Mr., David Francis Manning, National Defense University IMET Consultant, IMET in a Volatile and a Multipolar World in Crisis

American security and defense policy through foreign military training and cooperation with likeminded democracies are force multipliers but only to a degree in a multipolar, three power dyad, geopolitical world. This paper draws upon real-world experiences of foreign military officers and diplomates chronicled (First Person) in my global arms series which examines the strategic and tactical benefits derived from the United States government's International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs with long-lasting foreign military relationships around the world. Since the Second World War, the United States government has had, as a deliberate component of its national security policy, the cultivation and maintenance of direct military ties with foreign military establishments. These programs are notably conducted through military and diplomatic exchanges in defense education and training protocols, class seminars, and field applications. Since 1894 more than 15,000 Foreign Defense and Diplomat personnel have graduated from a US Defense Institution. International Defense Education and Training builds lasting friendships with interoperability skills and influence. These links allow access to territory, infrastructure, and information sharing as Windows to the World – in a profession of Arms spread in vast networks of friendships. We learn new defense capabilities universally rooted in culture and techniques in which we rely for successful interoperability. Our defense training institutions define Common Bonds that apply to defense power across the full geographical spectrum. Defense relationships are built on trust and understanding in the things we have in common. We cultivate these alliances through tolerance and mutual understanding, in their many shades of grey, despite all the divisive politics. Because we can surge lots of things but the one thing we cannot surge, is trust. If we learn more about where and how military leaders are educated, we are then better placed to shape transnational education to address new and changing threats based on shared evidence. What better platform is there for defense leaders, journeymen, and diplomates, of all stripes to congregate, educate and collaborate on defense tactics, stratagems, and command-and-control systems to better interoperate as a team. We learn who we are from a shared frame of reference in diversity and civil-military societies. We gather a sense of history and geography to better understand because nations' views of history differ by its national roots. These historical perspectives reflect our foreign policies in the geopolitics and social & economic conditions of the time. We learn what a liberal (or illiberal) democratic society looks like from the foreign students' own geopolitical and social realities. These things are not linear either but are more about learning who we are as a civilization; we learn what to think and how others think about us, culturally, defensively, geopolitically, and strategically. These officers and diplomatic alumni who advance to flag and senior leadership often exercise their long held political and strategic ideolog in governing and military leadership. President El Sisi of Egypt, a US Army War College graduate, rules his nation with a dictating iron hand of rule. Elsie's governing style ideology was outlined in his USAWC theses in 2006. Security has everything to do with economics and economics has everything to do with security. Geography and History have everything to do with both. These are political and leadership frames of reference in the minds of foreign officer and diplomate graduates, but dependable alliances are paramount to security cooperation. Albeit for keeping dependable allies on board through nurtured flexible relationships through security challenges while balancing values and interest of all nations.

Dave Manning is an Independent Writer on International Military Education & Training, International Defense Relations, and Alliance Partnerships. He chronicled more than ninety-six international military officer and diplomat alumni in four volumes in his Global Arms Series across several US War & Staff College Institutions. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1972 and served as a services-logistician throughout Europe with USAFE, AAFES, NATO, the Balkans, and European Defense Commands from 1974 to 1998.