

# Stabilization and Rebuilding Operations

A radical change in the strategic context has involved deep changes in terms of capabilities, structures and military doctrines of commitment those last few years. Static missions for the defense of homeland territory - specific to the bipolar period - have evolved towards dynamic overseas commitments, from humanitarian missions to high intensity operations, to cover the whole range of conflicts. Security has no longer a primarily military connotation and has become a larger concept, with a multidimensional and multipurpose character, within the framework of which the military tool is one of the major “actors” for action ; it operates alongside the diplomatic, economic and civil assistance components, in accordance with political guidelines.

BY GENERAL GIACOMO GUARNERA, ITALIAN DEFENSE ATTACHÉ IN PARIS

In modern scenarios, conventional symmetrical conflicts, characterized by protracted high intensity warfare, are very rare indeed. On the other hand, Crisis Response Operations (CROs) are very frequent. They can include several operational activities undertaken simultaneously and requiring diversified capabilities.

The recent lessons learned in Iraq have shown the extent to which the limit between Crisis Response Operations and conventional war operations is narrow or even non-existent, but especially the extent to which the stabilization and rebuilding phase proves to be essential, resolute and complex at the same time.

Indeed, to ensure order and safety, thus implementing the conditions for a real democratization of the country in which the forces are committed, it is necessary to have a broad range of capabilities, enabling to carry out a heterogeneous set of activities, such as disarmament, demobilization and the rehabilitation of former-combatants and refugees, humanitarian aid, without forgetting

war against guerrilla and terrorism, etc.

It is a phenomenon whose appearance renders the framework even more complex and on which we will come back later in order to better specify the implications in the military field.

To deal with the new operational requirements characterizing modern scenarios, military tools must have distinct but complementary capabilities. They must be able to cope with the very combat missions, but also with stabilization and rebuilding tasks.

The Italian Army has launched a process of structural and capability reorganization for a long time through which it has been possible for our units to take an important part in the numerous commitments carried out on the international scene.

Currently, approximately 6,500 Italian soldiers are committed overseas. The daily average for personnel committed in out-of-area operations during the last 6 years amounts to about 8,000 men.



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In addition to these soldiers, it is necessary to add the soldiers tasked with defending the homeland territory, within the general framework of anti-terrorism warfare : the protection of VPs (Vulnerable Points), nicknamed “ Operation Domino”, has been carried out since 2001 with an average of 4,000 men tasked to monitor almost 150 VPs located in 88 provinces.

Last year, the Italian Army committed approximately 16,500 personnel on the various operation theaters, whereas 10,000 men were committed for “ Operation Domino”, out of a total of 26,500 personnel in one year, equivalent to 33 % of the operational component.

This is only a brief presentation of an intense commitment, during which time the Italian Army has supported peace and international security on the front line for more than ten years.

These numerous operational activities have resulted into useful lessons learned not only from national experiences, but also from those nurtured by other Armies.

All international crises in the last decade (from the crisis in the Balkans until the most recent ones in Afghanistan and Iraq) have confirmed the central role and the resolute character of the land component toward obtaining strategic objectives - in the field - as laid down by the political level.

Indeed, conflicts breaking out in populated areas during operations of this kind require the diffuse presence of the land system, an essential securing device to cope with crises.

Lessons learned revealed several other very important elements for the constant updating of the future capabilities that the Army must have. We will only present the main ones.

1) Success for a crisis management operation depends in particular on a careful planning for “ after-conflict ” activities. To transform a military victory into a political victory, we need in fact to conquer

“ the hearts and minds ” of the civil population, by helping it to restore acceptable living conditions, to rebuild the main installations, and to implement medical assistance, etc.

- 2) Modern stabilization operations must be launched without stopping the whole of the operational cycle. Thus combat, stabilization and rebuilding activity planning have to be carried out simultaneously, as an integral part of a single and larger operation plan.
- 3) Within the framework of a stabilization and rebuilding operation, the commander of the force has to operate both as a major “ manager ” for stabilization and rebuilding activities ; simultaneously he has to be responsible for monitoring all the forces committed in the theater, and also by exercising command and control for smaller combat operations when necessary. Accordingly, it is necessary to plan to integrate the know-how shown on the table within the command structure, in particular during the initial phase of the post-conflict period, before the civil structures begin to resume operations.

- 4) As the situation is stabilized, it is necessary - in the process of force generation - to carry out the lightening of combat units incrementally. Action will focus on the maintenance of long-term stability, through a closer coordination with the present international organizations.
- 5) It is essential to have a significant number of tactical support and logistical assets, in order to support the units of the operational component of the land force properly and to achieve stabilization and rebuilding activities to the benefit of the civil population.
- 6) The “ *Brigade Task Force* ” approach chosen by the Army to define the sets of forces to be committed individually proved to be effective. Moreover, as stabilization operations carried out in the post-conflict period last for quite a while, it is necessary to have a robust set of major unit and brigade commands to enable units to rotate and to provide sustainability.

In short, to face future challenges, lessons learned have confirmed that land forces must include a vast range of capabilities as well as complementary and especially specialized assets, necessary to carry out actions developed within the framework of a crisis management operation successfully, including stabilization and rebuilding activities - specific to the after-conflict phase.

In terms of forces, the components necessary to conduct crisis management operations can be schematically gathered in three sets. - **The first one** composed of forces able to implement an actual and large combat capability is also essential during the stabilization and rebuilding phase to meet foreseeable risks and to graduate responses in a flexible and tailored-to-attack way ; and it is also an important element of deterrence.

- AOR SECURITY :
  - . ROUTE SECURITY
  - . FORCE PROTECTION
  - . VPs' DEFENSE/CONTROL
- COUNTER-TERRORISM/GUERILLA WARFARE
- CIMIC
- EOD (EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL)
- CROWD CONTROL
- MILITARY INTELLIGENCE
- HUMANITARIAN AID
- TRANSPORTATION/SUPPLIES
- MEDICAL SUPPORT
- REBUILDING
- RESTORING POWER
- CRIME CONTROL
- POLICE AND ARMED FORCES TRAINING
- SUPPORT TO NGOs AND GOs



complementary way compared to combat units is not new at all for the Italian Army. To confirm it, it is only necessary to refer to forces deployed on the various theaters as years go by.

- **Second** - in theory at a level no lower than brigades - one must be able to secure large areas - and also to deny some of them. It must also be able to operate in an environment as insidious as urban terrain, in the whole range of missions including close combat in the event of anti-guerrilla and counter-terrorism operations.

- Lastly, a **third** set of forces, composed of specialized units for stabilization and rebuilding operations : Intelligence, CIMIC, PSYOPS, NBC, Engineers, Medical and Transportation. Within this framework, so-called gendarmerie forces can be committed ; they are tasked with missions typical of a police force with a military status, generally entrusted to ensure law and order, to carry out criminal investigations, to fight against organized crime and to train local police forces.

Each set of forces makes its contribution to achieve the required "end state", within a "military" security framework that must anyhow be carried out before and during a stabilization operation.

The operational concept consisting in committing - during stabilization and rebuilding operations - specialized units in a synergistic and

the Balkans, in operation "Antica Babilonia" carried out in Iraq and in operation "ISAF" in Afghanistan, the Army commits "combined-arms task forces" task-organized around a combat component, tasked to protect, including the above-mentioned specialized components.



The appearance of terrorism on the international scene makes it more difficult to task-organize and balance the units designed to carry out modern operations. Indeed, military operations that occurred on the international scene - following the September 11 attacks - resulted from the fact that terrorism moved from an especially internal law and order problem to a problem of international security.

Today, to meet terrorism, it is not only necessary to implement a vast range of political and economic measures, but also to commit forces able to neutralize and fight this

threat whose organizational and operational factors represent an increasing military connotation. It is within this framework that NATO's NRF - NATO *Response Force* - initiative, whose planned operations for commitment can ideally be set in a kind of "overlapping zone" between peace-support and high-intensity operations.

In this "transition zone", the limit between war and Peace Support Operations (PSOs) is unspecified. For this reason, even while stabilization scenarios progress, it is necessary to commit Army specialized forces of gendarmerie-type units or MSUs, beside a significant number of combat units, within which Special Operations Forces (SOFs) and light infantry units trained for anti-guerrilla and counter-terrorism warfare, as operations "Licorne" in Ivory Coast and in Haiti showed, where France applied these concepts in a significant way.

Among Army specialized forces operating beside SOFs and light infantry units in the repression of guerrilla and "militarily" organized terrorism, there are units tasked to carry out intelligence operations (EW - Electronic Warfare, observation, HUMINT at a tactical level), NBC units, and EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) teams to neutralize, remove and destroy explosives, PSYOPS and CIMIC units.

In addition, recent terrorist attacks against civil populations and against the array of forces and military facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan, show that terrorism exploits urban installations for its own ends to cause not only devastating effects on civil



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including urban terrain. The initiatives undertaken in this direction by the Italian Army are numerous and, to begin with, deal with training, specific cycles aiming to the acquisition of a capability to operate in asymmetrical contexts and in all the dimensions of urban terrain, including sub-surface.

population but also important effects on military, political and economic plans.

From this point of view, it is necessary to increase and improve the components that can meet and neutralize the asymmetrical and terrorist threats in any environment

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***In conclusion, the evolution of operational scenarios compelled the Italian Army to reorganize almost all its operational components, implying quality. As regards manpower, we moved from almost 290,000 personnel in 1991 to 115,000 today, and we aim to reach 112,000 men and women in 2006. A decrease of 60% compared to 15 years ago.***

***Today, thanks to this rationalization process, the Army is able to implement almost all its (combat and specialized) units required to meet the needs associated with stabilization and rebuilding operations in a suitable way, by supplementing them with the capabilities provided with other components of the military tool, depending upon the mission to be carried out and upon the characteristics of the operational environment.***

***In practice, it is a unique set of forces within which synergies on the terrain - among various components - result from a balanced and functional use of their respective and specific operational capabilities, derived from an ad hoc developed training and a structural organization.***

***The capabilities optimization and improvement process has not yet been completed. At an organizational level, we consider to reinforce the SOF pool, to complement the ISTAR-GE reservoir, within the general framework of capabilities associated with tactical intelligence, in particular to the benefit of units earmarked to observation and intelligence gathering, including HUMINT.***

***We also consider to establish a set of medium forces particularly fitted to operate in sophisticated environments, thanks to their mobility, protection and firepower characteristics.***

***Obviously, the reinforcement process aims at a high joint- and multinational-oriented interoperability level.***

***Now we have to move forward in this way, in order to provide fast and effective answers adapted to all possible missions.***