

Symbiosis of Defence Research and Education in Response to the Future Security Challenges

Nebojsa Nikolic, PhD

Associate Professor, Strategic Research Institute, University of Defence in Belgrade, Serbia
nebojsa2008_g@yahoo.com

Keywords: Defence Research, Military Education, Security Challenges, Reform, Accreditation

The paper discusses strengthening relationships between scientific research and education at the University of Defence. We pledge that building symbiosis of research and education function at the integrated university could enhance capacity for coping with future challenges. Motivation for this study arose from recent organizational merge of the Strategic Research Institute into the structure of the University of Defence in Belgrade. Both institutions are accredited according to the national academic standards for scientific research and higher education. Both of them are dedicated and obligated to follow national strategies, laws and norms related to the scientific research and higher education.

Research and education are two basic functions which are conducted at the higher military education system. Both functions have to be considered inside three main and interfering external frameworks. First framework is primary and it is related to the needs of the armed forces. Second one is related to the academic standards which are defined by the national authorities for the system of higher education. The third framework is related to the future security challenges. While the first two contexts are quite obvious and well defined, the third one deserves few words more. Evaluation of relations and impact of the future security challenges on the scientific research for the military and defence needs, as well as to the higher military education process, is important and logical. Both processes, scientific research and education, are a long-term endeavors. Time frames for scientific projects are measured by years, at least one or two years for smaller projects. Time frame for the basic level of the higher military education is about four years. Having this time aspects in mind, it is logical to put the questions about relevance and actuality of the future research outputs as well as a preparedness and adequacy of competencies of the future military officers. New face of modern conflicts sometimes is marked as hybrid, unrestricted, asymmetric, compound, ambiguous, multi-domain, etc. Contemporary challenges to the national security and defence are complex, numerous, dynamic and of various characters with tendency to become even more complicated and diverse in the future. That place the basic question: how to prepare, train and educate in order to effectively and efficiently respond to such challenges. Does it require some changes in education system and concept, as well as in research approaches, and what kind and scope of changes?

Along with plethora of the security challenges, there are other social, political and legal factors which affect system and concept of higher military education and research. Some of them are as follows: process of joining to the European Union, a compliance towards civilian educational and accreditation standards, restrictive financing, organizational cut-offs, new missions, global trends in education and research and in other fields, etc. Future military officers are expected to have a wide spectra of competencies including: managerial skills, understanding of other cultures, communicational and behavioral skills and foreign language proficiency. And all of that along with traditional requirements as follows: military

competences including technical, organizational and leadership skills, good psycho-physical readiness and resilience to cope with rapid and diverse changes.

Symbiosis of research and educational function is particularly appropriate at the master and doctoral levels. Future master and doctoral thesis should be developed according to the scientific methodology while topics selection should be influenced by needs of the military organization and by relevant views of the future challenges. Also, interdepartmental cooperation and joined work among scientific institutes, research centers and educational departments should become a *modus operandi* at the integrated university. Besides the symbiosis related to the accredited studying programs, it is appropriate as well, to engage senior research personnel in lecturing at various postgraduate military training and education courses for selected topics. Some practical questions which deserve further discussions are as follows: how relevant are research topics; who needs research results; how to conduct research process; and what about a quality of research results. The paper offers some proposals for answering above questions.

Symbiotic connections between scientific research and higher education, together with respect of the practical needs of the military organization, are very important for all three domains, particularly in the context of the future security challenges. Research institutes and centers should become a spearhead of joint endeavors, which have to perceive future security challenges and offer some respond proposals based on scientific methodology.

References

- European External Action Service (EEAS), 2003. *A Secure Europe in a Better World - European Security Strategy*. EEAS, Brussels.
- European External Action Service (EEAS), 2016. *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe - A Global strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, EEAS, Brussels.
- ISMS, *Proceedings of the International Society of Military Sciences Annual Conference - ISMS-2014*. Vienna, Austria.
- ISMS, *Proceedings of the International Society of Military Sciences Annual Conference - ISMS-2017, ("Military Science -The Backbone of Military Educational Institutions)*, Norwegian Defence University, Oslo.
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, 2012. *Strategy for education development in the Republic of Serbia up to 2020*.
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia, 2016. *Strategy for scientific and technological development of the Republic of Serbia 2016-2020*.
- Paile-Calvo, S., 2016. *From European Mobility to Military Interoperability: Exchanging Young Officers, Knowledge and Know-How*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union.
- University of Defence in Belgrade, 2018. *Strategy of internationalization*.