

# Military power and its applicability (modernity) in the XXI century

The defense and security of a Nation is a vast subject isn't it ? Vast subject indeed :

- When one considers the complexity and the evolution of the world. Again, vast subject it is - when one remembers the historical blunders of the last century, in particular those committed by France :
- When in 1914 (WWI), offense, which until then had been advocated at all cost by Lieutenant Colonel Foch, gave way to four years of obstinate defense ;
- When in 1940, a major error led to yet another one. First, the implementation of a policy of intervention in favor of the Central Nations, such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, but supported by a purely defensive strategy - the Maginot Line. And second, opposing the first principle, the incredible decision to expose the army forward of " Fortress France " leading to a haphazard clash in the Flanders plains.

BY MAJOR GENERAL GÉRARD BEZACIER, COMMANDER, CDEF (DOCTRINE AND FORCES EMPLOYMENT CENTER) - US EQUIVALENT TRADOC

Definitely a vast subject, when one refers to the strict use of air power in the Kosovo operations. It was decisive in that it unequivocally relegated land forces to a secondary role performing ancillary tasks. Yet again, it is a vast subject when one considers the Iraqi, Ivory Coast, and Haitian situations where land forces reemerge as the principal actors, dominant and compelling. They are reasserting their role in rebuilding and setting the genuine conditions for military success and the peace that should have been engendered. But of course, one has to remain cautious when making these assertions. This should lead one to make judicious and well measured decisions when preparing for the future - decisions that cannot wait for tomorrow.

These are the first thoughts that come to mind as the one (of many) who has

to deliberate on these matters. We must confront this challenge with conviction and a the resolve to lead this project through.

Before shedding some light on our vision, let's begin by presenting a brief geopolitical analysis. In doing so, one cannot begin from the most recent and significant event - that of 9/11. This event, beyond the pain it inflicted, illustrates the violence and disorder of our times, and to the highest degree, symbolizes the following :

- The weakening of the nation states including the vanishing control of their territories - incidentally, the United States had never been directly aggressed since 1812 ;
- The fanatic use of violence aiming to inflict the highest number of casualties among the civilian populations ;
- The diversity and the proliferation of destruction capabilities.

To this premise, one must add the frequent unilateral behavior of some world powers that often confuse their self-interest with those of the rest of the world. In doing so, some may ignore what Thucydides said some 2500 years ago, "*that of all the demonstrations of power, self-control is the most impressive.*"

Going straight to the point, what should we learn from the weakening of nation-states raised by so many experts ? First, there is a corollary relationship with the end of the balance of terror between the Eastern

elsewhere - with all the associated tribalism, clannish behavior, and all types of corruption, worst of which financial. The latest takes its roots in the wake of transnational and globalization opportunities. It invests ever-greater resources in favor of stateless organizations of varying size and nature.

The first lesson we should draw is that nebulous entities prosper mainly because of the weakening states. Some have terrorist and/or mafia overtones and recruit from the many and fertile grounds of poverty.

*" If you don't take care of them, they will take care... of you ! "*

and Western blocs. This weakening finds its origins from above and in the supranational institutions like in Europe. But also from below and in the developing nations like in Africa and

This is what helps explain the presence of Al Qaida in Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, etc. The second lesson is a resultant of the first. Today, nation-states are not the

exclusive possessors of the exercise of violence and of the outrageous monopoly of its use. We have been witnessing an emergence of ideas, ideologies, organizations (adaptive or not), all of which equally and *de facto* legitimize their own use of violence citing the blatant injustices of an imposed world order.

From these ideas, **two strategic requirements that responsible States cannot ignore are self-evident.**

First, to ensure an intervention/expeditionary capability in all the sensitive zones providing bases and logistic support to violent groups. "If you don't take care of them, they will... take care of *you*!" This also applies to all illegal traffic organizations. It is the inherent cost of the "global village" we are building.

The second is much similar to the first one, and centers on this so-called mandated/legitimized right of interference in other nations' affairs (normally in failed states). It renders the principle of sovereignty less and less justifiable, in contradiction to human rights and, more generally, in contradiction to what have become universal values (the same applies for border inviolability).

It is in this context that we need to look at international security and globalization.

Going back to 9/11. This date carries more significance than 1789 or 1989. This cowardly terrorist act was planned in Central Asia, executed in New York and Washington D.C., and performed by Saudi and Egyptian



AFP

nationals who had pursued western post-graduate programs. Its consequences go far beyond, let's say, Japanese security policy.

This is a perfect illustration of what transcends from the resulting effects of mass exchanges that characterize our world today :

- First, and most important, information exchanges promote envy as the poor can observe the rich. Also, the youth inclined to passion, sacrifice, and ideological nihilism, inspires itself from conclusive blood-spattered successes and violent activities ;
- Financial exchanges point the finger at white-collar criminals of all nationalities and social backgrounds who feed the engines of violence with unlimited financial resources - sometimes exceeding those of the States ;
- Human migration / exchanges - man is a perpetual immigrant and traveler. Just like water, he espouses the path of least resistance - he rides the wave that leads to prosperity. And, just like

water these historical fluxes are difficult to canalize - to the chagrin of the Maginot line lonesome militant, this concept is definitely long-gone.

- Finally, analogous to the preceding idea, the large number of movements / exchanges of worldwide gatherings such as anti-globalization, anti-G8 and others demonstrates a strategy of destruction. These movements call into question a world order grown decidedly intolerable to three-fourth of the planet, in total disregard of the progressive advancements in the world.

These characteristics are not complete without pointing out some very specific but major exchanges - the proliferation of weapons, and above all their increasing and almost unlimited effects.

Unfortunately, weapon trade and technological know-how have become common practice, needless to say dual-use technology as well. Moreover, the number of nuclear states increases, and likewise the number of "ballistic" states. This is a process that will remain unrelenting.

And perhaps, sooner than later, we will have to revise the theory of nuclear deterrence. This would be in the aftermath of a new Hiroshima in Asia, in the Middle East, or on the periphery of the European Union. The latent nuclear pause invoked by General Poirier will be obsolete and pragmatism will triumph. We must remain attentive to this.

In terms of the consequences on crisis and war, proliferation has given way to an increase in weapons capabilities :

- It is now possible to deliver fires everywhere and from anywhere (space, air, land, sea, or subsurface) in increasingly shorter delays and with awesome precision. Today, the delivery of weapons by means of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) still requires a flight time of six hours versus a few 20 minutes or so for an airplane. And all indications are that these delays will get even shorter.

- The lethal capabilities increase - exponentially for nuclear weapons, but as well for conventional weapons such as artillery projectiles. In 1870, bullets fragmented in some twenty pieces of shrapnel - today in well over 2000 pieces. On top of this, the development of lasers, chemical, and most importantly biological and genetic weapons have shown much potential. In this regard, we must not forget that the tularemia virus (rabbit fever) was used in Stalingrad. The USSR also used the *Burkholderia Mallei* biological agent in

Afghanistan (Glanders disease). While today we are concerned about Anthrax, we have become aware of the Ebola virus (hemorrhagic fever) and the absence of an antidote against it. Last but not least, history is filled with examples of plague-ridden cadavers used to infest cities undergoing sieges, and to pollute water-wells in desert areas, just to name a few examples.

Moving right along this military glimpse of the geopolitical world. We must underscore what may be considered to be the most determining fact of this coming century - this unbelievable phenomena -

during each recent crisis (albeit of low-intensity) this percentage has yet again increased and varies from 75 to 90%. It is in order to highlight that these percentages can translate into millions like in Cambodia or Rwanda. Further investigation points to what extent civilian populations have become major actors/targets of conflicts :

- Physical cleansing of minorities.
- Psychological manipulation of populations.
- Hostage taking.
- Use of women and children as agents/ combatants even as shields, and so on...

security issues, we cannot ignore the military balance of power.

All things being equal, we must recall that when building for the future one must take some distance from the present, if only for an instant, in order to get a clearer vision. Therefore, so as to get a good grasp of today's strategic context and in order to lay a good foundation in consonance with our political objectives, **we must discard erroneous debates and false concepts.**

Just as concepts (and God knows how much French people fancy them) can be useful, they are often counter-productive.

In particular, this applies to the Cartesian-minded person trapped inside his own intellectual logic and disconnected from reality - and this is the point, reality is all about the complexity of the human mind.

If concepts are such, we must note that they can contribute to shedding some light on as much as distorting reality. They can help in seeking tangible decisions but can weaken them when preconceptions get in the way. That is the case when we are dealing with defense matters such as courses of action, materiel, organizations etc...

Today, the most obvious example concerns artificial dichotomy. It is practiced by intellectual analysts who have never been in a theater of operation and have not been able to engross themselves with the **stench** of the battlefield nor with the differences between low and high intensity conflicts - each opposed to one another like day and night.

The divergence between these two precepts (low and high) contributes to the same apparent rigor, especially when one attempts to visualize a new architecture in the face of today's debates. Therefore, we must recognize that not one military operation, even limited in scope, never has been, is not, and never will be characterized as a purely low or high intensity conflict. On one hand, when you deal from a position of strength you assume you are in a low intensity environment. Conversely, if you are weak, the number of punches you receive is directly proportional to your sense that you are in a high intensity environment. We'll return to this point later.

Then, another idea emerges. A good one for sure, but very naive since it has the potential to stumble on the first obstacle it encounters - I am referring to the "Multinational", also referred to as "Supranational", concept. In such an environment, national vital interests in military interventions become increasingly intertwined. Hence, the following principle has grown to be to be accepted as the norm : " Each entity/nation acts in consonance within the limits of its own relative power... "

The contention that any world power has its own limits is linked to the previous pessimistic but realistic statement. Paraphrasing Mr. Brzesinski, it is vital to recognize that one's leadership capability is **inversely proportional** to his resolve to dominate.

( *“ Each entity/nation acts in consonance within the limits of its own relative power... ”* )

the "victimization" of civilian populations. Until now, they were at the heart of and the essence of the Law of Land Warfare. There was an obligation to distinguish them (from uniformed combatants) and to protect them. However, we are forced to recognize this is not so any longer. There are countless massacres in Africa ; in the Balkans - just 700 km from Strasbourg ; and now, massive terrorist attacks in the United States, Spain, the Middle East, in Asia, etc.

Besides, a brief glance at the past confirms that this situation is part of a growing and troublesome trend that merits further analysis. Indeed, in WWI, just in the last century, 10% of the total casualties were civilians. This percentage increased to 60% in WWII. Now, we observe that

Foremost, and a key point for our democracies, we should not forget that beyond our permeable borders and unlimited exchanges, the phenomenon of victimization of civilians affects our own populations as well. The 3/11 Madrid train bombing, and the hostage takings in Iraq are compelling evidence of that fact.

With hindsight, -as a rhetorical question - couldn't this criminal tendency on one end, and the growing and now imperialistic use of information on the other, be tied to the confrontation between fanatic religious ideologies and democratic and secular states ? Finally, in order to complete this snapshot of the world's defense and

Enlightened by these clues, we now need to characterize the correlation of military forces in the world. We will then draw some lessons and elaborate on the first assessment for the future role of our forces - in our case, land forces. And since it is our destiny, we need to focus this process on a XXI century force in a European context.

**First, we had previously established an essential premise.**

**The territory of the United States is no longer impervious from external aggressions.** Sure, airliners momentarily substituted missiles. But in the end, this brings comfort to and validates this major and vital interest - the pursuit to protect and safeguard national territories - tied to the permanent research of technological progress applications. After the conquest of the West, the Apollo program, Star Wars, let us remain convinced, that once the dividing and emotional parenthesis of the Middle East has been closed, that mighty America will raise to the occasion. Regardless of the results, something will come out of it. And in the end, those who stayed on the sidelines of this essential strategic race are doomed to become insignificant and ignored actors in a new world order. Therefore, whatever range or effectiveness, or shape or form the antimissile defense program takes, it will be recognized as the major defense system of the XXI century.

**The second premise involves the growing technological gap that exists between the American weapon**

**stockpiles and those of the western powers (including Japan) and Russia.**

The source of this imbalance originated chiefly in the mastery of information technology - eventually impacting on the art of war. Naming just three consequences :

- Mastery of time.
- Mastery in the observation and acquisition of targets.
- Mastery in precision fires.

In general, three corollaries can be inferred - one at the strategic level, the other two at the operational/ tactical levels :

- Opponents of western powers resort increasingly more to different interpretations of subversive warfare.
- “Exotic” weapons of the nuclear, biological, chemical types are sought after.
- The enemy makes an economy of force by withdrawing into isolated, built-up, mountainous or rough terrain areas.

Concerning the analysis of the correlation of forces, one must not overlook the human resources/forces enlisted because of their beliefs - in the end, belief is an especially decisive element of power. **Still today, people continue to die more easily in the cause of ideas than of interests** - this is a proven and **extremely** disturbing lesson-learned. But then, nothing is more foreign to our democracies, our hedonist societies, where we have long forgotten about the power of ideas and their resulting violence. So, what to make of all these examinations, premises, facts, and our uneasiness when confronted by the evolution of the threats as related



AFP

here ? We can draw four lessons directly related to the role of our future forces in the context of our defense and security organization.

**First and foremost, it concerns the joint aspect of our military operations.**

We must delve into it right away because it will form the basis for the budgetary and materiel choices of the future. Land, sea, and air components do not operate separately. The French military will have to conduct operations that require all three services<sup>4</sup> each one acting in the four main operational functions : Command and Control, intelligence, signal, and logistical support. But to suggest that we need to integrate all services into one in order to optimize the number and quality of our headquarters - we must reflect on that for a while... Let's look at it carefully without skipping over the fact that when traditions are ripped apart the price we eventually end up paying can be astounding.

**The second lesson**, and by no means less significant, is that we can now validate some certainties in the short and medium term.

**Obviously, we are getting to know our adversaries... if not enemies, may they be found in foreign theaters of operation or even on the European continent itself.**

In fact, in the framework of our assigned missions which aim to reestablish (and why not establish) democratic order, justice, security, and peace our forces will be faced with armed resistance fighters. As far as one can forecast, but for at least the next twenty years, while there may be an increasing number of hopeless adversaries, no capable army will be able to rival our European and Atlantic alliance coalitions. Most often, these enemies will be equipped with deep-rooted ideologies. And since these ideologies seek the upheaval and the overthrow of universal order and values, the foe will *de facto* conduct what we are compelled to refer to as subversive operations. At any rate, taking into account our air, space, and sea as well as subsurface technological superiority they will have no other choice. What we call today dissymmetric/asymmetric conflict is nothing other than the price we pay for our progress.

These acts, or some forms of war, are characterized by the combination of psychological operations (in priority targeting civilian populations either in the countries where we are engaged or in our own - civilians who have become the strategic actors and targets of this century's conflicts). Other acts are of an indirect type and nature (guerilla, terrorism) perpetrated against all infrastructures of our societies, and increasingly against information networks.

lands - at least, that our citizens will be able to perceive.

**The third lesson**, although still in the news in Iraq, is ancient history. It stands out like a sore thumb. Field Marshals Lyautey and Gallieni imparted that with us more than a century ago - even if in the colonial context of their time. While all things are equal, it is connected with what us, Europeans, understood well before our American friends who painfully discover it day by day.

**In a word, it has become a truism to notice that whatever type of military engagement we are involved in, the political dimension prevails, and always will, over the pure military approach.**

Beyond the very short (sometimes non-existent) combat phase conducted to neutralize an organized armed force (termed **intervention/expedition**) utilizing compelling and joint forces capable of conducting high intensity warfare or even a deterrence role, lays the transition phase. This phase, of varying duration, is termed **stabilization**.

This period can be precarious and subject to sudden violent flare ups. Such situations can produce the reverse effect of the intended outcome. It will precede the **normalization** phase. This later phase is intended to progressively reestablish the country's sovereignty with the help of **forces, acting in support of local and/or international institutions, capable of deterring or preventing hostile forces from acting.**

It is during the second phase, stabilization, that all the causes and sources likely to disrupt the reestablishment of peace are assembled. Incidentally, they can be the result of bad choices or poor planning in the phases leading up to the intervention. Again, lessons can be drawn from the Iraqi conflict.

As much as the intervention phase will be relatively easy to conduct, will the stabilization be difficult to bring to a close.

The later phase combines the need to conduct short and violent combats to reduce organized armed resistance against a fleeting enemy, all the while performing security and population control operations. As we have seen, this population is the target of subversive actions - incidentally, none of those on the receiving end label them asymmetric operations. As we have seen previously, it requires the implementation, or the support of complementary civil projects. These are exclusively of the political realm. They are the sole guarantors for a secure exit from the crisis. It's all and only about facilitating and garnering support for political projects and structures - the only peace promoters. Once more, make no mistake ; with regard to the insecurity that characterizes this phase, the role of the armed forces will remain significant. Their authority, even if under political control, will still be desired.

In this regard, we need to articulate **one more effect that can help us better determine the future model of the armed forces.**

Although it must clearly stated, we must treat with care a favored but disputed terminology that has not fared very well - "first in, first out". Derived, or rather imported hastily from the United States, this idea suggests that our expeditions/interventions be as short as possible. This theory does not resist the test of what happened in Cyprus, Bosnia, Kosovo, Ivory Coast, and of course Iraq. In the later, we observe that stabilization is about winning the hearts



ADC F. CHESNEAU/SIRPA Terre

But, as we have hinted to earlier, it is our most precious resources, our soldiers and our citizens, who will be taken for targets when they will fall victims to numerous assassinations.

This means, and make no mistake about it, that massive casualties may engender near political defeats -at least a political problem for our governments who will be forced to attend to a wide-ranging and emotional public opinion. What is more, is that none of our vital interests will be at risk in the majority of our engagements on foreign

**Our armies are no longer the protagonists of today's victories.** They have become the facilitators.

But peace, a very dynamic phenomenon, can only be approached progressively and preserved only by the implementation of complementary civil projects (juridical, economic, financial, constitutional, etc...) all part of a greater and **enduring exit strategy plan.** Anyhow, the military can play this facilitator role effectively only if its initial engagement is already a part of such a plan - and, when practical, only if under political authority as early as possible.

and minds as well, and it requires a long time - on the scale of the history of man.

Therefore, contrary to the assumption that **with technology we can do away with soldiers**, we remain convinced by how much their importance and numbers remain a fundamental constant. We must factor this in (and of course other parameters) when discussing resources during the upcoming debates about our new military - the only proper way to make sound investments.

**Finally, the fourth lesson.** What has become to characterize our engagements can be used as a model for our future army. We are talking about the **interweaving and the increasing interaction between armed forces and civilian populations** - whether friendly, neutral, or hostile.

These new difficult constraints are the result of demographic growth and substantial migratory fluxes/exchanges. They drag the entire world into an urbanization explosion. This can be observed not only in industrialized countries, but also in the majority of developing nations. Further, this occurs in numerous regions of potential crisis. This has created conditions encouraging the participation, voluntary as well as involuntary, of numerous groups of civilian combatants confronting our troops. The latest are and will remain engaged in these conflicts.

**Thus, we can say that our army will not conduct campaigns on an open landscape anymore - but in cities.**

It is now possible to draw our **first conclusion concerning our forethought on the role and the concept of our future land forces, specifically land forces. We will do this drawing on our two modes of operation - coercion mode<sup>2</sup> and violence-mastering mode<sup>3</sup>.** In general terms, these two approaches explain how to conduct operations in order to reach the fixed political/strategic objectives. First, we must note that they wholly complement one another and that they are inexorable. In fact, in order to reestablish (and ensure) security on a territory, we must be able to permanently constrain an adversary to renounce to his action even if this means that we have to destroy him. Also, everybody has known for ages that the mastery of violence is only possible when supported by strong deterrence forces. In the end, these two modes are not in opposition to one another, but are complementary (French operations in the former Yugoslavia were a good example of what not to do - immobilized and paralyzed forces, hostages, all sorts of slights, and so on).

**These two modes constitute the two poles of a range of possible actions from which we can alternate from one to another.** Besides, they



ADC F. CHESNEAU/SIRPA Terre

are independent from the spectrum of warfare intensity, high or low - a trendy debate inside the Paris beltway, but not so for those in the trenches. So, let's discard once and for all some clichés such as the wishful thinking that wars are distinct from operations other than war. Let's reject all simplistic and overly simple ideas arbitrating whether or not to go heavy or light.

Lets be frank, **yes**, we need armor for protection ; **yes**, we need heavy weapons, and accurate at that, in order to deter and destroy rapidly and precisely when needed ; **yes**, we do need an exceptional and performing command and control system - intelligence as well, obtained by all available captors especially human, and good analysis ; **and no**, our forces, when employed for crowd control, have nothing in common with the Gendarmerie - they are trained and capable of facing situations when shots are fired from the crowds and facing the numerous improvised explosive devices attacks, such is not the case for our Gendarmerie forces whose

numbers are justly and duly calculated to maintain law and order within our borders<sup>4</sup>.

The objectives of military intervention have changed - we are not talking about conquering territories or cities. **We are talking about a new approach for the employment of our forces.** We are talking about is this - from now on, it's all about conquering the hearts and minds.

As we have explained, it is the political dimension that will prevail over the strictly military approach hereafter. The Iraqi conflict is an obvious illustration. For the most part, our operations aim to assist or protect threatened populations or communities, sometimes from their own governments. Besides the close and permanent interaction between the forces deployed on a theater and civilian non-combatants, paramilitary forces and/or armed factions often represent an ill-defined but real threat. In some cases, the foe blends in with the locals, in other cases, entire communities can turn against our troops.

The switching of alliances between factions and/or the use of non-combatant civilians by determined adversaries also constitute further add elements of confusion and of instability. As such, the identification of the threat on the ground remains uncertain and the use of force can be in inconsistent with the established objectives. Ground forces are the only elements that can discriminate in this identification. Therefore, they are compelled to direct their irrevocable strikes exclusively on identified and direct actors. This **new approach to the employment of forces** leans on the entire panoply of available tactics (TTP's - tactics, techniques and procedures). And, according to the circumstances and the appreciation of the situations, **three new principles for the employment of forces come to supplement Marshall Foch's principles of war :**

- **The progressive escalation of military effects** corresponds to **concentration of effort.**
- **The preservation of human resources,** of cultural and material wealth, and of infrastructures corresponds to **economy of force.**
- **And the permanent legitimacy of actions** corresponds to **freedom of action.**

Under these complex conditions, only land forces can ensure, with all the implied gradations, that their political use will remain adapted to the threat level. The intent is to maintain the level of

violence as low as possible so as to preserve the perceived legitimacy of the operation, and in the end, to create the conditions for peace. In fact, all that can be done to reduce the risk of irreversible damage, all the while preserving the integrity of the force, directly contributes to the legitimacy and the credibility of the operations that are necessary to win battles and enlist the support of the populations. It is the true guarantee for the commander to preserve a certain amount of freedom of action, but also the sine qua non condition to win future conflicts - that is to say, to win an enduring peace.

**We cannot conclude this challenging approach toward a XXI century army without addressing Europe.** We know that a European Union strategic concept for security has been in existence since December 2003. "A safe Europe in a better world", coupled with the creation of a 60,000 soldiers capability made up of several 1,500 strong combat units.

Actually, it appears that in the analysis and interpretation of this concept one may find the

general framework of this prospective treatise. This brings added value to several elements already well thought-out but which remain modest, incomplete and fragile. We must convince ourselves, unless we are basically pessimistic, that the construction of the XXI century French Army will most probably evolve in the midst of the European concert of nations. Therefore, it is pertinent to be well versed in the founding philosophy as it pertains to defense and security endeavors.

**As a preliminary conclusion to this initial and incomplete brainstorming, here are a few points and a notion worth mentioning.**

Operations ARTEMIS (Congo), CONCORDIA (Serbia-Montenegro), soon the EUROCORPS command of ISAF (Afghanistan), and the relief of SFOR units in Bosnia point to a European defense that is alive and evolving. It works in agreement with a European security strategy that became public at the end of 2003.

The drawing of this **European security strategy concept** was no small matter when one considers the basic foreign policy

divergences between European countries. It is no easy task to reach a common agreement concerning the defense of strategic interests in a Europe where, starting in May 2004, western nations and countries of the former Soviet Union coexist - some pro-Atlantic, while others possess a nuclear deterrence capability. Nevertheless, the basics of the European security environment were specified: the European Union's challenges, the main threats, the strategic objectives that were subscribed to, and their political implications.

We must make it clear that both the internal security and the external security of the E.U., as it relates to the **challenges and the main threats**, are intimately linked. In order to take them on, European countries must respond to the global challenges that can upset the security conditions, i.e. : globalization, conflicts, poverty, disease, and the competition for natural resources such as water and oil.

**Five threats facing Europe have been identified :**

- **Terrorism**, considered to be a "growing strategic threat" for Europe ;
- **The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ;**
- **Regional conflicts ;**
- **The disintegration of nation states** and regional instability ;
- **Organized crime**, together with its external dimension.

All of these challenges and threats are a part of the European security environment. Even if they



COMMISSION EUROPÉENNE

are focused on Europe, we cannot help but notice a significant convergence with the American strategic vision contained in its “National Security Strategy” (2002). In fact, the European document specifically addresses an axis of the good - “the European Union and the United States can constitute a formidable force to the service of the good in the world”, p.15 - matching George W. Bush’s axis of evil. In coherence with these threats, the E.U.’s first strategic objective is to meet head on the ones mentioned in the first part with all the tools available to the E.U., including the military option. This is about a Europe that cannot be satisfied with assuming no more than just its own defense (self-defense), but also that must have an expeditionary capability - precisely where the “E.U.’s first defensive line” is located.

The second objective is “to build security in our own neighborhood”, such as in the Balkans. “The credibility of our foreign policy depends on the consolidation of our accomplishments in this region”. Today, Europe’s objective is “**to be able to intervene autonomously in its neighborhood**”.

The settlement of the crisis in the Middle East constitutes another priority so as to guarantee European security. Finally, the E.U.’s last objective is to develop and defend international law and multilateralism - the core of international order. “Security can only be reinforced by confidence building measures and

the institution of armament control systems, tools that can equally contribute to the security and stability in our neighborhood and beyond”. Europe’s political implications emerge from these goals. This involves the specifics that the E.U. must elaborate and improve upon in order to fully satisfy the objectives discussed previously : the creation of military capabilities, the enhancement of cooperation with our partners, and the development of a coherent policy.

The E.U. must be “**more active**” in matters of crisis management and conflict prevention. This primarily concerns the political, military, and commercial aspects. “The E.U. must be able to act before the situation deteriorates, on our doorsteps ; when indications of the existence of weapons proliferation are detected ; and before emergency humanitarian situations occur”. In this regard, the E.U doesn’t reject the possibility to engage in preventive actions in order to face the threats we have described earlier, so as to “avoid more serious problems in the longer term”.

To this end, the E.U. must **develop its operational military capabilities** by focusing on providing more available resources, together with their better utilization. **Cooperation** with partners must be privileged - especially the transatlantic partnership, deemed irreplaceable.

Finally, the E.U. must improve its political coherence.

Yet again, the European strategic concept promotes multilateralism. This was presented as the E.U.’s primary objective leading to a more equitable world, safer and more united.

Here then, after the divergences on the Iraqi intervention that opposed some European countries to the United States, is a European strategy document that reminds us of the primacy of the Americano-European strategic partnership. This is illustrated as follows :

- A common strategic vision,
- Common threats and interests,
- A reaffirmed cooperation between both continents.

In the end, the aim of a European military capability is to contribute to peacekeeping operations, but also capable of intervention and pacification/stabilization (eventually developing into amplified Petersberg missions). Today, the E.U. affirms, in its strategic concept, to preserve the ability to conduct “preventive engagements”, including military. However, from reading Mr. Solana’s document, we still ignore (it is too early to tell) under what framework, unilateral or multilateral.

Regardless, the European Union finally has its own strategic vision. While this strategic concept document is prudent and consensual, some aspects still limit its intent and significance. But, although European defense is still far from being autonomous, still depending on the partnership with the United-States, it becomes more tangible with

each day. This takes into account the notable resolve of some “locomotive” nations such as France, Germany, as well as the United Kingdom. Moreover, facing today’s threats, Europe has become conscious of the fact that it cannot remain on the margins of the battlefield<sup>5</sup>.

*1 The Gendarmerie cannot be taken into account in this type of operation.*

*2 Coercition (Fr) - coercion - An action on a declared adversary to impose national or international will is a political choice. It can be deliberately decided or a result from an escalation from the violence-mastering mode.*

*3 Violence-mastering - Mastery of violence - One of the two operational action modes (the general manner of operating on a theatre of operations in order to reach one or several objectives selected at the strategic level) in the current French doctrine (the other being coercion by means of force). Mastery of violence is an operating mode or course of action for the Land Forces, requiring the ability to conceive and conduct, in coordination with a number of diplomatic, economic, and media actions, military action aimed at the resolution and stabilization of a crisis situation. This mode combines measures of safety, confidence and even assistance measures, for those factions involved, as well as control. It might lead to constraints or coercion actions. The purpose of the strategic option of violence mastery is to prevent, contain and control the escalation of violence. It implies that those actions cannot be directed to the adversary’s center of gravity without running the risk to drag the mandated force in a protracted conflict that the political leader is specifically trying to avoid.*

*4 This does not exclude the utilization of paramilitary forces, Gendarmerie, in expeditionary operations when the conditions on the ground and the need for this type of force are met.*

*5 “Le Monde”, Daniel Vernet, 13 March 2004.*