

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9947

To direct the Secretary of Defense to design and implement a foreign military officer subject matter expert exchange program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2024

Mr. PANETTA (for himself, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. TRONE, Mrs. WAGNER, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense to design and implement a foreign military officer subject matter expert exchange program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Learning Integrated
5 National Knowledge for the Abraham Accords Act of
6 2024” or the “LINK Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. KEY PARTNERS FOR MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL INTE-**
2 **GRATION MILITARY SUBJECT MATTER EX-**
3 **PERT EXCHANGE PROGRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, using
5 existing authorities, including section 311 of title 10,
6 United States Code, as applicable, and in consultation
7 with the head of any other Federal agency, as appropriate,
8 shall design and implement a foreign military officer sub-
9 ject matter expert exchange program to be known as the
10 “ Middle East Regional Integration Military Subject Mat-
11 ter Expert Exchange Program” (referred to in this section
12 as the “exchange program”).

13 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the exchange pro-
14 gram shall be to facilitate interaction, cultural exchange,
15 and mutual learning of members of participating militaries
16 in support of Middle East regional integration in order
17 to deepen and expand such integration.

18 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

19 (1) COMPOSITION.—The exchange program
20 shall be composed of members of the Armed Forces
21 of participating militaries in support of Middle East
22 regional integration and members of the Armed
23 Forces of the United States.

24 (2) SUBJECT MATTER.—

25 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of De-
26 fense shall select exchange program participants

1 with a wide range of experiences collectively
2 covering the tactical, operational, and strategic
3 levels.

4 (B) PARTICIPANT PAY GRADE LEVELS.—

5 The Secretary of Defense shall include in the
6 exchange program participants at each of the
7 following military pay grades, or equivalent for-
8 eign military pay grades:

9 (i) E-7 through E-9.

10 (ii) CW-3 through CW-5.

11 (iii) O-3 through O-9.

12 (iv) Such other pay grade levels at the
13 discretion of the Secretary of Defense.

14 (C) EXPERTISE.—A participant in the ex-
15 change program shall have expertise in one or
16 more of the following subject matter areas:

17 (i) Strategic doctrine.

18 (ii) Defense planning.

19 (iii) Civilian and military relations.

20 (iv) Military law.

21 (v) Public affairs.

22 (vi) Civil affairs.

23 (vii) Military budgeting and acquisi-
24 tion.

1 (viii) Integrated air and missile de-
2 fense.

3 (ix) Integrated maritime domain
4 awareness and interdiction.

5 (x) Cyber resilience and defense.

6 (xi) Counterterrorism.

7 (xii) Defense information sharing.

8 (xiii) Any other subject matter area
9 that the Secretary of Defense determines
10 to be appropriate.

11 (d) EXCHANGE PROGRAM CONTENT.—The exchange
12 program—

13 (1) shall include learning modalities and meth-
14 ods, as determined by the Exchange Program Coor-
15 dinator;

16 (2) may include separate agendas and experi-
17 ences for participants in order to—

18 (A) facilitate interaction on particular top-
19 ics;

20 (B) cater to participant backgrounds or
21 rank levels; or

22 (C) achieve other pedagogical ends as de-
23 termined by the Exchange Program Coordi-
24 nator; and

1 (3) may include discussion, comparison, and in-
2 formation regarding the development of—

3 (A) defense doctrine;

4 (B) exercise development;

5 (C) budget planning;

6 (D) military law and law of armed conflict;

7 (E) military cooperation with civilian agen-
8 cies;

9 (F) standard operating procedures;

10 (G) operational plans and the operational
11 art;

12 (H) gaps and opportunities for improve-
13 ment in existing procedures and plans;

14 (I) existing technical challenges;

15 (J) emerging technical challenges;

16 (K) the current and future threat environ-
17 ment;

18 (L) trust and capacity for multilateral
19 sharing of information;

20 (M) additional mechanisms and ideas for
21 integrated cooperation;

22 (N) ways to promote the meaningful par-
23 ticipation of women in matters of peace and se-
24 curity; and

1 (O) other content, as appropriate, devel-
2 oped to advance integration and tactical, oper-
3 ational, and strategic proficiency.

4 (e) MEETINGS.—Participants in the exchange pro-
5 gram shall meet in-person not less frequently than quar-
6 terly.

7 (f) EXCHANGE PROGRAM COORDINATOR.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense
9 shall designate an Exchange Program Coordinator,
10 who shall be assigned to a Department of Defense
11 School, to oversee the exchange program.

12 (2) DUTIES.—(2) The Exchange Program Co-
13 ordinator shall—

14 (A) design the exchange program;

15 (B) ensure that the exchange program
16 complies with the requirements of this section;

17 (C) provide to the Secretary of Defense re-
18 ports on developments, insights, and progress of
19 the exchange program; and

20 (D) notify the Secretary of Defense of any
21 failures of the exchange program to comply
22 with the in-person requirements of subsection
23 (e).

24 (3) NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—Not later
25 than 15 days after receiving a notification under

1 paragraph (2)(D), the Secretary of Defense shall
2 submit to the Committee on Armed Services of the
3 Senate and the Committee on Armed Services of the
4 House of Representatives a report describing—

5 (A) the reasons an in-person meeting did
6 not occur during such quarter; and

7 (B) any measures taken to ensure that an
8 in-person meeting occurs during the following
9 quarter.

10 (g) REPORT.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
12 the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually
13 thereafter for 5 years, the Secretary of Defense shall
14 submit to the Committee on Armed Services of the
15 Senate and the Committee on Armed Services of the
16 House of Representatives a report that includes—

17 (A) a summary of the activities of the ex-
18 change program during the prior year, includ-
19 ing—

20 (i) the countries participating;

21 (ii) the subject matter covered;

22 (iii) developments, insights, and
23 progress achieved through the program;
24 and

1 (iv) any new topics added to the ex-
2 change as well as a justification for adding
3 the new topic;

4 (B) an assessment of the effectiveness of
5 the exchange program; and

6 (C) recommendations on further improve-
7 ments to the exchange program.

8 (2) FORM.—The report required by paragraph
9 (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may
10 include a classified annex.

11 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SCHOOL.—The
13 term “Department of Defense school” means any in-
14 stitution listed in section 1595(e) or section 2162(d)
15 of title 10, United States Code.

16 (2) PARTICIPATING MILITARIES IN SUPPORT OF
17 MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL INTEGRATION.—The term
18 “participating militaries in support of Middle East
19 regional integration” means military allies and part-
20 ner forces of the United States working to advance
21 regional integration in the Middle East.

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