

## Tomorrow to dominate the opponent: What will it mean to win?

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État-major de l'armée de Terre Paris

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Engagement opérationnel

In the literal sense of the word, to win means to subdue an adversary by arms, possibly to the point of physical destruction. This seemingly simple definition hides considerable challenges. The conflicts at the beginning of this century revealed this perfectly. Not only is political success now difficult to achieve through military action alone, but the adversary has proved his manoeuvring skills, in the sense that he can once again avoid the effects of power by combining the use of weapons with the use of force. a fierce will, a stubborn patience, a deep intelligence of the different levels of warfare - from tactical to strategic - combined with a perfect mastery of the art of concealment and propaganda.

**Uncontested Western domination has lived and the instruments of superiority may be blunted. Avoiding downgrading therefore requires constant vigilance and innovation.**

In this new warlike dialectic where competition will be tighter, it is the very notion of victory that will be in question. As recent conflicts have shown, land forces are the only force capable of physically and lastingly marking the political resolution on the ground, allowing the control of a territory and its population. It will thus have to maintain its ability to fight anywhere and at any time. However, this resolution can only be achieved over a long period of time and in a more open framework than before, involving many players capable of restoring the foundations of an acceptable social and economic life to the populations that are deprived of it. Under these conditions, peace, which is a fragile

balance, will then be able to resurface.

### **Principles, factors, aptitudes and capacities**

In the description of the qualities and skills to be possessed to ensure victory, military strategy adopts a hierarchy of norms summarised in the attached diagram.

In order to assert itself in the land environment, the Army has retained eight factors of operational superiority, the indispensable stage between principles and aptitudes: understanding, cooperation, agility, mass, endurance, moral force, influence, and command performance.

Contrary to the principles, the superiority factors are not invariants. They can evolve in time and space according to the context and the environment. Thus, these eight factors result from the Army's appreciation of the future operational environment. They highlight the constancy of certain qualities (understanding, moral strength, command performance, agility, endurance) that land forces will always have to rely on, just as they highlight qualities of new importance (mass, cooperation, influence). These factors are also a guide for the developments to be conducted.

Specific to the Army, they may logically be different from those retained in other environments. Nevertheless, they remain complementary and consistent with the skills set out in the joint documents of a forward-looking nature.

### **Army and lightning**

**A concept developed by Admiral Labou rie and then integrated into French doctrine, lightning strikes "aim (...) to break the opponent's rhythm so as to keep him behind the action". It involves knowing the opponent's system, acting by surprise and striking powerfully to stun.**

**Accepting risk taking, it inspires an audacious style of manoeuvre combining speed, depth and shock. For land forces, the raid - the rapid and deep incursion of armoured elements, helicopters or special forces on a high-value target - is probably the best illustration of this principle. The application of deep, counted or massive fire also helps to produce targeted, sudden and brutal effects.**

**Lightning weapons therefore have in common their accuracy, mobility and range. This principle extends to immaterial fields. Lightning strike is one that also manages to strike the opponent in its electromagnetic fluxes, its computer systems, its navigation and localisation capabilities, its perceptions.**

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