

## **International Seminar on Military Leadership**

### **Opening Lecture by His Excellency, the Lieutenant General Deputy Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army**

Distinguished Lieutenant-General João Boga Ribeiro, Commander of Personnel of the Portuguese Army,

Distinguished Lieutenant-General Nuno Lemos Pires, National Defence Policy Director,

Distinguished Major-General Lino Loureiro Gonçalves, Military Academy Commander,

Distinguished Brigadier Leigh Drummond, Deputy Director of the Centre for Army Leadership from UK,

Dear Friends of the Spanish Royal Army,

Distinguished Academic and Scientific Authorities from our Academy and Universities,

Distinguished Moderators and Lecturers,

Esteemed Generals Officers, Sergeants, Soldiers and Civilians of the Army, Navy and Air Force,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great enthusiasm and commitment that the Portuguese Army and the Military Academy hold this International Seminar on Military Leadership, in compliance with the vision of His Excellency the General Chief of the Army Staff, General Eduardo Mendes Ferrão, which encourages the promotion of active Leadership, implementing

a close and attentive attitude that consolidates discipline, cohesion and enhances military performance. It is critical to prepare the future leaders for the challenges that we are facing.

Military leadership, being a context-dependent domain, needs to be analysed, studied, discussed and taught, ensuring the ability to harmoniously follow developments, share experiences and learn from those, laying the foundations that may guarantee the necessary confidence to face the challenges in a conflict environment.

We are currently witnessing a time of profound and fast changes in different areas, particularly regarding security and defence, which consequently affect our way of thinking, how we prepare, how we plan and, consequently, exercise leadership.

This seminar aims to achieve the goal of analysing the current human, technological, ethical, strategic, operational, environmental and even legal challenges.

Therefore, I would like to congratulate the Military Academy for this initiative and organisation, and hope this event will be an open forum for discussion. I am confident that the conclusions that will emerge from this Seminar provide warnings, models to follow, lessons to be learned, but above all, ideas for how to prepare our staff and our talents to lead military professionals that chose carrying out complex and demanding missions, where we will have to lead and enforce combat operations, dispel our fears and motivate EVERYONE to face the difficulties that today's combat entails.

The current operational environment is indeed a challenging context that encompasses different domains. I would dare to say that it is more difficult than ever to lead and motivate people, motivate our talents in multi-domain operations within complex contexts.

If in the past superiority was guaranteed by the principle of mass and the conquest or possession of terrain, today the dominance of information, perceptions and artificial

intelligence technologies can have devastating effects, which is why the ability to act immediately and globally is crucial.

Only with prepared, trained leaders, with cohesive teams in which everyone counts, will we meet and overcome the challenges that we have to face.

We therefore need leaders who are oriented towards innovation, not averse to experimentation, who are competent, approachable and capable of taking risks. In summary super leaders!

The Army is an institution that has a deep-rooted risk culture, where at all levels and echelons, from strategic to operational and tactical, decision-making is carried out under uncertainty, which is why commanders need to be able to act in environments that often provide incomplete and highly volatile information.

Regarding training, risk should be met in the context of innovation, supporting tolerance to failure in experimentation, as an evolutionary mechanism to achieve a final state. Ultimately, failures accepted in the context of innovation will contribute to minimising the Army's risk in operations.

We must prepare new leaders for teamwork, for a sense of belonging that unites us, as the preparedness for combat, quick decision-making, trust in those who lead us and the full acceptance of each person's relevance, is essential for the unity of the team in the most critical moments and the unconditional acknowledgement that work and everyone's responsibilities are a differentiating factor in the success and fulfilment of every mission, at all levels, in all echelons.

This is why the imperatives of the current security and defence context determine that Mission Command and Leadership based on a more collaborative model are of particular importance, seeking to value PEOPLE, giving them AUTONOMY, treating them with RESPECT and instilling in them a sense of BELONGING TO THE ORGANISATION.

Within this framework, we deem it appropriate to:

Maximise the role of soft skills, namely Emotional Intelligence, empathy and communication, among others;

- ✓ Fully embrace the Duty Command - telling the truth and ensuring better conditions for our soldiers, through attentive, close and human leadership;
- ✓ Promote the importance of being constantly and timely aware of all alert signs for intervention.
- ✓ Pay special attention to the impact of leadership, as part of the resilience of organisations, for the success of Military Forces on extreme context scenarios, preparing our young people to lead with the worst to be expected, maximise the combination of the appropriate attitude with the fulfilment of the mission.

The strength of the Army ultimately lies in the people. Today, more than ever, it is essential to care for the physical and psychological well-being of the personnel, promote healthy organisational cultures, and lead with empathy, ethics, and emotional intelligence.

The context in which Military Forces and Military Leaders operate brings together, in the same scenario, uncertainty, risk management, ethics, legal responsibility, quick and multidimensional decisions, loss of human lives and suffering, public condemnation, and perception management, all is nowadays integrated in a myriad of technologies that transform the operational framework into a deeply challenging environment.

In this context, multi-domain leadership is assumed to be decisive; leadership that is intellectually capable, emotionally balanced, ethically oriented, adaptable, needs to be implemented with a spirit of service and the ability to influence and motivate others; based on and grounded in the values that unite us and that we practice in our daily activities.

We believe that the cost of inaction is higher than the cost of action. We should therefore invest in leadership, encourage preparation and learning, as a factor of success in the most demanding situations.

This is the example of the Photo displayed, where our Chief of Staff is taking part, side by side, with our soldiers and doing the same they perform.

This Leadership Event is another opportunity to bring together this strong Community of Interest, to challenge ideas and, in addition to sharing knowledge and identify improvements to be implemented for training and in operational context.

Each lecture, each panel, each discussion will certainly offer an opportunity to broaden our perspective and, perhaps, even inspire new ideas that drive us to implement solutions, to face the real problems.

Vision, Courage, Openness and Sharing will be decisive principles to ensure that what we think, what we innovate, the solutions we propose will have a positive and consistent impact in our readiness to fight.

Aware of the relevance of this Event, EVERYONE, Army, Military Forces and Academy must be connected, focused in and finding solutions that allows our talents to face, in a more informed and capable way, the current and future combat situations and the realities that leaders are facing in order to anticipate, prepare and transform their missions.

Commitment to the mission, loyalty to the Motherland, respect for others, and serving with Honour are values of the military ethos and of the Military Leader.

I hope that this International Seminar inspires and strength these principles and that tomorrow's leaders will increasingly become examples of competence, courage, resilience and determination, which are essential in our operations within the global framework of a ready, resilient Army, united by the core values of service, but above all ready to serve, prepared to fight and

Since ever defending Portugal.

Lisbon, the 15<sup>th</sup> of May of 2025,

*Lieutenant General Paulo Emanuel Maia Pereira*

*Deputy Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army*

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.60746/8\\_16\\_42451](https://doi.org/10.60746/8_16_42451)