



International Military Education and Training Program

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Summary

This report provides background on the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET). It discusses the program's main features and purposes, perspectives of the IMET's supporters and critics, and recent issues surrounding the program and its implementation. The United States in recent years has trained annually, on average, over 10,000 students from approximately 130 countries. Formal instruction under IMET involves over 2,000 courses, nearly all of which are taught in the United States at approximately 150 military schools and installations. As the size of the United States foreign assistance program has declined, the IMET program has attracted greater attention as an instrument for serving broad U.S. foreign policy and national security interests. At the same time the program, and placement of restrictions on its participants, has also been an instrument for expressing concerns about the human rights practices of certain nations that have been IMET program participants. This report will be revised should major changes occur in the IMET program.

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Background: Program Framework And Activities¹

The International Military Education and Training program (IMET) was formally established in 1976 as part of a restructuring of the United States Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program.² It had its antecedents in legislation passed in 1949 that created the grant Military Assistance Program (MAP). IMET, as currently constituted, is intended to be a low-cost policy program to provide training in U.S. Defense Department schools to predominantly military students from allied and friendly nations on a grant basis. The foreign students must speak English and train to U.S. standards, alongside American military personnel and other foreign students. They are offered courses in military skills and doctrine, exposed to the U.S. professional military establishment and the American way of life, including democratic values, respect for internationally recognized human rights, and the belief in the rule of law.

Students are also exposed to U.S. military procedures and the manner in which the military functions under civilian control. Through the IMET program, the United States seeks to influence students who may rise to positions of prominence in foreign governments, expose foreign students to a professional military in a democratic society, and professionalize foreign armed forces. It also seeks to strengthen regional relationships while enhancing the self-defense capabilities of U.S. friends and allies, as well as enhancing the ability of the U.S. and participant nations to conduct military operations and peacekeeping activities together. Many nations come to participate in IMET, in part, to enhance their capabilities to utilize effectively the defense articles and services they obtain from the United States.

The United States in recent years has annually trained, on average, over 10,000 students from approximately 130 countries through IMET. Formal instruction involves over 2,000 courses, nearly all of which are taught in the United States at approximately 150 military schools and installations. Other activities utilized to achieve IMET goals include orientation tours for key senior military and civilian officials, observer training, and on-the-job training. The United States Coast Guard also provides education and training in maritime search and rescue, operation and maintenance of aids to navigation, port security, at-sea law enforcement, international maritime law, and general maritime skills.

Schools Utilized to Accomplish IMET Training

Senior Service Schools. The Service War Colleges and the National Defense University's (NDU) National War College programs are attended by U.S. and foreign senior military and civilian equivalents. These programs focus on service/national security policy and the politico-military aspects of Service/Defense policies and programs. The Services and the Joint Staff (for the NDU) annually provide invitations to the governments of foreign friends and allies, for foreign student participation. The senior service schools remain a significant element of IMET sponsored training. The specific schools and their locations are as follows: NDU, Fort McNair, Washington DC; Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA; Navy War College, Newport, RI; Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL.

¹ Background details on all aspects of the IMET program given throughout this report are based on information provided by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) of the Department of Defense, and on various editions of the Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations prepared each fiscal year by the Department of State.

² Section 106(a) of PL. 94-329, 90 Stat. 732, added a new Chapter 5, International Military Education and Training to P.L. 87-195, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

Professional Military Education (PME) Programs. The United States military services offer numerous programs and courses categorized as professional training. These include Service Command and Staff College programs, basic and advanced officer training in specialized areas such as finance, ordnance, artillery and medicine. PME programs and the senior service school programs combined account for approximately 50% of the annual IMET appropriation. A representative listing of the schools involved include Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KA; Army Logistics Management College, Fort Lee, VA; U.S. Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA; Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH.

English Language Training. The majority of IMET sponsored training is conducted in the United States at Defense Department and U.S. military Service schools, with U.S. military personnel. Therefore, English language proficiency is required. The U.S. Defense Department has assigned the English language training mission to the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC), located at Lackland Air Force Base, TX. DLIELC provides resident English language training in state-of-the art facilities. Additionally, DLIELC conducts English language training surveys to evaluate foreign government programs and will assign instructors as a “detachment” to the host country to personally assist in the establishment and maintenance of their English language training program.

Expanded International Military Education and Training Program (E-IMET)

In 1990, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees initiated a statutory change based on their view that changing world political-military circumstances warranted a new direction for the traditional IMET program, one that would bring an increased emphasis on enhancing the skills and professionalism of both civilian and military leaders and managers of foreign military establishments. The Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY1991 (H.R. 5114, P.L. 101-513, signed November 5, 1990) directed the Defense Department to establish a program within IMET focused, in particular, on training foreign civilian and military officials in managing and administering military establishments and budgets; creating and maintaining effective military judicial systems and military codes of conduct, including observance of internationally recognized human rights; and fostering greater respect for the principle of civilian control of the military. Congress earmarked \$1 million of the FY1991 IMET Appropriation to be used to establish this program. This initiative is called Expanded IMET, or E-IMET, and each year the Defense Department has broadened the program. Although Congress did not earmark IMET funds to support this program after FY1991, it has in report language noted an expectation that the financial investment in E-IMET be increased. Congress further broadened the program to include participation by members of national legislatures who are responsible for oversight and management of the military, and “individuals who are not members of a government.” Because E-IMET is a sub-element of the overall IMET program, it is funded as part of the annual IMET appropriation.

The E-IMET initiative is accomplished through educational programs in the United States offered by U.S Defense Department and U.S. military Service schools, by Mobile Education Teams visiting host countries, and by funding military participation in overseas conferences, such as the African American Institutes’ seminar on “The Role of the Military in a Democracy” (a joint USAID, World Bank and IMET funded initiative). Although IMET funding can be used for such an initiative (overseas seminars) under the auspices of the E-IMET program when such activities

are deemed appropriate, the emphasis and preference is for a longer training experience in the United States that maximizes the students' exposure to the American way of life.

Programs for Implementing E-IMET

Beginning in FY1991, the Defense Department launched E-IMET by refining some existing programs and initiating new courses through the military departments. Further, new educational programs were established to address the topics of military justice, human rights and civil-military relations. The bulk of this effort is accomplished through three schools: Defense Resource Management Institute, Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), Monterey, CA; Center for Civil-Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA; and the Naval Justice School, Newport, RI.

Defense Resource Management Institute (DRMI). The Defense Resource Management Institute at the Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, CA, was tasked with meeting the E-IMET criteria to assist recipients establish processes for more effective defense resources management. DRMI reactivated a two week Mobile Education Team, which takes the curriculum to the host country, and developed two resident programs within the U.S.—the 11-week, mid-level International Defense Management Course, and the four-week Senior International Defense Management Course established for flag-rank military and civilian equivalents.

The Naval Justice School. Under Defense Department assistance and guidance, the Naval Justice School established a program to address the topics of military justice and human rights. They developed a multi-phased program, comprised of seminars and resident programs, designed to culminate in the passage of a rewritten military code by their national legislature. Albania was the first nation to legislate into effect its rewritten military code in October 1995.

The Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR). The Center for Civil-Military Relations, located at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey CA, was established by DOD's Defense Security Assistance Agency to provide a broad range of innovative graduate level educational programs and research to address the issue of civil-military relations in a democratic society. This program is first conducted as a one week seminar, held in the host country, which is attended by ministers, key parliamentarians, ranking military representatives, and the U.S. Ambassador. It is followed with resident programs within the United States, to include a one year accelerated graduate degree program—the first class of which began in January 1996.

Other E-IMET Programs. All E-IMET approved programs are published in an annual E-IMET Handbook. The handbook reflects the various programs described above and others covering such topics as equal opportunity, financial management, and maritime law. In addition, the E-IMET effort was recently broadened to include environmental military law and resource management issues.

The Value of IMET: Perspectives of Supporters and Critics

As worldwide U.S. military assistance funding levels have declined in the post-Cold War era, the IMET program is viewed by its supporters as a valuable tool in support of American foreign policy. IMET, and within it, E-IMET, are seen as a low-cost means of maintaining access to and influencing the military and civilian leaderships of nations with political traditions less

democratic in nature than most Western democracies. By making professional military training available to U.S. friends and allies, IMET also enhances the ability of participating countries to make the most of U.S. weaponry they have obtained from the United States, thereby increasing the self-defense capabilities of these nations—and lessening the need for U.S. military forces to be utilized to protect such nations. Advocates of a strong IMET program believe it should be afforded increased funding to build on the programs' successes in the past, and to enable IMET to be extended to more of the emerging nations of the former Soviet Union, while continuing to provide assistance to traditional clients.

Critics of IMET argue that it is a relic of the high Cold War era and has been, at best, only marginally successful in advancing United States foreign policy interests. Indeed, IMET opponents believe that much of the training related to human rights issues and exposure to American democratic institutions is conducted in a pro forma fashion, and is, in any event, not taken seriously by many foreign participants. IMET critics argue that a number of the program's notably effective military elements should be drastically curtailed, if not totally eliminated, because they enhance the capabilities of anti-democratic military establishments and associate the United States with their practices. Should IMET focus almost exclusively on training foreign military and civilian participants in U.S. democratic values, institutions, and principles of human rights, they might be prepared to support carefully targeted funding of the program. But in the absence of a substantial re-direction of the program toward these ends, these opponents would support a termination of the program.

Current Issues for Congress

Funding Level and Focus

The level of funding for IMET has increased significantly since FY1995 from \$26.35 million to an estimated \$91.7 million for FY2004, while overall foreign assistance program funding has continued to decline. The recent funding levels represent a restoration of IMET funding to levels more consistent with those that existed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It also reflects support for efforts to meet training requirements generated by 29 newly emerging democracies globally.

The Defense Department expects the costs associated with the IMET program to increase due to inflation, to growing requirements of Central Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS), to the increasing popularity of Expanded IMET, and efforts to maintain existing programs in Africa and Latin America. In addition, since FY1994, the United States has placed a strict limitation on the amount of technical and high-cost training in response to an earlier large reduction in IMET funding. Instead emphasis has been placed on the U.S. military services' senior service school programs, professional military educational efforts, Expanded IMET and English language training. As a result, there has been a notable reduction in the proportion of technical training. In FY1995, for example, technical training represented about 17% of the overall IMET appropriation, while professional military education programs constituted over 50% of the appropriation. These facts raise the current issue of whether or not more resources, and possibly more funds, should be made available for technical training. This issue may become more acute as the United States attempts to advance its policy goals in NATO enlargement (which might well require training on NATO interoperable systems), and in seeking to help IMET participants enhance their ability to assume greater roles in international peacekeeping operations. However, any decision to provide additional funding for IMET would mean that those funds could come at the expense of other programs, given current budgetary constraints.

Human Rights and IMET

In recent years, American concerns with human rights practices of certain nations that were recipients of United States foreign aid has led to restrictions or conditions being placed on their participation in the IMET program. In the case of Indonesia, for example, Congress has required that the President make a number of certifications about the actions of the Indonesian government before funds can be provided under the Expanded IMET program. In some cases, the IMET program represents the major current vehicle for contact between the United States military and its counterparts in countries with a record of human rights violations or a tradition of authoritarian or undemocratic governments. As reductions in the United States Foreign Military Financing program (FMF) continue, IMET is increasingly the remaining military assistance program that Congress can use to sanction nations it finds to be abusing the human rights of its people. At the same time, IMET may also be the only instrument available that might assist in changing the attitudes of military-dominated governments and lead to a reduction in human rights abuses and greater levels of democratic government. A current issue, then, is whether using IMET restrictions to sanction nations with poor human rights records can be an effective means for modifying the behavior of their governments.³

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³ Although the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation shares a number of the goals of the IMET program, it is an independent entity. For background, see CRS Report RS20892, *Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation*, by (name redacted).

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