

# Building Better Security Partners: *What have we learned from the past and how it applies today.*



Civilian Research Project by Geoff Stewart  
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# Building Partner Capacity

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- What can we learn from past experience?
  - When is BPC most effective?
  - What key factors contribute to success?
- Are we applying these lessons today?  
(focus on fragile states)
  - Re-training Iraqi security forces against ISIS
  - Continued assistance to Afghan security forces
  - BPC in Africa

# Research Methodology:

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- Explore current scholarship:  
RAND, Congressional Research Service, others

- Interviews with current practitioners:

## Department of Defense

- Defense Security Cooperation Agency
- Department of the Army G3/5/7
- United States Africa Command
- Operation INHERENT Resolve (Iraq)
  - Office of Security Cooperation – Iraq
- Operation Freedom Sentinel (Afghanistan)
  - Resolute Support Headquarters

## Department of State

- Political Military Bureau
- Regional Bureaus: Africa, Europe



# Building Partner Capacity

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- What is BPC?

- Security Assistance (Foreign Military Sales, Financing, etc)
- Security Cooperation (Foreign Internal Defense, combined exercises, etc)
- Security Sector Assistance
- Security Force Assistance (Train, Advise, Equip)

= All of the above, *focused on fragile states*



# Why is BPC important?

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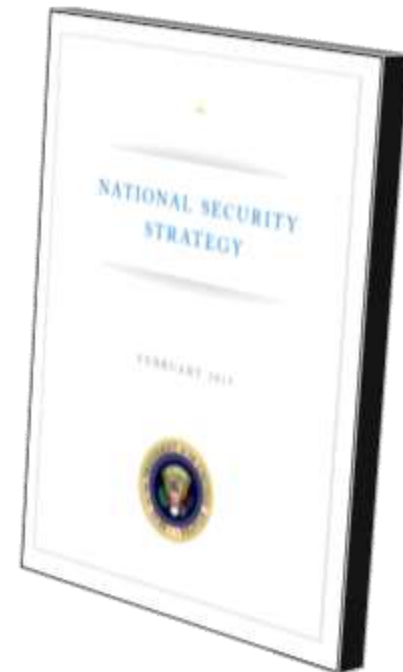
- **Presidential Policy Directive #23 (2013)**

“U.S. assistance to build capabilities to meet these challenges can yield critical benefits, including reducing the possibility that the United States or partner nations may be required to intervene abroad in response to instability”

- **National Security Strategy (2015)**

“We will strengthen U.S. and international capacity to prevent conflict among and within states.”

“...we will continue to work with partners and through multilateral organizations to address the root causes of conflict before they erupt and to contain and resolve them when they do”



# And one more voice....

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“Building the governance and security capacity of other countries ....is even more urgent in a global security environment where....the most likely and lethal threats – an American city poisoned or reduced to rubble – will likely emanate from fractured or failing states, rather than aggressor states.”

“It (BPC) is in many ways the ideological and security challenge of our time.”



- Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates;  
speech to the Nixon center, 2010.

# When is BPC most effective?

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## Case studies considered by the CRS:

- **Victory in war or war termination** (exit strategy)
  - Vietnam (1954-1973)
  - Afghanistan (2001-2015)
  - Iraq (2003-2010)
- **Managing regional security challenges**
  - Support to African Union and its mission to Somalia (2005-present)
  - U.S. Assistance to Mali (2002-2015)
  - Support to Former Warsaw Pact (1994-present)
  - Security Assistance to Pakistan (2002-present)
- **Indirectly Supporting a Party to an Internal Conflict**
  - Philippines (1947-1953)
  - U.S. Intervention in Soviet-Afghan war (1980-1988)
  - U.S. Assistance to Columbia
- **Conflict mitigation**
  - Bosnia – Herzegovina (1995-2002)
  - Prevent re-emergence of conflict between Egypt and Israel)
- **Building institutional and interpersonal linkages**
  - Asia Pacific Center for security studies (1995-present)
  - International Military Education and Training (IMET)
- **Enhancing coalition participation**
  - Vietnam and “Many Flags Initiative
  - Coalition participation in OIF
  - Coalition participation in OEF/ISAF/RS
- **Alliance building**
  - BPC in Greece to support NATO (1947-1952)
  - BPC in Korea to support United Nations (1948-1950)
  - Build Alliances in former Warsaw Pact (1992-2010)



# When is BPC most effective?



**Source:** Congressional Research Service.

# RAND Report Findings:



“What works best when building partner capacity and under what circumstances?” 2013

“What works best when building partner capacity in challenging contexts?” 2015

- Partner Nation invests its own funds to support or sustain capacity
- Partner Nation has sufficient absorptive capacity
- Partner Nation has high governance indicators
- Partner Nation has strong economy
- Partner Nation shares security interests with the U.S.
- ~~Spending more money on BPC~~
- Consistency in both funding and implementation
- Matching BPC efforts with Partner objectives and absorptive capacity
- Including a sustainment component of the BPC initiative
- Progress can be highly personality dependent (Partner Nation)
- Ministerial capacity is extremely important



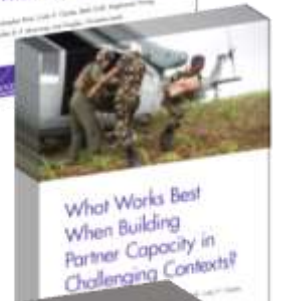
# RAND Report plus Karlin Findings:

“What works best when building partner capacity and under what circumstances?” 2013

“What works best when building partner capacity in challenging contexts?” 2015

“Training and Equipping is not Transformation” 2012

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- Ministerial capacity is extremely important
- Significant involvement in Partner Nation sensitive affairs  
(personnel and organization)
- Avoiding co-combatant role



# Factors mostly within US control:

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- **Consistency** in implementation  
(funding, interagency coordination, personnel policies)
- Including a **sustainment** component of the BPC initiative
- Developing **Ministerial capacity** is extremely important
- Significant **involvement in Partner Nation sensitive affairs**  
(personnel and organization)
- **Avoiding co-combatant** role
- **Matching** BPC efforts with Partner Nation objectives and absorptive capacity

# Consistency Deep Dive:

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## - **Funding challenges**

Patchwork of over 103 different legal authorities

Year to year availability based on congressional approval

Berry amendment and Leahy law

## - **Interagency Coordination**

Regional military campaign plan vs. individual ambassador prerogatives

Dual-key approval

Importance of relationships

## - **Personnel Policies**

Do we pick our best? Afghan hands program?

Frequent rotations impact relationships (both internal and w/partners)



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# Parallels with international development

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## Similar elements found in experience with civilian capacity development in fragile states:

- Consider **sustainability** and reinforcement of **indigenous capacity**
- Long timeframe
- Importance of **Change agents** and champions
- Importance of adaptation of intervention templates
- **Systems perspective** to capture complexity and interconnections



# So how are we doing?

BPC Factor	Afghanistan	Iraq	Africa
Consistency in funding and implementation	✓	✓	
Including Sustainment into BPC effort	✓	✓	✓
Developing Ministerial Capacity	✓		
Involvement in Partner Nation sensitive military affairs	✓		
Avoiding co-combatant role	✓	✓	✓
Matching BPC efforts with Partner Nation objectives and absorptive capacity	✓	✓	✓
Conclusions:	<b>So its all good right?</b>	<b>Not likely to succeed long term</b>	<b>Likely to succeed at limited objectives</b>



# What does it all mean?

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- The enemy still gets a vote
- Partner nation failures can derail our best efforts
  - Military BPC cannot succeed in a vacuum
- BPC is a less effective short term solution for contingency response
- BPC *is* a viable long term strategy *before* war begins: shape the security environment to prevent larger conflicts
- History provides important principles for today's planners

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, showing a dense urban area with a large mountain in the background. A multi-lane highway runs through the city, and a large green field is visible in the lower right. The word "Questions?" is overlaid in white text in the upper center.

Questions?