



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1010

12/10/19

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Foreign National Military Education and Training

Our National Defense Strategy recognizes the valuable contributions of our allies and partners. These mutually beneficial relationships are critical to our strategy and provide the asymmetric advantage that no competitor can match. These enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, which are underpinned by interoperability, form the bedrock of our national security.

International military education and training are critical elements of building allies and partners' capacity, which extends our ability to act decisively to meet the shared challenges of our time. Currently, the U.S. military trains personnel from more than 150 partner nations in the United States. Our military education programs enable our allies and partners to better provide for their own defense, share the burden of responsibility for regional security and coalition operations, and maintain regional balances of power favorable to the United States.

The Department of Defense recognizes the importance of long-standing military education and training with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The Department has trained more than 28,000 Saudi students over the life of our security cooperation relationship without serious incident. KSA is an essential partner, and we will continue to partner with the Kingdom to reinforce defense cooperation, increase military investment, and advance America's interests.

As we reaffirm our commitment to these critical military partnerships, so must we assess the efficacy of our security procedures in light of the tragic loss of life on December 6, 2019, at Naval Air Station Pensacola. In doing so, we will make every effort to ensure the safety of all personnel and their families on U.S. military installations. Therefore I direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)) to take immediate steps to strengthen personnel vetting for International Military Students (IMS), and to complete a review within 10 days of policies and procedures for screening foreign students and granting access to our bases. These efforts will seek to more closely align IMS vetting procedures with those we apply to U.S. personnel. With respect to specific training programs and personnel under their cognizance, the Secretaries of the Military Departments may take additional security measures as they see fit.

The Department is working closely with the Saudi government in our response to this incident. Pending the completion of a security and safety stand-down led by the Military Departments, which is supported by the Saudi government, training of KSA military students at U.S. installations and facilities will be limited to the classroom.

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