

# The Market

International Journal of Business

## *The Market: International Journal of Business*

*The Market: International Journal of Business* is a scholarly, peer-reviewed research journal published annually by the Cyprus Centre for Business Research at the Cyprus Institute of Marketing (CIM).

We seek to promote new and productive interaction between various business disciplines and fields. We consider articles that express new and innovative ideas in Business, paying particular attention to developments in Cyprus and the broader Eastern Mediterranean area.

**Published by:**

Cyprus Centre for Business Research  
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Nicosia, Cyprus  
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## NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE MILITARY. BUT NEW SOLUTIONS IN MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

By

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Militaries across the world have a problem. The problem is: How do we deal with 'New' and 'Emerging' security challenges?

What does this mean? For centuries, the role of the military was to deter hostile states, and to be able to engage in conflict with other states using arms, if required by their government's foreign policy. In other words, military and foreign policy was all about states - countries. The role of the military was clear: it was to defend the state or operate overseas on the instructions of their own civilian administration against the military of an opposing state.

But over the last 20 years we have seen the creation of new and emerging security challenges. These new challenges may lead us to re-evaluate the role of states' militaries in international relations.

'Non state' actors including fringe groups and extremists have been able to use cyberspace - the online environment in which we all live and work - to spread their narrative. Terrorists are able to use cyberspace to communicate their propaganda, recruit individuals, and execute their atrocities. They use secure online communications, evading the detection of security services here in Europe and across the world. Sadly, terrorists have utilised cyberspace to devastating effect.

Moreover, security challenges emanating from decreasing energy supply, combined with the security challenges caused by climate change, have created whole new security dynamics for which governments and their militaries have been - and continue to be - unprepared.

Indeed, climate change, which is causing diminishing food and water supply, lack of healthcare and endemic poverty, combined with political instability, have created a situation where desperate people end-up in the hands of criminals facilitating human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

In 2010 former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright wrote about the blurring of distinction between what were once considered 'military threats' and "non-military' threats - such as cyber and energy security. We can extend these examples to the protection of critical infrastructure - our water, power, health systems, and transport. Very few governments have clearly allocated civilian or military control for the protection of these critical services from physical, and increasingly cyber incursion. (For example, our critical infrastructure is increasingly controlled by 'SCADA' systems - essentially computers that monitor and control infrastructure online in cyberspace. SCADA creates huge efficiencies, but, in the wrong circumstances, also creates great security vulnerability).

So why have militaries across the world been slow in addressing these new and emerging security challenges?

Military training for officers and recruits has changed little in centuries. Marching, fieldcraft and, in the case of a certain European military, weekly ballroom dancing lessons (no I'm not joking), are considered to be compulsory and essential military training. Now there may be fundamentally sound reasons to continue with many aspects of traditional military training, as they enhance discipline and self-reliance. To be clear, the author is not advocating abandoning these traditional aspects of military training entirely (not even the dancing lessons). But almost all cadets are trained to dig trenches (trench warfare has not really been engaged in by European countries since 1918), and operate heavy artillery (European Union militaries have not operated heavy artillery in conflict since World War II.)\* Again there may be a benefit to this - developing a comprehensive understanding of the traditional military battlespace for example - despite being operationally useless. Moreover, some might argue (although I've seen little evidence to prove this), that training in extreme physical conditions while under great stress helps decision making and rational thinking under pressure. The question is: does it help the military and the countries they serve in addressing new and emerging security challenges?

The answer almost certainly lies in closely examining why we are conducting the military training that states conduct in the first place. The fact that a cadet may not be able to handle extreme environments does not prevent him or her from being an invaluable asset. Logistics, communications, engineering, medicine, law, strategic planning, operating in cyberspace - and the multitude of other skills critical in this new military strategic environment - may not require the traditional training that cadets and recruits have been exposed to for centuries. Indeed, this is comprehensively proven again and again by the fact that officers who apply for 'direct entry' from civilian roles with specialist skills - who commission without undertaking the vast majority of this type of training - are equally as capable operationally (many serving with distinction), as those that have been trained in the traditional way.

Military training should never be conducted at the expense of the ability of the cadet or recruit to be able to comprehensively understand and act within the new environment of security challenges that they will be facing over their career. But at the moment the ability to withstand being wet, freezing and highly fatigued while being yelled at by a non-commissioned officer appears to be much more 'important' than the cadet or recruit's potential ability to operate in this new environment of emerging security challenges. For example, at the recruit and cadet level there is a huge amount of training in the use of military camouflage to hide in undergrowth and behind rocks - but no training whatsoever in defending the cybersecurity of their military equipment and logistics which can now be directly targeted and attacked online. Likewise, they are trained in how to fire bullets yet receive no training whatsoever in how to breach and disable an opponent's military equipment and capabilities via cyberspace.

In summary, it is critical for our armed forces here in the European Union and elsewhere for military training and education to reflect the new and emerging security environment - an environment which no longer comprises a neatly arranged enemy on the other side of a field to be engaged in battle - as it once did. And to be fair NATO and its partners' military education programme (operated by the Partnership for Peace Consortium), and the EU's European Security and Defence College (part of the EU's European External Action Service, where Cyprus and Ireland have crucial roles), are developing training and education which focuses on these new security challenges.

Progress is being made toward adopting military training and education for the new security environment in which we find ourselves. But we have a very long way to go. There is still an over-reliance in many militaries across the world - and here in Europe - on the fact that things have 'always been done this way'. In order to meet new security challenges a comprehensive analysis of what, how, and most importantly why we conduct military education and training in the way we do, is very much required.

\* (The only exception to this for a European military was the British use of heavy artillery in Kosovo in 1998 for illumination during night operations, and in 2003 with the AS90 artillery weapon in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In other words, it has been used essentially once in battle in 76 years by only one European country. Air power has now effectively made the use of heavy artillery redundant, and yet its use is still taught to cadets and recruits despite its irrelevance).