



## □ Four years of Sentinel involvement: feedback

Land Forces Doctrine Review

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**When in January 2015, following the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo newspaper and the Montrouge shooting, the Armed Forces deployed 10,000 men in 7 days, the commitment was then in accordance with their operational contract, but unprecedented in its scope and, they do not yet know it, its duration.**

**By choosing to keep its military model - there will be no force dedicated to the engagement in the TN but the same soldier in the GAO and in the metro - the Army is betting on versatility and reintegration. The army is therefore betting on versatility and responsiveness, based on a culture of alert, training and resilience, the high standards and exemplary nature of its soldiers and a culture of responsiveness shared at all levels.**

In fact, for the past three years, and each time the Sentinel system has been involved (attack on the Valence mosque on January 1, 2016; attack on the Louvre museum on February 3, 2016; attack on the Louvre museum on January 4, 2017), the Sentinel system has been used to monitor the situation. February 3, 2017; attack at Orly airport on March 18, 2017; attack at Marseille train station on October 1, 2017), terrorist attacks have been thwarted.

The action of the Army on the TN is proving to be effective and credible: This background of well-mastered individual and collective know-how and interpersonal skills gives it a pool of immediately employable forces, suitable for engagement in OPEX as well as on the TN.

It is this credibility in operation that enables it to generate confidence and support, both within its own ranks and outside MINARM, and to be, if necessary, a source of proposals. For the past three years, it has been constantly adapting and convincing.

## **The adaptation of the Army**

The creation of a COMTN - Land Referent in charge of providing expertise in the TN engagement, defined as a support force dedicated to anticipation, preparation and operational engagement on national territory, is the result of in-depth work carried out from 2015.<sup>70</sup> and reflects the early appropriation of the Army's commitment to the national territory.

The operational preparation cycle, which was initially rushed, is quickly adapted to integrate Sentinel preparation, itself gradually improved to include the specifics of the commitment.

In response to changes in the security situation, a land protection posture (LPP) was introduced in 2016.<sup>71</sup> It now constitutes the framework for the army's commitment on national territory, which includes a gradual response capacity in order to be able to respond in particular to a major crisis on national territory.

The adaptation of systems and modes of action must constantly monitor the evolution of the threat in the NT, in order to prepare for the future and offer the expected response, if necessary, to the most probable and dangerous crisis scenarios, in partnership with all NT actors.

## **Boosting the system**

Firstly, by gradually replacing the staffing logic, which is easy to handle by our civilian interlocutors but unsuited to our commitment, with the more military logic of the effect to be achieved, with a view to operational efficiency. Then, and in continuity, by a gradual transition from a static to a dynamic posture, favouring random patrols on foot and in vehicles, in the spirit of area control.

The renovated Sentinel system, ratified at the Defence and National Security Council of 14 September 2017, is based on three levels, giving force back its manoeuvring capacity and allowing the concentration of efforts according to the evolution of the threat and events.

Finally, the development of a TN culture within the armed forces now enables them to implement their anticipation, planning and regeneration capabilities, and to adapt force generation measures with appropriate resources.

As soon as circumstances permit, it is essential to restore the conditions that enable the military leader to adopt military modes of action in order to preserve his freedom of action and his ability to regain the initiative.

## **Enhancing the value of the operation**

Operation Sentinel was immediately well received and perceived as reassuring and natural by the French population: the adapted posture of its soldiers is backed by robust operational experience that allows it to build confidence. The military dimension of the fight against terrorism, here and there, although not an absolute guarantee, is not disputed.

The proximity of the armed forces to the population, generated by Operation Sentinel, sets the conditions for a strengthened armed-nation bond. However, it is important to avoid both the trivialisation and the effect of a deterrent presence perceived as burdensome, the aim being to achieve a reassuring effect through a presence that is just sufficient.

Rebalancing Paris/province from 2016 onwards will improve territorial coverage. By exchanging operational preparation for territorial coverage, the Army will enhance the value of its commitment by allowing the reappropriation of know-how in open terrain exercises.

The essential updating, or even the creation of documentation and reference procedures (doctrinal corpus, directory of land holdings, storage sites, generators, etc.) is a prerequisite for the development of the army's expertise in the field. The essential updating, or even the creation of documentation and reference procedures (doctrinal corpus, inventory of land holdings, storage sites, generation of reflex sheets, regulations, warning instructions, optimisation of the methods for mobilising the operational reserve, measures to protect soldiers and land holdings, etc.) is essential.) accompanies this deployment. Finally, in order to allow units to continue their training and to ensure its reversibility, initial autonomy is reinforced.

The long-term commitment of the armed forces throughout the whole of the TN is accompanied by concrete and pragmatic measures that organise resilience and strengthen the capabilities of a force capable of committing itself effectively, at short notice and at all points, with the appropriate means.

The army does not engage alone on national territory, but in an inter-ministerial coalition: Working alongside the actors on the national territory, security forces and rescue forces, on a daily basis as well as in crisis situations, has gradually led to a better knowledge and a reinforced tactical, operational and technical interoperability with the ISF, a condition for a confident civil-military dialogue, based on regular joint exercises and training.

The level of operational effectiveness of those working in the NR is still based on coherence and synergy between State services. It is therefore essential to raise the level of efficiency at all levels. Repeated training allows both reciprocal acculturation and the acquisition of consolidated joint know-how in crisis situations.

By constantly adapting its mechanisms and modes of action, by seizing the opportunity to improve its performance while organising its capacity to deal with a threat likely to jeopardise the security of the country, the State can be able to respond to the crisis. national security, the French Army is asserting itself as a determined player in the

protection of the national territory and of the French people, and as a decisive component of the overall national response to terrorism. It is built around one objective: anticipating in order to be ready to face the unexpected.

70 The COMTN was officially created on 16 October 2017.

71 Corpus of texts establishing the TPP :

- Report to Parliament on the conditions of employment of armies when they intervene on national territory to protect the population of 4 March 2016;
- Update of Title I of the PIA 01 "Operational situations and commitment assumptions relating to the LBDSN 2013" of 15 March 2016;
- DIA-3.60 "Employment of armies on the national territory" of 28 June 2016;
- DIA-3.60.2 "Land engagement in the NT" of 9 June 2017;
- IIM10 100, Interministerial Instruction on the engagement of armies on national territory of 14 November 2017.

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