



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN MILITARY LEADERSHIP

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In military structures, the leader has always been at the forefront of organising and carrying out specific actions with the aim of increasing the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, the military organisation's efficiency and effectiveness are the effects of leaders' ability to react to disturbances, ensuring optimal orientation of those in command, and finding optimal answers to the questions "how" and "what" is to be done so that the best organisational course of action could be achieved.

In this article we consider it appropriate to analyse emotional intelligence, how it influences military leadership, how an optimal affective environment influences the military actions, and to answer the question: Do military leaders need emotional intelligence?

Keywords: military leadership; emotional intelligence; efficiency; effectiveness; personal development;



INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is one of the areas of intelligence that emerged relatively recently in the organisational field. However, it has been studied intensely especially from the perspective of the impact it can have on the behaviour of the individual in most diverse situations.

Perhaps the best argument for the need to develop emotional intelligence is provided by Lisa Nowak, an American astronaut. Her profession is very demanding as the selection criteria involve tremendous expertise in science and engineering, but also high physical and mental qualities for piloting. Lisa Nowak had a master's degree in aeronautical engineering and studied postgraduate astrophysics at the US Naval Academy. She flew air tours for the US Navy for more than five years, and in 1996 she was selected to become an astronaut. She had also a very high Intelligence Quotient (IQ). In 2007, however, after discovering that her boyfriend was in a relationship with another woman, Lisa decided to meet her, having a vague plan to kidnap her. She tried to implement the plan, but she had a nervous breakdown, which led to her arrest (Manson).

It is especially important to be able to understand why intelligent people like Lisa often really do stupid things, deciphering emotional intelligence being a step in this attempt. Although the field of emotional intelligence is still very controversial, its importance cannot be disputed because it is recognised that for being successful it is not enough to have a high level of academic intelligence, namely a high intelligence quotient. It is obvious that there are people who have not been exceptionally good in school or do not excel through syllogisms at present, but perform in their fields of activity, being respected and loved by others. So intellectual and technical capabilities play an important role, they make success in leadership possible, but the probability of success seems to be grounded on emotional intelligence.

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HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

The term *intelligence* comes from the Latin “*intelligentia*” and represents “*the ability to understand phenomena, things etc. easily and well, based on previous experience*” (Romanian Explanatory Dictionary – DEX), the term *understanding* having also, according to the explanatory dictionary, the sense of establishing relationships between people.

Over time there have been numerous approaches to the term, with the French philosopher Descartes succeeding in the definition closest to modern understanding of intelligence. He defined intelligence as “*the means to acquire a perfect science of an infinite number of things*” (Sîrbu, 2019).

The term “intelligence” offers a dual approach, on the one hand, as a process of assimilation and interpretation of data and information with the aim of optimal adaptations and, on the other hand, as skills, qualities, through which efficiency and effectiveness are ensured.

There were times when people expressing their emotions were often marginalised perhaps because the term we use today, emotional intelligence, would have been considered an oxymoron. Moreover, those who expressed their emotions were considered mentally ill and underwent therapy to suppress their emotionality. It was not until the early 1960s that some researchers agreed that emotions could guide thinking and actions and turn attention to solving problems (Caruso, Salovey, 2012, pp. 34-47).

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Initially, intelligence was approached from the perspective of its cognitive aspects, but over time there were views that this approach was not sufficient to determine the ability to adapt effectively to the environment. Thus, over time, several typologies of intelligence have been developed.

In 1983, Howard Gardner¹ introduced the concept of *multiple intelligence*, arguing that not only logical-mathematical intelligence is important, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. He introduced the Multiple Intelligences model, which is presented in *table no. 1*.

¹ Howard Gardner, American psychologist and author, known for his multiple intelligence theory.



TYPE	MEANING	ACTIVITY
Visual/spatial intelligence	Ability to visually perceive what surrounds us	Building, reading, writing, painting, interpreting some images
Verbal/linguistic intelligence	Ability to use words and speak	Listening, speaking, writing, punning, explaining concepts
Logical-mathematical intelligence	Ability to use reason, logic and numbers	Solving problems, working with certain abstract concepts, mathematical calculations
Body/kinaesthetic intelligence	Ability to control body movements, ability to work with different objects	Dance, sport, body language, theatre, mime
Rhythmic/musical intelligence	Ability to produce and appreciate music	Whistling, singing, using musical instruments, composing songs
Interpersonal intelligence	Ability to understand and relate with others	Listening, using empathy, advising teamwork, observing moods
Intrapersonal intelligence	Ability to self-reflect and be self-aware	Self-assessment, knowledge of one's own powers and weaknesses, self-discovery

Table 1: Multiple Intelligences Model (Ibid., p. 629)

Peter Salovey found that the ability to identify own or other feelings as well as to solve problems with emotional implications differs from person to person.

Part of these types of intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence, could be elements of what would later be called emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is a concept that was born in the United States in 1990, in an article written by Peter Salovey². He found that the ability to identify own or other feelings as well as to solve problems with emotional implications differs from person to person. John Mayer and Peter Salovey presented emotional intelligence as a two-way combination of thought and feelings and supported the thesis that IQ does not guarantee success in life.

² Peter Salovey is an American social psychologist and current President of Yale University, one of the first pioneers and leading researchers in emotional intelligence.



When addressing the issue of emotional intelligence, the following types of skills should be considered: recognition of one's own affective situation; learning how affective situations can be used; recognising the emotional situations of others; addressing the affective situation of others.

Daniel Goleman³ took up this thesis and, in 1995, after his own analysis and investigation, published the book *“Emotional Intelligence”*, which had a strong impact on leadership. Thus, skills and attitudes that until then were not considered causally related to the success of a leader, became essential evidence of a developed emotional intelligence.

Daniel Goleman continued his research in the field by trying to identify a link between emotional intelligence and performance in the workplace, introducing the term *specific skills*.

The results of the study coordinated by Daniel Goleman were published in the *Harvard Business Review*, highlighting an obvious link between understanding, acceptance and emotion management skills and the concept of leadership.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

After John Mayer and Peter Salovey conceptualised and measured the elements of emotional intelligence as a skill, as a personality characteristic, influenced by both mood and social factors, and after Daniel Goleman pointed out that *“emotional skills are meta-skills, which determines how well we can use the talents we have, including pure intelligence”* (Goleman, 2001, p. 75), followed a general concern about the emotional intelligence composition.

Thus, it was established that when addressing the issue of emotional intelligence, the following types of skills should be considered:

- recognition of one's own affective situation;
- learning how affective situations can be used;
- recognising the emotional situations of others;
- addressing the affective situation of others (Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2018, pp. 70-75).

Thus, we can understand both our own and others emotional situations, the effects of these situations on our own behaviour and how emotional intelligence can influence our way of relating within

³ Daniel Jay Goleman is an American writer, psychologist and journalist specialised in psychology and neuroscience. He is the author of over 10 books on psychology, education, science, environmental crises and leadership. He has been nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize.

an organisation, in society in general, depending on its level, contributing to success or hindering it.

We are generally talking about four components, as areas of emotional intelligence, divided into two groups (A and B) depending on the type of adjacent skills (Ibid.):

A. *Personal skills* – used to take care of ourselves:

a. self-knowledge:

- emotional self-knowledge: identifying one’s own emotions and understanding their impact;
- correct self-evaluation: awareness of one’s own strengths and limitations;
- self-confidence: correct appreciation of one’s own value and abilities;

b. self-control:

- emotional self-control – controlling one’s emotions;
- transparency – the manifestation of an honest, trustworthy behaviour;
- adaptability – adaptation to the new, the ability to overcome obstacles;
- ambition – continuous concern to improve performance;
- initiative – the quality to undertake something new at one’s own urging and to capitalise on opportunities;
- optimism – the ability to look confidently to the future.

B. *Social skills* – used to manage human relationships.

a. social consciousness:

- empathy – identifying and deciphering the feelings of other people, concern for their interests;
- organisational awareness – interpretation of trends, decisions and policies at organisational level;
- solicitude – knowing and anticipating the wishes of subordinates;

b. relationship management:

- inspired leadership – guidance and motivation for a clear vision;
- influence – the ability to act persuasively;
- training others – developing the skills of other people through guidance and harnessing feedback;



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- catalysing changes – mobilising subordinates in a new direction;
- conflict management – settling disputes;
- team spirit and collaboration – team cooperation and strengthening.

The components of emotional intelligence are in continuous inter-conditioning with each other, the ability to use one of them being closely related to one, several or all other elements. Thus, self-regulation is influenced by the level of self-awareness, those who can easily identify their feelings are able to manifest empathy, and without self-awareness people cannot have motivation. Also, having social skills is certainly a condition to have developed all other components of emotional intelligence.

Daniel Goleman examines the extent to which people manage to transfer potential into professional performance, introducing the concept of emotional competence, based on both personal skills (self-awareness, self-control and motivation), as well as on social skills (empathy, sociability).

Moreover, Goleman, in an attempt to clarify these issues, examines the extent to which people manage to transfer potential into professional performance, introducing the concept of emotional competence, based on both personal skills (self-awareness, self-control and motivation), as well as on social skills (empathy, sociability).

In the current context, characterised by an unprecedented technological evolution, a tendency of organisational constraint and an increase in individual responsibilities, qualities such as those presented above are increasingly important. Thus, personal development and educating the emotional intelligence of leaders need to be a priority.

This priority is also explained by the fact that one of the main tasks of a leader is to induce positive feelings to those he leads. From this perspective, the emotional side of the leader is crucial in optimising the other dimensions of leadership.

If there is a need for change, regardless of its complexity, the leader's reaction becomes very important from the perspective of the emotional orientation of the group. The leader's reaction helps the group to decipher and react optimally emotionally to the events that have occurred. Whether we are talking about panic, nervousness, irritability or optimism, these situations will inevitably be transmitted to the whole group.

In antithesis to emotionally intelligent leaders there are emotionally "toxic" leaders. There are those leaders who can negatively influence

the affective climate within the group. They are frequently angry, irritated or anxious. They transmit these feelings and, each time they interact they affect negatively the dynamics of the group, without even being aware of this fact.

So, the leaders' emotions can instil into the group either anger, panic, apathy, or involvement, pride, optimism. Regardless of the leaders' visibility, their attitude influences the affective climate within the management team, which will lead to affecting the emotional condition throughout the subordinate structure.

The leaders emotionally impact the group to such an extent because they are the first to express their opinion, and the other people frequently discuss their point of view, they speak and are listened to the most. Moreover, their nonverbal language is quickly received and interpreted by other people because group members trust the leaders and shape their own emotional reactions based on leaders' emotional reaction.

Consequently, the leader's ability to recognise and control own affective situations and to recognise and address the affective situations of others has a major impact on the group's results, in terms of influencing actions both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Therefore, the efficiency of the leader and the group is directly proportional to the ability not only of the leader but also of the group members to manage the relationships with the others.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

Emotional intelligence has a decisive role in leadership, the management of emotions determining the optimisation of the other dimensions. Even more important is the role of emotional intelligence in military leadership.

In military structures, the leader has always been at the forefront of organising and conducting specific actions, aiming to increase the level of efficiency and effectiveness of these actions. Military efficiency and effectiveness are the effect of leaders' ability to react to disruptions, ensuring the optimal orientation of subordinates.



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In the current security context, in which visions, foresight, critical and creative thinking are increasingly important, the need for effective leadership is identified also in peacetime. In this regard, the US Army Leadership Advisory Manual provides clear insights into the training of military leaders and states that effective leadership is the key to military success, both during training and in combat.

Until recently, in peacetime, the military relied on good managers to fulfil their mission, identifying the need for competent leaders to exercise genuine leadership only in time of war.

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What is effective leadership?

Starting from the fact that the main purpose of the military forces is to *“guarantee the sovereignty, independence and unity of the state, the territorial integrity of the country and constitutional democracy”* (Romanian Constitution, 2003), the analysis of the completion of the tasks received and of their opportunity and impact is increasingly important in the current security context. In other words, *how* and, most importantly, *what* the armed forces execute become essential questions.

Military success has always been based on achieving objectives, but it has also been influenced by budgetary aspects and resource management, which have been increasingly brought to the fore in recent times. That is why we consider it appropriate to analyse the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness, also considering the general tendency to use them at random.

Although they *“seem”* to be synonymous at first sight, efficiency is the result of *“performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort”* (Inside Squared), while *effectiveness* is *“the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which the problems concerned are solved”* (Business Dictionary).

Unlike efficiency, effectiveness is determined without reference to costs and, while efficiency means *“doing things right”*, effectiveness means *“doing the right things”* (Ibid.). Thus, efficiency must be seen as part of effectiveness.

We can therefore say that effectiveness focuses mainly on the objective, while efficiency focuses on resource optimisation. One way

to clarify this issue could be to analyse a strategy from a perspective of efficiency and effectiveness. For this we will analyse France's strategy in the interwar period, which was aimed at preventing a surprise attack by Germany.

The Maginot Line, the second largest permanent system of man-made fortifications, was a clear example of military defence policy and doctrines of the period. Named in honour of Andre Maginot⁴, the Maginot Line consisted of a series of permanent fortifications, built with the ultimate goal of defending France's borders from possible attacks from Germany and Italy. Thus, after the end of the First World War, when the East of France was occupied almost continuously by enemy forces, the French began to wonder what they should do to be able to defend their territory in the future, starting from the fact that some generals considered the Treaty of Versailles to be an armistice and that the war would resume (Greelane, 2018).

Consequently, the Maginot Line, planned in 1920 and built ten years later, had the main goal of stopping a ground invasion at the borders, until the French Armed Forces completed the mobilisation. It was, in fact, a linear fortification, composed of an uninterrupted series of forts and casemates. The forts were arranged at a maximum distance of 15 kilometres from each other, depending on the configuration of the terrain, and between the forts numerous casemates were built, which supplemented their mouths of fire. The forts and casemates were linked by a series of trenches, and the ground in front of the fortifications was provided with anti-tank mines and barbed wire networks. These arrangements were built after the actual completion of the Maginot Line, being concrete structures, with the role of supplementing the main line of fortifications, where the land did not allow building a satisfactory number of casemates and forts, having the role of repelling attacks concentrated in weak points of the line. In total, the fortification consisted of 22 field fortifications, 36 forts, 311 casemates, 78 infantry shelters, 14 observation points and over 4,000 concrete blocks where soldiers were housed. The Maginot Line was built between 1930 and 1936 and it was constantly improved



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⁴ Andre Maginot, French Minister of Defence during 1931-1932.



until the date of the German attack on France in May 1940 (Parlog, 2003).

The efficiency of the line resulted from the ingenuity of the construction. No unit in the line-up was positioned to fight in isolation, and any German attack would face the entire firing range of the Maginot Line. In reality, however, Germany, aware of the impenetrability of the line, ordered the invasion of France through the Netherlands.

In addition, the dynamics of the fighting forced the French strategists to decide that the troops and armaments serving the Maginot Line should be sent to the front line. The fortifications were then occupied by both the Germans and the Allied troops who made important bases in it.

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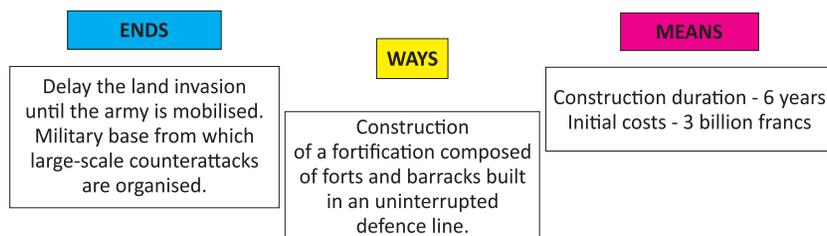


Figure no. 1: French Strategy – Maginot Line

In conclusion, by looking at the value of the Maginot Line in terms of defence potential, we can highlight the effectiveness of this, but given that reality exceeded the original forecast, the French strategy proved ineffective.

In addition, if we analyse the concept of targeting, we can offer another explanation regarding the difference between the two terms, namely: it is efficient to hit a ship, but if, after an efficient targeting, we can hit the right ship, we can affirm that we acted effectively.

Starting from the difference between efficiency and effectiveness, Peter Ferdinand Drucker⁵ presented, as early as 1954, the difference between management and leadership, stating: “*Management does*

⁵ Peter Ferdinand Drucker (1909-2005) was an Austrian-born American management consultant and author, whose writings contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation.

things right ... leadership means to do the right thing" (Maciariello, Drucker, 2016, pp. 27-28).

Supporting the same idea, in 1985, W. Bennis⁶ states: "*managers do things right and leaders do the right things*" (Rost, 1993, p. 165). In other words, managers answer *how* and *when* questions, focusing on efficiency, while leaders seek answers to *what* and *why* questions, which are increasingly difficult to obtain taking into account the particularities and trends of the security environment, and they are oriented towards efficiency, focusing on effectiveness. In conclusion, using a simple syllogism, the desire to optimise leadership can be achieved by *efficient leaders*.

In addition, looking at the National Defence Strategy of the Country, 2020-2024, according to which "*Membership of the European Union and NATO as well as the Strategic Partnership with the USA are the foundations of Romania's foreign policy and the trajectory on which the Romanian state has consciously and irreversibly committed itself*" (p.8), the process of identifying the optimal answers to the questions *how* and *when*, and, particularly, the questions *what* and *why* represent an important challenge, the development of leadership becoming thus paramount. Therefore, the need for *effective leaders* stems from the increasing condition of uncertainty that characterises the military organisation during the performance of its constituent mission.

In this context, the continuing training of military personnel, in general, and of those entrusted with the responsibility to lead, in particular, is a priority of major significance. In this continuing training, the personal and emotional development of the armed forces personnel becomes a necessity.

While the importance of leadership skills in the military is evident, we have not identified empirical evidence on ways to cultivate emotional intelligence in the military environment. FM 22-100 emphasises that leaders need to be mature, able to control their emotions and remain as unperturbed as possible in the face of danger (p. 35). Without using the term "*emotional intelligence*", the handbook presents the traits



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⁶ Warren Gamaliel Bennis (1925-2014) was an American scholar, organisational consultant and author, widely regarded as a pioneer of the contemporary field of leadership studies.



of emotional intelligence, inducing the fact that emotionally balanced leaders can cope with any situation and can emotionally guide others (Ibid., pp. 35-41). The problem is that the manual does not present how to develop these skills.

ADP 6-22, *Army leadership and the profession* does not introduce the concept of emotional intelligence either, but it presents in detail the attributes of the military leader, according to the model presented in figure no. 2, some of them being skills specific to emotional intelligence (p. VII).

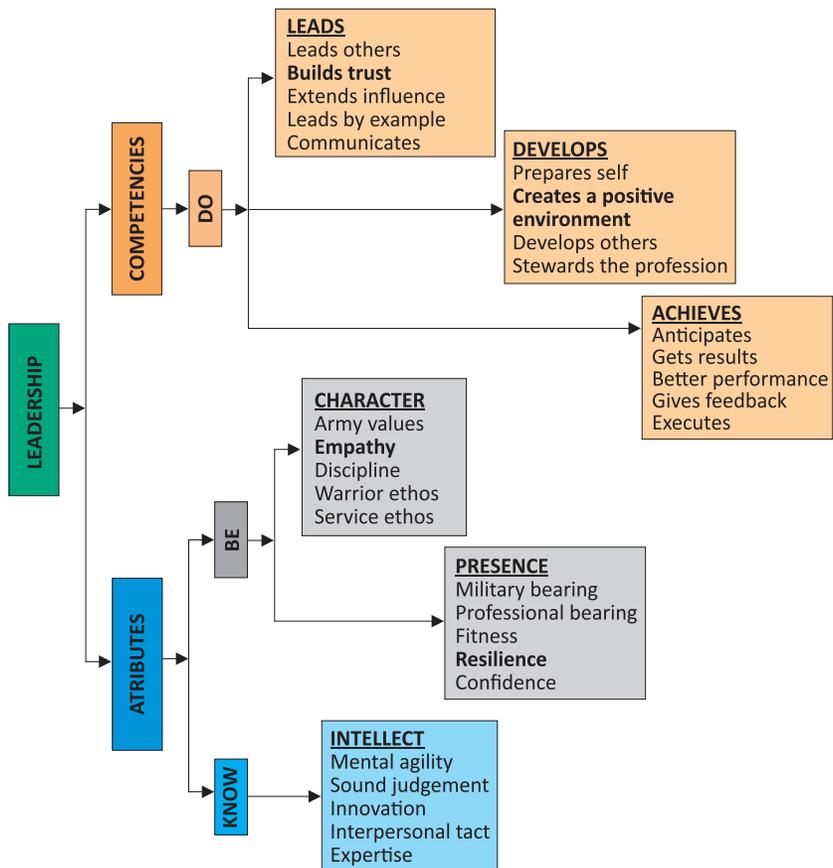


Figure no. 2: Attributes of military leader (Ibid.)

Moreover, the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) of the US War College, a structure that dedicates all its research to adapting the college curriculum, although it has made a very important contribution

to the development of military leadership, has not included emotional intelligence on its agenda. In 2016, however, in the study *Emotional Intelligence and Self-Effectiveness of Military Leaders* conducted at Brandman University, Kelly A. Hudson demonstrated strong correlations between emotional intelligence and the effectiveness of military personnel. Moreover, on 6 June 2019, the GLOBALSEC Bratislava 2019 Forum, co-sponsored by NATO, took place in Slovakia. Within the forum, the first cyber crisis simulation workshop was called “*Disruptive Dilemmas*”. The workshop proposed a series of interactive stress tests covering a wide range of topics, from the use of information in refugee crisis management to cybersecurity challenges and the use of cyber potentials in the fight against misinformation. An important conclusion in this workshop was that cybersecurity crises resolution requires both cognitive and emotional intelligence skills (GLOBALSEC 2019). Thus, the importance of emotional intelligence in military leadership starts to be seen.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of the attributes of good leaders can be considered as skills specific to people with high emotional intelligence quotient, skills that ensure success in the workplace and that can be developed through continuing training.

We therefore consider that a good leader is the one who also develops his emotional intelligence skills, because, always, real leaders appeal to emotions. They know how to identify and manage both their own and other people emotions, thus providing a balanced affective framework, optimising the impact of their own actions and manifestations, ensuring the success of the led structure.

Consequently, the training and development of these skills become essential actions in the process of having a type of leadership that allows optimal reactions to the challenges specific to the future security context. Moreover, it would be beneficial to introduce a selection criterion specific to emotional intelligence, because both its level and its potential for development are especially important.

In addition, tracking the emotional evolution of personnel will allow to maintain the emotional balance of military personnel



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Tracking the emotional evolution of personnel will allow to maintain the emotional balance of military personnel and minimise the stress caused by traumatic events, in order to eliminate possible disorders specific to post-traumatic stress.

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Therefore, military leaders need to have emotional intelligence, complementary to the other attributes characteristic to leadership. This will ensure the optimal framework for carrying out efficient and effective actions and identifying the answers to the questions *how* and *what* in order to meet the organisational goals.

It thus becomes obvious that the development of emotional intelligence should appear on the first page of the agenda of the Romanian military system, in addition to professional training, personal development becoming increasingly important.

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