



Civil-military management of external crises: for the promotion of French economic interests

military-Earth thinking notebook

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Engagement opérationnel

In France, civil-military management of external crises is an old concept on which there is a consensus. It is based on a continuum of action in crisis, but faces certain difficulties in its implementation because coordination, however real it may be, is still too partial. Indeed, the private sector deserves to be more involved in this process, which would therefore participate directly in the promotion of French economic interests.

"It is essential to strike the right balance between the military and civilian effort and to achieve full coordination in all areas. Otherwise we end up in a situation where military operations produce no lasting effects because they are not supported by complementary civilian actions. Similarly, civilian measures...are a waste of time and money if they are not supported by military operations designed to provide the necessary security".

(Robert Thomson, Defeating Communist Insurgency - 1966)

After the recent military operations in Afghanistan and Mali, where the kinetic model predominated, the French intervention currently underway in the CAR seems to be more a matter of crisis management. While this idea was far from absent in the two aforementioned theatres, it is clearer that military action, although indispensable, is clearly insufficient here to achieve political objectives on its own. The observation made above by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Thomson, based on British experience in Malaysia and American experience in Vietnam, is now old. It had already been formulated in France by Marshal Lyautey as early as 1900: "Give me a doctor, I will give you three companies [...] a construction site is worth three battalions". One might wonder what makes the French approach today so original in this area, which is essential to resolving crises, and which Lyautey had intuited more than a century ago, and, above all, what are the possible avenues for progress.

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its implementation because coordination, however real it may be, is still too partial: The private sector deserves to be more involved in this process, which would therefore participate directly in the promotion of French economic interests.

Thus, it is understood that crisis resolution today no longer has a single component, whether civilian or military, but must on the contrary follow "strategies that bring together all diplomatic, financial, civil, cultural and military instruments, both in the pre-crisis and post-crisis phases.vention and crisis management phases as well as in the post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction phases" (White Paper on Defence and National Security - 2008). This orientation is further confirmed in the White Paper of 2013, which gives it even greater prominence and stresses the need to make further progress in this direction: "Better coordination of institutional actors, intergovernmental and Community policies and crisis management instruments, both civilian and military, should be sought..."

First of all, the French system is not unique in the world: the United Kingdom, on a larger scale, set up a Stabilisation Unit (SU) in 2007 under the triple authority of the Ministry of Defence, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development. This structure, which has been active in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan, can count on a pool of about 1,000 civilian experts who can be deployed on external assistance missions. Similarly, the United States created an Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization within the State Department in 2004, following the Iraqi and Afghan experiences, with its own budget of \$250 million. The mission of this structure is to coordinate the action of American civilian capabilities - unified action - in an interdepartmental perspective. This "interagency" approach emphasises the idea of giving the same priority to civilian stabilisation and combat operations. In addition, international organisations also have a crisis management concept requiring an "integrated approach": the European Union has a dedicated structure, the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD). The UN and NATO also describe the need for a "comprehensive approach".

It is in this context that in France, following the 2008 White Paper, an¹ interministerial strategy for civil-military management of external crises was drawn up. was therefore approved in 2009 by the Prime Minister. For their part, the armed forces then formally took into account the concept of the Global Approach (GA)² ...and declined it at their level. While the major role of the armed forces in crisis management is to participate in stabilisation by providing security, the "governance" and "development" lines of operation are the other two pillars of stability.³ . The contribution of the armed forces must therefore lead to the establishment of the conditions necessary for the achievement of strategic success through other instruments⁴ .

A continuum of **crisis management**

The 2009 interministerial strategy is therefore part of this general landscape, and aims to "decompartmentalise civil and military actions" in order to "synergise the different instruments" by systematically seeking coordination. To this end, the interministerial steering is placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE). The system is based on a high-level steering level which meets several times a year at the Ministry's crisis centre (CDC), and on a modular operational structure placed under the authority of the CDC since December 2013, which is intended to bring together all the administrations involved in external crisis management. This structure is in charge of steering, mobilising and interministerial coordination to plan French civil engagement in the post-crisis phase. Today it is known as the "Mission for Stabilization" (MS) and monitors

France's contribution in terms of human and financial resources. It operates according to the network principle: it is made up of a hard core of half a dozen agents provided by the various ministries (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Interior, Finance, etc.) and works with the contact points identified in the administrations concerned. There is therefore a real continuum of crisis management, with an emergency echelon composed at the Quai d'Orsay by the CDC, at the Ministry of Defence by the CPCO at the EMA, and by this mission for stabilisation which intervenes downstream, in the stabilisation phase.

The limits of the French system

However, one of the major problems with this structure remains funding. The French inter-ministerial strategy provided for the creation of a dedicated stabilisation fund to support the stabilisation mission. This fund was to benefit from a transfer of funds from the budget lines of already existing programmes, or it was to be created independently. Due to budgetary constraints, this was not possible. The work of the stabilisation mission is therefore probably sometimes made difficult, as it needs budget appropriations to be made available for the financing of stabilisation actions. This fragmented funding therefore undermines the coherence of the whole.

Another limit to the coordination action of the various actors in crisis management is the relatively low number of qualified specialists available in crisis zones. In contrast to the British and American models, which both rely on rich pools of experts or numerous reservists, the French system is still insufficiently developed. In Afghanistan, for example, France has opted to set up a "stability pole" in Kapisa and Surobi from 2010 until the French withdrawal. The "pole of stability", a small group of experts with a variety of skills (agriculture, justice, development, etc.) placed under the authority of a diplomat, had the merit of not acting immediately connected to the tactical situation, with too much autonomy as is often the case with the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a model generally adopted by Western armies in various forms. However, the difficulties in projecting civilians into conflict zones, circumvented with the use of the principle of the commissioned officer. However, the difficulties in projecting civilians into conflict zones, circumvented by the use of the principle of the commissioned officer, the rapid rotation of personnel and the lack of reservists with the appropriate specialities militate in favour of a policy of strengthening and broadening this pool of skills.

National advocacy and economic opportunities

Finally, the global action plan must be geared more towards the promotion of French interests and the expected "return on investment", both in terms of maintaining our influence in the area in question and, above all, our economic presence. The search for the involvement of national economic players, be they large groups or SMEs, must be more systematic. However, after a military operation phase, the law of the market regains its rights. The involvement of French companies is still too limited in the post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation phases. In Libya, for example, France has made major efforts following the 2011 revolution, but even if the complete stabilisation of this country is still a long way off, French companies have benefited little from the opening up of new markets after Operation Harmattan. Contrary to popular belief, the post-crisis environment is often a favourable ground for the commercial development of companies. Our Anglo-Saxon allies, renowned for their pragmatism, have long understood this. The examples of Iraq and Afghanistan speak for themselves in this respect: during the initial

negotiation phases, in order to win a contract, it is not uncommon to see very senior executives of large industrial groups making the trip, and if necessary, on several occasions. The pitfalls and difficulties do of course exist in markets in crisis areas, but are often easier to overcome than in economies with more mature and better organised markets. The economies that are also growing fastest over time are - together with China - the countries in crisis: from 2002 to 2012, Angola grew by 11% a year and the Afghan economy by 8%. France was Libya's sixth largest ^{supplier} in 2010; the role played by France and the positions it has taken have been welcomed by the Libyan authorities, but French companies have not been given preferential treatment: competition is tough and the Libyan market is not to be taken, but to be won. The Libyan revolution caused the economy to shrink by 60% due to the interruption of oil and gas production, which fell from an average of 1.8 million barrels per day in 2010 to 500,000 in 2011 (hydrocarbons account for 70% of GDP and 95% of exports). This recession has had a brutal impact on Libyan foreign trade. Imports from France thus fell from 980 million euros (2010) to 225 million euros (2011), a drop of 77.1%. After the fall of Colonel Gaddafi, however, French economic actors were not able to recover quickly enough to position themselves favourably: In the end, the resumption of current trade and economic activities in 2012 benefited Turkey and Italy, which were able to quickly set up the indispensable logistics chains, as well as neighbouring Egypt and Tunisia. France, Germany and China lag behind. In this context, even greater cooperation between public players and major French groups and SMEs, grouped together as genuine interest groups, is a necessity. in order to allow for a more rapid stabilisation, to maintain French influence in our area of interest and to offer our economy interesting outlets.

Ultimately, **the** implementation of a coordinated policy for the civil-military management of external crises must make it possible to federate the contributions of multiple and heterogeneous players around a common objective. France has set up a coherent mechanism to ensure coordination within a genuine crisis management continuum, despite certain difficulties due to limited human and financial resources. The involvement of French companies is still too limited in comparison with our American allies and even some of our European partners, and is also one of the ways forward. because, as Marshal Lyautey pointed out in 1900 in his Letters from Madagascar, it must still be a question of "leading economic and political efforts in a single gesture: civil and military action are linked by simultaneity (...) it is the action of the whole".

1] "Interministerial Strategy for Civil-Military Management of External Crises" of 22 October 2009, presented to the Prime Minister by Prefect Jean Dussourd.

2] CIA-3.4.5 Global Approach (GA) to External Crisis Management and Military Contribution, No. 024 of 24 January 2011.

3] CIA-0.3 Contribution des forces armées à la stabilisation, No. 022 of 22 February 2010.

4] CIA-0.2 La gestion de crise (GDC), No. 033 of 10 January 2008.

[5] Decree No. 2008-959 of 12 September 2008.

6] Source: International Monetary Fund.

7] Source: Franco-Libyan Chamber of Commerce.

8] See Rapport au Président de la République sur la politique d'aide au développement en Afghanistan et la contribution des structures économiques françaises, Françoise Hostalier, January 2012.

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