



Questioning new enforcement procedures

Workshop n°5

CDEC

Published on 24/07/2019

Histoire & stratégie

Based on the shared observation that the principles of war should retain their full relevance over a 15-year horizon, Workshop No. 5 considered how to make them operational in the light of the probable ruptures envisaged in 2035.

The discussions in the workshop were as rich as the opinions were sometimes very divergent on certain aspects of the issue. The exchanges focused on the different meanings that foreign armies may have of this notion of principle.

First of all, the members of the workshop discussed the need to distinguish between principles of warfare, principles of conflictuality and principles of operations. Despite different approaches to the issue, all participants agreed on the need not to question **this notion of principle, because although it does not guarantee** success, it remains essential to reduce the risks of failure. Principles are therefore supposed to guide action, but should not be an intellectual straitjacket. As such, the French are more in agreement on the notion of moral precepts rather than laws to be applied in a deterministic and mechanical manner.

For all nations, this is therefore an indispensable cultural and intellectual reference point, making it possible to ensure consistency in the training and education of operational decision-makers. A synthesis of Clausewitzian and Jominian thinking, the French approach retains, at all levels, three meta-principles (freedom of action, economy of means and concentration of efforts), to which are added two complementary principles (lightning and uncertainty). This simplicity of the principles allows both effectiveness and simplicity of teaching, while guaranteeing great flexibility in their application.

Generally speaking, it appears that all the nations **present are found in the three great**

principles known as "Fochian", which they consider universal and timeless However, technological developments, the consideration of adversaries using more complex operating methods, and major societal and geopolitical trends inevitably lead to questions about how to conceive and conduct confrontation at the tactical, operational and strategic levels in the near future.

Thus, it is more the modalities of implementation of principles, rather than the latter, that should be studied. It therefore seemed appropriate to try to reason, on the basis of existing principles, on much more indirect methods of execution, allowing for less costly kinetic and immaterial effects on the human level. The starting premise of the reflection was to recognize that the acquisition of operational superiority in the context of current or future operations could be translated or verified through the realization of a certain number of decisive effects. These effects could be achieved through variable combinations of the principles applied in the areas covered by the identified operational superiority factors. These **decisive effects to be achieved on the adversary and on its own capabilities could thus be as follows:**

- **Dissociation of adversary capabilities** (means of knowledge acquisition, command, aggression and support, including psychological) vs. sanctuarisation of **friendly critical vulnerabilities (CP systems enhancing** reach-back, unsinkability of tactical counters, systematic reserve).
- **Sideration of the opposing command** (systematic search for surprise through sensor saturation and systematic aggression of information systems) vs. elusiveness (concealment, **deception, ultra-mobility** , and agility).
- **Determination of the adversary's combat capabilities** (contact marking and systematic deception aimed at premature engagement of the adversary's reserve) vs. depolarisation (favouring **interlocking** combat : wear and tear **defence** and flexible attacks, deconcentration of logistical means down to the lowest echelons to allow maximum autonomy).

Thus, without calling into question the three principles known as the "three principles". For example, without calling into question the three so-called "fochien" principles, several application procedures aimed at achieving operational ascendancy can be envisaged. By process, we mean all the sequences of actions involved in achieving specific effects.

- **Mastery of the otherness of the environment**, the goals, the potential and the aptitudes of the adversary and the forces or entities.
- The **mastery of persistence** (determination of goals, resilience, endurance, actions on perceptions).
- The **mastery of ubiquity (calendar time** , rhythms, delays, key moments) and movement (notions of ultra-mobility, deception and concealment).
- The **control of adaptability (search for** opportunities, risk management, reversibility, reserve and insubmersibility).
- **Control of lethality (gradation** , coordination and convergence of effects).

In an attempt to draw a synthesis from these discussions, three notions finally emerged from the debates: disappointment, agility and resilience. These notions could thus constitute a kind of extension of existing principles and would aim to make them more operational in the operational environment envisaged in 2035.

The notion of **disappointment** was thus associated with the principle of freedom of

action. On a battlefield that is expected to become more transparent in the near future, the ability to deceive the adversary as to its disposition and intention will become an inescapable factor of success. Disappointment is to be linked to the notions of surprise and astonishment, with the aim of depriving the adversary of his ability to react to our action. This process will be based on multi-domain actions, implying a capacity for coordination and implementation of highly differentiated levers of action and not only military ones.

The concept of **agility covers** skills that go beyond mere adaptability or reversibility. It should be linked to the principle of concentration of efforts. It will be crucial in the face of a fleeting, innovative and opportunistic adversary, which itself has the capacity to identify and act very quickly on the critical vulnerabilities of our systems. This agility is therefore already a major challenge for Western forces. This agility will be based on collaborative combat capabilities and protection of the connectivity of all its force systems. It will therefore be a question of having command systems that are less vulnerable, more responsive, capable of making a decisive impact on the adversary and on a constantly changing environment in a timely and graduated manner.

Finally, participants unanimously stressed the importance of the concept of resilience, **an extension of** the principle of economy of forces. New technologies will most likely bring as many opportunities as new vulnerabilities. Western forces must be able to develop and acquire weapon systems that can operate in degraded environments. Resilience is linked to the notion of reserve and regeneration of forces, which is essential in a perspective of major high-intensity engagement. However, this notion of resilience will only make sense if it is cultivated in close relationship with society as a whole, which must relearn to accept the unavoidable cost of engagement in combat.

Round Table 1: Should a distinction be made between Principles of Strategy and Principles of War?

Moderator: Mr Elie **TENENBAUM (IFRI)** Speakers :

- **Olivier ZAJEC:** Are the principles of operational conduct and those of politico-strategic conduct distinct?
- **GCA (FRA) Vincent GUIONIE:** How do "principles of war" and "principles of strategy" converge in practice?
- **Maj Gen (RBG) Tim HYAMS:** Are there different principles for high and low intensity?
- **GBR (BRE) Pires do Nascimento HERTZ:** Do the principles of war apply to engagements on national territory?
- **GDI (GER) Reinhard WOLSKI:** Can principles of war apply equally to different environments (land, air, sea, space, cyber)?

Round Table 2: Will technological breakthroughs change the art and principles of warfare?

Moderator: Mr. **Philippe CHAPLEAU (Journalist and defence expert)** Speakers :

- **GDI (FRA) Pascal FACON:** Do the new forms of conflictuality observed during

- recent engagements imply a new art of warfare?
- **Lieutenant-General (ESP) Antonio RUIZ BENITEZ:** What new technologies could really constitute game changers?
 - **General-Major (BEL) Philippe BOUCKE:** Are infovalorisation and collaborative combat a tactical revolution?
 - **GBR (ITA) Gianluca CARAI:** Are new technologies the only factor that can change the art of warfare?
 - **Brigadier-General (promotable) (USA) John PHILIPS:** How do the principles of warfare apply to the concept of multi-domain operations?

Title :	CDEC
Author (s) :	CDEC
Release date	13/07/2019

[DOWNLOAD DOCUMENT](#)
