



Offense and defense

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May 2013, Article n°III.4

Traditionnaly, any artifact designed at causing material damage or human harm is dubbed an “offensive” weapon¹. It makes therefore sense that a weapon (or protection system) designed at rendering the former useless be named a defensive weapon. In fact, both concepts unite, just as one totes a sword and a shield, and as a tank bears armor and a gun, etc.

Strategically speaking, an offensive meant, for a long time, launching men, vehicles, forces or projectiles onto the enemy, a defense being necessarily a consequential motion and reactive? Hence the logic of using as clues, to define who attacks and who defends, the initiative, the violence and the place of first attack.

Over a century ago, Ratzel² could say that war “was a matter of carrying one’s borders onto the enemy’s territory”. *Id est*, carry out acts of domination and violence beyond the political frontier, frontier which etymologically stems from the “front line”: confronts the enemy line and temporarily marks the area beyond which battle is possible, but within which a base is safe³. A notion which a cyber attack, which dissimulates its place of origin, renders obsolete.

All this does not go without its share of ambiguities. An extreme example is the preemptive (and not preventive) war imagined by George W. Bush⁴ and his neo-conservative counselors: this doctrine authorizes strikes on an enemy (rogue states or terrorist groups harbored by a state), readying its forces to attack, especially when it is equipped with weapons of mass destruction, or about to be. While invoking legitimate defense.

Rampage information and shield information

¹ AndréLeroi-Gourhan(*Évolutionettechnique*,2vol.TIIMilieuxettechniques,1943,AlbinMichel)presents his vision of the evolution of the weapon.

²FriedrichRatzel,*Géographiepolitique*,1897,French edition:1988,Economica

³On the notion of borders and its evolution see Médium n° 24/25, "Frontières", 2010 (<http://mediologie.org>)

⁴ West Point speech, June 1st 2002,see our comment in F.B.Huyghe, *Quatrième guerre mondiale Faire mourir et faire croire*,2004,Éditions du Rocher