



THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

2022



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FOREWORD



The Armed Forces are projected into a historical phase marked by phenomena of great political and strategic significance, which have radically changed our way of life and our perception of the future.

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation marked a breaking point and, at the same time, an acceleration of dynamics. Some of these dynamics are pre-existing and some are new, and require us to strengthen defence and deterrence policy. At the NATO Summit in Madrid in June 2022, it

was emphasised that strategic competition is set to grow rapidly in the coming years in the light of the changed geopolitical scenario due to the competitive drive developed, at the same time, by Russia and China.

The Armed Forces must be able to tackle the expanding threat to collective security and ensure operational effectiveness in the service of Italy. For the international community, the Ukrainian crisis represented a harsh realisation of the danger of the so-called hybrid war, which is unfolding according to increasingly complex and lethal dynamics. Thanks to technological progress, there is the possibility of bringing together the classical domains (land, air, naval) with the cyber and space domains and the cognitive environment as a whole. The synergy between these dimensions shapes conflicts without rules or limits, with a theatre of war that involves civilian populations, networks and the international community.

Among the future challenges is the evolution towards a new 'deterrence paradigm'. This paradigm is, in fact, increasingly connected with





'technological development', including through the expansion of deterrence tools. Deterrence cannot disregard a state-of-the-art military instrument that interprets a joint and multi-domain operational model and is a full player in the ongoing revolution in military technology.

Another aspect of primary importance concerns the values underpinning our strategic and military policy. The protection of international stability and peace and the safeguarding of human rights and dignity are a primary aspect of our strategic and military policy and part of the core tasks of the Armed Forces. At the same time, they are one of the cornerstones of Italy's action on the international stage. These ethical principles are at the heart of our Constitution and of the international values embodied by the United Nations, the European Union and NATO, to which our Country is firmly anchored. The field of action in this area continues to expand day after day and we are aware that the defence of these values, which are at the basis of civil coexistence among peoples, represents a real global challenge that will require a renewed, focused and determined commitment from everyone, including Italy.

In this geo-strategic scenario, missions abroad for peace, international stability and the protection of human dignity are the epitome and operational transposition on an international level of the heritage of values that inspire the Armed Forces. Our commitment is growing steadily: for the first time since World War II, the national military force is deployed in a geographical arc of unprecedented breadth: from the Arctic region and the Baltic southwards through the Alliance's Eastern Flank, from the Persian Gulf westwards through the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Sahel to the Gulf of Guinea. In all those areas, the Armed Forces' activities could expand and continue, also and inevitably as a result of the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis.

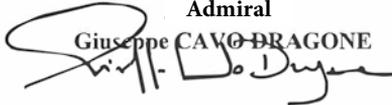
The Armed Forces will increasingly rely on a joint organisational structure that is fully integrated and interoperable nationally and internationally, on the modernisation of means and systems, on the adaptation of infrastructure, on the optimal planning of available resources, on the education and motivation of the most important resource at our disposal: the women and men of the Services who serve our homeland.

I would like to thank the President of the Republic, the Minister of Defence,





the Parliament and the Government for their political guidance, for their attention and sensitivity to the human and financial requirements that the Armed Forces express as they meet and tackle the challenges that await us.

Admiral
Giuseppe CAVO-DRAGONE






INDEX

1. THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO AND THE ARMED FORCES	1
2. ALLIANCES AND CHALLENGES	3
3. THE ARMED FORCES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO	7
4. THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT	11
5. HUMAN RESOURCES	17
6. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDUSTRY	21
7. INFRASTRUCTURES	23
8. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	25
9. CONCLUSIONS	27





THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO AND THE ARMED FORCES

The current geopolitical scenario is characterised by multifaceted dynamics of strategic competition accelerated by the crisis in Ukraine. That is why the Wider Mediterranean¹ has become central as a space of primary strategic interest for Italy, where historically-rooted criticalities intersect with hybrid threats, conflicts of varying intensity and multi-domain confrontations within the framework of invasive and destabilising communication strategies. It is now a widely shared opinion that this multidimensional geographical quadrant – an area that falls naturally within Italy's sphere of interest – will face growing instability as a result of the crisis in Ukraine, among other things.

Faced with an increasingly competitive and complex world, strengthening the military component of national power² has become key. This process is widely supported by our partners in the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance.

Therefore, the security of Italy and the international community is a challenge that is evolving rapidly and has become much more complex. The quick and widespread development of new technologies makes drawing a clear difference between defence and security or, simply, between war and peace difficult. This is also due to the increasing use of irregular militias, of so-called 'sub-threshold' hybrid actions, and of information or disinformation campaigns.

Against this background, competition in the cyber and space domains, and

1 Wider Mediterranean: an area of priority national strategic interest and a complex multidimensional geopolitical system. It is a hub of economic, commercial and social flows and a region that includes areas immediately contiguous to the Mediterranean 'in the narrow sense'. It encompasses the Middle East and the Arabian Gulf, the sub-Saharan strip extending to the Gulf of Guinea from the Horn of Africa through the Sahel (see "The Security and Defence Strategy for the Mediterranean" - edition 2022).

2 Also known in English as DIME (Diplomatic, Informative, Military, Economic).



the potential effects generated in the information and electromagnetic environments, considerably broadens the concept of threats to national security. Similarly, albeit at a different scale, communication networks are already the place where confrontations occur, mainly in the cognitive dimension, the intensity and complexity of which will grow in the near future. The CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) threat should be added to the picture outlined above. The pandemic crisis marked its return to the stage with a disruptive cross-sectional character, emphasising the vulnerability of national security, which can potentially be attacked by emerging infectious diseases.

In this scenario, the Armed Forces must be able to meet the challenges posed by emerging environments and technologies. The Armed Forces' planning should focus on resources that achieve continuity and innovation. They should also seize and exploit the opportunities arising from European and international cooperation programmes through a clear medium- to long-term vision. Today, as never before, we must lay the foundations so that Defence can successfully be part of the industrial initiatives that will give rise to a technological revolution in the classical domains, in the cyber and space domains, and in the cognitive environment.

At the organisational level, we endeavour to achieve a fully joint model that is integrated with other State bodies, with our European and Atlantic Alliance partners, and that can develop effective and structured synergy with national industry and with the world of research and culture.

To this end, the Armed Forces must be provided with trained and specialised human resources, as well as stable and adequate financial means for a planning timeframe of at least ten years. The men and women of Defence, as well as equipment and infrastructures, are investments for the security of the Country, which can be harnessed immediately if needed to tackle a wide range of contingencies, as emergency interventions, the contribution to internal security, and the fight against the pandemic have shown.

This document, which updates the 2020 Edition, supplements the guidelines issued by the Minister of Defence, in particular, the National Military Policy Directive (2022), the Security and Defence Strategy for the Mediterranean (2022) and the Defence Industrial Policy Directive (2021).



ALLIANCES AND CHALLENGES

Within the framework of alliances, the United Nations, NATO and the European Union are the bearers of our values and political references for the protection of security and economic and social development.

Our Country recognises the United Nations as the inescapable and shared instrument for legitimising and safeguarding peace and stability: our increased participation in UN peacekeeping missions is urged in light of Italy's substantial and competent contribution that is internationally recognised and appreciated.

NATO is the Alliance of reference for defence and deterrence. The national strategy envisages a marked commitment on the Alliance's Eastern Flank in line with the developments of the recent Ukrainian crisis and the conclusions of the Madrid Summit (June 2022). Such commitment is a dutiful response to the security threat of the most exposed countries in that quadrant, while safeguarding, through the national posture, the attention and commitment to Cooperative Security and Crisis Management requirements.

Within the European Union, we must pursue a stronger integration of resources and capabilities among Member States and strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy in synergy and complementarity with the Atlantic Alliance. We must favour the consolidation of the so-called 'European pillar' of NATO and make full use of the Union's integrated approach. The ambition is that expressed in the 2016 European Union Global Strategy (EUGS), with which the Union aims to become a global security provider. It is a goal for which the ambitious action plan outlined in the Strategic Compass represents a quantum leap.

Within the framework of these alliances, the recent bilateral treaty with France – known as the 'Treaty of the Quirinal' and signed in Rome on 26



November 2021 – the strengthened cooperation with Germany and the historic and solid relationship with the United Kingdom may also represent an opportunity to develop joint initiatives aimed at shifting NATO's and the European Union's focus towards the Mediterranean.

Since the Atlantic and European dimensions represent the cornerstones of our international positioning, the Wider Mediterranean is an area of primary importance in which Italy's interests are projected and must be protected for the purposes of national security. It represents a crossroads of influences and a wide field of action in terms of hard security, but also of opportunities of a commercial and financial nature and for economic and energy supply. A significant role is played by maritime routes, which are key to ensuring our Country's economic, social and cultural interdependence.

This geopolitical space is characterised by challenges that are increasingly complex and interconnected with the neighbouring macro-areas. Indeed, state fragility, economic gaps, social imbalances, illegal flows, ethnic and religious tensions are now almost endemic phenomena. The result is the progressive deterioration of the security conditions due to the presence of a wider range of threats - terrorist, traditional and non-terrorist. As a result, instability has turned into competition, and sometimes conflict. The activist stance taken by Russia, which has expanded its military presence and political influence in all of the Wider Mediterranean's crisis area is accompanied by the increased, and tangible strategic and economic influence of China, which can only be expected to become a constant in the near future.

Turkey is the architect of politico-military initiatives in areas where our Country's strategic interests lie - namely the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, Libya, the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In the long term, it sees itself as an important player and partner for regional stability. Israel is another key element of stability in the area. It has established more structured political and economic relations with Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan (known as the Abraham Agreements) and is developing a constructive dialogue with Ankara.

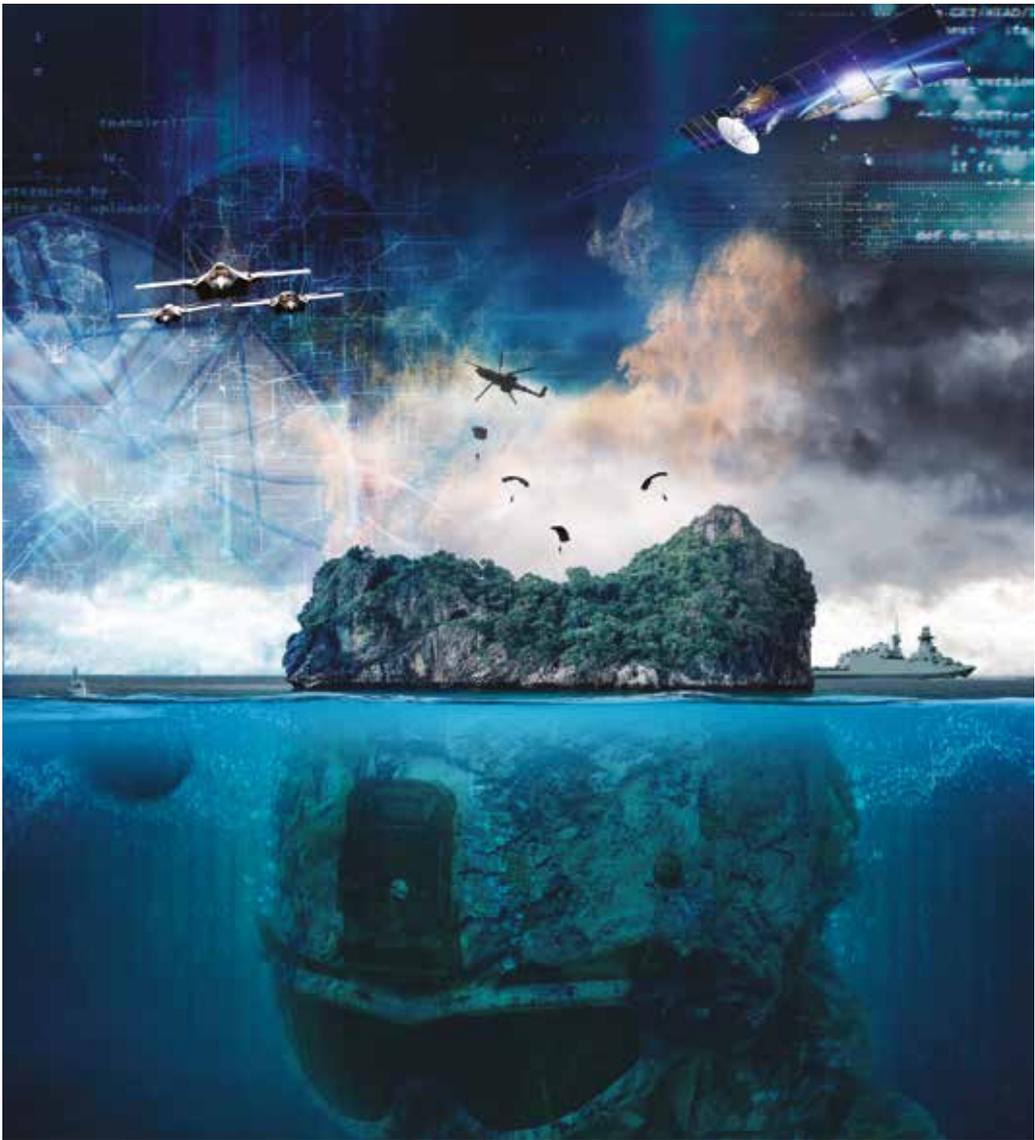
In parallel, the Ministry of Defence is paying increasing attention to the Arctic region, which will take on significant strategic and economic importance in the medium term. There is a possibility that new routes of communication (North-West passage) will emerge as an alternative to current ones. There



are also signs of a possible competitive push by some countries - Russia, above all - aimed at securing privileged positions for the exploitation of the important mineral and energy resources in the area.

Finally, power relations are also constantly evolving in the Indo-Pacific region. The 'AUKUS' strategic agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia is part of a system of relations that includes the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or 'QUAD' among the US, UK, India and Japan; ASEAN and the strengthened relationship with India, with a view to containing China's expandism in the Indo-Pacific region. Beijing and Washington play a leading role and prompt Brussels to give more substance to its strategy with a view to a more incisive presence and strengthened cooperation with the Indo-Pacific region. It would be of fundamental importance for EU interests. The scenario outlined above will influence which areas will emerge as those of priority interest, and highlight both possible needs for intervention and opportunities for Italy to seize.







3

THE ARMED FORCES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

The Armed Forces will continue to be engaged at the nerve centres of the political-strategic space detailed above. This space remains crucial for global stability, and is where the main national interests to be pursued and defended lie. The processes underway call for increasing and pragmatic participation to combine – by involving the entire Country system – realism and the ability to create operational and institutional relationships that foster lasting and respectful collaboration and dialogue and facilitate the management of existing tensions. This approach relies on the concept of interoperability and the ability to project hard power and soft power to increase our internationally recognised 'capital of credibility', protect national interests and open up new spaces for manoeuvre.

Stability in our region of interest also depends on countries of crucial strategic importance such as Germany and France. The latter, together with Spain, Greece and the aforementioned Turkey, is an important factor of equilibrium and cooperation for the security of the Mediterranean and the Southern Flank of the Alliance.

In the Balkans, we will increase our efforts and consolidate the support for the international community's action to contain ethnic/political tensions and promote the region's inclusion in the European and Atlantic security space. In this area of priority national interest, all our efforts to foster the development of multilateral cooperation – e.g. the Defence Cooperation Initiative (DECI) with its NATO Framework Nation Concept; the Adriatic Ionian Initiative (ADRION) in the Western Balkans and the Adriatic Ionian region; and bilateral cooperation – will be enhanced by sharing common visions on missions and operations. This will allow us to seek convergence of views and strategies and convey them in international fora, starting with the UN, NATO and the EU.



Libya and its future, which the actions of external actors, including Russia, are making more uncertain, will be a priority for the coming years, on par with the stability of Tunisia and Lebanon.

Jordan and Egypt remain pillars of regional stability and the international fight against terrorism.

We remain firmly committed to the Sahel area, which is strategic in the fight against the terrorist threat and illicit trafficking, and we promote stability in the area. The expansion of the Russian presence in the Sahel through the Wagner Group makes the situation even more critical, particularly considering the recent cooperation activities launched in Sudan. We will focus capacity building activities in this area, particularly in Niger through the MISIN bilateral mission, as well as develop potential synergies with other European countries operating there.

We will continue our efforts in countering piracy and crime in the Gulf of Guinea, where Nigeria has become an important partner for our interests in security, migration flows and energy supply.

Our presence in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia will remain among our priorities as a contribution to the international community for the security of sea-lanes, regional stability and countering illicit activities.

The Persian Gulf is at the center of new political, technological and economic dynamics (see for example the recent Abraham Agreements). With these countries, cooperation in the military and security field has also gained further importance in developing a broader relationship at the political and economic level.

On the Asia side, our disengagement from Afghanistan has made both our presence in Iraq and the development of relations with Pakistan, an eastern hub within our geostrategic area of interest, even more important. With Pakistan, the Ministry of Defence will develop more intensive collaborative relations while supporting a necessary evolution of bilateral relations with India.

In the light of the evolution of the international security framework and of the Wider Mediterranean scenario, Defence will have to face a twofold challenge. On the one hand, it will have to undertake a profound upgrade of its military equipment to make it fully integrated and able to effectively take part in the new competition in the cyber and space domains, two



fundamental enablers for all operations. On the other, it will have to preserve the ability to operate effectively in the traditional domains and consolidate tangible combat capabilities, readiness, projectability, logistical sustainability and overall effectiveness.

At the same time, the following will be necessary:

- stimulating urgent and in-depth reflection on the mechanisms for the deployment of the Armed Forces and the financing of their operations abroad, currently governed by Law 145/16. Indeed, given the dynamism and complexity of modern scenarios, ensuring strategic and operational flexibility as well as speed of response and deployment of the military instrument, in particular the rapid reaction forces, is indispensable;
- implementing an interdepartmental approach to adapt the legal and financial mechanisms and procedures relating to Defence Capacity Building initiatives in favour of partner countries in areas of priority national interest and consolidating a structured approach to military assistance. As a concrete multiplier of the effectiveness of our initiatives, through such an approach we will be able to achieve the desired strategic effects and, at the same time, make the national role and presence more competitive vis-à-vis other countries, further strengthening links with the host nation;
- paying increasing attention to inter-ministerial collaborations, with a view to a more effective contribution to the desired whole-of-government action. The ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Sustainable Infrastructure and Mobility, Economic Development and Ecological Transition will be our first partners. At the same time, we will develop fruitful relations with all other State bodies that support the activities of the Armed Forces. Within the framework of national initiatives, we will make our resources available and seek the best synergies with the National Cybersecurity Agency (Italian: Agenzia di Cybersecurity Nazionale, ACN³), the Interministerial Committee for Space Policy and Aerospace Research (i.e. the future Space Department), the Office for Space and Aerospace Policy of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the Civil Protection Department;
- carrying out adequate reflections on Homeland Security Operations, i.e. on the sustainability of the Armed Forces' commitment in the framework



of the operations in support of the Police Forces/Public Authorities and, more specifically, of the 'Safe Streets' Operation (Italian: "Strade Sicure", under Law 125 of 2008);

- setting up joint logistic hubs distributed in the area of national strategic interest to support the national action at a regional level and contribute to a stable Defence presence in sectors of interest in support of Italy's economic, diplomatic and cooperation interests.

3 ACN has responsibility over cyber security and resilience, i.e. one of the four national pillars of cyber domain management. It stands alongside cyber intelligence, managed by Security Intelligence Department; cyber defence, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence; and cyber-crime and investigation, under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior.



4

THE MILITARY INSTRUMENT

The development of the Armed Forces is rooted in the commitments undertaken in the international arena, within the political and military Alliances to which Italy belongs. The main references of general planning activities for the Armed Forces' capability development are the strategic scope of the NATO Political Guidance and the EU Strategic Compass, the capacitive value of NATO Capability Targets and the opportunities offered by European initiatives.

As recalled in the 2015 White Paper and the most recent Defence Minister's Policy Guidelines, by 2026 Defence will have to consolidate its capabilities to conduct joint operations. To do so, it will have to build a force capable of operating in all domains, including cyber and space, either autonomously or integrated in multinational task forces for regional-scale deployments (Limited Small Joint Operation).

The rapid evolution of the cyber and space domains directs the military's capability development towards greater integration, deeper interoperability and, the implementation of integrated-by-design systems and platforms.

The recent regulatory change that gives Defence responsibility for the management of cyber and space activities of a military security nature, thus becoming one of the pillars of the national system, is part of this framework. To ensure maximum effectiveness and interoperability within the international organisations of reference, Defence must refine its strategic vision and policy with respect to the new dimensions of strategic confrontation. It will also have to provide for dedicated forces, which the Services will have to generate and place under joint command.

As far as the space domain is concerned, we are witnessing a real global competition that presages possible kinetic conflicts and that sees private and institutional actors as protagonists, with greater risks related to the



growing threats 'from space, to space and in space'. If, until a few years ago, space was considered an enabler of classical domains due to the presence of systems capable of providing vital services in support of military operations, today it has become an operational domain in its own right. This requires new capabilities to ensure the protection of national military and civil satellite systems in Europe and NATO with a unified vision. It is therefore necessary to pursue the objective of consolidating and increasing existing military capabilities (SATCOM, EO and PNT)⁴, developing sensors and capabilities for observation and analysis (military SSA⁵) to know the actual situation in space (SDA⁶). With this in mind and in a broader future perspective, it is appropriate to invest in and evaluate the possibility of acquiring an autonomous capacity for accessing space, also in view of the increasing miniaturisation of certain satellites.

The cyber domain now has strategic relevance in the national and international scenario. Safeguarding the security of military networks is part of the institutional tasks of Defence, which, at the same time, cooperates with the National Cybersecurity Agency to protect the Country's system, and with the Intelligence Services to implement counter intelligence measures in the cyber domain. As part of coordinated action with these entities, acquiring the capacity to conduct the full range of cyber operations will be important. The necessary resources will therefore have to be dedicated and the required operational capabilities developed through the involvement of academia and domestic industry.

The exponential growth of digital services has also made data a key factor. This is a central issue, not least because of the need for agile and innovative management methods, but also for the protection of information assets. We will therefore have to create a single classified info-structure cloud (Defence Cloud), based on data centres with centralised computing and storage capacities. These will ensure full interoperability between the systems in use for data analysis and exploitation in a single environment. This architecture will have to support all Defence components (joint force and Services), and allow secure information exchange with NATO/EU and

4 Satellite communications, Earth Observation, Positioning-Navigation-Time.

5 Space Situational Awareness.

6 Space Domain Awareness.



mission networks. It must also be able to exploit Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analysis and simulation engines, or emerging technologies such as 5G as an enabler of infostructure from the tactical to the strategic level.

With great determination, we must move towards the creation of true multi-domain capabilities to synchronise actions and effects across all domains (land, sea, air, cyber and space). However, we cannot generate a concrete multi-domain defence without a decisive and coordinated acceleration of the joint integration process. Even if it has already started, the latter will be outdated and will eventually be included in the Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) concept itself. It is therefore necessary to develop a cultural and capacitive *modus operandi* that goes beyond the vision of conflict linked to traditional domains. Such an MDO should lead to operating, with a very strong inter-agency approach, in the multi-domain.

Developing multiple actions capable of generating convergent, simultaneous and combined effects in the different domains is the goal. This potential will find its fullest expression when combined with an ability to understand the objectives and overall actions of our potential adversaries well in advance through enhanced strategic anticipation and situational awareness.

The project to strengthen the Command and Control capabilities of the Joint Force Summit Operations Command through the newly established Joint Operations Centre (JOC) fits into this approach. The JOC will be the information hub for Defence operations. This implies a more integrated training and the enhancement of the potential of the LVC (Live, Virtual and Constructive) synthetic environment. Such an approach should be enhanced by implementing a joint and interagency approach that implements realistic multi-domain training scenarios.

Strategic communication, an essential element of the cognitive dimension – even more so in today's hyper-connected society – is a capability that must be further enhanced and, above all, better understood. Thanks to marked technological progress and through the expansion of publicly accessible communication networks, today's cognitive activities - which play the role propaganda played in the 20th century - have evolved and grown to the potential size of an operational domain.

The cognitive environment in which fake news, media control, the and the manipulation of social networks and information are employed, is for all intents and purposes a battleground where contemporary weapons are



used to shape public opinion and ultimately influence decision-makers. To successfully address these challenges, the development process mentioned above must follow three main lines of effort:

- modernisation, by fully grasping the opportunities of the most advanced technological progress;
- efficiency, by optimising the use of available resources, including energy resources, and rationalising structures and articulations;
- enhancement, through widespread integration between the components of the Services. This integration is intended to achieve a genuine joint construct to exploit the potential offered by the multi-domain environment, for deployment in any operational context, from high-intensity combat to low-intensity and extended operations.

To this end, medium- to long-term capability choices are required. These choices must follow principles of prioritisation, cost-effectiveness analysis, even accepting and mitigating temporary gaps, and support a clear and indispensable strategic vision.

Technological coherence, across and within the components, will be necessary to achieve full integration between and within the Services, also in anticipation of the progressive introduction of particularly advanced technologies, which are essential to successfully transition to a multi-domain operational construct.

In this regard, Defence will have to implement:

- new capabilities across the entire spectrum of operations, including space and cyber;
- decisive, low-lethality weapon systems;
- integrated air and missile defence to be framed within the broader framework of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD⁷) to ensure protection against all evolving threats, including from space and aerospace;
- capabilities to counter emerging forms of attack often also employed by non-state actors such as, for example, armed drones and loitering munitions;
- modern tools for preventing, detecting and countering CBRN threats and enhancing, in parallel, our health capabilities;
- tools and modes of action in the cognitive dimension;



- a transition to the digital mode of operation, completing the technological upgrade of systems and the adaptation of internal processes;
- propulsion systems not depending on traditional energy sources.

We should also approach the process of technological innovation through the implementation of national 'incubators', in line with what other countries and NATO are developing⁸. The recently established Office for Defence Innovation (Italian: Ufficio Generale Innovazione Difesa, UGID) is evidence of the need for a single, uniform point of reference for innovative strategic thinking within Defence.

Our attention should also be devoted to sustainability and the impact of climate change through the development of Green Defence initiatives. In the face of the international community's goals to reduce climate-changing emissions and embark on an energy transition, the Armed Forces will have to seek efficient and sustainable solutions to reduce their energy and environmental footprint while preserving full operational capability. The implementation of the Defence Energy Strategy Plan (DESP) falls within this framework. The DESP aims, on the one hand, to pursue the national goals of sustainability, improved efficiency and reduced emissions with positive effects on expenditure, and, on the other hand, to increase the levels of security of energy supply⁹.

7 It includes Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) and aims to protect European territory and Allied Forces deployed in theatres of operations from the short- and medium-range missile threat.

8 NATO is developing its own network of incubators and accelerators through the establishment of the system called DIANA - Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic.

9 At the same time, it is keeping in line with the goals set by the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan (NIPEC) for 2030.





HUMAN RESOURCE

The availability of adequate human resources, both military and civilian, is the first pre-requisite for the Armed Forces to successfully tackle the manifest expansion of their institutional tasks, starting with the increasingly complex and broad challenges at the national and international level. To these are added those related to technological development, the modernisation of operational processes, cyber and space activities and the increased need for internal support in major emergencies. Therefore, the Armed Forces have warmly welcomed the force model reform envisaged by Law No. 244 of 2012 (i.e., 150k personnel across the Armed Forces)¹⁰. Through this model, the military will adapt to the changed geostrategic context and consolidate its ability to operate effectively in the new space and cyber domains.

Selection, education and deployment are three essential functions that must be designed and implemented in a systemic and integrated manner to ensure that adequately prepared personnel are assigned 'to the right post and at the right time'. Particular attention should be given to the selection of resources deployed in the new cyber and space domains and to the acquisition of innovative and specialised expertise through specific selection methodologies adopted by all services. In parallel, given the central role of education, the contents of the 2022-2024 Three-Year Training Plan for Defence Civilian Personnel will have to be exploited to the full in order to better map the training needs of the same personnel. All this, while being aware that qualitative advances through individual improvement and the enhancement of specific characteristics of each individual will lead to the

¹⁰ The new text of the law approved on 3 August 2022 provides for the delegation of authority to the Government to revise the model of the fully professional Armed Forces, as well as the extension to 2033 rather than 2024 of the deadline for reducing the total number of personnel to 150,000.



most efficient use of human resources.

For both civilian and military personnel, education should be oriented towards a 'flexible' paradigm modelled according to needs and integrating innovative methodologies enabled by technological progress.

This educational path – which is inspired by modern education models and consistent with the concept of open innovation – will have to adapt to the new digital environment. We will be able to borrow best practices from the business and university world and capitalise on the potential of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality. We will have to pay equal attention to the education of joint operational planners through dedicated courses.

Particular emphasis will have to be placed on leadership education at all levels. An increasingly transversal and balanced set of skills¹¹ will be required, both of a managerial nature and related to the so-called soft skills in the cognitive and relational domains. The Centre for Higher Defence Studies (Italian: Centro Alti Studi della Difesa, CASD) will play an essential role: it will be transformed into a Special-order School of Higher Education for high qualifications and research in the field of defence and security sciences. Through this project, supported by the Ministry of University and Research, a military training institution will be elevated to university level for the first time¹².

The Centre for Higher Defence Studies will therefore act as a driver of strategic level education, research and consultancy for the Ministry of Defence and the Country, with PhDs Programmes in 'Innovation Sciences for Defence and Security', with special reference to innovation, organisational development, strategic sciences, international legal studies for innovation, digital transformation, cyber security and new technologies. The Centre for Higher Defence Studies is now also the Defence cyber training centre for the specialisation of military personnel and personnel from outside the Ministry of Defence¹³. The programmes available are up to the doctoral

11 Examples of soft skills, in the cognitive area are critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and imagination, cognitive flexibility, the ability to intercept relevant information, the ability to condense large amounts of information. In the relational area, the ability to collaborate, empathy, inclusiveness, coaching skills (self and others).

12 Under Law no. 77 of 17 July 2020.

13 Minister of Defence Decree of 5 August 2021.



level and promote collaboration and exchange of experiences with similar organisations at the national and international level.

The employment of human resources within Defence will have to be increasingly careful, targeted, and take advantage of structured vocational development. Careful evaluation and enhancement of skills and experience acquired over the years will have to be carried out, taking into account the natural inclinations of individuals. Virtuous personnel management will have to develop according to a medium- to long-term vision that adopts innovative models and processes and involves the personnel concerned.

Identifying and proposing the most suitable profiles to represent Italy within national and international organisations will require increasingly adequate and timely planning. The quality and professionalism of our candidates will have to be based on the construction of structured professional pathways and dedicated training activities.

At the operational level, the women and men of the Ministry of Defence are called upon to be prepared to act with professionalism, determination and an exemplary spirit of sacrifice for long periods, even in environments characterised by discomfort and potential danger that entail high levels of psychic stress and physical exhaustion.

This is why it is important to adapt personnel support by making it more and more responsive to the new needs of individuals and their families. In addition, more emphasis will have to be placed on internal communication to share plans and directions and to receive input to identify corrective actions and improve support policies.

We will have to pay increasing attention to the integration of the welfare state, as well as to safeguarding and enhancing social security instruments. We will have to recognise more adequate compensation for strenuous and hazardous activities and support military relocations, with special reference to dependants. In parallel, we will have to allocate more resources to improving and increasing housing capacities for families and commuters.

We will also have to promote legal protection formulas for military personnel, in particular for compensation for damages to third parties as a result of civil liability in the performance of their duties. In addition, starting from the rules on the exercise of trade union freedom regulated by Law 46 of 28 April 2022, we will need to adapt the disciplinary and sanctioning rules and identify appropriate instruments for exercising command action at every



level. One of the priorities in this area is the completion of initiatives for the 'Protection of Commanders' and Professional Associations of a trade union nature.

Support for the families of the fallen and veterans must be constantly ensured with dedicated policies in respect of those who daily bear the consequences of their sacrifice in the service of the Country.

Last, but not least, is the need to implement a vigorous policy to support the redeployment of personnel in pre-secured detention at the end of their period of service. Similarly, it will be necessary to reintegrate into civilian employment those who, as bearers of Defence culture and values and for personal reasons, should decide to leave active service.



6

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INDUSTRY

In addition to depending on the operational capabilities of its Armed Forces, a Country's defence potential is proportional to the level of technology and production capabilities expressed by its industrial system.

Defence therefore supports the development of an increasingly solid, modern and efficient industrial and technological base with the support of both large groups and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Armed Forces will have to expand the synergy with the defence and aerospace industry to embark on a shared path and face the challenge of modernity. Like a few other countries in the world, Italy has a domestic defence industry, which is an essential sector of the 'Country system' and a multiplying factor for economic, technological and employment growth. It also ensures strategic capacity and autonomy is available to the military. Defence intends to take determined action to support this strategic sector of the national economy. We will therefore have to strengthen and preserve national strategic autonomy, as well as technological sovereignty in areas of priority Defence interest, and maximise collaboration, standardisation and interoperability among the Services and with our Allies. We will also take full advantage of opportunities arising from European and international cooperation programmes. This effort will capitalise on the contribution of the other state agencies involved in the support and export processes, as well as the definition of a regulatory framework in line with European and Western standards.

In terms of international relations, the defence industry and related cooperation activities contribute significantly to the Country's strategic positioning and open up important prospects for penetration of foreign markets to other sectors of the national economy.



In the area of industrial cooperation, Defence should strive to foster Government-to-Government (G2G) agreements also with countries outside the European and Atlantic perimeter through existing legal instruments. G2G agreements, which represent an effective industrial policy tool, will have to aim at launching cooperation programmes on common platforms and consolidating partnerships capable of generating interoperability in the engineering, operational and training fields. The countries that have unreservedly adopted the G2G model – namely the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany – enjoy a strategic competitive advantage. Having recognised this, we will have to define appropriate strategies involving the entire 'Country system'.

Research and innovation are the key to remaining competitive and to developing cutting-edge and interoperable systems in joint and multinational operations. Hence the need for Defence, industry, institutional actors and academia to act as a system. The National Military Research Plan and other national and multinational initiatives, especially in the European dimension, represent an excellent stimulus to the research and development activities of national industrial realities. Within this framework, the innovation process must reflect the needs of the Armed Forces and enhance interactions with the Defence procurement area to create a collective advantage for the Country as a system.





INFRASTRUCTURES

The effectiveness of the military instrument is closely related to the availability of infrastructural assets in line with the modern needs and challenges the military faces, with special attention to sustainability, environmental impact and energy efficiency.

Along with highlighting strengths and weaknesses, the pandemic has also highlighted the need for Defence to adapt its facilities and infrastructure that have been facing a progressive and constant reduction in financial resources for years.

At the national level, the pandemic has made it necessary to enact extraordinary measures to contain the dramatic health emergency and to ensure that Armed Forces can respond appropriately to the needs of the Country and its citizens in terms of logistical structures, support and health hubs.

The need has clearly emerged to define a strategic planning process that ensures that financial resources are allocated to the overall infrastructural adjustment. Reference is also made to the logistical capabilities of the military health sector, so that Defence can guarantee a prompt and effective response in case of collective need.

We will also have to ensure greater impetus to the major infrastructure projects presented individually by the Services for a progressive renewal of Defence infrastructure according to the Smart Military District model applied specifically to barracks, ports and airports.

In addition to being financed by the ordinary Defence budget and by inter-ministerial funds, it is desirable that the above-mentioned projects are also developed by resorting to public-private partnerships and to the allocation of the 'Fund for the financing of investments and the national infrastructural development'.



Finally, in the operational arena, it will be crucial to give importance to the role of personnel employed in the logistics/infrastructure sector, supporting an adequate and progressive training process for all Services.





FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The objectives set out are ambitious but achievable and require stable and secure financial resources. In this regard, the Defence Multi-Annual Investment Fund has certainly made it possible to revitalise the modernisation and renewal process of the military instrument, whose development and consolidation will only be guaranteed through an annual allocation to the fund itself.

Through Joint General Planning - i.e. the capability and financial planning tool based on operational needs - it will be possible to define the resources required to support and modernise the Services. As a result, we will have an integrated, balanced, sustainable military instrument that is consistent with Italy's needs and standing, as well as with our commitments to International Organisations.

Unfortunately, there are organisational and structural factors that limit Defence's ability to invest in the industrial sector, which has a high technological coefficient capable of guaranteeing multiplicative effects on the overall supply chain. Among the main factors that we will have to better manage and mitigate are – among others – the procedural complexities of the Procurement Code, the shortage of contracting personnel and the introduction of the so-called 'consolidated cash budget'¹⁴, with its rigidity in the management of investment programmes.

These critical factors are even more evident in the case of urgent acquisitions, such as those referred to the operational theatres¹⁵. In the specific case of

¹⁴ Regulations requiring that the multi-year payment schedule of each undertaking be defined and adhered to, albeit with the possibility of modification, requiring that the sums allocated be committed and spent for each Financial Year to which they have been attested.

¹⁵ Mission Need Urgent Requirement.



'urgent procurement', we will have to provide for regulatory adjustments and the simplification of the criteria for contractual and accounting exceptions. In this delicate historical moment, in which the arguably more negative effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict are overlaid by the effects of the pandemic, the Services are ready to play a significant part in the Country's economic recovery and support activities. They can take advantage of partnership opportunities with other ministries and public and private entities in areas of common interest within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).





CONCLUSIONS

The rapid succession of historic events that have marked the international scene in recent months, together with its contents, define the strategic nature of this document. We are at a point of no return: future challenges can no longer be evaded, except at the price of abdicating our primary interests and the very values of freedom and democracy. We cannot take anything for granted, not even in the Old Continent.

The Italian foreign policy and the values on which it is based make the Armed Forces an important instrument to guarantee peace and international stability, to safeguard democratic values, civil society and the dignity of the human person. The need to participate unsparingly and to protect our personnel in almost all the crisis areas of the 'Wider Mediterranean' require us to engage in close dialogue at all levels with allied and friendly countries. In doing so, we present ourselves for what we do: provide added value to peace and international stability. The commitment of the Italian Armed Forces is always viewed with favour and appreciation because our history precedes us and we are met with confidence and friendship.

The determination to support the Armed Forces and the need to provide them with adequate resources and attention must become a stable and entrenched element in national public opinion. Indeed, only long-term planning and commitment will enable us to achieve the technological deterrence necessary to deter aggression and armed conflict, to protect our interests and safeguard future generations. The Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are moving forward in a cohesive manner. They generate mutual trust and conviction, two indispensable conditions for dealing with possible energy supply shortages and the difficult international economic situation.



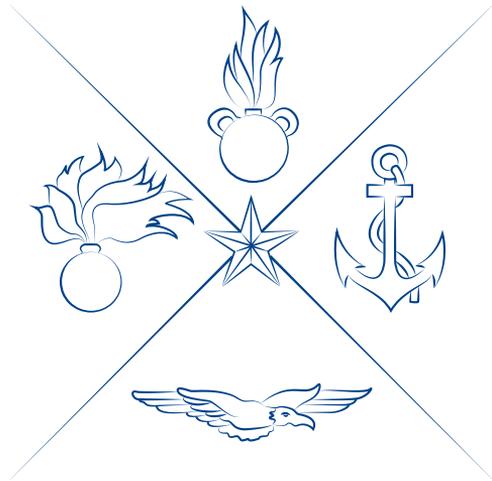
We are at the beginning of a long and very demanding path. It lies on Italy's political and social cohesion for the years to come and on our ability to evolve rapidly towards an entirely joint model of Armed Forces that is deployable simultaneously in the classical, cyber, and space domains, or in the vast cognitive environment. The relationship with industry must lead to the production of systems and equipment with high technological content and fully in line with Defence operational requirements.

The organisational overhaul at all levels must proceed consistently and rapidly: modernity and technology do not wait, but require timely and effective choices on personnel, education, infrastructure and logistics. These are fundamental building blocks of an Armed Forces model that is projected into the future. Failure to give timely attention to these priorities means paying a very high price in the future, as the experience of the Ukrainian crisis itself shows.

We are the protagonists of a historical phase that is just beginning and that will demand unreserved commitment of dedication from us, as well as planning and courage, with a view to ensure Italy is effective on operations at the service of the Nation.

I am confident that Defence will be fully up to the challenges of the future and will work successfully to stand close to the Nation, safeguard its interests and protect its citizens, the latter being the true lodestar of the commitment of the women and men of the Armed Forces.





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