

ALI LAHKO PROCES PROFESIONALNEGA VOJAŠKEGA IZOBRAŽEVANJA USTVARI VOJAŠKE STRATEGE?

CAN THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION CREATE MILITARY STRATEGISTS?

Povzetek Izobraževanje vojaških strategov je tema, ki v pogojih vedno bolj kompleksnega varnostnega okolja postaja ponovno aktualna. Vojske bolj kot kdaj koli prej potrebujejo voditelje, ki bodo sposobni strateškega razmišljanja. Novembra 2011 je na Poveljstvu za doktrino, razvoj, izobraževanje in usposabljanje potekalo 5. redno srečanje Foruma centralnih evropskih držav o vojaškem izobraževanju (Central European Forum on Military Education – CEFME). Osrednja tema posveta je bilo izobraževanje vojaških strategov. Na srečanju so sodelovali visoki predstavniki s področja vojaškega izobraževanja iz devetih srednjeevropskih držav in predstavnik zveze Nato. Osrednja referata sta pripravila Uroš Krek, predavatelj predmeta vojaška strategija v generalštabnem programu Slovenske vojske, in polkovnica Mojca Pešec. V nadaljevanju avtorja predstavljata poglede na programe izobraževanja vojaških strategov v Sloveniji s teoretičnega in praktičnega vidika in utemeljujeta potrebo po intenzivnejšem in kakovostnejšem študiju strateške teorije za učitelje in študente predmeta vojaška strategija, nujnost oblikovanja celovitega programa učenja strategije z vidika izbora udeležencev in predavateljev ter potrebo po postavljanju dosegljivih ciljev, ko gre za časovni obseg in določanje vsebin programa. Oblikovanje nove generacije kompetentnih častnikov, ki bodo sposobni prepoznati varnostne izzive 21. stoletja in strokovno prispevati k civilno-vojaškemu procesu oblikovanja strategij, je nujno.

Ključne besede *Strategija, vojaški strateg, vojaško izobraževanje in usposabljanje.*

Abstract In the increasingly complex security environment the education of military strategists is a topic which is again becoming of interest. More than ever before, the armed forces need leaders who will be capable of strategic thinking. In November 2011, the 5th regular meeting of the Central European Forum on Military

Education (CEFME) was convened at the Doctrine, Development, Education and Training Command. The central theme of the conference was the training of military strategist. The meeting brought together senior military education representatives from nine Central European countries, and a representative of NATO. The two central papers were prepared by Uroš Krek, military strategy lecturer in the Slovenian Armed Forces General Staff Programme, and by Colonel Mojca Pešec. In their article, the authors present views on education programmes for military strategists in Slovenia from the theoretical and practical point of view, and substantiate the need for more intensive and better quality strategic theory study programmes for military strategy teachers and students. They also define the need for developing a comprehensive programme of learning the strategy in terms of selection of participants and lecturers, and the need for setting up achievable targets when it comes to the time frame and the determination of programme subjects. It is essential to form a new generation of competent officers who will be able to identify the 21st century security challenges and contribute expertly to the civil-military process of the strategies formulation.

Key words *Strategy, military strategist, military education and training.*

Introduction In the recent decade, countries have faced increasing threats to global security. In comparison to the threats from the previous periods, these threats are more intense, more complex, multidimensional and above all unpredictable. As the importance of classic military threats to security is diminishing, non-military threats are becoming increasingly more common. Despite the continued efforts of the global community to establish peace and security, threat management is becoming increasingly challenging. States and international institutions, such as NATO, strive to establish systemic solutions and appropriate mechanisms for the provision of a comprehensive approach to the resolution of contemporary crises through the interconnection of (competent) institutions. To be able to better manage possible crisis situations, the crisis management systems defining coordination, interagency cooperation and mobilization of social resources and like are being established in individual countries and across the international community.

But what should the military or civilian experts and leaders who will be capable of directing and managing such complex systems be like? What knowledge and what kind of skills should they have to be able to effectively incorporate the expert findings of the highly specialized government and non-government agencies into the appropriate anti-crisis measures?

Essential for the coping with the current and the future security hazards and threats is to have the right people in the right positions at the right time. Each state should form and establish an identification, selection, education and training system for leader candidates capable of strategic management and of making decisions regarding national security. Leadership signifies the coping with challenges and the capacity to motivate, unify and direct people towards a specific objective. A

state desiring to establish an effective government strategy for the elimination of security threats must have capable leaders at all management levels; leaders who successfully manage and guide comprehensive systems and organizations with their knowledge, skills and personal qualities.

1 CAN A GOOD MILITARY STRATEGIST BE THE RESULT OF APPROPRIATE EDUCATION?

The "strategy" notion covers not only the capability of planning, but also the capability to be goal-oriented and to be able to predict effective actions for the attainment of political and military objectives. Strategy introduces a special way of thinking and conduct, the ability to see the bigger picture and understand the connection between and interdependence of activities and their consequences. The nature of strategy is universal and not linked to a specific place or time. Strategy students should therefore be taught to think strategically outside the familiar constraints. Strategy teachers are not creating experts for solving strategic issues from the early 21st century, but experts who will be capable of strategic thinking and strategic assessment of all time-space situations.

Strategists must be capable of long-term and comprehensive planning, decision-making, command and control which to a great extent depends on the character and personal characteristics of an individual (Troha, 2009, p. 77). They must also understand theory and be capable of upgrading their theoretical knowledge with experience. For this reason, there are certain limitations regarding the teaching of strategy within the formal educational process; those who excel in the understanding of military theoreticians are not necessarily the best of strategists.

There is but a handful of strategy genius, but there are individuals with a talent for strategy both in the military and in the business world. Just as any other talent, the talent for strategy can likewise be improved through education and operation in appropriate circumstances. The integration of personal characteristics and values with knowledge and skills during the education and training process supplements and develops individuals' capability (Troha, 2009, p. 74).

All professional military education systems believe to be educating military strategists and leaders. However, the curricula of higher military education programmes are often not oriented towards the development and promotion of strategic and critical thinking. They are more influenced by the characteristics and expectations of the training participants who have entered this program because they have performed duties which enabled them promotion and further education. Participants of strategic education are not selected on the basis of scientific procedures or methods aimed at assessing their psycho-physical characteristics, but by their superiors (Kotnik, 2008, p. 88–89). They are usually selected for their past success and diligence in the performance of their duties and are not required to have predispositions for a strategist or meet the objective criteria for academic

studies (Baraka et al. 2010; Allen, 2010). On the other hand, there are some capable individuals who are not sent to schooling by military units as it is believed that sending them to schooling would mean depriving them of first-hand experience in practice. We, however, know that tactical experience without the possibility of insight into and understanding of the entire spectrum of complex situations does not support the development of strategists (Allen, 2010; Bethel et al., 2010).

Experts participating in military education estimate that the graduates of the current university programmes do not meet the standards required for the production of coherent and logical arguments and for written expression. (Gray, 2009). Clear expression and argumentation is a prerequisite for entry into the professional military education system. Should the students lack this skill, its development has to be included in the curriculum which represents a considerable challenge for the planners of military education. Education in the military education system is sadly still more of a »necessary evil« required for career path development, and to a much lesser extent an honour and an privilege bestowed only upon a couple of chosen individuals expected to fulfil their study obligations with a high level of academic maturity.¹

Military leaders of the 21st century have to learn strategy. The strategy studies are compulsory at the master and doctoral levels. Study candidates should thus be selected based on the assessment of their capability to effectively and logically integrate different information into coherent conclusions which can be applied in problem solving. Personal experiences are undoubtedly the best teacher. However, knowledge and wisdom deriving from the works of the greatest strategic minds are equally important and valuable.

The learning of strategy cannot be founded exclusively on contemporary challenges and challenges anticipated in the near future. By employing this approach, strategic studies would become nothing more but an examination of the current situation. The students would thus learn to value only those strategic issues that they estimate as extremely important, which would taint their analysis with prejudice. A good strategist is highly educated also in other areas, has vast general knowledge and is familiar with the development principles of the society in which he is active. The success of strategic operation often depends on the strategist's capability to successfully communicate military issues to professional politicians (Kotnik, 2008).

¹ *A research conducted among education providers, participants and graduates of all levels of military education programmes in the SAF in the field of military education and training in the context of the Defence Sector Strategic Review (SPOR 09) confirmed these statements. The findings of the research are available in the joint material of the inspection performed at the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia.*

2 THEORETICAL ASPECT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION OF MILITARY STRATEGISTS

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

Alvin Toffler

Strategy education is important for the development of the strategic approach, a way of thinking that can help solve contemporary and future strategic challenges. Nonetheless, such education should be based on very clear assumptions regarding the nature, importance and function as well as the fact that the nature of strategy is constantly changing.

Theoreticians (Gray, Hughes, Lyman, McCausland) agree that a good strategist is a result of the nature and personality, in short, psychological characteristics, and the experience related to the opportunities presented to an individual during his personal and professional development. They all promote the importance of formal education; although there is no scientific proof that education and training do in fact contribute to the making of a strategist.

Colin Gray is convinced that strategic talent nowadays suffices for work at the strategic level. A strategic genius, however, is a true rarity and not even close to continuous phenomena, as they are hard to be found. Both the conceptual basis which will serve as a foundation for the study of strategy and the desired content of strategic education have to be defined. He also warns that different circumstances require different strategic conduct which should be taken into account during the preparation of the curriculum for strategic education (Gray, 2009).

The education of military strategists should include both theory and the practice. It should include ideas and the method of their execution through plans carried out by commanders.

Wayne P. Hughes recommends that the strategy and tactics are taught in a way that the contents supplement and upgrade each other, stressing that it is the tactics that defines the borders of strategy. Theory (strategy as a plan) and practice (tactical activity) constitute a whole. The difference lies in the purpose and the instrument by means of which the intention is achieved. Therefore strategy theory and practice should be taught at all levels of warfare and for each war or armed conflict individually (Hughes, 1989, p. 75).

Robert Lyman is convinced that the operational level of warfare must be led by generals with a pronounced feeling for strategy (Lyman, 2008). There, nonetheless, exists a traditional belief that only command in military sense can be carried out at the operational level of warfare, without any political elements included

(Gray, 2009). As warfare and the objectives defined as a military instrument are part of the external politics and the political will reality, the teaching of strategy can be quite a challenge.

A couple of basic questions to be answered prior the formation of the strategy education curriculum:

What can be required from a strategist?

Why are we educating future strategists?

What does it mean to be a strategist?

Colin Gray believes the following could be expected from future strategists:

- Theorize abstractly and contribute to the development, or more accurately the interpretation, of strategy's eternal and universal general theory.
- Conceive, invent, or discover, the master idea(s) that provide the basic guidance for planners in particular historical contexts.
- Shape and draft the actual historical operational plans, also known as strategies, for the use of the armed forces; this requires command and control of the process of strategic planning, including adaptive planning once the enemy begins to cast his vote.
- Command and control of the attempted implementation of plans. (Gray, 2009, p.13)

According to Kotnik senior officers should:

- Be capable of analytical integration which will ensure better understanding of the comprehensive strategic environment.
- Be able to manage a wide spectrum of activities surpassing the activities of a classical theatre.
- Be able to operate in different environments in which they will come across different races, religions, cultures etc. (Kotnik, 2008, p. 83).

Strategists must be able to direct, lead and form military operations the purpose of which is to secure the advantage obtained in the military area.

Troha states that "a strategic leader" focuses on the formation of the vision and the organization structure, and allocates resources and assets. He operates in unclear circumstances and deals with complicated and challenging problems which are influenced by events and organizations that are not part of the military" (Troha, 2009, p. 77). Strategists should also be able to form and direct military activities supporting the attainment of political objectives; "military commanders must be able to take on a multilayered and a complex role of a soldier-scientist and a soldier-diplomat" (Kotnik, 2008, pr. 82).

What should the strategists be educated in?

Gray warns that the teaching of strategy should take into account the different roles a strategist can carry out, as well as the fact that strategy is a science not to be treated by the teachers (lecturers) as a never changing set of truths.

He is also convinced that education in the field of strategy should influence an individual, his behaviour and his conduct; a strategist should be a dynamic product or a mix of biology, psychology or character, experience and opportunity. The mere intelligence does not suffice for the attainment of the highest quality strategic conduct. Good tacticians are not always good strategists and good strategists do not need an exceptionally brilliant career in tactical warfare. In practice, however, an individual who has the potential to become a great strategist will never get the opportunity at the strategic level, if his performance of duties at the lower levels will not be satisfactory, even though if such duties do not correspond to his capabilities.

There are three closely intertwined developmental paths leading to a military leader at the strategic level: a selection process which ensures the selection of an individual with the most appropriate personal qualities and personal values; the formation of the organizational structure which enables monitoring, assessment and the rewarding of an individual through promotion to more responsible positions as well as education and training aimed at the development of knowledge (e.g. experience and findings) and conduct, both essential elements for an individual assuming the highest leadership positions (Troha, 2009, p. 77).

The strategy theory signifies a conceptual basis and the understanding of war. Is a tool which can be used for analyzing war and peace problems. The understanding of theory means that a student has both the concept and the questions which help him and guide him through further studies. The study of strategic theory helps us think strategically (Mahnken, 2010, p. 68).

The general theory of strategy is always important. It is the context in which strategy is applied that differs, most likely leading to significant differences in the contents. The challenge in this respect is, above all, to define the necessary topics for future strategists in relation to the history and context. It is much easier to reach a consensus on the contents of the general theory of strategy than to define which strategies should be applied at the present time and in the future.

Gray claims that the future strategists should be trained in a variety of different peacetime and wartime scenarios, as we cannot predict the type of conflicts that will require their professional skills. This training would, however, have to include also the classical form of warfare. Gray is a strong advocate of the revival of forgotten skills. He believes that we merely think that we understand conflicts of the new century and that it is dangerous to presume that contemporary conflicts are the same as the conflicts we will be confronted with in the future. To his belief the contemporary study approach to strategy should take into account the different conflicts and all aspects of such conflicts, even though this may not be the modern tendency or desire.

How good can a general who has never commanded in an engagement be? How capable and efficient will the armed forces be in 2025 or 2030?

There are two sides to the issue of the teaching of strategists; On the one hand, military profession has been lacking real-life experience for years. On the other hand, strategic professions in the military are much more demanding than other professions, since strategy deals with the issue of national security and human survival. For this reason strategic education must be as realistic as possible.

Kotnik says that "war still demands both science and skills from (military) leaders" and that "creativity, intuition, leadership, motivation and the adoption of correct decisions", all attributes of skills or qualification and personal characteristics of an individual, remain the key factors also in the present-day theatre situation (Kotnik, 2008, p. 86).

Appropriate peacetime strategic conduct must be adaptable, flexible and adequate, and must enable operation in different types of conflicts and warfare. In the future, a military instrument able to support political decisions in that context will be required. Strategic education must therefore take into account historical experience, but must not be directed towards or rely exclusively on the study of contemporary history and the current events.

What should we teach?

The aim of the education programme is to provide strategists with quality knowledge and appropriate competencies, and not only the attainment top-notch results. The most important thing to teach a strategist is strategic assessment.

Gray presents seven areas in which strategists can gain appropriate knowledge.

1. To think strategically; to focus on activities which enable coping with consequences or results of decisions and to predict immediate (direct) and future effects of activities. To understand or justify the desired end state, the manner in which this state will be attained and the means to be used to this end.
2. Formal education in strategy is mandatory. Since war changes only in character but not also in nature, the general theory of strategy should be applied to all historical examples of war and conflicts.
3. Apply theory to contemporary examples of conflicts and war and assess the value of theoretical premises.
4. Understand the opponent and be able to adapt to new opponents.
5. Use healthy scepticism, critical and creative thinking and understand that these are strategic advantages.
6. Understand that strategy can function well enough to carry out specific tasks despite the scepticism and negative historical experience.
7. Be familiar with humanistic studies. Successful strategic operation depends on appropriate education and the worldliness of an individual. A strategist must be

able to explain the current and future military activities to civilian high officials in a way they will understand them (Gray, 2009, p. 37–51).

Kotnik believes that future commanders will have to master combat and diplomatic skills and be capable of assessing activities "not only from the aspect of military effectiveness but also in the light of the influence of political, ethnic, linguistic and religious circumstances in the environment they are operating in" (Kotnik, 2008, p. 78).

Strategic conduct must therefore include the capability to make decisions, carry out command and control and the capability to understand events. To that end practical limitations of formal education in the field of strategy must be understood.

In addition, in order to define what needs to be taught, we also have to define who should the strategy students be, what do they have to achieve or do and what should they be taught and what not.

3 THE CURRENT EXPERIENCE IN THE EDUCATION OF MILITARY STRATEGISTS IN SLOVENIA AS A GUIDANCE FOR THE FORMATION OF EDUCATION FOR FUTURE STRATEGISTS

In Slovenia, the preparation of curriculum for military strategists started six years ago. In that time, Slovenia had a number of military and civilian experts who completed strategic education at the National Defense University and some other colleges in the USA, the Royal Military Academy in Great Britain and at the General Staff College in Germany. The drafting of the curriculum turned out to be very challenging as there was but a handful of people who had both the experience at the strategic level and a solid theoretical knowledge. The Faculty of Social Sciences, however, stepped in and helped with an expertise which was mostly theoretical.

Further on, the article presents the experience and the authors' proposals deriving from the attendance of the Military Strategy subject at the General Staff Programme in the Slovenian Armed Forces by one of the authors and the experience of both authors obtained during the performance of functions at the strategic level and the theoretical knowledge gained at strategic trainings.

3.1 Strategy teachers

During the process of preparation of the military strategy curriculum, Slovenia has gained a number of experiences which support the theoretical premises for the formation of the study of strategy.

The first important Slovenian experience has brought the realization that individuals who would be capable of teaching strategy should be identified already at the major or lieutenant-colonel level. Consequently, the planning of their professional and

career development has to be provided for. They have to complete adequate military and civilian post-graduate studies, participate in the process of military education and training as instructors or as assistants in the strategy course and gain practical experience from engagement in command and control at the strategic level and return in the education process as strategy teachers with all the theoretical knowledge and practical experience. One of the key elements without which a national military higher-education school system cannot be formed is quality lecturers (Žabkar, Svete, 2008; SPOR09).²

In the future, effective cooperation between civilian and military actors for the formation of appropriate national security strategies will become increasingly important. Therefore the experience that better results in education can be achieved only through the inclusion of military and civilian experts, theoreticians and practitioners with work experience from civil and military field in the teaching of strategy at the national and international strategic level in the form of permanent staff (co-workers).

The next challenge to be solved is the objective of the training or in other words the question "What is the desired end result?". Strategy students must develop the capacity to understand and reflect critically about skills and the knowledge for the formation and the use the national military power which can be used to support national interests. They have to develop critical thinking and the capability to use concepts and understand the current and future strategic challenges.

Up until the present time the curriculum of military strategy included topics on the theory of war and the military force, military strategy, war strategy, strategic planning, the planning of strategic resources, strategic planning for the future and the preparation of own (national) military strategy. It was practically impossible to carry out all required topics and meet the set goals completely, as they were too extensive and too demanding content-wise. These findings result in the following experience: we should set attainable objectives and support them with topics and exercises which can be carried out with the personnel and technical capabilities at hand. It is very difficult to lower the level of ambitions and expectations, however the

² *The key findings from the field of personnel selection to support the process of military education and training in the Slovenian Armed Forces in the context of the strategic review of the defence field carried out in 2009 were as follows: The personnel plan does not envisage the inclusion of expert personnel for the manning of duties within the education and training system: nor the education and training implementers nor those who provide for the uninterrupted execution of education and training processes; the mandatory directions for the SAF active component members career paths system even to the present day do not stipulate a planned development of personnel for the manning of duties within the education and training system; the majority of education and training implementers, working in centres which provide teaching personnel, and in military schools, attend supplementary andragogical and pedagogical training, but not before they are assigned to the new duty post; the personnel who does not have the appropriate knowledge and previous experience required for quality work in education and training and who do not see the work in the education and development process as a professional challenge are likewise assigned to schools and centres; we are not training military experts who are capable of independent and quality takeover and execution of basic military subjects from the field of education and training in the SAF; experts who would take over the execution of basic military subjects at the highest levels of education and training are also a problem.*

following principle "less is more" has to be applied for the definition of objectives, while the thematic scope of the education and the credibility of the programme has to be preserved. The set conduct, when execution becomes a formality but does not ensure the desired quality, has to be avoided.

In addition, the formation of the strategy curriculum also requires the definition of the type of strategists required. The experience shows that individuals who combine the capability to operate at different strategic areas of operation, such as strategic management, planning, the development of concepts and other areas are difficult to find in the education process. Therefore the curriculum has to be prepared in a way that supports the strengthening of the natural capabilities of students, thus providing for better education results.

3.2 Strategy programme timeframe

Another important experience was learnt; time is also essential for the attainment of the education objective. And so are the selection of students, preparation of the study process in a methodological sense (teaching methods and techniques), the selection of study material, comparison of curriculum with other programmes, courses (the upgrading, connection and the transfer of experience) and other activities.

The time available for the execution of a subject is a key factor for the attainment of curriculum objectives. There are 48 hours planned for the execution of the military strategy subject; for both lectures and practical exercises.³ In practice, the time available was much too short for a quality presentation of topics, therefore the lecturers had to decide by themselves what to exclude from the programme. The execution of the programme in the given timeframe presented an even greater challenge in the generation of students who attended the schooling while employed full-time; they attended the education one week per month at which the lectures lasted at least eight hours per day, followed by individual study. It is therefore important that the subject preparation process provides the lecturers with the freedom to assess and decide in which way they would like to address the topics. When time is limited, it is more important to address the key topics than to merely go over the prescribed content.

3.3 The role of teachers in the selection of topics or the flexibility of syllabus

The possibility of a flexible presentation of specific topics in the context of prescribed topics is important, as it enables the lecturer to include the discussions on and the experience gained from the current global or regional events. The lecturers must have the knowledge and the skills required to include real-life events in their lecture with the intent of encouraging discussion and application of the students' theoretical knowledge to current events. This provides the students with a possibility to educate

³ When Krek took over the Military Strategy subject in 2006, the subject was 48 hours long, which is the exact number of hours that the General Staff Programme curriculum encompassed in 2008 when Žabkar and Svete prepared a critical comparison of the programme with comparable programmes abroad (Žabkar, Svete, 2008, p. 202–203). The programme is, however, still applicable (Program, 2007).

in the field of military strategy and helps them form their own strategy which could prove useful in an actual real-life situation. Strategy students can be an excellent professional audience for a critical assessment and supplementation of current strategic documents from the field of defence planning and doctrinal documents. Experience from practice to be applied in the preparation of the strategy curriculum show that the syllabus has to be flexible enough for the lecturer to include current events in the discussion and use them to support the theory. In this way, the lecturers provide for a higher quality execution of the course and include the students' opinions in the preparation of the expert assessments of the current normative and expert national security documents.

3.4 Study literature and material

The study material used in the implementation of the strategy education is essential for quality education. There is currently a great variety of useful literature available in the English language, some of it in German, French, Italian and even Russian. Naturally, the limitation in the use of these materials are the lecturer's and the students' language skills. In the recent years, English language skills have considerably improved; however, the knowledge of other languages saw only little progress. Nonetheless, the greatest challenge remains the selection of the appropriate study material in the vast variety of all material available. It is relatively simple to select the material on the theory of strategy, on the identification of the use of strategy in history of warfare and in a number of modern conflicts. A much bigger challenge is the selection of the study material, which is appropriate for the examination of the strategy and military strategy of the Second World War in Slovenia, the Slovenia's War of Independence and the Balkan Wars after 1991, in short, the strategies which are of special national and security interest for Slovenia. There is more than enough material and books addressing the subject, however we have to identify the parts with expert explanations which could serve as appropriate study material. Hence the lecturer is often confronted not only with the task to prepare the study material, but to write it as well. A strategy lecturer must be able to produce quality study material addressing strategy issues.

3.5 Interconnection of the strategy subject with other areas in the military education programmes

Among other things, the experience gained from military education demonstrated the importance of relation to other subjects and courses or other education programmes. Also very important are the appropriate upgrading of knowledge and the joining of individual contents of different subjects under one single course and the interconnection between them. It is especially challenging to prevent repetition and to ensure the inclusion of important topics in at least one of the courses. During the drafting of curricula for different education programmes such interconnection between subjects can be attained only through professional coordination which has to be ensured also during the execution of programmes or subjects.

3.6 Education participants and their previous knowledge

The strategy study programme should not be prepared without paying special attention to the education participants who enter the education process with different experience; some of them completed education abroad, their civilian and military prior knowledge differs, they have different language skills and different capability for preparing written papers at the postgraduate study level. Across the world certain strategic education programmes are attended by both civilian and military persons of different nationalities together (civilians and soldiers). It is very difficult to find a common premise which would serve as a basis for quality teaching of the subject if the lecturers have no influence over the curriculum requirements and are not familiar with the students' capabilities.

The quality of the lectures and the study can be increased through certain activities that facilitate the adjustment of the work method to the education participants. These are:

- Conducting interviews with education participants who will enter the education programme before the selection of participants and immediately afterwards;
- Preparing the selected material in advance; the material can be prepared for each individual and/or for all training participants, especially if the group of participants is large;
- Carrying out a preparation course to determine the level of knowledge. Based on the latter individuals are able to enter the education process without interruptions. This can be taken into account only if the lecturer has the possibility to determine an individual's experience and knowledge beforehand.

All of the listed activities can be carried out in practice even though an effective way for their execution might be difficult to find. A more feasible way is when the individuals obtain the knowledge required for successful inclusion in strategic education through a prior mandatory course (operational level). In the Slovenian example this means that a subject providing the basic knowledge on strategy (e.g. Strategy 101) to participants would be included in the Higher Staff Course syllabus.

3.7 Monitoring the successfulness of the graduation candidates following the completion of the strategy studies

There are two more experience relevant for further education on strategy in Slovenia; The work of those who have completed their education has to be monitored also in the future, especially when they take over duties at the strategic level of decision-making. The monitoring and assessment of their work results, also during this period, can improve their readiness and capability for the performance of strategic functions. It often occurs that individuals understand the operation of the national security system, the area of work and the responsibilities at individual functions/duties at the strategic level up to the time they are confronted with real-life action, the influence of national politics and the civil society on the functioning of the system

and the individuals. A particular problem at this level is an individual's incapacity to present strategic problems in a clear, unambiguous and comprehensive way. Even high officers occupying strategic positions, including those who passed education at the strategic level, are not versed in explaining professional arguments to civilian officials and politicians. On the other hand, civilian officials and politicians do not have the appropriate knowledge on national security which additionally hinders mutual communication and the assessment of issues which are often of national importance. In Slovenia, this problem was evident especially in relation to the question on the downsizing of the defence budget, assessment of certain more important programmes for the purchase of military equipment, the discussions on the cooperation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in Afghanistan and last but not least in the discussion on the abolishment of the Slovenian Armed Forces. Since we operate in an environment in which there are less and less available (financial and material) resources, political skills of high officers who are able to express the needs of the military in a persuasive and argued manner, are becoming increasingly more important (Kotnik, 2008, p. 82–83).

Strategy students must be trained in the coping with challenges they will be confronted with at their strategic duties. They have to be versed in constructive discussion and be able to adequately explain professional military standpoints to both civilians and politicians. Already during their studies, the representatives of both the government and non-government organizations and the civil society are to be included in the education process. Strategy students have to be introduced to different circumstances and confronted with difficult questions regarding the resolution of the current crisis situations. Education at this level is their last systemic education or the last academic education during which they are free to express and defend their standpoints and opinion without their opinion having a negative influence on the defence and national security system.

Conclusion

At present, a strategic education curriculum is being formed under the auspices of the Central European Forum of states for military education. The initiative resulted from the needs of the small states which were later joined by the large ones. A joint curriculum for the education of soldiers and civilians at the strategic level would facilitate the formation of the curriculum for individual countries. It would unify professional knowledge at the strategic level, which would support the cooperation between agencies not only within individual countries but also at the international level (Comprehensive Approach), especially in the decision-making and the implementation of activities connected to the world crisis. The exchange of lecturers especially for those subjects, for which they are difficult to ensure within the national framework, is envisaged. This will improve the quality of execution and contribute to the better understanding of the English language, since the course will be held in English. The planners of this curriculum in general tend to organize the lectures in the English language for all participants. The unified learning language would enable the countries to send their students abroad, while the only subjects they would attend in the homeland would be those that are exclusively of national importance, such as

the exercises for the improvement of the operation of the system of national defence or any of its part and other similar contents.

Slovenia has to continue to be actively involved in the formation of the joint strategy curriculum and its actual realization, to support initiatives which would facilitate the study and support its quality. A small army, such as Slovenia's, will have to learn how to better exploit the different possibilities for a quality professional training of personnel and for the obtainment of better results in relation to the resources and the time invested also in the future. However, it is important to take on an active role in such initiatives, as we have both the experience and the knowledge we do not have to be ashamed of.

The politics has to support our efforts to provide the best quality lecturers, students and programmes for the study of strategy. Without a doubt, a course the objective of which would be the familiarization of the members of parliament and the Government and other important political officials with the system of national security and especially with the matters pertaining to the defence system, would prove to be more than suitable and significant, as it would contribute to the improvement of the general knowledge, familiarization with terminology in the defence field and the knowledge required for work and, in particular, for making decisions at the strategic level.

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