

The Implications of the Fight Against Terrorism For the French Gendarmerie

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Introduction

The French Gendarmerie is one of two French police forces. Consisting of approximately 100,000 career or contracted officers and of civilian staff, it can be reinforced by 40,000 reserves if necessary. This 800-year-old institution operates in the field of homeland security and can adapt to the intensity and variety of all types of missions, from peacetime to low or high crisis levels.

The Gendarmerie, as the French Police, contributes to the commitment of the government to ensure public security and adequate policing. This dualism ensures an efficient democratic balance in homeland security. Its participation alongside the armed forces is justified as a specific means for the fulfilment of police duties during a high level crisis.

Moreover, taking into consideration the evolution of the geostrategic situation, the Gendarmerie is a major player in civil and military crisis management within the context of the European Policy for Security and Defence. As both a military force and administrative entity, the French Gendarmerie operates to protect individuals and properties all over the national territory but works alongside the armed forces in overseas peacekeeping missions.

Given its dual police and military culture, the Gendarmerie must adjust to the complexity of the fight against terrorism both inside and outside the national borders. Thanks to its versatile organisation and its wide range of activities, the institution is able to operate in different fields in the fight against terrorism, in the form of planned counterterrorism intervention, prevention measures, and antiterrorism. The first phase of its counterterrorist activities involves analysis, benchmarking, audits, training, and defining and setting up of means, and the second phase consists of a combination of intelligence work with police and judicial action, leading to the discovery of criminal activity, the arrest of perpetrators, and the collection of evidence.

Asymmetrical terrorism, brought to light by the attacks of 9/11, weakens Western countries. As it becomes an international phenomenon, undercover agents infiltrate working-class and rural circles. Con-

sidered as wartime actions, these security-threatening attacks have required the police to provide a new response to the threat. As a result of this terrorist phenomenon, the Gendarmerie has redefined its role and the involvement and use of its law enforcement techniques and strategies.

Players Involved in the Fight against Terrorism

The events of 11 September 2001 and of 11 March 2004 have demonstrated the striking power of terrorists throughout the world. Facing the new challenge of a complex terrorist network, the French Gendarmerie has adapted its tools in order to optimise the French government's ability to combat this phenomenon. The entire institution is thoroughly dedicated to the fight against terrorism. Because of the wide range of its capacities, the Gendarmerie has imposed an overall system within centralized headquarters.

Restructuring the Main Headquarters

The French Gendarmerie headquarters is made up of three main departments. The Operations and Deployment Service includes, since the 2003 reorganisation, five subdivisions that aim at being complementary, as far as homeland security is concerned. Four of them are directly involved in the fight against terrorism and are the prime movers in the fight against terrorism.

- Subdivision of Defence and Public Order: responsible for the deployment of the GSIGN²⁰⁵ and of the national operation centre, it leads the planning working groups in cooperation with the relevant inter-ministerial structures (such as the Defence Department).
- Subdivision of Criminal Police: in charge of the processing of intelligence, coordination, follow-up, and support to criminal police and antiterrorist units. Also liaisons with other police departments, intelligence units, and special magistrates.
- Subdivision of International Cooperation: forwards the intelligence collected by the Gendarmerie officers involved in cooperation missions and provides support to the other subdivisions, enabling an international network of prevention and crisis management.

²⁰⁵ Groupe de sécurité et d'intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale = French Gendarmerie Security and Intervention Unit

- Subdivision of Public Security and Traffic: in charge of defining the principles governing the deployment of specialised branches and special means of action of the Gendarmerie.

All these services work in synergy. They are closely and continuously linked to the other governmental players who take part in the fight against terrorism.

Coordination Between the French Gendarmerie and the Other Services of the State

The French Gendarmerie coordinates its actions with other state services on different levels:

Interministerial

- a. Governmental planning: The gendarmerie participates in the projects carried out not only by the SGDN²⁰⁶ but also by the MAE,²⁰⁷ the DGAC,²⁰⁸ the DAMGM,²⁰⁹ and the DTMPL.²¹⁰ It maintains a permanent contact with the High Representative of Defence (HFD) of the Homeland Office (MISILL). Thus, it contributes to global risk assessment and monitors the current geopolitical situation.
- b. Intelligence and criminal police fields: The French Gendarmerie takes part in the works of the UCLAT²¹¹ and has direct relations with the specialised magistrates from the Paris pool, and also works with other national (CIR²¹²) or international departments (G8, UE²¹³, OSCE²¹⁴, UN) tasked with the fight against terrorism. As a matter of

²⁰⁶ Secrétariat général de la Défense nationale = National Defence General Office

²⁰⁷ Ministère des Affaires étrangères = Foreign Affairs Department / “White Paper” regarding the security of French natives abroad

²⁰⁸ Direction générale de l’aviation civile = National Civil Aviation Headquarters

²⁰⁹ Direction des Affaires maritimes et des gens de mer = Seamen and Maritime Affairs Headquarters

²¹⁰ Direction des transports maritimes, des ports et du littoral = Coastline, Harbours and Maritime Transport Headquarters

²¹¹ Unité de coordination de la lutte antiterroriste = Antiterrorist Coordination Unit

²¹² Comité interministériel du renseignement = Interministerial Intelligence Committee; the SGDN provides the permanent secretary’s office.

²¹³ Union Européenne = European Union

²¹⁴ Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération en Europe = Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

fact, the Gendarmerie is directly involved in the threat assessment process.

Joint Forces

The French Gendarmerie implements permanent plans in aerial and maritime fields in which military forces are involved. It trains a part of its staff in techniques specific or common to the armed forces.

Coordination with Corporate Entities

Agreements with corporations are considered vital for the country, and play an important part in the surveillance and intervention processes, especially in the high-tech energy field.

The Forming of Concepts and Forecasts

In association with civilian or military partners from the research world, it initiates, promotes, and participates in studies of the existing or projected consequences of terrorism. This work is in keeping with the continuous adjusting process of its organisation and its means of meeting the requirements of the antiterrorist fight.

The involvement of all the Gendarmerie units (headquarters and ground units) in the fight against terrorism was particularly significant on the occasion of recent major events (the G8 summit in Evian in June 2003 and the Sixtieth Anniversary of the D-Day Normandy Landings in June and August 2004). This shows that the whole institution has taken into specific consideration the terrorist threats. These interventions are carried out at a strategic, operational, and tactical level, involving all levels of the Gendarmerie in cooperation and coordination with the governmental departments concerned.

A Global and Consistent Contribution to the Fight Against Terrorism

Intelligence, specialised intervention, and the criminal police are the three pillars of the Gendarmerie framework.

Intelligence

The intelligence is worked through a process that includes searching, collecting, analyzing, and forwarding data to operation and intelligence centres at local, regional, and national levels.

a. National level:

Acting as an “integrated police” thanks to its territorial networking, the Divisional Gendarmerie collects information that may be useful in terms of antiterrorism. Through specialised forces (for example, aerial transport and maritime units), it also monitors travel routes, which provides an important source of information and makes it more difficult for the terrorists to move about undetected. The French Gendarmerie is therefore a part of the French intelligence network, which is composed of specialised institutional agencies (DCRG,²¹⁵ DST,²¹⁶ DGSE,²¹⁷ and DRM²¹⁸).

b. International level:

Intelligence is also collected by the Gendarmerie’s Commissioned Officers assigned to embassies within the ASI²¹⁹ network and their exchanges with the services of host countries. Moreover, in the OPEX²²⁰ scheme (UN, NATO, EU, OSCE), the deployment of gendarmes among the J2 structures (intelligence), engaged forces or specialised groups such as CIAR²²¹ in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and within the PGSI²²² and Military Police, enables the processing of criminal and terrorist-related intelligence collected in the field. The collected and analyzed intelligence is forwarded to data bases that will be processed in order to be useful to Homeland Security. Therefore, this task of the Gendarmerie is a component of the strategic function of “prevention.”

Intervention

Within the framework of its protection missions, the French Gendarmerie can consistently and gradually deploy specific means at the regional

²¹⁵ Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux = Central Intelligence Agency

²¹⁶ Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire = Domestic Security Service

²¹⁷ Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure = Secret Overseas Intelligence Service

²¹⁸ Direction du Renseignement Militaire = Military Intelligence Service

²¹⁹ Attaché de Sécurité Intérieure = Homeland Security Attaché

²²⁰ Opérations Extérieures = Overseas Operations

²²¹ Cellule d’Investigation et d’Analyse du Renseignement = Intelligence Analysis and Investigation Group)

²²² Peloton de Gendarmerie de Surveillance et d’Intervention = Gendarmerie Surveillance and Intervention Platoon

or national level: PIGM,²²³ GSIGN under its different forms, and the national NRBC group.

The French Gendarmerie reaction capacity is then ensured by close territorial networking that allows a proportionate and gradual response whose cornerstone is the deployment of the GSIGN, the national unit for counterterrorism, or the key figures of the international community protection (GSPR,²²⁴ EPIGN²²⁵) or crisis management (GIGN or even EPIGN for some crucial interests abroad).

Criminal Police

The deployment of specialised units as a reaction to a terrorist action – units also able to play a role in crisis management – represents the third part of French antiterrorist policy. In its everyday criminal police duty, the French Gendarmerie is more and more confronted with the connections between criminality and terrorism (for example, the black market, petty and more serious offences, drugs and weapon trafficking). In order to cope with this set of problems, its criminal police units (BR,²²⁶ SR²²⁷) are provided with IRCGN²²⁸ technical support, in addition to their standard equipment, as well as the STRJD²²⁹ analysis capacities. The GSIGN units can here also supply operational support, especially the EPIGN, which sets up the GOR²³⁰ (specialized in shadowing and surveillance).

Furthermore, the French Gendarmerie provides experts to requesting countries (technical and scientific cooperation with Egypt over the Egypt air Boeing 737 crash that occurred on 3 January 2004 in Charm El Sheik). It also takes part in operational action plans in communitarian (EUROPOL) or international structures (UN, G8).

²²³ Peloton Intervention de la Gendarmerie Mobile = Mobile Gendarmerie Intervention Platoon

²²⁴ Groupe de Sécurité de la Présidence de la République = Security Unit for the Presidency of the Republic

²²⁵ Escadron Parachutiste d'Intervention de la French Gendarmerie = French Gendarmerie Airborne Intervention Squadron

²²⁶ Brigade de Recherches = Criminal Investigation Unit

²²⁷ Section de Recherches = Criminal Investigation Squad

²²⁸ Institut de Recherches Criminelles de la French Gendarmerie = French Gendarmerie Institute of Criminal Research

²²⁹ Service Technique de Recherches Judiciaires et de Documentation = Documentation and Criminal Investigation Technical Department

²³⁰ Groupe Observation renseignement = Observation-Search Group

The Targeting of the Terrorist Threat by the National Gendarmerie

In order to face the persistent terrorist threat, the authorities have set up and implemented appropriate responses in order to prevent illegal acts. Supported by its specialised units, the French Gendarmerie has developed a global security culture that places it among all the sectors of activity that might be weakened by a terrorist threat. A versatile security force, it can intervene in the transportation field, operating close to sensitive areas, when faced by a NRBC threat, but also for the benefit of the diplomatic corps.

Involvement in Transportation Issues

The Gendarmerie transport security policy is the result of expertise, a well-known security label, as well as a multipurpose territorial competency. It is involved in all the systems and in all the action plans pertaining to the transport issue.

1. Air counterterrorism

Terrorism employing airplanes is among the most symbolic and dramatic types. The hijacking of the Air Algérie airbus in December 1994 as well as the 9/11 attacks caught the public attention. In the face of this new threat, the French Gendarmerie has had to review its action plan and adapt it in order to reduce the risk of an attack against aircraft.

The French Gendarmerie acts in different areas:

a. Airport security (checks, investigations, protection)

The purpose is to prevent any sensitive devices from boarding (explosives, dangerous items, weapons that could be used during the flight) or suspicious persons from perpetrating a terrorist action.

In connection with the other departments of the state (Police, Customs, and DGAC in particular) and in relation with private operators (air companies, development societies), the GTA,²³¹ mainly in charge of the airports' restricted areas, has stepped up its action. It is supported by the Mobile Gendarmerie in its mission of securing sensitive aircraft.

As for the Divisional Gendarmerie, it is involved in the intelligence collecting process and in detection of all suspect activities in the areas surrounding airports located within its jurisdiction. It is necessary to emphasize that Gendarmerie experts take part in the airport security audit carried out by the DGAC.

²³¹ Gendarmerie des Transports Aériens = Aerial Transports Gendarmerie

b. Flight security

The GIGN has been tasked to provide armed undercover security officers on board certain sensitive commercial flights since late 2003. These officers are able to handle a hijack situation thanks to their capacity to combine operational intelligence analysis, negotiation, and assault skills. The antiterrorism office is in charge of the specific intelligence pertaining to aerial transport in connection with other antiterrorism departments.

According to the governmental “plan VIGIPIRATE,” the GTA, the Divisional Gendarmerie, and the GBGM²³² (Roissy and Orly) are involved in ensuring airport security and have to secure the external surrounding area against any armed attack (MANPAD or other) directed at aircraft. These units are harmoniously deployed in their areas of responsibility. Furthermore, the GTA and the Divisional Gendarmerie represent a basic part of the intelligence community and continuously monitor the activity of flying schools and flying clubs that are likely to turn out “kamikaze pilots.” Additionally, in connection with aerial operations and defence headquarters, the French Gendarmerie takes part in the monitoring of every aircraft flying over a restricted zone.

Finally, the specialised governmental plan (PIRATAIR-INTRUSAIR) determines the GIGN as a reference unit as far as aerial counterterrorism is concerned. For that, nationwide exercises are organised regularly in order to make sure the Gendarmerie action is at its best in the case of an actual threat.

Maritime Counterterrorism

Taking the sea terrorism issue into account has led international bodies to take security measures regarding the transportation of passengers as well as freight. The enforcement of those measures has given security missions a new dimension with respect to government action at sea and has prompted a security assessment of ships and port facilities. The French Gendarmerie, a major inland security player, is also actively involved in the current sea security voluntary policy.

The positioning of the Gendarmerie's sea security

The French Gendarmerie's presence on the entire coastline is manifested by the maritime Gendarmerie positioning in large port facilities and by the divisional Gendarmerie's operations in small harbours. This implies a continuous presence alongside the Navy in the permanent safeguard-

²³² Groupement Blindé de Gendarmerie Mobile = Mobile Gendarmerie Armoured Battalion

ing of the sea. The maritime Gendarmerie involvement in that structure enables it to efficiently tackle illegal immigration and the drug trafficking that finances terrorist networks; it also permits the Gendarmerie to gather intelligence, to secure sensitive facilities, and to protect French coastal waters.

Its action is relayed in smaller ports by boats and divisional units that work alongside local maritime authorities on a daily basis. This close joint ministry collaboration is today reinforced by the implementation of an international legal framework that has been recently altered. In the near future, maritime Gendarmerie seagoing units will be involved in automatic intelligence gathering for maritime purposes, within the deployment of SPATIONAV phase 3.

ISPS code enforcement

Outside VIGIPIRATE plans, ISPS code provisions have been added to the French “droit positif” by the decree of 26 March 2004 and have been enforced since 1 July 2004. The ISPS code implementation has required involved ministries to set up a working party that joins together safety and security experts. The security visits were led, in accordance with the DAMGN, by mixed teams made up of the ISN (Inspectors of Ship Security), the DAMGN, and experts from the Gendarmerie. The headquarters of the Gendarmerie represents the Ministry of Defence, as part of the interministerial committee for the ratification of security measures, and participates in the maritime counterterrorism training of the ISN at the Merchant Navy School.

Maritime counterterrorism intervention

The specialised governmental plan of intervention “PIRATE MER” sets out the framework for intervention and places the Gendarmerie as the central point of action in a plan coordinated with the Navy. To this effect, the Gendarmerie is charged with outlining scenarios while working out specific training exercises.

Railway counterterrorism

Aware of the importance and also the vulnerability of the rail network, the Gendarmerie has been working on this issue for many years. Its nearly nationwide coverage (3,600 Divisional Gendarmerie units covering 95 percent of national territory) allows it to act resourcefully and to carry out the securing of a TGV train or a site in quick time. The increase in rail travel caused by the TGV has sparked an increase in the risks of terrorism. This fact forces the Gendarmerie to counter this ter-

rorist threat by specially training part of its personnel. In order to provide a full response, teams of bomb-sniffing dogs are deployed as part of the rail network team. The GIGN has trained for many years in the area of rail transport.

Road counterterrorism

The Divisional Gendarmerie, reinforced in certain situations by the Mobile Gendarmerie, escorts convoys of dangerous materials travelling across French soil. To provide security for this form of transport, equipment and specific training are required. It also works closely with the national NRBC unit.

Furthermore, in its mission of public security, the Gendarmerie regularly inspects the substructure of the roads. The Gendarmerie is responsible for 90 percent of the French road network. In this regard, the risk of terrorism on the involved transport is regularly assessed and is integrated into the way the GIGN acts.

*The fight against NRBC terrorism*²³³

The attack on the Tokyo metro in 1995 showed the necessity of taking seriously the threat from NRBC. The 9/11 attacks served to reinforce the necessity of this approach and forced the SGDN to redefine the specific intervention plans for the problem issue of NRBC.²³⁴ The Gendarmerie has adopted a plan of action comprising two levels. One level is for the units dedicated to national competence, by providing support to the local Gendarmerie units, and the other level is for the Gendarmerie units that intervene outside national territory. All this training is necessary to enable the Gendarmerie to provide a response to governmental authorities during the management of an NRBC-type crisis.

The national NRBC unit (C2NRBC)

The national NRBC unit, created in June 2001, provides technical support to the units of the Gendarmerie. It is notably responsible for providing NRBC-related support to the GSIGN and its operational subdivision in Satory, with whom it is sometimes deployed. Its personnel are trained to understand and have knowledge of NRBC and also of newly implemented techniques of detection, evacuation, and decontamination.

²³³ Nuclear Radioactive Bacteriological Chemical.

²³⁴ The PIRATOME plan, which concerns the nuclear threat, and the BIOTOX, which concerns the bacteriological threat.

Taking into account the entire range of the NRBC threat to both the civilian and military domains, the unit informs both the civilian and military authorities charged with the management of the crisis (whether a terrorist act or a technological catastrophe), and provides technical and operational advice for the police or Gendarmerie operations commanders (COPG) in a zone where a plan of action for public safety has been put in place. It participates in the creation of training exercises for the Gendarmerie units on the topic of NRBC. It also maintains established links with specialist national and international organisations in order to improve the relevant expertise of the operational capacity of the Gendarmerie.

Lastly, a unit which is under a state of alert can require any gendarme, in the event of a judicial police inquiry into a contaminated area.

The operational subdivision NRBC, SGO NRBC

The SGO-NRBC is made up of four squadrons of GBGM who are on a permanent state of alert. As well as carrying out the traditional missions of the Mobile Gendarmerie, their units are both prepared and trained to intervene in a contaminated area anywhere on national territory.

The SGO, a rapid intervention unit, coordinated by a tactical headquarters, if necessary can call on air support. It is systematically accompanied by a unit of the C2NRBC.

The other components of the action plan in the fight against the threat of NRBC

The NRBC action plan of the Gendarmerie also works at a regional and local level. In effect, the efficient regional structures allow for the deployment of two mobile Gendarmerie squadrons per defence district area, which are already armed with specific equipment (and who, close to the areas at risk, are in charge of the escorts of nuclear convoys, whether civilian or military). On the local plan, each Gendarmerie company has one or several trainers who specialise in ecology and the environment at its disposal. They give training to all French divisional gendarmes.

This basic training is the first operational level that considers the NRBC issue.

Then, any commanding level faced with an event of NRBC nature can ask at any time for support from these units, who are able to be one of the key instruments in the management of the crisis.

The Protection of French Vital Interests in France and Abroad Faced with the Terrorist Threat

Within the framework of its strategic function, which is described in the 1994 “White Paper” on defence, the Gendarmerie is in charge of protecting vital infrastructure (sensitive areas and networks, state institutions) in France, and protecting French interests abroad, such as diplomatic buildings.

Protection of Sensitive Areas and Networks

The French Gendarmerie is involved at different levels in the protection of sensitive sites.

Within the framework of its daily service, its main mission is to look for information in the vicinity of sensitive areas and networks. This involvement is managed by the OCR²³⁵. He is in charge of coordinating and boosting information research and deals with its centralisation and daily management. Finally, he is the main contact for all the functional authorities of the sensitive areas and networks concerned (including state, administrative, and judiciary authorities).

The Gendarmerie also draws up particular plans and operation orders relating to the organisation of the defence of these sensitive areas and networks. Within this framework, as a member of the CIPRS,²³⁶ it participates in audits to assess the safety of these set ups. In times of crisis or of DOT,²³⁷ the Gendarmerie deals with the external security of these sensitive infrastructures. It is involved in their internal defence only in the case of a terrorist attack.

Protection of VIPs

The Gendarmerie participates in the protection of people important to the state, in both France and abroad. Therefore, in 1983, it put in place an innovative structure to protect the Chief of State by creating the GSPR. Since then, this unit has worked in close collaboration with the whole of the services and protection units for French and foreign VIPs. Its military statute naturally marks it to ensure the protection of impor-

²³⁵ Officier centralisateur du renseignement = Information Gathering Officer

²³⁶ Commission interministérielle des points et réseaux sensibles = Interministerial Commission for Sensitive Areas and Networks

²³⁷ Défense opérationnelle du territoire = Inland security in case of a threat or aggression against the national territory

tant military personnel, who are sensitive on the national territory (EP-IGN, Air Force Gendarmerie, Arms and Ammunitions Gendarmerie) as well as personalities who are particularly vulnerable in some countries where France and its interests can be threatened (EPIGN).

Protection of Diplomatic Interests on the National Territory and Abroad

Faced with a terrorist threat, the French Gendarmerie has a significant capacity to increase its power, relying on a permanent plan for the protection and the security of embassies, which can be reinforced by GM and EPIGN officers, according to the level of threat. In effect, this issue is currently controlled by the GSIGN, whose capacity of projection and interoperability with military structures gives it a particular ability to act abroad. The EPIGN has vast experience, and share these skills among several French services in the diplomatic buildings or in sensitive metropolitan sites. Gendarmes carry out missions as security guards in two-thirds of the French diplomatic representation, within the framework of the permanent security of diplomatic missions. If needed, mobile or divisional gendarmes – or even GSIGN officers – can provide a temporary reinforcement of the security guards plan for the security of state representatives, or even of the NRBC capacity. Moreover, the Gendarmerie has developed an expert capacity by participating in assessments of the protection plans of diplomatic buildings, carried out by the CSI.²³⁸

The Involvement of the Gendarmerie on the International Plan

With respect to the inland security forces, the Gendarmerie is present in all the national authorities dealing with the fight against terrorism as well as within international organisations (EU, Europol, NATO, G8, etc.). The French Gendarmerie, which is an active member of the work group “G8 Roma Lyon,” participates in all work linked with counter-terrorism issues.

It also intervenes and plays a part in specific topics where its civilian and military experience gives it a great deal of credibility. Thus, the “Maritime Gendarmerie,” for instance, participates in work meetings

²³⁸ Comité de sécurité interministériel = Interministerial Security / Safety Committee

with other European countries. It also participates in the putting in place of European maritime coordination centres for the fight against illegal immigration in Spain and Greece. It is also involved in combined forces exercises, particularly with Spain and Italy, in order to improve reaction capacities when faced with a terrorist threat. Within the CE-POL,²³⁹ the Gendarmerie participates in training dedicated to the fight against terrorism. There experts and trainers explain its involvement and actions, and trainees are sent to the different annual sessions organised by the member states of the EU. On theatres abroad, it participates in multinational operations in the fight against terrorism.

Wiser for its experience and for the conclusions it draws from its constant surveillance, the GSIGN contributes, through its training Centre, to display know-how and skills, which are essential to manage and tackle crises. Thus, it provides international coverage to prevent risks and to assess threats, as French strategic policy decrees.²⁴⁰ In the framework of the European policy of Security and Defence, the Gendarmerie develops antiterrorist strategies through the capacities permitted within the European Union in the context of European policy forces and within the European Gendarmerie forces. These are in the process of being set up with four partners: Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal.

Conclusion

In accordance with the traditional roles fulfilled by its large subdivisions and its highly specialised devices, the Gendarmerie is one of the principal parts of the crisis plan, notably the specialised plans of the government for the “pirate” families.

Indeed, it can mobilize a high reinforcement capacity very quickly using not only the mobile Gendarmerie, but also the 40,000 personnel of the operational reserve, which allows for the reinforcement of the active personnel in a flexible way during missions.

Moreover, it has specialized units capable of intervening in the case of a serious situation that involves a terrorist action. The Gendarmerie takes into account the whole measures relating to the security for a terrorist attack. It enables it to proceed in an interdepartmental – indeed, international – environment. Therefore, the Gendarmerie can provide a warning and the first response for the state in the event of a terrorist threat, not only throughout the national territory, but also at the bor-

²³⁹ Collège Européen de Police = European Police College

²⁴⁰ 1994 “White Paper” on Defence structures the defence of France around four strategic functions: protection, prevention, deployment and deterrence.

ders. The Gendarmerie is extremely flexible, which enables it to increase its power according to the threat and to bring the appropriate tools in the event of a major crisis. The Gendarmerie is well assimilated among other national mechanisms for the fight against terrorism. It is a military force, which provides police missions and can act in an interdepartmental or international environment. The Gendarmerie offers excellent solution to the issues of terrorism, which includes both strict ways of operating and a perfect respect for the legal framework imposed by the French conception of a constitutional state.

The current thoughts concerning the land and rail transportation network and their protection and adaptation to the NRBC threat is that the use of new technology could provide the “missing link” in the fight against terrorism, and that the Gendarmerie wants to be proactive. It has developed projects that provide an assessment of its own skills. The participation of its units in the fight against terrorism in major public events (G8 summit in Evian, sixtieth anniversary of the D-Day Normandy Landings) proves this.