



Sous le Haut parrainage du ministre de la Défense, avec le soutien de **DCNS** et de l'**IHEDN**  
l'association des Journalistes de défense (AJD), l'association des Journalistes-écrivains pour la Nature et l'Écologie (JNE)

## **Defense and Environment : a New Way of Thinking Conference held on July 10th, 2007**

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### **Defense gets involved in Environment**

On the 10th of last July, the Institute of High Studies of National Defence (IHEDN) hosted at the Military School (Paris), the first conference on the theme of « *Defence and Environment* » organized by 3B Conseils. Based on official reports and leads put forward during the crossing of skills and disciplines, the participants called for « *a new way of thinking* » in the relationship between Defence and Environment.

« *The blue uniform of the Navy is green at heart* »: thus began Admiral Oudot de Dainville on a poetic note in the first ever conference dedicated to the relationship between Defence and Environment. In the Des Vallières auditorium, at the Military School in Paris, the Navy Chief of Staffs highlighted « *just how much the respect of nature currently affects the activities and plans of the Navy* ». This Movement is already in motion. The first program of action between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Environment was signed in 1995. In its daily activity, the military cannot but obey the laws in effect: « *We have to abide by the REACH regulation on chemicals, the guidelines on the protection of biodiversity with Natura 2000 sites, the legislation on gas quality, as well as the waste reduction policy,* » reminds Laurent Teisseire, Assistant Director of the Directorate of Legal Affairs, at the Ministry of Defence. Tight relations have thus been established with the Ministry of Environment, anxious to support such an important institution in the wake of these new initiatives.

### **Biodiversity and energy savings**

After 10 years of cooperation, a broad range of actions have been implemented. As the President of the *Fédération des conservatoires d'espaces naturels* (Federation of Natural Spaces Conservatories) Pascal Vautier, testified to the importance of the 42000 Ha *Natura 2000* sites in the military camps of Canjuers, Montmorillon,

Valbonne and Avon. The savings in Energy and the reduction in the requirements of water for the three services are now listed in the catalogue for the sustainable development action weeks. New constructions stick to the High Environmental Quality (HEQ) criteria, putting greater emphasis on insulating materials and the use of renewable energy.

However the most spectacular rests with the very conception of armaments and equipments. « *It is now inconceivable to use asbestos, or any other toxic chemicals, in the conception and construction of modern ships,* » assures Jacques Cousquer, Head of the Naval Systems Architectures at the General Delegation for Ordnance (DGA). It is the very structure of the ship that we develop by introducing, for example, a waste sorting and storage system, which didn't exist back in the days when garbage used to be thrown overboard. Nowadays, our ships are handed out Green Passports in order to ensure the traceability of the various components which make them up.

### **A growing part against sea pollution**

The Q790 example has stressed the importance of anticipating the dismantling of a ship, right from the moment work upon it is begun. This « end of life » issue is now a major concern for all naval architects. The story of the Q790 shone the light on Indian and Bangladeshi shipyards, where old ships usually end up. Men there work in dreadful conditions, thus leading the international community and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reflect on new dismantling criteria : « *End-of-Life and to-be-dismantled military ships account for merely 1% of the tonnage of all dismantled ships across the world* » points out Xavier Lebacqz, currently at the General Council for Ordnance (CGA), and formerly the executive manager of a dedicated government team tackling the issue of military and merchant ships environmental and safe dismantling.

Because they have become major actors in the fight against pollution, the services - and more particularly the Navy - have no other choice but to be exemplary. The military are often called upon to help in times of great disasters, such as oil slicks. And the Navy cannot pollute the oceans when one of its missions consists in hunting down inept captains who clean out their ships' tanks at sea. The more and more frequent inspections off the Brittany coast (along with more substantial fines) induce ship-owners to better respect the legislation. Sea rescue services are also widely supported by the French people. Jean-Paul Hellequin, President of the Brest association for the protection of the sea – Morglaz – paid tribute to these services by pointing out that close to 21 disasters, tantamount to the Amoco Cadiz shipwreck, have been avoided over the past 30 years.

### **Increasing condemnation of war damages**

The long period of peace which France has been experiencing cannot make one forget that the military is made for war, and that the latter scarcely spares nature.

Rare are the conflicts that have no impact on the environment. According to Laurent Teisseire, « *the doctrine is based on the belief that, though the protection of the environment is a continuous concern of the armed forces, it should not call into question their final mission.* » In this matter, the difference is sometimes very subtle between inevitable destruction and gratuitous acts. The resolutions voted by the United Nations Security Council are beginning to take into account deliberate damage to the environment, and to condemn them. « *The first resolution along those lines dates back to 1988, and pertains to the repeated pollution of the Gulf, due to the war opposing Iran to Iraq,* » points out Alain Piquemal, Professor of International Law at the University of Nice. « *However, the destruction of the Kuwaiti oil wells by Iraq, in 1991, accounts for the first conviction of a state to repair the damages brought about on sites of no strategic use whatsoever.* »

This issue has only been touched upon throughout this first meeting. Environmental management during armed conflicts will be more specifically addressed during the second conference, in February 2008. An assessment session will also take place in July 2008 and result in publication of an abstract.



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