



## Educational Cooperation between Royal Thai Armed Forces and The United States

บทความวิจัย

Panitee Lekkla<sup>1</sup>

Witchayanee Ocha<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Educational cooperation between Royal Thai Armed Forces and major powers, applying educational cooperation as one of their tool for building defence diplomacy. Applying International Military Education Trainings: IMET by The U.S. Army successfully requires the addition of vetting officers, as described above. Professionalizing the military, most importantly meaning a military mandated to secure a nation against military threats would be the focus. Such a military is disengaged from commercial endeavors so as to avoid conflicts of interest, receives constant funding levels, and remains centrally devoted to preparing to combat military threats effectively.

Educational cooperation between Royal Thai Armed Forces and major powers, applying educational cooperation as one of their tool for building defence diplomacy by applying International Military Education Trainings. The U.S. and Australian Army saw an importance of educational cooperation or education assistance.

All countries have defense strategies and military strategies to build relationships with target countries. The relationship is expected to be sustainable. With this reason, building a relationship through educational cooperation will be a genuine friendship. Because of Educational assistance will be military to military (Mil-Mil), Access to all levels of relationships. This will bring success to

---

<sup>1-2</sup> Diplomacy and International Studies, Rangsit University

<sup>1</sup> E-mail: lpanitee@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: witchayaneeocha@gmail.com

the implementation of strategic policies of the country. The establishment of educational cooperation is a planned action under Soft manner to be a channel leading to create and maintain relationships

**Keyword:** Defence Diplomacy, International Military Education Trainings, Royal Thai Armed Forces, Military Educational Cooperation

A strong national defense is thus indispensable for a peaceful, successful, and free America—even if a shot is never fired. The diplomatic successes in building and maintaining a stable and peaceful international order achieved by the United States over the past century have been enabled by America’s military dominance. Conversely, the calamitous defense budget cuts and corresponding rise of potential peer competitors in the present day are already undermining America’s diplomatic and economic influence.

Defense diplomacy has emerged as one of the most important tools of military statecraft amid this effort to move past the use of force. Although the exact definition of defense diplomacy, sometimes labeled military diplomacy, remains uncertain, it is generally considered the nonviolent use of a state’s defense apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through cooperation with other countries. Typically used as an umbrella term, activities as diverse

as officer exchanges, education cooperation, visits, training missions, and joint military exercises have all been denoted as practices of defense diplomacy.

#### U.S. Military Assistance to Thailand in term of educational cooperation

The Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN), the site provides unclassified news items and other information on military matters in Asia. APAN is part of the Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative, a U.S. effort to foster cooperation among militaries in the region. APAN is also seen by the U.S. Congress as a device to improve regional coordination with America’s armed forces. Most of the reports on the site dealing with peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief come from the staff at Camp Smith in Honolulu. U.S. Pacific armed forces have concentrated on increasing military ties to Southeast Asia. Since 1999, Washington has signed a Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines and initiated International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs for Southeast Asian officers in the United States including Thailand. There are collaborative programs with Thailand, some limited spare parts for Indonesian air force cargo planes, and PACOM has called for enhanced multilateral exercises. This interest in cooperative security has continued. Its latest manifestation is in communications technology.

### Training: The JUSMAGTHAI Joint Training Division's Role

The Joint US Military Advisory Group Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI) is PACOM's Security Cooperation Office (SCO) in Bangkok. The SCO consists of three primary divisions: Joint Operations, Joint Training, and Security Assistance. The Security Assistance Division is further divided into Army, Navy, and Air Force offices. Close collaboration between these divisions toward common Security Cooperation objectives has resulted in several models for success. This article will focus on one in particular: rotary-wing aviation capacity building. While all three elements—training, exercises, and sales—are generally put into motion simultaneously, there are some initial steps in the sequence that are critical to overall success. First and foremost, the US government, by way of the COCOM and the SCO, determines the strategic objective of our security cooperation initiatives. A significant part of this planning effort is accomplished collaboratively with the host nation. As one can imagine, the importance of long-term relationships and rapport between the US and its partners cannot be overemphasized in this environment.

After the strategic objectives are clearly defined, the implementation plan is mapped out. The remainder of this paper will provide a broad overview of implementation rather than go into great detail about how each element of the triad does its particular job. Note that after the Security

Cooperation objective is defined, the remainder of the process occurs simultaneously with constant collaboration and adjustments being made between all parties involved, both Thai and US.

Unsurprisingly, flying and maintaining helicopters requires extensive, specialized training. The JUSMAGTHAI Joint Training Division is responsible for working with Thai and US military education representatives to identify necessary CONUS-based courses. Training for aviation and many other professional development skills may come from International Military Education and Training (IMET), Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), or Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) courses.

In the case of aviation piloting and maintenance, the US trains approximately 40 Thais annually through FMS cases. During the mission analysis portion of the utility helicopter strategy, US and Thai representatives identified a critical deficiency in Thailand's ability to fly and maintain US helicopters: English language capability. A pilot or maintainer is simply not able to attend a class in the United States if he/she can't speak English, read English training manuals, etc. This shortcoming was affecting other areas of CONUS-based military training as well since officers and NCOs must come to JUSMAGTHAI, take an English language test and achieve a minimum score for admission. In response to this requirement, English language was identified as a Country Security Cooperation Plan (CSCP)

priority and a concerted effort was launched across the SCO to increase the Thai military's English language capability. English language Mobile Training Teams (MTT) launched to conduct intense language immersion training focused on maintenance and piloting, the Training Division ordered basic and advanced English-language books for our counterparts to study, JUSMAGTHAI secured funding to construct or renovate language labs on military bases around the country, and professional interpreters translated our aviation manuals into Thai. To this day, US service-members from JUSMAGTHAI and visiting units routinely provide English instruction at various military academies in and around Bangkok.

In other words exactly, Foreign military assistance directly contributes to U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives. The principal components of foreign military assistance are Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), the Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), the Regional Centers for Security Studies, and transfers of Excess Defense Articles (EDA). Training provided to foreign militaries through foreign military assistance, particularly the IMET program, helps promote the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. In addition to making the world a safer place, the spread of democratic principles contributes to a political environment more conducive to the global economic development so critical to a nation's

well being. Thus, there is a genuine linkage between foreign military assistance programs and the day-to-day lives of Americans.

## PROGRAMS FUNDS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

### 1) Foreign Military Financing (FMF)

The principal means of ensuring U.S. security is through the deterrence of potential aggressors who would threaten the United States or its allies. Foreign Military Financing (FMF), the U.S. appropriation for financing the acquisition of U.S. defense articles, services, and training through grants, supports U.S. foreign policy and regional security goals and enables allies and friendly nations to improve their defense capabilities and to work toward common security goals and share burdens in joint missions. Congress appropriates FMF funds in the International Affairs budget; the Department of State allocates the funds for eligible allies and friendly nations; and the Department of Defense (DoD) implements the program. As FMF helps countries meet their legitimate defense needs, it also promotes U.S. national security interests by strengthening coalitions with allies and friendly nations, cementing cooperative bilateral military

Relationships, and enhancing interoperability with U.S. forces. Because FMF monies are used to purchase U.S. defense articles, services, and training, FMF contributes to a strong U.S. defense industrial base, which benefits both America's armed forces and U.S. workers.

FMF grants in FY 2008 (articles and training) totaled \$5.23 billion, with the vast majority of funds earmarked to support stability in the Middle East. FMF is also being used in the Middle East to strengthen self-defense capabilities and to safeguard borders and coastal areas. In Africa, the bulk of the funds support counter-terrorism programs and provide security for borders and territorial waters.

The majority of FMF funds in the East Asia and Pacific region support Indonesia for defense reform, improving maritime security, counter-terrorism efforts, mobility, and disaster relief capabilities. In Europe and Eurasia, FMF funding supports modernization and interoperability programs in Poland and coalition partners. Funding will also be used to continue the integration of new NATO members into the Alliance, support prospective NATO members and coalition partners, and assist critical coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan. In South Central Asia, FMF will continue to be used for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) sustainment, countering regional and international terrorism, and enhancing counter-insurgency programs and peace support programs. Finally, in the Western Hemisphere, FMF for Colombia will continue to support counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism efforts, and maritime interdiction programs.

## **2) The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program**

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, which provides

U.S. government funds to members of foreign militaries to take classes at U.S. military facilities, has the potential to be a powerful tool of U.S. influence. IMET is designed to help foreign militaries bolster their relationships with the United States, learn about U.S. military equipment, improve military professionalism, and instill democratic values in their members. For forty years, the program has played an important role in the United States' relations with many strategic partners and in cultivating foreign officers who become influential policymakers. Although the program's funding is relatively small, it could have an outsize impact on the United States' military-to-military relations with many nations. Yet IMET today is in need of significant reform. The program contains no system for tracking which foreign military officers attended IMET. Additionally, the program is not effectively promoting democracy and respect for civilian command of armed forces. A 2011 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that most IMET programs did not include material on human rights and democracy. Although some U.S. policymakers now want to expand IMET to include officers from a broader range of developing nations, such as Myanmar, the program should be revamped before it is enlarged. The reforms should include more effectively screening IMET candidates, developing a system to follow the careers of IMET alumni, and institutionalizing coursework on professionalism, human rights, and democracy in IMET's curriculum.

## 2.1) Background

Launched in 1976, IMET supports training for foreign military personnel from “allied and friendly nations.” It designates funding for members of foreign militaries to take courses at technical schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools affiliated with branches of the U.S. armed forces. Most of the courses are categorized as either professional military education, which focuses on broad leadership training, or technical classes, which teach students skills specific to military occupational specialties. When it was founded, IMET focused on boosting foreign militaries’ relations with the United States and educating armed forces about U.S. weapons. Reforms initiated in the 2000s were supposed to refocus IMET to include more coursework on military professionalism, human rights, and the role of a military in a democracy. Funding for IMET is delivered on a country-by-country basis. It is only a small portion of overall U.S. security assistance to most countries. About 120 countries, mostly lower and middle-income developing nations, receive IMET funding each year. (Joshua, 2016)

IMET is only a small portion of U.S. security assistance, but many policymakers believe the program is more effective at boosting foreign militaries’ ties to the United States than other types of aid. IMET creates personal relationships in a way that other types of security aid cannot, and the program often includes men and women who later ascend to the ranks of colonel or

general. For more than four decades, the program has played a role in bonding foreign and U.S. officers, and in cultivating U.S. influence in strategically vital nations. In a 2014 study, political scientists Jonathan Waverley and Jesse Savage found that U.S. military training “increases the (foreign) military’s power relative to the (civilian government) in ways that other forms of military assistance do not,” because of the prestige accrued and bonds formed among officers. (Joshua, 2016)

Recognizing IMET’s promise, Congress has increased IMET funding 70 percent since 2000; in fiscal year 2016 IMET was allocated \$108 million. However, IMET’s importance makes it even more critical that the program be reshaped to function in the best interests of the United States. A 2014 study by the National Defense University found that the majority of IMET graduates are never contacted by the U.S. military again. This lack of information makes it difficult for U.S. policymakers to identify foreign military leaders who could be liaisons for future military-to-military relations or to assess IMET’s utility at all. A lack of institutional memory also makes it hard for the Pentagon and U.S. arms manufacturers to find IMET graduates who were trained on U.S. weapons systems. In addition, IMET’s admissions processes and curriculum do not sufficiently emphasize military professionalism or the importance of democracy and human rights. According to interviews with officers from a range of countries, few IMET courses focus on the role of a military in a democracy.

Moreover, several U.S. government audits have found that screening of candidates for past abuses is minimal. Yet history suggests that allowing foreign officers who have committed abuses into IMET, with the rationale that the training will influence them to act more humanely, has proven a false hope. During the Cold War, IMET welcomed Burmese, Indonesian, Pakistani, Thai, and Egyptian senior officers who had demonstrated histories of abusive behavior. There is no evidence that they returned home and behaved differently. Instead, the United States should choose the most professional and least abusive candidates to come to IMET, rather than hoping that IMET will radically reverse officers' qualities.

## 2.2) The Goals of IMET

As codified in the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, the Department of State appropriates IMET, the training of foreign officers in military schools in the United States alongside American military officers. In general, the IMET program provides foreign officers with significant exposure to U.S. military educational institutions and some interface with American culture. Along with some personal occasions to travel, the IMET student is thus provided the opportunity to absorb such U.S. knowledge, values, and culture fundamental to its model military officer. With exposure to these values, the intention is also for the IMET student to be a future positive conduit for U.S. communication and influence

in that country, especially with those who rise significantly in rank and status.

Consequently, it can also enhance the long-term potential for military interoperability with the U.S. military through IMET officers' understanding of U.S. doctrine. It is a low-cost tool to help fulfill The United States' broader foreign policy objectives of promoting international values, improving the internal defense of other nations, and gaining common ground on global and regional security issues. Although it is a modestly funded foreign policy tool, IMET receives political attention greater than its funding level alone might suggest. This attention particularly arises if an IMET recipient military commits human rights violations or upends the political process in their country.

The goals of IMET we can conclude that this program would like;

- To train future leaders.
- To create a better understanding of the United States.
- To establish a rapport between the U.S. military and the country's military to build alliances for the future.
- To enhance interoperability and capabilities for joint operation.
- To focus on professional military education.
- To allow countries to use their national funds to receive a reduced cost for other DoD education and training.
- To provide English Language Training assistance.

We can say that as the Thai-U.S. defense alliance is calibrated to address 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, defense cooperation is to focus on the following four areas: 1) Partnership for Regional Security in Southeast Asia; 2) Supporting Stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and Beyond; 3) Bilateral and Multilateral Interoperability Interoperability and Readiness; and 4) Relationship Building, Coordination, and Collaboration at All Levels.

Thai officers have traditionally attended U.S. service academies. Service academy attendance has traditionally provided an invaluable means to foster long-standing ties with the Thai military and to provide in-depth exposure to the U.S. system of civil-military relations, military law, and related issues. The Thai military has expressed interest in participating in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD)-sponsored Defense

Resource Management Study (DRMS). This program's intent is to work with the host-nation military to design a multi-year resource management model tailored to the specific requirements and unique aspects of that country. OSD is considering this request.

Undeniably, that applying IMET successfully requires the addition of vetting officers, as described above. Professionalizing the military, most importantly meaning a military mandated to secure a nation against military threats would be the focus. Such a military is disengaged from commercial endeavors so as to avoid conflicts of interest, receives constant funding levels, and remains centrally devoted to preparing to combat military threats effectively. Additionally and ideally, professional militaries answer to civilian governments.

\$ in thousands for all items	Total	GHP-USAID	IMET	FMF	PKO	Other**
East Asia and Pacific	768,280	131,250	9,290	72,488	-	-
Burma	75,445	16,000	-	-	-	-
Cambodia	73,474	30,500	450	1,000	-	-
China	7,698	-	-	-	-	-
Indonesia	182,965	39,750	1,700	14,000	-	-
Laos	12,950	-	400	500	-	-
Malaysia	2,970	-	900	-	-	-
Marshall Islands	550	-	50	-	-	-
Micronesia	500	-	-	-	-	-
Mongolia	11,310	-	850	2,400	-	-
Papua New Guinea	5,030	2,500	250	-	-	-



\$ in thousands for all items	Total	GHP-USAID	IMET	FMF	PKO	Other**
Philippines	187,982	31,500	1,700	50,000	-	-
Samoa	40	-	40	-	-	-
Singapore	240	-	-	-	-	-
Thailand	10,125	-	1,300	988	-	-
Timor-Leste	16,560	2,000	400	300	-	-
Tonga	550	-	250	300	-	-
Vietnam	96,493	-	1,000	3,000	-	-
State East Asia and Pacific Regional	35,715	-	-	-	-	-
USAID Regional Development Mission-Asia (RDM/A)	47,683	9,000	-	-	-	-

After 2014 there are no any assistances from IMET program especially scholarships to RATRF. We expects that after Thailand's political situation returns to normal, the IMET program will be resumed. The IMET program will be resumed. Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) also IMET/FMF are currently suspended however PACOM looks forward to reinstituting GPOI, IMET, FMF English Language Training, English language training is available upon request to JUSMAGTHAI Training priorities for US professional military education Bilateral and Multilateral Interoperability and Readiness.

We can say that applying IMET successfully requires the addition of vetting officers, as described above. Professionalizing the military, most importantly meaning amilitary mandated

to secure a nation against military threats would be the focus. Such a military is disengaged from commercial endeavors so as to avoid conflicts of interest, receives constant funding levels, and remains centrally devoted to preparing to combat military threats effectively. Additionally and ideally, professional militaries answer to civilian governments. Expectations must be realistic and challenges recognized

we can conclude that educational cooperation is an important part of building a military relationship or defence diplomacy. especially major power as the United States focus on building strong military relationships via educational cooperation as well. Because militaries operate at three interconnected "top-down" levels (i.e., strategic, operational,

and tactical), it is plausible to assume that their transnational interactions also occur at the same levels. Using this generic hierarchical structure, we can employ three interconnected tiers conceptually to analyze the military socialization process. This framework will consist of the political and strategic tier, the operational and tactical tier, and the educational tier. Each tier involves different actors. The political and strategic tier is represented by political leaders, senior defense officials, and strategic level military

leaders; the operational and tactical tier involves mid-level officers and below; and educational tier refers to defense educational promote confidence building and professional military exchanges to improve interoperability. Based on its professional development system, military personnel move along this operational hierarchy. Generally, military officers start their career at the tactical level, then move to the operational, and a few manage to serve at the political and strategic levels.

## References

- Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster. (2004). *“Adelphi Paper 365: Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance.”* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brigety II, Reuben E. (2008). *Humanity as a Weapon of War: Sustainable Security and the Role of the US Military, Sustainable Security Series Paper.* Center for American Progress.
- Corn, Tony. (2008). From War Manager to Soldier Diplomats: The Coming Revolution in Civil Military Relations. *Small Wars Journal*; Smith, Gayle E. (2008). *In Search of Sustainable Security: Linking National Security, Human Security and Collective Security to Protect America and Our World, Sustainable Security Series Paper.* Center for American Progress.
- Cheyre Juan Emilio. (2017). *“Defence Diplomacy”* Retrieved February 19, 2017, from [www.oxfordhandbooks.com](http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com), access on subscriber NUS.
- Franke, Volker. (2006). The Peacebuilding Dilemma: Civil-Military Cooperation in Stability Operations. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 11(2).
- Jha Pankai Kumar. (2011). “India’s Defence Diplomacy in Southeast Asia”. *Journal of Defence Studies*, 5(1), 47-63.
- Joshua, Wynfred, and Stephen P. Gibert. (1969). *Arms for the Third World: Soviet Military Aid Diplomacy.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Kron Nicholas D. (2017). *Security Diplomacy: Beyond Defence.* Retrieved March 4, 2017, from <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/38039/KRON-THESIS-2015.pdf>

- Mandee Jargalsaikhan. (2013). "Asymmetrical military socialization: Mongolia," *Armed Forces & Society*, 39(2), 305-330.
- Muthanna, K.A. (2011). "Military Diplomacy." *Journal of Defence Studies*. 1-15.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2006). *Enabling Military-to-Military Cooperation as a Foreign Policy Tool: Options for India*, New Delhi: Knowledge World.
- Mott, William H. (1999). *Military Assistance: An Operational Perspective*. Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Ministry of Defence. (2000). *Defence Diplomacy*, Policy Paper No. 1. London: United Kingdom Ministry of Defense.
- Reveron Derek S. (2007). *Shaping the Security Environment* (ed.). Newport, RI: Naval War College Press.
- Montgomery Brian, Commander. (2012). "Defence Diplomacy and Development–Status, US Army War College. Challenges and Best Practices". Retrieved February 19, 2017, from <http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA561488>.
- (2010). U.S. Special Operations Command Strategy. *USSOCOM strategy*, 8.
- Winger Gregory. (2014). "*The Velvet Gauntlet: a theory of defense diplomacy*," Institute for Human Sciences: Fellows' Conference. Vienna, Austria.
- Wallin Paper. (2015). "Military Public Diplomacy: How the Military Influences Foreign Audiences" *White Paper*.
- (2012). *Joint Vision Statement for the Thai-U.S. Defense Alliance*. From <http://archive.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=15685>
- Sheldon W. Simon. (2004). "The United States and Southeast Asia: Blowing Hot and Cold,". *Comparative Connections*, 2(4). From [http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/004Qus\\_asean.html](http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/004Qus_asean.html)