

Does Building Partner Military Capacity Work?

Description

This episode of the *Irregular Warfare Podcast* tackles the topic of capacity building. Hosts Shawna Sinnott and Kyle Atwell welcome Dr. Stephen Biddle and Mr. Matt Cancian to discuss the question: Does building partner military capacity work?

Dr. Biddle is a professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University and served as an advisor to Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. Stanley McChrystal during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. His research focuses on the [political challenges that influence the success of Security Force Assistance](#). Matt Cancian is a doctoral candidate in political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a former Marine officer. His research focuses on whether Western efforts to [build partner capacity among the Kurdish Peshmerga](#) during the counter-ISIS fight improved the combat performance of Kurdish units.

With examples from the theater and strategic to the tactical levels, our guests identify institutional- and individual-level barriers to building an effective partner force, as well as the conditions that best facilitate the success of these programs. They further contextualize why building partner capacity matters to the US national security strategy. In line with the charter of the *Irregular Warfare Podcast*, the conversation bridges the gap between scholars and practitioners by identifying important lessons learned from the study and practice of irregular warfare for both policymakers and practitioners.

The *Irregular Warfare Podcast* is a collaboration between the Modern War Institute and Princeton University's Empirical Studies of Conflict Project. You can listen to the full episode below, and you can find it and subscribe on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Stitcher](#), [Spotify](#), [TuneIn](#), or your favorite podcast app. And be sure to [follow the podcast on Twitter](#)!

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