



<b>Newsline</b>	Research Security		
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**Executive summary:** This week underscores the growing convergence of defence priorities, advanced research, and international partnerships in Canadian higher education. The launch of the Edmonton Region Defence Alliance and the federal Defence Industrial Strategy expand defence-linked funding opportunities, while university agreements in India and ministerial outreach to Gulf and South Asian partners deepen global engagement. Meanwhile, evidence that United States-funded research benefited China’s defence laboratories and an espionage-related arrest in the Philippines highlight ongoing vulnerabilities in research collaboration and student mobility—expanding both opportunities and research security responsibilities for Canadian universities.

**Key Points:**

- Defence–University Nexus Strengthens in Canada:** The launch of the Edmonton Region Defence Alliance brings the University of Alberta, NAIT, and regional partners together to compete for a share of Ottawa’s projected \$180B in defence procurement and \$290B in capital investment. Meanwhile, Canada’s Defence Industrial Strategy positions universities as key contributors to sovereign capabilities, targeting an 85% increase in defence research funding and committing \$6.6B over five years to strengthen domestic innovation capacity.

**What this means:** Universities will face expanded participation in dual-use and sovereign technology projects, increasing exposure to intellectual property risks, foreign interest, and complex supply-chain relationships. Research security considerations must be embedded at the earliest stages of partnership negotiation, funding intake, and project design to ensure appropriate safeguards accompany increased defence engagement.
- International Research Diversification Accelerates:** A delegation of 21 Canadian university presidents signed multiple MOUs in India covering joint research, dual-degree programs, and potential satellite campuses. The visit precedes planned high-level diplomatic engagement. In parallel, Canada’s Minister of AI conducted outreach in the Middle East and South Asia to expand technology investment and trade partnerships.

**What this means:** While diversification strengthens global engagement, it raises governance, export-control, and IP risks. Institutions must apply rigorous due diligence, ensure clear contractual protections, and assess long-term geopolitical and reputational exposure.
- U.S.–China Research Collaboration Reveals Screening Gaps:** A recent study reports that approximately US\$943.5 million in U.S. government funding supported collaborations with 45 Chinese government-designated defence laboratories between 2019 and mid-2025, resulting in more than

300 co-authored publications in sensitive areas including artificial intelligence, directed-energy systems, and advanced computational physics.

**What this means:** The case illustrates how academic collaboration combined with insufficient screening can enable unintended knowledge transfer to foreign defence entities. Canadian institutions should not rely solely on federal regulatory frameworks but instead strengthen institutional partner-vetting, disclosure requirements for foreign affiliations, and dual-use risk assessments at the proposal stage.

- **Student Mobility as a Security Vector:** Authorities in the Philippines arrested a Mongolian aviation student who was later identified as a licensed jet fighter pilot for China's People's Liberation Army after allegedly photographing sensitive military facilities. The case prompted intensified national monitoring of foreign students.

**What this means:** While international student mobility is central to academic exchange, it can present risk pathways in programs linked to defence, aerospace, or sensitive technologies. The University of Regina should apply risk-based access controls for sensitive infrastructure, provide training for faculty and admissions staff to recognize disclosure gaps, and ensure policies are applied lawfully and consistently without discrimination.

- **Academic Backlash Over Military Funding in Quantum Research:** More than 250 quantum scientists signed a manifesto opposing military-funded quantum research, warning that increased defence investment may undermine academic independence and calling for greater transparency in defence-linked university projects. Concurrently, leadership shifts at major research institutes, including the Alan Turing Institute, reflect growing institutional alignment with national security priorities.

**What this means:** As defence research funding expands, universities may encounter heightened internal debate regarding ethical boundaries and academic autonomy. Research security governance must be transparent, consultative, and clearly communicated to ensure faculty understand both the rationale for safeguards and the scope of institutional commitments.

- **Long-Term Foreign Funding Dependencies:** Carnegie Mellon University renewed its long-standing partnership with the Qatar Foundation through 2035. Since 2004, the arrangement has provided over \$740 million in funding, making the foundation the primary revenue source for its Doha campus.

**What this means:** Extended reliance on a single foreign government or state-linked entity for institutional funding can shape program priorities and introduce long-term governance sensitivities. Canadian universities pursuing overseas campuses or major foreign-funded initiatives should ensure agreements preserve academic control, intellectual property rights, and strategic flexibility.

**Conclusion:** This week's developments illustrate the deepening intersection of defence policy, international engagement, and advanced research within Canadian universities. As institutions expand defence-linked activity and global partnerships, they face heightened exposure to dual-use risks, foreign influence concerns, and governance complexities. Research security is therefore no longer peripheral to institutional operations but a core strategic function essential to safeguarding innovation, institutional integrity, and Canada's broader national interests.