

Reid B. C. Pauly

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor of Political Science

Department of Political Science, Brown University, 2020-

Dean's Assistant Professor of Nuclear Security and Policy

Watson School of International and Public Affairs, Brown University, 2020-

Research Affiliate

Center for Nuclear Security Policy, MIT Security Studies Program, 2025-

Visiting Fellow

Dickey Center for International Understanding, Dartmouth College, February 2025

Visiting Scholar

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2024-2025

Stanton Postdoctoral Fellow

Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, 2019-2020

Predoctoral Fellow

Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2017-2019

EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, 2013-2019

- PhD, Political Science, Security Studies Program

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, 2006-2010

- BA, Government and History, magna cum laude

Upper Canada College, Toronto, ON

BOOKS

The Art of Coercion: Credible Threats and the Assurance Dilemma (Cornell University Press, Studies in Security Affairs series, 2025)

- Reviewed in *Global Asia*

Nuclear Brinkmanship: The Role of Risk in Crises (book project)

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

Reid B. C. Pauly, “Damned If They Do, Damned If They Don’t: The Assurance Dilemma in International Coercion,” *International Security*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Summer 2024): 91-132.

Reid B. C. Pauly and Rose McDermott, “The Psychology of Nuclear Brinkmanship” *International Security*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Winter 2022/2023): 9-51.

- Subject of an H-Diplo Roundtable.

Erik Lin-Greenberg, **Reid B. C. Pauly**, and Jacquelyn Schneider, “Wargaming for International Relations Research,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2022): 83-109.

- Reviewed in H-Diplo.

Reid B. C. Pauly, “Deniability in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: The Upside of the Dual-Use Dilemma,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 66, Iss. 1 (2022).

Cullen G. Nutt and **Reid B. C. Pauly**, “Caught Red-Handed: How States Wield Proof to Coerce Wrongdoers,” *International Security*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Fall 2021).

Reid B. C. Pauly, “Would U.S. Leaders Push the Button? Wargames and the Sources of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Fall 2018): 151-192.

- Reviewed in H-Diplo.

Reid B. C. Pauly, “Bedeviled by a Paradox: Nitze, Bundy, and an Incipient Nuclear Norm,” *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 22, Iss. 3-4 (2015): 441-455.

- Winner of the 2014 McElvany Nonproliferation Challenge.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Reid B. C. Pauly and Jessica Chen Weiss, “How Coercive Diplomacy Works: Making Threats in International Crises,” in Hillary Rodham Clinton and Keren Yarhi-Milo (eds.), *Inside the Situation Room: The Theory and Practice of Crisis Decision Making* (Oxford University Press, 2025).

Scott D. Sagan and **Reid B. C. Pauly**, “Should the United States or the international community aggressively pursue nuclear nonproliferation policies?” in Peter M. Haas and John A. Hird (eds.), *Controversies in Globalization: Contending Approaches to International Relations*, 2nd Edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2013).

Reid B. C. Pauly and Scott D. Sagan, “The Conundrum of Close Calls,” in Henry D. Sokolski and Bruno Tertrais (eds.), *Nuclear Weapons Security Crises: What Does History Teach?* (U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2013).

ROUNDTABLES AND BOOK REVIEWS

Roundtable Review of Jacques Hymans, “The Bomb as God: A Metaphor that Impedes Nuclear Disarmament.” *Security Studies* (2024). H-Diplo | Robert Jervis International Security Studies Forum, July 24, 2024, <https://issforum.org/to/jrt15-53>.

“The Psychology of Nuclear Brinkmanship,” H-Diplo | Robert Jervis International Security Studies Forum, Policy Roundtable II-5, August 4, 2023, <https://issforum.org/to/jprII-5>.

“Shedding Light on Nuclear Conflict,” *Texas National Security Review*, Roundtable on Paul Avey, *Tempting Fate: Why Nonnuclear States Confront Nuclear Opponents*, August 17, 2020.

OP-EDS, ESSAYS, AND REPORTS

“Deterrence, Reassurance and the North Korean Nuclear Standoff,” *Global Asia*, Vol 20, No. 4 (December 2025): 44-47.

- Also published as “Policy Brief No.259: Reassurance on the Korean Peninsula: Lessons from Scholarship to Stabilize Deterrence,” Toda Peace Institute, November 25, 2025.

“Putin and the Psychology of Nuclear Brinkmanship,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 30, 2023. With Rose McDermott and Paul Slovic.

- “Don’t Be So Confident in Nuclear Decision-Making,” *Lamfare*, February 26, 2023. With Rose McDermott.
- “What to Do When Predicting Pandemics,” *Foreign Policy*, September 11, 2020.
- “Why Invading Iran Would Be a Military Disaster,” *The National Interest*, January 12, 2020. With Daniel Khalessi.
- “A Dangerous and Growing Rift Between Nuclear Strategy and Arms Control,” The Simons Foundation, March 1, 2018.
- “This is Why Trump’s Strategy for Iran Will Fail,” *The National Interest*, December 21, 2017. With Mahsa Rouhi and Sahar Nowrouzzadeh.
- “The Tangled Fates of Pittsburgh and Paris,” *War on the Rocks*, June 12, 2017.
- “The Pioneering Role of CIS in American War Gaming,” *Précis*, Fall 2015.
- “History, Close Calls, and Nuclear Materials Security,” with Scott D. Sagan, commissioned by the Nuclear Threat Initiative for preparation of the Nuclear Materials Security Index 2.0, December 2012.

WORKING PAPERS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS

- “Theories of Nuclear Brinkmanship: Reviewing the Role of Risk in Crises”
- “Second-Order Beliefs and Violent Transgressions: A Perceptual Turn in the Study of International Norms” (with Lee-Or Ankori-Karlinsky and Dan Post) (under review)
- “First and Second-Order Beliefs in Cold War Nuclear Wargames”
- “Power, Threat, and Risk: Arms Control and Nuclear Security Studies at the 50th Anniversary of *International Security*” (under review)
- “The Quiet Handling of the 1991 Algerian Nuclear Crisis”
- “‘Rhetorical Evaporation’ in Nuclear Security Studies”

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- Fellow, Equitable Learning Inquiry Program, Brown University, 2025-2026
- Visiting Fellow, Dickey Center for International Understanding, Dartmouth College, February 2025
- International Strategy Fellow, Schmidt Futures and the Rockefeller Foundation, Class of 2020
- Stanton Postdoctoral Fellowship, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, 2019-2020
- Predoctoral Fellowship, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Managing the Atom and International Security Program, Harvard University, 2017-2019
- Carnegie Junior Scholar, Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium, 2015-2018
- High Distinction, MIT General Examinations in International Relations and Security Studies, 2015
- Winner of the 2014 McElvany Nonproliferation Challenge, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

Winner of the 2012 Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and *Foreign Policy* Essay Contest on “Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis,” scholars and practitioners category

Winner of the 2009-2010 Cold War Essay Contest, John A. Adams Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute

Winner of the Project on Nuclear Issues 2010 Undergraduate Essay Contest, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC

Winner of the Janice N. and Milton J. Esman Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Scholarship, Cornell University, 2010

Varsity Letter, Cornell University, Division I Varsity Heavyweight Rowing, 2006-2010

RESEARCH GRANTS

Stanton Foundation, Nuclear Security Research Grant, 2022-2026

Longview Philanthropy, Research Grant, 2024

Watson Institute, Research Workshop, 2023

Schmidt Futures, International Strategy Forum Impact Grant, 2022

Birkelund Award for Watson Institute Faculty Research, 2022

Naval War College and MIT Center for International Studies, Research Workshop, 2019

Simons Foundation, Graduate Research Award for Disarmament, Arms Control, and Nonproliferation, 2018

Center for International Studies, Summer Study Grant, 2018

Center for International Studies, Starr Travel Grant, 2018

Smith Richardson Foundation, World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship, 2017

Tobin Project, Graduate Fellowship, 2017

Center for International Studies, Summer Study Grant, 2017

TEACHING AND ADVISING

The Politics of Nuclear Weapons, Undergraduate Lecture, Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2025

The Shadow of Power, Undergraduate GISP, Spring 2024

Coercion: Deterrence and Compellence, Undergraduate Seminar, Fall 2020, Spring 2022

Foundations of Security, Undergraduate Lecture, Spring 2023, Spring 2026

• Supported by an Equitable Learning Inquiry fellowship, Spring 2026

Nuclear Proliferation and International Security, Graduate Seminar, Spring 2021, Fall 2025

U.S. Military Power, Teaching Assistant for Professor Barry Posen, M.I.T., Spring 2019

Causes of War, Teaching Assistant for Professor Stephen Van Evera, M.I.T., Spring 2016

PhD Committees: Omar Afzaal '25, Beenish Pervaiz '25, Dan Post '23

DISCIPLINARY SERVICE

Reviewer for *American Journal of Political Science*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *Columbia University Press*, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *European Journal of International Security*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *International Interactions*, *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Perspectives*, *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, *Journal of Applied History*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Oxford University Press*, *Rand Corporation*, *Security Studies*, *Texas National Security Review*

Book Workshops: Tristan Volpe, Colleen Larkin

Member of the American Political Science Association, International Studies Association, Midwest Political Science Association

Representative of the Political Science Department on the M.I.T. Graduate Student Council, 2016-2017

Co-chair of the Political Science Graduate Student Council, 2016-2017

Co-chair of the MIT Nuclear Weapons Working Group, 2015-2016

OTHER POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Track II Diplomacy

- US-UK-France Trilateral Dialogue November 2023, June 2024, November 2024
- US-China Strategic Stability Dialogue 2019, 2023 (virtual)

Center for Strategic and International Studies, Project on Nuclear Issues

- Mid-Career Cadre, Class of 2021
- Conference Advisory Board

Schmidt Futures International Strategy Forum, Class of 2020

Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium (IPSCON)

- Member of the IPSCON Alumni Steering Committee

Bridging the Gap

- International Policy Summer Institute 2022
- New Era Workshop 2016

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Researcher, RAND Corporation

Washington, DC; September 2016-December 2023

Graduate Assistant, Carnegie International Policy Scholars Consortium

MIT, Cambridge, MA; September 2016-June 2017

Summer Associate, RAND Corporation

Washington, DC; June 2016-September 2016

Research Assistant, M.I.T. Internet Policy Research Initiative

Cambridge, MA; September 2015-June 2016

Research Assistant to Scott Sagan, Center for International Security and Cooperation
Stanford, CA; May 2011-June 2013

Rapporteur, U.S.-Pakistan and Pakistan-India Track II diplomatic meetings
Stanford, CA; 2011-2013

Research Assistant, Ploughshares Fund
Washington, DC; August 2010-May 2011

CONFERENCES AND INVITED TALKS

“Coercive Assurance”

- Oxford University, Oxford, UK, May 2026
- King’s College London, London, UK, May 2026
- International Studies Association, Columbus, OH, March 2026
- Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 2026
- Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Lab, virtual, December 2025
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, UK Ministry of Defence, virtual, October 2025
- Toda Peace Institute, Tokyo, Japan, October 2025
- Future Warfare Symposium, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, August 2025
- Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, April 2025
- Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, September 2024
- Yale University, New Haven, CT, May 2023
- University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, April 2023
- American Political Science Association, Montreal, Canada, September 2022
- International Studies Association, Nashville, TN, March 2022
- University of Virginia, virtual, November 2020
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, CA, January 2020
- Stanton Conference, Washington, DC, October 2019
- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, April 2019
- International Studies Association, Toronto, ON, March 2019
- New Faces Conference, Triangle Institute for Security Studies, Durham, NC, October 2018
- Yale International Security Studies Research Workshop, New Haven, CT, September 2018
- Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea, September 2018
- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, April 2018
- Tobin Foundation, Cambridge, MA, September 2017

“The Decline of Arms Control and the Future of Nuclear Security Studies”

- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, December 2025

“Nuclear Choices in a Changing World Order: US-China–Russia, US–ROK Alliance, North Korea, and the Future of Nonproliferation”

- South Korean Consulate, Boston, MA, November 2025

“Theories of Nuclear Brinkmanship”

- University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, May 2025
- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, February 2025
- Dartmouth College, Dickey Center, Hanover, NH, February 2025
- American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, September 2024

“Second Order Beliefs and Violent Transgressions in International Politics”

- Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea, April 2025
- MIT, Cambridge, MA, April 2024

“Wargames as Historical Evidence”

- UC Berkeley, Risk and Security Lab, virtual, April 2026
- MIT Wargaming Working Group, Cambridge, MA, March 2026
- MIT Wargaming Lab, Endicott House, Dedham, MA, July 2025
- XLab, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, July 2025
- MIT Wargaming Lab, Endicott House, Dedham, MA, July 2024

“Nuclear Knowledge, Nuclear Gaps”

- International Studies Association, Chicago, IL, March 2025

“Directions Forward for Psychology in International Relations”

- Columbia University, Saltzman Institute, New York, NY, January 2025

“Coercive Bargaining Theory and International Hostage Negotiations”

- Bridging the Gap and CSIS, Washington, DC, September 2024

“Deterrence and Compellence on the Korean Peninsula”

- Belfer Center Korea Project, Cambridge, MA, April 2022
- Midwest Political Science Association, virtual, April 2022

“The Benefits of Secrecy and Transparency in Arms Control”

- CSIS, Washington, DC, March 2022

“Wargaming: Its History, Application, and Future Use”

- Three-part webinar series, co-sponsored by Hoover, Watson, and MIT SSP, February-March 2022

“Keynote: Wargames and Strategic Deterrence”

- U.S. Naval War College, virtual, February 2022

“Understanding Threats That Leave Something to Chance”

- U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, December 2021
- Peace Science Society International, virtual, November 2020

“Deniability in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime”

- Watson Institute, Brown University, virtual, October 2021
- GW Institute for Security and Conflict Studies, virtual, October 2020
- CISAC, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, February 2020
- Nuclear Studies Research Initiative, Hamburg, Germany, December 2019
- American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, August 2019

“Would U.S. Leaders Push the Button? Wargames and the Sources of Nuclear Restraint”

- Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, February 2025
- King’s College London, virtual, March 2021
- UC Berkeley, Nuclear Policy Working Group, Berkeley, CA, September 2019
- Amherst College, Amherst, MA, April 2019
- American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, September 2018
- U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 2018
- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, February 2018
- International Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, February 2017
- RAND Corporation Center for Gaming, Washington, DC, August 2016

“Wargaming for Political Science Research”

- American Political Science Association, virtual, September 2020

“Prospects for US-China Nuclear Arms Control”

- Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai, China, December 2019

“Wargaming and Simulations in International Security Studies”

- NATO Defense College, Rome, Italy, December 2019
- International Studies Association, Toronto, ON, March 2019
- American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, August 2019

“Coercion, Diplomacy, and Nuclear Weapons: Eyes on Iran”

- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Cambridge, MA, April 2019

“Nuclear Strategy 101”

- Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, Project on Managing the Atom, Cambridge, MA, December 2018

“Wargaming in the Nuclear Age”

- Tufts University, Medford, MA, October 2018

“Selective Secrecy: The Strategic Logic of Deniability in Coercive Bargaining”

- International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, April 2018

“War Plan Orange: Lessons for Healthy Joint Planning”

- International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, April 2018
- RAND Corporation, Washington, DC, August 2016

“Deterrence vs. Disarmament: A Dangerous and Growing Rift in the Nuclear Weapons Expert Community”

- Global Affairs Canada, Ottawa, ON, March 2018

“Projecting Military Power in the Arctic”

- Conference of Defense Associates Institute, Kingston, Ontario, October 2014

OTHER MEDIA

Dagbladet Information (Denmark), commentary, “If Trump wants to secure concessions from Iran at the negotiating table, he will have to master a challenging discipline: convincing his opponent that he keeps his word,” April 22, 2026

El Mercurio (Chile), commentary, “Conflicting messages from the U.S. and Iran on the eve of negotiations, under the shadow of the truce’s end,” April 21, 2026

BBC News (Brasil and Hausa), commentary, “How war in Iran can lead the world to a new race for nuclear weapons,” April 11, 2026

CKNW Vancouver, radio interview, “Is Iran really a nuclear threat?” April 8, 2026

De Tijd (Brussels, Belgium), commentary, “Is the Iran war ushering in a new nuclear arms race?” March 25, 2026

CKNW Vancouver, radio interview, “The fog of war in Iran,” March 24, 2026

Brown Daily Herald, commentary, “R.I. gas prices soar amid Iran war,” March 20, 2026

Los Angeles Times, commentary, “Trump is searching for an endgame to the Iran war,” March 15, 2026

The Parliament Magazine, commentary, “The EU welcomes France’s nuclear turn, but questions remain,” March 12, 2026

News from Brown, interview, “A nuclear security scholar’s take on recent military actions in Iran,” March 6, 2026

News from Watson, commentary, “Celebrating the life and legacy of Mark Garrison,” February 25, 2026

TIME, commentary, “Here’s What We Know—and What We Don’t—About Trump’s Call to Restart U.S. Nuclear Testing,” October 30, 2025

‘Thinking the Unthinkable with Ankit Panda,’ War on the Rocks, podcast, “The Coercive Assurance Dilemma,” September 2025

‘New Books Network,’ King’s College London, podcast, “The Art of Coercion,” August 2025

‘Trending Globally’ Watson School, podcast, “Diplomacy, Security, and the ‘Art of Coercion,’” August 2025

‘The Risk Calculus,’ UC Berkeley Risk and Security Lab, podcast, “Shall We Play a Game?” September 2023

‘Profiles in Strategy,’ U.S. Naval War College, podcast, “Coercion: Deterrence and Compellence,” May 2023

‘Trending Globally,’ Watson Institute, podcast, “The Psychology of Nuclear Brinkmanship,” January 2023

Brown Daily Herald, commentary, “New faculty transition from virtual to in-person teaching,” October 27, 2021

Brown Daily Herald, commentary, “Watson Institute honors Gregorian’s legacy,” October 22, 2021

IS Author Chats, interview, “Wargames and the Sources of Nuclear Restraint,” May 8, 2019

Business Insider, commentary, “Experts say Trump is giving North Korea the excuse it needs to cling to its nuclear weapons program,” August 10, 2017