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Serval, Barkhane, and the new understanding of theatres of operation in the fight against terrorism: the evolution of French military doctrine: a transition towards the management of insurrectionary crises, military medical support and the management of new related risks

Lou Pinchon-Carron de la Carrière

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**SERVAL, BARKHANE, AND THE NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THEATRES OF
OPERATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM.**

The evolution of French military doctrine: a transition towards the management of insurrectionary crises, military medical support and the management of new related risks.

Internship with the International Cooperation Office of the Armed Forces Health Service
Headquarters - Operations Division.
From 16 January 2023 to 13 July 2023.

Lou Pinchon-Carron de la Carrière

Summary

Since 2013, France has played a leading role in the fight against terrorism in West Africa. Operations Serval (2013-2014) - characterised by a combat brigade, then Barkhane (2014-2022) - characterised by an installation force and increased regional cooperation, have served to block the territorial advance of GATs in the region and to train local military troops.

Operation Serval, a combat brigade with an anti-terrorist vocation, is a response to a request for intervention from the Malian authorities in the country. The objectives were clear, the resources deployed substantial and the theatre limited to Mali. Having learnt the lessons of its previous counter-insurgency campaigns, France is applying the COIN doctrine in line with its operational history.

Considered a tactical and strategic victory in the retreat of the GATs, the shift from Operation Serval to Operation Barkhane marks the expansion of the theatre of operations to the whole of the Sahel and the international involvement of players. This is a real logistical challenge: supplies, support, command organisation and communications are being deployed in a theatre on an unprecedented scale. The "3D" approach, covering Defence, Diplomacy and Development, is essential. Barkhane's mission is to reduce the terrorist threat to an acceptable level and contain it to enable local troops to regain leadership. The European Union's EUTM mission was designed to train Malian troops. MINUSMA covered the civilian aspect in addition to the training and development effort.

But the bogging down of Operation Barkhane highlights the need for a change in military doctrine. Counter-insurgency doctrine may still be called upon, but it must no longer be at the heart of strategies that focus more on a doctrine of stabilisation and an inter- and intra-sectoral approach to cooperation. The doctrinal approach in populo-centric operations, i.e. where the focus is on insurrectionary and/or terrorist phenomena, cannot separate military doctrine from political doctrine, even for the purposes of the study, without being biased.

Operation Barkhane is an illustration of a shift in French defence strategy.

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Internship experience in the French Armed Forces Health Service

I did a placement from 16 January 2023 to 13 July 2023 in the international medical cooperation office of the Operations Division of the Armed Forces Health Service Headquarters. This experience gave me the opportunity to learn about relations with the European Union, Asia-Pacific, North America and NATO meetings. I was able to put into practice the editorial aspect of monitoring and strategic analysis, as well as official representation to senior military authorities and the management of foreign delegations.

One of the tasks I was given was to write an open watch on medical and military health news, which is distributed every week to the Armed Forces Health Service headquarters.

I was the only official representative of the Operations Division of the Armed Forces Health Service Headquarters to the Major General of the Armed Forces, General Auttelet, as part of the preparations for the GFACM (Franco-German military cooperation grouping) for the medical component.

I helped prepare forums (EMOF: *European medical operation forum*) and multilateral meetings (COMEDS Plenary and COMEDS *steering Committee* of NATO).

I also acted as a representative for the Operations Division's personnel, for example during the visit of a Croatian delegation and visits to the Armed Forces Health Service (IRBA) facilities.

I had the opportunity to work with the *Direction des Affaires Juridiques* (DAJ) and the *Bureau des affaires juridiques et de la déontologie santé* (BAJDS) on military health agreements. In particular, I was involved in drafting technical arrangements, internship agreements, translating legal texts and drafting fact sheets for the Central Director on NATO concepts.

I was able to acquire skills both in the military field and in the management of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. I developed skills in analysing crisis situations and formulating strategic recommendations. These experiences have enabled me to acquire cutting-edge analytical skills, the ability to think across the board and the capacity to work in a demanding and caring environment.

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INTRODUCTION

1) Opening

On 26 July 2023, a military coup took place in Niger to depose President Bazoum, who supported military cooperation with the French Republic. It was a real turnaround for the French forces pre-positioned in Africa, particularly in Niamey, and was the third coup d'état in the Sahel in three years, following Mali in 2020 and Burkina Faso in 2022. This growing instability, anti-French sentiment and pro-Russian support for the Sahel states are putting France in a precarious position. France's presence in Africa is increasingly compromised and called into question. Serval, Barkhane, what's next? Recent OPEX, active cooperation with the G5 Sahel and the continuity of international missions have led to an evolution and adaptation of French military doctrine. The Gulf War and the war in Afghanistan were the first real reversals in French military doctrine. A few months after the end of Operation Barkhane, what are France's doctrinal developments and ambitions in the light of the lessons learned from the Sahel war?

2) Research question

The development of France's military presence in the Sahel since 2013, with operations Serval and then Barkhane, has led to a transition in military doctrine in terms of understanding theatres of operation and related strategic analysis. This is due in particular to the management of a new type of multi-border theatre of operations in an asymmetric conflict. The difficulties encountered by France are due to its strategic and operational modes of action, as well as to local geopolitical developments.

3) Assumptions

- 1) The transition from Operation Serval to Barkhane, a multi-frontal theatre characterised by asymmetric conflict, has created a need to redefine French military doctrine.
- 2) The lack of predefined objectives, the limited resources committed, the geographical extent of the conflict and the dynamics of the military forces pre-positioned during Operation Barkhane have created difficulties for the French presence in the Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso).
- 3) The anchoring of the conflict in a regional theatre and the extension of the circle of players involved, as well as the development of information systems and the operational resources deployed, have led to a transition in French military doctrine.

4) The issue of memory and France's legacy on the African continent meant that an operation characterised by a force of installation contributed to the political and tactical defeat.

4) Overview of the Sahel region

(1) Definition of the Sahel geographical area

The Sahel is the geographical area between the Saharan and Sudanian domains¹. According to the UN, the southern Sahel, located in the west, comprises five main countries: Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. Since 2014, these countries have formed the G5 Sahel politico-military coalition in the fight against terrorism. This area, rich in human and natural resources, is constantly subject to security and political challenges.

(2) Definition of terms: GAT, jihadism and terrorism

In order to understand the risks and players involved in the war in Mali, and subsequently the war in the Sahel, we need to define a number of terms.

A distinction must be made between the terms "jihadism" and "terrorism".

Terrorism consists of multiple violent acts committed and/or claimed by an organisation or an individual with the aim of creating a climate of insecurity, blackmailing a government, or hatred towards a community, a country or a system². Often associated with jihadism, jihadist terrorism represents any act of extreme violence or any act of radicalisation and propaganda emanating from a jihadist network and of a bellicose nature.

Europol defines jihadism as "*a violent ideology that exploits traditional Islamic concepts. Jihadists justify the use of violence by referring to the classical Islamic doctrine of jihad, a term that literally means 'struggle' or 'effort', but in Islamic law is defined as war waged in the name of religion.*"³.

Jihadist groups call for the application of Sharia law⁴ within an Islamic state. "*Jihadism is a subset of Salafism, a Sunni revivalist movement*"⁵.

¹ French Larousse definition.

² French Larousse definition.

³ Definition by Europol, European Union Agency for Law and Enforcement Cooperation. Available at: <<https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>>.

⁴ Islamic law.

⁵ European Parliament definition. Available at : <<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/fr/headlines/security/20180703STO07127/le-terrorisme-djihadiste-dans-l-union-europeenne-depuis-2015>>

Having emerged in the 1980s, the Salafist movement advocates a return to the original Islam and the redefinition of borders in order to establish a Caliphate. The term "Salafism" is literally defined as "*a return to the practices of the pious ancestors*", i.e. the generation of the Prophet Mohammed and the two that followed. This movement, which links religious and political notions, is based on a rigorous interpretation of the sacred book of the Koran and the prophetic tradition, and rejects all "*blasphemous innovations*"⁶ .

(3) GAT presentation⁷

In the Sahel war, Salafist terrorist groups aim to expand the Caliphate, whose proto-state is based in Afghanistan, and apply Sharia law. The main jihadist networks in Sahelian terrorism are al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (Daesh).

Al-Qaeda is an Islamist terrorist organisation founded by Sheikh Abdullah Yusuf Azzam and his pupil Osama bin Laden. It emerged from the Maktab al-Khadamat organisation formed during the first Afghan war, a sign of the Afghan resistance against the Soviet armed forces. Active since 1987, its objectives are the establishment of a caliphate in the Muslim world, the strict application of Sharia law and the destruction or weakening of the Western world. In their view, the West represents an obstacle to the establishment of a Caliphate and is a source of perversion and interference in the internal affairs of Islamic nations. Terrorism has become the preferred mode of action of al-Qaeda, which regularly claims responsibility for attacks, kidnappings, extreme violence and anti-Western propaganda. Al-Qaeda currently operates in twenty-seven countries and is on the official list of terrorist organisations of many international organisations and states. Following the 2001 attack on the United States, various movements pledged allegiance to Bin Laden and adopted the name Al Qaeda. In the Sahel region, this is the case of the Algerian group that emerged from a break with the GIA⁸ , the Algerian jihadist group GSPC⁹ , which pledged allegiance to him in 2007 and officially became AQIM¹⁰ , led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar. While the group's origins are Algerian,

⁶ Definition given by the Institut du Monde Arabe. Available at : <<https://vous-avez-dit-arabe.webdoc.imarabe.org/religion/le-droit-musulman/qu-appelle-t-on-wahhabisme-et-le-salafisme>>

⁷ Armed terrorist groups

⁸ Armed Islamic Group.

⁹ Salafist group for preaching and combat.

¹⁰ Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

its current area of operation extends across the Sahel-Saharan strip: it is active in Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Tunisia and Libya.

The Islamic State, or Daesh, was born of a split with al-Qaeda in 2006. In 2014, the group proclaimed the establishment of a Caliphate over the territories under its control, with the setting up of a totalitarian system in Iraq and Syria, under the lead of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Following this proclamation, AQIM rejected the caliphate of the Islamic State, and from then on the two groups were considered rivals. Many jihadist groups pledged allegiance, including Boko Haram, operating in Nigeria and opening the door to the Sahel. Many jihadist groups split and merged as a result of the dual jihadist presence in the Sahel. The EIGS¹¹ was created in 2015 but was not recognised by the Caliphate until a year later.

Other minor groups appeared at the same time and, for the most part, ended up merging with one of the two main networks.

They include Ansar Dine, an armed Salafist jihadist group that emerged in Mali in 2012 and was founded by Iyad Ag Ghali, a former member of the Malian government. The group eventually merged with AQIM, the Macina katiba and the Mourabitoune katiba in 2017 to form the GSIM¹².

The Macina katiba is a Salafist fighting unit that emerged in 2015 during the war in Mali. It was first affiliated to Ansar Dine and then to the GSIM.

MUJAO¹³ is a jihadist group based on Salafist ideology that emerged in Mali in 2011. In 2013, the group merged with Les Signataires du Sang to form Al-Mourabitoune as a katiba led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, after the command of AQIM was withdrawn. In 2017 it merged to form GSIM. However, a branch of the group led by Adnane Abou Walid al-Sahraoui pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in 2015 and formed the EIGS.

In addition to jihadist networks, other GATs are active in the Sahel, mainly in Mali. The MNLA¹⁴ is a predominantly Tuareg political and military organisation that has been present in Mali since 2011.

¹¹ Islamic State in the Great Sahara.

¹² Support Group for Islam and Muslims.

¹³ Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa.

¹⁴ National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad.

The FLNA¹⁵ , renamed MAA¹⁶ , is an Arab political and military movement that has been active in northern Mali since 2012. Initially, these Tuareg and Arab movements joined forces with the jihadist group AQIM to conquer northern Mali. Jihadist expansion and various splits in the area subsequently led to clashes and deep divergence between them, particularly with Ansar Dine and MUJAO.

(4) The Sahel and Mali in particular in 2013 before Serval

The launch of Operation Serval by the French Republic was President François Hollande's response to Malian President Amadou Toumani Touré's appeal for help during the war in Mali. This armed conflict, which began in 2012, is part of the war in the Sahel and the Tuareg rebellions against the Malian state since the 1990s.

In the mid-1990s, in the midst of the Algerian civil war (1991-2002), Islamist rebels established themselves in northern Mali and Niger. The real jihadist foothold in the Sahel began in the 2000s. Algerian Islamist rebels, in particular the GSPC, seeking retreats south of the Sahara, established themselves in the Sahel and linked up with arms traffickers from Niger and Mali. It was not until 2003 that the Sahel became a jihadist niche. The young mufti Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who later became Emir, ran into difficulties against the troops of the Algerian People's National Army and took refuge in Mali. He joined forces with a large Arab tribe, the Berabiches, and settled near the Mauritanian border. He succeeded in laundering his money and developed a local social base, thanks in particular to his links with mafia groups. He popularised the business of kidnapping Western hostages for ransom in order to finance and arm his groups. Other jihadist leaders imitated him, and the Malian government, for fear of entering into open conflict with these networks, did nothing, unlike in Niger, where the President demanded disarmament, and in Mauritania, where there were numerous anti-terrorist missions. Gradually, hostage-taking and terrorist offensives claimed by the jihadist networks multiplied, and a climate of guerrilla warfare took hold. Negotiations between the jihadist leaders and the Malian government began to secure the release of the hostages. The jihadist groups grew and armed themselves. They established increasingly strong links with the local population, and conversions to Islam and radicalisation towards Salafist Islam increased.

¹⁵ Azawad National Liberation Front.

¹⁶ Azawad Arab Movement.

In 2007, through a letter of allegiance accepted by Bin Laden, the GSPC officially became AQIM. Following this merger, internal differences erupted and the Sahara zone was divided in two: the first concerned south-western Algeria, northern Mali and Mauritania, while the second concerned north-eastern Mali, northern Niger and western Chad. This spread of radical Islamism led to the recruitment of a number of natives and the emergence of new jihadist movements with strong roots in the Sahel region, such as Ansar Dine, MUJAO and Katiba Macina. Until 2010, the Malian government remained passive towards the GAT, for which it was criticised by France, Algeria and Mauritania. The execution of a British hostage in Mali in 2009 marked a turning point in the Malian president's handling of the conflict, with a promise of reprisals. In response to this government threat, AQIM assassinated Lieutenant-Colonel Bou, an agent of the Malian intelligence services. Violent conflicts broke out between the Malian government and AQIM.

The Sahel war has been going on for twenty years, encompassing all the countries in the Sahel-Saharan strip. The United Nations has set up a support plan targeting ten countries in the Sahel. The aim of this plan is to strengthen and intensify efforts to restore peace and stability to the region. The target countries are : Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. To this end, six priority areas have been identified: cross-border cooperation, peace prevention and peacekeeping, inclusive growth, climate action, renewable energy and the empowerment of women and young people.

The challenges are as much security-related as they are political and social. More than 50% of the population lives below the poverty line, and most countries face the threat of terrorism and organised crime.

5) France in the Sahel

(1) Definition of an operation outside France and its attributes

The French Ministry of the Armed Forces defines operations outside France as "*interventions by French military forces outside national territory*". The qualification of OPEX¹⁷ results from a decree issued by the Minister of the Armed Forces, which opens the theatre of engagement by specifying the geographical area and the period concerned. OPEX are distinct from pre-positioned forces, as is the case for certain bases in Africa under defence agreements, or at sea. An OPEX can

¹⁷ External operation.

take place in several contexts. The French Republic may intervene within the framework of the UN, the European Union, multinational forces or within a national framework.

In parallel with military action, French diplomacy aims to find solutions and political consensus with its partners. Stabilising and securing areas of action is the primary end goal. The decision to commit the armed forces rests with the President of the Republic in the Defence Council on the basis of his prerogatives under article 15 of the French Constitution and article 5.2, which makes him the "*guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity and respect for treaties*". The operation orders and the administrative and logistical directive, which specify the geographical scope of the theatre of operations and the support arrangements, are produced by the Armed Forces Headquarters.

Several levels of politico-military decision-making are put in place during an OPEX. These are known as the strategic, operational, tactical and technical levels. The strategic level concerns the iterative dialogue at the highest level of the State, between the political, diplomatic and military levels. The President of the Republic, Head of the Armed Forces, is responsible for decisions concerning military interventions outside France, after discussion and advisory opinion from the Chief of Defence Staff¹⁸. The operational level concerns the planning and conduct of the joint military campaign to meet the objectives set by the strategic level. The CPCO¹⁹ is in charge of this aspect and implements the PCIA²⁰. Next comes the tactical level, governed by each of the HQs for their anchorage. This concerns the planning and conduct of command at local level and for a defined mission. It is a real logistical challenge between the command posts and the projected posts. The last level is the technical one, which concerns the use of weapons.

Military medical support is a mandatory prerequisite for OPEX. Proportional to the size of the operation underway, SSA forces are deployed alongside combat forces. Depending on the scale of the operation, the organisation and personnel deployed vary. The EMO-S²¹ is responsible for planning and logistics. The structural construction must be consistent and coherent with international law and the partners involved. In the theatre of operations, different chains coordinate decision-making. The SSA's planning process ensures that support meets certain standards. At

¹⁸ Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces.

¹⁹ Operations planning and control centre.

²⁰ Joint command posts.

²¹ Operational Headquarters - Health. Interview with the head of the planning unit in Annex.

medical level, the DirMed is responsible for overall supervision. The PECC²² is, in the French sense, a medical regulation function. Any patient present in a theatre of operations depends on its decision-making. This applies to both the wounded and the sick. He organises and supervises the management of care flows. His role is to advise the military commander of the operational centre, to reorganise the medical system if necessary, and to mobilise medical evacuation resources in conjunction with the tactical operations commander. These decisions are taken by the DirMed, who is the health advisor to the general command of the operation and the deputy to the command. Different care structures and medical resources are integrated in theatres of operation: Role 1 structures are forward medical posts, which are the lightest and most basic care components available. Role 2 structures are the first forward surgical components, available in several forms. They meet NATO standards and enable *Damage Control Surgery*²³. The vehicles, whether land, air or naval, are designed to be medicalised and adaptable to a range of configurations and operating environments. Medical support is an essential and mandatory component of OPEX.

(2) Short presentation of French interventions in the Sahel

Since 2013, France has played a leading role in the fight against terrorism in West Africa. Operations Serval (2013-2014) - characterised by a combat brigade, then Barkhane (2014-2022) - characterised by an installation force and increased regional cooperation, have served to block the territorial advance of GATs in the region and to train local military troops.

Operation Serval, an anti-terrorist combat brigade, was a response to a request for intervention from the Malian authorities in the country. The significant retreat of the GAT, the securing of Mali and the tactical success of the operation paved the way for Operation Barkhane. Conflicts are spreading beyond Mali's borders to affect the entire Sahel region, and the "Sahel War" is taking on a multi-regional dimension. This mode of conflict is a first: in addition to the multi-regional *modus operandi*, it is an asymmetrical war in that the resources and cooperative forces deployed by the West are vastly superior to those of the GAT. As the first multi-frontal theatre in the war on terror, the operation provides essential support to the G5 Sahel countries (Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali). Based on a regional and cooperative relationship, and the use of a pre-positioned force, Operation Barkhane marks a U-turn in the construction and management of a theatre of external operations. The strategy is global: political, security and development. But the

²² Patient control evacuation centre. Interview with the PECC projected on the Barkhane operation in Annex.

²³ Summary surgical intervention as close as possible to the point of injury to ensure survival and limit the damage inflicted on the individual, while awaiting a second clean operation.

new Russian presence and local anti-French sentiment, reinforced by the various coups d'état, led to a decline in the French presence in Africa.

What lessons and doctrinal shifts is France drawing from the war in the Sahel, in line with the feedback from French OPEX (24) and the lessons learned from counter-terrorism operations and the evolution of counter-insurgency doctrine?

6) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews:

- Operational Staff - Health: planning section for operations outside France.
- Bio engineer for the SCA (*Service de Commissariat des Armées*), presence in Côte d'Ivoire - Operations division of the central directorate of the French Army Health Service.
- PECC (Patient evacuation cooperation centre) - Operations division of the central directorate of the French Army Health Service.
- Defence operational advisor on military issues at MOSS SAS, formerly General within the CDAOA (*Commandement de la Défense Aérienne de la Défense Aérienne*), presence at the Gao air base during Operation Serval
- Thematic analyst for the CICDE, specialising in counter-insurgency and counter-intelligence doctrine.

Contributions :

- Military doctor - Special Forces Operational Committee, multilateral referent for the Operations Division of the Armed Forces Health Service Headquarters.
- Defence Civilian - NATO referent within the Operations Division of the Armed Forces Health Service Headquarters.

²⁴ Feedback.

I) FRENCH MILITARY ISSUES IN THE SAHEL: THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND THE APOGEE OF THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY DOCTRINE

a) Operation Serval: key point in France's presence in the Sahel

1) A defined theatre of operations : Mali

(1) Background to the French intervention

After the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, the Islamic Legion, made up of young fighters mainly from Mali, Nigeria and Chad, saw no prospects in Libya and returned to the Sahel. Former mercenaries in Libya, this force has large stocks of weapons. While the Nigerian President demanded disarmament, Mali's President Amadou Toumani Touré remained passive. The fighters settled in northern Mali, strengthening the ranks of the GAT and jihadist networks and arming them. At the same time, the proliferation of trafficking networks is contributing to the instability and security deficit in the Sahel region. Trafficking is therefore a factor that undermines the functioning of a number of administrations and states. From drug trafficking to human trafficking and medicines, mafia and illicit networks are strengthening their hold. Arms trafficking, for example, is strongly supported by mafia and/or jihadist GATs, such as Boko Haram, which opens the door to the Sahel.

This lightning destabilisation and general entrenchment of the GATs led to direct conflict. On 17 January 2012, Tuareg rebels belonging to the MNLA²⁵ and Ansar Dine²⁶ launched the fifth Tuareg rebellion against Mali²⁷. Other jihadist GATs, such as AQIM and MUJAO, joined the conflict and northern Mali was occupied, including the towns of Aguel'hoc, Ménaka and Tessalit. This led to government instability and an attempted coup d'état by part of the Malian army further divided the country and disrupted operations in the north. The GAT and rebels then seized the towns of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao. The MNLA, a pro-independence movement, then proclaimed the end of its offensive and the independence of Azawad. This ideological divergence quickly shattered the alliance between the independence fighters and the jihadist terrorists. The MNLA was driven out of the north by the jihadist GAT, who occupied the whole of northern Mali in November 2012, including the symbolic towns of Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Ménaka.

²⁵ Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad: independence movement.

²⁶ Salafist movement founded in 2012 in Mali by Iyad Ag Ghali, formerly close to the Malian government, and dissolved in 2017 after merging with AQIM. The movement wants to establish Sharia law in Mali. Rivals of the MNLA.

²⁷ Mali has experienced Tuareg rebellions in 1963, 1991/1996, 2006 and 2011.

Salafist terrorist groups are attacking northern Mali, claiming borders in order to establish a Caliphate and the application of Sharia law. After the failure of negotiations at the end of 2012, the GATs set their sights on the centre of the country at the beginning of January 2013, attacking the towns of Ségou and Mopti in particular. The violent clashes left the Malian government and the FAMA²⁸ unable to react, and President Amadou Touré called for help from France, ECOWAS²⁹ and the United Nations.

A number of multidimensional support missions have been launched in response to security imbalances and challenges.

MISMA, the United Nations support mission, is made up of some fifteen African countries, the largest of which is Chad. However, this mission is intended to provide support and training, and the soldiers deployed as peacekeepers are not able to take part in combat or organise an operational response.

The aim of the European Union's EUTM mission is to train local military forces, such as the FAMA.

(2) The reasons for France's involvement and the objectives of Serval

On 11 January 2013, following a request for intervention by Mali's interim president Adama Touré, President François Hollande committed French armed forces to Mali through the combat brigade of Operation Serval. To this end, he announced that France would be present, alongside its allies and partners, within the framework of the United Nations Security Council resolution, to engage in the fight against jihadist terrorism in Mali. This is a major turning point: this intervention is the first to involve French armed forces in a fight against armed organisations in Africa since 1979.³⁰ The lightning launch of the operation comes against a backdrop of growing regional destabilisation in the Sahel since 2011.

Operation Serval is the largest non-coalition operation conducted by France: it is joint and combined. It represents a huge security and logistical challenge. It is in addition to the Sabre special force, deployed in the Sahel since 2009. The objectives are clear and well-defined: France is coming to the aid of the Malian government and the FAMA to put a stop to terrorist and/or jihadist

²⁸ Malian armed forces.

²⁹ Economic Community of West African States. Comprising 15 member states.

³⁰ Comments by Michel Goya in "Barkhane: an analysis of France's military commitment in Africa".

offensives, to restore Mali's territorial integrity and to ensure the territorial security of French nationals.

The special forces were the first to be deployed, with aircraft from their 4th helicopter regiment. This marked the start of an unprecedented air campaign, which was to characterise the entire Serval operation, whose deployed command post was based in N'Djamena. The main command post was at Lyon Montverdun, headed by General Borrel. Logistics and command techniques were innovative and adapted to the theatre. January 14 marked the last terrorist victory, with the capture of Atali, before the French retaliation. Following on from the special forces, the forces pre-positioned in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire went into action. Operation Serval deployed a rarely equalled autonomous intervention force to carry out an offensive operation. The tactical air deployment in particular marked a real turnaround.

At the same time, the Guépard alert is activated on French national territory. This mechanism, which comes under the authority of the Prime Minister, is an alert system that enables autonomous alert forces to be deployed at short notice as soon as a crisis occurs somewhere in the world.

The aim of Operation Serval was to be swift and to reduce the influence of the GATs in the area, while training the local armies to enable a handover of conflict management. The situation stabilised rapidly at the start of 2013 and the first priority was to stabilise the town of Makala. Following the first recaptures of strategic towns, it would have been possible for France to stick to the initial plan and let the MISMA battalions take over. But as part of a counter-insurgency strategy, the French counter-offensive was organised by integrating the Sabre force into the Serval manoeuvre. These special forces were positioned to seize key points ahead of the brigade. Following this decision to intervene and this tactical U-turn, the symbolic recaptures of the towns of Gao, Timbuktu and Tessalit were significant milestones.

The logistics of the operation are also characterised by the high mobility of the command posts, requiring constant communication and increased vigilance. The second priority identified is the Adrar massif, a natural dungeon in which the GATs are entrenched. This is a joint ground and air operation.

(3) Definitions of the French chain of command

Operation Serval brings together joint and combined forces. Although mainly focused on offensive operations and air logistics, the staffs are nevertheless cooperating in theatre. From France, the

CPCO³¹ is in charge of operational management. The PCIATs³² are the command components deployed at the front. They are a prerequisite for the French commitment in the Sahel. Each army has forces that meet NATO standards, in particular because of France's status as a Framework Nation.

The GTIA³³, i.e. groups of units with complementary skills, are deployed around a regiment that forms the core. Operation Serval has four GTIA, whose forces are pre-positioned on French bases in Africa.

GTIA1, the first force deployed, represents the air component and is commanded by Colonel Jezz. Pre-positioned in Bamako, this is where the air force's initial PCIA³⁴ is based. The GTIA2 represents the ground component. It is commanded by Colonel Bert, whose initial PCIA is prepositioned in Dakar. GTIA3 is made up of the 1st Marine Infantry Regiment, airlifted to Niamey. It is commanded by Colonel Gouyon. GTIA4 is made up of the parachute battalion and the 4th REP. In addition, there are the GAM³⁵ aircraft and the RAFALES under the command of Colonel Gou and prepositioned in Abidjan.

The logistical challenges of the Serval operation are the fluidity of air traffic between transport and tactical aircraft, and communications and intelligence resources.

Medical support is also organised in the command of an external operation. The health component of the EMO³⁶ is divided into different cells responsible for planning an external operation. The M1 is in charge of manpower. Its role is to equip the posts with the number of personnel required to provide the best possible support to the military forces deployed. The M1 cell organises canvassing, mainly through requests to DMF³⁷, but also through DHA³⁸. Each chain builds up its manpower

³¹ Operations planning and control centre.

³² Joint theatre command posts.

³³ Joint Task Forces.

³⁴ Joint command post.

³⁵ Airmobile groups.

³⁶ Operational Staff.

³⁷ Directorate of Force Medicine.

³⁸ Armed Forces Hospitals Directorate.

according to a TUM³⁹ , drawn up for each operation and describing each projected unit line and the skills of the pax. These personnel numbers are constantly changing throughout the operation. The ENU⁴⁰ defines the volume required in anticipation of the TUM. The SSA proposes a dimensioning with the aim of sustaining: the volume of health personnel is based on the volume of soldiers, and therefore varies according to the operation. The structural construction must comply with and be consistent with international law and the partners involved. The SSA's planning process ensures that support meets certain standards. Medical reports and records are kept throughout the operation.

Analysis of surrounding risks is incorporated into the command architecture. When a theatre opens, a preliminary risk assessment is carried out. This enables the health needs to be estimated, but does not influence the decision to participate. The volume of care to be deployed and the logistics to be put in place are then determined to ensure that the medical support provided to soldiers remains at a minimum.

Planning takes place at several levels, from cold planning (long-term forecasting), to warm planning (medium-term forecasting), to the conduct of the operation (short-term and immediate decision-making). In terms of planning for the command force, the PECC is the only component of the SSA. It has the capacity to take decisions on medical incidents occurring in a theatre of operations and has instant knowledge of operations in progress and permanent monitoring of all the components of the operation. The PECC is kept informed of special forces missions organised during an operation⁴¹ , but the latter have their own medical unit and their own medical referent adapted to the anticipated risks. Medical resources are nevertheless pooled.

(4) Players cooperating with France

Although in 2013 France was the only country to intervene militarily by deploying forces, other countries are participating by providing material resources or financing the operation. Around ten partner countries are committing resources at various levels to support and promote the restoration of security in Mali. During Operation Serval, only a contingent of 1,400 Chadian soldiers is engaged in northern Mali, via Niger in the tri-border area, alongside the French.

Operation Barkhane is mobilising more aid workers. In addition to the international training missions launched by the United Nations and the European Union, and the offensives and support

³⁹ Military units table.

⁴⁰ National emergency echelon.

⁴¹ The PECC deployed on Operation Serval, then Barkhane, is kept informed of the activities of the Sabre special force. The Sabre force has its own medical component, but resources are pooled and information is shared to the extent necessary for proper coordination of missions.

organised by ECOWAS's African partners, other Western countries are supporting the Barkhane force. Belgium, for example, is providing deployed forces and two aircraft from its air force. The Americans are providing intelligence and making financial contributions to the operation, while the United Kingdom and Denmark are supplying equipment to Barkhane.

2) Legal basis

(1) The law of armed conflict and the evolution of French concepts and doctrines

According to the manual *Droit des opérations militaires*, "*the use of armed force on the territory of another State is lawful in only three cases: the exercise of individual or collective self-defence, the agreement of the United Nations Security Council on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter and the consent of the State on whose territory the armed intervention is taking place*"⁴². In this context, France's intervention in Mali in 2013, which stemmed from an express request for aid from the government, was initiated with the consent of the State on whose territory the intervention was taking place and, moreover, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and Security Council Resolutions 2056, 2071 and 2085, issued in 2012.

The conquest of Algeria in 1840 helped define the French military doctrine applicable to insurrectionary conflicts. Gallieni and Lyautey developed an initial theory based on the population. Gallieni's idea was the "oil stain" concept, which consisted of the armed forces securing specific areas and having a positive effect on the population within these tasks. The aim was to expand the tasks over the course of the operation in order to gradually secure larger areas. Lyautey added to this concept of war focused on the population a distinction between combat operations, i.e. missions carried out outside the secured tasks, and security and vigilance operations carried out within these tasks. The conquest of Algeria was also an opportunity to transform troop training and innovate in what we now call the "human terrain": troop mobility, lighter training and cooperation with locals. The style of command was transformed and "command by objective" began to be applied, as is still reflected in the COIN doctrine⁴³.

The Indochina War provided the impetus for this new doctrine. French counter-insurgency theorists in the 1950s agreed that operations should continue to focus on the population and on a global

⁴² Military Operations Law Manual, Part 2, Chapter 2, page 73.

⁴³ Counter-insurgency.

approach. However, the link between the security and political aspects was the subject of debate. While Trinquier believed that the support of the local population was gained by securing the theatre of operations and subsequent social action, Hogard thought that the ideological reasons for the confrontation had to be explained first in order to unite the local population against the insurgents. He emphasised the importance of psychological warfare, propaganda and counter-propaganda, and the need for a massive and coordinated global approach from the whole of government.

The Algerian War was an opportunity for the French army to apply the lessons learned from the Indochina War. The vastness of the theatre once again encouraged troops to be hyper-mobile. It was also the pioneering conflict in heliborne warfare, i.e. operating light and relying on airborne hit-and-run missions. Galula made it possible to develop a military doctrine between Trinquier and the psychological school. He integrated the psychological aspect of counter-insurgency and advocated the definition of an established cause and an ideological basis for this type of operation. He insisted on disseminating the competing cause of the counter-insurgents. In the evolution of French military doctrine, the Algerian War underlined the need to align military operations with political objectives. Subsequently, France continued to be involved in conflicts in which the application of the COIN doctrine was relevant. However, the Algerian War highlighted the need to deploy substantial resources and massive efforts to ensure the success of counter-insurgency operations.

France's intervention during the civil war in Chad in 1965 was a first example of the application of the new COIN doctrine. The French forces relied on a mobile operating mode and the tactical superiority of infantry while awaiting the arrival of air support. It is also an example of cooperation with local troops: the French army is also relying on Chadian troops and local militias to occupy the reconquered areas. The mission combined a military expeditionary effort with civilian participation to implement administrative reforms and stimulate economic development. Operation Bison and the Chad War served as a benchmark to mark the beginning of modern military doctrine.

The Gulf War was the second reversal in French military doctrine. The aim was now to consolidate the host nation and secure the theatre for their own benefit. In other words, politics is no longer involved in the management of the area of intervention. Politicians decide whether or not to commit France, but they do not determine the operational logic. The 1990s also saw a shift towards multinational operations, particularly with the rise of UN-led missions.

The third generation of the COIN doctrine took shape after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The COIN doctrine is now of an ephemeral nature: the aim is not to establish oneself and govern, but to operate with a view to a transition in the forces of action.

Prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the COIN doctrine remained taboo due to the events of the Algerian War (1954-1962). France's involvement in the 1990s in what the Americans call "operations other than war"⁴⁴ revived the subject. Development aid actions are now part of the civil-military approach, marked by a depoliticisation of objectives.

According to Taillat⁴⁵ these operations involve a type of conflict that is distinct from conventional warfare: political action is essential to a greater extent than military operations. Victories are achieved within the population itself, and above all the decisive phase comes after the armed conflict: the stabilisation of the cleared area after it has been made secure. It is the transition from the military to the political that is critical in a theatre of operations against rebellion. In operational terms, the oil-stain method is favoured. The American intervention in Iraq had an influence on the development of French doctrine by emphasising the anti-rebel nature of the conflict. In particular, the drafting of the counter-rebellion doctrine in 2009 served as a working basis for the COIN doctrine.

The Afghan War combined the use of several concepts. Its RETEX led to a real doctrinal turnaround, putting the COIN doctrine back on the agenda. Psychological warfare was very much in evidence, combining non-violent political action to influence and discredit the enemy. This operation was also a decisive turning point in the doctrine of support in operations, following the deadly events in Uzbin in 2008.

(2) Concepts and doctrines for operations outside France

French military doctrine is drafted by the CICDE⁴⁶. It follows the overall security and defence strategy set out in the White Paper on Defence drafted in 2013. The latter is the strategic foundation on which the LPM is built. It also sets out the relationship with the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy and NATO, and the capabilities required to implement it over a period of fifteen to twenty years.

⁴⁴ French intervention in the Sahel and the evolution of COIN, IRSEM, Michael SHURKIN.

⁴⁵ Stéphane Taillat, professor at the Saint-Cyr military academy and army officer.

⁴⁶ Joint Centre for Concept, Doctrine and Experimentation.

The *"national defence and security strategy cannot be conceived outside the framework of the Atlantic Alliance and our commitment to the European Union"*⁴⁷. However, French participation in defence strategies is not organised in the same way for the two organisations.

NATO is a politico-military alliance, and as such it fulfils three essential functions: ensuring the collective defence of its members, strengthening and supporting the strategic partnership across the Atlantic, and providing the framework for military action when one or more Allies wish to intervene jointly in response to global risks or threats. The interoperability of forces is a priority, and common procedures and standards are developed and regularly updated. Several types of operation can be conducted under the NATO umbrella, from collective defence to the conduct of stabilisation operations. Crisis management and the handling of cross-cutting threats is one of the Alliance's capabilities.

There are several levels of texts providing a framework for the management of war practices. Concepts are at the level of the Military Committee. They are set out in the AJP⁴⁸, under the supervision of the NSO, and make it possible to define the doctrine agreed and accepted by the Allied Nations that are members of NATO. STANAGs⁴⁹, which are normative documents recording an agreement concluded between different NATO member countries or between all of them, ratified at the authorised national level, and relating to the application, in whole or in part, with or without reservations, of a standard. They cover the standard, i.e. the AJP. These are then broken down according to the catchphrase and in particular into AJP-MED for NATO's medical doctrine. It serves as an absolute reference in the strategic definition of security and defence and the application of standards in situations of armed conflict.

The EU⁵⁰ represents a political, economic, commercial, diplomatic and military framework for its member states.

The French armed forces must be capable of planning or participating in three types of operation: firstly, operations are conducted autonomously, in particular evacuations of French or European nationals, and counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency missions. Secondly, France can take part in coalition operations, within the framework of the EU or a NATO alliance, or within a framework

⁴⁷ Defence White Paper, Chapter 5 "France's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union", page 61.

⁴⁸ Allied Joint Publication.

⁴⁹ Standardization Agreement.

⁵⁰ European Union.

defined for the circumstances, such as the G5 Sahel. Within these operations, France can act as a framework nation, in which case it must oversee the planning and management of the theatre, as well as meeting certain standards imposed by international institutions and organisations. Thirdly and lastly, it can take part in coalition operations as a contributor and under the command of an allied nation.

Each OPEX has three main common objectives: to ensure the protection of French nationals abroad, to defend French and allied strategic interests, and to exercise international responsibilities.

The CICDE⁵¹ is responsible for defining and implementing the concepts and doctrine applicable to the French armed forces, based in particular on NATO standards. In particular, it is responsible for drafting and updating force employment doctrine.

Several levels of texts define the military security and defence strategy. Under the EU's European Security Strategy⁵², NATO's Strategic Concepts⁵³, the French White Paper on National Security and Defence and the Strategic Review of National Defence and Security⁵⁴, texts of varying scope govern the organisation of warfare. The joint concepts⁵⁵ are the highest level of text: each expresses an objective to be achieved and the major fundamental principles associated with it, and deals with the role and capabilities expected of the armed forces in the face of current constraints.

These are set out in doctrines⁵⁶. They organise the conduct of war by translating the complexity of OPEX into simple, operational principles of action. They are modified in line with feedback and capitalise on experience. Constantly evolving, they cover different areas, from the use of joint forces to the specific methods and procedures for implementing units and certain weapon systems. The aim is to provide an analytical and rigorous framework for reflection. The DIAs define the principles of joint action by the forces, giving rise to a set of precepts, rules and methods approved and prescribed by the command. This framework represents a common frame of reference for the armed forces.

⁵¹ Joint Centre for Concept, Doctrine and Experimentation.

⁵² Defined in 2003 and ratified by the Member States. Established and provided for by the EEAS.

⁵³ General framework for intervention by the Allied Nations in an armed conflict drafted and implemented in 2010.

⁵⁴ The last official version was published in 2017.

⁵⁵ The IACs (joint concepts) are in line with NATO concepts (MC 0400/3 2012).

⁵⁶ The DIAs are derived from the IACs. They are at the same level as NATO's AJP's and must comply with them.

Lastly, in order, come Joint Publications⁵⁷ , doctrinal reflections and exploratory concepts, and finally EUMS publications, which illustrate and give concrete form to joint concepts and doctrines. A distinction is made between joint doctrine and army doctrine. Each base⁵⁸ has its own doctrine. Operational doctrine and employment doctrine are also defined.

In theory, the COIN doctrine is particularly relevant to the French military deployment in Mali. It takes up the oil stains, the grid and combing, and the extreme mobility of the deployed forces trained to destabilise and counter the actions of the insurgents, in this case the jihadist GATs. The role of the intervention forces is defined. The host nation retains full responsibility for defining the political vision that guides political action. *"The French armed forces are not setting up forces solely dedicated to counter-insurgency, but are adapting the units engaged in this type of operation by relying on their versatility, the modularity of the forces and a pre-projection "conditioning" adapted to the theatres of engagement"*⁵⁹ . In addition, equipment is not specific to the COIN, but is adapted to the needs of the theatre through a process of "reactive adaptation". However, in parallel with the principle of training French armed forces in high-intensity situations, counter-insurgency operations require specific, reinforced training adapted to the context of intervention. The emphasis is therefore on joint and even multinational training. In the context of a counter-insurgency operation, applicable to the fight against terrorism, learning and doctrinal adaptation are permanent. It is based on a continuous and reactive RETEX process at all levels of command and compulsory. Red Teams⁶⁰ can be set up to test the modes of action envisaged.

3) Operational mode and tactical analysis of Serval

(1) The SSA as compulsory support for OPEX

Medical personnel deployed on external operations are answerable to the command of the Armed Forces General Staff. To fulfil its missions, the Army Medical Corps has resources that come directly under its authority. The SSA is modelled on existing operations, and is a mandatory but not autonomous component. As military personnel, the public health code and the defence code govern military medical acts. Military doctors are not registered with the Ordre des Médecins, but perform

⁵⁷ PIA.

⁵⁸ The French Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Army Health Service.

⁵⁹ CICDE, DIA3.4.4.COIN, Chapter 6 Joint Operational Capabilities in Counterinsurgency, Section 1, page 59.

⁶⁰ Forces staging the reactions of opposing forces after analysing the risks and the theatre environment.

their duties as military personnel. In the context of an external operation, NATO doctrine applies jointly. The *EMO-santé* is the CPCO's strategic advisor in the field of medical support, and is the technical prime contractor for its resources in operations.⁶¹

The CPCO sets the duration of the mandate, including in particular military medical personnel deployed on external operations. These mandate periods are also established with international organisations when France takes part in an operation as part of a coalition. For example, deployment times vary depending on the operation. It was set at 6 months for Afghanistan and 4 months for Barkhane.

The direct influence of the political level on military medical support in operations cannot be emphasised. The SSA is deployed to support and follow the planned missions. Its primary role is to be able to support and provide the care required by combatants, in proportion to the needs of the volume of warfare. This volume can vary throughout an operation due to the evolution of the missions themselves and the necessary requirements. The SSA does not have independent decision-making powers. The funding of the medical component of an operation is a direct result of the overall budget for the operation, provided for in the military programming law and applied by the DAF BOP⁶².

There are four levels of care for the wounded in conflict situations. Role 1, or the forward medical post, provides medical care for the wounded soldier at the front. Its mission is dedicated to the initial paramedical and medical care of the wounded soldier at the front. Role 2 is the first level of care with surgical capability. Carrying out resuscitation and life-saving surgery at the front is a cornerstone of French doctrine on medical support for operations. Its role is to triage, stabilise, operate on and, if necessary, hospitalise the wounded in a theatre of operations, before evacuating them to another equivalent or superior care structure. Medical evacuation may be to another Role 2 facility, or to the rear to Role 3 (TACEVAC) or in mainland France to Role 4 (STRATEVAC). Depending on its capacity, Role 2 can be classified as *Forward*, *Basic* or *Enhanced*. Role 3 or military field hospital corresponds to surgical treatment and intensive care capabilities. It is the most complete health structure in terms of surgical skills and capacity for treatment during operations. Role 4 corresponds to the armed forces' training hospitals⁶³ in France. The HIAs provide

⁶¹ source DIA 4.10 operational medicalsupport

⁶² Operations Office of the Financial Affairs Department.

⁶³ HIA.

definitive care and rehabilitation for the wounded after their initial treatment in the theatre of operations.

Role 1 structures⁶⁴ are the responsibility of individual nations. In the interests of multilateral cooperation, Role 2 structures⁶⁵ must comply with at least the standards defined by NATO. These standards are set out in STANAGS. Each participating nation's R2 structure must provide a minimum level of medical services and facilities. The same problem arises for UN-led missions. As a NATO framework nation, France is developing a Role 3 structure as a reference.

(2) Operational mode applied and strength of action implemented

Faced with the security risks in Mali observed during Operation Serval, three types of operational response must be provided in parallel. Serval is an operation that was mounted quickly in response to an emergency situation and a request for help from the Malian government. The air strikes are representative of the intervention brigade. The aim is to kill the jihadist leaders. The primary objective is to retake northern Mali from the GAT. The use of RAFALES is recurrent. The conflicts are not only against the jihadist networks, but are also internal to Mali. The recruitment of local populations, growing radicalisation and instability within the FAMA and the Malian government are a further difficulty for peacekeeping.

The first concerns political dialogue: crisis management and resolution must be driven by political consensus. Dialogue is essential in any crisis. To give just one example, the worrying situation in Central Mali requires greater political mediation, because the area is more sensitive, being besieged by various GATs. The second response must be in terms of security. International aid is essential for training local troops and for civil-military action. Whereas Serval consisted of an operations brigade designed to drive back the GATs, Barkhane, which has taken over from Serval, focuses mainly on the military security aspect. Barkhane's action is both French and multilateral. The third level of importance is development. This is the final stage and must be applied over the long term. The success of a counter-insurgency operation depends on post-operational stabilisation and the maintenance of security over time. Civil-military action and the support of the population are essential to success. GATs rely on propaganda and the radicalisation of local populations. Finally, the management of space between competing populations is a major challenge.

⁶⁴ R1.

⁶⁵ R2.

A fourth level can be added to the first three. It is that of rights, through economic and social rights, but also the dimension of political rights and the right to fair representation. According to DIA 3.4, stabilisation follows military intervention. It consists of several phases, including local development: "*The reform of security systems aims to strengthen respect for the rule of law by all actors involved in security. The armed forces thus contribute to the development of trained military forces that respect the principles of good governance and the rule of law*"⁶⁶ . In theory, complete security should lead to a process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, followed by normalisation and reconstruction.

b) The transition from Serval to Barkhane: from intervention brigade to pre-positioned forces

1) Operation Serval: a tactical and operational victory and its limitations

(1) Operation Serval: a military operational victory

Operation Serval prevented the collapse of the Malian state and the seizure of power by AQIM and EIGS jihadists. Since then, the French government has been resolutely committed to the fight against terrorism. Several objectives have been achieved: the French intervention has prevented the collapse of Mali, avoided the creation of terrorist sanctuaries, in particular the territorialisation of the threat and the creation of a caliphate in the Tri-border area⁶⁷ , dealt severe blows to the EIGS, deprived the GAT of leadership and, lastly, contributed to the rise and consolidation of armies in the region.

The operations brigade carried out more than fifty missions with substantial resources, which facilitated tactical and operational success. More than 200 tonnes of munitions were discovered and destroyed, fifty enemy vehicles found and destroyed, and several hundred terrorists, mainly jihadists, were neutralised.

Serval's final mission is to reintegrate, clean up, tidy up and make way for the international relief force. The aim is to prepare for the transfer of authority to the FAMa and to prepare for the new Malian elections.

⁶⁶ AJP 3.4: La contribution des armées à l'approche globale dans la prévention et la gestion de crise extérieure, Chapter 3 The military contribution to the global approach to external crisis prevention and management, section 2, page 26.

⁶⁷ Border area between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. An area in which the jihadist GAT are particularly well established.

Operation Serval also led to negotiations between the Malian government and the MNLA and MAA GAT, and the HCUA⁶⁸. Signed on 18 June 2013, the Ouagadougou agreement prepares the way for the presidential elections, plans the return of the army and administration to Kidal and provides a framework for the security process. An immediate ceasefire is decreed, as well as the cantonment of rebel fighters. Mali dropped its demand for immediate disarmament of the Tuareg rebels, in exchange for which the MNLA agreed to the deployment of the Malian army in Kidal. However, the failure of the elections, the coup attempts and the resumption of fighting with the GAT in 2014 did not allow the legislative framework to implement local security.

(2) The transition to Barkhane: an unused exit door

The end of Operation Serval means that France has the choice of withdrawing and letting international training missions take over, or extending its efforts in partnership with local and regional forces. The failure of stabilisation has given France the impetus to maintain a presence in the Sahel. Operation Barkhane is a national and international operation, launched in 2014 with the aim of supporting the G5 Sahel forces in the retreat of jihadist terrorists and for the security stabilisation of the Sahel-Saharan strip.

It all starts with an analysis of the threat: the GATs, defeated but not totally ousted in northern Mali, have dispersed to neighbouring states, particularly in south-west Libya, where a veritable "security black hole" has been created in the Fezzan region. The GAT are re-establishing themselves in Niger and northern Mali along an axis of over a thousand kilometres along the border between Niger and Algeria. The French strategy aims to prevent the jihadists from accessing their rear base in Libya. Operation Barkhane focuses primarily on the security aspect, leaving development and support for the local population in the background. Yet the success of the operation depends on a partnership with the G5 and the training of Malian troops. The war in Mali, expanded into the war in the Sahel, is characterised by three aspects of interdependence: it is a war for Mali, with Mali and by the Malians.

The aim of the French intervention was to restore peace and resolve the security deficit. However, peacekeeping was a failure: government instability, the recapture of territory by the jihadists and the entrenchment of Russian militias demonstrate France's failure to meet its objectives over time. By merging operations Serval in Mali and Epervier in Chad, the aim is to act globally in support of the

⁶⁸ High Council for the Unity of Azawad.

G5 countries and, ultimately, to be able to transfer the lead to the UN and local armies. But the transfer and resumption of the support role came too late.

(3) Change in means of command

The change of operation requires the implementation of regionalisation, which involves the reorganisation of C2 and C2 Log⁶⁹. Operation Barkhane is the result of the merger of two operations and therefore two chains of command. The logistics plan requires particular attention, as it is one of the major challenges. There have been four successive phases: the first is the transfer of the command post from Mali to Chad, while maintaining command capability. Then came the disengagement and handover of the French military presence in Bamako (Mali). This was followed by the ramping up of the Niamey (Niger) airport zone, with the transfer of the aircraft that were stationed in Bamako. Finally, the temporary forward base at Madama in northern Niger was ramped up. Operation Barkhane comprises a single PCIA⁷⁰ and a single ASIA⁷¹.

In theatre, command must be decentralised and deconcentrated, following a logic of subsidiarity. HQs at all levels have a duty to be flexible, dynamic and responsive in order to adapt to changing situations and requirements. Mobility is a key criterion, and they must be capable of deploying light elements quickly in order to be able to command operations as closely as possible. With regard to air operations, given the management of a single airspace, command remains centralised and control decentralised thanks to liaison detachments as close as possible to ground elements. The role of the SIOCs⁷² is to promote this decentralisation and responsiveness in COIN. This makes it easier and faster to take decisions and draw up orders, reducing the time needed to complete the decision-making loop; it facilitates the implementation of support, whatever its nature, increasing security for allies; and it is interoperable with local forces, allies and civilian responders.

⁶⁹ C2 Command and Control, and C2 Log Command and control Logistic, are the general concepts of operational command resources.

⁷⁰ Joint command post.

⁷¹ Joint Support Assistant. The ASIA function clearly makes it possible to "move from a business logic to a mission logic"; fully integrating the action of the logistics sub-functions armed by the DIA/SIA, the ASIA makes it possible to avoid "end-to-end" logics, gives coherence to logistics action and simplifies the understanding of the theatre logistics situation by COMANFOR and the CSOA or CPCO.

⁷² Operational information and communications systems.

In the COIN doctrine, the PCs must have enhanced expertise at all levels. In particular in the fields of intelligence and knowledge of the social terrain, in the field of influencing actions and finally in the implementation of the global approach.

Actions in a theatre such as Barkhane must be considered in relation to the other players involved. The operational command has a decisive role as coordinator of civil-military actions. The operational HQ must also have access to high-level expertise (POLAD⁷³ , LEGAD⁷⁴ , GOVAD⁷⁵ , etc.) which must feed into the work of the entire staff.

2) Managing a new theatre of operations: the regionalisation of the conflict

(1) Definition of the regional theatre of operations: the Sahel

Operation Serval was already present in the G5 countries. However, its actions were limited to Mali. However, Niger was not included in the two previous French military operations (Serval and Épervier) and was a "No Go" zone. The French military presence was limited, as was the room for manoeuvre in securing and arresting jihadists.

With the creation of the G5 Sahel and the opening up of a regional theatre, the installation and pre-positioned French forces acquire a new dynamic and new objectives. What is very specific about Operation Barkhane is its regionalisation: France is deployed in cooperation with the G5 Sahel countries and with the support of other partner countries in the region, such as Senegal. This configuration is unprecedented for armed forces and the organisation of the theatre of operations in different countries. Cross-border areas are conflict-ridden and the grey zones set up by terrorist groups are too large in the Sahel-Saharan strip. The regional coalition makes it possible to maintain greater security and to prepare for the reduction of the terrorist threat.

Taking into account the changing regional and international context, the Barkhane force has constantly evolved its modes of action, based on a "3D" approach: diplomacy, development and defence. *"The objectives are purely operational: to prevent any resurgence of the GAT threat; to avoid the emergence of new sanctuaries; to limit the capacity for jihadist regeneration; to cut off logistical flows. In theory, however, "Barkhane" only provides support to Sahelian actors whose armies are declared to be "leading the fight" against the GATs⁷⁶ .* This reduces the cost of the

⁷³ Political advisor.

⁷⁴ Legal Counsel.

⁷⁵ Government advisor.

⁷⁶ HANNE, Olivier. Operation Barkhane in the face of changing risks in the Sahel-Saharan strip. In *Outre-Terre*, No. 51, Cairn. pp. 225-237.

operation. However, as the terrain is nine times the size of France, with only a few thousand men deployed, it is essential to keep an eye on the major strategic locks in the region through which traffic flows: the Adrar des Ifoghas (north-east of Mali, south of Algeria), the Salvador pass (north-east of Madama in Niger) and the Lake Chad region. The air component is a key logistical and strategic asset. It is essential for troop projection, intelligence support, combat against GATs and evacuation of the wounded.

In this context, the tactical importance of Force Sabre is clear. This is the operation led by COS⁷⁷ in the Sahel region since August 2012. It was first deployed in Mauritania to secure the east of the country, then in Burkina Faso where it set up its centre in Ouagadougou, and finally in Niger and Mali.

(2) The formation of the G5 Sahel

The G5 Sahel was founded in 2014 as a regional intergovernmental organisation. This coalition provides an institutional framework to promote development and security in its five member countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The purpose of this regional cooperation is to coordinate the development and security policies of its members.

The cross-border nature of the GAT threat has led the G5 Sahel to propose a pragmatic, transnational response. The enlarged theatre leads to a dilution of forces in the area covered. The regionalisation of the conflict makes it possible to track down and flush out GAT beyond Mali's borders, but also to counter safe havens that straddle several countries, and the G5 Sahel validates joint interventions.

In 2017, the Sahel Alliance completes the system targeting the following five areas: youth employability, education and training; agriculture, rural development and food security; energy and climate; governance; decentralisation and support for the deployment of basic services.

Europe is making a massive commitment to the G5 Sahel: the European Union is funding the training of military forces in Mali via the EUTM mission and the security mission via EUCAP Niger and EUCAP Mali. It finances 25% of the initial budget of the joint G5 force, i.e. €100 million from the African Peace Facility, plus bilateral contributions. It also contributes a large share of the funding for MINUSMA.

⁷⁷ Special Operations Command.

As part of its security mandate, the G5 Sahel created the Joint Task Force in 2017 to strengthen the fight against threats to peace and security and support development. Its main objectives are to collect, process, exploit and share relevant criminal information between various actors in a complex environment. It is structured around military and police components, which are linked by National and Regional Security Co-operation Platforms. INTERPOL is supporting the police component of the G5 Sahel Joint Task Force (FC-G5S PC) through a three-year project (2019-2022), implemented under the umbrella of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Node for West and Central Africa (RCTN WCAF) initiative, and funded by the German government.

(3) Modifications to adapt to a multi-frontal theatre

To ensure the successful ramp-up of Operation Barkhane, choices have to be made in terms of the right-of-way to be retained and therefore the infrastructure. The main criterion is the logistical and operational vocation of each right-of-way in its area, as the operation is characterised by a high degree of interoperability. This is reflected in the high level of capitalisation on the major logistics bases (Gao, Madama), the increase in infrastructure on isolated sites (Tessalit, Kidal, Timbuktu) and the reduction in the number of sites (Abéché), or even their closure (Bamako, Dirkou). During the transition from Operation Serval to Operation Barkhane, a second PCE, from Abidjan, was definitively allocated to the West zone in order to provide better coverage of the vast area. There are also two zones, between West and East, which have the same objectives but are clearly separate, each with its own supply line. Following regionalisation, we can see that while logistical procedures in the West zone have changed little, a complete overhaul has been carried out in the East zone, in particular with the rise in power of Madama and the increase in operations in North Niger from this base.

As far as the Air Force's tactical vectors are concerned, a schedule has of course been drawn up, but there is still a degree of flexibility depending on the needs of the force. This route is the only one that offers a rapid logistical changeover capability. It also covers theatre resupply and emergency logistics. The air route is very interesting because of the guarantee of surprise it offers and the immediacy of its effects on the tactical situation.

Operation Barkhane marked the culmination of counter-insurgency operations and the implementation of the COIN concepts and doctrine⁷⁸ . But the anti-terrorist objectives set during Barkhane, including the elimination of jihadist leaders, were not enough to stabilise the region.

Graduated use of force is necessary to avoid fuelling a "violence-repression" spiral into which insurgents seek to draw the security forces. In addition, civilians and infrastructure must be particularly well protected. An indirect approach and targeted actions should be favoured, as should precision rather than firepower.

The ability to manage captured people is essential in counter-insurgency operations in order to isolate insurgents and gather information. This management requires significant resources and its own management because of its importance, intelligence being one of the pillars of the COIN operation.

Similarly, the training and support - known as "second curtain" action - of local forces cannot be improvised. It requires capabilities adapted to the human, cultural, material and other particularities of these forces, as well as appropriate training. In the COIN doctrine, covering the information environment and coordinating influence actions are central. Propaganda is one of the major risks, and maintaining the legitimacy of military action in local opinion helps to strengthen the base and legitimise armed action while delegitimising the insurgents. Information warfare is just as important as armed COIN missions. According to DIA 3.4.4 on counter-insurgency doctrine, *"the coordination of influence actions must also be a priority in order to ensure consistency between physical actions on the ground and messages. To this end, they are planned at the strategic level to win the battle of perceptions by shaping the information environment and gaining information superiority"*⁷⁹ .

3) A new operational mode and a new approach to the theatre of operations

(1) Geopolitical context of the multi-border theatre

Crisis management on the African continent is one of the main objectives of French and, more broadly, European security and defence policy. The strategic challenges of responding to crises centre on preserving human security on the one hand, and physical security on the other. This second point represents the first challenge to peace, and involves securing borders, stabilising political relations and calming ethnic, religious and political conflicts.

⁷⁸ Counter-insurgency.

⁷⁹ CICDE-DIA-3.4.4A-COIN-2013, Chapter 6 Joint Operational Capabilities in Counterinsurgency, Section V - Influence in Counterinsurgency, page 63.

The Sahel region is home to a variety of approaches to conflict resolution. The five countries concerned (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina-Faso) are at the heart of Europe's external security and defence strategies, as well as France's, notably through its support for the G5 Sahel. Five objectives common to the multiple strategies can be identified: security, development, resilience, governance and education.

Led by the French armed forces in partnership with the G5 Sahel countries, Operation Barkhane was launched on 1 August 2014. It is based on a strategic approach founded on a logic of partnership with the main countries of the Sahel-Saharan strip (BSS). It brings together around 3,000 military personnel whose mission is to fight armed terrorist groups and support the armed forces of partner countries so that they can deal with this threat.

In Barkhane, following the reorganisation of local operations, the permanent French positions are divided between the Barkhane regional bases and the temporary forward bases. The permanent bases are located in Gao, Niamey, Arlit, Ouagadougou and N'Djamena. Forward bases are planned for Atar, Tessalit, Madama, Abéché and Faya.

The decentralisation of air-land manoeuvres, particularly in "control zones" and "surveillance zones", requires efficient and appropriate air resources, the ability to deploy all kinds of support quickly and urgently at the lowest level, to set up closer cooperation between ground forces and special forces, and finally, substantial and reactive stocks of supplies, most often airborne, which requires parallel heliborne capabilities .⁸⁰

(2) International missions: training and commitment issues

Faced with the security challenges in Mali, the armed forces are making a permanent contribution to prevention within a multinational framework. The representatives of the armed forces participate at their level in defining the objectives sought by NATO, the EU, the UN and the OSCE.

In 2013, the UN adopted an integrated strategy for the Sahel: the UNIS. The aim is to define a set of priorities common to the entire UN system and to propose a regional coherence of commitments for the Sahel by promoting the implementation of a multisectoral approach in the region. The United Nations also deploys UN forces such as MISMA, which is subsequently integrated into

⁸⁰ Manoeuvring helicopter.

MINUSMA⁸¹ . However, this aid is not permanent, but is gradually being taken over by the Sahel states. The ultimate aim of the G5 Sahel is to take over from the international forces.

In addition, the policy of reducing army budgets has led France to opt for a change of strategy: it applies to troop withdrawals and multilateralisation through the intervention of a United Nations force of around 12,000 men in Mali. By the end of Barkhane, there were only 1,000 troops under autonomous command from Paris, allowing UN funding of MINUSMA. At the same time, France is helping to mobilise other partners such as the European Union, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank around non-military priorities in the Sahel, such as security and infrastructure construction and development.

The European states are facing various security challenges in the Sahel. The terrorist threat and the influx of migrants remain key concerns. Despite this, the strategic and economic interests of the players in the area diverge. It remains difficult to define a common strategy for security, defence or cooperation in the face of the terrorist threat in the Sahel, and there are underlying tensions between the players. The framework nation approach remains essential. Crisis management and prevention encompass effective operations within the framework of defence and deployment agreements. France remains the external leader in the region, along with the European Union. The regional strategy adopted makes it possible to adopt a global vision of the area and to mitigate the border factor. Several international support operations were launched from 2013 onwards to re-establish political stability in the region.

The EU developed a security and defence strategy for the Sahel very early on. This is the first time that the EU has had a real strategy for a region. The consensus of the twenty-seven Member States is required to undertake wide-ranging action in the Sahel. The objectives are ambitious.

For example, EUTM⁸² , which is part of the CSDP⁸³ , was an example of the EU's ability to react quickly to train Mali's armed and security forces. Despite the initial difficulties inherent in any rapid, coordinated response to a crisis by an organisation operating with 27 states, the programme drawn up by the military trainers of the EUTM Mali mission was adapted to meet both the immediate and longer-term needs of the Malian authorities. However, the pax involved in EUTM, like those involved in MINUSMA, take part in training and support missions and cannot be

⁸¹ United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali.

⁸² European Union Training Mission in Mali.

⁸³ Common Security and Defence Policy.

employed in defence missions or armed conflicts. This is a hindrance when you consider the need for local forces to be trained and their lack of equipment, and at the same time, the lack of resources and the drop in the number of French pax involved in the theatre.

In addition, EUTM funding is divided into two axes and sometimes seems weak in relation to the objectives. However, many partners within the EU invoke the guidelines of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee to justify the separation of funding for development and security actions.

4) The doctrinal openness following a new type of conflict broadens

(1) The opening up of French doctrine with the intervention in the Sahel

French operations are crucial to the development of French doctrine: each feedback⁸⁴ contributes to an adaptation. A hot feedback is made on the AAA⁸⁵ logic and allows lessons to be drawn for future missions or operations. Doctrinal changes are addressed in the cold feedback, in particular by exploiting feedback from the feedback chains of each Staff State.

With Operation Barkhane and the G5 Sahel, an innovative legislative framework is providing a first attempt at stabilising the Sahel zone. The Algiers Agreement, signed on 15 May and 20 June 2015 in Bamako, and officially known as the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, aims to put an end to the Malian War. The negotiations led to a ceasefire and a return to the initial terms of the Ouagadougou Agreement. However, despite efforts to negotiate with the Coordination of Azawad Movements, the Algiers agreement does not cover central Mali or the entire territory of the G5 countries. Negotiations with Mauritania and the African Union have enabled the pro-independence GATs to retreat, but have not reduced the activity of jihadist terrorists.

The CI function⁸⁶ deserves particular attention in COIN, and all the more so in the Barkhane theatre, which is becoming more regional. The insurgency represents a threat to the armed forces through espionage, sabotage and subversion missions, for example. These are loopholes that can be exploited by insurgents. We need global CI actions with local forces to cover all potential risks. This is first and foremost a preventive security action and is carried out in conjunction with criticality, vulnerability and risk studies. It is also used in the planning of armed missions in the event of a

⁸⁴ Feedback.

⁸⁵ Analysis After Action.

⁸⁶ counter-intelligence.

suspected enemy attack or on the provision of intelligence. The CI thus helps to protect the French armed forces by advising on the appropriate security measures needed to counter the risk of terrorist attack and sabotage. It contributes to the security of operations and can sometimes lead them.

The IC also contributes to OMI⁸⁷ by analysing the discourse of the insurgents and their partners, whose aim is to discredit and damage the French and international missions in the eyes of the local population. However, force protection must not be to the detriment of environmental control, based on the principle that the best protection lies in contact with the population. Furthermore, it is preferable to have mobile intervention reserves and smaller self-defence posts capable of providing mutual support. Similarly, individual and armoured protection must not hinder the tactical mobility of combatants.

(2) Adaptation of the SSA military health doctrine

The SSA acts in operations as it does on French territory: the care it provides is proportional and sized to the context, it contributes to military action (SOUTEX⁸⁸), and it provides medical aid to the population⁸⁹.

When it comes to treating the wounded, no distinction is made. The SSA is responsible for its own nationals, the soldiers of partner nations, civilians, but also enemies, and in the case of the Sahel, terrorists. If the injuries are equally serious, the military medical corps decides which casualty to treat first. Military personnel who are French nationals do not legally have priority in the order of treatment.

The treatment of a wounded terrorist follows the same circuit as for a soldier. Initial care as close as possible to the wound is provided by R1 structures, i.e. the forward medical station, and R2 structures, known as ARCS, together. Transport is then usually by air using a rotary wing⁹⁰, to an R2 *Enhanced* or to a Role 3 structure⁹¹. The only difference is the escort provided by the armed forces, who are permanently present to ensure general security. Medical care is provided right up to

⁸⁷ Military influence operations.

⁸⁸ Experienced support.

⁸⁹ The example of Gao and related civil-military objectives.

⁹⁰ Helicopters are rotary wings. Fixed-wing aircraft.

⁹¹ R3: *Host nation* hospitals, i.e. Niamey.

the moment of arrest. It is based on the Geneva Convention, the Right to Human Dignity and the Right of Prisoners in High Intensity Situations.

Niamey has an R3 military hospital. Three types of rooms are available: those for civilians, those for military personnel and rooms adapted for prisoners. After treatment, the SSA is no longer responsible for prisoners of war. They are handed over to the competent local authorities or to whom they may concern. The only condition is that they must be medically cleared by the military doctor. Normally, no STRATEVAC to Role 4⁹² is possible for terrorist prisoners. This choice of command is left to the political and military authorities other than the SSA (particularly if the terrorist in question is of French nationality).

When the French army closed the Gao base, the medical devices (R1, R2) were automatically closed.

The SCA, which is part of the Gendarmerie, is responsible for military deaths. In the event of a terrorist death after the SSA has taken medical charge, the body is handed over to the relevant local authorities.

Civil-military aid is not the sole responsibility of the SSA; it is organised in conjunction with the overall operation by the ACM, and in particular enables schools to be rehabilitated, acceptance actions to be carried out and medicines to be distributed.

(3) Medical evacuations and theatre organisation

The SSA provides initial care for the wounded, as close as possible to the place of injury, and implements various evacuations depending on the theatres of operation and the medical needs observed. France uses the *damage control doctrine*, i.e. providing care quickly after the injury has occurred and carrying out the necessary back-up surgery at a later stage. In the area of operations, the Chief of the Defence Staff relies on the Deputy Chief of Operations of the Armed Forces Staff, who has access to the CPCO, which is the national strategic command body for operations.⁹³ The commander of the strategic level of an operation, the COPER, is responsible for the design, preparation and overall direction of the operation for which he is the commander. The operational level is the highest level of joint military command in a theatre of operations, at which operations

⁹² R4: Hôpital d'Instruction Militaire on French national territory, HIA Hôpital d'Instruction Militaire.

⁹³ Source DIA-3.0 command of operational commitments outside national territory

are planned, conducted and supported by a joint force, with a view to achieving the military objectives set by the strategic level. It covers military, civil-military and political-military dimensions.

The supply mode can be either just-in-time or pull-flow. One is not exclusive of the other. The Ministry of the Armed Forces also has provisional stocks in case of crises. Pharmacists are responsible for adjusting pharmaceutical and medical resources, and for building up strategic stocks.

Medical supplies use the logistics flows defined by the armed forces to transport health products. For example, by air, civilian carriers can be used to transport products from a military force to a forward base or logistics base. Certain means of transport can also be dedicated to transporting healthcare products for military use. A major constraint in the transport of healthcare products is, for example, the storage temperature. Some products, such as blood and certain medicines, need to be kept in positive cold. The medical supply chain for an operation must be able to transport blood. In this example, a thermochip is used to track the temperature of the product throughout transport, ensuring that it is kept in good condition and anticipating any risk of deterioration. If the temperature is too hot or too cold for a period specified by the manufacturer, the products must be destroyed. Emergency refuelling procedures are also envisaged in critical situations. The time taken to supply the various products meets different emergency criteria: medical supplies can include medicines, pharmaceutical products, vaccines and hospital beds.

In the military sector, STRATEVAC and TACEVAC medical evacuations describe the movements of the injured person from the point of injury to their return to France for final treatment.⁹⁴

STRATEVAC medical evacuations consist of repatriating the wounded and sick to mainland France for definitive treatment in mainland France's infrastructure hospitals, known as Role 4.

TACEVAC medical evacuations involve transporting casualties from a level 2 care facility to a higher level facility (Role 3).

The medical teams are not the same for each type of MEDEVAC. A MEDEVAC is defined by NATO as: "*the medically supervised process of moving any person who is wounded, injured or ill to and/or between medical treatment facilities as an integral part of the treatment continuum*"⁹⁵ .

⁹⁴ AJMEDP-2 : Fwd / TAC./STRAT

⁹⁵ AJMEDP-2 Allied Joint Medical Doctrine for medical Evacuation (NATO)

These may be land or air vehicles. Thanks to the medical equipment on board, the necessary care can be provided immediately. A MEDEVAC therefore provides continuous medical supervision until the final destination.

II) THE FAILURE OF OPERATION BARKHANE AND THE POST-OPERATION PERIOD: A REVIEW OF FRENCH AMBITIONS IN THE SAHEL

a) French difficulties and surrounding risks: geopolitical developments in the Barkhane theatre

1) The end of the Barkhane mission: increasing risks and mixed security results

(1) The failure to maintain stability

According to anthropologist Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, Barkhane has achieved significant operational results. Despite an upsurge in violence and instability in the area, the jihadist networks and other GATs have been considerably weakened and have become entrenched. However, Operation Barkhane remains a failure. The lack of objectives, the lack of resources, the focus on the security aspect to the detriment of support and development have led to significant anti-French sentiment. In his view, this is what is known as the "revenge of the contexts": in the Sahel, as in Afghanistan, we are seeing that the international players, despite the financial, military and technological resources, cannot be triumphant in a context whose codes and standards they do not master. Most of the ex post facto errors analysed show that the French, among others, did not have sufficient command of the networks of local players in which the conflict in the Sahel today is embedded.

In assessing what happened, Operation Serval was marked by a phase of political and military success: the objective was clear and limited, and the resources deployed were substantial and adapted to requirements. Barkhane, on the other hand, was marked by greater ambition and more vague objectives, but without the resources or investment to match. The slashing of military budgets and the dispersal of French OPEX in 2015 contributed to this inability to pursue the goals envisaged. Operation Barkhane can be seen as a tactical success, which can be seen in the ground and territorial hold it has had in limiting the local base of the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, but also in its ultimate strategic failure.

You can't wage war against a particular modus operandi, and that's what went wrong with Operation Barkhane. The war against jihadism is made up of insurgencies with an underlying political will. However, the actions taken in the Sahel are directed against insurgencies with a jihadist modus operandi, but not against the politics that motivate them. These are actions taken in detail, not in their entirety. Local political solutions need to be negotiated in order to be able to analyse the

surrounding risks and draw up a viable operational plan. Insurgencies are not treated as violent local attacks. Take the example of President Bazoum in Niger, who decided to negotiate with the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. The French support this decision to find local solutions but never take the initiative to negotiate. However, the insurgencies are not purely terrorist movements, as local recruitment has taken place over time. The local way in which taxation, politics and recruitment operate has enabled these networks to establish themselves beyond simple jihadist terrorism and to found a local political system governed by terror and servitude. Their domination extends beyond the simple terrorist motive, and this notion was taken into account very little during Barkhane, which focused mainly on the security aspect. The strategic vision is incomplete. However, this is not just a French failure, but a collective one: France, MINUSMA and the FAMA do not have the capacity to regain political control of these territories. The Sahelian states do not provide sufficient protection or confidence for the local populations to turn to them rather than give in to the demands of the jihadist networks.

(2) The failure of regional cooperation and coalition: an operating mode called into question

Operation Barkhane was conducted primarily from a security perspective, despite the rhetoric about the global approach and tactics shared with the COIN campaigns. However, several criteria are necessary and unavoidable to characterise the success of a counter-insurgency operation: the substantial resources employed and the support for development and the local population. The primary military objective of a COIN campaign is to achieve permanent control of human and geographical areas: after security tactics comes stabilisation through transfer to local forces. What's more, despite the pooling of regional military resources under a single command, the reduction in resources compared with the maximum in May 2013, following the LOLF, and the reduction in military personnel, means that the operation cannot be sustained. From the outset, the objectives were doomed to failure. The three poles of the operation known as "3D" for Diplomacy, Development and Defence could not be covered. As Michel Goya describes it, Barkhane is content to be an operation of cumulative pressure: it does not consider the root causes of the enemy's existence and development. Control of the zones is only temporary and due to the use of force, but if the zone is not immediately occupied by a strong, legitimate and permanent local state administration and forces, the "oil stain" logic is doomed to failure. Training missions such as the EUTM mission are not living up to expectations, and the training of local forces, including the FAMA, is not meeting the ambitions set. As for the other armies, the forces involved in UN

missions, as is the case for a large part of the Chadian army integrated into the blue helmets, cannot take part in war operations but only in development and aid missions.

COIN then leaves one question unanswered: what happens if *"the host nation is not up to the challenge and capable of devising and promoting an alternative political project that would improve the status quo ante and take the wind out of the sails of the insurgents? What if it makes the wrong choices, from the point of view of the intervening nation? And what if it makes the wrong choices, from the point of view of the intervening nation?"*⁹⁶ .

Despite the fact that the political decision should normally rest with the host nation, the successive instabilities and coups d'état, the misunderstandings between the Malian and French leaders over negotiations with the jihadist GAT or the implementation of the Algiers agreement illustrate the differences in priorities and the divergence in treatment between France and Mali. Added to this is the fact that international intervention already irrevocably undermines the authority of the host nation and inflames tensions between the perceived illegitimate government and the local people against international aid. At the same time, during a COIN campaign, a major French principle has to be set aside: that of "freedom of action", largely abandoned in favour of the host nation imposing its agenda. This is also difficult for the host nation to manage.

Growing anti-French sentiment since the 2015 attacks, marked by a period of extreme violence until 2019, is making France's presence in the Sahel difficult. The lack of support in the discourse of the G5 authorities also contributes to undermining the legitimacy of French action. President Emmanuel Macron has repeatedly called for clear support from the local authorities, but coups d'état and instability cannot make up for the lack of confidence.

(3) The opposing response and growing anti-French sentiment: the need to change tactics and modus operandi

According to Olivier Hanne, the threat to the Sahel has become multifaceted. Various traditional criteria of social and political fragility have accumulated, making the structural problems insurmountable. Agricultural crises, endemic poverty, regional grievances, social injustice, state failure, the obvious corruption of elites and ethnic tensions have enabled jihadist networks to recruit local people and play on dissent. French strategic analysis has failed to focus on the structural problems and, by concentrating on the security aspect, has overlooked these weaknesses. Jihadism is therefore only the most salient aspect and ultra-violence is a

⁹⁶ IRSEM, Michael Shurkin, FRENCH INTERVENTION IN SAHEL AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF COUNTER-INSURRECTION.

widespread weapon. The nuisance caused by GATs takes advantage of social fragmentation and signs of weakness in the Sahelian states. The intelligence and power of these networks lie in their ability to harness local tensions, in particular by channelling the frustrations of the population and the feeling of oppression by the State.

Since 2012, the focus of jihadism has shifted, while Operation Barkhane has retained the same focus and the same strategic planning. *"The formation of the "trans-Sahelian jihadist triangle" has had the effect of splitting up the counter-terrorist system in the Sahel, including Operation Barkhane. Already deployed in a gigantic theatre, it is inconceivable that the 3,500 French soldiers could be redirected to a new zone, unless they were reinforced. And neither the United States nor the European Union are willing to invest militarily or financially to support the G5 Sahel. We cannot envisage dismantling a "front" without the GATs running the risk of re-establishing themselves there"*⁹⁷ .

Despite operational victories and successful hit-and-run actions, anti-French sentiment is growing at a worrying rate. Since 2016, anti-French demonstrations have been organised, including one during Emmanuel Macron's official visit to Gao in 2017. Questions of historical memory are still very present and are not taken into account in Barkhane's planning. The cohesion of the G5 Sahel remains shaky, which does not help to strengthen the French base. According to the report by the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, *"this 'anti-French sentiment' is nonetheless heterogeneous, emanating from an unstructured movement that is sometimes religious and anti-Western, sometimes anti-imperialist"*.

In his book, Olivier Hanne concludes that Operation Barkhane, which was planned with the aim of counter-terrorism in the face of the jihadist threat and the proliferation of GATs in Azawad, *"finds itself ill-equipped and outdated to deal with multiform and ill-defined GATs, the militiaisation of central Mali, growing inter-ethnic tensions and urban attacks that fall under the heading of counter-terrorism"*⁹⁸ .

As part of Operation Barkhane, France does not want to bring about total pacification or defeat the jihadist GATs on its own, but aims to bring the situation to the point where it can leave local forces to manage the security and development phase on their own. The French army has assigned itself a limited role consistent with the COIN doctrine. However, neither Operation

⁹⁷ Olivier Hanne, L'opération " Barkhane " devant l'évolution des risques dans la Bande sahélo-saharienne, in Outre-Terre 2017/2 (N° 51)pages 225 to 237.

⁹⁸ Olivier Hanne, L'opération " Barkhane " devant l'évolution des risques dans la Bande sahélo-saharienne, in Outre-Terre 2017/2 (N° 51)pages 225 to 237.

Serval nor Operation Barkhane provide any room for innovation in the counter-insurgency doctrine. Operation Serval can be considered innovative insofar as France had abandoned the constraints it had imposed on itself since the 1980s. The imminent threat and the demand for help spurred tactical and operational innovation. But the tactical successes at the end of Operation Serval led to a slackening off, with a reduction in resources and a move towards Operation Barkhane, rather than a renewal of objectives. Barkhane's innovation lies in the regional context and the vastness of the theatre in the context of an asymmetric conflict. This does not mean that the global approach has been abandoned, but that French military forces have withdrawn from the essence of what it implies. Several aspects are the responsibility of other components of the French government⁹⁹, its international partners and the Sahelian governments.

2) Regional geopolitical shift

(1) The collapse of the local legal framework and the precariousness of the existing doctrine

According to PIA 5.4, "Anticipation is an essential factor in determining and finalising the legal framework for any international cooperation activity. Determining the appropriate legal vehicle must be based on an analysis of the risks for the Ministry and its staff. Although the following list is not exhaustive, the following questions should be asked in order to determine the appropriate legal framework. Any consideration of the nature of the vehicle required to provide a framework for international cooperation activity must first consider the existing legal framework (bilateral or multilateral) for defence matters with the foreign partner(s). Secondly, it is necessary to examine the framework requirements for the planned cooperation activity in order to determine the legal instrument required. Choosing the most appropriate legal vehicle can sometimes prove more complex with some of our partners when they do not have the same legal traditions or the same requirements for the legal supervision of activities as France. If it is not possible to agree with the partner on the appropriate legal framework, or if this framework proves insufficiently protective, it is advisable, in liaison with the legal advisor and the DAJ¹⁰⁰, to seek the agreement of the minister's office as to whether or not to maintain the international cooperation activity"¹⁰¹.

⁹⁹ These include the French Development Agency, the Sahel Coalition and the G5 Sahel which, with French encouragement, is working to improve governance in parallel with its security sector reform work.

¹⁰⁰ Legal Affairs Department.

¹⁰¹ PIA 5.4 JURACTIV, Legal framework for international cooperation activities, Chapter 2 - Determining the legal framework for an international cooperation activity.

Cooperation with the G5 Sahel provides a legal framework for France's actions in the region. The G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat is the body that implements the decisions of the Council of Ministers. It is placed under its direct authority. Each member of the coalition has a National Coordination Committee made up of experts in the sectors covered by the reference framework. The National Coordination Committees are managed by the Permanent Secretariat, which in turn reports to the ministers responsible for development. The focal point for the operation of the G5 Sahel is the National Coordination Committee, whose chairman is the focal point for coordination at the level of each member state. The specificity of such an agreement lies in the creation of a Defence and Security Committee, i.e. the body that brings together the Chiefs of Staff of the armed forces and the officials mandated by the Member States to deal with security issues.

However, this legal framework, whose initial objectives were to facilitate the coalition and management of Barkhane's vast theatre, has gradually been eroded. At the Pau G5 summit in 2020, France stressed the urgent need to improve governance and for the Sahel states to support and legitimise military action in their political discourse and agendas. With anti-French sentiment on the rise, the prolongation of Operation Barkhane and the management of the memory of the past have turned France into an invader, creating a breach into which Russia and, above all, the paramilitary group Wagner are rushing. The legal framework is no longer enough to stabilise the G5 Sahel. The summit in Mauritania, invoked by President Emmanuel Macron, has as its central agenda the express request to affirm support for operation Barkhane and the related strategy by the five governments in order to stabilise the situation and legitimise military and international action. *"At the June 2020 summit, the French also reiterated that the "Coalition for the Sahel" strategy had four pillars: "counter-terrorism action" and "military capacity-building", of course, but also "support for the return of the state and government authorities throughout the territory" and "official development assistance"*¹⁰².

(2) The transition from the G5 to the G4 Sahel: the porosity of coalitions and regional cooperation

In a multinational context, political and military management and governance are very demanding. The G5 is a diplomatic set-up that was expected to produce results in a global world where we rely heavily on international organisations to solve problems. In Africa, in the 2010s, dialogues with the

¹⁰² IRSEM, Michael Shurkin, FRENCH INTERVENTION IN SAHEL AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF COUNTER-INSURRECTION.

African Union, then the G5 on the one hand and the European Union, NATO and the UN on the other reinforced this desire to use international coalitions to resolve national and regional problems.

The junta's coup d'état in Mali in 2020 disrupted not only the interior of the country but the entire Sahel region. In May 2022, Mali decided to leave the G5 Sahel regional coalition. At the same time, the country announced the withdrawal of its anti-jihadist force. On the face of it, this decision to emancipate itself stemmed from Niger's opposition to Mali taking over the rotating presidency due to governmental instability. However, as one of the main players in the fight against terrorism and jihadism in the region, its absence cannot but be noted. As part of the Tri-border region, Mali is a focal point for geographical positioning and political concerns.

July 12 and 13 were marked by discussions between the presidents of Chad, Mahamat Idriss Déby, and Niger, Mohamed Bazoum, who are determined to breathe new life into the G5 Sahel and continue the fight against terrorism despite Mali's departure. At a press conference, the two presidencies discussed the fight against terrorism in the region, Mali's withdrawal from the G5 Sahel and Chad's transition. On this occasion, the two heads of state wanted to show that they are united in the fight against terrorism, which they believe involves the G5 Sahel. With the departure of Mali, an area where terrorists are concentrated, attacks have multiplied. Niger has seen several episodes of extreme violence. Security issues are becoming all the more important as the Barkhane force is being reorganised. There is an urgent need to breathe new life into the G5. Once a strong point in the positioning of French forces in Africa, the reorganisation of the Barkhane force in Niger is underway.

On 20 February 2023, the first extraordinary G5 summit was held in N'Djamena, but without Mali. It followed the African Union summit. The leaders of Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Chad met to discuss the fight against transnational threats. Three major threats were identified: terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration in the Sahel region. This summit marks a real turnaround in security management in the Sahel: it is the first since 2021, the year marked by the death of former Chadian president Idriss Deby Itno, and the profound change in the security situation in the Sahel. Chad, which has held the presidency for the past two years, is trying to revitalise the regional organisation, whose track record is considered to be rather meagre. At the beginning of 2023, another absence was noted: that of the President of the transition in Burkina Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traoré. The Burkinabe delegation was led by the Minister of Defence, which raised questions about the transition to a G3.

However, the summit was also attended by other key players such as the Vice-President of the World Bank, Ousmane Diagana. This presence underlines the need for additional resources and commitments to help develop the Sahel region.

(3) Growing regional instability: risks, enemies and opposition

In the implementation of military strategies as a means of using force to impose one's will on the adversary and a determined operational tempo, a distinction is made between direct and indirect confrontations. The former are confrontations with symmetrical or asymmetrical adversaries, involving the use of operational capabilities. The latter involve confrontation with an asymmetrical adversary in the context of guerrilla warfare or harassment, for example. A dissymmetrical adversary, as is the case in the Sahel War with the jihadist GATs, can switch from one to the other depending on contingencies. Based on an initial characterisation of the enemy, operating methods can be devised.

However, the Sahel War, as it is evolving, is not pitting France against just one type of adversary. Russia's presence on Malian soil, its growing presence in the Sahel-Saharan strip, and the propaganda and discrediting it has generated make the Wagner militia another type of risk for France. Among the modus operandi according to the risk analysis, delegitimisation or demonisation is defined in DIA 01, the force employment doctrine derived from the force employment concept, as the fact that *"the adversary endeavours to undermine the legitimacy of the military action conducted, in order to achieve his goals without military intervention or reaction on the part of the Force. To achieve this, the adversary can: block the political process authorising the use of force by taking advantage of alliances or support, mainly within the Security Council. Forcing the Force to withdraw prematurely by manipulating an incident following a media trap on its part or a friendly tactical error. The solution has to be military in the first instance, then very quickly political if it is to be sustainable. The establishment of and compliance with an indisputable legal framework and strict rules of engagement and behaviour are essential guarantees"*¹⁰³.

The first signs of the end of Operation Barkhane, due to the coups d'état of 2020 in Mali and 2022 in Burkina Faso, the request by the respective governments for the departure of French troops and the new agreements and alliances with Russia are transforming the management of the theatre. From an armed conflict against the jihadist GAT, France finds itself in a war of information and influence. The deployment on Malian soil of the paramilitary group Wagner and related companies

¹⁰³ Joint Doctrine DIA-01(A)_DEF(2014) No. 128/DEF/CICDE/NP of 12 June 2014,

are reinforcing the fragmentation of conflicts and priorities. Despite major operational efforts and the retreat of the GAT, the neglect of the aspects of maintaining stability, transition to local forces and development are now showing their downside.

Barkhane is not a counter-insurgency operation, even though this term has been used extensively in the analyses and media coverage of the operation. Its primary purpose was to reduce the terrorist threat to the point where local forces would be able to act independently. The wording of the operation targeted "terrorist" risks, not "insurgent" or "jihadist" risks. The objective of Operation Barkhane for the French forces is therefore terrorism and not all sources of loss of life. This threat accounts for half of all casualties, according to the Senate Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee report. No promises have been made to combat the insurrectional threat, and the related issues have never been dealt with in a way that could be contractualised. The Algiers agreements of 2015 were signed to resolve the problems of the insurrection. The process of applying these agreements is intended to reduce the insurrectionary crisis, in conjunction with the action of MINUSMA. Operation Barkhane is a huge set-up for everyone involved. Intervention in the Sahel is not about counter-insurgency but rather about stabilisation in a multinational environment. France relied too much on a Sahelian organisation by anticipating its capacity for action, which was never realised. We note that the "country by country" approach is the preferred approach for analysing regional gradations in the Sahel.

The dynamics of the coups d'état in the Sahel region are complex, but they converge on growing instability, the retreat of democracy in Africa, renewed clashes with the GAT and mistrust of public authorities and organisations such as the G5. Since the coup d'état in Mali in August 2020 and again in May 2021, the five colonels have benefited from the general dissatisfaction with the corrupt regime of Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. Since the junta came to power, the Islamic State in the Great Sahara has regained ground, and security deficits have been all the more visible since the withdrawal of French forces and the arrival of Wagner militia troops. In addition, since the departure of MINUSMA, Tuareg terrorist movements have resumed armed fighting, signalling the definitive failure of the 2015 Algiers Agreements. In September 2023, the CMA¹⁰⁴ claimed responsibility for several attacks on the FAMa and the seizure of war materiel.

¹⁰⁴ Coordination of Azawad movements.

In Burkina Faso, the seizures of power in January and September 2022 marked a break between the civilian and military authorities and a growing security deficit since the departure of the Barkhane force. According to the latest census, insurgent groups control 40% of the country.¹⁰⁵

In Niger, a dozen jihadist attacks have killed more than a hundred people, half of them civilians, since the coup d'état on 26 July.

3) The end of Operation Barkhane: the opening up of French military doctrine

(1) Lessons from the Sahel war

Operation Barkhane has shown that the intelligence function is decisive in COIN. This aspect must be implemented on the basis of regional and multinational cooperation, but also by the appropriate cells directly dependent on the French armed forces. Exchanges of information with allies and local security forces are strengthened, while respecting the security of operations. The United States is France's main partner in this area. Intelligence, for the purposes of anticipation and planning, should make it possible to grasp the complexity of the environment, the situation and the insurgent threat, to calibrate requirements and to determine the focus of efforts. The intelligence resources deployed in the theatre of Operation Barkhane, mainly under the command of COMANFOR, are diverse.

First of all, it is necessary to focus on documentary intelligence, i.e. *"image-based intelligence from drones (Harfang and then Reaper), fighters, light surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft (ALSR) and other technological vectors, and electromagnetic intelligence mainly from tactical sensors deployed by armed forces intelligence units"*¹⁰⁶. This provides an insight into the physical and social context in which the intervention forces operate.

Central to the COIN doctrine, intelligence research also focuses on the population, the economy, governance and the information environment, among other things. *"We call this human intelligence, developed mainly by the multi-sensor research group.* Sensors are one of the pivotal keys to COIN: faced with insurgents who, blending into the population, can escape detection by technical means, human research, in contact with the population and its elites, is well placed to detect insurgent networks and perceive their intentions.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Alain Antil, Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Centre at the French Institute of International Relations (Ifri).., <https://www.ifri.org/fr/espace-media/lifri-medias/coups-detat-afrique-putschistes-promettent-une-deuxieme-independance>

¹⁰⁶ Pascal Allizard, Olivier Cigolotti, Marie-Arlette Carlotti, Rapporteurs to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence. NP_EMA_ESMG_A-SO_RELPARL - SENAT_CAED - RI Retex Barkhane- synthesis. WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF OPERATION BARKHANE?

The RETEX from the various operations since the colonial era has led to a transformation in French military concepts and doctrine. The focus has shifted from the military operation of conquest to an approach that concentrates on the population. Because ambitions and mores have changed, economic, psychological and security actions are central to the concepts and doctrine applicable today. Operation Barkhane, the apogee of COIN, set up by France and then taken over by the United States, has enabled a transition in doctrinal thinking. Each aspect is not sufficient in itself, and the end of the operation followed by the redeployment of the military force shows that the capacity of Western players to stabilise and secure theatres of operation over the long term is being profoundly called into question.

The civil-military aspect is becoming essential and can no longer be separated in the management of a crisis. Crisis resolution requires an integrated approach at all levels. In the evolution of crisis resolution, OPEX must complement the predominantly civilian operations of reconstruction, training, re-establishing the functioning of public institutions and restoring basic economic capacities. This is what was lacking during Operation Barkhane. France has gone from insisting on the primacy of politics to seeking to depoliticise what is intrinsically political. This management was logical in the post-colonial context, but no longer corresponds to the type of crisis countries are facing today. This partly explains, for example, France's reluctance to intervene in Malian politics at national level, regardless of the fact that Operation Barkhane is a major *de facto* intervention in support of the Malian regime. However, this blurring between reticence and French interference raises questions about the validity of the COIN doctrine at present.

It would seem that if the COIN doctrine is to work, it needs to be backed up by substantial financial and physical resources. However, this is difficult to achieve, leading to protracted operations and quick-fire victories without any real security gains. In addition, the civil-military aspect is still not given sufficient prominence, which is detrimental to the objectives of the COIN doctrine. Finally, the French and American political will to put an end to the war and the disappointment of the lack of local political support, added to the refusal of Western countries to devote the necessary resources, make the application of COIN almost impossible. Counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism are not high on the agendas of many NATO and EU member states.

The failure to pacify does not mean that operations are not useful. The objectives must evolve more in line with what they were initially: France in the Sahel wanted to create strategic opportunities so that its local partners could exploit them. The training and development issue in this approach takes

on its full meaning. Victory" according to this definition is then possible and feasible for the countries involved.

(2) Multilateral influence in the development of doctrine

One of the main challenges facing France as it pursues its counter-terrorism ambitions and develops its military doctrine is to engage in and strengthen international cooperation. Three main areas have been identified in addition to OPEX. Firstly, the prevention of radicalisation and the fight against terrorist propaganda is central. The fight against the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes is one of the major thrusts. Secondly, the fight against the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters is being put in place to contain the threat in the appropriate international fora, notably the UN and the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which brings together twenty-nine countries and the European Union. Thirdly and finally, building the capacity of our partners to combat terrorism is an important issue. We provide training programmes for our partners, such as training for judicial police investigators, magistrates and services working in the field of counter-terrorism.

France is including these priorities among the three main priorities of its presidency of the G7. This is also why, from 2018, France is mobilising countries to identify and dry up these sources of terrorist funding. The international conference "No Money for Terror", initiated by the President of the French Republic, is the first step in this direction. The first conference, held in Paris, focused on the fight against the financing of al-Qaeda and Daech, and brought together seventy states and twenty heads of IOs¹⁰⁷ and specialised agencies. In the final declaration, the participating states undertook to strengthen their legal frameworks and cooperation on information. A number of clear priorities and concrete measures were defined in the summary document known as the "Paris Agenda". For the second edition, France is making major efforts to mobilise the international community to implement the Paris Agenda. For the first time, a resolution on the financing of terrorism was adopted by the Security Council on 28 March 2019. It created a benchmark political decision on the subject.

However, the OPEX carried out in recent decades have shown the limits of the European Union's political will. European operations have often been conducted in conjunction with and in support of other operations, and have been very limited in time. However, the proliferation of crises and the multidimensional responses required show that the EU has not yet taken advantage of all the

¹⁰⁷ International organisations.

resources available to the Commission and the Member States to provide a comprehensive response to crises. Civilian and military resources must be better coordinated, and a change in procedures must be put in place to respond to the EU's operational role. The aim is to improve the responsiveness and intervention capabilities of the forces that can be made available to the CSDP. Common training, availability and better-coordinated force generation between Member States are urgent and feasible points for progress. The European support mission deployed in Mali, the EUTM, to which the French entrusted the task of training their security forces to the Malians, was a tactical error and a failure because very little was achieved and at great expense. The Barkhane force has tried to make up for this shortfall in training and development aid, but due to a lack of resources, dedicated time and local support, it has not been able to reverse the trend. The launch of the European Task Force Takuba in 2019 is a partial response to this need. It is looking for European partners capable of providing special forces to accompany the FAMa units. But the ambitions of this European intervention do not only benefit Mali: through this channel, the French wish to strengthen their relations with various members of the EU, and in particular with the Nordic nations. It also wants to gain the advantage of having French personnel escort Malian units into battle, while avoiding the colonial associations of this practice by using non-French personnel.

The end of Operation Barkhane and the failure to train and support local development has led to a number of instances of French interference. This is also one of the RETEX points that shows that the COIN doctrine must evolve and change, but also that civil-military action is necessary. This is one of the most significant lessons learned from the Sahel war in terms of doctrine. With this in mind, NATO's C2 Command and Control concept is currently being rewritten to become C3 Consultation, Command and Control, based on civil-military cooperation.

b) After Operation Barkhane, France's ambitions in the Sahel and the doctrinal transition

1) The end of Operation Barkhane: lessons from a multi-border theatre

(1) The redeployment of French military forces

The reorganisation of the military operation, following President Emmanuel Macron's announcement of the end of Operation Barkhane on 9 November 2022, has gone according to plan. A major logistical challenge has been met. However, the combat mission continued throughout the move of French troops out of Mali. The Gao base, formerly one of France's major permanent bases, was handed back to the FAMa in August 2022. A rigorous process has been put in place to hand

over a fully operational tool in line with the expectations expressed by the FAMa, with the aim of being able to continue the fight against armed terrorist groups. Niger becomes the preferred location for French forces at the end of Barkhane: air bridges are being set up between the two countries, but also by convoys from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin by land before being transported to France by sea.

Successive coups d'état, first in Mali in 2020 and then in Burkina Faso in 2022, have wearied the French government. Openly seeking a change in French policy in Africa, the President of the Republic, as head of the armed forces, is providing the impetus around which the new French military doctrine will be built. The results of Operation Barkhane included a number of operational victories, but left a bitter taste in the mouths of politicians. Political U-turns in the Sahelian zone also led to a French detachment that did not intervene, but which contributed to the decision to reduce the French presence.

The gradual withdrawal of troops from Malian territory was carried out in accordance with the planned negotiations. The Burkinabe government's request at the beginning of January 2023 to withdraw French troops within a month further underlines the extent of anti-French sentiment, the Russian base and the growing political instability. It is a U-turn in the construction of French policy in Africa. The Kamboinsin camp, shared with the national army, was the base for the special forces. The ambition of a partnership discussed in 2018 with Burkina Faso has been reduced to nothing, further reducing France's presence in the Sahel region. These loopholes are being exploited by Russia, whose paramilitary group Wagner is establishing itself wherever France withdraws. The refusal of some African states to condemn Russia's aggression in Ukraine at the UN has highlighted the gaping hole in a fault line that does not concern France alone. The failure of MINUSMA and EUTM, as well as the mixed results of Task Force Takuba, have not left the G5 governments indifferent in the management of their agendas.

When the French troops left, the FAMa and the Burkinabe forces were able to count on the support of the Wagner group, which finances itself by plundering mining resources. In this context, rhetoric hostile to French policy, supported and encouraged by Russian propaganda, has become a powerful lever: on the one hand, it mobilises the population on a large scale, who are looking for someone to blame for the poverty and insecurity; on the other hand, by justifying the interference of Russian mercenaries who are not interested in the democratic aspect, it enables the military who came to power in a coup d'état to retain this status.

(2) The end of Operation Barkhane: rethinking military engagement in Africa

The strategies for Africa, which report to the President of the Republic, were presented for the first time on 27 February 2023. The outlines of the reorganisation of France's military resources are concerned. France's aim is to "*build a new, responsible, balanced and reciprocal relationship*"¹⁰⁸ with the continent, on several fronts.

As far as the military aspect is concerned, a new model of local partnerships needs to be devised and proposed. France does not wish to retain the same models of permanent and advanced military bases, but to build a new model of partnerships. To enable these bases to "*change their appearance and footprint*", some will be transformed into "*academies*" and others into "*joint bases*". In the President's speech, two main axes are put forward for the pooling of French positions: "*a visible reduction in the number of French troops and an increase in the number of troops from our African partners {and} an increase in the range of training, support and equipment at the highest level*". However, the desire to reduce the number of French military personnel does not apply to the Djibouti base, which is part of the Indo-Pacific zone that France wishes to develop jointly with the United States. The main permanent military bases are in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Gabon, where France has 1,700 soldiers. In addition, some 3,000 troops are currently deployed in the Sahel region. However, based on a genuine cooperative ambition, the French government is awaiting proposals from its African partner states.

The specific organisation of Operation Barkhane shows that regionalised operations are eminently logistical. It is the key to their success. Logistics is a criterion of power, both in terms of being the first to enter the theatre and in terms of supporting a dynamic force in a vast theatre where it has a permanent obligation to achieve results. These logistics, in a multi-frontal theatre, can be described as "*archipelago logistics*" and constitute a daily challenge. These issues are one of our primary concerns, and are one of the points of the RETEX, which enables concepts and military doctrine to evolve. Despite being spread over two zones and a dozen or so permanent and forward bases, and despite the difficulties caused by the vastness of the theatre, Barkhane's logistics system has never failed. This is an operational lesson.

¹⁰⁸ Speech by Emmanuel Macron at the presentation of his new Strategy for Africa on 27 February 2023.

The forward-looking document "Operating Environment 2035", presented for the first time in 2017, outlines our thoughts on the operating environment and the four key areas for improvement and transition. As far as the force is concerned, a global approach, based on civil-military cooperation, needs to be put in place. The notion of war and peace has evolved and no longer corresponds to the marked confrontations of the past. Rethinking force means rethinking conflict. Secondly, collaboration and interdependence are crucial in legitimising actions and the scope of manoeuvre and means of implementation. This involves considering the joint, combined, inter-allied, inter-agency and inter-departmental aspects. Another criterion is time, which must no longer be synonymous with bogging down, but must be manageable without falling into media hype or the rush for immediate results. Finally, it is vital to maintain the internal capacity of the armed forces to overcome crises and shocks, and thus maintain operational coherence. This was articulated around the notion of C2¹⁰⁹.

2) New management of environmental risks

(1) France VS Russia: a war of influence in the Sahel

The difficulties encountered during Operation Barkhane and the increase in violence between 2015 and 2019, both in the theatre of operations and in France, have made the French fight against terrorism a laborious one. The failures and tactical differences have led to a growing anti-French sentiment. This has been created by Russian instrumentalisation and propaganda. With the FAMa having chosen to turn to the paramilitary group Wagner, the pre-existing rifts were deepened and the speech in Timbuktu at the end of Operation Serval to underline the victory of the French armed forces became a memory. There have been too many French expectations, too many promises and too few results. The rapprochement with Russia can be explained by a choice to spite the local forces in the expectation of seeing concrete results quickly, but also by the common past of Russia and West Africa: the colonels of the Junta were in fact trained in Russia. Many African leaders and elites were trained either in the United States or in Russia during the Cold War period and are now in power, following a line of learning inherited from a period of global crisis. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who will be visiting Mali in early 2023, has promised Mali continued military support since the end of 2021 in the form of arms deliveries and the dispatch of hundreds of men, described by various sources as Russian army instructors or Wagner mercenaries. Two days

¹⁰⁹ Command and Control.

before his arrival, the junta announced the forced departure of the head of the human rights division of the United Nations mission, MINUSMA.

The impact of Wagner in the Sahel is a significant step backwards: the jihadists are no longer frightened by drones and the Russian air presence is extremely weak. The GAT are making increasing use of it, making it easier for them to move around. Those who were in the north of Mali have moved down to the centre, then to Burkina Faso and Benin. Radicalisation and rallying methods have also changed on their side. The jihadist GATs no longer recruit only fighters, but also masterminds such as Jaffar Diko. The two nebulas in the Sahel, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, used to compete with each other on tactical alliances and have become more radical over the last ten years. The elimination of their chiefs and local leaders by the Barkhane forces allowed a status quo, but since 2020 the two groups have signed the end of their tactical cooperation and the greatest damage is done in their mutual confrontations. Without the French presence, the number of strikes is increasing and Wagner does not have the means to fulfil his ambitions, which has led to a resurgence of jihadist networks. The populations also turn to them for territorial protection. Their effectiveness lies mainly in their information capacity. The propaganda and communication of the FAMA's victories has restored a certain closeness and confidence in the Malian government. The Malian offensive is therefore presented to public opinion in a different way, and at the same time it is a way of presenting the French operational failure. What's more, al-Qaeda was able to grow and target the population because, seeking a political foothold, the group negotiated and engaged in diplomacy with Wagner, who did not hesitate to do so. The democratic model did not meet local needs and results were too slow, so the radicalisation of the GAT and Wagner's hold over them progressed rapidly.

(2) The development of a new French strategy in Africa

Asymmetrical warfare takes a new twist. The French army is under the supervision of a ministry and France is a state governed by the rule of law, whereas Wagner is an autonomous group sponsored by the Russian state. The French means are not symmetrical with those used by the paramilitary group in the information war: in the short term, the discrediting and propaganda attacks by the Russian forces are felt, but in the long term these manipulations and repeated scandals risk undermining Wagner's presence.

Wagner set up first in Mali, then in Burkina Faso. This Russian base is also possible because in Mali, fundamental freedoms have been suppressed and a climate of fear has spread. But, fundamentally, many Sahelians are turning their backs on France because they blame it for its

inability to re-establish security. In Niger, the French army is present but remains discreet. France is helping the Nigerian forces, particularly with intelligence. Barkhane's *modus operandi* is no longer the same: the French army no longer acts alone but provides support or advice. The President of Niger negotiates alone and France supports him. The military and diplomatic aspects have evolved since the end of Operation Barkhane. Niger is becoming France's new pivot in the Sahel region.

Communication policy at the highest level has also evolved. The failure to achieve the objectives announced during Barkhane and the lack of communication in French strategies have led to their failure and a feeling of local opposition. We need to think about how France is perceived on the ground. The forces pre-positioned in Côte d'Ivoire are decisive. Emmanuel Macron visits Angola, France's new "pivot" in Africa. The essentially economic relations that Paris wants to develop with the former Portuguese-speaking colony are supposed to illustrate a renewed approach to the continent. On Friday 3 March, Emmanuel Macron is expected in Luanda, the capital of Angola which, along with Nigeria, is vying to become the leading oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. On the contrary, the relations that France intends to develop with this former Portuguese-speaking colony, independent since 1975, would illustrate France's new approach to the continent. As with those outlined with other "*pivotal regional countries*" such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Kenya. These are countries that reflect France's ambition to diversify its partnerships outside its historic homeland, where Paris has suffered one political and diplomatic setback after another.

On 27 February 2023, the President of the French Republic, head of the armed forces, announced his new policy for Africa. Fahiraman Rodrigue Koné, a researcher at the Institute for Security Studies in Dakar, deciphers this speech. Despite an intrinsic desire for change, the political and security guidelines announced by the President for the continent remain vague, a sign of the differences that remain within the French executive on this issue. However, the doctrinal changes that will be implemented following the feedback from the current Barkhane operation are also in line with the French Presidency's political guidelines. It is the tactical level that defines the direction of concepts and doctrine, on the one hand in agreement with cooperating international organisations such as NATO, and on the other hand according to French political will and needs. Emmanuel Macron stresses his desire to strengthen cooperation with African states, emphasising support and training, in order to provide African solutions, particularly in terms of security. For the time being, this vision remains discreet, except in the Niger region, with the reorganisation of the Barkhane force in recent months. France is no longer the regional leader: the forces are integrated into the Nigerian system and placed under its command. But in reality, France's African policy is still

dominated by the security aspect. Even though the bases are due to be transformed and a reduction in personnel has been announced, there are no plans to abolish them. The researcher points out that *"this French political paradox surrounding democracy in Africa is one of the main ways in which France has lost credibility on the continent. If Paris wants to continue to promote this model of political governance, which it seems to regard as absolute, it needs to put its money where its mouth is". This necessary aggiornamento must take account of the fact that every setback, every weakness on the part of Paris is an opportunity for its rivals - particularly Russia, China and Turkey - whose purity of intentions with regard to Africans appears dubious, to say the least*¹¹⁰ .

However, France's desire to establish co-managed bases and new partnership models has been undermined by recent tensions. However, the French Presidency refuses to abandon its position in Africa, a vector of influence, particularly against Russia on the international stage. During the post-colonial era, France was one of the few Western countries to retain permanent bases on African soil. Inherited from a culture but also from partnerships formed in the 1960s¹¹¹ , these positions are destined to evolve and change. Following the "epidemic of putsches"¹¹² in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the negotiation of the French presence is delicate. Niger is currently in advanced talks for the rapid withdrawal of French troops from its territory.

However, threats from countries at odds with France have not been spared: sanctions have been put in place, such as the suspension of visas and study grants.

3) Towards a turnaround in French military doctrine

(1) COIN, counter-terrorism, *stabilisation operations*, C3: post-Barkhane and the doctrinal shift

COIN doctrines are designed to remedy the violent destabilisation of a legislature by an insurrectional movement, itself assisted from outside, with reference to a bilateral assistance agreement between a State attacked from within and an external State. The doctrines of counter-terrorism are essentially applied to combating the threats posed by armed networks and groups that are incriminated as terrorists. They are complemented by doctrines for combating international criminal networks. These doctrines, which are applied to combating modelled threats (COIN,

¹¹⁰ Communiqué from the Dakar Institute for Security Studies, led by Fahiraman Rodrigue Koné, an Ivorian Sahel specialist.

¹¹¹ Historical summary of the presence of French military bases in sub-Saharan Africa by Tony Chafer, Professor of African and French Studies at the Research Centre for European and International Studies at the University of Portsmouth in the UK, BBC News, 18 September 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/articles/cpdm7jg0yd2o>

¹¹² Formula used by Emmanuel Macron.

counter-terrorism), are necessary but insufficient. They are subaltern and subject to cognitive bias if considered exclusively. Strategists of all times have pointed out that waging war "against" guarantees less intelligence, and therefore fewer victories, than waging war "for". One cannot be achieved without the other, but it is a question of precedence.

The doctrines relating to stabilisation *operations* are more applicable to the contexts mentioned above, through a series of principles according to which it is possible to intervene as part of an international coalition and in partnership with local governments and local players in multi-sector crises subject to global geopolitical interference. As they do not model threats as precisely as other doctrines, they are more framing than prescriptive.

The vocabulary used over the last thirty years is beginning to be abandoned, but their principles are still taken up. The most precisely formulated post-Barkhane doctrines can be found in communications from the Presidency of the Republic and the government. These documents set out the guidelines followed by France in continuity with the stabilisation doctrines, rather than in rupture with the COIN and counter-terrorism doctrines, whose level of implementation is not equivalent but subordinate.

On 19 April 2023, the Minister for the Armed Forces, Sebastien Lecornu, issued general instructions to the armed forces on the main thrusts of France's new policy in West Africa. In response to the intensification of strategic competition on the African continent and attempts to instrumentalise the military presence in Africa, the aim is to renew all dimensions of the partnership with African states and to focus on civilian aspects. A change in the format of missions and bases is underway, with a view to moving towards co-managed bases and more cooperative command centres. The security aspect must no longer overwhelm the other dimensions of 3D. Support must become the central feature, depending on the needs of partners in the areas of training, equipment, intelligence and operational support, without replacing their actions. The Minister also indicated that support would involve production, and that manufacturers and equipment suppliers would be called upon to a greater extent. At the request of many partners, the aim is also to develop skills in arms procurement, the drafting of specifications, the awarding of contracts and contractualisation. Only the areas of special forces and maritime security, and to a lesser extent aviation, will maintain the security aspect at the highest level.

Rethinking strategy in Africa also means breaking away from the French colonial posture. According to R. Adjovi in his book, "*modelled on the geography of the former French Union, France's military posture in Africa appears to be the legacy of its colonial positions, maintained*

thanks to the persistence of links between the former metropolis and the new states"¹¹³ . The current political will and the resulting doctrinal changes correspond to the desire to develop civil-military operations, to emphasise the need for multilateral and multi-regional cooperation, and also to move away from the application of the COIN doctrine towards adaptation to new types of crisis by taking account of the population in strategies and tactics.

France's presence in Africa is a constantly evolving challenge, but above all it serves specific interests. In economic terms, French interests are currently rather mixed, with France's relative market share falling from 15% to 7.5% between 2000 and 2020, although French exports have doubled in absolute terms. In political terms, however, Africa plays a very direct role in France's stature as a world power. West Africa is at the heart of domestic security concerns because of its place on the trafficking map. All the more so as France remains one of the world's major players in the fight against terrorism and jihadist radicalisation.

On 6 August 2023, NATO updated an official communiqué defining the scope of civil-military actions and their importance for future cooperation. *"Each NATO member country must have the necessary resilience to withstand a major shock - natural disaster, critical infrastructure failure, hybrid attack, armed attack, etc. {...}. Civilian preparedness is a pillar of the resilience of NATO countries and one of the critical enablers of the Alliance's collective defence, and NATO assists its members in assessing and improving this preparedness"*¹¹⁴ . Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty describes national and collective resilience, a vital element in credible deterrence and defence, and therefore in the protection of civilian populations as well as common mores and doctrines. The former application of the C2 concept in theatres of operation is now being transferred to C3¹¹⁵ and C3 Log. This dynamic shows the importance of civil-military cooperation at all levels.

In the new defence strategy, the French President has announced his intention to withdraw gradually from West Africa, while setting up permanent co-managed bases. This is an illustration of the new partnerships in Africa: the French military presence is being redefined.

In addition, French partnerships are turning towards Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. France already has an active presence in this area through the arms trade links we supply to them. France is

¹¹³ R. Adjovi, "La politique africaine de la France", *Annuaire français des relations internationales*, vol. 2, 2001, p. 426-437.

¹¹⁴ NATO website, "Resilience, civil preparedness and Article 3".

¹¹⁵ Consultation, Command and Control.

not as much of an expert in this region as the Australians or the Americans. But the commitment of the USA and their request for support is driving France to develop in this area.

(2) Serval, Barkhane and beyond? The implications of French counter-terrorism doctrine

In its report on the new strategies applicable to West Africa, Ifri describes that: "*Redefining a sustainable strategy for France in West Africa therefore implies a change of approach by adopting realistic objectives that do not presume on the goodwill of partners but on their interests and the expectations they may formulate. This also requires the ability to regain freedom of action by breaking away from the logic of "external operations" and their stakes - organic for the armed forces and media-related for the political authorities - in favour of more discreet and longer-lasting forms of presence*"¹¹⁶. Any security strategy is based on the preservation of clearly understood and identified interests. In this context, there are three main areas of focus. The first is the need to stem political instability and the continuing advance of jihadist GATs threatening African states and French interests in the Sahel region. Secondly, preserving French influence in the region, especially in the face of repeated attacks from Russia, is a major challenge. It is necessary to legitimise local anti-terrorist action in the eyes of the local population and to be accepted as support for local forces. This second point is linked to the third and final one, which is the need to maintain diplomatic stability in France's relations with its African partners. We need to develop new forms of cooperation and focus on strengthening civilian structures and maintaining stability.

Elie Tenenbaum, a specialist in military security issues, analyses the French President's plans to reduce his presence in Africa in favour of the Indo-Pacific. Recent events in Niger are the decisive impetus for withdrawing from the Sahel region. A former French anchorage, Niger is subject to growing instability and regional coalitions are failing to restore order. According to E. Tenenbaum, this turnaround can be explained tactically. French armies were undergoing major structural changes. The return of a major war in Ukraine, and the structural rivalry between China and the United States over the Indo-Pacific region, mean that a posture inherited from the 1990s and focused on OPEX in Africa and the Middle East must be adapted. The next Armed Forces Programming Act (2024-2030) should therefore focus on this issue. "*The clear desire to reduce the role of the military in Franco-African relations is also commendable. However, care must be taken to ensure that the determination to rethink French strategy in Africa does not lead to the*

¹¹⁶ Ifri, Après Barkhane: repenser la posture française en Afrique de l'Ouest, Laurent Bansept and Elie Tanenbaum, page 50.

undermining of essential cooperation tools such as the French elements in Senegal or the French forces in Côte d'Ivoire"¹¹⁷ . The effect of any dilapidation of pre-positioned forces would be to send out a radical message of withdrawal from France, which until now has been the last European country to emphasise its willingness to play an active part in the security of the African continent and in the fight against terrorism.

The coup d'état in Niger on 26 July 2023 further underlines the instability in the Sahel and France's lack of foothold in the region. The G5 Sahel, already in trouble since the departure of Mali and the conspicuous absence of Burkina Faso, is in danger of being reduced to Chad and Mauritania in the fight against jihadism. This episode, following the first two putsches in 2020 in Mali and 2022 in Burkina Faso, gave the French President the impetus to redefine his global strategy for Africa. France decided to turn its attention to the Indo-Pacific, in conjunction with the United States. While the intervention in the Sahel was in part a victory, with the Serval intervention brigade, the development of international structures against terrorism and major operational advances, it was also a tactical and political failure and reinforced anti-French and anti-European sentiment with the end of Operation Barkhane. However, the post-Barkhane doctrines can be seen as a continuation of the COIN and stabilisation doctrines and the desire to increase international frameworks and partnerships with civilians in order to fully cover the global approach and 3D strategy. The doctrinal approach in populo-centric operations, i.e. where the focus is on insurrectionary and/or terrorist phenomena, cannot separate military doctrine from political doctrine, even for the purposes of the study, without being biased. Counter-insurgency doctrine is partially outdated but can still be used or adapted theoretically in certain cases. Whatever the *modus operandi*, we need to know which local relays we can focus on and rely on. This notion can be seen in the way France has left Mali and Burkina Faso. The methods that have changed are not military ones but multi-sector partnerships. These partnerships also make it possible to fit into a very concrete multinational system, framed by several entities and international organisations in coalition.

(3) Multilateral response to coups d'état and growing security deficits

According to Alain Antil, researcher and Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Centre at the French Institute of International Relations (Ifri)¹¹⁸ , interviewed for L'OBS, the coup d'état in Gabon marks

¹¹⁷ Le Monde, Elie Tenenbaum, "Pour les armées françaises en Afrique, pas d'influence sans présence".

¹¹⁸ Alain Antil, researcher at Ifri, <https://www.ifri.org/fr/espace-media/lifri-medias/coups-detat-afrique-putschistes-promettent-une-deuxieme-independance>

the seventh forced seizure of power by a military regime in French-speaking Africa. This backward slide in democracy reflects both the structural fragility of these states and a return to the military regimes of the Cold War era. Anti-French sentiment is all the more correlated with the rise of Russian influence in West Africa. On 7 September 2023, French President Emmanuel Macron announced that the new strategy for West Africa would be debated in Parliament in autumn 2023. This instability and France's desire to redefine its objectives in Africa and the Sahel region was also mentioned during Elisabeth Borne's speech at the IHEDN on 13 September 2023. This speech was an opportunity to present France's assets and the study guidelines set by the IHEDN. The 2024-2030 LPM, officially adopted by Parliament, will release the exceptional sum of €413 billion. Enabling France to face up to new threats and maintain its position as one of the world's leading powers: that is the historic ambition of this LPM. But this law will also make it possible to take into account new areas of conflict such as cyber, space and the seabed. The multiplication of international threats and their proliferation is an additional security challenge. Investments will be made in several areas of expertise, including disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence, quantum physics, drones and cyber defence. In order to continue to lead global and regional influence strategies, we need to target new types of partnerships, as well as making structural changes in the management of military resources.

It was also an opportunity to explain the RETEX of the Serval and Barkhane operations and to counter certain misinformation or anti-French rhetoric. The Prime Minister praised France's achievements in the Sahel, reiterating the objectives of Barkhane and the role played by French forces in the fight against terrorism. *"Some would have us believe that our military commitment to operations Serval and Barkhane has failed. We can be proud of what our soldiers have done in the Sahel. They have fulfilled their mission: to enable the countries we came to help, at their request, to confront terrorist groups"*¹¹⁹.

On 16 September, the three military regimes in sub-Saharan Africa signed a charter establishing a defensive military alliance aimed at keeping the junta in power and dealing with any possible retaliation or aggression from ECOWAS, international organisations or intervening Western states. The new Alliance of Sahel States (AES), governed by the Liptako-Gourma Charter, which refers to the Tri-border area, aims above all to put in place an architecture of collective defence and mutual assistance between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. This initiative is not new, since back in January

¹¹⁹ Elisabeth Borne, Speech IHEDN 13/09/2023.

2017 the three states announced the creation of a multinational security force, against a backdrop of the fight against terrorism, based on the model of the mixed multinational force (MMF) set up in the Lake Chad basin to fight the GAT Boko Haram. This is a collective defence clause, similar to that provided for in NATO's Article 5. According to AFP, Article 6 of the Charter states that "*any attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one or more contracting parties will be considered as an aggression against the other parties and will trigger a duty of assistance and relief on the part of all parties, individually or collectively, including the use of armed force to restore and ensure security within the area covered by the Alliance*"¹²⁰. The sanctions and warnings issued by ECOWAS following the removal from office of President Bazoum, who is still a prisoner of the junta, have led to an escalation in tensions. This alliance marks the materialisation of a military response in the event of external intervention and a risk of the conflict becoming bogged down. But this military agreement raises other concerns: the collapse of the G5 Sahel and the end of partnerships with its previous international allies. On the one hand, the three countries of the Alliance are declaring their opposition to the actions of ECOWAS, which they describe as high treason, and on the other, tensions with France are growing, with Niger even suspecting French armed intervention in the near future and threatening to retaliate.

The fight against terrorism remains one of the main points of the charter. Since the departure of the French troops and the UN mission, the GAT have once again taken centre stage. Following the signing of this agreement, the Malian Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that this remained the primary motivation for signing such a charter. On paper, the agreement makes it possible to contain both the terrorist threat and the Tuareg rebellions in the Tri-border area. As a result, Niger and Burkina Faso forces can now supplement the FAMA against the predominantly Tuareg GAT in the north of the country.

This military agreement seems to mark the beginning of a new G3 Sahel. Already fragile since successive coups d'état, the coalition between the five Sahelian states now seems impossible due to differences of opinion and alliances, and warnings from ECOWAS. This represents an upheaval in the geostrategic landscape of the Sahel-Saharan strip, but also for French strategy in West Africa. This new alliance is also symbolic of the regionalisation of anti-French and anti-Western sentiment, with the definitive withdrawal of French forces and the accelerated end of MINUSMA. The position of the international community will soon have to determine the value and legitimacy of the ESA, whose signatories belong to transitional governments, as in Mali and Burkina Faso, or which

¹²⁰ AFP report. Press release: <https://www.lexpress.fr/monde/afrique/alliance-des-etats-du-sahel-le-detail-de-laccord-militaire-signé-par-le-niger-le-mali-et-le-burkina-HPDXN6CLPVBSRPLCLiy22FKYTM/>

could become one, as in Niger. This is all the more true given that international positions in the region are shifting and evolving with the dispatch of a new US ambassador and the resumption of surveillance operations, France's inflexibility regarding the positioning of its troops at the Niamey base and the arrival of a Chinese delegation to meet the new government of Niger.

CONCLUSION

Operations Serval and Barkhane have thus led to an innovation in the construction and command of an OPEX. Ultra-mobility, the global approach and joint deployment have led to changes in the concepts of force employment and defence and security strategies for external operations. From the intervention brigade to the installation force in a multi-border theatre, the implementation of the COIN doctrine was also illustrated during this crisis as having drawn lessons from previous conflicts. The intervention in Chad in 1965, the first model for the application of the COIN doctrine by French forces in modern crisis management, followed by the war in Afghanistan, where the lessons learned in counter-insurgency and the management of a pre-positioned force in a wider theatre are noteworthy, led to an evolution in the concepts and doctrines applicable in the case of an asymmetric conflict and the management of crises and insurrectionary risks. The influence of the United States, particularly following the intervention in Iraq and the drafting of its own counter-insurgency doctrine, has influenced the definition of a NATO framework and the necessary adaptation of French doctrine in this area.

However, the end of Operation Barkhane highlighted the porous nature of the objectives and the lack of tactical victories. Indeed, the COIN doctrine as such, which applies to the fight against modelled threats, is necessary but insufficient. Doctrines relating to stabilisation operations are more applicable to the current contexts of crises and high-intensity armed conflicts. Moreover, to be successful, the COIN and counter-terrorism doctrines require huge long-term resources and effective stabilisation and local infrastructure development efforts, which are still lacking in French OPEX.

In the course of the RETEX, Operation Barkhane led to a transition in French military doctrine. Although it should be seen as a continuation of the COIN doctrine and stabilisation doctrines, the analysis has also opened the door to greater civil-military cooperation and a preference for international coalitions rather than solitary interventions. OPEX are destined to be transformed: shorter, with greater cooperation and precise objectives, forces on the scale of Barkhane are no longer relevant.

The operation also showed that in COIN, intelligence and control of the risks on the ground are essential in the fight against the insurgents. The Russian presence also enabled us to analyse the flaws in information warfare. The Sahel War brings together several aspects of asymmetric warfare and provides a basis for reflection on the evolution of modern conflict management, where the risks are global and widespread. Knowledge of the social terrain, a global approach, psychological

support and development aid are now an integral part of the development of post-Barkhane military concepts and doctrines, as can be seen in the aid affiliated with Ukraine. At NATO level, the development of C3 and C3 Log is pushing the use of forces as well as military support and logistics to focus on civil-military cooperation.

APPENDIX A: MAPS AND CHANGES IN THE POSITIONING OF FRENCH TROOPS IN OPERATION SERVAL AND THEN BARKHANE.¹²¹

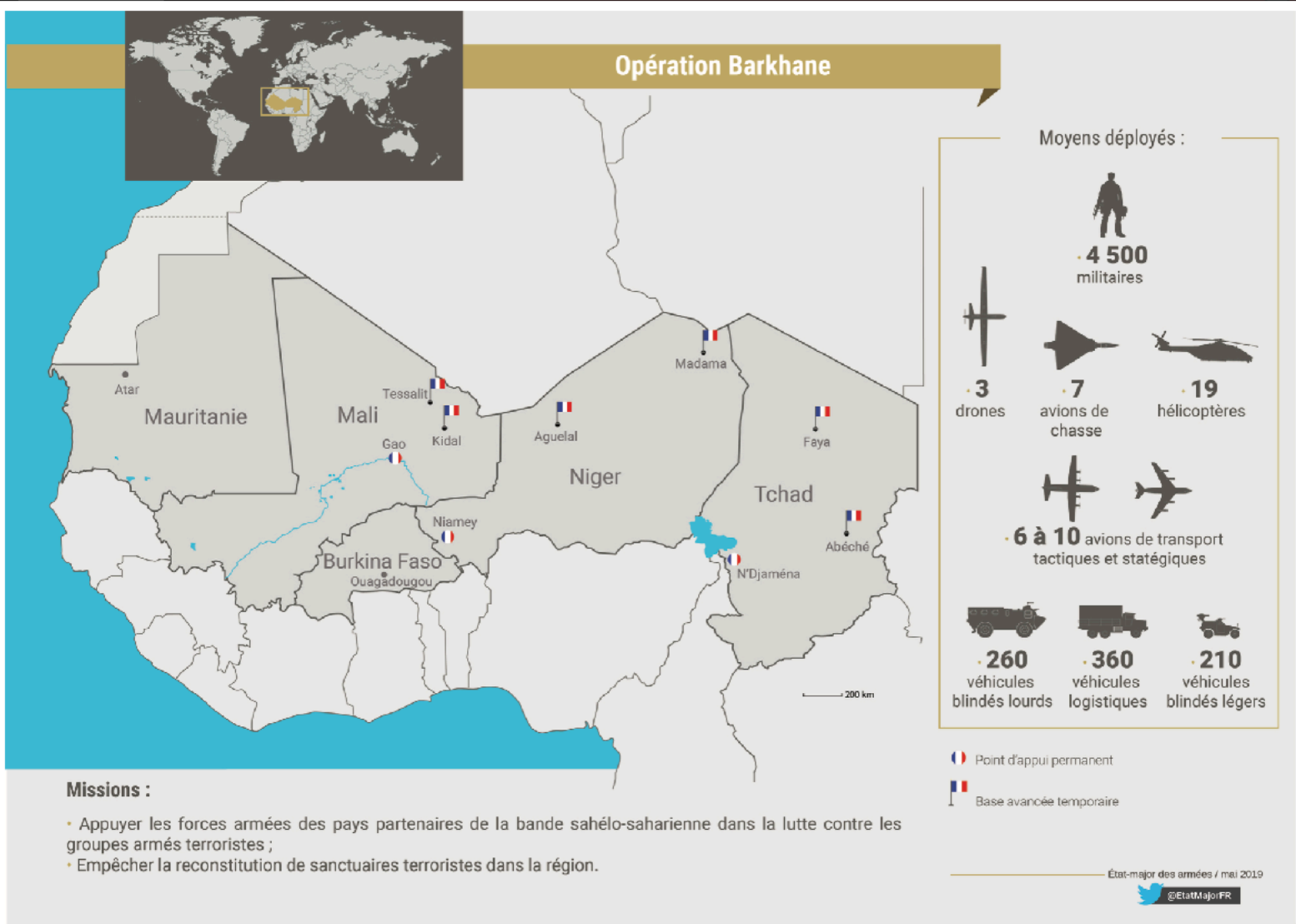


Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international, direction des Archives (pôle géographique) © Janvier 2017

¹²¹ Map of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the francediplomatie.fr website



L'opération Serval au mali : cartographieCrédit : Agence IDE



Crédits : EMA

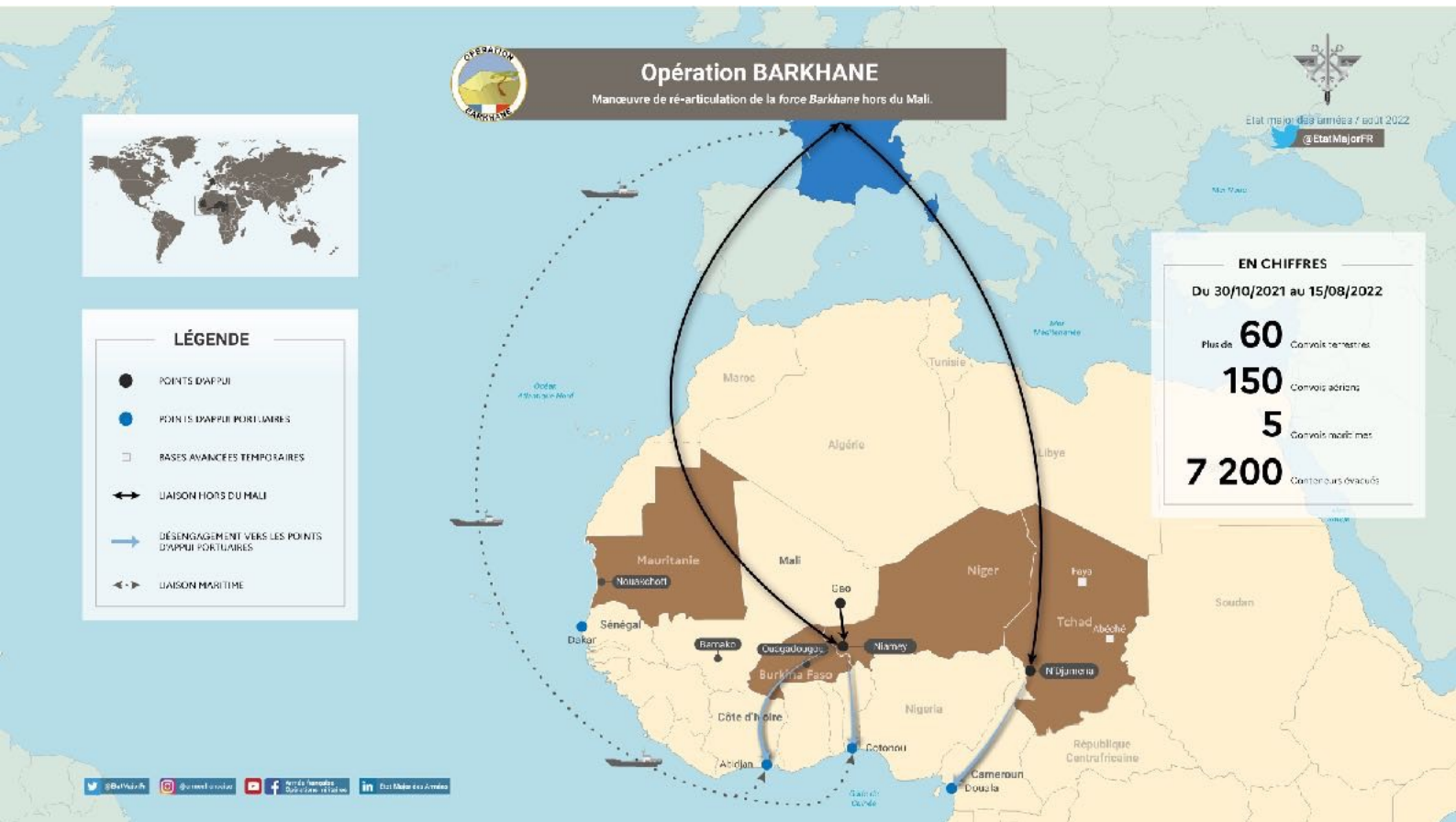
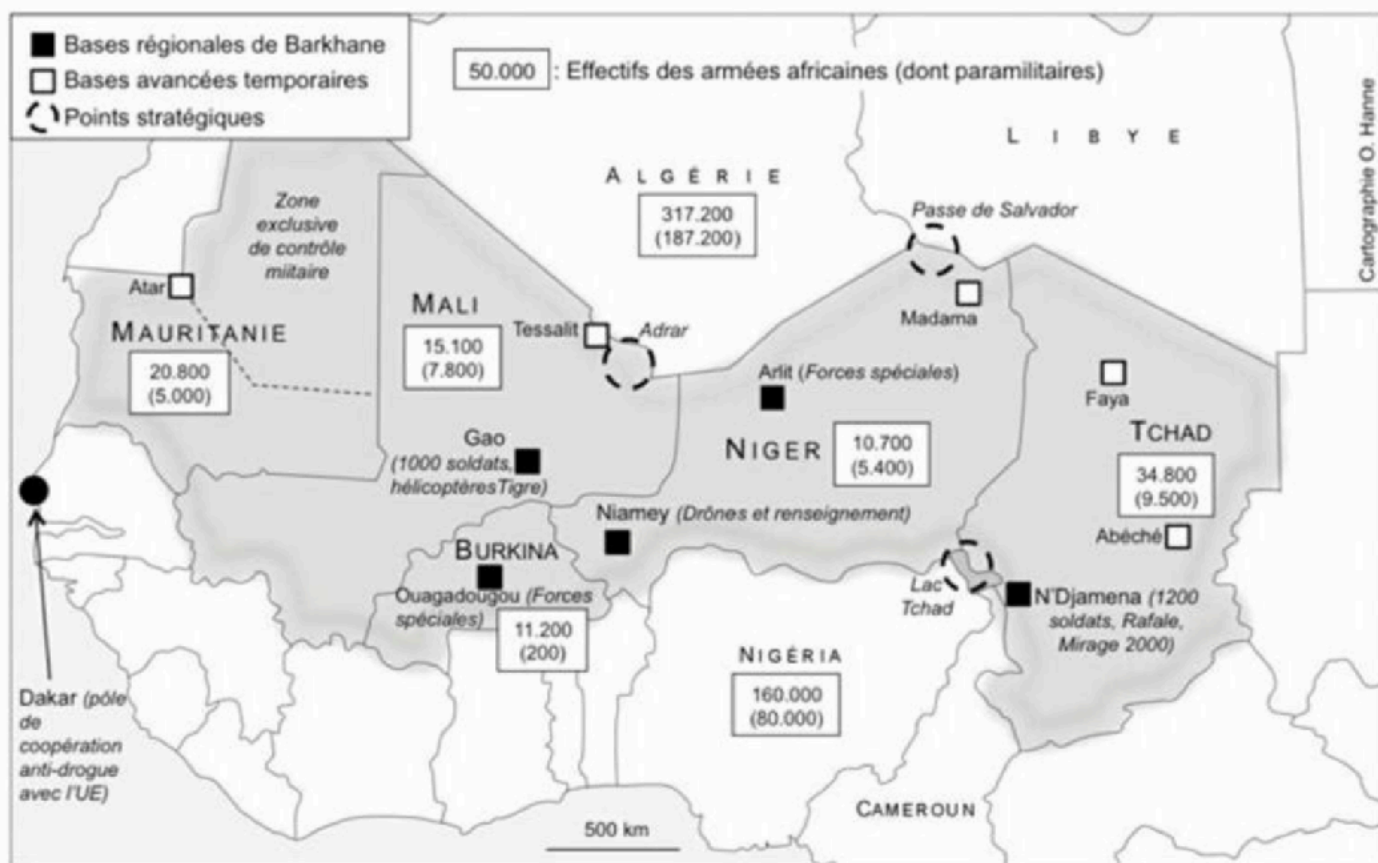


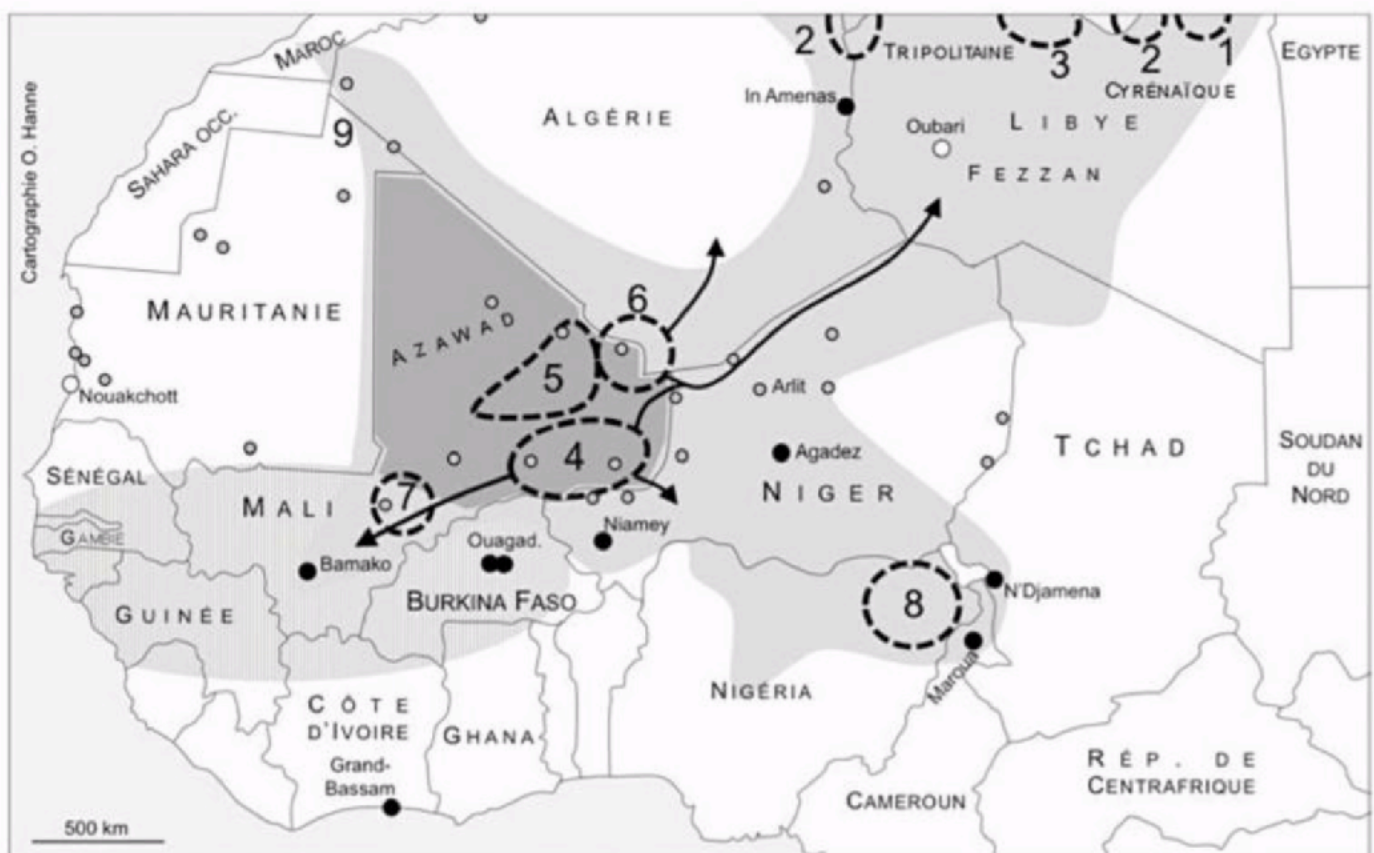
Figure n°1 – Barkhane et le G5 Sahel



Cartographie O. Hanne

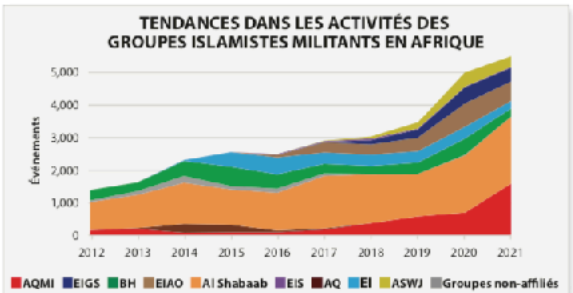
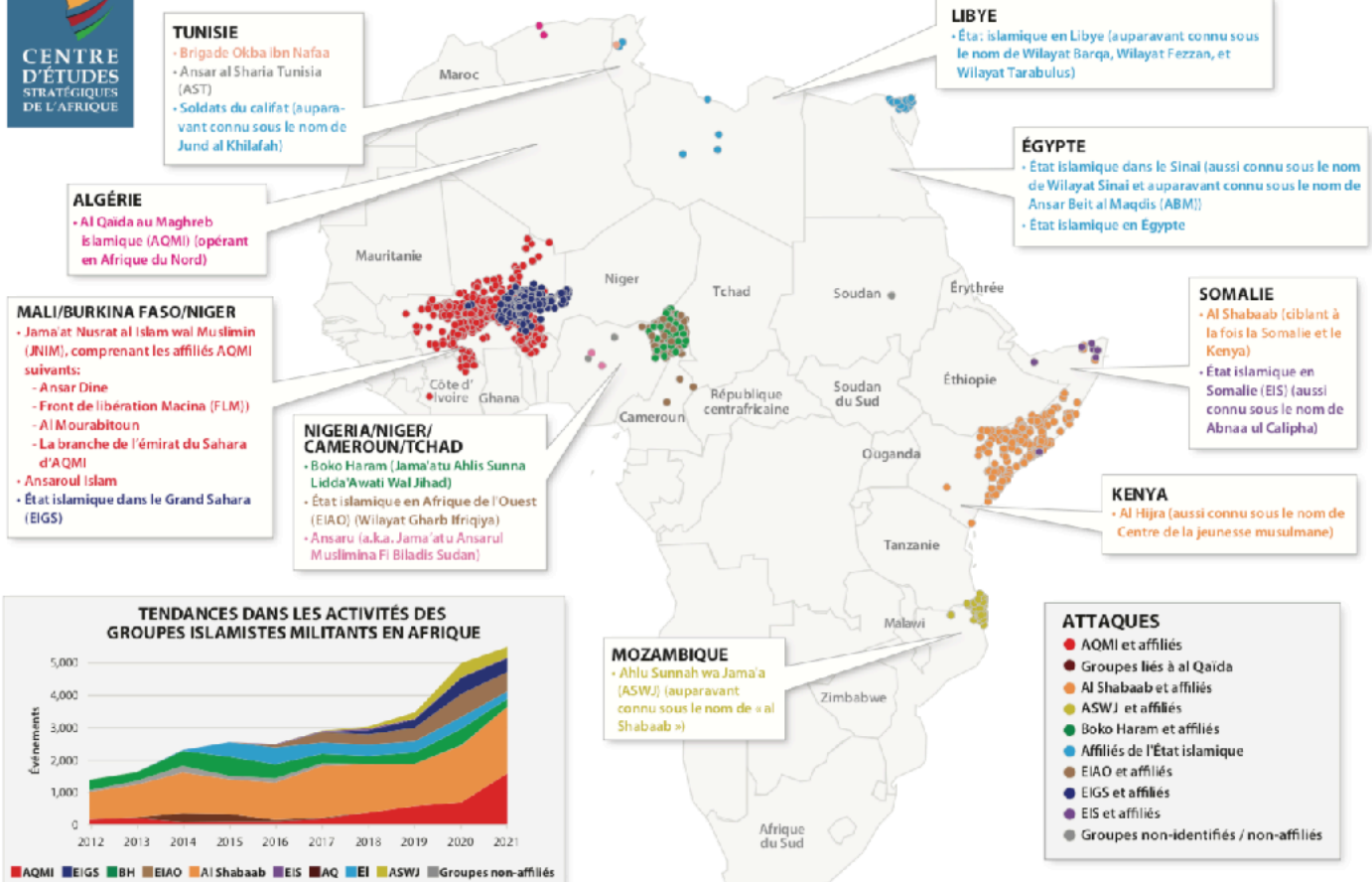
- Attentats et prises d'otages d'AQMI (2003-2011)
 - Échec de l'Azawad islamique (2012-2013)
 - ← Déplacement des GAT suite à Serval
 - Zone de déstabilisation par le djihadisme (2012-2015)
 - Principaux attentats (2013-2017)
 - Formation d'un nouvel espace djihadiste en Sénégal (2015-2016)
- GAT et leur zone d'action :**
- 1 : État islamique de Lybie
 - 2 : Ansar al-Charia
 - 3 : Frères musulmans et autres GAT
 - 4 : MUJAO, al-Mourabitoune
 - 5 : Ansar Dine
 - 6 : AQMI et filiales
 - 7 : FLM
 - 8 : Boko Haram
 - 9 : Mouvement sahraoui de la jeunesse islamique

Figure n°2 – Le risque djihadiste (2013-2017)



¹²⁵ Cartographies obtained in: HANNE, Olivier. LARABI, Guillaume. Jihad in the Sahel: threats, Operation Barkhane, regional cooperation. Bernard Giovanangeli éditeur. France, 2015. 190 pages.
And HANNE, Olivier. Operation Barkhane in the face of changing risks in the Sahel-Saharan strip. In *Outre-Terre*, N°51, Cairn. pp. 225-237.
<<https://www.cairn.info/revue-outre-terre2-2017-2-page-225.htm>>consulted on 03/08/2023.

GROUPES ISLAMISTES MILITANTS EN AFRIQUE



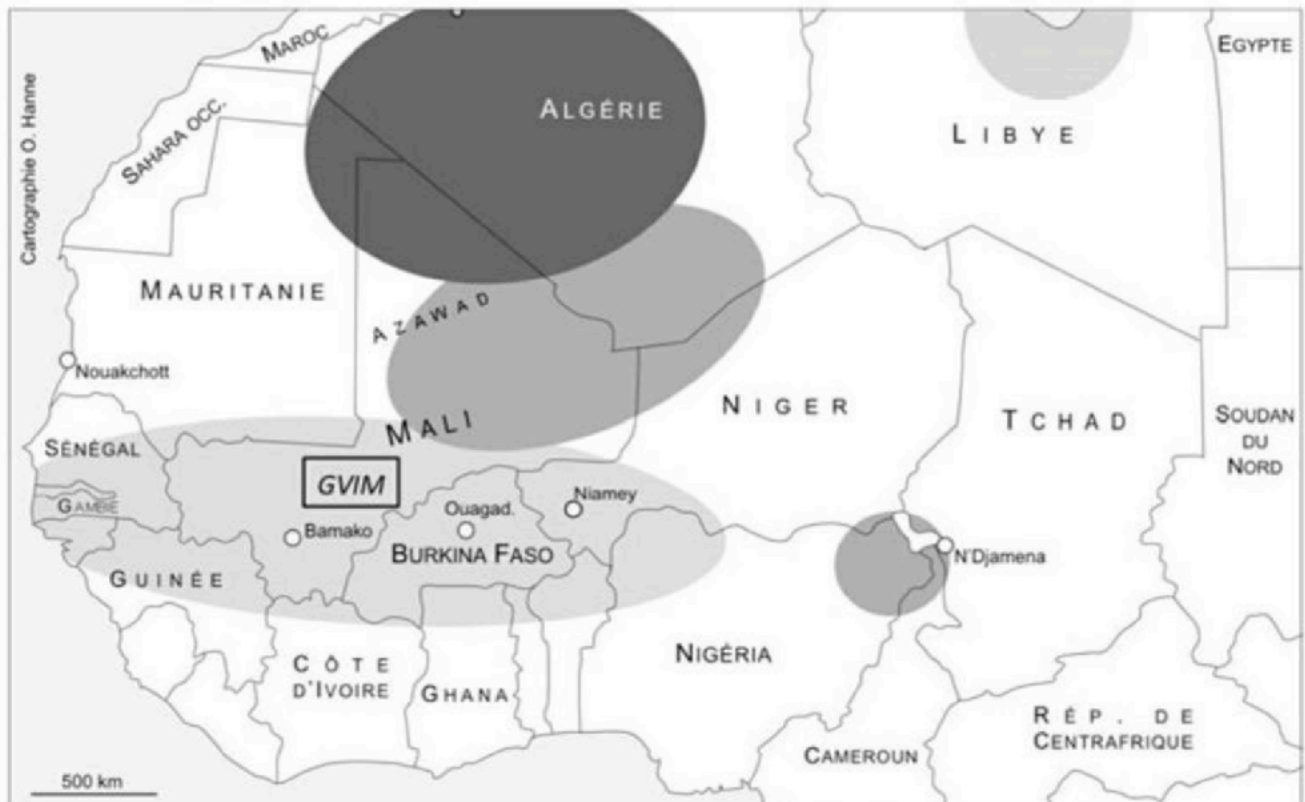
Mise à jour : janvier 2022.

Note : Compilé par le Centre d'études stratégiques de l'Afrique, cette infographie montre les événements violents impliquant les groupes indiqués au cours de la période de 12 mois se terminant le 31 décembre 2021. Les membres des groupes indiqués ne les sont qu'à des fins d'information et ne doivent pas être considérés comme des désignations officielles. En raison de la nature fluide de certains groupes, leurs membres sont susceptibles de changer.

Sources : Projet de données d'emplacements et d'événements armés (ACLED); Daniel Bynman; HumAngle; International Crisis Group; SITE Intelligence Group; Le Groupe Soufian; projet de cartographie des groupes militants de l'Université de Stanford; Stratfor; Consortium de recherche et d'analyse du terrorisme (TRAC); et Aaron Y. Zelin.



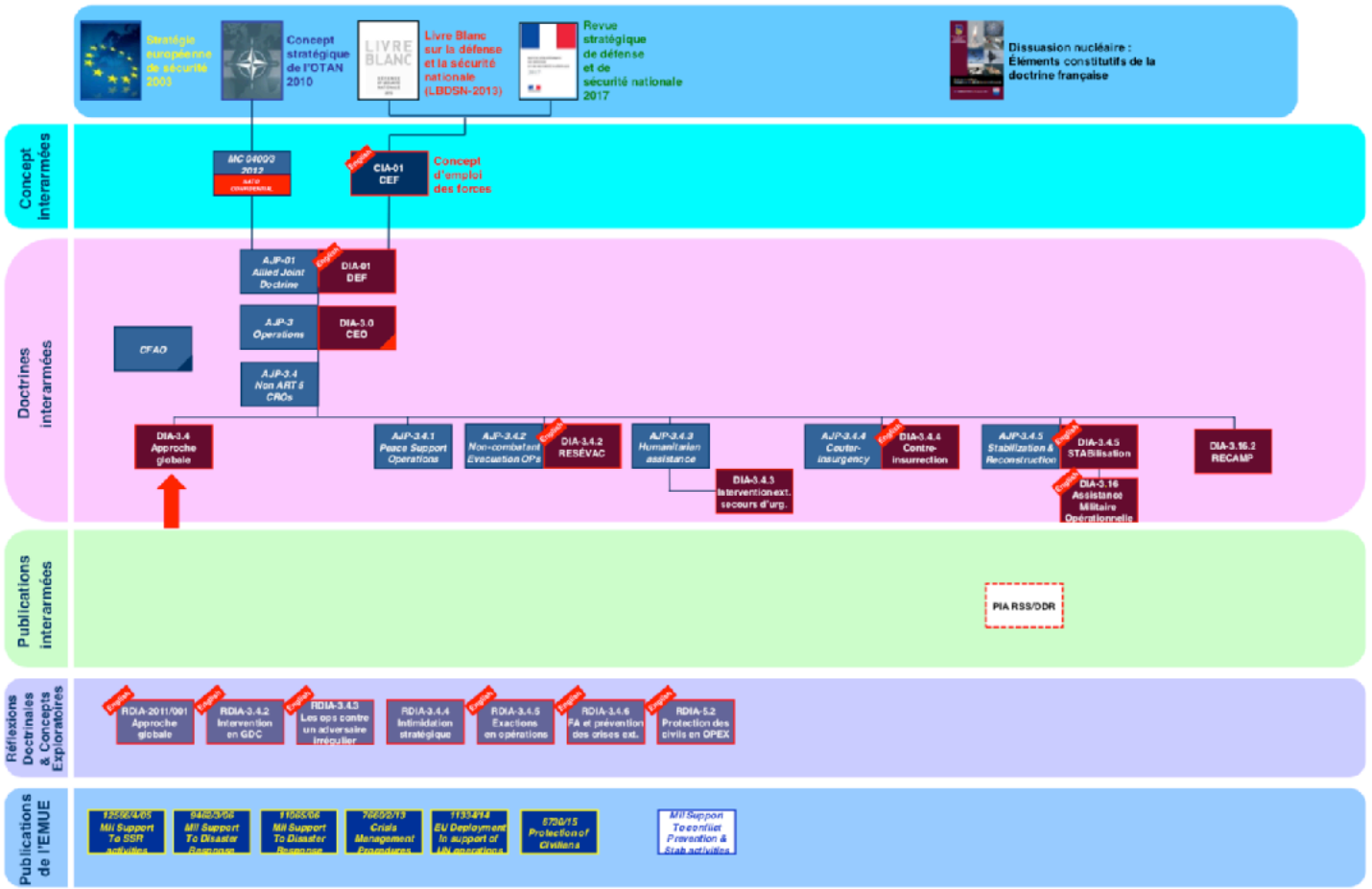
Figure n°4 – Les mutations du djihadisme africain (2006-2017)



- 2006-2010 : djihadisme d'AQMI, politique et magrébin
- 2010-2013 : djihadisme ethnique (touareg ou kanouri), territorial et régionaliste
- 2013-2016 : djihadisme de DAECH, international et eschatologique
- 2016-2017 : djihadisme subsaharien, sursaut des djihads du XIX^e siècle
- GVIM 2017... : djihadisme unifié, proliférant sur l'éclatement national et sociétal

APPENDIX B: DEFINITION CHAIN FOR FRENCH CONCEPTS AND DOCTRINES.

Domaine 3.4 Prévention et gestion de crise



APPENDIX C: RETEX AND PROCESS IN FRANCE, NATO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

French Army RETEX chain¹²⁶.

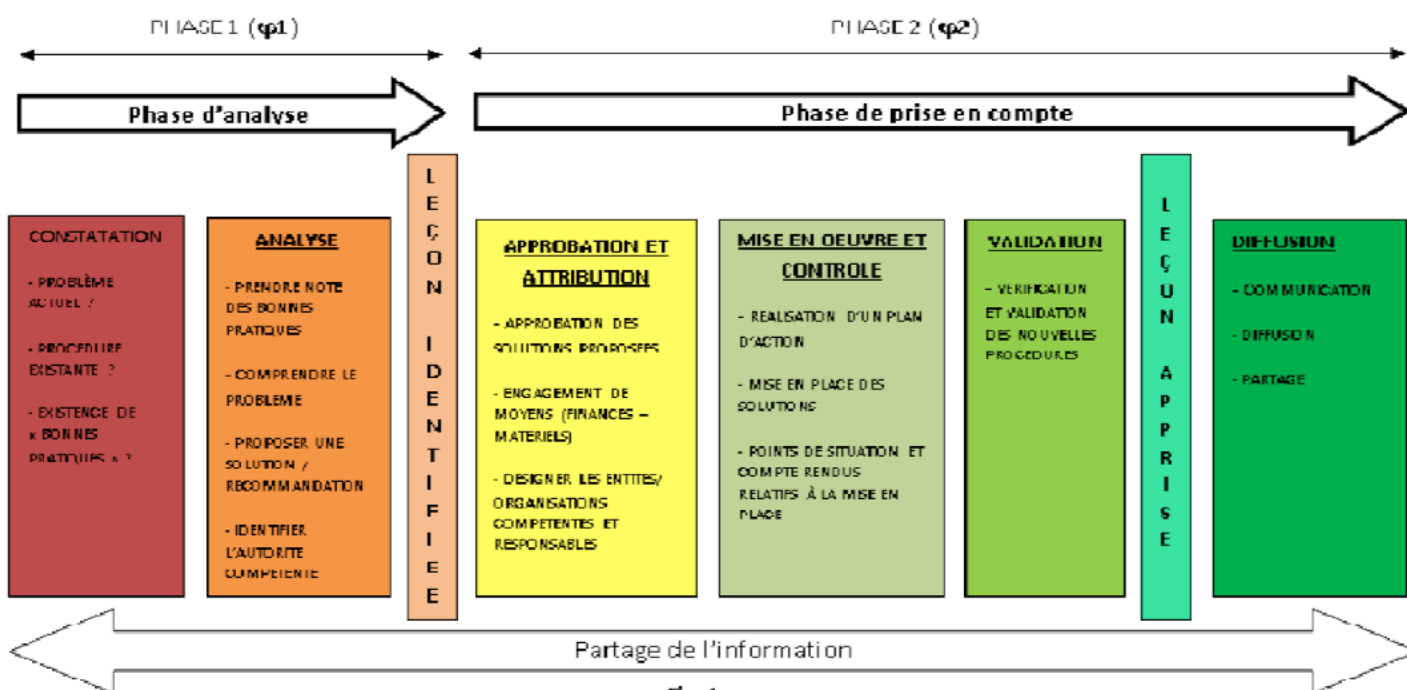


Fig. 1

¹⁰ Bi-SC Command Directive 080-006 Lessons learned : " A Lessons learned capability provides a commander with the structure, process and tools necessary to capture, analyse and take remedial action on any issue and to communicate and share results to achieve improvement."

¹¹ Ibid.

¹²⁶ CICDE. The RETEX. Framework document DC-002_RETEX(2014), No. 140/DEF/CICDE/NP of 19 June 2014. Director of publication Vice-Admiral Arnaud de TARLÉ Director of the CICDE, Editor-in-chief Colonel Marc LE BOUIL, Authors Collaborative document under the direction of Colonel Marc LE BOUIL. Accessed on 20/07/2023.

And CICDE. Le RETEX. Joint publication PIA-7.7(A)_RETEX(2017), No. 13 /DEF/CICDE/NP of 26 January 2017. Major General Jean-François PARLANTI CICDE Director, Editor-in-Chief Colonel Thierry CHIGOT CICDE Deputy Director "Doctrine - RETEX", Authors Document revised under the direction of Colonel Thomas SEIGNON (CICDE). Consulted on 23/07/2023.

NATO RETEX chain¹²⁷.

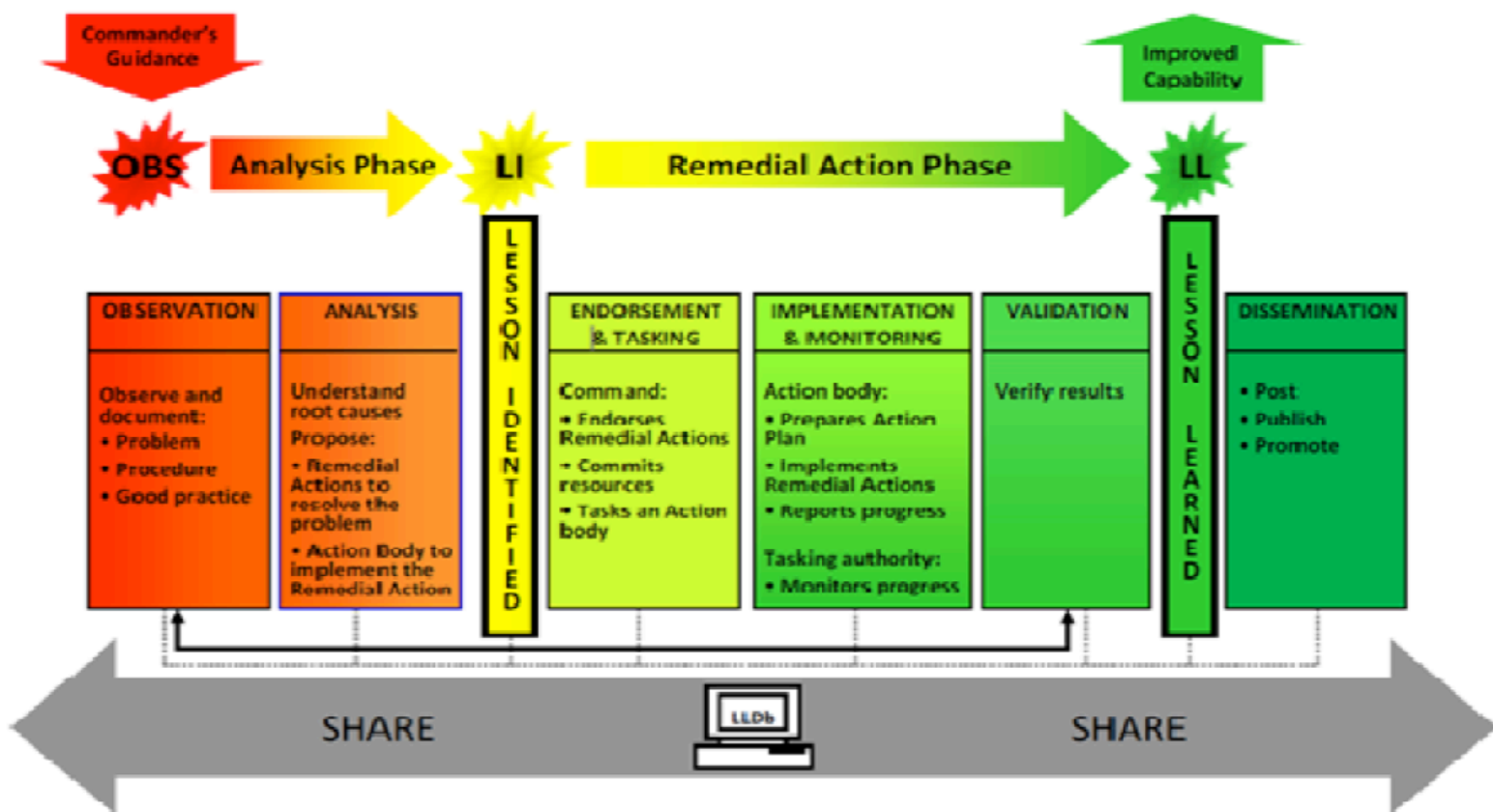


FIG. 2. - Schéma décrivant le processus LL, extrait de la Bi-SC Directive 080-006, p.7

¹²⁷ CICDE. The RETEX. Framework document DC-002_RETEX(2014), No. 140/DEF/CICDE/NP of 19 June 2014. Director of publication Vice-Admiral Arnaud de TARLÉ Director of the CICDE, Editor-in-chief Colonel Marc LE BOUIL, Authors Collaborative document under the direction of Colonel Marc LE BOUIL. Accessed on 20/07/2023.

And CICDE. Le RETEX. Joint publication PIA-7.7(A)_RETEX(2017), No. 13 /DEF/CICDE/NP of 26 January 2017. Major General Jean-François PARLANTI CICDE Director, Editor-in-Chief Colonel Thierry CHIGOT CICDE Deputy Director "Doctrine - RETEX", Authors Document revised under the direction of Colonel Thomas SEIGNON (CICDE). Consulted on 23/07/2023.

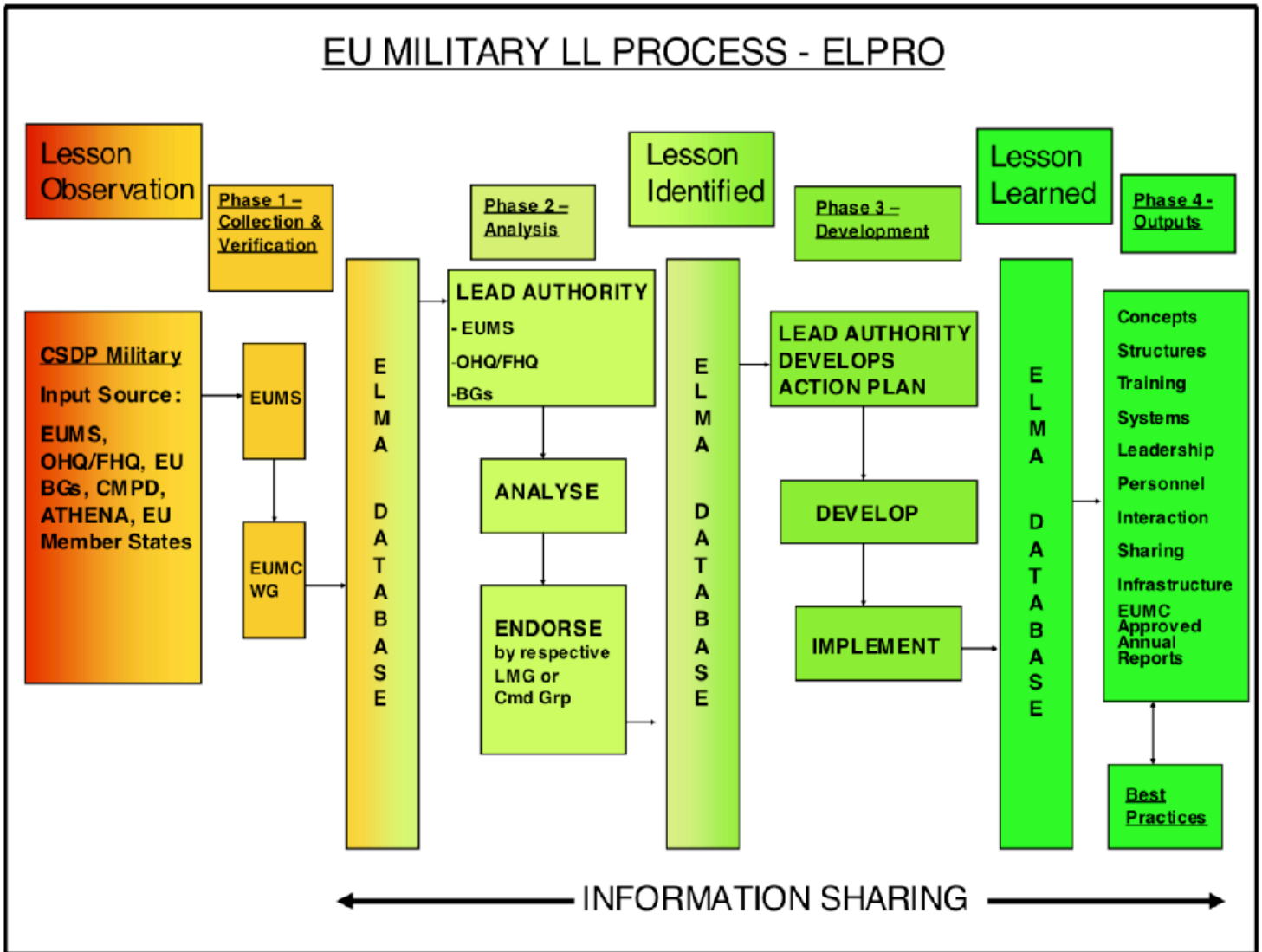


FIG 3. - Processus RETEX de l'UE, EU Military Lessons Learned Process

¹²⁸ CICDE. The RETEX. Framework document DC-002_RETEX(2014), No. 140/DEF/CICDE/NP of 19 June 2014. Director of publication Vice-Admiral Arnaud de TARLÉ Director of the CICDE, Editor-in-chief Colonel Marc LE BOUIL, Authors Collaborative document under the direction of Colonel Marc LE BOUIL. Accessed on 20/07/2023.

And CICDE. Le RETEX. Joint publication PIA-7.7(A)_RETEX(2017), No. 13 /DEF/CICDE/NP of 26 January 2017. Major General Jean-François PARLANTI CICDE Director, Editor-in-Chief Colonel Thierry CHIGOT CICDE Deputy Director "Doctrine - RETEX", Authors Document revised under the direction of Colonel Thomas SEIGNON (CICDE). Consulted on 23/07/2023.

APPENDIX D: CONSTRUCTION OF THE OPEX RISK ANALYSIS.

Grid for analysing risks in a theatre of operations¹²⁹ .



FIG. 3. – Matrice d'aide à la décision.

¹²⁹ CICDE. Legal framework for international cooperation activities. Joint publication PIA-5.4(A)_JURACTIC(2019). Director of publication Air Division General Thierry Duquenoy Director of the CICDE, Editor-in-chief Colonel Michel-Henri Faivre Deputy Director "Doctrine" of the CICDE, Authors Chief Superintendent Christophe David Commander (R) Thibault Beurnier Mrs Christine Piltant, Mr David Helm Mrs Audrey Martineau. Accessed on 02/08/2023.

APPENDIX E: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS ON THE SSA.

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DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Master 2 "European Governance and European Global Studies" course

SEMI-DIRECTIVE INTERVIEW

Academic year 2022-23

Surname, First name: FREIERMUTH Jean-Paul

Profession: Chief Medical Officer, Colonel, *EMO-Santé* Referent Programming

Theme: Supply and operational support for forces

Date and venue: 20/06/2023, Paris.

1. Organising medical evacuations from a theatre of operations

Medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) is defined by NATO as: "*the medically supervised process of moving any person who is wounded, injured or ill to and/or between medical treatment facilities as an integral part of the treatment continuum*"¹³⁰. These may be land or air vehicles. Thanks to the medical equipment on board, the necessary care can be provided immediately. A MEDEVAC therefore provides continuous medical supervision right up to the final destination.

The SSA provides initial care for the casualty, as close as possible to the place of injury, and carries out various evacuations depending on the theatre of operations and the medical needs observed. France uses the *damage control doctrine*, i.e. providing care quickly after the injury has occurred and carrying out the appropriate back-up surgery at a later stage.

In the military sector, *strategic evacuation* (STRATEVAC) and *tactical evacuation* (TACEVAC) describe the movements of the casualty from the point of injury to their return to France for final treatment.¹³¹

¹³⁰ AJMEDP-2 Allied Joint Medical Doctrine for medical Evacuation (NATO)

¹³¹ AJMEDP-2 : Fwd / TAC./STRAT

STRATEVAC medical evacuations involve the repatriation of the wounded and sick to mainland France, for definitive treatment in mainland France's infrastructure hospitals known as Role 4 (HIA).

TACEVAC medical evacuations involve transporting casualties from a level 2 care facility to a higher level facility (Role 3).

The medical teams are not the same for all types of MEDEVAC.

In the area of operations, the Chief of the Defence Staff is supported in his role as national strategic military commander by the Deputy Chief of Operations of the Armed Forces Staff (SC OPS of the EMA), who has the Operations Planning and Control Centre (CPCO), which is the national strategic command body for operations.¹³²

The commander of the strategic level of an operation (operation commander - COPER) is responsible for the design, preparation and overall direction of the operation for which he is the commander. The operational level is the highest level of joint military command in a theatre of operations, at which operations are planned, conducted and supported by a joint force, with a view to achieving the military objectives set by the strategic level. It covers military, civil-military and political-military dimensions.

2. Supplying health products in a theatre of operations

Medical supplies use the logistics flows defined by the armed forces to transport health products. For example, by air, civilian carriers can be used to transport products from a military force to a forward base or logistics base. Certain means of transport can also be dedicated to transporting healthcare products for military use.

One important constraint in the transport of healthcare products is the storage temperature. Some products, such as blood and certain medicines, need to be kept at a positive temperature.

The medical supply chain for an operation must be able to transport blood. In this example, a thermochip enables the temperature of the product to be tracked throughout transport, ensuring that it is well preserved and anticipating any risk of alteration. If the temperature is too hot or too cold for a period specified by the manufacturer, the products must be destroyed.

Emergency refuelling procedures are also envisaged in critical situations.

¹³² Source DIA-3.0 command of operational commitments outside national territory

Products such as vaccines can also pose logistical problems. For example, vaccines against COVID-19 had to be transported at -25°C in a dry ice device that would not allow them to be transported for more than 4 days.

The time taken to supply the various products meets different emergency criteria: medical supplies can include medicines, pharmaceutical products, vaccines and hospital beds.

The supply mode can be either just-in-time or pull-flow. One is not exclusive of the other.

The Ministry of the Armed Forces also has provisional stocks in case of crises. Pharmacists are responsible for adjusting pharmaceutical and medical resources, and for building up strategic stocks.

3. OPEX medical support and SSA capabilities

There are four levels of care for people injured in conflict situations.

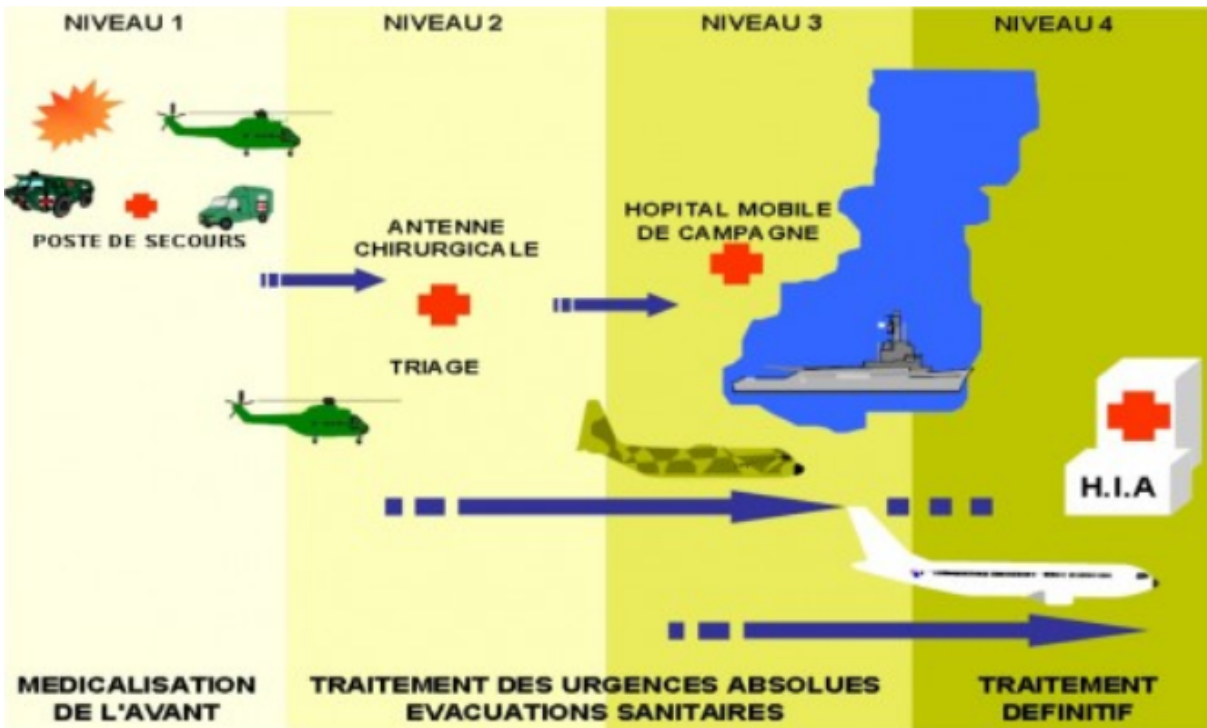
Role 1, or forward medical station, provides forward medical care for the wounded soldier. Its mission is dedicated to the initial paramedical and medical care of the wounded soldier at the front.

There are no surgical resources in role 1.

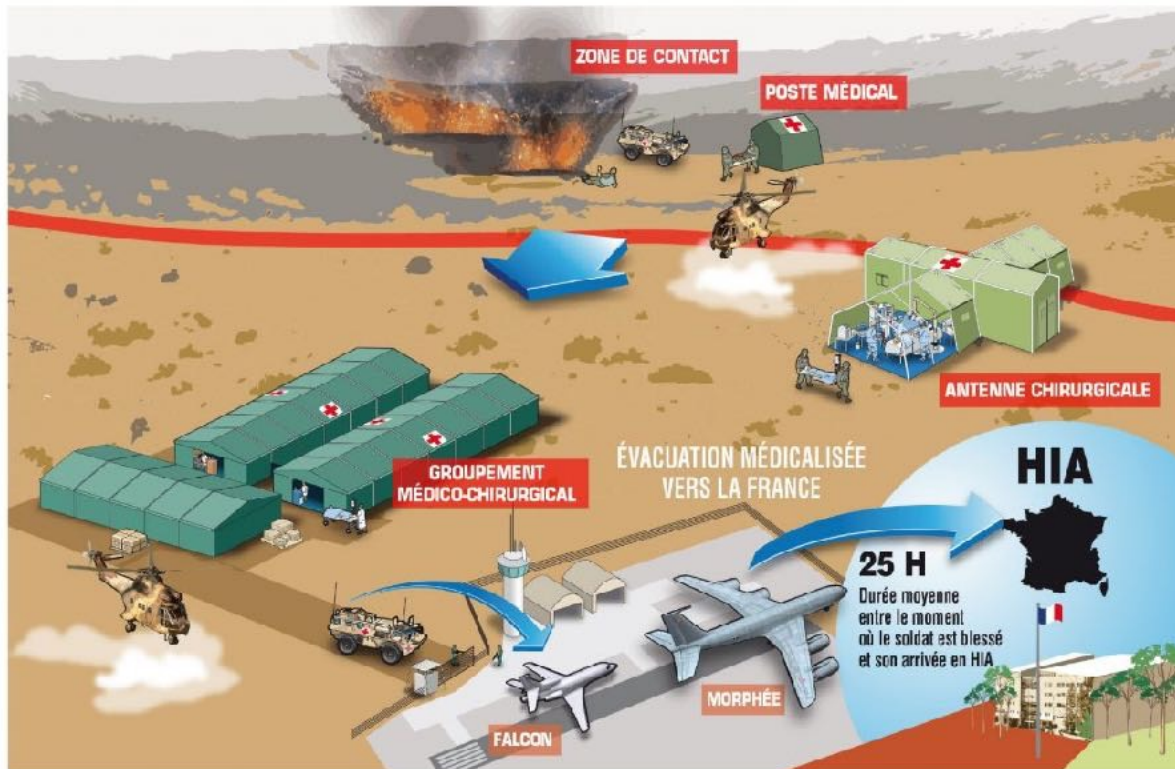
Role 2 is the first level of care with surgical capability. The conduct of resuscitation and life-saving surgery at the front is a pillar of French doctrine on medical support for operations. Its role is to triage, stabilise, operate on and, if necessary, hospitalise the wounded in a theatre of operations, before evacuating them to another equivalent or superior care structure. Medical evacuation may be to another Role 2 facility, or to the rear to a Role 3 (TACEVAC) or in mainland France to a Role 4 (STRATEVAC). Depending on its capacity, Role 2 can be *Forward*, *Basic* or *Enhanced*.

Role 3 or military field hospital (MFC) corresponds to surgical treatment and heavy resuscitation capabilities. This is the most comprehensive health structure in terms of surgical skills and capacity for treatment during operations.

Role 4 corresponds to the Army Training Hospitals (HIA) on French territory. The HIAs provide definitive care and rehabilitation for the wounded after their initial treatment in the theatre of operations.



CHAÎNE DE SOUTIEN MÉDICAL EN OPÉRATION





4. Legal framework for medical personnel on operations

Medical personnel deployed on external operations are subject to the instructions of the Armed Forces General Staff. The SSA does not have any independence in the organisation of an operation. To fulfil its missions, the armed forces health service has resources that come directly under its authority. It is responsible for the recruitment, training, management and administration of active and reserve military personnel in its own corps and specialities. The SSA is modelled on existing operations, and is a mandatory but not autonomous component. As military personnel, the public health code and the defence code govern acts of military medicine. Military doctors are not registered with the Ordre des Médecins, but perform their duties as military personnel. In the context of an external operation, NATO doctrine is applied jointly.

The *EMO-santé* is the CPCO's strategic advisor in the field of medical support, and is the technical prime contractor for its operational resources.¹³³

The CPCO sets the duration of the mandate, including in particular military medical personnel deployed on external operations. These mandate periods are also established with international organisations (UN, NATO, EUFOR, etc.) when France takes part in an operation as part of a coalition. For example, deployment times vary depending on the operation. It was set at 6 months for Afghanistan and 4 months for Barkhane.

¹³³ source DIA 4.10 operational medicalsupport

Master 2 "European Governance and European Global Studies" course

SEMI-DIRECTIVE INTERVIEW

Academic year 2022-23

Full name: XXX

Profession: Chief Medical Officer, Colonel, Deputy Head of the Employment Office in the Operations Division, PECC on Operation Barkhane.

Topic: Health support planning for external operations, risk analysis, command coordination.

Date and venue: 11/07/2023, Paris.

1. Planning an external operation

The Health component of the Operational Headquarters (OHQ) is divided into different units responsible for planning an external operation. The M1 is responsible for manpower. Its role is to equip the posts with the number of personnel required to provide the best possible support to the military forces deployed. The M1 unit organises prospecting, mainly through requests to the Directorate of Force Medicine (DMF), but also through the Directorate of Army Hospitals (DHA). Each chain builds its manpower according to a military unit table (MUT). A TUM is drawn up for each operation and describes each projected unit line and the skills of each pax. These personnel numbers are constantly changing throughout the operation.

The national emergency echelon (ENU) defines the volume required in anticipation of the TUM. A job description for each unit is presented. The SSA proposes a dimensioning with the aim of sustaining: the volume of health personnel is based on the volume of soldiers.

The SSA plan sizes the support to meet certain standards. Medical reports and records are kept throughout the operation. The pax deployed are selected for departure after their suitability has been

checked. Prior to departure, an advisory opinion is sought from the military doctor, with the final decision on deployment resting with the commander after technical advice.

2. Risk analysis in a theatre of operations

The analysis of surrounding risks is integrated into the command architecture.

We need to define and inform people about France's own areas of competence and prerogatives, in particular water quality, the quality of healthcare on offer and the quality of human life.

When a theatre opens, a preliminary risk assessment is carried out. This enables the health needs to be estimated, but does not influence the decision to participate. The volume of care to be deployed and the logistics to be put in place are then determined to ensure that the medical support provided to soldiers remains at a minimum.

Among the risks, the conservation of pharmaceutical products is a primary concern. The supply and conservation chain is subject to temperature constraints. Products such as insulin, medicines, blood and vaccines must be stored at less than 25 degrees Celsius. Depending on the product, transport times vary.

For example, in the case of blood supplies, if the cold chain is broken (as can be seen using thermal tracers), restocking can be carried out as a matter of extreme urgency and samples taken on site.

Vaccines are not usually administered in a theatre of operations, but the situation at COVID was an exception. Doses of vaccine had to be stored at -60 degrees Celsius.

3. Ethics, politics and international law

Depending on the size of the operation, the organisation and personnel involved will vary. The structural construction must be consistent and coherent with international law and the partners involved.

Role 1 (R1) and Role 2 (R2) structures must comply with at least the standards defined by NATO. These standards are set out in STANAGS (*standardisation agreement*). Each of the participating nations' R1 and R2 structures must provide a minimum level of medical services and facilities. The same problem arises for UN-led missions.

The Ministry of Health has no role in supervising the SSA. No military doctor is registered with the Ordre des Médecins. However, discussions may be necessary on matters of shared competence, such as blood transfusion.

No operation is entirely medical. The special context of COVID-19 led to collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Armed Forces on an exceptional basis.

There is no direct political influence on military medical support in operations. The SSA is deployed to support and follow the planned missions. Its primary role is to be able to support and provide the care required by combatants. The medical response must be proportional to the needs of the volume of warfare. This volume can vary throughout an operation due to the evolution of the missions themselves and the necessary requirements. The SSA does not have independent decision-making powers.

The funding of the medical component of an operation is a direct result of the overall budget for the operation, as set out in the military programming law and applied by the DAF BOP (Bureau Opération de la Direction Affaires Financières).

4. Medical support in theatre

The French military medical support system is over-medicalised compared with many of its partners. The USA, for example, does not have the same system, the difference lying mainly in the type of personnel deployed and their specialisations.

In the theatre of operations, different chains coordinate decision-making. At medical level, the DirMed is responsible for overall supervision. The PECC (*patient control evacuation centre*) is, in the French sense, a medical regulation function. Any patient present in a theatre of operations depends on its decision-making. This applies to both the wounded and the sick. It organises and supervises the management of care flows. His role is to advise the military commander of the operational centre, to reorganise the medical system if necessary, and to commit medical evacuation resources in conjunction with the head of tactical operations. His decisions go back to the DirMed, who is the health advisor to the general command of the operation and the deputy to the command. At the end of each medical treatment, a report is given to the ECCP. The PECC determines his own involvement, and sometimes no action on his part is necessary (minor injury, minimal care). Decisions must be taken in agreement with the commanding officer.

The PECC is integrated into a joint operational centre, which leads the operations.

There is cooperation in decision-making at medical and tactical level.

Planning takes place at several levels, from cold planning (long-term forecasting), to warm planning (medium-term forecasting), to the conduct of the operation (short-term and immediate decision-making). In terms of planning for the command force, the PECC is the only component of the SSA. It has the capacity to take decisions on medical incidents occurring in a theatre of operations and has instant knowledge of the operations underway and the permanent monitoring of all the components of the operation.

The PECC is kept informed of special forces missions organised during an operation (e.g. mission of the Force Sabre during operation barkhane), but the latter have their own medical unit and their own medical referent adapted to the anticipated risks. Nevertheless, medical resources are pooled and the ECCP is kept constantly informed.

A RESEVAC (*Ressortissant evacuation*) is an evacuation of civilian nationals from a theatre of operations, medicalised as a preventive measure.

5. The specific case of the Sahel

When the French army closed the Gao base, the medical devices (R1, R2) were automatically closed.

When it comes to treating the wounded, no distinction is made. The SSA is responsible for its own nationals, the soldiers of partner nations, civilians, but also enemies, and in the case of the Sahel, terrorists. If the injuries are equally serious, the military medical corps decides which casualty to treat first. Military personnel who are French nationals do not legally have priority in the order of treatment. Military doctors are answerable to professional ethics.

The treatment of a wounded terrorist follows the same circuit as for a soldier. Initial care as close as possible to the wound is provided in R1 (forward medical station) and R2 (ARCS) structures jointly, then transport is usually by air (rotary wing), to an R2 *Enhanced* or to a Role 3 structure (R3: *Host Nation* Hospitals, i.e. Niamey). The only difference is that the armed forces provide a permanent escort to ensure general security. Medical care is provided right up to the moment of arrest. It is based on the Geneva Convention, the right to human dignity and the rights of prisoners in high-intensity situations.

Niamey has an R3 military hospital. Three types of rooms are available: those for civilians, those for military personnel and rooms adapted for prisoners. After treatment, the SSA is no longer responsible for prisoners of war. They are handed over to the competent local authorities or to whom they may concern. The only condition is that they must be medically cleared by the military doctor. Normally, no STRATEVAC to a Role 4 (R4: Hôpital d'Instruction Militaire sur le territoire national français, HIA) is possible for terrorist prisoners. This choice of command is up to the political and military authorities other than the SSA (particularly if the terrorist in question is of French nationality).

The SCA, which is part of the gendarmerie, is responsible for military deaths. In the event of a terrorist death after the SSA has taken medical charge, the body is handed over to the relevant local authorities.

The SSA acts in operations as it does on French territory: the provision of healthcare is proportional and scaled to the context and volume of the force deployed, it contributes to military action (SOUTEX), and it provides medical aid to the population (e.g. Gao and related civil-military objectives).

Civil-military aid is not the sole responsibility of the SSA; it is organised in conjunction with the overall operation by the ACM, and in particular enables schools to be rehabilitated, acceptance actions to be carried out and medicines to be distributed.

Master 2 "European Governance and International Organisations" course

SEMI-DIRECTIVE INTERVIEW

Academic year 2022-23

Full name: Dominique Clavier

Profession: CDAOA

Theme: The doctrinal transition between operations Serval and Barkhane.

Date and venue: 17/07/2023, Paris.

1. OPEX in the Sahel

The conquest of territory in northern Mali and the imminent threat to Bamako from jihadist networks motivated France's intervention in the Sahel (operations Serval and then Barkhane).

The aim of the French intervention was to restore peace and resolve security deficits, first in Mali and then in the Sahel region. However, the peacekeeping operation was a failure, despite some notable results (around 3,000 GAT neutralised): the proliferation of coups d'état, the recapture of territory by jihadists and terrorist groups, and the entrenchment of Russian militias demonstrate France's failure to achieve its objectives over the long term.

The transfer to an international force and the reorientation of French military action towards a support role was difficult, imperfect and late. The French political discourse and the diplomatic and economic accompaniment of the military action may have lacked linearity, firmness or even coherence.

Serval is an operation that was mounted quickly in response to an emergency situation and a request for help from the Malian government. Air strikes characterised the initial phase of the intervention. The primary aim was to shoot down the jihadist leaders from the outset of the operation, using multiple, coordinated strikes by several Rafale fighter jets. The main strategic objective for the

French armed forces is to retake northern Mali from the GAT. The use of Rafale aircraft and intelligence gathering resources (UAVs, ALSR, etc.) is systematic during this first phase of the operation, in support of ground action.

The conflicts are not only the work of the jihadist networks, but also have internal causes in Mali. The recruitment of local populations by the jihadists, the antagonism of Mali's different ethnic groups, the growing radicalisation and the dissensions within the FAMa and the Malian government are all aggravating factors in restoring and then maintaining peace.

Questions of memory also remain strong and influence growing anti-French sentiment: the example of Western intervention in Libya is increasingly loosening acceptance of France's intervention in Africa, suspected of neo-colonialism.

Intelligence is one of the decisive factors in the success of an operation on the scale of Barkhane. But uncoordinated action by conventional armed forces, the COS and the DGSE in this area can have harmful consequences for France (particularly in terms of loss of life). On the one hand, it is important to know the positioning and capabilities of enemy forces in order to anticipate and optimise kinetic and non-kinetic modes of action. On the other hand, sharing information and pooling intelligence is decisive for the implementation and conduct of operations at the operational (CPCO, PCIAT) and tactical (land and air component headquarters) levels.

The transition between operations Serval and Barkhane, prepared by the armed forces, was decided by the President of the Republic, Head of the Armed Forces. The decision to extend Operation Barkhane rests with the President of the Republic, who validates the strategic options proposed following analysis by the armed forces and presented by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CEMA) to the Defence Council, Gal De Villier, then Gal Lecointre and now Gal Burkhard.

Operation Serval had perfectly defined objectives and appropriate means of action. The tactical and operational objectives were all achieved. The redeployment to the BSS under Operation Barkhane, in a greatly expanded theatre, is potentially marked by a lack of precise and intangible objectives, with the long-term installation of foreign forces pre-positioned in new French-speaking African countries. It is possible that the lack of investment in civil-military, diplomatic and economic ("soft power") actions has contributed to a deterioration in the acceptance of foreign forces by the populations, while the jihadist threat continued to spread. Certain negotiations for the release of Western hostages, imposed on the authorities of the host countries in return for what were

considered excessive (payment of ransoms and release of jihadist prisoners) were certainly very badly perceived by the armed forces and local populations.

In assessing what happened, Operation Serval was marked by a phase of political and military success: the objective was clear and limited, and the resources deployed were substantial and adapted to the issues at stake. Barkhane, on the other hand, was marked by greater ambition and more global, even more vague objectives, in an extended theatre (BSS), but without the resources or investment to match. Cuts in military budgets and the increase in the number of French OPEX from 2015 onwards (in the Middle East) have contributed to this inability to pursue the goals envisaged in Africa. Operation Barkhane can be seen as a tactical victory, with control of the ground and air environments having limited the local base of the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, but also as a final strategic failure for the way in which France is being rejected by former French-speaking friends who have left the concert of democratic nations.

Operation Barkhane was mainly conducted with a security rationale, despite the rhetoric about the global approach and tactics shared with counter-insurgency campaigns. The failure of Barkhane can be characterised by several factors. Firstly, France reviewed its objectives between 2015 and 2019, the jihadist terrorist threats in France (Bataclan, Charlie Hebdo), the extension of the Boko Haram threat and the difficulties encountered on the three borders (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger). The long-term nature of Operation Barkhane has also been difficult to maintain. The evolution of the counter-insurgency doctrine has meant that the military armed forces are following local wishes. Local political solutions have to be negotiated in order to be able to analyse the surrounding risks and draw up a viable operational plan. The junta's seizure of power did not allow the French armed forces to continue pursuing their objectives.

Furthermore, the war waged by jihadism is characterised by insurgencies guided by an extremely strong political will and underlying doctrine. So the military action taken in the Sahel is directed against insurgencies with a jihadist *modus operandi*, but not against the politico-religious underpinning that motivates them. These actions are carried out for tactical purposes, but do not seem to be sufficiently framed by a global and shared multinational vision (France, G5 Sahel, host nations, etc.) of the ultimate objectives (desired end state), which cannot be exclusively military but also diplomatic, cultural and economic.

Despite operational victories and successful hit-and-run actions, anti-French sentiment grew alarmingly during Operation Barkhane. As early as 2016, anti-French demonstrations were organised, including one during Emmanuel Macron's official visit to Gao in 2017. Remembrance issues relating to colonisation are still very present but are not taken into consideration in the planning of Barkhane. The cohesion of the G5 Sahel remains shaky, which does not help to strengthen the French base.

2. Chain of command

The President of the Republic is the head of the French armed forces. The decision to open a theatre rests with him, after analysis of the strategic guidelines by a Defence Council comprising the President, the PM, the Chief of Defence Staff, the Chief of Defence Staff and, where necessary, the ministries involved in the decision-making process.

The joint operational level under the command of the EMA's SCOPS via the CPCO and the COS.

The tactical level of command is broken down for each army, air force, navy and special forces.

The armed forces are commanded from the CPCO, and the Chief of the Defence Staff may delegate his command to a force commander (COMFOR) exercising his authority from a PCIAT. The counterpart to the PCIAT is the JTFHQ in terms of NATO doctrine.

During Serval, the operation was initially launched and conducted from national territory, before the deployment of a PCIAT command post to the theatre of operations.

As part of the transition between operations Serval and Barkhane, the decision to maintain and reorganise the French operation fell to the President of the Republic. The Chief of Defence Staff then issues an initial planning directive (DIP) for the CPCO and the COS. Each staff defines the modes of action within its remit, at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The CPCO and the COS define the strategic and operational modes of action, validated by the CEMA.

According to NATO, the counterpart to the mode of action is the "Course Of Action", which must be proposed and validated by the COMJTF. The aim is to compare allied modes of action with those of the enemy. This is followed by the creation of a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) and an Operation Plan (OPLAN).

So we move from the political level to the strategic level, then to the operational and tactical levels.

Operation Serval was initially designed to involve the air force and special forces, with the aim of planning a stoppage controlled from mainland France. Air operations command is centralised at the

CDAOA¹³⁴ via the CNOA¹³⁵ in Lyon. A theatre air operations command centre (CCOA) is based in N'Djamena. The initial Serval air force is pre-positioned in N'Djamena. France has a significant presence in Niger.

One of the doctrinal changes that mark the French intervention in the Sahel is the centralisation of command centres in mainland France. Previously, it was inconceivable to plan an OPEX in Africa without local command centres. Today, communications and information processing resources in the theatre mean that operations can be conducted from the CPCO and COS in France, and for air operations from the CAPCO¹³⁶ based in Lyon.

The development of command posts follows on from Operation Barkhane. It should be remembered that according to NATO doctrine, in the context of an NRF-type coalition operation¹³⁷, France must theoretically be able to provide a deployable command structure capability. This is no longer systematically the case, as all Western armies have reduced their size since the demise of the USSR and rationalised their command structures.

One reason that has affected the ability to deploy the command is the LOLF provided for under Sarkozy, which has led to a significant reduction in the number of military personnel. The air force has been the hardest hit, with its strength falling from around 70,000 to less than 50,000 personnel. The air force's air operations command was centralised in Lyon in 2012 (FRA-JFAC and CNOA).

The COP (Common Operational Picture) provides an overall tactical picture that is sent up to joint level. This gives the military authorities a synchronised view of the theatre of operations. The in-theatre command regularly exchanges information with the command in mainland France through a "Battle Rhythm" which sets the rhythm for the sequencing of meetings and productions (orders, briefings, reports). Commanders in mainland France also receive the theatre COP on a permanent basis via satellite link. The chain of command is thus more responsive.

During Operation Barkhane, an operational-level command centre (CPIAT) was relocated to the theatre. Initially based in Bamako, it was later moved to Niger (Niamey).

¹³⁴ AADOC: Air Defence and Air Operations Command

¹³⁵ CNOA: National Air Operations Centre. CAPCO has only existed since October 2021.

¹³⁶ CAPCO: Centre air de planification et conduite des opérations, housing the FRA-JFAC and eventually (2024) the CNOA.

¹³⁷ NATO Response Force

3. French military concepts and doctrines

The CICDE is responsible for defining French military doctrine. This is aligned with that of NATO. Concepts, the highest level of text, are broken down into doctrines applicable to the armed forces. A distinction is made between operational doctrine and force employment doctrine. A distinction is also made between joint doctrines and the doctrines of each army. Each service has its own body of doctrine. All staffs operate a RETEX chain¹³⁸.

Doctrine is supplemented by cold feedback, which gathers together the lessons learned from completed actions and operations, and even hot feedback (cf. After Action Analysis: AAA) which, at the end of a military action, makes it possible to identify "best practices" and any errors made by the unit involved.

Changing doctrine does not mean adapting it. The first real change in French doctrine came after the Gulf War: it was characterised by a simplification of OPEX command. The second came after Afghanistan. Between each doctrinal shift, the necessary adaptations and upgrades take place.

The transition between the Serval and Barkhane operations can be seen in the divergence between the strategic objectives and the resources deployed. As a result, the military set-up had to be adapted, with a parallel change in doctrine. Serval is an operation mounted mainly by the Air Force and Special Forces to put a stop to jihadist networks, followed by a deployment of ground forces to retake and secure territory occupied by the jihadists and push the enemy back to the borders. Barkhane is mainly made up of missions carried out by ground forces to occupy the terrain within the numerous operational bases deployed (FOB¹³⁹) and to oppose enemy incursions in support of the host country's armed forces. The similarity with operations against rebels in the former AOF between the 2 World Wars (i.e. Fort Saganne) is worth remembering. The theatre is regionalised, multilateral missions are changing (MISMA is becoming MINUSMA) and several new players are joining the French intervention (G5). Barkhane also represents the culmination of the application of the counter-insurgency doctrine (following the cases of Libya and Afghanistan), which will evolve with the regionalisation of the conflict and the intervention of third parties such as Russia.

¹³⁸ RETEX: Feedback

¹³⁹ FOB: Forward Operational Base

C2 (Command and Control) of an OPEX, generally carried out in coalition, is based on a joint doctrinal corpus and an army doctrinal corpus largely inspired by NATO doctrines, in the elaboration of which France is largely involved via its centres of excellence and its officers seconded to NATO organisations.

French forces have benefited from the experience of Afghanistan in Barkhane. Doctrinal learning and development takes place via OPEX feedback and joint and international exercises. Barkhane is a repeat of pre-positioning forces in the middle of a population that is increasingly reluctant to accept a foreign force on its soil.

Afghanistan's legacies include the FOBs (Forward Operating Base), which are entrenched camps in Mali, deployed for one-off operations at specific times.

Master 2 "European Governance and European Global Studies" course

SEMI-DIRECTIVE INTERVIEW

Academic year 2022-23

Full name: Paillat, François

Job title: Biomedical Engineer in the Employment Office of the Operations Division of the SSA Central Directorate

Theme: The organisation of SSA resources in OPEX, the deployment of personnel, geopolitical developments in the Sahel region.

Date and venue: 24/08/2023, Paris.

1. Deployment in Côte d'Ivoire

Commissaire Paillat was deployed to Côte d'Ivoire as part of the EFCI (Eléments Français en Côte D'ivoire) at the permanent base in Abidjan during Operation Barkhane. The post was attached to the SCA (*Service de commissariat des armées*) which, like the SSA (French Army Health Service) is a service and is therefore assigned a support and logistics role for the armed forces (Army, Air Force, Navy). The deployment volume of the Armed Forces Health Service is proportional to the deployment of the armed forces. In addition to their role on the military base, they also provide medical assistance to the population. When the influx of war-wounded is low, this civil-military action enables medical staff to maintain regular medical activity, to consume medicines and other pharmaceutical products that have reached the end of their shelf life and, above all, to maintain France's image with the local population. Mostly present in the most unstable countries, such as Mali and the other G5 countries, AMP is also carried out to a lesser extent in Côte d'Ivoire because of its more developed system.

The permanent base in Abidjan provides an operational relay in an area of strategic interest. It benefits from port and airport infrastructures, making it a major strategic, operational and logistical

platform on the West African coast. In particular, supply convoys for Operation Barkhane are sent from the Ivory Coast. Some of the supplies are transported by sea, while supplies to Ndjamena and Gao are transported by road via Boloré.

The mandates are rotational, but it's mainly an Army facility.

Côte d'Ivoire is not part of the G5 Sahel coalition. As such, the country remains on the sidelines of the fight against terrorism, despite tensions in the north of the country on the border with Mali and Burkina Faso. Countries like Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal are strategic targets for jihadist GATs because they provide direct access to the ocean. This is one of the reasons why the French presence there is so important.

France collaborates with Côte d'Ivoire through training and the employment of local civilians and military personnel. Ivorian civilians work at the permanent base and benefit from medical care provided by the SSA, as do their families. The aim is also to improve acceptance of the French presence among the local population.

Anti-French sentiment is less strong in Côte d'Ivoire than elsewhere in the Sahel. Not being a member of regional coalitions, the French presence is organised and has a different influence on the management of agendas. What's more, France brings dynamism and resources to the country, so there is an exchange of good practices.

2. Transitioning defence strategy to the Indo-Pacific

When it comes to the management of modern armed conflicts, particularly in terms of medical care, France has been operating in Africa for several decades. Its equipment, strategy and tactics are based on its knowledge of the terrain, which has evolved over time. France's shift of focus to the Indo-Pacific region has led to changes in the development of equipment and the type of medical support required. The temperatures, climate and terrain are different.

In Afghanistan, problems with the use of helicopters had already been noted because of the minimal lift due to the altitude of the area.

The war in Ukraine is already a change in itself. For armies, clothing, tents and vehicles are adapted to the Sahel or West Africa. The deployment of French forces to Romania, for example, shows that not all equipment is suited to cold climates. The deployment of French forces to Romania has already shown the technical shortcomings in dealing with cold temperatures in the field.

The ECMSSA (Etablissement Central des Matériels du SSA) has a climatic chamber that can simulate environments encountered in theatres of operation, such as dry heat (Sahel), humid heat (Guyana), altitude (Afghanistan) and cold (Baltic countries). Tests are carried out to test medical devices and ensure that they are tolerant to these climates.

For each theatre, military veterinarians are deployed to ensure the safety of the environment. In particular, they study the fauna, flora and water quality in order to implement specific countermeasures. This partly addresses the climate issue in the preliminary risk analysis.

Operating sites can present particularities that doctors in mainland France are rarely confronted with.

3. The evolution of theatre

The 2014-2019 LPM has led to an unprecedented reduction in military personnel. The LOLF depends on political currents.

The reduction in the number of armed forces personnel, which is reflected in the theatre of operations by a reduction in the number of troops deployed, does not necessarily constitute a risk. In fact, as Operation Barkhane is intended to be multilateral and to hand over management to local forces, the reduction in French forces is not seen as a risk of counter-attack by insurgent GATs. Despite the increase in violence in 2015 and 2019, these responses cannot be entirely attributed to cuts in military personnel.

The over-mediatisation of conflicts plays an important role in the development of the global approach. On the one hand, France is faced with enemy propaganda and repeated attacks. The techniques used by the jihadist GATs or Wagner's paramilitary militias in the information war cannot be reproduced by France, which is a constitutional state. However, highlighting violence, lies and fear enables France to show civilians the importance of military action and the external danger. The LEGAD (legal adviser to operations), in the theatre of operations, advises the defence command on the application of the law and ensures that the law of armed conflict and international standards are respected and applied. The legal adviser is kept informed of every military manoeuvre and has the right to veto in the event of doubt or non-compliance with the law of armed conflict.

France also employs other means of risk management. The application of democracy is not appreciated everywhere in West African countries. Political management is different. France does not negotiate with terrorists, whereas some African states are more inclined to negotiate. This is particularly true of Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

The different involvement of the G5 Sahel states and surrounding states in the fight against terrorism depends on the culture of the country. Despite the regional coalition and dialogue with the G5 entity, the member states are extremely different in their social constructs, agendas and cultures.

One of the doctrinal shifts in modern armed conflicts is the development of civil-military relations.

4. Developing and strengthening the civil-military sector

SSA doctrine is evolving. As a support service, the SSA is modelled on NATO and French concepts. C3 (Consultation, Command and Control) is being developed at NATO level and is based on strengthening civil-military capabilities for Alliance member states. C3 Log, which focuses on logistics and is modelled on the C3 concept, includes a medical component. Still under development, this concept will enable military medical support to be focused on civil-military action and increased cooperation with civilian infrastructures. It is a doctrinal evolution that follows the armed forces' guideline and the current political will.

Logistics is one of the most demanding aspects of an operation, as it is essential to keep up with military manoeuvres and ensure that they run smoothly. The prerequisites are important, and this determines the scale of the operation.

The SSA will not be entirely autonomous, but will work in support of the Host Nation. Cooperation may therefore be directly with the Host Nation, but also with international associations and organisations (such as Médecins Sans Frontières, the Red Cross and secours populaire). The SSA provides support to civilians, not the other way round. A single civilian DirMed is appointed, with the military under the command of the civilian. The prefect or hospital director hands over command directly.

For example, during the Covid crisis, the SSA intervened in support of civilian actions. As the patients were not war wounded, this did not fall within its remit. However, the organisation and management put in place for civil-military cooperation can be seen as an example, particularly for

the Mulhouse hospital in mainland France (EMR, élément militaire de réanimation) and overseas in Fort-de-France in Martinique and Mayotte (MMR, module militaire de réanimation).

The SSA has two Army Medical Supply Establishments (ERSA), which build up and maintain medical stocks ready for deployment around the world.

Civilians may also need additional training in the use of military medical equipment. Overall, 95% of military equipment comes from civilian sources. However, the equipment is subject to the conditions of OPEX and must therefore sometimes be more rustic to withstand the climate, shocks, vibrations and other inconveniences such as sand and dust. Civilians are used to cutting-edge technology, as hospital structures have controlled environments (air treatment, stable temperature, smooth floor).

This cutting-edge technology is also the objective for the Role 3 structures currently under development.

A Role 3 is not intended to be mobile and is close to the BIAT (joint tactical base) at the start of a theatre. However, as a NATO framework nation, France must be able to provide Role 3 structures. This progression is part of the development of the SSA's civil-military cooperation.

The army, even in projection, and depending on the theatre, is able to have different equipment. For example, on the aircraft carrier, the equipment is ultra high-performance and allows us to have scanners and cutting-edge surgical equipment.

As part of the evolution of civil-military relations and SSA doctrine, psychological units have been set up. Taking post-traumatic stress disorder into account is becoming increasingly important. Studies on the damage caused by military manoeuvres to the psychological development of soldiers are focusing on PTSD. Psychologists are not managed solely by the SSA: the Navy and Army have their own psychological support units. This section is not joint. Several types of psychologist are present.

Master 2 "European Governance and European Global Studies" course

SEMI-DIRECTIVE INTERVIEW

Academic year 2022-23

Full name: Audoin De Chanterac

Profession: CICDE Analyst, Captain, Colonel

Theme: Analysis of military concepts and doctrines, geopolitical analysis of the Sahelian zone and analysis of operating methods and multi-sector cooperation.

Date and venue: 25/08/2023, Paris.

1. Analysis of theatres of operation

In the case of a purely French operation, studies have been carried out comparing the results obtained in the 1950s during the Indochina War, the failures of which are well known, with operations in the Laos-Cambodia region, the successes of which are less well known.

When organising an operation, three points of analysis are central: the implementation of the "3D" global approach, the development of multi-sector partnerships and knowledge of the human terrain.

What's more, armies have always made the most of the terrain in which they fight, both in attack and in defence. Take the example of the Spartan defence of a few fighters against a Greek army at the narrow defile of Thermopyles. Analysis of the terrain must be favourable if an intervention is to be successful. We need to extend this notion of valuing the physical terrain to the human terrain. If effective local political forces are involved, as was the case in Laos and Cambodia in the 1950s, a few soldiers will suffice. If local governance is chaotic, a whole army may not be enough, unless a military-political administration mandate is adopted, as was done in the past in the form of League of Nations trusteeship. But this approach is totally irrelevant in today's world.

In the specific case of the Sahel, both enemies and allies are highly antagonistic groups. The populations there have a long history of divergence and conflict, especially in Mali where, beyond

the confrontations linked to the insurgents and jihadists, the peoples have deep-rooted differences. Military action is designed to ensure that its distribution on the ground is action-oriented. The success of an operation is linked to the possible support within the local population. For example, the withdrawal of French forces from Mali and Burkina Faso is more a reflection of the failure of partnerships than of the war itself.

In military terms, a terrorist is defined as an individual who has committed or claimed responsibility for terrorist acts and who is to be tried under criminal law for his crimes. GATs are insurgents, rebels or jihadists, depending on the terminology used. Extremism refers to both ideological violence, including religious violence, and political violence.

Barkhane is not a counter-insurgency operation, even though this term has been used extensively in the analyses and media coverage of the operation. Its primary purpose was to reduce the terrorist threat to the point where local forces would be able to act independently. The wording of the operation targeted "terrorist" risks, not "insurgent" or "jihadist" risks. The objective of Operation Barkhane for the French forces is therefore terrorism and not all sources of loss of life. This risk accounts for half of all casualties, according to the Senate Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee report. No promises to counter the insurgency have been made, and the related issues have never been addressed in a way that could be contractualised. The 2015 Algiers Agreements were signed to resolve the insurrectionary problems. The process of applying these agreements is designed to reduce the insurrectionary crisis, with the support of MINUSMA. France monitored the drafting of the agreements but is not present in the Sahel to ensure that they are applied.

A large part of the Muslim world believes that the Western approach, based on religious risks and radicalisation, was totally inappropriate. The religious approach is more characteristic of Western countries in the way they deal with crises than of African countries. The latter do not qualify violence in the same way.

A study of the needs of the different groups is carried out as part of the preliminary understanding of the theatre.

2. The global approach

The "3D" approach, covering Defence, Diplomacy and Development, is essential. The less it is integrated, the more the need for military resources increases, exponentially to the point of making

a military campaign unfeasible, hence the decision to withdraw from countries such as Mali and Burkina Faso. This is what the Senate report shows, which explains why nothing can be done outside the 3D approach.

Barkhane's mission was to reduce the terrorist threat to an acceptable level and contain it so that local troops could regain the leadership. The European Union's EUTM mission was tasked with training Malian troops. MINUSMA covered the civilian aspect as well as the training and development effort.

The failure of Operation Barkhane lies in its inability to define its success or failure. The lack of clarity in the objectives and missions assigned has made it difficult to characterise its successes.

Acting as part of a coalition requires different strategies to be put in place than for purely French interventions. The notion of freedom of action is not considered in the same dimension. The notion of freedom of action for the military is therefore linked to the notion of political decision. There is too much political attribution to the military, and that's the whole point of the global approach.

Barkhane also symbolises a considerable logistical effort. This has been supported by the efforts of our heritage and various contracts. Committing to heavy logistics requires substantial funds, which are not always made available. It is a question of ensuring the support of several bases and actions with significant flows. This logistics, mainly supported by the air force and communication systems, is an innovation. It could be done again, but that would not necessarily be to France's advantage. In the Barkhane theatre, we took control of a military requirement that was difficult to control because the Malian partner was increasingly in difficulty. At the Pau Summit, the French President made clear the need for resources and support from local partners.

3. The evolution of French military concepts and doctrine

The doctrinal approach to populo-centric operations, i.e. where the focus is on insurrectionary and/or terrorist phenomena, cannot separate military doctrine from political doctrine, even for the purposes of the study, without being biased.

The concept of civil-military cooperation is not new, but it has been gaining ground recently. It fits in with the new models of political partnerships for security and development with African countries. At the same time, there is a growing awareness of France's limitations and the

weaknesses of its partners, so as to avoid getting bogged down in untenable situations. The old doctrines remain valid at the tactical level, but the strategic framework is constantly changing in insurrectionary and asymmetric practice.

The concept of C3 (communication, command and control) improves the information systems' recognition-hit loop compared with C2 (command and control). Decisions are faster and more effective. The use of drones improves information systems. We are therefore adding sensors and transmission media for C3. What's new is the capacity for reconnaissance and open-loop strikes. Legal experts have been added to enable legal engagement in compliance with political orders.

The doctrine of counter-insurgency is completely outdated, but it can still be invoked. Whatever the modus operandi, you need to know which local relays you can concentrate on and rely on. This notion can be seen in the way France has left Mali and Burkina Faso. The methods that have changed are not military ones but multi-sector partnerships. These partnerships also make it possible to fit into a very concrete multinational system, framed by several entities and international organisations in coalition.

4. Multi-sector partnerships

Particular attention is paid to the effectiveness of partnerships with local authorities and personalities, and the support of the population for the intervening forces, without which it is difficult to make progress. Acquaintance with the human terrain is essential in all our projects. Acceptance of local human groups helps to strengthen the military base in a theatre of operations. You have to know them and understand them in order to benefit from their cooperation.

From a Malian point of view, the French are not the only partner. The Russian training of African elites and governments, and their historical proximity to the USSR after decolonisation, explains their choice of partnership with Russia.

In a multinational context, political and military management and governance are very demanding. The G5 is a diplomatic set-up that was expected to produce results in a global world where we rely heavily on international organisations to solve problems. In Africa, in the 2010s, dialogues with the African Union, then the G5 on the one hand and the European Union, NATO and the UN on the other reinforced this desire to use international coalitions to resolve national and regional problems.

Operation Barkhane is a huge set-up for everyone involved. Intervention in the Sahel is not about counter-insurgency, but rather about stabilisation in a multinational environment. France relied too much on a Sahelian organisation by anticipating its capacity for action, which was never realised. We note that the "country by country" approach is the preferred approach for analysing regional gradations in the Sahel.

Military doctrine adapts to the context and argues that if the human terrain is difficult, the army alone cannot manage. The army does not wage war against a population. If a population develops anti-French sentiment, there is no point in staying because it would be counter-productive.

As part of the evolution of partnerships, we are seeking a better understanding of the people we are addressing and their environment. Rather than doctrine, we are seeing an evolution in intra- and inter-sector partnerships.

Psychological action is not new, but it is re-emerging in the global approach and analysis of current armed conflicts. It is an old political skill that the military must make use of. The over-mediatisation of conflicts also shows the need to look at the psychological aspect. In a populo-centric operation, the various forms of violence depend on the needs that motivate them. This can be explained using Maslow's pyramid of needs. This is a pyramidal representation of the hierarchy of needs that interprets the theory of motivation based on observations made in the 1940s. People's needs and opportunities influence violence and the exacerbation of violent actions. A distinction is made between "needs" and "ideology/desires".

5. France's new defence policy and Indo-Pacific partnerships

As part of the new defence strategy, the French President has announced his intention to withdraw gradually from West Africa, while setting up permanent co-managed bases. This is an illustration of the new partnerships in Africa: the French military presence is being redefined.

In addition, French partnerships are turning towards Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. France already has an active presence in this area through the arms trade links we supply to them. France is not as much of an expert in this region as the Australians or the Americans. But the commitment of the USA and their request for support is encouraging France to develop its activities there. France also has a number of individual interests in the area.

OPEX will no longer take place in the same way as before. It is no longer a question of committing French forces as was done in the past, but of aiming for multi-sector partnerships and taking

ownership of the human terrain. The context and environment are also changing compared with the French history of OPEX. This too is an innovation and an evolution.

LEXICON

Code	Definition
AAA	After action analysis
ACM	Mobile surgery unit
AJP	Allied joint publication
ARCS	Resuscitation and rescue surgery unit
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASIA	Joint Support Assistant
Bop	Operations office
C2	Command and control
C3	Consultation, command and control
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States. Comprising 15 member states.
CEMA	Army Chief of Staff
CI	Counter interference
CIA	Joint concepts
CICDE	Joint Centre for Concept, Doctrine and Experimentation.
COIN	Counter-insurgency
COPER	Operation command
COS	Special Operations Command
CPCO	Operations planning and control centre
DAF	Financial Affairs Department
DAJ	Legal Affairs Department
DIA	Joint doctrine

Code	Definition
DMF	Forces Medical Directorate
EI	Islamic State or Daesh
EIGS	Islamic State in the Great Sahara
EMO-S	Operational health headquarters
ENU	National emergency echelon
EUCAP	European capacity
EUTM	European Training Mission
FAMa	Malian armed forces
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Azawad
G5 Sahel	Group 5 Sahel - regional coalition of Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali
GAM	Airmobile groups
GAT	Armed Terrorist Group
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GOVAD	Government advisor
GSIM	Support group for Islam and Muslims
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
GTIA	Joint Task Force
HCUA	High Council for the Unity of Azawad
HIA	Armed Forces Training Hospital
LEGAD	legal advisor
LPM	Military programming law
MAA	Azawad Arab Movement
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali.
MISMA	Support mission in Mali

Code	Definition
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for the Unity of Jihad in West Africa
IMO	Military influence operation
UN	United Nations
OPEX	External operations
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PC	Command post
PCE	External command post
PCIA	Joint Command Post
PCIAT	Joint theatre command post
PECC	Patient control evacuation centre
PIA	Joint publications
POLAD	Political advisor
RETEX	Feedback
SC OPS	Deputy Head of Operations
UNIS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
SIOC	Operational information and communications systems.
SOUTEX	Experience support
SSA	Armed Forces Health Service
STANAG	<i>Standardisation agreement</i>
STRATEVAC	Strategical evacuation
TACEVAC	Tactical evacuation

Code	Definition
TUM	Military unit table
EU	European Union

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