, presented at the London School of Economics, April 2023

"Why Women Fight: Evidence from a Field Survey in Iraq and Syria" journal article in progress based on an original dataset of male and female combatants who fought against the Islamic State

"Dead States and Living Legacies: From the Republic of Mount Ararat to Northeast Syria" in *The I.B. Tauris Handbook of the Late Ottoman Empire: History and Legacy*, edited by Khatchig Mouradian and Hans-Lukas Kieser, forthcoming 2024

"Dual Refusal: How the Labor Movement Almost Toppled the Bahraini Monarchy", in: *The I.B. Tauris Handbook of Sociology and the Middle East*, edited by Fatma Müge Göçek and Gamze Evcimen, December 2022

"Myths of Military Defection in Egypt and Tunisia" (co-authored with Kevin Koehler) *Mediterranean Politics*, July 2018

"Working on the Revolution in Bahrain: From The Mass Strike to Everyday Forms of Medical Provision" *Social Movement Studies*, July 2015

"On Military Coups and Mad Utopias", in: A Region of Resistance, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 113:2, Duke University Press, spring 2014

"The Base that replaced the British Empire: De-Democratization and the US Navy in Bahrain", *Journal of Arabian Studies* June 2014

"There are weeks when Decades happen: Structure and Strategy in the Egyptian Revolution" *Mobilization,* 17(4), December 2012, p 391-410

Giovanni Arrighi: A Global Perspective, Special edition of the *Journal of Development Studies*, (Journal für Entwicklungspolitik), co-edited with Stefan Schmalz, 2011

"From Africa to Asia: The Intellectual Trajectory of Giovanni Arrighi", editorial in the Special edition of the *Journal of Development Studies*, (Journal für Entwicklungspolitik), co-authored with Stefan Schmalz, Summer 2011

Selected Policy Reports, Articles, Op-Eds, Edited Volumes, and Book Chapters

"Survival and Self-Determination in Northeast Syria" Written responses to interview about my book *Statelet of Survivors*, Epicenter, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, October 4, 2024

"Why Isn't the US supporting Free and Fair Elections in Northeast Syria?", Wilson Center, June 10, 2024

"Five Years of Airstrikes: Turkish Aggression and International Silence in Sinjar", (co-authored with Diween Hawezy and Brett Cohen) *International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism*, 2 August 2021

"Threats Perceived and Real: New Data and the Need for a New Approach to the Turkish-SDF Border Conflict," *The Wilson Center*, Occasional Paper, No. 39, May 2021

"Biden-Harris Should Lead on Women's Rights and Help End Syrian Conflict", Council on Foreign Relations Blog, March 26, 2021

"The Capitol Invasion was a Coup from Below", *Foreign Policy,* January 13, 2021

"The United States Can Counter Putin and Assad With a Light Footprint in Syria", Foreign Policy, October 21, 2020

"Despite Ceasefire Agreement, Turkey Implicated in More Than Eight Hundred Violations," Council on Foreign Relations Blog, October 13, 2020

"Interview with Lelwy Abdullah: Co-Chair of Deir Ezzor Military Council in Syria", The Wilson Center, September 24, 2020

"Arabs Across Syria Join the Kurdish-Led Syrian Democratic Forces" MERIP, Summer 2020

"Syrian Yezidis under Four Regimes: Assad, Erdogan, ISIS, and the YPG," Wilson Center, July 2020

"Q&A with Amy Austin Holmes." *Belfer Center Newsletter*, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School. (Spring 2020)

"SDF's Arab Majority Rank Turkey as the Biggest Threat to NE Syria: Survey Data on America's Partner Forces", *The Wilson Center*, October 7, 2019

"Kurds and Arabs in Northeast Syria: Power Struggle or Power Sharing?", (co-authored with Wladimir van Wilgenburg) *The National Interest*, August 11, 2019

"The Future (and present) of northeast Syria is female," *The Hill*, March 8, 2019

"Egypt's Lost Academic Freedom" (co-authored with Sahar Aziz), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sada Middle East Analysis, January 24, 2019

"US withdrawal from Syria will endanger Kurds, Arabs, Christians," *The Hill*, December 27, 2018

"Military defections didn't determine the Arab Uprisings", *Washington Post*, December 21, 2018

"The Erasure of Women from Egypt's Revolution", Global Dialogue, Magazine of the International Sociological Association, Volume 8, Issue 3, 2018

"Women, Minorities, and Military Aid to Egypt" Washington Institute, August 9, 2018

"Civil Society from Alexandria to Aswan: Survival Strategies" Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, May 31, 2018

"What Egypt's racist campaign against Nubians reveals about Sisi's regime" *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2018

"The Turkish War on Afrin" The Wilson Center Viewpoint No 125, April 2018

"Egypt's Nubia: Drowning by Government Decree" Real Clear World, September 27, 2017

"Tightening the Noose on Egypt's Civil Society" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sada Middle East Analysis, June 1, 2017

"The Attack on Civil Society outside Cairo" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sada Middle East Analysis, January 26, 2017

"Sisi's US Army War College Thesis: 10 Years Later", op-ed in Mada Masr, March 15, 2016

"Egypt's Protests by the Numbers", co-authored with Hussein Baoumi, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sada Middle East Analysis, January 29, 2016

"What are the Kurdish Women's Units Fighting For?" *The Washington Post*, December 23, 2015

"As Kobane comes under ISIL attack, Kurds encircle, cut off caliphate", *Informed Comment* June 26, 2015

"What the Battle for Kobane says about U.S. overseas military bases" *Washington Post*, February 2, 2015

"Why Egypt's Military Orchestrated a Massacre" *Washington Post*, August 22, 2014

"In Egypt, Industrial Scale Death Decrees", op-ed in *Providence Journal*, May 5, 2014

"The Military Intervention that the World Forgot: Saudi and Emirati Forces continue to police Bahrain", op-ed on *Al Jazeera*, March 27, 2014

"Before the Bloodletting: A Tour of the Rabaa Sit-in", *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, August 16, 2013

"Everywhere is Taksim: The Crackdown on the Commons", *Counterpunch*, June 26, 2013

"The Royals' New Rules: Backsliding in Bahrain", *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, February 27, 2013

"Egyptians blame military for failures of transition period", *Ahram Online*, June 28, 2012

"Is US Support for the SCAF Unconditional?" Atlantic Council, November 25, 2011

"The real force of stability in Egypt is its people, not its government" *Baltimore Sun*, February 8 2011

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

U.S. Department of State, Turkey Desk Officer in the Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Southern Europe (EUR/SE), and Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow (August-Nov 2022)

Drew from all-source information to provide up-to-date, independent analysis on regional politics and security based on TS/SCI (Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information) security clearance

Wrote ten-page Policy Ideas Channel Memo for the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department on Opportunities for Mediation and De-escalation in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq

Provided independent analysis on the politics, economic situation, international relations, and military operations of Turkey, and US security assistance to Turkey

Provided analysis of the pre-election political and economic dynamics in Turkey, including Turkish foreign policies in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Eastern Mediterranean region

Represented EUR/SE at the US-*Türkiye Strategic Dialogue. Topics included joint military operations, security assistance, security cooperation, cyberspace defense, logistics of providing aid in Northeast Syria*

Drafted paper for principals including Deputy Assistant Secretary for Southern Europe and the Caucasus Erika Olson relating to Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus (more info available upon request)

Accompanied DAS Olson to meetings in Istanbul and Ankara and diplomatic engagements with numerous high-level government officials for discussions on the energy crisis caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as regional politics involving Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Wrote Info Memo on presidential elections in Turkey for Secretary of State Blinken

Built extensive network of Turkish contacts and experts on Turkey to inform internal reporting in EUR/SE Organized engagements with experts on Turkey, Greece, and the wider Eastern Mediterranean region to inform internal discussions on policymaking

Contributed to internal discussions involving a wide range of regional dynamics involving Turkey; including tensions with Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, and normalization talks between Turkey and Armenia

U.S. Department of State, Policy Advisor at the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (Syria-Iraq) and Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow (Nov 2021-August 2022)

Drew from all-source information to provide up-to-date, independent analysis on regional politics and security, based on TS/SCI (Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information) security clearance

Provided independent analysis on the politics, history, economic situation, and international relations of Syria and Iraq for colleagues in various State Department bureaus (Syria Desk, Iraq Desk, Turkey Desk, Syria Regional Platform, Democracy Rights & Labor, Global Women's Issues), and Treasury

Provided analysis of US security assistance to Iraqi security forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as part of the D-ISIS mission

Represented CSO at the D-ISIS Ministerial and held meetings with partner nations who are part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Topics included implementation of US security assistance, military operations, logistics of providing aid, and cyberspace defense

Provided policy recommendations and background analysis for colleagues in the field in Northeast Syria who were mediating the Intra-Kurdish Dialogue

Wrote Backgrounder on all major Kurdish Peace Negotiations in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey from 1983-2014, summarizing accomplishments, shortcomings, and relevance for current US-mediated Intra-Kurdish Dialogue in Syria. This included an analysis of regional politics and dynamics, and covered more than three decades of history of Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran.

Wrote Action Memo on the Syrian conflict and Syria's regional politics, U.S. security assistance to the SDF, the SDF's D-ISIS military operations, and outlined options for conflict prevention in Syria for CSO's Assistant Secretary

Developed policy positions and policy recommendations related to Syria, Iraq, and Turkey
Briefed the National Security Council on Iraq and provided recommendations for how to broaden and strengthen the Sinjar Agreement to ensure local buy-in and allow the Yezidi community to recover from the genocide by the Islamic State

Presented field research conducted in Northeast Syria, Turkey, and Egypt to interagency. Discussion was attended by several desks and bureaus

Participated in interagency working groups related to the NEA region (Ex: Yezidi Working Group, Atrocity Prevention Working Group)

Participated in regular meetings, including the Northeast Syria Action Plan meetings, the Syria Assistance Coordination meetings, and the Syria Watchers meetings.

Represented CSO at interagency discussions on Syria and Iraq

Co-led briefing to the interagency focused on the disputed territory of Sinjar, Iraq; provided analysis of non-state armed actors and geopolitical regional dynamics involving Iran and Turkey

Organize and moderate roundtables with subject matter experts on Syria, Iraq, and Turkey to incorporate non-governmental perspectives into analytic products and policy discussions

Wrote SitReps summarizing complex events and their impact on US foreign policy, with recommendations for US officials

Built extensive network of Syrian, Iraqi, and Turkish contacts to inform internal reporting

Wrote BCLs, talking points, and readouts for senior staff meetings with foreign diplomats

Cleared Papers and Memos, provided backup support to colleagues on the Syria and Iraq Desks

Advised on public diplomacy outreach, including social media messaging

Made recommendations to department management for new program management approaches, and new techniques to ensure the implementing partner achieved program goals

Made recommendations to team lead to ensure implementing partner's data collection process was methodologically sound and that the population sample was representative

Responded to crisis situations, emerging issues, and RFIs in a timely manner

Drafted numerous papers including for the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and EUR and CSO Leadership

FELLOWSHIPS

Council on Foreign Relations, International Affairs Fellowship, 2021-2022

Public Policy Fellowship, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May-August 2021

Harvard University, Kuwait Foundation Visiting Professor, at the Middle East Initiative, 2019-2020

Harvard University, fellowship at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, 2018-2019

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, fellowship in the Middle East Program, 2017-2019

Harvard University, one year academic fellowship with funding at the Belfer Center for 2014-2015 (declined)

Brown University, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies, 2013-2014

Institute of Advanced Studies in Toulouse, (IAST) Visiting Scholar, Summer 2013

Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Visiting Fellow at the Research Group "Post-Growth Societies" funded by the DFG (German Research Foundation), Spring 2012

Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the Institute of Turkish Studies: September 2007-March 2008

Fulbright Dissertation Research Fellowship for Germany: September 2005 - June 2006

RESEARCH GRANTS

Co-Pi on DSCU Grant submitted, "The Changing Face of U.S. Security Cooperation," Submitted as part of a Group Project, with Alexander Downes as P.I. Other Co-PIs include: Nicholas Anderson, Min Jung Kim, Matthew Levinger, Rachel Metz, Joanna Spear, and Paul D. Williams.

Principal Investigator on Minerva-DECUR Grant, Principal Investigator for the project "Meta-Conflict and Integrated Deterrence: Adversaries, Problematic Allies, and Non-State Actors", Awarded April 2024. Budget: $398,700

XCEPT Grant on Cross-Border Conflicts comparing Ukraine and Syria, submitted October 2023, shortlisted to submit full application. Budget request $30,377

Minerva Grant, Principal Investigator for the project "Meta-Conflict and Integrated Deterrence: Deterring Threats by Adversaries, Problematic Allies, and Non-State Actors. Russia, Iran, Turkey, and the Kurds" submitted February 2023, (not funded). Budget request $976,683

National Endowment for Democracy, Research Grant on the Crackdown on Civil Society in Egypt, $50,000, October 2018-September 2019 (grant awarded but declined)

National Endowment for Democracy, Research Grant on the Crackdown on Civil Society in Egypt, $50,000, September 2016-September 2017

Global Liberal Arts Alliance, grant to develop and teach a new course "Borders, Wars, and Refugees: From the Ottoman Empire to ISIS", which was a Connected Course between AUC and Oberlin where I provided some video instruction from Egypt as well as in-person lectures on the Oberlin campus, $5,000, spring semester 2017

European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights – Research Grant "Protest and Violence in Egypt", Lead applicant on two-year grant for 300,000 Euros, submitted 2016 but not funded

Carnegie Endowment Project on Arab Civil-Military Relations, Grant for $5,000 for research on Syrian Kurdish Women's Militias, February 2016

Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, Research Grant for $27,129 funded, but the political climate in Egypt led AUC to not allow me to accept the grant, 2016

Travel-Research-Engagement Grant from the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS), Fall 2014

Junior Scholars' Book Development Workshop at Yale University, Grant covers travel and accommodation at Yale University during the book workshop, October 2014

Faculty Support Grant for a research project on Popular Uprisings, Regime Collapse, and Uncertain Transitions: The Case of Egypt, Spring Semester 2012

Faculty Support Grant for Research in the Persian Gulf from the American University in Cairo: January 2010

Faculty Support Grant for Summer Research in Turkey and Germany from the American University in Cairo: June-July 2009

Goldman Fellowship from the American Council on Germany: January 2008

DAAD/AICGS Fellowship from the American Institute of Contemporary German Studies for two months in-residence in Washington DC: February-March 2008

Next Generation Grant/Young Fellows Program of the Transnational Institute: Dec 2007-Jan 2009

Summer research grant from the Institute of Turkish Studies: 2005

SELECTED INTERVIEWS, INVITED LECTURES, AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Invited book talk at Columbia University, New York, April 1, 2024

Invited book talk at SOAS, London, March 5, 2024

Book Launch for *Statelet of Survivors* at George Washington University, February 21, 2024

Invited as the key speaker to present my research on cross-border conflicts at a private roundtable at the United States Institute of Peace, October 3, 2023

Invited speaker at the Suli Forum "Twenty Years after the Invasion of 2003" at the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, attended by scholars and government officials from Iraq, the US, and Europe, including the current Prime Minister and former President of Iraq, March 15-16, 2023

Invited to provide written and oral testimony for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) on Safeguarding Religious Freedom in Northeast Syria, Online Hearing, June 10, 2020

Briefing for mid and senior-level military medical officers, from the United States and over 10 foreign partner nations from the Medical Strategic Leadership Program about the situation in Syria, March 3, 2020

Invited speaker in the European Parliament, "North and East Syria/Rojava" December 12, 2019

Public Lecture at Harvard University, "Turkey, the Kurds, the United States, and the Future of Northeast Syria", December 4, 2019

Invited speaker at a bi-partisan event on Capitol Hill with three US Senators, "The Future of US Relations with Syrian Kurdish Partners," November 20, 2019

Television Interview on "Turkey launches Syria offensive," BBC News, October 10, 2019

Television Interview on "US Troops Withdraw from Northern Syria," CBS News, October 9, 2019

Profile of my research "In the Crosshairs of an Academic Crackdown," Epicenter, Weatherhead Center at Harvard University, April 9, 2019

"The Islamic State After the Fall of the Caliphate," 17 minute Video Interview, Wilson Center, April 9, 2019

Television Interview on the situation in Iraq and Syria with Al Hurra, August 1, 2018

Television Interview about US-Turkish relations with Al Hurra, July 7, 2018

Television Interview about de-escalation zones in Syria, with Al Hurra May 26, 2018

"State Repression in Egypt since July 2013", 25 minute Television Interview for Al Jazeera Mubasher (Live), October 7, 2017

"Status Report on Egypt's Civil Society", 13 minute Video Interview as part of the NOW Series at the Woodrow Wilson Center, September 27, 2017

"Why Kurdish Women Joined the Fight against ISIS", Radio Interview with NPR, June 26, 2017

Television Interview with BBC Arabic, March 2016

"The Battle for Kobane" Radio Interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, July 6, 2015

Member of the international election observer team in Gaziantep/Turkey for the Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) during the parliamentary elections, June 2015

Speaker at the House of Lords in London/UK on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the intervention in Bahrain. Other speakers included Lord Avebury and Jeremy Corbyn. March 2015

"Empire, Republic, Democracy: A History of Turkey" I was one of three scholars invited to contribute to Curriculum Development for the Choices Program at Brown University

References

- List of references available upon request.