

C.D.E.F



Between May 19 and 20, 1978, the full 2nd REP (Foreign Parachute Battalion) was dropped in two waves on Kolwezi. This operation was ordered under short notice, but not without hesitation by the President of the French Republic. It enabled the evacuation of 2,800 French, Belgian and Western nationals. These were trapped by a distant and complex insurgency which was covered with blood. This event marked the starting point for a series of other NEOs (Noncombatant Evacuation Operations). These are always at the heart of a number of commitments tasked to the French Land Forces: since 1990, these forces have been involved in twenty-six NEOs, i.e. one to two per year.

Today, no current commitment should divert us from the requirement to constantly maintain contingency forces available to conduct a NEO. This task may be launched under short notice, either with France as lead nation or within a coalition arrangement. It can operate a variety of resources including land, sea and/or air assets. As it occurs mostly in a very unsafe environment, speed is required.

This issue of Doctrine Magazine aims both at putting a doctrine light on their sequencing and at taking up the main lessons learned by those who conducted or experienced such operations: forces commanders, military actors, civil servants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, holding a post either in Paris or abroad.

Major General Thierry OLLIVIER
Commander, Forces Employment
Doctrine Center