



□ Editorial by the Director of the Centre for Doctrine and Command Education

General Military Review

Le Général de division Pascal FACON

Published on 01/02/2019

Histoire & stratégie

"Nourished, sometimes force-fed, for the first few years of our lives in our families and in civilian and then military schools, we are then drawn into "active life" without taking much time to think. Laziness? Inertia? Habit? Conformism? Probably all of these at once. But action suffers from this destitution because the world is mobile, men change, techniques evolve; no problem where the human has a part never rests in the same terms as the day before, no recipe is applicable for sure as a solution. We have to think about action. »

It was in these terms that Lieutenant General Dominique Chavanat introduced his book *Pour réflagir*, which was distributed to all officer cadets from 1984 onwards in the schools of Coëtquidan, as part of their training in the exercise of authority. Reflection is defined as a return of thought on itself in order to examine an idea or a situation in greater depth. In philosophy, action refers to a voluntary and intentional bodily movement. Thinking with a view to action. Thinking during action... There can be no effective action, especially when it is complex and collective, without prior reflection, without the elaboration of an intention preparing its conduct. This reflection-action, expressed by an idea of manoeuvre, is the quintessence of command. It is through it that a leader, whatever his level, makes his true mark. In its most sober expression, it is translated in the French Army as "In view of..., I want..., to this end..."

As Jean Guitton pointed out in a lecture given at the War School in 1952, entitled *The Art of Thinking and the Conduct of War, the Means of War, the Means of War and the War of the French Army*, the French Army's methods of the man of war and those of the man of thought are intimately linked, recalling in passing that Descartes was both a philosopher and a soldier. The exchanges between philosophers, strategists, the business world and the military in the field of understanding and formalizing decision-making have contributed greatly to the evolution of the nature, organization and modes of operation of our command systems, particularly in recent decades. In principle, these developments

are aimed at improving their effectiveness. However, experience shows that sometimes, far from reducing the complexity of operations, these command structures can contribute to increasing it. Taking account of new technological, socio-cultural and geopolitical data on the forms that conflict takes today and will probably take tomorrow leads the Centre for Doctrine and Command Education to consider how best to contribute to improving the performance of operational command.

The work of the Army and the Centre thus covers all dimensions of command in operations. The selection and training of operational commanders, the reinforcement of the culture of decision making in combat, the improvement of decision support tools, and the decompartmentalisation of inter-military and inter-professional relations are the main thrusts of the studies underway. The field of possibilities is wide, evolving and growing exponentially with scientific progress. It therefore implies a permanent doctrinal and technological watch aimed at nourishing our reflections and keeping one step ahead. Publications on the subject are abundant, sometimes controversial and contradictory. We must be careful not to be faddish, not to reason solely according to the logic of our environment or profession, and not to allow ourselves to be led towards technological mirages, without however denying their potential contributions. This is what prevails in the reflections underway at the Centre.

It is therefore a reflection on the framework and purpose of the work dealing with the improvement of command performance in operations that is launching the new format of the journal dedicated to research and foresight. The aim is to consider the capacity to mobilise all available resources in an optimal way to think in view of air-land action, and then to conduct it with a view to winning in combat.

Enjoy reading!

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Release date 13/12/2018

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