



"This difficulty in seeing right..." from Tora to Gao. military-Earth thinking notebook

Le Chef d'escadrons GAY

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Histoire & stratégie

Added value of counter-insurgency Human Research Detachments (REHUM)

Based on Anglo-Saxon references, the specialists do not hesitate to say: "In France, we do not have the culture of Rens! And yet ... Surobi has enabled the insurgents to steal nearly five tonnes of explosives (477 rocket and shell-type munitions) from the Tizin valley - the largest recovery of munitions since France's commitment in Afghanistan.

On 21 August 2010, following a presentation made by the REHUM Surobi detachment to a US delegation, COM TFLF[1] proposed to the Chief of Operations (COO) that he should be given the opportunity to present a proposal to the US delegation on the future of the EU's military operation in the Middle East and North Africa. 101st Air Assault to take advantage of the unit's detailed knowledge of the insurgent network to insert him into the Iron Gray Task Force in charge of searching villages in the northern Uzbeen Valley, so that he could guide it. Thanks to one of its sources, the REHUM detachment notably helped prevent an American company from falling into an ambush led by insurgents south of Lakarlam.

The following is an excerpt from an end-of-term report by the TFLF Liaison Detachment Commander to CJTF101 [2]:

"Extremely positive point: the information transmitted by La Fayette is particularly appreciated by the Americans, who are a little surprised at the French results in this area. Moreover, the results obtained during cache excavations in the Tizin Valley also left them stunned".

From Tora to Gao, in the face of a furtive, fanatical enemy who knew how to hide, the

REHUM detachments shed light on the situation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thanks to the efforts of the French army. The REHUM detachments shed light on the situation assessment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thanks to both their experience in Afghanistan and their ability to manage contacts and acquire in-depth intelligence.

Engaged in self-replacement for a decade in Afghanistan, since early 2013 in Mali and recently in the Central African Republic, REHUM detachments of the Land Forces (LF) have had to adapt to counter-insurgency combat in support of smaller tactical levels. Trained at the TSH [3], they have a special place in these intelligence operations and are preferably oriented towards the population. Their reversibility towards specialized reconnaissance or surveillance procedures enables them to accompany the units of the force. Finally, the contribution of IPC [4] capabilities is considered unavoidable, even when the adversary cannot be described as an enemy within the meaning of international conventions.

As for the dissemination of information, it's an old joke in the staffs to tell how a second office, as soon as it knows something, hastens to make a paper of it, to write it up, to make it available to the public," Pamir said. writing on it, in red ink, "very secret", and then locking it up, away from the eyes of anyone it might interest, in a triple-locked cupboard" (Marc Bloch 1886-1944, "The strange defeat">, 1940)

Prior to action, an intelligence and decision-support capability booster

REHUM detachments are a real anticipation tool. The self-replacement of these units makes it possible to build up a solid database to prepare the GTIA's missions. Benefiting from information on the insurgent groups present in the area of operation, it enhances the assessments of the S2/GTIA's enemy's intentions.

The key to success in counter-insurgency lies in sharing information within headquarters and exploiting synergies between different offices:

- To effectively direct the joint chiefs of staff to enemy objectives...

These detachments have the capacity to direct their contacts within the population to identify the presence of weapons and ammunition caches, HVT[5] of the insurgent facilitator type, manufacturing of weapons and ammunition, and the presence of HVT[6] of the insurgent facilitator type. The campaign in Mali revealed the relevance of these ground intelligence units, particularly in the constitution of files of objectives for action (DORO operations)[7].

- To enable the force to launch an operation outside its area of responsibility

In Afghanistan, during Operation ALTOR INCUDINE in Methar Lam (16 to 18 June 2010), the Surobi IWG simulated the construction of a COP[8] in order to incite insurgents from a village to leave their sanctuary. Infiltrating at night by vehicle, then on foot to a TAC HARPON[9] CP located on a pass northeast of Chasmeh-Ye-Masti, the AIG was able to surprise the enemy by holding the place of refuge from above and cutting off the enemy's rear. However, this operation could not have been carried out without the constitution of an intel package imposed by the IJC[10]. 10] Prior to the operation, the REHUM detachment was able to provide this information to the ISTAR cell[11] in a timely manner for the constitution of the objective file.

As the information is of a useful duration, it must be used quickly in order to take advantage of its validity.

At the heart of the action, closest to the tactical levels

To offer the command a wide range of contradictory indications is to reserve the means to say triumphantly, whatever happens, "if you had believed me" (Marc Bloch 1886-1944, "... if you had believed me..."), and to say "if you had believed me..." (Marc Bloch 1886-1944, "..."). The strange defeat"», 1940).

The REHUM detachments, which are installed in advance of the phase and are exfiltrated after disengagement, are an undeniable asset for the safety of force deployment. In a very unstable zone, a shaping type operation[12], which is long and continuous (more than 72 hours), preceded by successive intelligence operations, makes it possible to destabilise and disorganise the insurgent force. In Surobi, Operation BISON PLAY OFF (22-24 November 2010) perfectly illustrated this. In cooperation with two companies, reinforced by the ANA[13], it aimed to seize and hold key points on the ground in the south of Tagab for the purpose of shaping for the benefit of the Kapisa IWG .

- A maneuver conducted over time combines in a relevant way, actions of influence on the population and coercion actions on insurgents. To fight with the force. Operations employing STU[14] highlight the key role of REHUM detachments. They are conducted on the basis of intelligence consolidated by the TSH, such as the location of an HVT, a stockpile of weapons or ammunition, or an IED manufacturing facility. Accustomed to infiltrating and providing information at night, well-versed in the study of non-compliant cases and constantly relying on their TSH capacity (before and during the operation), REHUM detachments are naturally responsible for STU mission preparation and command these units on an ad hoc basis.
- To give credit to the intelligence given, be prepared to engage on the front line to obtain a consolidated view of the threat. The simultaneous use of several specialised sensors makes it possible to cross-check views and improve observations of insurgent movements that seek overlap during combat (ICTs[15]) by taking advantage of the unseen areas of the force. Accompanying the commitment of the IRTFs, the REHUM detachments were able to identify, thanks to their means of observation, signs of IEDs being placed at night by insurgents. They were also able to be warned by sources of the presence of such devices on axes or of the precise location of preparations for indirect fire. In Mali, the Serval brigade was able to detect and locate an enemy perfectly camouflaged and integrated into the landscape thanks to the action of its contact and tactical intelligence units, both in the Adrar and in the wadis of Gao.

"The enemy is contingent, variable; no study, no reasoning can reveal with certainty what he is, what he will be, what he is doing and what he is going to do. (General de Gaulle, "The Thread of the Sword"» , 1932).

- To protect the force thanks to the airplane (FAC[16]) or attack helicopter (CCA[17]) guidance capabilities of the REHUM detachments which contribute to its safety. The time required for attack helicopter crews to visually acquire the enemy is incompressible (difficulties due to vegetation, compartmentalised terrain, etc.).

The BATHELICO Pamir RETEX stressed the importance of synergy between all intelligence sensors and target designation vectors in order to contribute significantly to improving the effectiveness of helicopter fire support missions.

After the action, in support of the results of the force

- **To participate in the radiance of the force.** During the first mandate of the Serval force, based on tactical intelligence (mainly human), the brigade seized a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition, in liaison with the FAM [18] and the MISMA[19]. [19] Such operations, such as sharing intelligence on the enemy with foreign forces, fully contribute to the positive image of the force.
- **To search for evidence.** The advantage of benefiting from such detachments is the ability to confirm or deny enemy Battle Damage Assessments (BDA), as well as avoid collateral damage to the population. In the middle of an operation, if direct observation allows such BDAs to be assessed, the TSH mode helps to refine them not only during but also after the operation (burial ceremony). Indirect fire on insurgents accompanied by children was also avoided.

In his "Memoirs", the Duke of Fezensac reports that one day in Ney, having received the mission to bring an order to one of the Marshal's subordinate generals, he wanted to ask where he should go: "No observations," replied the marshal, "he doesn't like them," and Fezensac added: "They never spoke to us about the situation of the troops. No order of movement, no report was communicated to us. We had to inform ourselves as we could, or rather guess".

Knowing the added value of such detachments in counter-insurgency is essential for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Knowing the operating and action manuals of the joint units is crucial for the FT REHUM detachments.

As part of the multi-sensor approach to optimize their effectiveness during operations and facilitate their links with the joint units, REHUM detachments must participate more regularly in the development of their operations. In order to optimise their efficiency during operations and facilitate their links with joint units, the REHUM detachments must participate more regularly during pre-projection conditioning (MCP) in shaping type operations as part of mission preparation and STU type operations as part of the common procedures drill .

The concept of "every soldier is a sensor" takes on its full meaning in counter-insurgency.

There is no doubt that the REHUM detachment, engaged in Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic, will refine this ability of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to "get it right".

1) La Fayette Task Force Commander

2) Combined Joint Task Force of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

[3] Human Source Processing

[4] Interrogation of captured personnel

[5] High Value Target

[6] Improvised Explosive Device

[7] During these operations, the No. 2 AIMG armoured infantry faced the katibat of the MUJAO (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) in the Grand Gao region.

[8] Combat Outpost

[9] Forward Command Post

[10] ISAF Joint Command

[11] Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance

[12] An American term that describes the preliminary phase (shaping) of a major operation and has no equivalent in French tactical vocabulary.

[13] Afghan National Army

[14] Search Task Unit: circumstantial units, dedicated to the search of inhabited areas (compounds), accompanying units on the ground in landed combat actions. They are always composed of an Operational Search Engineer Group, an INVEX Detachment (compound investigation) , an MCM/GCP Detachment and a REHUM Detachment that coordinates the search.

[15] Troop In Contact

[16] Forward Air Controller

[17] Close Combat Attack

[18] Malian Armed Forces

[19] International support mission to Mali

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