

Department of Defense Strategic Evaluation
International Professional Military Education

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Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

The Department of Defense (DoD) sponsors strategic evaluations of security cooperation (SC) programs and activities pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §383 and DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5132.14, “Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise.”

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) commissioned Lukos, LLC, to evaluate International Professional Military Education’s (PME) contribution to DoD strategic objectives.

Background of DoD’s International PME Programs: International PME is a foundational instrument of U.S. national security that supports National Defense Strategy (NDS) implementation to help strengthen alliances and partnerships. International PME builds trust and interoperability with allied and partner forces, upholds a foundation of mutual respect, and expands regional consultative mechanisms for collaborative planning. International PME plays an important role in building relationships with allies and partners’ military and civilian officials who often attain senior positions.

DoD implements a range of International PME programs and activities worldwide. These programs provide DoD education courses to representatives of foreign governments and international organizations at DoD military schoolhouses, to include DoD-contracted facilities and selected Coast Guard schoolhouses. International PME programs provide funding for foreign military personnel, ranging from enlisted personnel to senior officers, and in limited cases, civilian officials from Ministries of Defense, to participate in U.S. military educational opportunities. Often, these courses include both international and U.S. students.

International participation in these courses is intended to convey to U.S. allied and partner service members and select civilians the broad body of knowledge essential to the military professional’s expertise in the art and science of war; provide career education to enhance leadership capabilities for conducting military operations, planning, programming, management, budgeting, and force development appropriate to that force; and enhance combined warfighting interoperability with U.S. forces.

Nature and Purpose of the Evaluation: This evaluation focused on International PME implementation, outputs, outcomes, and contributions to DoD strategic objectives to determine how DoD can leverage International PME most effectively to support NDS objectives.

The evaluation will aid policymakers and International PME implementers in making decisions about the management and implementation of International PME, including decisions about how to: incorporate International PME into holistic SC planning; maintain contact and manage relationships with participants over time; and monitor and evaluate the effects of International PME in relation to DoD strategic objectives. The evaluation will assist SC planners in optimizing International PME’s contribution to strategic objectives and in identifying best practices to achieve return on investment.

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Evaluation Questions: The strategic evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. How has International PME contributed to NDS objective achievement, such as strengthening alliances and attracting new partnerships?
2. How can DoD improve its management and implementation of International PME to achieve strategic objectives outlined in the NDS?

Evaluation Design: The evaluation included a process and performance evaluation and used a case study approach. It focused on three Geographic Combatant Commands: U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, and U.S. Southern Command, with one country case study within each region. The evaluation team evaluated both the strategic and country-level outcomes within each country case study as well as planning processes and integration with other SC programs. The case studies addressed a range of factors, including International PME activities, trends, and participants. The evaluation team used multiple data collection instruments, including desk reviews, a subject matter expert survey, and structured and semi-structured interviews. The focus period covered a retrospective evaluation of past International PME activities over the ten-year period from 2010 to 2020.

Conclusions: The evaluation team provided the following conclusions.

- International PME is an investment in human capital that helps increase partner nations' institutional and operational defense capabilities including warfighting interoperability, and strengthens relationships between partner nations and the U.S. military.
- International PME builds relationships, but the Department does not consistently maintain relationships over the long-term. Alumni programs and alumni engagement can be improved.
- International PME facilitates defense relationships with partner nations that have the potential to be more impactful.
- The Department can further strengthen its relationships with International PME graduates to facilitate NDS objectives over the long-term by establishing regional and country-specific guidance and objectives, and resourcing a purposeful alumni network.
- The Department can develop a strategic approach to assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of International PME to improve the program and measure its effectiveness over time.
- A lack of consistent information requirements and metrics for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation of International PME makes it difficult for stakeholders to measure return on investment in the human capital developed through International PME and the partnerships it creates in relation to NDS objectives.
- The Department can better integrate International PME with other SC programs and activities.

Recommendations: The evaluation team provided recommendations that are intended to inform future DoD decision-making about International PME.

- Improved Unity of Effort: Standardize International PME terminology within joint publications and related SC doctrine to improve unity of effort.
- Focused International PME Relationships/Responsibilities: Increase the Department's capacity for International PME alumni engagement and continuing education activities and ensure enterprise-wide coordination.

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- Improved Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation: Synchronize International PME assessment, monitoring, and evaluation activities to improve programs and measure the effectiveness of International PME toward meaningful outcomes over time.

This evaluation noted several areas for further examination, including the following recommendations:

- Continue to improve alumni engagement: (1) designate key nodes that can link International PME alumni engagement activities within specific regions, (2) leverage virtual meetings where appropriate, (3) leverage U.S. allies and partners in combined planning and activities where feasible, and (4) ensure planners integrate International PME with other SC efforts.

Evaluation Results: In accordance with DoDI 5132.14, “Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise,” the Department is considering recommendations and lessons learned from this evaluation to adjust policy, programs, and resource allocations, including the following:

- *Implementing Recommendations:* DoD developed an internal action plan, in coordination with primary stakeholder organizations to examine this evaluation’s recommendations. The design of International PME efforts—both ongoing and prospective—is informed by the findings and recommendations of this report.