

DIU: Silicon Valley Meets the Modern Battlefield

Description

Episode 114 – DIU: Silicon Valley Meets the Modern Battlefield

Episode 114 examines the formation of the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) and its mission to integrate Silicon Valley technology within the Department of Defense innovation sphere. The guests are the co-authors of [Unit X: How the Pentagon and Silicon Valley are Transforming the Future of War](#), which is the foundation for the conversation.

Our guests begin by outlining DIU’s origin and mission emphasizing the importance of commercial technology in deterring and winning future conflicts. Our guests then discuss the challenges DIU faced with skepticism about the role of young companies in Silicon Valley and the bureaucratic problems associated with the DoD’s current budgeting and acquisition processes. They then provide insight into DIU’s core concept of operationalizing commercial technology faster than adversaries as a mean of supporting the National Defense Strategy. Lastly, they discuss adversarial approaches to innovation and use examples from both historical and contemporary conflicts to highlight important lessons learned for policy makers and practitioners.

[Raj Shah](#) is a serial technology entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and former director of the Pentagon’s Defense Innovation Unit. He is currently the managing partner of Shield Capital, an investment firm focused on technologies at the nexus of commercial and national security applications. He started his career as an F-16 pilot in the Air National Guard and continues to serve part time. He obtained an AB degree from Princeton University and an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania.

[Christopher Kirchhoff](#) is an expert in emerging technology, who helped create the Defense Innovation Unit and continues to advise. During the Obama administration, he was the director of strategic planning for the National Security Council and senior civilian adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Chris obtained an AB degree from Harvard College and a PhD in social and political sciences from Cambridge University.

[Frank Struzinski](#) and [Matt Moellering](#) are the hosts for Episode 114. Please reach out to them with any questions about this episode or the [Irregular Warfare Podcast](#).

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Date Created
2024/09/20