JOINT SERVICES
COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES

1999
"We must not keep the armed forces we are used to, but build the army we need".

General de Gaulle
1932
The aim of this Handbook is to provide Advanced Command and Staff Course students with a better understanding of French defence policy and with a summary of the French Armed Forces before they attend the lecture on this subject.

On the 22 of February 1996, President Chirac announced the main tenets of a reform that will radically change our defence apparatus.

The total package involves: the complete transformation to regular armed forces (i.e. the end of the conscription), a reduction in the strength of the three services, a new distribution of the tasks assigned to them, the reform of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation with its impact on Europe and France, the restructuring of the forces at Home and abroad, and, finally, the new provisions concerning the armament's industry.

At stake, essentially, is a successful transition from a post -Cold War period array of forces, deeply but successfully transformed by General de Gaulle during the 60s, to a new defence force capable of facing the challenges which we expect in the future. The new model should be completed in the year 2015.

This Handbook will present the French Armed Forces as they are intended to be in 2002, reflecting the first tranche of the transition as directed by the Military Programming Bill enacted by the French Parliament in June 1996.

Further and more detailed information can be obtained from the French Liaison Officer to the Joint Services Command and Staff College.

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CONTENTS

PART I: A DEFENCE FOR FRANCE

CHAPTER 1: FRANCE'S DEFENCE POLICY
CHAPTER 2: THE FRENCH DEFENCE STRATEGY

PART II: THE NEW FORMAT OF THE ARMED FORCES

CHAPTER 3: THE NEW MODEL FORCES
CHAPTER 4: ADAPTING THE ARMED FORCES

PART III: THE NEW STRUCTURES OF THE THREE SERVICES

CHAPTER 5: THE ARMY
CHAPTER 6: THE NAVY
CHAPTER 7: THE AIR FORCE
PART 1

A DEFENCE FOR FRANCE

CHAPTER 1: FRANCE'S DEFENCE POLICY

CHAPTER 2: THE FRENCH DEFENCE STRATEGY
CHAPTER 1

FRANCE'S DEFENCE POLICY

In an uncertain strategic context, the French defence policy is guided by two principles:

- **Independence**: France alone makes decisions concerning her future.
- **Solidarity**: France is ready to help her neighbours, her allies with whom she acts jointly, and to meet her commitments in Europe and in the rest of the world.

1 - A NEW AND UNCERTAIN STRATEGIC CONTEXT:

"Today, there are less threats but more risks " (M. WOERNER )

The French defence policy must be analysed within the new strategic context, and particularly in the light of two determining facts:

- the disappearance of the major threat;
- the multiplication of crises.

The disappearance of the major threat close to the borders is a new situation. In the short and medium term, the resurgence of such a major threat is unlikely.

Nevertheless, peace remains fragile on the continent of Europe. There is a peace on the French borders, but not yet in the world close to France. The new risks are called: nationalism, political and social instability, terrorism, Mafia, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction etc...An old and great nation like France cannot give up and hasn't the right to lower her guard. She has to honour her commitments but also to fulfil the role history has bequeathed her, by relying on her armed forces if need be. Within six years, since 1990, France has been involved in over 30 interventions, several times alongside her allies.

This demonstrates that France is not constrained to acting only in defence of her own territory or as an intervention force in Africa but also as a significant contributor to international security, wherever it may be necessary, alongside her allies.

2 - THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FRENCH DEFENCE POLICY.

France is a peaceful nation without expansionist ambitions and declared enemies. But she does have interests to defend, responsibilities to shoulder and a world role to play. Hence the following three objectives assigned to her defence policy.
1 - The first objective of the French defence policy consists of defending the **vital and strategic interests** of France as well as those corresponding with the **international responsibilities** related to her **world rank**.

The survival of the nation depends on its **vital interests**, which are to be defended, alone if necessary, against any threat from any source. As much as ever, it is difficult to foresee where the boundary between vital interests and strategic interests will be in the future. But France's strategic interests lie in peacekeeping within Europe and adjacent areas and in areas essential to economic activities. Beyond that, France has interests corresponding to her **international responsibilities**, the security of which cannot be guaranteed without suitable defence.

2 - The second objective is to **build Europe** and ensure international stability. France's security relies first on peace and stability in Europe. France's ability to influence the European construction and future developments in Europe will also help maintain her position in the world. Last, the building and maintenance of a stable and peaceful order are also necessary on a world-wide scale.

3 - The third objective is to implement a **comprehensive defence policy** which is not limited to military and strategic aspects. More than ever defence must cover all of the country's activities and form a permanent part of national life.

3 - **THE DEFENCE POLICY'S INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK: FRANCE, NATO, EU AND UN.**

1 - The gradual restructuring of Europe is leading to the definition of a political identity which would be incomplete if it were not also expressed in the context of defence. Hence the obligation of asserting a **European Security and Defence identity** in accordance with the objectives defined by the European Union.

2 - Although France remains free to evaluate conditions for its security and to choose her means the reason why she left the integrated military structure in 1966, she admits that the North Atlantic Alliance remains the **essential link between Europeans and Americans**.

3 - But NATO, which was designed for winning the Cold War, has become an institution preoccupied with broader security. Therefore, considering the new strategic context, it has to adapt. France intends to participate in a **renovation of its structures**, so as to:

- provide Europe with the means and assets it needs to achieve certain European missions, in which the American ally may, for some reason, not want to get involved;

- appear as a welcoming and flexible organisation better adapted to respecting the personality and history of Europe's future partners knocking on the door.

France claims for a well balanced burden sharing between the USA and Europe, especially regarding the **Mediterranean area**, that is crucial to the European security.

4 - Thus the capacities of a renovated North Atlantic Alliance - in which responsibilities are better shared between the United States and Europe - can be put at the service of peacekeeping or crisis resolution missions on behalf of the United Nations. France, as a **permanent member of the Security Council**, is playing an active part in it and ensuring that the UN have the means needed to carry out their mission.
1 - The President acts as Head of the Armed Forces. He has the responsibility of defining the defence policy.

2 - The Prime Minister is responsible for defence in all its aspects, i.e.: military, economics, Foreign policy, Home affairs, etc... He is supported by a secretariat in charge of inter-ministry coordination.

3 - The Secretary of State for Defence implements the policy designed by the President, under the control of the Prime Minister.

4 - The CDS has the overall responsibility for operations.

5 - The Single Service COS have to organise, equip and train their service. As far as operations are concerned, they have the responsibility of supporting the units involved.
CHAPTER 2
THE FRENCH DEFENCE STRATEGY

1 - A NEW STRATEGY

France's military strategy has been strictly defensive for the last forty years. It is based on a concept of comprehensive deterrence. It relies both on nuclear forces and on conventional forces, the role of the two types of forces being mutually complementary.

But the new strategic context has led France to develop an updated relation between deterrence and action. Although the object is still to deter an aggressor from attacking the vital interests by retaining nuclear capabilities, the role of conventional forces must change from a strict complement of deterrence to a specific strategic capability for prevention, power projection (i.e. expeditionary action) and protection missions.

Therefore, the new model forces will have to meet four major operational requirements:

- Deterrence
- Prevention
- Power projection (i.e. expeditionary action)
- Protection

2 - THE FOUR OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS

1 - Deterrence remains at the heart of France's strategy. It continues to be her ultimate guarantee against any threat to her vital interests and contributes to the overall security of Europe. It is founded on the principle of self-sufficiency and is exclusively defensive. France has also put forward the concept of "concerted deterrence" in Europe, which aroused some interest among her allies.

2 - Prevention enjoys today higher priority in the French strategy. Its object is to anticipate and to prevent conflict-generating situations. The courses of action are primarily political, but are also military. Prevention hinges on intelligence, notably with regard to space observation assets jointly developed with some allies, and on the presence of armed forces that France shall continue to maintain in her overseas territories, as well as in Africa.

3 - Power projection is the action vector. France must be able to commit forces, either within a national frame or within a multinational frame in or outside Europe. The operational readiness of rapid reaction forces and their command structure lies at the heart of this. In essence, the transformation to regular armed forces will serve this purpose.

4 - Protection is a permanent requirement. By protecting the territory from all types of reprisal and international blackmail, it is possible to keep the nuclear forces safe and to make external action credible. It is becoming more and more an internal security mission in which Gendarmerie nationale will play an increasing part.
3 - CONTINGENCIES REQUIRING THE USE OF FORCE

In the absence of a clearly identified enemy, the French have narrowed down to 6 the number of scenarios which should be used as capability yardsticks for the armed forces:

- **S1**: A regional conflict which does not threaten the vital interests.
- **S2**: A regional conflict which could threaten the vital interests.
- **S3**: A threat to the integrity of the national territory outside Europe.
- **S4**: The implementation of bilateral defence agreements.
- **S5**: Peace and International law upholding operations.
- **S6**: The resurgence of a major threat against Western Europe.

4 - THE MISSIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES

Organised, equipped and trained with a view to facing contingencies that are much more numerous and varied than in the past, the armed forces have to develop and acquire the necessary operational and logistic capabilities for carrying out the 4 major categories of missions drawn from the objectives of the defence policy and from the updated defence concepts:

1 - Preserving the vital interests of France against all forms of aggression.

2 - Contributing to the security and defence of the European and Mediterranean space with the eventual prospect of a joint European defence policy.

3 - Contributing to actions for the promotion of peace and the observance of international law.

4 - Carrying out public service tasks.

4 engagement frameworks are envisaged for the armed forces:

1 - The armed forces must be able to defend the national territory and approaches to it.

2 - Action within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance or of the Western European Union must be envisaged less in term of the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact than in terms of regional conflicts involving obligations under the terms of treaties.

3 - The armed forces must be capable of acting under mandate from the United Nations or from a European Organisation to contribute to operations for keeping or re-establishing peace. Such operations might take place on a multinational basis within an appropriate coalition, or in the framework of the WEU or of NATO.

4 - They must be able to act on a national or multinational basis to implement defence agreements signed with allies, in Africa or the Middle East.
PART II

THE NEW FORMAT OF THE ARMED FORCES

CHAPTER 3: THE NEW MODEL FORCES

CHAPTER 4: ADAPTING THE ARMED FORCES
CHAPTER 3

THE NEW MODEL FORCES

The objectives assigned to the defence policy and the updated strategic principles, as well as the engagement frameworks, determine the capabilities required from the armed forces. Therefore the French nuclear deterrent and conventional forces will develop to meet these capabilities and complete the new model by 2015.

1 - THE CAPABILITIES REQUIRED FROM THE ARMED FORCES

Among the four operational functions, power projection and prevention enjoy today higher priority while deterrence should stay at a sufficient level. The capabilities are designed to take into account three elements:

1 - The analysis of the contingencies requiring the use of forces has shown the necessity to provide for the *simultaneousness* of several actions.

2 - The engagement frameworks have proved essential for the country to have the necessary military means to conduct strictly *national* actions to a certain level of intensity in or outside Europe. At the same time, it must have the necessary means to project *expeditionary forces which must be able to work with allies*. In the latter case, France must be able to take a significant place in the plan of action or to play a *crucial* role, especially within the context of a European coalition.

3 - The ability to respond to various contingencies must be completed by a *permanent security posture* providing nuclear deterrence, protecting the country, participating in prevention of crises and providing the authorities with the immediate assistance they may need.

On the basis of these three elements, the capabilities as a whole may be presented in five main categories:

1 - capabilities for *commanding and conducting* joint operations, within a national or multinational framework;
2 - capabilities for *intelligence, projection* and *strategic mobility*;
3 - capabilities for *surveillance* and *protection* of the French territory;
4 - capabilities for *action and support* specific to projectable forces;
5 - capabilities for *re-building* additional forces, if necessary, should a major threat reappear.

Therefore, the French nuclear deterrent and conventional forces will appear as follows:

2 - THE NUCLEAR COMPONENT: "Smaller but better"

Taking advantage of the respite offered by the current strategic situation to rethink the nuclear posture, the choice of the different means will continue to be based on the principles of *sufficiency and credibility*. 
From now on, the deterrent force will have two reduced and modernised components:

1 - **The oceanic strategic force**, capable of ensuring deterrence on a permanent basis. It will have 4 nuclear powered Triomphant type class submarines carrying new M51 missiles so that 2 can be kept at sea if necessary.

2 - **The air component**, that will provide the deterrent capability with flexibility, visibility and diversification of penetration modes.

It will be composed of Air force or Navy **Rafale** aircraft equipped with an air-to-ground medium range missile.

The former and oldest third component, the 18 land-based strategic missiles based in the south of France, has been dismantled, as well as the pre-strategic missile Hades. The Mururoa test site has closed down.

**3 - THE CONVENTIONAL FORCES**

Conventional forces are designed to meet the other operational requirements, i.e. prevention, power projection and protection, with a priority assigned to the **projection capability**.

Out of area operations require highly trained and available rapid reaction forces, making the best possible use of complex weapons system, with the ability to integrate rapidly into various contexts of action that are often joint-services and multinational operations. These required qualities have led France to opt for professional forces.

But the will to avoid an increase of operating costs has made it necessary to reduce the forces by roughly a third.
The President of the Republic has set the volume of forces which could be deployed on a theatre far away from the national territory as follows:

- The Army must be capable of deploying either an expeditionary force of 50,000 men to take part in a major engagement within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance or a force of 30,000 men, a proportion of whom can be relieved, and, simultaneously, a relievable force of 5,000 in another theatre.

- For the Air Force, it is 100 aircraft operating from 2 projected air bases.

- The Navy will have to be capable of putting to sea a carrier group and a submarine force.

The Gendarmerie nationale will carry out its traditional internal security duties, but will be involved in the protection of the territory.

### 4 - THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN 2015

By the year 2015, the French armed forces will look as shown on the following picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARMY</td>
<td>239,100 mil + 34,000 civ</td>
<td>136,000 mil + 34,000 civ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 divisions, 129 regiments</td>
<td>85 reg split into 15 brigades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>927 MBTs</td>
<td>420 MBTs Leclerc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>350 light armoured tanks</td>
<td>350 light armoured tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>340 helicopters</td>
<td>180 helicopters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAVY</td>
<td>63,800 mil + 6,600 civ</td>
<td>45,500 mil + 11,000 civ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 ships, incl 2 AC</td>
<td>81 ships, incl 1 or 2 AC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total: 314,000 tons</td>
<td>total: 234,000 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>89,200 mil + 4,900 civ</td>
<td>63,000 mil + 7,000 civ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>405 combat aircraft</td>
<td>300 Rafales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86 transport aircraft + 11 C135</td>
<td>52 transport aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 heli</td>
<td>84 heli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gendarmerie</td>
<td>92,230 mil + 1,220 civ</td>
<td>95,600 mil + 2,300 civ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The building of the new model armed forces is backed on the 1997-2002 military programming bill. This law enacted in June 1996 is a result of the decisions taken by the President of the Republic to enable France to have a more effective and less costly defence system in the near future.

It has three objectives to be reached by 2002:
1 - to succeed in adapting the format and conducting the transformation to regular forces;
2 - to continue to modernise the equipment of the forces;
3 - to restructure the arms industry.

It provides the forces with an adequate financial support

**1 - ADAPTING THE FORCES 1997-2002s "a gradual but swift change"**

Changes over the next 6 years covered by the programming law will take place in 3 stages:

1 - reorganisation of the forces from 1997 to 1999;
2 - modifying the training and support system from 2000 to 2001;
3 - reorganising the command and territorial structures at the end of the period.

The measures for adapting the armed forces for the years 1997 to 1999 constitute the first phase of the changes that the forces are to undergo, in order to reach the first programming objectives:

1 - the number of units must be reduced to take into account the reduction in staffing levels and units will gradually become professional;
2 - support organisations must be grouped together to make savings to be used to finance the cost of the regular armed forces.

**2 - TRANSFORMING INTO REGULAR FORCES: "the corner stone of the reform"**

The forces face 2 major challenges over the next 6 years:

1 - To recruit career service personnel or personnel under contract and civilians

   - The personnel hired at non-commissioned level is to double in 6 years to reach 92,527. To meet this new need both quantitatively and qualitatively, a genuine attractive profession will be proposed to young people, satisfying their expectations, in particular terms of training and of subsequent resettlement into civilian life.

   - At the same time, measures will be taken to encourage a sufficient number of officers and NCOs to leave to reach the target, which is to reduce the number of posts by 16,000. The refusal to use coercive measures required a support plan which was set up in 1996.
- Finally, the **civilian element** of the armed forces is to increase by 9,276 (up to 20% of the total figures).

2 - To implement a **reserve forces system**

- It will remain an **essential supplement** to the professional forces, whether it be for performing certain missions in times of crisis or for dealing with threats or risks that exceed their normal framework of action. The reserve will be constituted of volunteers and will be integrated to a large extent into the regular units.

- It will be articulated in 2 parts:
  - the **first reserve** (or operational reserve), a volume of 1,000,000, will be capable of reinforcing forces;
  - the second reserve will encompass all of the other reservists.

- **A genuine status** will protect the reservists and enable them to work under conditions that are very clear with respect to their civilian employers, with precise guarantees for themselves and their families.

3 - **RESTRUCTURING THE ARMS INDUSTRY: "more Europe, more efficiency"**

One of the more important aspects of the reform undoubtedly concerns weapons' procurement.

Two main driving forces underpin this deep change:

1 - It is in **Europe** that the procurement context is to be set because Europe is at the hub of the alliances, cooperation and interests around which France's defence policy revolves.

2 - In the next 6 years the costs of the programming act are to be cut down by 30% and delays in armament programmes reduced.

This frame and this goal will constitute the background of 5 axes:

1 - **Cooperation** will be developed, since it can be forecast that in 2002, the total share of cooperation programmes will reach 34%. Added impetus must be given to an emerging European armament policy.

2 - France proposes to restructure its defence industry by regrouping the 5,000 firms into **4 sectors** (i.e. an aeronautical sector, an electronics sector, a nuclear sector and a mechanical engineering sector)

3 - The defence **sales** organisation will be improved by concentrating on extending and strengthening the military and official government relations.

4 - The overall **efficiency** of the procurement process in the MOD will be improved by drawing inspiration from the example of civilian industrial methods.

5 - The **Procurement Agency** (DGA) will be reorganised, its scope of action amended as well as its financial procedures and structures.
France's defence effort can be measured through some financial indicators:

1 - The first financial indicator is the 1998 budget. At 184.725 Billion francs (excluding pensions) the Defence budget represents 11.64% of the State budget. Three points are significant:

   - the budget is in line with the first annuity of the programming law;
   - the amount of capital expenditure (43.8%) is still reasonable compared with operating expenses (56.2%);
   - the share of the budget earmarked for nuclear forces is decreasing: 9.9% of the Defence budget.

2 - The second financial indicator can be drawn from the 1997-2002 military programming law:

   - this law makes provisions for devoting annually 86 Billion francs (in real terms based on the 1995 value of the franc) for equipping the French armed forces, and 99 Billion francs to operating costs;
   - the defence equipment credits 1997-2002 decrease (of around 18%) compared to the former military programming law but allow to provide less numerous forces with a good standard of equipment;
   - the operating expenses stay at the same level, for the increasing costs related to the transformation into regular forces are balanced by the reduction in strength.

3 - The third financial indicator can be found by drawing a comparison between the defence efforts of our main partners in 1997:

   - with 242,243 Million francs of military expenditure in 1997, which represents 3.0% of the DP, France holds the second place amongst the western nations.
PART 3

THE NEW STRUCTURES OF THE THREE SERVICES

CHAPTER 5: THE ARMY

CHAPTER 6: THE NAVY

CHAPTER 7: THE AIR FORCE
Of all the three services the Army has to face the greatest challenge, for it has to deal with a complete building process. Mostly now dedicated to prevention and power projection it has to cope with a great variety of crises and has therefore conceived its organisation on new tenets. But, during the transition period that is due to achieve in 2002, it will nevertheless retain a substantial capacity to commit forces, if necessary.

1 - THE NEW ROLES

- By 2002, the Army will be capable of handling the new roles assigned to it under the Defence restructuring program:

  1 - **Prevention**: by using intelligence and prepositioned forces, the Army must be permanently capable of anticipating and understanding situations.

  2 - **Projection**: the Army must be capable of deploying either an expeditionary force of 50,000 men to take part in a major engagement within the framework of NATO, or a force of 30,000 men, partially relievable and, simultaneously, a relievable force of 5,000 men on another theatre.

  3 - **Protection**: the Army must be capable of guaranteeing the security and the integrity of the French territory against an external threat, of participating in combating threats affecting the internal security, and of taking part in public service missions.

Thus the Army can be committed in 3 different types of engagement:

  1 - in a **high intensity** conflict within a multinational framework (for instance the Gulf war);
  2 - in a **non conventional** conflict within a multinational framework and without a clearly identified enemy (for example Somalia or former Yugoslavia);
  3 - to defend the **integrity** of the French or allied territories, alone or within bilateral defence agreements.

2 - THE PRINCIPLES: " Leaving the off-the-shelf era for the made-to-measure era "

To meet these new requirements, and with regard to the change of the conditions under which it is now to be employed, the Army has to adapt its structures. The reorganisation of the Army is based on 3 basic tenets: modularity, economy of force and separated chains of command.

1 - **Modularity** is the consequence of the great rupture that occurred in land operations. Until the nineties, it had been preparing for a gigantic military confrontation in Central Europe; such planning resulted in an operational organisation which was also its peacetime organisation. But now, it has become unable to plan in detail the great variety of crises it is to cope with. The corps and divisional level traditional units, as they are currently organised in peacetime, can no longer be committed as such into
modern operations, except under very exceptional circumstances, as the last operations proved it. Therefore, to avoid permanent disorganisation and structural inadequacy, the Army must be considered as an organisational system able to generate, whenever required and at short notice, contingency operational systems, the organisation of which will be specific to each occasion.

Implementing the modularity tenet has 2 main consequences:

a- The basic standing modules, designed to build up the contingency forces, must be combined arms brigades, each of these having an operational dominant speciality (armour or infantry, for instance).

b- Moreover, not only units, but also headquarters must be projectable; this means that they must only focus on their operational mission.

2- Economy of force is a consequence implied by the reduction in size. Downsizing the Army entails a limitation in the assets dedicated to combat support and combat service support capacities. As a consequence, they must be centralised, according to their function, within specialised brigades. In the event of a crisis, they would be picked out from these brigades to be assigned to the contingency operational force.

3- The implementation of both principles implies that responsibilities must be clearly separated between the contingency operational chain of command and the standing organic one. Mixing both operational and daily organic responsibilities within the same chain results in a limitation in the ability for immediate projection of the operational command.

Apart from the chain of schools and the technical directorates, the organisation of the Army will retain:

- an operational chain of command, freed from any responsibility but the operational one and made up of all operational headquarters and projectable units;
- an organic chain of command, responsible for basic training, financial and administrative service support and based upon 5 territorial regions.
3 - THE OPERATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY

It consists of 4 levels:

1 - At the first and highest level stand the land action force command (CFAT) and the land logistic force command (CFLT), both created in 1998.
   a - CFAT will be tasked with:
      - the operational training of all operational headquarters and projectable units;
      - the setting up of either a NATO class corps command post or the nucleus of a joint multinational command post.
   b - CFLT will be responsible for:
      - the operational logistic support of all contingency actions;
      - providing projected forces with their theatre logistic command posts.

2 - The second level will be divided into 4 force headquarters, directly subordinated to CFAT and fully projectable. They will receive no direct permanent command except for operations or combined exercises. One of these headquarters will be the preferential correspondent for the European corps. For operations or exercises, they will have to set up:
      - a NATO class division command post;
      - or the nucleus of a joint theatre command post for a national operation.

3 - The third level will consist of 8 combined arms brigades (whose speciality are: armour, armoured infantry, light armoured and light infantry), 1 airmobile brigade, 2 logistic brigades and 4 specialised combat support brigades. For operations or training only, each brigade will be under the command of a light and fully projectable headquarters. As a consequence, the brigade will be the only standing operational structure in the Army.

4 - At the fourth level the regiments are organised to commit themselves at full strength and at short notice. Each regiment will be composed of 4 combat units supported by a HQ unit, all of them dedicated to action. The maintenance of the base will be ensured mostly by civilians, but also by the training unit and the reserve unit attached to the regiment.
A short example will describe the way the Army intends to build up a contingency force within the framework of a multinational operation in which France does not assume the overall command but is responsible for the conduct of land operations.

In such assumption:

- CFAT and CFLT provide the allied joint theatre command post with the required cells.
- They also provide the nucleus of the command post of the land force under French command.
- As a leading nation, France provides a major part of the operational level combat support and combat service support units, as well as a strong airmobile contribution.
- A force headquarters provides a division level command post which exercises command over a NATO class multinational division.
- 2 French brigades are assigned to this unit and a third one to an allied division.

4 - A SMALLER BUT MORE COHERENT ARMY

For the Army, this large-scale re-modelling is also characterised by 4 major changes:

1 - Over the 1997-2002 period, staffing levels, will be reduced from 270,000 to 172,000 civilian and military personnel (138,680 military, i.e. 16,000 officers, 50,000 NCOs, 72,000 privates, and 34,000 civilian) and 30,000 reserve.

2 - The transformation to regular forces will give better coherence to a smaller Army. 10,000 men and women are to be recruited each year between 1997 and 2002 for over 400 trades. In 1997, the Army has created 5,879 extra posts for volunteers. The transformation will not only result in the replacement of conscripts by regular servicemen but will also help to improve the ratio of officers and NCOs to privates (49% from 30%). Coherence will also be reinforced through the attachment of 30,000 reserve to the regular units.

3 - This dedicated-to-action Army must retain specific capabilities:

   a - To commit in a high intensity conflict, the Army must rely on its decision forces, equipped with modern and complex weapons systems to defeat a conventional enemy.

![LECLERC MBT](image1.png)  ![AP and AT TIGER](image2.png)
b - To be engaged in a non conventional conflict, it has to retain lighter forces able to control the ground.

c - The forces have to be equipped with reinforced capabilities in command, intelligence, mobility and targeting.

4 - Finally the Army has to reinforce its cooperation with the allies. It has become increasingly necessary to plan for the Army to be committed to thoroughly multinational operations within NATO, WEU or UN frameworks and within the framework of defence agreement as well. This reorganisation offers good opportunities to get closer to NATO structures and procedures, even though France's full return is delayed.

5 - THE FRENCH PRESENCE AND INTERVENTIONS ABROAD

1 - The strength of the Army prepositioned forces abroad will be downsized by 30% in 2002. This political decision has the following consequences:

   - in Africa 1 base will close and the standard forces prepositioned will be **1 battalion** (i.e. a HQ unit and 2 combat companies) per country, except in Djibouti (2 regiments);

   - in the French overseas territories, the standard force will consist of **1 battalion** (i.e. a HQ unit and 3 combat companies);

   - support will be joint and therefore provided by the most numerous service on the territory.
2 - These prepositioned forces will be mainly composed by relievable units, except some permanent personnel serving the support bases, HQ units and HQ. The Army intends to create a training centre in each territory in order to help the relieving units to acclimatise. Moreover, a permanent pathfinder platoon will be built up to train these freshly arrived units. Finally, permanent operational training cells attached to the friendly foreign forces will be set up.

3 - During the 1997-2002 period, the Army will retain a substantial capacity to intervene abroad. France is still able to commit up to 20,000 men abroad:

- 3,000 men (around 20 companies) are projected in Africa or in the overseas territories every 4 months to relieve the prepositioned forces;

- France can commit at short notice an immediate reaction force of 3,200 men; mostly composed of light regular forces, they are relievable every 6 months;

- France can also commit within a month a rapid reaction force of 10,000 men heavily equipped; non relievable, they are able to work within a multinational frame.
For France the sea is crucial for several reasons. As a major power, conducting a proactive policy, she must have the means to intervene overseas. As a major economic power, she is dependent on supplies and resources from all over the world, delivered by sea, for her prosperity. Finally, France has to defend a 5,000 kms coastline, overseas territories and dependencies in every ocean, plus exclusive rights to resources from the sea.

The Navy has therefore a major role to play in the new and re-balanced strategy, with its organisation looking out more overseas. But the reduction in size of the armed forces has also made it necessary to undertake certain changes.

1 - THE ROLES

Although its 4 traditional roles have not been changed, the Navy will be principally re-orientated around deterrence and power projection.

1 - Deterrence: this remains the principal role, although SSBNs are to be reduced to new generation Triomphant class, according to the principle of self sufficiency.

2 - Power projection: this is the second role assigned to the Navy within a joint and even combined services framework. The projection capability relies on the existence and the permanence of the Naval Air Group and of the Amphibious Group, these groups making up the air-sea arm of our joint services capabilities for projecting power and forces.

3 - Prevention and protection: this includes monitoring sea areas (the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean sea and wherever France's interests lie, especially in the French overseas territories and in their exclusive economic zones) with dynamically prepositioning security and sovereignty forces.

4 - Public service: the Navy coordinates the various maritime administrations, participates in sea rescue, the sea police, maintaining public order and combating marine pollution. The Navy is also responsible for general hydrography and nautical information. Furthermore, the air-sea forces deployed throughout the world participate in humanitarian aid action.

2 - THE ORGANISATION

The Navy is organised in 2 chains of command. The "operational command" is designed to direct the operational use of forces. The "organic command" is meant to direct the preparation of forces for action. Meanwhile some appointments are double hatted.
1 - The operational chain is composed of 5 major commands. 4 of them are geographic commands: CECLANT (CinC Atlantic), CECMED (CinC Mediterranean), ALINDIEN (CinC Indian Ocean) and ALPACI (CinC Pacific Ocean). The latter is ALFOST (Ocean Strategic Force). The zones surrounding the French overseas territories are under the joint services operational command (COMSUP).

2 - The organic chain includes 7 specialised commands, which are the Submarine force (ALSOUMAT), the Naval task force (ALFAN), the Anti submarine warfare group (ALGASM), the Mine warfare forces (ALMINES), the Seaborne aviation (ALAE), the Maritime patrol aviation (ALPATMAR) and the Marine fusiliers and commandos (COFUSCO).
3 - DEPLOYMENTS

1 - The French Navy at home is deployed in 2 main areas, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.
   a - The Atlantic. Around Brest, ASW, MPA, MCM and SSN are collocated with SSBNs in order to operate and protect the SSBN force.
   b - The Mediterranean. Toulon, the other centre of excellence, is dedicated to power projection with CV, LPD, frigates and SSN. These forces can therefore be committed wherever it is necessary, dependent upon the threats.

2 - France maintains significant naval forces stationed permanently overseas. The principal areas of interest are:
   a - The Pacific. In Papeete: 1 frigate, 1 light transport ship, 1 survey ship, 3 patrol craft, 1 LSD, 1 LCT, 3 DA 20 and several auxiliaries. In Noumea: 2 frigates, 2 patrol craft and 1 repair ship, 2 MPA.
   b - The Caribbean. 1 frigate, 1 support ship, 1 light transport ship, 1 LCT and 1 patrol craft are based in Fort de France (Martinique). 1 patrol craft is based in Cayenne to support the European Space Agency Launch Site of Kourou.
   c - The Indian Ocean. 1 command ship (AOR), 2 frigates, 4 logistic ships and 2 patrol craft are based in Djibouti and La Réunion. A permanent naval detachment is stationed at Mayotte (Comoro Islands) with several auxiliaries to support and ensure the maritime capability of the Foreign Legion units based on the islands.
   d - In addition to forces permanently stationed overseas there are regular deployments (reinforcements). Typical force levels are:
      - Caribbean. 1 MPA.
      - Indian Ocean. 1 ASW frigate, 1 frigate and 1 MPA.
      - Western Africa. 1 MPA and 1 frigate.

4 - THE NAVY AND THE REFORM OF THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES

By the end of the period governed by the programming law, the Navy will retain its operational capabilities of deterrence and projection of power, and will continue to carry out the public service missions incumbent on it. However, it will undergo certain changes regarding to its strength and tonnage.

1 - In 1998 the authorised strength of the French Navy was 57,000 military (including 11,498 conscripts) and 8,200 civilians. Defence reorganisation will mean a reduction in numbers of personnel to 56,500 (5,000 Officers, 30,100 Senior Ratings, 8,000 Junior Ratings and 11,500 civilians) by 2002. As one fifth of the manpower is made up of conscripts, the Navy has to replace about 20% of each ship's complement with regulars.

2 - According to the Defence restructuring programme, the Navy will become smaller, with the number of vessels decreasing from 101 to 82 and aircraft from 175 to 136: 13 vessels are to be decommissioned.
by 2000. However, the introduction of several new units will guarantee the strength of its essential components.

a - **Submarines.** *Le Triomphant*, the first of a new class of 4 SSBNs, entered service in 1996. She incorporates improvements in acoustic detection capability and noise reduction and is fitted with new improved missiles. The attack submarine force will continue to comprise 6 SSN.

![SSN Saphir](image)

b - **Aircraft carriers.** Due to her ability to deliver prestrategic nuclear weapons and to project power at all levels of crisis and conflict, the carrier remains an essential element of our force and will be renewed with the arrival of the nuclear aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* (1999). She will carry 40 aircraft including the maritime version of the Rafale fighters, 2 Hawkeye AEW aircraft and Super Etendard aircraft. A second CVN could be planned later to replace *Foch*.

![CVN Charles de Gaulle](image)

c - **High Seas combat forces.** Despite the arrival of 2 *Cassard* class AAW escort, the French Navy will retain only 4 AAW frigates. These frigates are planned to be replaced by *Horizon* class frigates, developed with the British and Italian Navies.

![AAW Cassard](image)

With its 8 ASW frigates, 2 of them (*Tourville* and *De Grasse*) equipped with the new SLASM system (very low frequency active sonar), it has strengthened its long held "savoir-faire" in ASW warfare.
d - **Sovereignty forces.** Dedicated to surveillance or to the settlement of crises, these frigates will increase in number thanks to the arrival of 4 additional *La Fuyette* class frigates by 2000.6 *Floreuil* class surveillance frigates, deployed in the overseas territories, entered service between 1992 and 1994.

![La Fayette](image1)

![La Fayette](image2)

![La Fayette](image3)

e - **Amphibious transport.** The Navy will improve its capacity from 3 to 4 assault ships with the arrival of a *Foudre* class LPD and can rely on an operational transport force of 19 landing crafts of various types.

![MCM Orion](image4)

f - **MCM forces.** The French Navy has a recognised strength in MCM, largely due to its 13 Tripartite Mine Hunter, developed in cooperation with the Belgian and Dutch Navies.

![MCM Orion](image5)

![MCM Orion](image6)

g - **Support forces.** The Navy will retain 6 replenishment and support vessels (3 AOR, 1 repair and 2 specialised support ships) and will rely on its overseas bases to support its ships at sea.

![Maritime Rafale Fighter](image7)

![Maritime Rafale Fighter](image8)

h - **Naval aviation.** The number of aircraft will decrease significantly from 175 to 136 but their quality will dramatically improve, especially with the arrival of 60 maritime Rafale fighter, 3 Hawkeye AEW aircraft, 27 NH 90 (ASW and transport Helicopters). It will also comprise 22 new generation MPA (Atlantique 2), AWACS, and 24 Panther Helicopters.
CHAPTER 7
THE AIR FORCE

The characteristics of the Air Force are the speed with which Air power can be applied, the capability for long range engagement and the power and precision of its weapons. The Air Force therefore plays its part in the new, re-balanced strategy with its organic and operational organisation. But, like the Navy, it has to undergo some changes to meet the new requirements and the reduction in size of the armed forces in general.

1 - THE ROLES

In the context of the Defence Missions, the Air Force has the 6 following responsibilities:

1 - **Deterrence**: By implementing the air component of the nuclear forces, thereby providing flexibility, and diversification to the courses of action.

2 - **Prevention**: This includes acquisition of intelligence from space systems and implementing specialised air assets such as airborne command, detection systems, electromagnetic listening instruments and reconnaissance aircraft.

3 - **Projection of forces**: This includes the air transport of personnel and equipment, the participation in joint operations (air drops, air transport, in-flight refuelling) and in humanitarian assistance missions worldwide.

4 - **Projection of power**: Includes the use of combat aircraft to intervene, when and where required, without delay far from the national territory in any significant operation.

5 - **Protection of the territory**: Through airspace and space control by identifying aircraft and other flying objects, evaluating threats, transmitting alerts, and by intervention, in order to ensure that national sovereignty is respected, and to guarantee governmental freedom of action.

6 - **Public service missions**: These include, on a daily basis, urgent medical evacuations, the search and rescue to crashed aircraft; and in times of domestic crisis, it caters for minimum operation of basic public services (air traffic, air transport, meteorology).

2 - THE ORGANISATION

The organisation of the Air Force is based on a distinction between an operational chain of command, an organic chain and a territorial chain.

The **operational commands** are designed to **direct the use of the** air forces, under the authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff.

The **organic and territorial chains** are meant to direct the preparation of forces for action, under the authority of the Air Chief of staff.
1 - The operational chain is composed of 2 major commands:
   - Strategic Air Command (CFAS);
   - Air Defence and Air Operations Command (CDAOA), over or from the home territory.

2 - The organic chain includes 5 specialised commands:
   - Air Combat Command (CFAC);
   - Air Mobility Command (CFAP);
   - Air Surveillance, Information and Communication Systems Command (CASSIC);
   - Air Force Ground Security Command (CFCA);
   - Air Force Education and Training Command (CEAA).

3 - The territorial chain, that provides support for all the above means via the air bases, comprises 3 Air Regions:
   - North East Region (RANE);
   - Mediterranean Region (RAM);
   - Atlantic region (RAA).

4 - The 42 Air bases are essential, for they act as coordination centres and are responsible for the preparation and the use of the forces. They gather in the same place, and under the same authority, different air units from the various operational and organic commands.

To ensure the deployment of air forces on operations far from home, the French Air Force have developed the concept of "deployable air base package", which consists of 3 types:
a - the first is designed to deploy 8 fighters, 3 transport aircraft, 2 CSAR and 1 tanker and is operated by 400 airmen;

b - the second is operated by 800 airmen; it is meant to support 12 fighters, 5 transport aircraft, 2 CSAR and 2 tankers;

c - the third (1200 airmen) is able to operate 40 fighters, 10 transport aircraft, 2 CSAR and 2 tankers.

3 - THE CAPABILITIES

1 - Deterrence:

CFAS alone is concerned with deterrence.

It implements the air component of the nuclear forces which consists of:
   - 3 squadrons of Mirage 2000 N equipped with the ASMP missile;
   - supported by 1 squadron of C135 FR tankers;
   - controlled by C160 ASTARTE.

CFAS also implements a strategic air reconnaissance squadron (operating Mirage IV P).

2 - Protection and prevention:

CASSIC is responsible for implementing and maintaining systems for:
   - surveillance;
   - information;
   - ground-to-air defence;
   - electronic warfare;
   - and communications.

Its area of responsibility includes the overseas French territories and bases, the zones of crisis and the space.
It encompasses:
   - surveillance, detection and control means which basically consist of:
- the STRIDA terrestrial-based radars system and communication network (designed to process data in order to provide the air picture and the means to control assets over national territory);
- the terrestrial-based national radars STRAPP system (for local threat warning and aircraft recovery) and 4 AWACS (cover any low-level gap in the ground base detection network);
- electronic warfare units (18 specialised aircraft);
- ground-to-air defence units equipped with CROTALE, SATCP and ASPIC missiles;
- space intelligence unit implementing HELIOS information.

3 -Action:

The action capabilities are divided between the Air Combat Command (FAC) and the Air Mobility Command (FAP).

a -FAC is permanently tasked with:
- security over the territory in the air;
- implementation of the combat air intelligence chain.

FAC can intervene with combat aircraft as and when required in significant operations far from the home territory to conduct:
- defensive or offensive counter-air operations;
- participate in Land/Air operations;
- electronic and photographic missions.

FAC consists of 18 squadrons including 315 combat aircraft:

- 8 squadrons (105 aircraft), equipped with Mirage F1 C & B and Mirage 2000 C & B are dedicated to defensive counter-air operations; '9

- 10 squadrons (200 aircraft), equipped with Jaguar, Mirage F1 CT, Mirage 2000 D & N and Mirage F1 CR are devoted to offensive counterair operations, land/air operations and reconnaissance operations.

They implement various weapons including laser-guided bombs, Beluga and Durandal bombs for airfield attacks as well as AS30 L missiles and anti-radar Martel AS 37 missiles.
b - FAP is tasked with:
- projection of forces and equipment;
- in-flight refuelling;
- CSAR and Special Forces missions;
- peacetime public service missions (Medevac, search and rescue for crashed aircraft, air transport, humanitarian aid missions).

FAP consists of some 300 diverse aircraft including 95 transport aircraft and 90 helicopters. Every day, FAP flies 140,000 km, transports 2,000 passengers and 100 tons, and drops 800 airborne troops. It has the capability to transport **5,000 men and 8,000 tons over 10 days.**

It can carry out:

- strategic transport missions with its 3 DC8 and 2 Airbus A 310;
- tactical transport operations with its C160, C130 and CN 235 aircraft;
- CSAR missions with Super Puma, Puma and Fennec helicopters;
- liaison missions with its Falcon 900, Mystere 20 and 50, Nord 262, Twin Otter and TBM 700.

**4 - THE AIR FORCE AND THE REFORM OF THE ARMED FORCES**

At the end of the period governed by the programming law, the Air Force will have a **reduced** combat fleet and undergo downsizing in its strength.

However, the introduction of modern **equipment** as well as the adoption of **new courses of action** will allow it to retain the required capabilities for assuming the priority projection mission with efficiency.

1 - In 1998, the authorised strength of the Air Force was 83,460 military personnel (7,280 officers, 42,560 NCOs and 33,620 airmen, 26,400 of whom were conscripts) and 5,080 civilians. Defence reorganisation will mean a **reduction in numbers of personnel to 71,100** by 2002. At the end of the process the strength of the Air force will be 7,000 officers, 38,400 NCOs, 18,983 airmen and 6,700 civilians.

This means that **the system of air bases will have to be trimmed:** 4 bases are to be closed during the 1997-1999 period.

2 - According to the Defence Restructuring Programme, **the Air Force will become smaller.** The number of combat aircraft will decrease from 390 to 300 and this of transport aircraft will fall down to 52. The Air Force will retain only 84 helicopters.

3 - However, **the introduction of several aircraft and equipment** will guarantee the capability for power projection and projection of forces.
Concerning the capability for projection of power, the arrival of 234 Rafale aircraft (139x2 crew and 95 single seat) in 2005 will notably improve our Air Force. This multipurpose fighter will first replace both assault and air defence aircraft, and then be used for deterrence. By 2015 the 300 Rafale will form the backbone of the Air Force.

By 2000, the Air force will also implement new weapons, such as the Apache missile, a long-range air-to-ground stand off missile, as well as the air-to-air Mica missile. The latter will be associated with the multi targets RDY radar.

The capability for projection of forces will improve with the acquisition of 5 new tankers, the numbers of which will increase from 11 to 16. France is also very concerned by the development of the European Future Large Aircraft, for it needs to buy around 50 by 2004 to replace its old C160.

The Air Force now dedicated to power projection is working to improve its ability to insert forces in multinational operations by reinforcing its cooperation with our allies. Like the Army, the last operations in Bosnia have made it necessary to plan for it to be committed within the NATO framework or within a bilateral framework, such as the French -British Air Group. Having learnt the lessons from the Gulf War, the Air Force is increasingly concerned with the development of both tactics and equipment for use at night.