

# The 6<sup>th</sup> International Military Leadership Conference: Military Leaders Development – The Multiple Approaches

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The 6<sup>th</sup> International Military Leadership Conference was held on 17–18 November 2016 in Tartu, Estonia. The event was organised by the Estonian National Defence College (ENDC) with the participation of speakers from Estonia, Finland, Israel, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This year, the attention of conference participants was focused on multiple approaches to military leaders development. The aim of the conference was to discuss current status, challenges and prospects for the military leaders development systems including their governing principles, methods and best practices. The conference included paper sessions, a panel discussion and workshops. The event was chaired and moderated by Lt.Col. Antek Kasemaa from ENDC.

The first paper session introduced the audience into the issues of military development in Estonia, Poland and the United Kingdom. Col. (Ret.) Aarne Ermus, a lecturer of Organisation Management and a former (2007–2013) Commandant of ENDC presented an overview

of the leadership development system in the Estonian Defence Forces. He introduced the new research project (The Leadership Development Program of the EDF 2016–2022), launched by the ENDC this year. The aim of the project is to review the existing EDF leaders' development system and to make science based proposal for the change. The new system must support the development of leaders, who are capable to lead and inspire units and fulfil the complex tasks in uncertainty. The project has five interrelated lines of research: situational awareness, leadership doctrine development, the future leaders' profiles, the leaders' selection tools and leaders development tools. Capt. (Ret.) Eric Reinhold, the chief of the Estonian Defence League School, discussed leader development programs for voluntary leaders in the Estonian Defence League. Time, what Defence League can use to develop their voluntary leaders' leadership qualities is limited. Also, these voluntary leaders are diversified by age, education and experience. Such background and high expectation from the side of voluntary leaders to the quality of training are making design of the courses and selection of training methods quite challenging. Lt.Col. Dr. Andrzej Lis representing the Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces and Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland talked about the institutional training domain of leader development in the Polish Armed Forces. He analysed the context and position of leadership related issues in the curricula of military academies, post-graduate studies, courses and research conducted by military higher education institutions in Poland. Lt.Col. Justin F. Barry, the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Training Regiment, outlined the key assumptions of the military leadership doctrine in the British Army. He focused his attention on the leadership framework including the character, values and standards of military leaders; their professional competence and skills to develop themselves and others, build teams and achieve results.

The second paper session was focused on the approaches to military leaders development in the Finnish and Swiss Armies and the determinants of contemporary military leadership studied from the Israeli perspective. Col. Dr. Vesa Tapani Nissinen, the Director of the Finnish Defence Research Agency and an Adjunct Professor of Leadership Development at the University of Lapland, Finland presented the concept of deep leadership merging the ideas of deep learning and transformational leadership. The model of deep leadership assumes the cause-effect relationships between readiness, behaviours and effects

and points out the stimulating role of 360° feedback and deep learning. The concept of deep leadership is based on four cornerstones which are: learning, enthusiasm, respect and trust. For effective deep leadership programmes, the prerequisite tools are properly designed and conducted selection of future leaders and coaching support to them. Col. Dr. Hubert Annen, the Head of the Department of Military Psychology and Military Pedagogy at the Swiss Military Academy of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, discussed the issue of 'officership' in the Swiss Armed Forces. To his understanding leadership represents the activities of a military leader, whereas officership stands rather for his attitude. He presented the assumptions regarding the length of service in the Swiss Army and selection criteria to find out the best leaders. In his speech, Col. Dr. Annen emphasized the concept of organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) used as a foundation for the leaders-development programme. He analysed five dimensions of OCBs i.e. altruism, civic virtues, conscientiousness, courtesy and sportsmanship embedding them in the military context. Moreover, he identified the key success factors of effective leaders development programmes including: citizenship behaviours, commitment, cognitive capabilities and communication skills. Dr. Eyal Ben-Ari, the Director of the Institute for Society, Security and Peace in the Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee, Israel, studied the challenges faced by military leaders in the changing operational environment focusing the attention on the consequences of the emergence of hybrid wars. He highlighted the issues of commanding (or rather managing) loose and temporary coalitions of organisations evolving into network structures, 'hyphenated' roles played by military leaders in contemporary conflicts (e.g. soldier-policeperson, soldier-relief worker etc.), privatization of security and internal complexity of military organisations.

Paper sessions were followed by the panel discussion. All the speakers responded to the questions related to the issues of leadership and leaders development asked by officers and cadets who study in the ENDC as well as the teachers and researchers from the ENDC and the Baltic Defence College. The second day of the conference was devoted to the workshops conducted by the conference speakers for ENDC teaching staff and students. The scope of the workshops included the aspects of developing junior officers' leadership skills (Col. Dr. Nissinen and Lt.Col. Barry), selection and development of reservist leaders (Col. Dr. Annen), intra-organisational antecedents of capability to

develop military leaders (Lt.Col. Dr. Lis) and the requirements for military leader development in modern environment (Dr. Ben-Ari).

Summing up, paper sessions, the panel discussion and workshops enabled the participants to share knowledge and explore the contemporary challenges related to leader development. It should be emphasized that the selection of speakers ensured discussing the multitude of approaches typical of both fully professional armed forces or reservist-based voluntary armies. Taking into account the variety of the presented opinions, two key messages can be pointed out as a take-away. First of all, regardless of the hierarchical structure of the armed forces, which are traditionally associated with the authoritarian leadership style, effective military leadership should be based on the foundation of the concept of transformational leadership. Secondly, regardless of the revolution in military affairs (RMA) highlighting the role of military technology, soldiers with their skills, competencies, values and commitment should be considered as the most important and the critical component of the military power of any nation, which becomes even more evident in the hybrid operational environment of the post-modern world.

In order to disseminate the research findings and ideas presented at the conference, all the submitted and positively reviewed papers will be published in *Estonian National Defence College Proceedings* and *Estonian Journal of Military Studies*.