

MATTHEW CANCIAN

mcancian@mit.edu

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Associate Professor, Naval War College (2024-present)
- Senior Researcher at the Naval War College through Saalex Solutions (2021-2024)
- Captain, United States Marine Corps (2009-2013)
 - Forward Observer with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines during Operation Enduring Freedom (2011)
 - Platoon Commander (2011-2012), Fire Direction Officer (2012), Battery Executive Officer (2012-2013)

EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Ph.D in Political Science	<i>2016 - 2022</i> Security Studies & Comparative Politics
The Fletcher School, Tufts University Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Edmund A. Gullion Prize for Academic Achievement	<i>2014 - 2016</i>
University of Virginia B.A. History	<i>2005 - 2008</i>

WARGAMING EXPERIENCE

- Current projects:
 - ‘Breaking Out of Quarantine: Wargaming a Chinese Blockade of Taiwan’. With Mark Cancian and Eric Heginbotham. Funded by the Smith Richardson Foundation. Anticipated completion: October, 2024.
 - ‘The Use of Nuclear Weapons in a Taiwan Invasion: Military Incentives and Operational Effects’. With Mark Cancian and Eric Heginbotham. Funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. Anticipated Completion: July, 2024
- Co-author, “The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan.” *Center for Security and International Studies* (2023). With Mark Cancian and Eric Heginbotham.
- Iterations of Chinese Invasion Wargame led at:
 - Institute for National Defense and Security Research. Taipei, Taiwan (2024)
 - MIT Wargaming Lab (2022, 2023)
 - Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Tokyo, Japan (2023)
 - Naval War College Foundation (2023)
 - Business Executives for National Security (2023)
 - ‘Coercion and Deterrence’ course at MIT, by Professor Phil Haun (2023)
- Contractor at Naval War College, 2021-2024
 - Senior Researcher, Halsey Bravo (S/NOFORN)
 - Lead Designer, Naval Contested Logistics Wargame III (S/REL JPN, FVEY)
- Co-Developer, “Active Denial: A Roadmap to a More Effective, Stabilizing, and Sustainable U.S. Defense Strategy in Asia.” with Eric Heginboth. *The Quincy Institute* (2021)

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- “The Impact of Modern-System Training on Battlefield Participation by Kurdish Soldiers.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66, no. 7-9 (2022): 1449-80.
- “The Motivation to Enlist Among Kurds.” *Armed Forces and Society*. Volume 49, Issue 1 (2022)
- “Military Officer Aptitude in the All-Volunteer Force.” *Armed Forces and Society* 44, no. 2 (2018): 219-237. With Michael Klein.
- “Informal Institutions and Quantitative Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 52, no. 3 (2019): 485-489. With Kristin Fabbe.
- “The Offensive Mine-laying Campaign Against China”, *Naval War College Review*. Volume 75, Number 1 (2022) Winter 2022.
- “Infrastructure, Revenue, and Services: Non-State Governance in Iraq’s Disputed Territories”, *Civil Wars*. Volume 24, Issue 4 (2022)

Book Chapters

- “‘You Don’t Know What You’re Getting Into’: Dealing with Dishonesty in the Field,” in *An Unorthodox Guide to Fieldwork*, ed. Ora Szekely and Peter Krause (Columbia University Press, 2020). With Kristin Fabbe.
- “Christians in Northern Iraq,” in *Death, Dominance, and State-Building The US in Iraq and the Future of American Military Intervention*, Roger Petersen (Oxford University Press, 2024). With Roger Petersen.

Book Reviews

- Review of Bryan R Gibson, *Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War* in *Review of Middle Eastern Studies*, 52(1), 2018, 1-3.

Monographs

- “Trained to Win? Evaluating Battlefield Effectiveness and Socio-Political Factors among Partnered Forces”, contracted with Joint Special Operations University (2021)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- CSIS Non-Resident Fellow (2023-2024)
- Charles Moskos Prize (2022)
- MIT Center for International Studies Summer Fellowship (2020)
- Graduate Fellow, MIT Global Diversity Lab (2020-present)
- Non-Resident Fellow, Modern War Institute (2018-2020)
- Student in Special Standing, Emory University (2018-2019)
- Edmund A. Gullion Prize for Academic Achievement, Fletcher School (2016)

INVITED SPEAKING

- Office of Naval Intelligence “Knowledge 360: CSIS Wargame” (2023)
- ‘Military Power and Effectiveness’ course at Brown, by Kendrick Kuo (2023)
- U.S. Naval War College Faculty Development (2022)
- Rûdaw Media: “Bultena Bakur” with Hêvîdar Zana
- Washington Kurdish Institute: “Taking a Closer Look at the Peshmerga and the SDF” with Governor Najmaldin Karim, Wladimir van Wilgenburg, and John Holland-McCowan (2020)
- Modern War Institute: “Irregular Warfare Podcast Episode 3: Does Building Partner Military Capacity Work?” with Dr. Stephen Biddle, Shawna Sinnott, and Kyle Atwell (2020)

- Podcast: “Conducting Political Science Field Research”, with Peter Krause, Ora Szekely, Kristin Fabbe, and Kristin Michelitch, Spring 2020
- 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade: “The Effectiveness of Coalition Training on the Peshmerga” (2019)
- DoD Strategic Multilayer Assessment Group: “Trained to Kill: Battlefield Participation in Kurdish Fighters” (2018)
- Marine Detachment, United States Central Command: “Geopolitics of the Peshmerga” (2018)
- United States Consulate, Erbil, Iraq: “The Effectiveness of Coalition Training on the Peshmerga” (2017)
- Bundeswehr Detachment, Kurdistan Training Coordination Center, Erbil, Iraq: “The Effectiveness of Coalition Training on the Peshmerga” (2017)
- Center for a New American Security: “Military Officer Aptitude in the All-Volunteer Force,” part of the ‘AVF 4.0 Study Group: Quality of the Force’ (2016)
- Jesse Brown Veterans’ Affairs Hospital, Chicago, Illinois: “Veteran Experiences on Deployment” (2015)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Referee: *Armed Forces and Society*, *Security Studies*

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- ‘Gaming to Win’. Sea, Air, Space Forum (2023)
- International Kurdish Studies Conference (2019)
- Cato Junior Scholars Symposium (2018)
- International Studies Association Annual Convention (2018)
- Harvard-MIT-Tufts-Yale Conference on Political Violence (2018)
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting (2018)
- Sulaimani Forum, American University of Iraq - Sulaimani (2016)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- “Stop Undermining Partners with Gifts,” War on the Rocks (blog), 2021
- “Killing Qassem,” Modern War Institute (blog), 2020
- “Well-Trained Partners Are More Likely to Fight.” *Association of the United States Army Magazine*, 2019.
- “It Is Long Past Time to Stop Expanding NATO,” with Mark Cancian. War on the Rocks (blog), 2019
- “Difficult Decisions: Practical Policy for the Air Force’s Pilot Retention Crisis,” with Colonel Jesse Friedel, War on the Rocks (blog), 2018
- “Between Two Caesars: The Christians of Northern Iraq,” with Roger Petersen. *Providence*, 2018
- “What Iraq’s Kurdish Peshmerga Believe: And How It Will Affect the Country’s Post-ISIS Future,” with Dr. Kristin Fabbe. *ForeignAffairs.com* (blog), 2017
- “Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures of the Islamic State: Lessons for U.S. Forces.” *Military Review*, 2017
- “Culture Wars,” Modern War Institute (blog), 2017
- “Untangling the Arab-Kurdish Web in Post-ISIL Northern Iraq.” *Small Wars Journal* (blog), 2016.
- “A Visit to the Frontlines of the Battle Against ISIL,” with Mark Cancian. War on the Rocks (blog), 2016
- “Officers are Less Intelligent: What Does It Mean?” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 2016.

- “Counterinsurgency as Cargo Cult,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 2013.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- Volunteer experience teaching in Uganda (2013) and Haiti (2016)
- Active Top Secret - Sensitive Compartmented Information Clearance
- French: Interagency Language Roundtable Writing Level 5 (Functional Native), Oral Level 4 (Full Professional)
- Kurdish (Kurmanji): Intermediate
- German: Intermediate
- Programming: R, L^AT_EX, C++
- Purple Belt, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu