

Why GAO Did This Study

Since 1976, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program has provided education and training to foreign military personnel. The program's objectives include professionalizing military forces and increasing respect for democratic values and human rights. In 2010, Congress appropriated \$108 million in IMET funding for more than 120 countries. The Department of State (State) and the Department of Defense (DOD) share responsibility for IMET. In response to a mandate in the conference report accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010, this report assesses (1) changes in the program from fiscal years 2000 to 2010, by funding levels, students trained, and recipient countries; (2) the program's provision of and emphasis on human rights training for its students; and (3) the extent to which State and DOD monitor IMET graduates and evaluate program effectiveness. GAO reviewed and analyzed agency funding, planning, and performance management documents, and interviewed U.S. officials in Washington, D.C., and overseas.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretaries of State and Defense (1) ensure human rights training is a priority in IMET recipient countries with known human rights concerns, and (2) take initial steps to begin developing a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the IMET program, including adopting existing evaluation practices used by other State and DOD agencies and soliciting IMET training managers for suggestions on improving monitoring and evaluation efforts. State and DOD both concurred with our recommendations.

View [GAO-12-123](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Agencies Should Emphasize Human Rights Training and Improve Evaluations

What GAO Found

Although IMET funding has increased by more than 70 percent since fiscal year 2000, the number of students trained has decreased by nearly 14 percent. Over the last 10 years, countries in the Europe and Eurasia region have continued to receive the largest portion of IMET funding, receiving \$30 million in 2010. However, all regions have received increased IMET funding since fiscal year 2000, with the levels of funding to the Near East and South and Central Asia regions more than doubling from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2010. Professional military education represents the largest single use of IMET funds—nearly 50 percent in fiscal year 2010. Other major types of training funded by IMET include English language training and technical training, which represented 13 and 11 percent, respectively, of fiscal year 2010 IMET program costs.

Training to build respect for internationally recognized human rights standards is provided to IMET students through various in-class and field-based courses, but human rights training was generally not identified as a priority in the IMET country training plans GAO reviewed. IMET students primarily receive human rights training through human rights courses that focus on promoting democratic values, and through a voluntary program that sends them on visits to democratically oriented institutions. However, human rights and related concepts were identified as key objectives in only 11 of the 29 country training plans GAO reviewed for IMET participant countries that received low rankings for political and civil freedoms by Freedom House, an independent nongovernmental organization. Furthermore, 7 of the 12 training managers GAO interviewed from countries that received low to moderate rankings for political and civil freedoms said that human rights was not a priority compared to other IMET objectives.

State and DOD's ability to assess IMET's effectiveness is limited by several weaknesses in program monitoring and evaluation. First, State and DOD have not established a performance plan for IMET that explains how the program is expected to achieve its goals and how progress can be assessed through performance measures and targets. Second, State and DOD have limited information on most IMET graduates, due to weaknesses in efforts to monitor these graduates' careers after training. DOD has collected updated career information on only 1 percent of IMET graduates. Training managers identified limited resources and lack of host country cooperation as among the key challenges to monitoring IMET graduates. Third, the agencies' current evaluation efforts include few of the evaluation elements commonly accepted as appropriate for measuring progress of training programs, and do not objectively measure how IMET contributes to long-term, desired program outcomes. The agencies could incorporate existing evaluation practices, including those of other State and DOD entities, or suggestions from training managers overseas to improve IMET monitoring and evaluation efforts. IMET training managers have offered suggestions for improving monitoring efforts, such as by clarifying DOD's monitoring guidance and strengthening DOD's IMET data systems. Training managers also offered ideas to improve program evaluations, such as surveying U.S. military groups to assess participant nations' proficiency in key areas, assessing career progress of IMET graduates against non-IMET graduates in specific countries, and testing students before and after training to measure changes in knowledge or attitudes.