



Letter to Editor

International Conference on Military and Security Studies, Turkish Army War College, March 10-11, 2015, Istanbul, Turkey.

The Declaration

Dear Readers of JMISCI,

The nature and range of threats to security have become extremely complex and unpredictable since the end of the Cold War. This ambiguity makes it hard to forecast the future operational environment. However, it is obvious that the strategic security environment is undergoing a rapid evolution wherein various actors might play active roles and an unprecedented proliferation of technology with military applications might be prevalent, which create a competitive environment that challenges armies around the world. Furthermore, major shifts in the balance of power, along with recent crises and financial constraints, have placed a heavy burden on the armies around the world and raised new questions about the future of the Armed Forces. To meet the challenges of such an environment, old paradigms that limit our way of thinking should be reconsidered and new doctrines should be developed.

Although technology has evolved and profoundly changed our way of waging war, most wars are still ultimately won or lost on the ground, thus land power is again expected to be the principal element of military power in the future. However, recent developments indicate that over the next decades, world armies might have to downsize due to budget cuts and become smaller, yet still agile, flexible, capable, and technologically advanced to be prepared for a wide variety of threats, none of which

can be defined with much specificity. This trend will definitely require a change in vision, structure and capability to ensure that the army can respond to the challenges of the future and beyond.

In this regard, although land forces will continue to play the central role in the security of the states in the foreseeable future, a thorough assessment of the future operational environment and its implications for land forces is both timely and relevant, as it is quite obvious that certain trends and patterns seem to be coming to the fore. Comprehending those issues will provide military planners with the insight to shape the evolution of land force capability and ensure that it can respond to a myriad of threats. This effort, beyond doubt, has profound implications for Strategy Development and Force Generation in the future. In this sense, the role of the defense industry and its interaction with the army in transformation efforts gain new prominence in terms of meeting emerging threats, fulfilling new requirements and responding to innovative opportunities in a coordinated fashion.

However, material solutions and structural transformation alone will not be enough for armies to prepare for future security challenges. To respond to the challenge of this new paradigm, the army must invest in its most valuable resource, its people. Within this scope, leadership development and mission command, i.e. the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution, have

become more a critical issue. Since leaders are the ones who will be the principal actors in transforming the army for the future, having competent leaders gives competitive advantages that cannot be replaced by technology. Hence future military leaders must be trained in a way to make them highly capable and adaptive in managing the complexity of the future operational environment.

The conflicts and wars that will take place in this complex environment will involve different facets such as geopolitics, society, economics, environment, science and technology, and the military. Since the complexity of the environment will not allow disputes to be successfully resolved with military power alone, the use of all instruments of national power and the approval of the larger society will be needed. The countries with the capability to manage these instruments in a coordinated fashion will gain a competitive edge. Furthermore, the public's attitude toward defense spending, the use of armed forces and civil-military relationships will be important issues to take into account in the future operational environment.

The Turkish Army War College's "International Conference on Military and Security Studies (ICMSS)" will address these important topics by gathering leading international/national military and civilian security experts, commanders, scholars, and policy makers from a wide array of countries. While it is beyond the scope and means of the conference to find definitive answers to the questions raised, we aim to highlight crucial questions and discuss their implications during this two-day conference. We believe that the exchange of ideas on the issues mentioned above will contribute significantly to all our attendees as well as military leaders of today and the future.

Ltc. Alper Kayaalp, Ph.D
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Member of ICMSS Organizing Committee