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**"MILITARY LEADERSHIP UNDER STRESS"**



Rio de Janeiro  
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## **"MILITARY LEADERSHIP UNDER STRESS"**

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado á Escola de Comando e Estado-Maior do Exército, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Especialista em Ciências Militares, com ênfase em Estudos Estratégicos.

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# **MILITARY LEADERSHIP UNDER STRESS**

**Resumen:** Hay mucha teoría publicada sobre las habilidades, las cualidades y las capacidades que un líder debería tener para ser seguido fielmente por sus subordinados pero hay muy poco escrito sobre cuáles son las realmente importantes, las que debe tener ineludiblemente y sin las cuales esa persona no podría ser un auténtico líder. Además es fácil tomar decisiones cuando hay tiempo, cuando no hay nada en juego porque estamos en tiempo de paz o es un ejercicio. En este estudio pretendo investigar sobre cuáles son esas cualidades que debe tener un líder, en primer lugar en términos generales y en segundo lugar especialmente cuando se está bajo presión o cuando la decisión puede traer como consecuencia que muera gente o cuando se está en un escenario complicado como es el de las misiones actuales de Irak o Afganistán. A este respecto, quiero entrar en lo que es el estrés, que significa el estrés para un soldado y como lo afronta y si hay técnicas especiales para entrenar la resiliencia y poder hacer líderes más fuertes y mejor preparados en las Escuelas de Oficiales y Suboficiales de los países de nuestro entorno Además, quiero analizar si es cierto que existe lo que llaman “Soledad del Mando” y en su caso investigar cuales pueden ser los principales apoyos que puede tener un líder para manejar ese aislamiento, esa soledad, a la hora de tomar decisiones importantes.

## **Keywords**

Estres, resiliencia, liderazgo, intuición, error, soledad del mando

**Abstract:** There is a lot of published theory about the skills, qualities and abilities that a leader should have to be followed faithfully by his subordinates, but there is very little written about which ones are really important, those that he must have inescapably and without which that person could not be a true leader. It is also easy to make decisions when there is time, when there is nothing at stake because we are in peacetime or it is an exercise. In this research, I intend to investigate what are those qualities that a leader must have, first in general terms and second especially when under pressure or when the decision can result in people dying or when they are in a complicated scenario such as the current missions of Iraq or Afghanistan. In this regard, I want to get into what stress is, what stress means to a soldier and how he copes with it and if there are special techniques to train resilience and be able to make stronger and better prepared leaders in the Officer and NCO Schools of the countries of our environment In addition to that, I want to analyze if it is true that there is what it is called “loneliness of a leader” and just in case, investigate what are the main supports that a leader should have to handle that isolation, that loneliness when taking important decisions

## **Keywords**

Stress, resilience, leadership, intuition, error, loneliness of a leader

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## **1 INTRODUCTION.**

Warren Bennis, one of the leadership gurus, said: "Leadership is like beauty, difficult to define but easy to perceive when you see it."(Carreño, 2011) And this is the main problem professional soldiers encounter, that we talk about something that is difficult to define and what we don't all understand the same. You perceive it when you have a boss who commands with ease, that when he speaks he has that charisma that makes us look at him carefully and follow him in what he orders us, especially because we are convinced that it is what should be done, but it is certainly not a characteristic that all the bosses that we have met have, some because they are shy others because they are not accustomed to command troops or feel themselves more comfortable in teaching positions or as analysts.

Commanding men and women is a difficult task, requires a lot of dedication, being close to your subordinates, knowing what are the dreams, challenges or problems of those people you are addressing, knowing that each person has a different attitude towards the life and that on many occasions you will be required to bring them up and give them a great motivation so that in the key moments they are one hundred percent involved in the mission and not with their heads in their own troubles.

The leader is made, without any doubt, although it may help that by genetics he already has a predisposition, by his physical capacity, empathy or common sense and the only way for a person to become a true leader is by having experiences in which he is able to observe other Chiefs, living moments where he has to take decisions in front of his men, where he suffers the same vicissitudes as his subordinates, enduring physical, mental fatigue and where he may acquire skills to give orders at any moment regardless of the place or situation. Besides that experience, the detailed knowledge of his men and women, the situation or the moment, it will give him a thing called INTUITION that will probably also be important to be a good leader. The main reasons for this research go along that line; find out which are the fundamental qualities that a leader must have to be able to take consistent decisions and discover which are the best supports a leader may have especially during stressful times or under big pressure.

Training, training and more training is clue for being updated in combat procedures and the best way to build up a team where everyone trusts everyone.

When you are on a real mission, there are many times when there are risks, times when you have to take really important decisions that can cause the death of your men and women or follow them all alive, times when the pressure and stress drown you but you have to make a quick decision and your subordinates are waiting for you to guide them ... in those moments when you feel lonely, you are afraid to screw up and make the wrong decision because your

men will follow you equally. In your mind is the fear of being wrong and this error can lead to losing some of them, ultimately to fail them as a leader. This is a secondary reason for the investigation, trying to take away the fear of error, to take the decision they don't expect, to manage stress in those situations. At last time during the research I will try to find new ideas that may help officers' schools to form leaders who are able to command with ease in this era of asymmetric fighting that is normally carried out in urban environments and where you don't know when it is a citizen or an enemy the person you meet on the street.

Summarizing, during the investigation that I am going to carry out, I intend first to conduct interviews with well-known Spanish leaders, high-ranking military officers who lived special circumstances in complex missions, then I will conduct some questionnaires that will be answered by students of the Staff Course and the General Officer's Promotion Course that are being developed in my country from where I intend to extract some interesting facts about leadership in complex scenarios or under stress

Later, by reading in detail books of famous international leaders, usually American Generals and specialized books on decision making under great stress and stress management in different circumstances, I want to draw conclusions that will determine how to handle this stress in complex scenarios.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

Lieutenant General Frederic J. Brown stressed that: "the genuinely new demands of leadership have been presented from the events of 9/11".

As of that date, the expectation of fighting an enemy in an exclusively conventional way is over, we have been in a decade in which the new operating environment requires leaders to become familiar with another type of combat in which the areas of operations are mixed, urban and rural, the enemy is difficult to see because he is camouflaged among the people, sometimes he is a citizen and at other times a fighter who plays as he pleases with social networks showing real or false images in a world in which western societies are not ready to afford collateral damages.

"The strongest does not live longer, but the one that best adapts" and this saying reflects the importance of "adaptability" in current operations that present many complex challenges for which there are no solutions that could have been studied in any military school. The doctrine goes far behind technology and ways of fighting and no longer provides any solution to the problems you encounter in the areas of operations. Our enemies have greatly improved their capabilities, get easily very advanced technology and know how to exploit our weaknesses.

Some books talk about adaptive leadership, about the importance of creating a cohesive team that can be trusted in critical moments but for a leader all that is not enough. There is concern for people themselves, how to manage a team made by people in which everyone has a life, a family, a problem, emotions, dreams and uncertainties. Preparing leaders to face these challenges is not an easy task, they must be continually tested, trained in difficult situations in which they have to solve the problems and trying to get them under pressure and stress.

The center of gravity of any army in the world is the combatant, and everything in his support is usually the first priority (SP ARMY, 2019). Training, good equipment and motivation are basic needs to carry out any mission, but above all of this, it's need a person who leads you, who leads the team, a man or woman in which the team has total confidence and the one that you would follow above all, even if it would be precise to give what the most precious thing a human could give in the name of his nation...the life itself.

Humanity always needed leaders although models have been different throughout history, they have always existed and will always exist. It is often said that there are physical differences between the leaders and those who follow him but more than physical, they are psychic; self-confidence, serenity, focus and motivation are the most pronounced differences between one and the others.

This is precisely what the leadership is about; in inspiring confidence, in giving security to the team that the decisions that are taken as rare as they may seem are the right ones, especially in critical situations.

There are a big number of qualities that can be demanded from a leader or that can be assumed to have them, although they do not always show them, the most typical are; honesty, integrity, decision-making ability, technical preparation, good shape, long-term vision, set specific goals, be enthusiastic and transmit that stimulus to his or her team, have charisma, be demanding with them and with himself, be consistent, but amongst of all these and others, we want to find those considered the really important ones to be true leaders and especially in complicated situations.

**We must not confuse leadership with the ability to command, being a leader is much more than that, it has to do with your abilities to inspire confidence and commitment as well as to motivate your team at all times.**

We are not talking about leaders of large Units because normally they will always have time to make a decision, they will have an advisory team and even if they are under pressure, it will never be the same as the heads of small Units that are fighting Talibans or Al-Qaeda warriors in each corner of a small lost village and have to take decisions in a hostile environment and



very close to the enemy. It is here that we are going to emphasize, in the Chiefs who lead small Units in combat zones.

The Commanders also have to fight very often against the excess of information and with the need of the superior Chiefs to know each movement that his Unit makes. In many cases, decisions based on information received from higher levels must be made. In this case, advanced technology can be a problem because they give you so much information that it takes you a long time to read and process it, thus delaying decision making. And sometimes one dreams of getting a piece of that vital information to arrive just to be sure you take the right decision and makes your subordinates wait and wait.(Rogers, 1994) This is the typical case that we have technologically very advanced means that make us delay the decision making process due to the volume of information or by waiting for that part of information that can give us the solution to a problem. We must prevent our leaders from being prisoners of technology and being able to take decisions more quickly, more intuitively and imaginatively.

This is reflected in several western doctrine books, the leader must in many occasions quickly make decisions based solely on his judgment and common sense not having to wait for a detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the different lines of action.

On the other hand, the need to know of the superior commanders often interferes with your ability to command, the constant questions of what has happened, how you have reacted, how many are injured etc ... limit your ability to decide and alter your mood, taking you sometimes to stress.

At Officers and NCOs` schools, chiefs of small or medium size units are formed through a rigid method of planning and decision-making that is practiced on numerous occasions in classrooms or rock-drills in which orders take time to be distributed because they reach too much limits detailed of what is intended, leaving the chiefs of subordinate units little space for their imagination or intuition and that once in the exercise does not respond to the fluctuations of the combat re-issuing new orders and so on.(Bungay Stephen, 2010)

Leaders are people who have acquired experiences participating in real missions, suffering the same vicissitudes as their subordinates and have been motivated by someone, some charismatic Chief they had and who left them a good mark and somehow follow a style similar to his, adapted to the new times. But in any case it is essential to be willing to offer motivation to your team and offer passion in everything you do.

It is when you realize that not only the acquired knowledge and its application are enough, in addition to that there is a way of being, of seeing things, of sharing with others, you have to be

one hundred percent authentic, do not try to imitate anyone, with your failures and your successes but always passionate about what is coming.

(Carreño, 2011)The leader has to carry out two main tasks; direct and command towards the achievement of an objective.Direct that we can define as the way to carry out resources and ideas and command that is the way to guide people and join all the efforts.

As director, he assigns the objective to be achieved and the purpose that is intended to be achieved by assigning tasks and coordinating the actions to reach it. These are fundamentally technical knowledge.

As commander, he combines and coordinates efforts to unite the results of what the subordinates have achieved with their own in order to achieve the final objective, which requires knowledge of how to motivate, influence, delegate and demand what are fundamentally human abilities.

Very important here is not to lose orientation towards achieving the ultimate goal of the superior command.

The true leader has AUTHORITY ... not because he is the Chief or the highest rank, but because he has earned it with his example, with his dedication, with his personal preparation and his team will always follow him, he has earned everyone`s respect, there are no gaps in internal relationships and the team endorses his moral authority. In this case, you have to run away from the toxic leader, the one who rules only because he has the rank and believes he has always the reason, the one who is usually despotic and unreasonable. It is what is called POTESTAS .. it is the established power, which is obligatory to obey. That boss who depends on how every morning comes that may be heaven or hell or that boss who shouts, threatens, humiliates or slanders. That kind of bosses who want to reach a goal and don't care about the means or the ways to reach them that boss who always demands and never rewards.(Army, 2005)

Another fundamental quality of a true leader is COMMUNICATION, he must be very detailed in this aspect, he must make very clear to his subordinates what the mission is, which is intended, why, how, when, if it is part of a major operation or not, what are the escape routes, possible interferences, what to do in case of doubt. A general said that subordinates often seem to listen to what you are saying but most of the time they do not get to hear more than half so you have to be patient, talk to them repeatedly, repeat to satiety all that is important for them to know and avoid the superfluous. You must not die drowning in vain things.

The third fundamental quality is the MOTIVATION and this is a difficult challenge of a true leader. Keep your team ready, eager to act whatever the mission is, with initiative, with positive mentality. All this can be achieved, being close to them, knowing them very well and having

absolute confidence in them and their abilities and having said that so many times. The commander has to know in detail the life of each one, their dreams or their problems, whether they have family or not and talk to them, give them the option of choosing to give their version of things, remembering that a handshake, a word of well done or keep it up, are fundamental to their self-confidence.

If I summarize these three fundamental qualities, the leader is the person who is able to inspire, motivate and impress his team due to his special faculties, the confidence he inspires, his way of achieving the objectives, his ability to act and express himself and the faith he generates in his subordinates.

However, this is easy to apply in exercises or low risk situations. When we add the component of stress, or danger, or the feeling of being in a great disadvantage in relation to the enemy or that you don't know where the threat may suddenly pop up from is when you really have to be a leader, your decisions may cause very serious troubles to your team.

How stress materializes, how it affects your physical condition or your relationship with other people or in this case decision making, is something that we will deepen next.

Stress is characterized, for creating situations that exceed the tolerance limits of people who are exposed to them. (Psic, Psic, & Arroquia, 2014)

Leadership is becoming very important in the teaching and training of military commanders and military psychologists have been preparing this issue for some time trying to create models for stress management and talking about training programs aimed at developing the innate and acquired resilience capacity of people facing physical or psychosocial stress, where they talk about group cohesion, teamwork, positive climate of the team but do not address the aspect in areas of operations or complex scenarios. ”

There is already a similar modern military concept known as "RESILIENCE" to which the Royal Academy of the Spanish language defines as "the human capacity to flexibly assume borderline situations and overcome them.

These same psychologists explain that there are internal factors that have demonstrated modulating effects on health and performance, which can be biological, such as physical strength that includes physical training, healthy diet and healthy lifestyle and psychophysiological, such as self-control, affection; positive thinking, realism, acceptance or self-awareness; altruism; spirituality (related, or not, to religion); and the experience. Some internal factors are directly related to having positive interpersonal relationships or giving and receiving social support while others are able to control and reduce the physiological responses of anxiety in stressful situations.

Stress usually produces a feeling of tiredness and fatigue, headaches, sleep disorders (insomnia, hypersomnia, nightmares, etc.), sweating, excessive dry mouth, which results in combat in lack of attention and concentration, rigid thinking, nervousness, anxiety, obfuscation, wrong decision making, mental blockages, increased reaction time and less efficiency that often leads to aggressiveness and anger.

All these symptoms being the Chief can be transferred to the general environment of the team, manifesting then an alteration in the general mood that can lead to personal conflicts, boredom, unjustified sadness and cynicism.

When in a complex environment, soldiers have episodes of all these types but under the leadership of the commander, they keep those symptoms under control without knowing it, but they have them latent and can jump at any time in case of a degradation of the situation. Excessive heat, fatigue, hours of uncertainty and risk undermine each other's mental strength and there is no time to rest, or to escape from what is around you, this is a real combat. There comes the true leader who at that time should increase the degree of flexibility to relax the environment, talk to the people on his team and have them on hand trying to ask and involve them in decision making. Important qualities are the ability to actively face complicated situations, be optimistic that clearly dampens tension, have good mood, have emotional intelligence, empathy but the fundamentals are TRUST AND SELF CONFIDENCE in oneself, and UNION AND COHESION of the team. No matter what we do, where or when ... but together!

There is an important link between experience and self confidence that usually includes training and technological competence. All these values provides the leader the knowledge to make intuitive decisions but it is also desirable that at all levels of command, it is essential to achieve team cohesion, a very valuable factor in achieving effectiveness and promoting the initiative of subordinate commanders.

INTUITION is the other one of the most important values that a leader should have in complex situations. Although it may seem that it is very fragile value since it is only based on feeling or perceptions, according to our research, yes, it is very important for the decision-making process of any person.

Let's understand what intuition is, or perhaps is not and if it has any impact on decision making process. Then we can assess its relevance and look at ways of developing it. We will go in depth into this due to it's always controversial. Webster's Dictionary defines intuition as "the immediate knowing of something without the conscious use of reasoning." (Rogers, 1994, pag

39) In many reports has also been described as “instinct“ or “hunch.” The problem with these words is that they lead you to perceptions of the senses that have no academic endorsement. The problem of trying to develop intuition in our future leaders lies in their own experiences, which requires analyzing and paying attention to non-visible details that makes it difficult to accept decisions made only by intuition. This type of teaching is not well developed and therefore it is not yet credible to take it as a subject to teach or practice.

Intuition or hunch is much more widespread in commercial activities than in the military itself where that intuition can cause the death of people or allow them to stay alive. On the other hand, not all solutions are in high-level computing machines or software. The difficulty lies in its lack of scientific credibility.

Lieutenant General César Muro said that instinct is very important because it gathers all your experience, your preparation and your skills as Chief, since you are quickly able to weigh the advantages and risks and make an imaginative decision. You have to think about the opportunity it gives you but also be prepared to assume a mistake. That quickness or mental agility is clue to decide before the enemy does so and be in better condition than him for the next phase. It is said that Winston Churchill had an intuitive leadership in contrast with his main assessor during the second world war, Sir Alan Francis Brooke, that provided him a safety net being very pragmatic..

Major General Smith (UK Army) said he only once made an “instant decision” in the Gulf War (Rogers, 1994, pag 40). Although this might suggest that decisions made by deep analysis are more the norm and the preferred and safer way of coming to decisions for the battlefield commanders, this is arguably incorrect as the situation during the “IO&hour” war did not require such instant or intuitive decisions to be made at division level,.., The use of instinct or intuition in decision making is related to lack of information and time available and is more useful in battle command than in battle preparation,

Experience says that once a commander has received his orders and mission, he will use intuition to decide on his plan. This will be a rapid process that will be based on his experience and knowledge, emphasizing the effect he wants to have on the enemy.

We need our armies to produce leaders with an intuitive sixth sense that guides their decision making on the complex modern battlefield. In part of the past that leaders have an “attritionalist” attitude, leading their soldiers into combat relying totally on material superiority and unimagined approach.

There is a phrase that I consider very well written by Marshal Castello Branco that says: “Ao chef nao cabe ter medo das ideias, nem mesmo das ideias novas. E preciso, isto sim, nao perder

tempo, empreende-las e relaiza-las até o fim” (The Chief should not be afraid of ideas, not even new ideas. It is necessary not to waste time, undertake them and relay them to the end.)

It is said that Hitler was an intuitive leader too that succeeded at the very beginning in the France and Russian front showing a certain genius but at the end that intuition failed resoundingly. Without a doubt, leading with intuition alone is something that has a great risk

Beverly Alim Metcalfe, senior lecturer in organizational psychology at Leeds University, said that intuition is, in reality, often not spontaneous decisions at all, but the result of rapid thought. Although this is undoubtedly correct, it prompts the question, “thought based on what?” The answer to this question must be centered on knowledge and a wealth of past experiences. Therefore, intuition is about sifting rapidly through your memory bank of past experiences in order to make decisions.

In the British Army Field Manual its described also the importance of the momentum, surprise and above all an ATTITUDE OF MIND. This attitude of mind is particularly important when looking at the activities of the leaders.

The US Army Field Manual, speaks that in essence, maneuver warfare can be broken down into two components. First, the physical ability to move and apply force faster than the enemy, which in simple terms relates to equipment and technology, and second, on the speed of decision making. If all things are equal, then decision making relative to the enemy becomes all important.

It follows from this that the commander must be unpredictable, imaginative and instinctive and must weigh the factor of surprise as critical to his plans. To achieve this, a commander needs initiative or “command pull” based on intuition rather than “staffpush”, which is a knowledge into the more analytical approach to command

**Leaders must know their team capabilities and limitations, must be well trained, competent and technologically advanced to make intuitive decisions**

Although intuition is a feeling, a special ability, we have to try by all means to train future officers to use this sixth sense in which to lean to make decisions in complex scenarios. To train intuition we have to rely on uncertainty. Promoting rapid decision making is vital for many Units that fight on different fronts.

As intuition relies on knowledge, when it comes to forming leaders it is important that we may train them in a large number of situations that allow them to have a good background from which they can then take lessons and have them as personal experiences that will be very valuable in future occasions. Within this training, it would be good to force them to have to make intuitive decisions in which they would sometimes make mistakes. It is already known

that you learn more from mistakes than from successes and giving this type of training to future leaders could be interesting and motivating at the same time.

(Burpo, John F. Maj, 2006) Finally, it is clear that leadership styles must change and adapt to the new ways of conflicts and the operating environments in the current crises, the leadership styles that served in other times right now are questioned. If we think about the complexity of the scenarios and the use of new technologies that offer the possibilities to show what is happening in the other part of the globe in a matter of seconds, and this can be commented by thousands no matter the country, race or religion, free to say, criticize or claim whatever they want. We have to think that our leaders, their teams, and their families are exposed to that fast and harmful criticism which can also affect team cohesion.

The Chiefs to whom I have had the opportunity to interview, commented on a detail that is true and is not often discussed in the publications, the LONELINESS OF A LEADER It is generally said, the higher rank you are, the more lonely you just feel and that is because on many occasions the Chiefs have to make decisions assuming great risks in places where there are many variables that are not known. The Chief is always responsible for success or failure.

The more you raise, the less friends you really have, General Carlos Prada 2018 Irak Force COM, said. Many people talk to you but in a vain and sometimes interested way. During my Command, I had a good friend, subordinate with whom I used to have coffee some nights, he tried to tell me his point of view about the operation and some events that happened, against which I always thought I had good arguments until I realized that it takes courage to hear the truth that one does not want to see. It suited me very well to realize that sometimes you live too self-centered and have a distorted view of what was happening out there.

General Luis Cortés, 2017 Irak Force Com, well-known in Spain, said that you have to be close enough to people to stay connected to what is really happening out there and they perceive, but distant so they do not forget that you are the boss. In his words, it is true that there is a lot of loneliness, at night I was in my office at about 55 degrees of temperature and I spent there hours planning, preparing reports, thinking about how the mission was unfolding and I think that my best support for the time to decide, they were, without a doubt, the experience of having been in other missions, of having lived hard moments in all ranks that gives you a self confidence in your actions and therefore in decision making and always knowing **WHAT IS THE FINAL OBJECTIVE**

During the investigation, I found several testimonies of leaders who were in combat zones such as Iraq or Afghanistan and who deployed without having received a clear mission. We were so involved in supporting each other, in advancing on patrol by providing mutual support that

sometimes I was not sure why, or for what. In some cases it took him years to get to tell it publicly and he never told his men because he wrote the missions to himself out of shame of not knowing what his mission really was.

Alastair Campbell (Tony Blair's head of communications) said in his book "Winners" that "when you're sick and tired of hearing the same old message, other people are just about getting it."

In this respect from the operations carried out in the last conflicts, there is a lesson learned that cannot be forgotten. You need to have a clear, attainable mission and you have to explain it well to your entire team over and over again. Make sure that everyone is clear about the mission, that they understand it and not only that they repeat it as robots without knowing what is really inside.

In this new era, psychological training of our leaders becomes increasingly necessary. They have to learn to develop certain psychosocial skills so that they can be effective when facing with one adverse situation after another in which their life and those of their team could be in risk. The idea is to integrate military capabilities with mental, emotional and behavioral skills to improve and strengthen the resilience of combatants.

These mental abilities should focus on enhancing factors that have positive effects on morale, performance, effectiveness and personal satisfaction, which should expand the traditional combat training that improves not only combat techniques and procedures, fatigue resistance and hardening in general, with psychological training that can be performed in short periods of time intensively or over several months, as well as in a group that is the most common or individual, focused mainly on making decisions, to take fear of error and make mistakes. and secondary to the coexistence of a group in situations of high risk in combat and stress effects.

To achieve this, a dynamic and interactive methodology must be used, avoiding the typical conferences in which only the coach or psychologist speaks and carrying out drills of practical cases with the team members, in which the members of the team can speak, identifying which are the situations or the things that most stress each one. Obviously this has to be done with small groups so that a wide variety of situations can be trained, improve personal resilience, subsequently sharing the experience and analyzing it with the psychologist or coach.

It would be an excellent support to be able to count on the advice of people who had such experiences in combat, where they can narrate in detail the psychological factors that affected them at all times both the leader and the rest of the team and learn from their own experiences, comments and suggestions.



It is clear that forming leaders is not an easy task in any army in the world, it would be impossible to try to build up teams that had no personal problems or families that would not affect their performance and with great physical and psychological resistance to carry out the most complicated and risky missions.

We absolutely need well-prepared leaders, physically and psychologically. If they come from the military schools without related background, we are forced to train them and the better way is to make them spend as much time as possible with their team, train them in the most varieties of possible scenarios and try to immerse them in complex situations where they have little time to react, assuming that the reality is much harder and changing than you can ever expect.

### **3. CONCLUSIONS.**

After having studied all the qualities and skills that a leader is supposed to have, having reviewed questionnaires of young Commanders who lead Special Teams in Operations such as Iraq or Afghanistan, some of them being known for their strong leadership and after having read in detail the interviews conducted with older people who were once military leaders and who had the opportunity to command big units in complex scenarios, I conclude that the most important qualities a leader has to have are **AUTHORITY, COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATION.**

Authority gained with its exemplarity, with its dedication, its style of doing things and the confidence that inspires in its people. Communication, in both directions from top to bottom and from bottom to top where a leader has to know his team perfectly and know how to express clearly what the objective is, how they will achieve it, when, and the possible alternatives they may have. Motivation to reinforce each other's confidence, correcting them when they do things wrong or congratulating them when they do it well, and stimulating them to make comments or give suggestions when asked in order to make them feel part of the team and of the decision making process.

But when the leader has to command and take decisions in difficult situations, when the lives of people are at stake in those complex scenarios in which we are currently moving and the Chief has to give orders and remain calm under enemy fire or in situations of great stress, then, the leader has to rely on his own **SELF-SECURITY**, which has forged the passage of time and experiences, in the **INTUITION** that will allow him to choose the momentum to take the right decision and **COHESION** of his team, which makes no one doubt the decision taken by the Chief, and the team in each situation remains together. This is one of the most important lessons learned in Operations, we can do it in many ways but .....**LET'S DO IT TOGETHER !!!**

It is true that the loneliness of the Chief exists, and that it is necessary to know how to fight it and the first thing that a leader must do in those difficult moments is listen to the opinion of his advisors or subordinates, and then decide having always in mind WHAT IS THE FINAL OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION and the best support of the leader in taking decisions will be his self confidence and in his own intuition.

How to manage stress is another factor to take into account, the soldier when acting under stress suffers physical and chemical reactions in his body that make him feel tired, fatigue, excessive sweating, dry mouth and can lead to a state of great nervousness and to make quick and wrong decisions. The leader must also show his presence in the bad moments and do his best to keep the team together and cohesive, trying to reduce tension and giving to every moment the importance it should have. Under great pressure he should talk calmly with the team members, reduce their anxiety, listen to their opinions and make them see that being nervous or excited is not the best solution.

To conclude and as a final conclusion of the research, it is recommended that the Academies for Officers and NCOs should introduce the psychological training of future leaders with interactive methods that were able to set practical cases in situations of stress, in small groups where a wide variety of possible situations could be trained, based on the experience of former combatants, who should act as advisors in which they could comment on their own feelings and their good or bad experiences, forgetting the typical boring lectures in which you don't really learn much.

The Armies need leaders adapted to the wide variety of operating environments we face, with a great military, technical, human and psychological capacity We need to be able to produce leaders with broader and more sophisticated educational and service experience to intellectually confront new threats while thinking strategically into the future.(Smith, 2005)

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