STATEMENT

BY THE COMMANDANT OF KAISONE PHOMVIHANE ACADEMY OF NATIONAL DEFENCE AT THE 28th ARFHUCDIM

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
20–23 October 2026

Excellency the Chair, Co-Chairs of the Meeting,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Major General Phansaeng Bounphan, Commandant of Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence. On behalf of Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence of the Lao People's Army, I am honoured and deeply pleased to have been invited by the host to participate in this important meeting and to exchange views on the subtheme: **"Enhancing the Strategic Capabilities of Defence Leaders for Multi-Domain Operations."**

First of all, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Chair, the co-chairs, and the host country for the warm hospitality extended to our delegation, as well as for providing this valuable platform for defence educational institutions from the region and beyond to meet, exchange experiences, share lessons learned, and jointly explore new approaches to preparing defence leaders for the future.

1. Perspectives and Guidelines of the Party and Government of the Lao PDR on National Defence

For the Lao PDR, national defence and public security constitute a strategic mission and a fundamental political responsibility. In preparing strategic defence and security leaders for multi-domain operations, the 12th National Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party emphasized strengthening the Party's decisive, direct, and comprehensive leadership over the national defence and public security forces; strengthening relations with strategic partner countries and the international community on the basis of mutual benefit; maintaining regional and international peace and stability; and linking these efforts with socio-economic development towards a strong, stable, civilized, and just society.

At the same time, the Party's directions emphasize building a comprehensive, strong, and modern people's national defence and public security foundation.

From this perspective, we recognize that **developing people is the foundation, developing leaders is the key priority, and building modern forces is an essential factor in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.**

The Resolution of the 12th National Congress also calls for the **"comprehensive development of the Lao people"** in order to meet the requirements of national development in the new era. For defence education, this means developing leaders who possess strong

political commitment and integrity, sound knowledge, analytical capabilities, broad vision and strategic foresight, the courage to make sound decisions, and the ability to adapt to changing real-world environments.

2. Developing Leaders for Multi-Domain Operations

In today's security environment, operations can no longer be confined to traditional military domains. Politics, diplomacy, economics, information, cyberspace, artificial intelligence, space, and emerging technologies are increasingly important elements of the strategic environment.

Therefore, next-generation leaders must move from **fragmented thinking to integrated thinking**, and from focusing on immediate issues to understanding their broader strategic-level implications.

For Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence, we believe that leadership development should cultivate at least five key characteristics:

First: Strong political commitment and integrity.

Second: The ability to conduct analysis and think at the strategic level.

Third: Technological awareness and the ability to assess both the opportunities and risks associated with technology.

Fourth: The ability to coordinate and integrate capabilities across multiple domains.

Fifth: The ability to make decisions and adapt under conditions of uncertainty.

These five dimensions must be developed through education, training, simulation, and real-world practice.

3. Lessons Learned from Force Development in the Lao PDR

Based on the orientations established by the Party and the State, we recognize that developing national defence forces is not merely a matter of acquiring weapons and military equipment. It is also about developing people, organizations, systems, and capabilities that are able to respond effectively to emerging challenges.

The Resolution of the 12th National Congress also emphasizes strengthening the forces politically and ideologically, organizationally and professionally, while promoting professionalization and modernization. This provides an important lesson for defence leadership education: **modernization must begin with people and leadership systems, alongside material resources and technology.**

At the same time, greater emphasis is placed on conducting comprehensive and in-depth research on national defence and public security strategies, from the central level to the local level. This is consistent with the role of defence educational institutions as centres of knowledge, research, and strategic thought development.

4. Future Directions of Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence

In order to contribute to implementing the Party's guidelines into practical outcomes, Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence will continue to focus on five key directions:

First: Revise curricula to emphasize strategic-level analysis.

We will place greater emphasis on enabling learners to analyze issues from multiple perspectives and to integrate political, military, economic, social, and technological factors.

Second: Develop education on **Pan-Domain Operations (PDO)** / **Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)** and multi-domain integration.

The focus should not merely be on understanding individual domains, but on learning how to integrate capabilities across multiple domains to achieve strategic effects.

Third: Expand the use of **Simulation and Wargaming** in Professional Military Education (PME).

We believe that wargaming should not be limited to simulating combat. It should serve as a **"decision-making classroom"** where leaders can develop the ability to think, analyze, decide, adapt, and learn from the consequences of their decisions.

Fourth: Strengthen **Technological Literacy** among leaders.

Leaders do not necessarily need to be engineers or specialists in AI, cyber, or space. However, they must understand which technologies can generate strategic effects, what their limitations are, and what risks they may present.

Fifth: Expand defence education cooperation within ASEAN and the globe.

The Party's foreign policy seeks to create favourable conditions for the national defence and development mission. Therefore, cooperation among defence educational institutions can serve as an important mechanism for promoting mutual understanding, strengthening trust, and jointly developing the next generation of leaders.

5. Responses to guiding questions

Based on the theme of this meeting, I would like to offer three key observations:

First: Leadership education must move from **"knowing how to do"** to **"understanding what to do, why to do it, and what the outcomes will be."**

Strategic-level leaders must be able to see both the **big picture** and the **details**, anticipate consequences, and establish directions with due consideration.

Second: Leadership development must go hand in hand with the development of well-rounded personnel.

Strategic capability cannot be developed through classroom education alone. It requires the development of knowledge, character, discipline, responsibility, a spirit of cooperation, communication skills, and the courage to make decisions.

Third: Technology must serve strategy, and humans must retain oversight and decision-making authority.

Before adopting any technology, leaders should ask:

"What problems can this technology address?"

"What strategic benefits can it generate?"

"What risks and limitations does it involve?"

And, ultimately:

"Where should human beings retain oversight and decision-making authority?"

Conclusion

Excellency the Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Based on the Party's guidelines emphasizing the strengthening of national defence and public security, the comprehensive development of people, and the building of a strong and modern national defence foundation, we can summarize several key principles for defence leadership education:

"Develop personnel with strong character and knowledge; develop leaders with vision and strategic thinking; build strong, professional, and modern forces; and leverage technology to serve strategic objectives."

In the era of multi-domain operations, an effective leader is not necessarily someone who knows everything. Rather, an effective leader is someone who **knows what matters most, knows how to integrate capabilities, knows how to lead people, and can make well-considered decisions under conditions of uncertainty.**

For Kaisone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence, we stand ready to continue enhancing education, training, research, and international cooperation in order to jointly develop a new generation of defence leaders who possess strong character, vision, strategic thinking, technological awareness, the ability to coordinate across domains, and a commitment to cooperation for peace, stability, and security at the regional and international levels.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Chair, the Co-Chairs, and all distinguished delegates for your kind attention and for this valuable exchange of views.

Thank you very much.