



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 4, 2017

Defense Department Investigates Security Risks of MAVNI Program to Recruit Immigrants and Aliens

The Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General listed an "Intelligence and Special Program Assessments Report" on its website on June 28 whose headline, "Counterintelligence and Insider Threat," indicated that the DOD has identified problems with its Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program serious enough to warrant investigation. MAVNI is a DOD program that provides immigrants and non-immigrant aliens with an expedited path to citizenship in exchange for military service.



Fox News, which broke the story on August 1, contacted Army Lt. Col. Paul Haverstick, a Pentagon spokesman, who said in a statement: "The Department of Defense is conducting a review of the MAVNI pilot program due to potential security risks associated with the program."

Beyond that, said Fox News, Haverstick declined to elaborate, citing "pending litigation." The notice on the inspector general's website states that the report is classified.

Fox News noted that the title of the report — "Evaluation of Military Services' Compliance with Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest Program Security Reviews and Monitoring Programs" — with its references to "security reviews" and "monitoring" of participants, hints at the problems.

The article quoted Representative Steve Russell (R-Okla.), a retired Army officer who sits on the House Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel. Said Russell: "The lack of discipline in implementation of this program has created problems elsewhere."

Russell noted the markup of the latest defense authorization bill, on June 28: "The [MAVNI] program has been replete with problems, to include foreign infiltration — so much so that the Department of Defense is seeking to suspend the program due to those concerns."

Since 2009, MAVNI program has enrolled more than 10,000 individuals seeking U.S. citizenship into the armed forces.

In a [September 2014 article](#), we noted that under a then-new Obama administration Department of Defense policy made public on September 25, a small number of aliens living in the United States illegally would be allowed to join the military. We wrote:

The program, known as Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI), will be open to immigrants without a legal visa if they came to the United States with their parents before the age of 16. Applicants are subject to approval under a 2012 Obama administration policy known as Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA)....

Under the new policy, up to 1,500 illegal immigrants per year will be allowed to serve in the U.S. military, but the true figures remain uncertain. Military recruiters under the MAVNI program



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would be most willing to consider immigrants with language skills important to national security, such as Arabic, Chinese, Pashto, or Persian.

In our article, we cited Edward Gibbon, who in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* maintained that the large number of barbarian (non-Roman) recruits resulted in a substantial decline of the army's effectiveness and was a major factor in the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Among his reasons for arriving at this conclusion was that the barbarian soldiers recruited by the army, having come from tribes that were historically enemies of Rome, had no loyalty to Rome and often betrayed the empire's interests. Some even cooperated with invading barbarian tribes, especially if those tribes were their own.

We continued by noting that while the Obama administration's action to enlist young men and women who are not in our country legally may not match the Roman experience in its numbers, it still sets a bad precedent. Those who are in violation of our immigration laws should not be trusted to obey the regulations imposed by our military.

The latest report just made public may indicate that DOD is finally addressing the risks posed by recruiting non-citizens and illegal aliens into our military. Hopefully, the investigation will lead to an end of this program permanently.

Image: Screenshot of [U.S. Army ad](#)

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