



## □ What is the doctrine?

Land Forces Doctrine Review

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**This new CDEC journal devoted to doctrine is an opportunity to present in a series of articles<sup>1</sup> not the doctrine itself but what it represents for the Army "In Touch" and by whom, how and in what spirit it is conceived.**

### **A doctrine, what for?**

The doctrine according to Foch is a set of fixed rules to be applied according to the circumstances.

Explained this way, the essence of the doctrine is very clear. It is not a matter of its writers providing operational managers at all levels with recipes to be followed and executed to the letter, but rather the intellectual tools to enable them to apprehend and apply them. hinder their particular operational dilemma (enemy, friends, context and mission) as well as to transmit orders, receive and send reports expressed in a common frame of reference, thus ensuring that they will be understood.

Doctrine is therefore first and foremost the "business grammar" of the operational commander at all levels. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition for tactical excellence. Although it alone does not ensure tactical genius, tactical engineers nevertheless find it difficult to express themselves without this common base.

It is more a question of understanding, reflecting on one's operational problem and making oneself understood in an INTER environment. INTER means understanding the friendly environment in which operational managers at all levels have to operate.

INTER first: tactical action, if it is based on a solid foundation of proven skills based on the fundamentals of each operational function, is first and foremost the combination of these different functions. Our operational structures are very largely joint from level 5 (battlegroup) onwards.

Second, joint: action by land forces can only be envisaged within a joint force. The understanding and ability of the land task force to interface with the other components, to benefit from their effects or to propose solutions to them requires, in addition to technical capabilities such as tactical data links, procedural and doctrinal interface capabilities, a common grammar.

Secondly, international: our operations are systematically conducted in coalitions, structured in peacetime as is the case with our participation in NATO or European Union activities, or on an ad hoc basis. Here again, doctrine must provide operational leaders with the tools to understand their environment and to make themselves understood in that environment. NATO, because of its historical role and its standardisation capabilities, is a basis for all our interoperability studies.

Lastly, interministerial: on national territory among other things, but also in external operations, land forces are in contact with the related coordination requirements with agencies other than military forces contributing to crisis resolution and with whom the need for mutual understanding is even more crucial.

This common grammar must therefore enable one to think about one's operational problem and to understand and be understood by others.

In order to do this, the Army has chosen to have a single doctrinal corpus integrating the different dimensions of the environment, allowing any element of the land forces to maintain its own style while ensuring good interoperability.

Never operating alone, a land force must be able to engage alongside allies, "with", without having to engage "as".

Thus the doctrinal corpus takes up and integrates, from the documents at the top of the spectrum (the Land Forces manuals, of which there are currently 5 and which are currently being rewritten) to the mementos, this dual requirement of interoperability and preservation of the style and spirit of warfare "in Contact".

The second purpose of doctrine is to contribute to the capability coherence of an army model. It is a question of organisation, equipment and employment.

In the French system, it is the D of the acronym DORESE.

These two vocations of doctrine give it an imperative: that of being a living subject that is constantly updated to keep pace with technological advances and the analysis of operational practices, whether they are those of our armies or those observed in current conflicts.

The pace at which doctrine evolves is linked to the pace of capability development and the pace of operational change over time. The adaptation of training to the pace of rotations and the adaptation of MCPs to the particular conditions of a particular mandate on a particular operation are the responsibility of the LFC but are not part of doctrine.

This necessary correlation between doctrinal and capability development is fundamental in order to avoid one of the major risks of operational engagement, unfortunately observed on several occasions in history: engaging with a doctrine that is unsuited to one's capabilities. The American Civil War is a major historical example of a war being waged with a doctrine lagging behind in terms of equipment.

As the Army begins its SCORPION transformation, the CDEC is therefore particularly attentive to the fact that the doctrine "in Contact!" doctrine continues to provide land forces with an operational tool, our doctrine today, but also makes it possible to prepare for the arrival of this system of systems that will profoundly transform not the fundamentals of tactics but the way in which we will be able to implement them.

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