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Ethics

Unethical behavior

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Agenda:

1. Recognize and defining the problem;
2. Gather information;
3. Develop criteria;
4. Generate possible solutions;
5. Analyze possible solutions;
6. Compare possible solutions;
7. Make and implement decision.

## Unethical behavior.

In every army of the world one finds unethical behavior. I can't speak about the US Army, however, most everyone is familiar with what happened at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. It is a strong example of unethical behavior. I think that Soldiers around the world are quite similar. It doesn't matter from which country you are. We could put other army's Soldiers in the place of those American soldiers, in the same situation and would probably get the same results. I will not discuss this example further because I wish to address unethical behavior overall.

Many circumstances give input on people behavior what erases unethical behavior. Also different situations and society in which people are living determine people actions. We all know that personal benefits quite often determine people actions. Also education level is very important part of people behavior but not always. I saw soldiers without any education whose behavior was appropriate to guys who had pretty high education level. That is fact and I would like to say that is family's merit. Under different circumstances people react differently. Some circumstances for example monotone routine, separateness, even personal freedom effect on people behavior very badly.

In my opinion unethical behavior in the military arises as a result of incompetence on the part of the Soldiers, NCOs and officers. There are many incoming Soldiers who have wrongly translated, and misunderstood the principles of democracy. One example is my army that has many Soldiers that were formerly under the Soviet

military system when it was a conscription service that has now changed to an all volunteer, professional military system. In the old system, superiors and older Soldiers could humiliate and haze subordinates or younger soldiers. For example superior could take off money from soldier without any doubt about any punishment for that. Younger soldiers who were in military service shorter time did the dirtiest jobs in unit and soldiers who were longer time in military service mentored them. Older soldiers did nothing. Actually they determined unit inside life

I am not gone speak about all insurgencies in my military. These were some examples of unethical behavior in my army before some years. This unprofessional conduct was not an official policy, but these things did happen quite often. Sometimes it escalated to the point of humiliation of a person both morally and physically. We solved this problem by strong leadership methods, and by discharging and prosecuting guilty parties, but the main effort was down at the unit level with reinforced control of subordinates. Squad leaders that were from the conscript era were changed to professional Soldiers. Squad leaders were together with soldiers days and nights not just in ranges and exercises but also in daily routine.

As a result of the newfound freedoms of democracy in Latvia the Latvian Army was affected by this sense of freedom as well and at times it bordered on permissiveness. Earlier superiors lead and got respect by physical power but then they started to fraternize with their subordinate Soldiers, frequently spending free time together. During this time of transition, leaders often did not enforce standards in the execution of duties. Superiors didn't control execution of orders and sometimes they

were involved in incidents that were clearly against military policies, regulations, as well as ethics and values.

To preclude such incidents from happening, we do not need to invent anything new. Latvians have a saying that all good new ideas are just forgotten old ideas. I think that we, as leaders, should set the example and ensure that our Soldiers are following and obeying our military policies, regulations and mainly understanding our seven core values – Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage.

NCOs are backbone of the army and I started to think how we earned this high evaluation. In my opinion NCOs earned this high evaluation by doing job in all circumstances. Because NCOs are not selfish and sacrifice their personal lives to accomplish our mission to lead Soldiers in both war and peace environments. Not everyone can be NCO.

To accomplish this, here are some possible solutions. One is to improve the training of our army values to all levels of commanders and NCOs in the military education system. For example in my army junior NCO course is the hardest and longest part of NCOs training. This is time when young NCO leads other NCOs in different played situations. Now either we have situation similar to behavior in prison as a guard squad leader.

Secondly, ensure that we explain the army values to our Soldiers in our daily routine. This suffer that NCOs spend more time in barracks.

Thirdly, we should continue to reinforce control of subordinates. This is the hardest part of all because as I sad before that NCOs sacrifice their personal lives to lead Soldiers.

I will not compare these courses of actions because these are generally similar and cover each other.

My answer to this problem is to reinforce the education of our junior NCOs and squad leaders, as well as reinforcing the high qualifications needed to become a squad leader. Quite often, I see that many squad leaders that are do not have any experience in management of Soldiers. Squad leaders are the first-line commanders for our Soldiers in the units; they are counseling, coaching and mentoring Soldiers. In my opinion, Soldiers are becoming leaders much too soon! Soldiers learn to be good leaders from good leaders. It take time and experience to become a good leader! And if we train, teach, coach, and develop good leaders then we will not have unethical behavior.