

## By way of summary

Reflection circle G2S - n° 21

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L'Armée de Terre dans la société

**The dossier on the universal national service is one of those that the G2S would like to conclude by giving its reader a definitive and argued point of view on the subject. This will not be the case this time. Indeed, while the general objective to be attained is more or less clear, centred on strengthening the sense of belonging to the same nation, the methods for achieving it are still at the reflection stage. Thus, apart from a few rare certainties, many questions remain open...**

The various assessments made in the following articles agree on one main assertion: the SNU cannot and should not be carried by armies alone. On the one hand because its vocation is not military; it is societal and concerns all State services. But above all because the project is clearly not commensurate with the armies on the basis of current resources and means or those that will be available when the United Nations system is established.

To do otherwise would overwhelm the armies and permanently alter their ability to fulfil the operational mission assigned to them.

For the rest, although announced for 2019, the establishment of the United Nations system still raises many questions:

The stated objective is commendable and makes sense. It is based on a factual and relevant assessment of our country's situation, its youth, its cohesion and the way in which its values are lived. However, it will be necessary to further define the goals that we wish to achieve, in such a short period of time, in order to better define the expectations and to properly set the framework of the project.

Achieving these goals in the context of the UNS alone may seem uncertain; an expedition phaserimentation phase, which is sufficiently long and involves a limited number of staff, will have to confirm that the desired effects are achievable by the system in the planned scheme ...

As you will read, the practical modalities for the establishment of the UNS present various types of difficulties. Those relating to staffing, legal aspects, medical aspects and finances are likely to call into question the feasibility of the project. They will have to be dealt with at a very early stage, and there is little time left if one looks at the political timetable. These problems also justify experimentation.

The role to be given to the armed forces needs to be carefully defined; in particular, it will be necessary to examine the linkage and balance with the existing arrangements; see also to what extent existing structures constitute complementary or complementary actions, alternative actions, to be maintained as they stand or to be merged into the United Nations system. Finally, it must be possible to take new initiatives that correspond to the historical know-how of the armed forces.

On this question of the role of the armed forces, the dossier proposed by the G2S has the merit of listing what has been achieved and what is feasible.

There is a long list of the know-how that the armies know or could put at the service of the country for this great national cause initiated by our new president:

- an accompaniment of the reflection on the establishment of the SNU and its content (educational goals and activities);

- participation in the supervision of all existing forms of service.

- or to come (civic service, ADM, MVS, future SNU);

- the control of job integration schemes;

- management of the social mix, which the project aims to achieve, based on the proven pedagogy of educators that military officers know how to be;

- the possibility of training in the defence issues of future elites destined for the service of the State, including on the basis of a dedicated form of service that remains to be imagined;

- the more concrete and proactive implementation of the texts in force between the National Education, Higher Education, Research and Defence, for better support for the teaching profession, so as to allow for more upstream work with young people;

- the strengthening of the role played by local channels, led by departmental military delegates;

- an articulation with the reserve to be designed;

- participation in medical care, both for selection, initial medical check-ups and support for activities .

This list clearly shows it : before seeking to define and then assign tasks to the armies, one should ask oneself theBefore seeking to define and then assign tasks to the armed forces, the question of how to make the most of what already exists must be asked; this question must also be asked along two complementary lines:

- what do armies already do and what should be maintained, if necessary, under the

cover of the SNU?

what forms of civilian services or volunteers already exist and should be maintained as part of the United Nations system?

The real issue at stake in the participation of the armed forces in the SNU, beyond their capacity to cope with the mission, without neglecting the protection of the French, is their positioning. In this vast undertaking of "learning about France and its values", as we wish to establish it, the State, the State and the French army are the main actors. The armies can only be in support, in a role of accompaniment, but not in that of an illusory mission of catching up...

More broadly, a central role must be given to "civil society" in all its dimensions (family, school, associations, professional circles, etc.). With a strong ambition which must be to deal with the causes of the situation and not only the effects. It is to be feared that the SNU will remain limited to a reducing role with regard to this ambition because of its late positioning...

To put it more succinctly, the real issue is actually that of national cohesion to be rebuilt. It must be sought as soon as one enters the education system. The SNU is one modality (among others) to contribute to it.

This rethinking clearly justifies the fact that its implementation is a national effort and that it should be steered at the interministerial level, with appropriate involvement of the military, i.e. without altering their operational capacities.

**As General De Gaulle** would have said, "A vast programme" , **I hope you enjoy reading it.**

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