



## Do the new forms of conflictuality observed in recent engagements imply a new art of warfare?

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Engagement opérationnel

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Do the new forms of conflictuality observed during recent engagements, against a backdrop of technological breakthroughs, prefigure a new art of warfare? This question that has been put to me covers both operational and strategic dimensions. To answer this question, it should first of all be recalled that winning without losing one's soul implies seeking a "lasting peace", in which enemies have become partners and allies have remained allies.

Such achievements have already been observed in the past, especially after the Second World War, despite the great devastation caused by it. The art of war remains a deliberate and conscious human activity, not an instinctive act. It is an activity with a strong social dimension, likely to lead to the disappearance of societies. It is also an activity that produces unique works - no two battles or engagements are truly alike. Finally, as it is an art, this activity takes on an aesthetic dimension, through the glance and inspiration of great strategists. The corollary of this art of warfare is the science of warfare, which involves technical and technological developments and the assessment of power relationships.

In the context of this discussion, we consider warfare as a mixture of science and art, that is to say, as an activity that combines, depending on the circumstances, the expression of a leadership and a managerial system. The original forms of conflict that have recently emerged do not seem to me to call for a new art of warfare. Twenty years from now, whatever the framework of engagement (national territory, symmetrical or asymmetrical

confrontations), no break, including technological, seems likely to definitively modify the art of warfare. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to train our armed forces in a certain number of new phenomena, while continuing to develop and disseminate doctrine.

First of all, we observe that today some States behave like armed groups and vice versa. Conflictuality in cyberspace is also complex to grasp - the principles of warfare are still difficult to define in this artificial and extremely fluid space. Moreover, in the new conflictualities, adversaries tend to combine characteristics, some of which echo or re-interrogate our own factors of operational superiority: hybridity, opportunism, disinhibition, opacity, transience, global approach and a clear understanding of who we are and our weaknesses. Our enemy thus appears as a "chimera" in the biological sense of the term, i.e. as an organism possessing cells of different genetic origins, which conditions our new operational environment and new forms of conflictuality.

Faced with this chimera, it will remain fundamental to mobilize the major factors of operational superiority specific to the Army: mass, agility, capacity to influence, understanding of the adversary, cooperation, command performance, moral strength and endurance. To prepare our officers for this confrontation, we will be able to rely on the three main principles of warfare discussed today.

These principles are all the more useful because they answer simple questions. Freedom of action gives us the ability to make choices and to decide, at the strategic level (based on an assessment of the situation, the case at hand, the situation at the time, the situation at hand, the situation at the time), on the basis of a strategic plan. The freedom of action gives us the ability to make choices and decisions at the strategic level (based on an assessment of situations, where appropriate at the national level), at the operational level (in particular to integrate the civilian and military dimensions in the same action) and at the tactical level (so as to never be stuck in one place). The concentration of efforts aims to mobilize all resources that will make it possible, in a material or immaterial space, to produce an effect, if necessary to seize an opportunity or take the initiative, while limiting the associated risk. The economy of forces, for its part, makes it possible to last in combat, by having a reserve (tactical, operational and/or strategic), a capacity for resilience, the support of the population, the support of political players, etc.

We will also continue to make no distinction between high and low intensity. In practice, under enemy fire, the intensity is real and the loss of soldiers has the same meaning regardless of the degree of intensity of the operation. To deal with chaos, we will also need to train our officers to operate in non-technological operations. Technology will be essential to deal with new forms of conflict.

**However, we will also have to learn to operate in "Mad Max" environments. We will also have to understand the representations and thinking of the adversary, i.e. the reasons for his attachment to a particular territory, culture, property, freedom, etc. We will also have to learn to understand how the adversary is represented and thought. Finally, the challenge will be to never apply mechanical reasoning to living environments that are always susceptible to change.**

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