Dr Tom Watts

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Areas of Research and Teaching

- **International Relations:** American foreign policy; great power competition; the Global War on Terror; popular culture and world politics.

- **International Security:** The changing character of war; US socio-technical imaginaries of war; remote warfare; security cooperation/assistance.

- **Artificial Intelligence:** autonomous weapon systems; global regulatory debates on military AI; AI narratives.

Selected Employment History

- **Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, Postdoctoral Researcher: Great Power Competition and Remote Warfare: Change or Continuity in Practice?** Royal Holloway University of London, November 2022 – October 2025.

- **Associate Postdoctoral Researcher, AUTONORMS Project,** University of Southern Denmark, Sep 2020 – Oct 2023.

- **Teaching Fellow in International Relations,** Royal Holloway University of London, Sep 2021– June 2022.

- **Lecturer in Politics and International Relations,** Hertfordshire University, Sep 2020 – Aug 2021.

- **Teaching Fellow in War and Security,** Royal Holloway University of London, Sep 2018 – Aug 2020.

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant/Assistant Lecturer,** University of Kent, Sep 2014 – May 2018.

Education

- **PhD in International Relations,** University of Kent: Pass with no corrections (Sep 2014 - Sep 2018). 2018 BISA Postgraduate Excellence in Teaching International Studies Prize | 2017 University of Kent Social Sciences Seminar Leader Teaching Prize.

- **MA in International Relations,** University of Kent: Distinction (Sep 2013 – Sep 2014). Global Society Prize for Best MA Dissertation | John Burton Prize for the Best Taught Postgraduate Performance.

- BA (Hons) in International Relations and History, University of Portsmouth: First Class Honours (Sep 2009 – July 2013). School Prize for the Best Dissertation | School Prize for the Best Overall Performance.

Research

Refereed Articles

- Watts, T. & Bode, I. (2023). Machine guardians: The Terminator, AI narratives and US regulatory discourse on lethal autonomous weapons systems. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 1-22.

- Biegon, R., & Watts, T. (2023). Beyond the neoconservative legacy in American counterterrorism policy: from George W. Bush to forever war. *International Politics*, 1-24.

- Bode, I., Huelss, H., Nadibaidze, A., Qiao-Franco, G., & Watts, T. (2023). Algorithmic Warfare: Taking Stock of a Research Programme. *Global Society*, 1-23.

- Bode, I., Huelss, H., Nadibaidze, A., Qiao-Franco, G., & Watts, T. (2023). Prospects for the global governance of autonomous weapons: comparing Chinese, Russian, and US practices. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 25(1), 1-15.

- Biegon, R., & Watts, T. (2022). Remote warfare and the retooling of American primacy. *Geopolitics*, *27*(3), 948-971.

- Watts, T. & Biegon, R. (2021). Revisiting the remoteness of remote warfare: US military intervention in Libya during Obama's presidency. *Defence Studies*, *21*(4), 508-527.

- Biegon, R., Rauta, V., & Watts, T. (2021). Remote warfare–buzzword or buzzkill? *Defence Studies*, *21*(4), 427-446.

- Biegon, R., & Watts, T. (2020). When ends Trump means: continuity versus change in US counterterrorism policy. *Global Affairs*, *6*(1), 37-53.

Policy Reports

- Bode, I. & Watts, T. (2023). [Loitering munitions and unpredictability: autonomy in weapon systems and challenges to human control](). Published in collaboration with *Article 36*, 1-72.

- Bode, I. & Watts, T. (2021). [Meaning-less Human Control: Lessons from air defence systems on meaningful human control for the debate on AWS](). *Drone Wars UK,* 1-72.

Briefing Papers and Book Chapters

- Biegon, R., & Watts, T. (2021). Security cooperation as remote warfare: the US in the Horn of Africa. In *Remote Warfare: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, E-IR, 152-172.

- Watts, T., and Biegon, R. (2019). Conceptualizing remote warfare: the past, present, and future. *Oxford Research Group*, 1-11.

- Watts, T., and Biegon, R. (2017). Defining remote warfare: security cooperation. London: *Oxford Research Group*, 1-16.

Submissions of Written Evidence

- Watts, T. (2023). Dr Tom Watts – Written Evidence (AIW0014). *House of Lords Artificial Intelligence in Weapon Systems Committee*, 1-13.

- Bode, I., Huelss, H., Nadibaidze, A., & Watts, T. (2023). Global Governance of AI in the Military Domain. *United Nations Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Technology*.

- Bode, I., Huelss, H., Nadibaidze, A., & Watts, T. (2021). Written evidence submitted by AutoNorms Project (TFP0008). *UK Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee enquiry on Tech and the future of UK*, 1-9.

Selected Online Publications

- Loitering munitions: flagging an urgent need for legally binding rules for autonomy in weapon systems. *ICRC Humanitarian Law & Policy Blog* (2023) with Ingvild Bode.

- Remote Warfare: A debate worth the buzz? *E-IR* (2021) with Rubrick Biegon and Vladimir Rauta

- Worried about the autonomous weapons of the future? Look at what's already gone wrong. *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (2021) with Ingvild Bode.

- Drones in Afghanistan: Not a technological "Silver Bullet". *Magazin für Computertechnik* (2021) with Ingvild Bode.

- Primary Primers: No matter who wins the Democratic primary, an end to 'Forever War' is unlikely. *LSE US Centre* (2019).

Professional Activities

Event Organization

- "Imagining Future War: New Perspectives on Military Technology in an Era of Great Power Competition" workshop (with Daniel Møller Ølgaard, Royal Danish Defence College). 11th European Workshops in International Studies, European International Studies Association, July 2024.

- "Conceptualizing Remote Warfare, the Past, Present, and Future," international conference (with Rubrick Biegon, University of Kent and The Remote Warfare Programme thinktank). University of Kent, April 2019.

- "The PhD and Beyond", Postgraduate Colloquium. British International Studies Association, Birmingham, December 2017.

Selected Invited Talks

- "Travelling Technologies: Repertoires of AI Innovation, Experimentation and Deployment Across Policing and Warfare Operations." Contesting Governance Symposium, Utrecht University, December 2023.

- "AI, Geopolitics and the Need for a New Analytical Framework?", Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Roundtable, December 2023.

- "The Past, Present, and Future of Remote Warfare Scholarship." School of Area Studies, Sociology, History, Politics and Literature, University of Portsmouth, December 2022.

- "Machine guardians: The Terminator, AI narratives and US regulatory discourse on lethal autonomous weapons systems." International Politics Seminar Series, University of Southern Denmark.

- "Publication, Post-Doctoral Pathways, and Research Roundtable." BISA Postgraduate and Early Career Research Conference, Aberystwyth University, April 2020. (Cancelled due to COVID-19)

- "Remoteness in Contemporary Western Military Intervention: A Conceptual Analysis." Security and Governance Research Seminar Series, University of Hertfordshire, January 2020.

- "What is Remote Warfare?" Postgraduate Talks, Kingston University, November 2019.

- "Remote Warfare and the Changing Character of Western Interventionism." Inaugural US Foreign Policy and National Security Seminar Series, University College London, October 2019.

- "Planning Ahead for Post-Doc Opportunities and Teaching Fellowships." BISA Postgraduate and ECR Conference, Portsmouth University, April 2019.

- "Brexit Roundtable." Conference on Foreign Policy in a Globalizing World, University of Edinburgh, May 2019.

Selected Research Presentations (since November 2022)

- 2023 European International Studies Association Annual Conference

  - Technological Change and US Imaginaries of War: Is Great Power Competition Changing American Practices of Loitering Munition Development?

- 2023 British International Studies Association Annual Conference

  - Technological Change and US Imaginaries of War: Is Great Power Competition Changing American Practices of Loitering Munition Development?

- 2023 British International Studies Association "Age of Antagonism: US Foreign Policy in an Era of Strategic Rivalry and Great Power Competition" workshop

  - Military Artificial Intelligence and the US-China Tech War: Practicing Great Power Competition?

- 2023 British International Studies Association International Studies and Emerging Technologies conference

  - Military Artificial Intelligence and the US-China Tech War: Practicing Great Power Competition?