

Psychological Changes In The Personal Characteristics Of The Soldiers And Officers Of The Kyrgyz Army At A Time Of Unstable Internal And External Conditions.

Kyrgyzstan is located in Central Asia. The population is approximately five million persons, the dominant ethnic group, the Kyrgyz, number about 90%. In the Republic are found about 65 nationalities. This is a mountainous land, 85% covered by mountains. This is the only of the republics of the former Soviet Union that has two official languages, Kyrgyz and Russian. Kyrgyz military consists of mass conscription. Young men are drafted at age of eighteen, and serve one and a half years. The Kyrgyz Army has 12,000 members. In the beginning of the decade of the 90's, the Soviet Union dissolved, and since that time the Kyrgyz Republic suffered two difficult unstable times:

1. One, the collapse of the socialistic order, with the following political and economic chaos, which lasted about ten years.
2. Two, the incursion of terrorists from Afghanistan in the summer of 1999, and the spring of 2000.

The aim of the following report: to investigate the changes in the psychological characteristics of the soldiers and officers of the Kyrgyz Army with an unstable background. This investigation has been carried out between 1995 and 2003. The investigation was carried out in various units of the Kyrgyz Army: but the most fundamental research was carried out in groups of military personnel of the National Guard of Kyrgyz Republic. Generally, 200 officers and 1500 enlisted men were used as study sample. The research was longitudinal, that is the psychological state of the subjects, were studied over several years and under varying conditions. The investigation utilized methods of observation, gathering of background information, in-depth interviews and psychological testing. Attention was paid to the psychological characteristics as, attention span, self-esteem, forms of aggression, level of arousal, emotional stability, ability to communicate, fears, and bi-polar disorders. The following methodologies (personality tests) were employed. Raven's Progressive Matrices, used to study cognition. Shulte Tables, Rings of Landolt, Counting by Kaepelin, were use to study the general ability and the level of attention. The Thomas tests, Buss-Durkey Inventory, Hand test, The Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study, were used to study aggression and the ability to communicate. MMPI (the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) was used to investigate specialized personal traits. Spielberger test, the drawing tests, Luscher Farbwahl tests were used to determine the emotional stability, level of arousal, self esteem, depressive tendencies, suicidal tendencies, and bi-polar disorders. The investigation was carried out with units of the Kyrgyz Army and Military Section of the Main Psycho-Neurological Dispensary of Bishkek, the capital of the Republic.

The observations were carried out on groups of 10-15 individuals. Following observations were performed at varying times ranging from one to six months.

The psychological forms of adaptation by the enlisted personnel to military service were investigated, with attention paid to behaviour in difficult situations. During the investigation there were some problems with the use of the above-mentioned methodologies, as around 70% of the enlistees do not possess Russian language, and understand only Kyrgyz. Most of the above-mentioned personality tests have not been

translated in to the Kyrgyz language. So in this investigation, the psychological traits of the enlisted personnel were studied by projective techniques. The derived results from the projective techniques were compared with the results of the observation, and the interviews with both the enlisted personnel and their officers. The personality traits of the officers were studied individually, because all of the officers graduated from Russian Military Institutes, and had excellent command of the Russian language, therefore with the officers both projective and personality tests were employed.

What has happened to the Kyrgyz military during the period when the Socialistic order collapsed, and Capitalism yet had to function, the economy in collapse, the rejection of the Communist ideals, and the absence of new ideas and ideals? The ethnic Kyrgyz officers, who had served through out the Soviet Empire returned home to Kyrgyzstan, with the hope that their military expertise and experience (many Afghan veterans) that they will be needed and appreciated by the nation, and that their efforts will be adequately compensated. This did not happen. In the 90's the Kyrgyz economic system went in to ruin, the Army got the "left-overs", and get only 30% of what it need to function, the military salaries are even by Kyrgyz standards, absolutely miserly. It is not possible to maintain oneself economically, much less a family. The Army is been reduced. The prestige of the military, very high in the Soviet times, has fell, and there is no more prestige. The populace dislikes the military and on the streets there are frequent words against them. Many officers wear civilian clothes when going to and from work, wearing their uniforms only on duty. There were individual problems. For example, in Soviet time a colonel may have commanded up to 10,000 troops, but in Kyrgyzstan he may only command 200 troops. He is depressed, and remembers the past and lives in the past. Another example a warren officer who had served in the Baltic. He organized one of the best border guard units in the Union. When he returned to Kyrgyzstan in his possession were several obsolete parachutes, with no personnel. There were Kyrgyz officers who in a burst of national pride divorced their Russian wives. They re-married Kyrgyz women, but still were in love with their former Russian wives. But the worst psychological problem was that the image of the "Enemy" had disappeared. Under the Soviet the "Enemy" were the armed forces of NATO. Now they are not the enemy any more, as USA provides economic assistance to Kyrgyzstan, Turkey provides uniforms. USA, Turkey and Germany provide training to Kyrgyz military. Kyrgyzstan is now a member of Partners for Peace. Where is the Enemy? There is no clear enemy. It seems that the government does not need the Army. Then why master combat skills? To train and to study? So think many in the military. The officers, seeing no point in their careers, started to leave the military.

In 1996-1997, the Kyrgyz Army consisted of two types of personnel, cadre officers who once loved their profession that they served with no pay, and recruited civilian with low level military skills to just fill vacant spots.

During second half of summer 1999, when snow has completely melted and mountain ravines opened for crossing, terrorists violated the state frontier in the South of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan Army wasn't ready to protect its borders. That is why terrorists managed to get deep into the country, capture villages and take Japanese geologists and a current Kyrgyz general as hostages.

Those times were very disturbing for the country.

In November 1999 mountain paths and trails were blocked with the snow. The military actions (*combat*) were stopped. Terrorists had to leave the country.

During autumn 1999 and spring 2000 Kyrgyz Army had to make changes and to rearm with the great help of republic's government.

In such hard times Kyrgyzstan got help from such countries as Russia, China, Turkey, Germany and United States of America.

In summer 2000 Kyrgyzstan Army faced the second invasion of terrorists well-armed and well-prepared. Therefore terrorists had to leave Kyrgyz territories.

Starting from summer 2000 military men started getting a support from government and people. Prestige, popularity of service men started to rise among the population. Necessity to have military men, the Army, became obvious after what happened on 11th of September 2000.

On the territory of Kyrgyzstan in 2002 there was built a United States military airbase "?????" and in 2003 there was built a Russian military base "Kant"

At the moment prestige of service men is high. Military men of Kyrgyzstan study in Russia, China, Turkey, and Germany. In combined military exercises take part such countries as Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and observers from United States of America.

But most important is that Kyrgyz service men know the image of the enemy, know that terrorists can threaten the country. And many countries have united in this was with terrorism.

How were changing psychological characteristics of military men in Kyrgyzstan in period from 1995 until 1999?

According to MMPI and "Projective Techniques" tendencies in depression increased from 32 % (*percent*) up to 84% during the period from 1995 until 1999. In the period from 2000 until 2003 tendencies in depression decreased down to 58%.

In 1995-1999 period emotional instability increased from 3.9 points until 7.8 points according to "Luscher Farbwahl Test". In 1999 – 2000 emotional instability was at the level of 7.8 points. After that there was a decrease and in 2003 emotional instability reached level of 2.5 points.

In period from 1995 until 2003 situational anxiety according to "Speilberger Test" was in limits of normal and didn't change. Personal anxiety increased from 42.6 points until 46.5 points. This tells that the personal anxiety was increasing. In years 2001 – 2003 anxiety indices dropped down to 38.9 points.

Following results are according to the "Test of Level of Subjective Control" (Locus of Control Scale). In situation of success military men assume responsibility for that success thinking that their hard efforts brought them success. And this tendency was increasing from 5.9 points up to 8.7 points during years from 1995 until 1998.

After Batken events, from years 2000 until 2003, “Locus of Control Scale” started changing in the opposite direction and dropped from 8.7 points down to 6.7 points. In other words service men started forming a correct estimate of the situation.

During 1995 until 2003 in the case of failure index dropped from 4.8 down to 3.5 points, in other words in case of failure military men were shifting the responsibility on to their surroundings. During 1995 – 1998 in work situation the index was the same – 3.7 point. But from 1999 until 2003 index increased up to 6.3 points. In other words until 1999 service men thought that nothing depended on them in their work and they couldn’t change anything. And after Batken events military men realised that many problems can be solved on the spot without trying to get to higher authority and results of work depend on military men themselves.

In the family the index stayed just the same 7.1 – 6.9 during years 1995 – 2003. In other words service men consider themselves responsible for the well-being of the family. In the aspect of health the index changed from 4.4 points to 7.5 points. This means that service men considered that doctors, NHS, should be responsible for their health, but recent events in the country made them change their view and now military men think that they themselves should be responsible for their health. The general index of “Locus of Control Scale” has changed from 4.1 points up to 5.2 points. It means service men started forming a correct estimate of the real situation.

To save the time I will devote a little bit less time to other methodics and read you about general tendencies.

According to “Buss-Durkey Inventory” from 1995 until 1999 indices of verbal and physical aggression decreased and indices of suspiciousness, irritability and resentment increased. But from year 2000 indices of verbal and physical aggression started increasing and indices of suspiciousness, irritability and resentment started decreasing. Excessive indices of feeling of guilt have stayed the same during 1995 2003.

According to “The Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study (P-F Study)” from 1995 until 1999 average index GCR was 7.8, in other words at the lower limit of normal and in general it is ?????????????????? aggression with irritability. From 2000 until 2003 following was observed: ?????????????????? processes, destroying aggression and irritability decreases, GCR increases up to 8.5 points.

According to “K. Thomas Test” during 1995 – 1998 years military men were getting out from conflict situation using way of leaving or giving (??????). From year 2000 they have started using more constructive ways of behaviour, like cooperation, compromise and competition.

According to “Drawing Tests” during 1995 – 2000 years there were observed such tendencies like excessive claims, low self esteem, and depressive conditions among military men. Starting from 2001 until 2003 low self esteem stays the same; claims get closer to normal, conditions of depression decrease.

Problems or private service men.

From early 1990ties until 2002 in the Army served in general young men whose parents couldn't find money to bribe military men or young men who had problems with parents or society or young men who were orphans. In that period Kyrgyz Army had 2 types of soldiers:

- 1) Privates who have got very low results (indexes) if tested by "Raven's Test"(lower than 25 points), whose mental abilities are bordering the norm, who will not understand the order at the first time.
- 2) Young men who have got very good results when tested by "Raven's Test" but who have got high emotional instability. They were adapting (getting used) to the service very badly.

From year 2001 prestige of military men started to rise and these negative tendencies started decreasing.

There is a problem of majority of soldiers that stayed the same during years from 1995 until 2003 and it is topical at the moment – it is sex-role identification. The system of education in Kyrgyzstan consist of mostly women, upbringing and teaching of the boys is up to women, because in families women (mothers, grandmothers, aunts, etc.) are responsible for upbringing, in the kinder gardens you've got only women, in schools, colleges, universities teachers are mostly women. That is why young men have got feminine ways of behaviour.

At the moment this problem remains open.

Results: From 1995 until 2000 under unstable political and economical situation in the country psychological characteristics of army soldiers and officers deteriorated. Men professionally unfit for the army service had left the army. Level of fear increased and level of aggression decreased.

Conclusion:

- Fighting spirit and psychological state of military men improves when they have a clear image of enemy.
- Psychological state of soldiers depends on psychological state of officers/management.
- Psychological condition/spirit of military men improves when several countries unite to fight against common enemy.

It is better and much more efficient to manage military units when army management has information on how officer's and soldiers psychological characteristics change in calm and chaos.