

Defense, Time For Necessary Adjustments

By Rachid EL HOUDAIGUI

I Summary

The debate on defense is more relevant than ever in an evolving global context that is driven by the constant reconfiguration of geostrategic equilibriums and by the importance of the impacts of the economic and financial crisis on States' budgets leading to pertinent questions such as: will defense policies be adapted to their future tasks? Will the military leaders' strategists have sufficient means to effectively negotiate the adaptation process? In addition to the modernization of weapons systems (a topic that will not be developed in this paper), this adaptation will require a governance transformation that is capable of balancing a triangle of issues, which are ensuring the interaction between defense and security; strengthening civil-military research and development (R&D); and modernizing defense through international partnerships.

I. Defense and security: two missions, one policy

Throughout the world, defense and security find their meaning, redesigned and refocused, in a comprehensive policy called Security and Defense Policy.¹ The threat of large-scale conflicts is overshadowed by rising threats and asymmetric risks.

Defense has always been strictly confined to the military, through a defense policy that is based on the doctrines of deterrence and containment or the strategy of the weak versus the strong, in accordance with a country's international status. Defense determines, so to speak, the stability of a nation, its independence, and its survival.

Asymmetric threats and risks represent a threat to the will, cohesion and stability of a nation. What is terrorism, if it is not to break a nation's will? As for the border, it is no longer a hermetic space for transnational crime and cybercrime. Economic espionage remains a challenge with damaging consequences for geo-economic competitiveness. Natural and ecological risks must be carefully managed, while the scarcity of water puts into perspective the multiplicity of conflicts and encourages large migration movements from South to North.

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This reality, which no longer distinguishes an internal from an external threat, reinforces the interweaving of security and defense missions in a comprehensive public policy.

¹ See, Association des auditeurs du centre des hautes études de l'armement, Défense, armements et nouveaux rapports de puissance, La Documentation française, 2016, 400 pages.

Planning should therefore be reframed, since the speed of change makes the link between strategy and tactics even more direct and rapid. In fact, the traditional warfare system is over, giving way to unpredictable threats that require tactical intelligence as part of a flexible, proactive and responsive defense planning, in order to mitigate these threats. For example, off the Somalian coast, within a short time piracy had developed surprising deployment capabilities to the point of defying great maritime powers. The situation in the Sahel is identical: terrorist groups in the Sahel continue to confront state armies that have little mobility and reduced agility. The impact of these scourges is such that they can easily reach the other side of the world. The Sahel is the region from which terrorist networks are deployed towards the Maghreb countries, and beyond. Here, defense no longer holds the traditional position of defending territorial integrity, but rather the security position of monitoring the national territory and the ensuring surveillance of the borders.²

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A State's ability to respond to these threats and to human and non-human risks depends on the mastering of intelligence and its wise use. This is not the only bulwark against threats and risks, but intelligence remains a necessary tool for any government to better manage the vulnerability, unpredictability and uncertainty of the national and international environment. However, in several countries, the segmenting of the intelligence community into several structures at the national level makes it difficult to manage intelligence. In the United States, the attacks on September 11, 2001 demonstrated the weaknesses of the highly segmented American system; In France, the reorganization of the internal intelligence services and the strengthening of coordination are in response to the new security situation; In the United Kingdom, the significant increase in the intelligence budget has been accompanied by closer cooperation between their various services.³ The global trend is therefore to institutionalize the coordination between military and civilian intelligence in order to reduce fragmentation.

². See Rachid El Houdaigui, *Les stratégies en cours pour une stabilisation régionale au Sahel: Enjeux pour le Maroc et pour la Méditerranée*, In *Dialogues Stratégiques*, HEC Paris, 2016, 113-130.

³. Sir David Omand, public hearing in front of the committee tasked on July 30, 2007 with preparing the white paper on national defense and security. *Les Débats*. La documentation française, June 2008, p. 336.

The overlapping of security and defense missions is repeated at different scales in every country, leading either to competency conflicts with an unrelenting impact on actions by a state, or an integrated approach based on maintaining a permanent gateway between the security and the military forces. However, there is no question of merging services and halting traditional approaches (military and police, and diplomatic) in order to manage risks and threats. The sharing of efforts by systematically exchanging the operational achievements of the military and the national security forces is the only guarantee that a state's efforts will be effective. For example, illegal migration by land and sea often leads to fatal accidents and transforms normal interception operations into sea rescue operations or medical and social assistance operations. As such, the security officer, in particular a border or military guard, has a dual mission: police mission with the duty to intercept, and rescue mission with the obligation to save lives.⁴

All in all, the state is constantly confronted with multidimensional security and cryogenic pressures that require a comprehensive and targeted response based on a developed civil-military network.

II. National defense overlapping for R&D

Beyond civil-military cooperation, which is necessary in order to strengthen a state's capacity to face risks and threats, it is understood here that the overlapping national defense in terms of defense policy is not necessarily a logic of war - to confront the enemy - but also a logic of protecting the nation's values, protecting a nation, and contributing to economic prosperity.

While the political and sociological aspects of civil-military relations are already part of defense policies in proportion to the degree of political openness of a particular country, the relationship between defense and economy takes on a qualitative dimension with a high strategic and technological value added.

The consolidation of technological independence for better economic efficiency and greater strategic autonomy is at the foundation of policies in European countries and

⁴. See author's communication for the Initiative 5+5 Defense seminar, organized by military staff for the southern region (Morocco), October 7 – 8, 2008.

the United States for example. In Europe, the weakness of national budgets allocated to R&D in the defense industry contrasts with the ambition of national technological independence. This situation has led the European Union to pool research efforts in three areas: the re-launch of a new European industrial policy, the merging of a highly fragmented defense industry (even if EADS⁵ is a successful example of a gradual consolidation to take into consideration) and the institutionalization of military research through the European Defense Agency (EDA).

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For a long time, the United States has been in an upward trend, far ahead of all the great powers thanks to the available civil-military network and financial resources. The budget for the 2017 fiscal year (\$582.7 billion) allocates \$71.8 billion to R&D, which is approximately 12.20%.⁶

Similarly, the convergence of civilian research and military research, despite the security and reciprocal vicissitudes in terms of the effectiveness of the results,⁷ seems to be the most prominent option today. This trend provides a pragmatic response to the weakness or lack of military budgetary appropriations. It enables an optimization of the overall budget (civil and military) allocated to research and development. The approach adopted to balance civil-military research in Europe,⁸ in particular, is based on the institutional identification of priorities, coordination of research activities (government, military, businesses, and research centers), openness to international partnerships, and the systematic evaluation of research effectiveness based on performance indicators that measure effectiveness.

Without going so far as to fully transpose this advanced model nationally, Morocco is nevertheless pooling its civil-military efforts in the field of R&D.

5. European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS)

6. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/652687/department-of-defense-dod-releases-fiscal-year-2017>

7. Some purely military technologies are difficult to transpose, making their civilian application impossible.

8. The European example is interesting to study because it perfectly illustrates the transition from a national approach to a community one by domesticating the budgetary issue.

III. Partnership, a tool for defense modernization and development

Partnership in the defense field does not fit into a universal model. Its shape (bilateral, multilateral, plurilateral), its nature (alliance, dialogue, cooperation) and its aim (military exercises, participation in military stabilization, or protection operations, support to modernize defense, etc.) depend on fluctuating strategic and geopolitical issues. It is in fact a matter of temporality and an international system comprised of interstate issues. As a result, any partnership is bound to evolve according to the strategic priorities of the States involved and the changes affecting their environment.

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In the Mediterranean, the various military and security cooperation instruments (NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, 5 + 5 Defense Initiative, security component of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) connect Western powers and Arab countries, which are under political and strategic reconstruction. What interests do they find in this partnership? What is the value added for their defense policy?

The naval predominance of Europeans and Americans in the Mediterranean is so evident that only their warships constantly crisscross the Mediterranean maritime space, over a grid facilitated by the existence of allied naval bases in Spain and Turkey. In this context, the partnership seems to represent, if not the hope of an impossible military rebalancing, than at least the possibility of aligning the southern Mediterranean countries with the strategic dynamics catalyzed by Europe and the United States in the Mediterranean, and beyond. This scenario has the advantage of placing these countries in strategic control of the West, no longer as a source of asymmetric threats, but as partners for peace and stability. Cooperation between Morocco and NATO is a perfect illustration of a partnership with high value added for both sides. The Atlantic Alliance is aware of the tactical and political importance of involving the Mediterranean partners in this operation, while Morocco sees the opportunity to

strengthen its military capabilities through human and technical interoperability. Their combined interests in a partnership instrument unite defense and diplomacy to consolidate trust.

« The modernization of weapon systems must be a major collaborative focus to make concrete technology transfer efforts.»

This defense diplomacy, embodied in security cooperation instruments, provides an opportunity to move forward in order to continue building a common vision and integrated solutions in an uncertain geostrategic realm. However, organizational weaknesses and a delay in the field of military theory and thinking in some southern Mediterranean countries make it difficult for them to integrate into international operations. Therefore, the question is asked, should the partnership instead focus more on tools for defense development? The modernization of weapon systems must be a major collaborative focus to make concrete technology transfer efforts.

Conclusion

The threat of military aggression remains and continues to occupy a prominent place in strategic doctrines. However, the gradual shift from this doctrine towards external threats to internal security (i.e. illegal immigration, crime, drug trafficking, or terrorism) reveals confusion in the defense hierarchy. This hierarchy is obliged to integrate security into military planning while avoiding the overlapping of skills with other security services. New forms of R&D and international partnerships are now the other necessary leverage for defense and security policy.

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