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## The White Paper: A Strategy for Italy's Defence Policy

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edited by Alessandro Marrone

### ABSTRACT

The 2015 *White Paper on International Security and Defence*, signed by the Minister of Defence, represents an important achievement for the Italian Armed Forces – and more in general for Italy's international projection. This paper is divided into six chapters analysing the main aspects of the White Paper. The first chapter explains the importance of the document in the Italian context. The second one explores the key elements of the White Paper, which altogether constitute a reform of the military entailing radical changes. Chapter 3 focuses on a set of measures to reform the governance and internal organisation of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), particularly concerning the joint level and the relationship between the political authority and the military. The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the novelties regarding industrial defence policy, with a focus on "sovereign" and "cooperative" technologies and the proposed partnerships between the MoD and the private sector. Chapter 5 analyses the European dimension of the White Paper from political, operational and industrial points of view, by discussing national interests in the perspective of a European integration. The final chapter focuses on what some would say is missing in the document, and what follow-up the White Book should have at the Italian and European levels.

*Italy | Military policy | Defence industry | European Union | NATO | Military missions | Mediterranean*



# The White Paper: A Strategy for Italy's Defence Policy

Edited by Alessandro Marrone\*

## 1. The White Paper's importance in the Italian context

by Alessandro Marrone

The *White Paper on International Security and Defence*<sup>1</sup> approved in April 2015, represents a key step for the Italian Armed Forces as well as for the country's role in the international arena. Indeed, there are at least four reasons that make it an important document: it is a fully-fledged strategy for the country's defence policy; it fills a gap in terms of government's strategic documents which lasted since 1985; it fosters dialogue among the different components of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and with the most relevant stakeholders; it triggers a better relationship between the Armed Forces, the political authorities and the public opinion.

The White Paper is important because it is a *strategic* document that tries to match Italy's defence policy *ends* with the *ways* and the *means* to achieve them. It is not just an analysis of the international security environment, nor a mere list of the assets the MoD already has at its disposal. The White Paper is rather a coherent attempt to define priorities for the Italian defence policy as well as guidelines to reform the MoD, on the basis of the national interests at stake and the resources that will realistically be at the disposal of the Armed Forces in the next years. To sum up, it is a short and a mid-term strategy for Italy's defence policy. The White Paper ambitiously outlines a comprehensive reform – of the MoD, quite detailed in some of its parts. It is not by chance that White Paper's last chapter is devoted to its implementation, indicating several documents and legislative acts to be prepared in a relatively short time (comparing to the usual timeline followed by national bureaucracies). Being it a strategy, the White Paper cannot be as detailed as a

<sup>1</sup> Italian Ministry of Defence, *Libro bianco per la sicurezza internazionale e la difesa*, 30 April 2015, [http://www.difesa.it/Primo\\_Piano/Documents/2015/04\\_Aprile/LB\\_2015.pdf](http://www.difesa.it/Primo_Piano/Documents/2015/04_Aprile/LB_2015.pdf).

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national law. Yet, it does provide the needed guidelines, anticipating a part of the content of the legislative acts that will have to be issued in the upcoming months. Additionally, the White Paper has been designed as a "Ministerial Directive" in order to increase the pressure to reform a structure that, like other bureaucracies, is not prone to accept the sacrifices linked to an effective reform.

The second reason the White Paper is important for Italy is that it fills a thirty-year long gap in terms of government's documents devoted to strategic reflection upon the country's defence policy. In the post Cold-War period, some important European countries such as France and the UK have elaborated similar documents – the *Livre Blanc* and the *Strategic Security and Defence Reviews* respectively – on a regular basis. These documents were conceived as the right tools to adapt national posture to a rapidly evolving international environment, or at least as a way to codify praxis that were already adopted by the country's defence policy. In the last 25 years, the United States seemed even busier<sup>2</sup> with producing strategic documents every few years. Additionally, NATO adopted three Strategic Concepts between 1991 and 2010<sup>3</sup> and even the European Union (EU) managed to overcome inter-governmental and institutional obstacles to strategic reflection by issuing a European Security Strategy in 2003.<sup>4</sup> As for Italy, the last fully-fledged White Paper was actually published in 1985,<sup>5</sup> during Bettino Craxi's administration with a key role played by the then Minister of Defence Giovanni Spadolini. At that time, the Government proved to have a strong vision of the country's foreign and defence policies by taking important decisions on the issue of the so-called "Euromissiles," as well as on the crisis of Sigonella with the US. That government managed to elaborate guidelines for the development of the Armed Forces through the White Paper.

Then the Italian military continued to develop itself during the post-Cold War period, with a real qualitative leap achieved by the Armed Forces through the new, prolonged, massive and demanding participation to crisis management operations: thousands of units deployed every year in several operational theatres, ranging from Africa to Central Asia, from the Balkans to the Middle East, often in joint and combined operations and also with combat tasks. Such deployment on the ground has demonstrated how the Armed Forces can implement Italy's defence

<sup>2</sup> See, among others, the report prepared by IAI, UI, FRS and CSIS, *EU-U.S. Security Strategies. Comparative Scenarios and Recommendations*, Washington, CSIS, April 2011, <http://www.iai.it/en/node/3391>.

<sup>3</sup> For an analysis of NATO Strategic Concepts see, among others, Alessandro Marrone, "The Equilibrium of the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept", in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (September 2011), p. 93-111.

<sup>4</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>. See, among others, Federica Di Camillo and Valérie Miranda (eds.), "L'Unione europea e la politica di sicurezza e di difesa comune: elementi", in *Documenti IAI*, No. 12|04, (April 2012), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/1515>.

<sup>5</sup> Stefano Silvestri, "Produrre un Libro Bianco, istruzioni per gli operatori", in *AffarInternazionali*, 24 March 2014, <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2579>.

policy and support its foreign policy, both at the bilateral and multilateral level (through NATO, EU and UN) in a mainly regional perspective – Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Mediterranean – but with significant global implications.

Unfortunately, the highest political-institutional levels did not respond adequately to this new reality in terms of strategic reflection. Although laws and documents important for the Armed Forces have been issued in the last twenty years, the MoD has not adopted an official strategy to be followed. In 1997, the reform by the then Minister Beniamino Andreatta marked a crucial moment – in line with the White Paper of 1985 – by shifting from national conscription to a professional military. In 2005, the Strategic Concept elaborated by the Chief of Defence Staff outlined how the Armed Forces would have to evolve in order to fulfil the tasks required by the new international context, which was marked by the war on terrorism as well as by radical technological evolutions. In 2012, the Law No. 244 outlined the organisation of the Armed Forces for the next ten years in terms of personnel and infrastructure, with important cuts on both sides.<sup>6</sup> Despite these three important steps, any really *strategic* document linking *ends*, *ways* and *means* was neither published in the post-Cold War period nor approved at the highest political-institutional level – the Supreme Defence Council – as envisaged by the Italian Constitution.

In this sense, the 2015 White Paper fills a gap lasting from 1985. In doing so, it also sets a precedent and a starting point for future similar exercises, which should be done more frequently – as it happens in the other important European states – rather than every thirty years. This thirty-year long vacuum contributes to justify the length of the White Paper as well as the emphasis on some of the key pillars of the Italian defence policy (and to some extent of the country's foreign policy) that emerged in the recent past: there was the need for such a point of reference, which would define both the conceptual and geopolitical baseline for a series of decisions and concrete actions to be taken by the MoD. Indeed, often strategic documents – as the NATO Strategic Concepts – are meant also to codify and establish some of the approaches emerged in the practice. However, the White Paper also promotes a comprehensive reform, containing very important innovations, some of which are discussed in the following paragraphs of this document.

Thirdly, the White Paper is important as it fostered dialogue among the different components of the MoD – something which cannot be taken for granted – and between the MoD and other Ministries relevant for Italy's defence policy (*in primis* the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation), the aerospace, the security and defence industry, and to some extent with the academic and the think tank sector. Such documents, both in Italy and abroad, help to define a shared vision of national defence policy among the different actors and stakeholders involved in it, each with its own competencies and role. This is why the group of experts that drafted the White Paper in the last 10 months organised seminars and meetings

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noticing that both documents were elaborated by the Admiral and then Minister of Defence, Giampaolo Di Paola.

with relevant actors and stakeholders.

Last but not least, the White Paper is an important document for Italy's defence policy as it regards the trilateral relations between the Armed Forces, the political authorities and the domestic public opinion. In Italy, for several historical and cultural reasons, the public debate on defence issues usually is not conducted sufficiently in-depth and constant. This frequently has given the impression that the different actors have followed an agenda mirroring their political goals, without really discussing the security challenges on the table.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, by observing the long experience gained in crisis management operations, as well as the way public opinion has discussed about them, it cannot be denied that "something has changed"<sup>8</sup> indeed in the country's defence policy – which turned into a more proactive comparing to the Cold War period – and in the public debate that recently became more frank and realistic.

In this context, the White Paper contributes in several ways to develop a better triangular relationship between the Armed Forces, the political authorities and the public opinion. Firstly, it explicitly starts from the analysis of national interests, something that could not be taken for granted in Italy – contrarily to what happens in other countries such France or the UK – whereby the debate got more realistic only recently.<sup>9</sup> By doing that, the White Paper helps the Government and the Parliament to understand the importance and implications for Italy of defence policy choices – i.e. on crisis management operations or military procurement – in terms of illegal migration, energy supplies, Italian exports and the national economy as a whole, security in the Mediterranean sea and the relations with the allies, EU and NATO. The White Paper explicitly addresses these implications of defence policy choices and this helps to convey them to the public opinion. The latter has been severely hit by the economic crisis and austerity measures, thus is rightly asking with a stronger voice what defence expenditures are for.

Moreover, some of the indications of the White Paper – if implemented – would strengthen the capacity of political authorities – namely Government and Parliament – to effectively and efficiently exercise their function of political guidance and control of the Armed Forces. As for the Government, the detailing of how does it work the hierarchy between the Minister of Defence and the military apex – both the Chief of Defence Staff and the National Armament Director – as well as the enhancement of the analytical capacities of the Minister's cabinet move in this direction. As for the Parliament, the White Paper proposal of a multi-year law on military procurement would improve its capacity to steer and to politically

<sup>7</sup> See, among others, Alessandro Marrone and Paola Tessari, "The Italian Debate on Defence Matters", in *Documenti IAI*, No. 13|07 (November 2013), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/477>.

<sup>8</sup> Fabrizio Coticchia, *Qualcosa è cambiato? L'evoluzione della politica di difesa italiana dall'Iraq alla Libia (1991-2011)*, Pisa, Pisa University Press, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> See, among others, Alessandro Marrone, Paola Tessari and Carolina De Simone, "Italian Interests and NATO: From Missions to Trenches?" in *Documenti IAI*, No. 14|12e (December 2014), <http://www.iai.it/en/node/2382>.

control military expenditures, because it would help the lawmakers to understand, discuss and decide upon core issues in a strategic way, without wasting time and resources on micro-management and technicalities. A better way to exert political guidance on the Armed Forces would also contribute to better explain to the public opinion the logic behind defence policy choices, thus triggering a debate that needs to be more focused on the content of the issues and the related choices.

Furthermore, the White Paper uses an explicit and frank language on what the Armed Forces are doing and what they will have to do, which is highly beneficial for its understanding by political authorities and public opinion. Indeed, the document explicitly refers to:

- deterrence;
- special forces;
- capacity to “tackle traditional conflict situations” (point No. 12);
- a “cyber domain that will have to be addressed and defended” (point No. 32);
- the Euro-Mediterranean region as the “priority scenario for national interventions” (point No. 50), where Armed Forces “must be ready to take on direct responsibilities to counteract crises and must be prepared to undertake crisis management operations” (point No. 71) also, in some cases, “by taking the lead of those operations.”

In addition, by making explicit the tasks of the Armed Forces, the White Paper introduces the task of “elimination of possible threats for the Italy's security and interests” (point No. 76). This language is much more explicit than that used for instance in 1999, when combat air sorties and ground attacks performed by Italian fighter aircraft Tornado in Kosovo and Serbia were euphemistically defined by the then Government as “advanced defence,” in order not to disappoint the pacifist groups within the political arena. No matter how limited the institutional communication impact is on the Italian debate about defence matters, it cannot be underestimated both the political and symbolic importance of the use by the White Paper of a clearer and more realistic approach to the public discourse. Overall, the document conveys the image of a country that explicitly acknowledges not only the *possibility* and the *legitimacy*, but also the *utility* and the *opportunity* of the use of force to pursue national interests.

If the White Paper is undoubtedly important and strategic for the aforementioned four reasons, its impact on Italy's defence policy – and the debate related to it – must not be overrated. In the recent past, legislative acts with potentially radical – and beneficial – implications for the Italian military, such as the Law No. 244 of 2012, were then watered down during the implementation phase. Unfortunately, Italy suffers a “structural” difficulty to reform public administration and the MoD is not an exception. Such complexity stems from a political-institutional system where relatively weak and short-lived Governments have to face strong and well-established lobbies and interest groups, which have a great influence in a bicameral system with very fluid parliamentary groups and ruling coalition. Additionally, also in this legislature ideological contrasts are emerging in the Parliament, making it harder to deal with the proposed reforms in a constructive way. In such a context,

the White Paper is on the one hand the result of a general, gradual and positive evolution of the Italian defence policy towards a more strategic thinking and *modus operandi*. On the other hand, it is also strongly dependent on the political will of the current Government, particularly of the Minister of Defence Mrs. Roberta Pinotti, to implement it. In conclusion, as Pietro Nenni once said "ideas walk through men's legs." And women's ones.

## 2. A reform act of the Italian military

by Vincenzo Camporini

The document presented by Minister Pinotti to the Supreme Defence Council on 21st April is not just a White Paper, but rather a truly comprehensive reform act of the MoD, both containing a very broad and deep analysis and also envisaging very effective reform measures.

Preliminarily, it is worth noticing that those complaining that the document does not explicitly state the number of F-35 fighter aircraft to be procured, completely ignores the function that is usually attached to a White Paper. Such a document aims to analyse the global strategic context, identify national interests to be protected, outline the institutional framework as well as the structures appropriate to fulfil these tasks, with a realistic financial plan. All other issues – being it the numbers of fighters, ships or brigades – will be addressed on the basis of the White Paper by using the appropriate planning tools.

Similarly to other White Papers, the Italian one starts from an analysis of the international strategic environment and its possible evolution. This is followed by an assessment of the national interests at stake. This parameter, coupled with the budgetary one regarding available resources, does set the level of ambitions of the Armed Forces. This confirms something that was already defined by praxis in the recent past: the document refers to Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Mediterranean regions, extended to the Gulf and to the Horn of Africa, and to the participation in both EU and NATO frameworks. This might sound trivial, if we did not consider that some components of the Armed Forces significantly deviated so far from such focus, as if Italy could allow military ambitions ranging from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian one, through the approval of an impressive enhancement of Italian military navy – a decision that was taken with inappropriate timing during the preparation of the White Paper and not after its publication, as it would have been right to do.

In the White Paper such definition of the level of ambitions is followed by a clear analysis on how norms, structures and procedures must be reformed in order to match the goals with the financial resources likely available in the next years. This radical reform of the MoD's governance envisaged by the White Paper makes it a "radical" document and it aims to fully implement the Law No. 25/1997 (the so called "Andreatta reform"), which was substantially watered down by its executive regulation. Therefore, the Pinotti reform goes much further than that proposed

by Minister Di Paola in 2012, which was nothing more than a reduction on a smaller scale of all existing structures and capabilities, without choosing whether to cut or to maintain a specific asset. Precisely, the reform outlined by the White Paper envisages a drastic reshaping of the single services, in the full respect of their specificities – which no one questions – in favour of a strengthening of the powers of the Chief of Defence Staff. Such enhancement of the integration at joint level will allow significant savings by eliminating useless duplications and thus managing expenses more efficiently. For example, logistics has to be integrated at joint level – it would be nonsense to keep two logistic chains for the NH90 helicopters respectively for the Army and the Navy, as well as to maintain a similar duplication for the F-35 fighter aircraft operated by the Air Force and the Navy. Similarly, the training activities related to NH90 and F-35 should be integrated and not kept separated at single service level.

A brave step is to assign the decisions related to the officials' promotion to higher ranks (Generals and Admirals) to a commission at a joint level. This is a real revolution that would make the high-level officials less dependent from their respective services and more accountable at a joint level. Some notice the risk of an excessive concentration of power in the hands of the Chief of Defence Staff, but they are wrong: no doubt that any good Minister of Defence would be able to control even the most ambitious General. In contrast, the real risk is that the different Chiefs of the single service could question the directives received from the Chief of the Defence Staff, as sometimes happened in the past. It will also be crucial that the National Armament Director receives precise directives from the Minister of Defence as far as procurement activities are concerned, although subordinated to the Chief of Defence Staff regarding logistics.

As for the personnel, it seems that a true revolution is about to come. Despite the issue deserves a specific analysis, at a first glance it seems evident that the topic has been eventually addressed by the White Paper with clear ideas in mind. No country in the world can allow to have middle-aged Armed Forces, as the soldier's tasks require generally physical force and energies that inevitably fade away at a certain age. As a result, the White Paper envisages a synergy between the defence and the civil sector – both public and private – in order to consider the Armed Forces as a sort of "breeding ground," whereby not only military but also other skills attractive for other sectors are developed by the servicemen. This would allow people, who have been serving within the Armed Forces for a certain amount of time, to find other concrete job opportunities in other sectors afterwards. This is not an easy goal to reach, especially within a social and legal context such as the Italian one: spending some time in the Armed Forces does not automatically represent a plus for a person's CV to be used in the job market, as it happens in Anglo-Saxon countries. Therefore, there is the need to create specific qualification pathways, agreed with the MoD as well as with all possible interlocutors, starting from the General Confederation of Italian Industry.

Furthermore, the White Paper rightly points towards a return to past best practices, when the rank of Marshall was awarded only after a consistent period spent in the inferior ranks – though this “return to the past” might not be widely shared. Despite the skills and the qualities of many young Marshalls graduated in the Armed Forces’ schools, generally speaking the experience gained at the lower ranks is not only valuable, but also indispensable for an official. Therefore, such a reform should also increase the prestige of the Marshall rank. The White Paper also envisages the creation of some reserve forces that could support professional soldiers in case of necessity, as it happens in many Allied countries. This would be another revolutionary step, which would have beneficial effects on the relation between the Armed Forces and the civil sector, a relation that has been hampered with the suspension of the conscription and the shift to a professional system.

Anyway, on personnel issues resistances will likely emerge at different levels, with critical voices already raised by some sectors of the “Military Representation”<sup>10</sup> and others. It is interesting the hint at the future of the management of the military criminal justice, for which – though cautiously – specific agencies within the system of ordinary jurisdiction are envisaged, thus leading to the replacement of the military courts. In terms of rationalisation, the White Paper flags the intention of a progressive integration of the single services’ health systems at joint level, without undermining the skills connected to different specific operational environments, even though these bureaucracies already revealed a strong capacity to resist to any attempt to unify different structures.

A final consideration regards the six-year “Planning Law” for large military procurement programmes. In any major procurement programme, a stable and clear picture of the resources available is crucial for both the “client” (the Armed Forces) and the supplier (the defence industry), because these programmes usually need a long time to be developed, sometimes more than 10 years. This is exactly the contrary of what is foreseen by Law No. 244 of 2012. According to this law, the punctual control by the national Parliament on major programmes risks to set the conditions for a negative micro-management conducted by people lacking the needed technical competencies. On the contrary, the “Planning Law” envisaged by the White Paper foresees a mid-term steering and control task fulfilled by the Parliament every three years, together with the ordinary annual approval of the national budget. In this way, the Parliament would be in the best position to debate a deepened and coherent analysis of the development of the different components of the Armed Forces, by overcoming the harmful current fragmentation of decisions in which both industrial and single Armed Forces lobbies take advantage of.

<sup>10</sup> The Military Representation (“*Rappresentanza militare*”) is a body within the Italian Armed Forces, which aims to protect the legitimate interests of the military personnel, in line with the provisions of national legislation.

In conclusion, it is worth underlining that the White Paper provides a political guidance, whose implementation will be realised only after a substantial ensemble of legislative acts of different kinds (laws, legislative decrees, regulations and so forth) is approved. This might require time as well as a coherent political support in the upcoming years. The rigorous and strict timeline imposed by the White Paper to the different MoD offices to draft the necessary proposals is remarkable, yet it is only the starting point of a complex and long path, where setbacks could not be tolerated.

### 3. The new governance of the MoD

by Alessandro Marrone

Ironically, it could be argued that reforming the public administration in Italy is somehow harder than winning a war. However, the White Paper attempts to achieve this goal, especially regarding a crucial aspect of the Italian military such as the governance and the internal organisation of the MoD.

The White Paper explicitly aims to reach a two-fold goal. On the one hand, it indicates what kind of Armed Force can handle the challenges as well as the opportunities in terms of international security and defence. On the other hand, it identifies the model of governance and internal organisation that, by doing it, is also able to meet the two criteria of effectiveness and efficiency. In other words, it is a truly "strategic" document, as it tries to match the goals with the ways and means to achieve them. By doing that, it acknowledges that resources available for the Armed Forces are and will be limited in the upcoming years, thus proposing hard and innovative choices "to do more with less." It comes to mind the famous joke by Churchill on the strategic thought: "Gentlemen, we have run out of money. Now we have to think."

What do we have to think about? It is about keeping Armed Forces able to support defence policy in order to protect Italy's strategic and vital interests, as it is explicitly stated at point No. 54 of the White Paper. This means, for instance, focusing – as all major European countries do – on those geographical areas that are a priority for national interests, pushing into the background other crises – though dramatic – in other regions of the world. A clear example of "strategic" choice is the fact that the White Paper clearly identifies the Euro-Mediterranean region as the "priority scenario for national interventions" (point No. 50) by putting it on the same level of the Euro-Atlantic region, where the country is traditionally engaged both within NATO and the EU (points No. 50 and 81). Accordingly, the White Paper tasks the Armed Forces to prepare themselves to lead international crisis-management operations in this area and to provide here "substantial full-spectrum capabilities" (point No. 138) – thus including for high intensity conflicts.

Strategic choices regard both priority regions for military intervention, as outlined above, and the way such interventions and generally speaking defence policy takes place. This latter aspect is pivotal, but also rather difficult to be understood by people who are not familiar with defence matters. The aspect is crucial for two reasons. At the political level, it touches a key issue: who (and how) truly rules the Italian Armed Forces. At the operational level, these choices are necessary to be taken to maintain the expeditionary capacity of Italian armed forces, their readiness, sustainability as well as its interoperability with the Allies – all qualities traditionally advocated in several official documents issued by the NATO, EU or their major Member States. The political and operational levels are clearly intertwined, and their interaction is crucial bearing in mind the limited available resources.

It is not by chance that the White Paper tries to link in a “strategic” way the political and the operational levels, by proposing a new governance for the MoD organised in five “strategic functions” (point No. 147):

1. political guidance;
2. strategic military – guidance;
3. forces generation and preparation;
4. forces operational deployment;
5. forces support.

The goal is to reshape the commands, as well as the central and the local bodies according to the aforementioned functions, by eliminating wherever possible the duplications and fragmentation that hinders both effectiveness and efficiency of the Armed Forces.

As for the “Political guidance” function, the White Paper concentrates on how to practically implement the functions of the Minister of Defence defined by the 2010 Military Code. The specific features of the Armed Forces make it harder than in other ministries for civilian political authorities to gain the necessary knowledge to effectively exert their power. This does not mean that the political decision-makers strives to have a full mastery over operational and technical aspects – something that is not (and neither could become) a matter of his/her competence. On the contrary, the White Paper aims to create within the MoD those instruments, as well as the necessary human resources, which will allow the Minister and his/her undersecretaries to overcome the “information asymmetry” they suffer from, and therefore to consciously take decisions and to verify their implementation and results. This is a pretty troublesome balance to reach, yet it would make the relation between the political and military environment more solid and effective.

As for the other four strategic functions, the White Paper proposes a series of important innovations that overall seek to increase the degree of jointness in order to benefit the effectiveness and the efficiency of the military. For instance, as for the function “Forces operational deployment,” the White Paper introduces a Deputy Chief of Defence Staff in charge of operations: he will head the current Joint Operational Command as well as the operational commands at single service level, the command for special forces operations and the one for cyber operations. In other

words, point No. 173 proposes that each military operation – even if performed by a single Armed Force – will be under the responsibility of the joint command. As for the function “Forces support” (notably logistics), the National Armament Director will centralise in his hands all the functions dealing with procurement acquisition, infrastructure and logistics, except those of direct support to the operational unit (point No. 174).

The White Paper sets a series of tasks for the different MoD offices for implementing all the provisions envisaged in the document. By doing so, the White Paper outlines a roadmap with strict timelines that should lead to a complete revision of the existing regulation at the legislative level as well as in terms of internal acts issued by the MoD. To be more effective, the document has been defined as a “Ministerial Directive” (point No. 294), that means compulsory to be enforced by the MoD officials. In light of the experience of the Law No. 244/2012 (the aforementioned “Di Paola” reform), whose content was watered down by the executive decree of 2014,<sup>11</sup> it is clear that the White Paper represents a milestone in a reform path still long, challenging and tricky – but more necessary and fair than ever.

### 4. The White Paper: a strategic partnership between the MoD and the industrial sector

by Alessandro R. Ungaro

“Our national defence cannot renounce to a certain level of industrial and technological autonomy, coupled with Armed Forces able to express the proper and necessary capabilities, in order to satisfy at least part of military needs either at the national level or through the participation to multinational initiatives of development and acquisition” (point No. 256). This is the beginning of the chapter of the White Paper which assesses the scientific, industrial and technological innovation policy of the MoD.

The first paragraphs in this chapter offer a context analysis aimed to underline the main dynamics that marked the international defence market as well as the technological developments occurred during the last 20 years. Among them, the White Paper stresses: the extension of the platforms’ lifecycle; the need for a constant adaptation of the systems, as well as for the reduction of the procurement programmes timeline, due to a widespread technological innovation – notably in the electronic field; the growing interlink between the civil and the military sectors, which makes it possible to link the civilian needs with the military ones; the dimension of military acquisitions still too much nationally-oriented. After that, the Paper devotes focuses on the Italian context, especially by emphasising the political-economic relevance of the security and defence industry. It provides the

<sup>11</sup> Alessandro Marrone, “La non riforma della difesa”, in *AffarInternazionali*, 24 February 2014 <http://www.affarinternazionali.it/articolo.asp?ID=2544>.

capabilities to the Armed Forces, by helping to shape Italy's level of ambition within the international political arena; it contributes to the country general development in economic, commercial and employment terms, as well as to the strengthening and the creation of collaborative relations with technological and industrial bases belonging to other countries.

Then, the Paper distinguishes between "sovereign" and "collaborative" technological competencies, which are the basis for developing products and systems – and, in turn, these are the fruits of Italy's scientific, industrial and technological background. Although both competencies are crucial for the development of an industrial base able to compete internationally, "sovereign" technologies are considered essential, "key and enabling," to satisfy the undeniable needs of the MoD, as well as of national interests, in an autonomous and sustainable way. The strategic character of these technologies demands that a certain level of sovereignty should be maintained upon them, by ensuring that the development and the production phases will be kept within Italy, regardless of the international cooperation and the shareholding of the companies owning such technologies. Among the "sovereign" technologies the White Paper includes dual-use technologies, which are widely analysed in the chapter (see points No. 270 and 283), with the aim to allocate adequate resources towards the research and the development of those projects whose dual-use utility is also confirmed at the European level.

In a complementary way, the "collaborative" competencies allow Italy to play a relevant role within cooperative programmes at the international level, i.e. multinational procurement programmes. These technological capabilities must be included in a logic of interdependence, specialisation and division of work with the partner countries. Hence, the need to identify those systems and products that will have to be developed and realised in a cooperative manner, by privileging the so called "Government to Government" (G2G) agreements, especially at the European level. Therefore, it will be even more urgent to look for a stronger cooperation and consultation among different EU Member States in order to "avoid duplications, assure that new gaps would not emerge, prevent breaches to the security of supply regime or the one regarding the control of technological and industrial assets." This is because the "security of supply for the EU Member States is indeed necessary for strengthening the European defence market. In fact, member States will not support the proposed changes if they are not sure they will be able to satisfy their military needs in a rapid and safe way, without any obstacles" (point No. 275).

By concluding this part on competencies, the document envisages the definition of a Plan flexible and easy to update, to be elaborated in consultation with the industrial counterpart, which should identify the strategic technological and industrial activities. This Plan should seek to unpick some dangerous and ineffective practices, which so far marked the relations between the MoD and the defence industry. In other words, the Plan should not be limited only to identify and match the requirements of the Armed Forces with the real industrial and technological capabilities in Italy. It should also consider as relevant the chances to export systems produced by those capabilities, their dual-use utility, as well as

the trends characterising the defence and security market.

The technological complexity of these products and systems, which are also marked by a growing interlink between the civil and the military sphere, demands a clear breakthrough in the relations between the Armed Forces and the industrial sector. The paragraphs in chapter 9 of the White Paper define the need for a renewed relation between the two actors, which is considered indispensable as a result of the technological and the other changes underway.

The core message follows a coherent logic and it is based on the idea of a future and desirable integration of the defence sector at the European level. According to the White Paper, such political vision must be nourished and supported by a deep revision of the relation between the MoD and the industrial sector, which has to shift from a "relation between supplier and client to a strategic partnership" (point No. 283). As a result of this new relation, the way to procure equipment will need to be reformed accordingly. This will have an impact in terms of management and organisation, which may foresee the shift of some competencies from the MoD to the industrial counterpart, in a way to increase cooperation between these two actors. Points No.279 and 280 address these aspects, by proposing solutions such as the possibility that the industrial sector may absorb some technical-industrial structures of the MoD (with the relative personnel) or the creation of public-private partnerships.

Additionally, it will be necessary to avoid that the technical requirements and the relative technologies mirror too much the very specific and detailed needs of the Armed Forces. In other words, as mentioned before by referring to the Plan on technological and industrial activities, the definition of these requirements must be broadened also taking into account the utility for other national needs, not just the military ones. This is a pivotal point for several reasons, including the possibility to make the acquisition process more and more joint and multinational: this aims to a stronger integration and interoperability also at the European level, by making a greater use of the competencies gained from the OCCAR and the European Defence Agency (EDA).

Complementarily, future procurement planning will have to lean towards modular platforms and systems, with an open architecture able to integrate more easily and in a cheaper way future technological updates. This is why in case of long-term acquisition of complex platforms, a "spiral" approach will be used in order to face the evolution of the operational needs over time. Such an approach foresees that a number of lots of systems/platforms that have already reached a certain technological maturity, enter the production phase. Meanwhile, the research and development activities will continue, in a way that the following lots will be produced in a more advanced version – but still keeping interoperability with the former ones. More importantly, the White Paper encourages, when possible, the adoption of common requirements and "hybrid" standards in a synergic way between the civil and the military sector – in a European perspective – in order to exploit the related economies of scale for the whole lifecycle of the product.

The partnership between the MoD and the industrial sector envisaged by the White Paper is not just a bilateral relation, but it must be complemented by a third pillar: the academia, whereby innovation flourishes and develops. As it happens in several European states, it is proposed a sort of virtuous system where the more innovative ideas and research proposals would find a preferential track to access funding and thus going on towards their realisation, after a careful but rapid evaluation. Italy as a whole would benefit from it, with spin off and positive economic and job creating implications in other sectors.

To conclude, the scientific, industrial and technological innovation policy represents one of the four paths the transformation of the Armed Forces must follow. The framework envisaged by the White Paper to realise such a process is the Technological and Industrial Strategy (TIS), to be prepared within six months by the General Secretariat of Defence/National Armament Director. The TIS will design a new form of cooperation, which will hopefully implement the positive and concrete steps foreseen in the White Paper. Beside the aforementioned Plan on industrial and technological activities, the elaboration of the TIS could benefit from a range of studies and works already conducted, or that are coming up within the MoD. Among them, two are the most important. On the one hand, the National Plan for Military Research, which will have to be integrated with the National Plan on Research in order to identify specific and priority research activities where the investments will focus on, and to exploit the beneficial implications for efficiency deriving from an integrated approach. On the other hand, the so-called "matrix of enabling technologies," mentioned at point No. 277 of the White Paper. It represents another way to integrate at the national level the technological needs of every Ministry and State body with the related technologies developed by national actors that contribute to Italy's technological development – not only industries but also private and public research centres, Universities, industrial districts and technological clusters.

### 5. The European dimension of the White Paper

by Jean-Pierre Darnis

The White Paper represents a worth noticed effort in terms of strategic reflection and rationalisation of the Armed Forces. The main goal regards the reform of the Armed Forces with the aim to reshape the personnel pyramid in a joint perspective, a very innovative and potentially revolutionary step. The White Paper is not a mere document of strategic guidance, as it defines further steps, both regulatory and legislative, which outline an important and comprehensive reform drive. This document, which is eminently a national one, sets Italy's position both at the European and at the international level.

Europe emerges as a double reference point in the White Paper. On the one hand, the document immediately broadens the concept of "national defence" – as the Euro-Atlantic region is presented as the "core of national interests." On the other

hand, it presents the political and functional framework in which the national defence policy will develop. Hence, we can observe that Europe is both the *locus* to be protected and the framework where to elaborate responses to crises. Such form of Italy's "Europeism" does not hesitate to consider the European integration the first pillar of the new Italian defence posture. The classical concept elaborated in the second half of the 20th century, according to which Italy would largely delegate its security to NATO, has been overcome by the revival of national interests, which have to be realised through the integration of Armed Forces and defence policy at the EU level. This does not mean marginalising NATO, but rather considering the Alliance within a more proactive role of Italy, where NATO is also presented as a European organisation.

Once the importance of the European component is defined, the White Paper introduces a second important geographic landmark, the Mediterranean region. Italy perceives very directly the risks coming from the South, claiming a key role – if not a leadership – at the EU level to face the threats for the Old Continent coming from the Mediterranean. Italy so strongly reaffirms its vision of regional power looking at the Mediterranean Sea, a sort of guardian of a risky border both for the EU and for NATO. Again, it is possible to see how the country defines very clearly an area of responsibility within what is called in the White Paper the "Euro-Mediterranean region," by expressing its national position in a collective security framework. This vision of Italy taking its responsibilities in the Mediterranean geopolitical context is the product of the experience gained through several international crisis management operations realised since the 1980s, notably during the post-Cold War period. Past military operations abroad not only mirror the geographical reach of the Armed Forces, but also put some pressure to reform them on the basis of the lessons learned. The emphasis on jointness is based on this operational experience, namely a series of interventions undertaken by the Armed Forces, which have required flexibility as well as the capacity to provide an immediate response: two requirements that does not match the current rigid separation at the level of single services. By using a provocative metaphor, it could be said that the end-state of the Armed Forces' transformation foreseen in the White Paper is something close to the model of the US Marines: Armed Forces integrated and fully expeditionary, comparable in quantitative terms to the US Marines corps by putting together the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. It would be counter-productive to keep rigid divisions among different services, if the goal is to have at disposal a modular force, which could draw from the overall of functions necessary for the different dimensions (air, ground and naval) to ensure its action and projection.

The European dimension is addressed by the White Paper in a crucial way also regarding the Italian Defence Technological Industrial Base (DTIB). Here it can be noticed a vision complementary to the political-strategic dimension. The idea is to improve the definition of the national DTIB, in a way to further develop a range of European cooperation that might even lead to a division of roles within an integrated industrial system. Talking about "sovereign" and "collaborative" technological competencies, the document foresees a substantial two-fold evolution from the

past. On the one hand, Italy adopts the concept of "sovereign" technologies, by referring to a definition already used in Europe – as in the case of the "*technologies de souveraineté*" which can be found in French documents. However, the Italian definition of "sovereignty" is still far from the French one, which is closely linked to the nuclear independence as well as to the complete control over the technological chain that is linked to it. Italy rather claims an explicit will to control the so-called "critical" technologies. The White Paper does not describe in full detail those technologies, but it envisages a range of documents, such as the TIS, which will have to take the final decisions upon that – as well as the coordination between civil and military public research.

Also in this case, it must be noticed that the apparent nationalism of these concepts of sovereignty is immediately translated in a European perspective. Indeed, the distinction between "sovereign" and "collaborative" technologies is a necessary step to define European cooperation, as well as a true division of labour that would imply abandoning some competencies. Avoiding industrial duplications might represent a rational objective if we think in a European industrial perspective. Yet, so far the main EU countries preferred to defend a model of DTIB theoretically able to satisfy the whole spectrum of national military needs – a model worthless in economic and industrial terms but very valuable in the context of national politics and in terms of social implications. The Italian White Paper breaks this taboo, by explicitly claiming the need for important political and industrial decisions, in order to keep the critical mass and the economy of scale – in terms of investments and market-share – necessary to enable the European industry to compete. The concept of interdependence expressed in the White Paper shows that the document overcame the idea of national autarky, which was traditionally linked to the production of weapon systems, to extend this concept at the European level. If from one side the "sovereign technologies" are defined at national level, on the other side we have an implicit extension of sovereignty at the European level, or better the acceptance to share the sovereignty by planning a system of interdependence.

Drawing further on the vision highlighted in the White Paper, we could imagine a first ring of national "sovereign" technologies and then a second ring of European "sovereign" technologies. The latter are defined as "shared," even though they still require a sort of extension of national sovereignty, for instance through a common security of supply regime, intra-European exchanges as well as rules on control and shareholding of defence industries. Italy's White Paper is thus coherent with a recent trend, which aims to increase the role of the European Commission over the defence market, by trying to reduce the national exceptions. A trend that has been recently observed through the implementation of the EU directives on procurement and intra-EU transfers in the security and defence sector. Obviously, the strong national perspective of the White Paper also reflects the limitations met by the community method, mirroring Italy's will to be more engaged on an inter-governmental basis. The document restates the national will further develop the role of the European institutions and organisations active in the defence procurement field – notably EDA or OCCAR – and demands the development of EU legislation for the acquisition and support of military equipment. This factor further

indicates the awareness of the drawbacks of the community approach, as well as of the need to develop the right tools to create a specific defence market regime in Europe, managed also by actors other than the Commission (which has mainly a civilian mandate). This kind of vision corresponds to the concept of "European sovereignty" expressed in the White Paper, with a theoretical extension of the idea of "national sovereignty" at the European level. This is an interesting evolution of such concept. It draws on a term often used by those countries traditionally linked to national sovereignty – like France – by interpreting it in a European perspective (mainly inter-governmental) but also insisting on the strengthening of the EU institutions. It is very significant that the White Paper is not based just on a single level to project national industrial policy, but it rather develops both the national and the European perspectives. This is an innovative synthesis, as it manages to make nationalistic approaches with pro-EU ones, through a pragmatic understanding of the interrelation of these two dimensions. The White Paper thus represents both an Italian and European comprehensive document, which defines some concrete reforming steps to ensure a stronger effectiveness of the system, also at the European level.

To conclude, as for the political and operational level, this document is in continuity with the existing institutional framework, by stating very clearly the national engagement in NATO and in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The novelty is represented by a stronger argument for a specific role for the country based on national interests, a sort of manifesto that implies also more responsibilities. The European partners will probably look at Italy to know whether this political ambition will have a practical realisation. A stronger Italian engagement, also from an operational point of view, can potentially change the current European situation, which actually sees France as a proactive but isolated actor, to re-launch forms of common action. In this sense, the EU's High Representative/Vice President (HR/VP) Federica Mogherini can play an important role toward this direction.

As for the technological and industrial context, we can see both a national and a European perspective, within which Italy elaborates a dynamic compromise between the protection of national technological capabilities and a vision of reform and increase of the effectiveness at the European level. This is very interesting from a European point of view, also because the White Paper draws from the current industrial needs and pushes towards a stronger political and operational integration. This is a truly expression of a "European realism," which projects the defence of national interests within a more integrated Europe.

Obviously, this position matches trends that often appear as centripetal within the current Italian debate. If Italy manages to realise the substantial agenda of reforms envisaged in the White Paper, this could also be an interesting push at the European level, starting from future White Papers or Strategic Defence Reviews which will be issued by the main EU partners. Above all, the White Paper brings on the table the vision of a stronger European defence integration, with a political qualitative leap: if this is taken seriously, it could lead Italy to take concrete initiatives in this sense.

## 6. The White Paper: what next?

by Stefano Silvestri

The recent White Paper is an interesting and ambitious document that sets the ways and the timeline for a deep renewal of the Armed Forces, in order to tackle future challenges. It contains an ambitious programme, which requires the maximum attention from the political authorities as well as from the public opinion, in order not to be watered down by the inevitable resistances that will arise. However, it lacks an adequate analysis of at least two crucial issues: the international dimension of the defence policy, as well as the new troublesome relation between the civilian and the military dimensions. The first missing point is the inevitable result of the White Paper institutional framework, which is explicitly national. The second weakness regards the fact that the White Paper focuses only on defence and not on international security and governance also. Probably, both limitations were unavoidable, but they deeply influence the final outcome.

The White Paper officially eliminates the illusion that any "peace dividend" is still available and usable, to be paid at the expenses of the MoD, even though it does not consider all the implications for that. Although within Italian and European public opinion there is not a common position on the complexity nor on the relevance of the new threats and risks, the events both in the Eastern and Southern EU neighbourhoods probably reduced the disagreements in this regards. Twelve years after, the famous incipit of the *European Security Strategy*, "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history"<sup>12</sup> is not valid anymore. Indeed, in 2013 the European Council approved a programme to strengthen the CSDP, stating that "defence matters"<sup>13</sup> already in the first paragraph of the Council's conclusions. Yet, these are only the first steps towards the right direction.

It is not easy to abandon the "post-modern" conceptual dimension of Europe, which emerged at the end of the 20th century. The EU presented itself as a normative power able to keep "unity in diversity" and to export peace abroad through its successful model, also because the opposite one – based on political hegemony and "exporting democracy" through military force – was not very successful. Unfortunately, we do not have any successful model to refer to anymore.

The issue is what we as Europeans are really able to do, and if what we will do will be enough to ensure the continuity of such a long period of peace and stability. There will likely be the need to use military forces that are larger than those available at the

<sup>12</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a better World: European Security Strategy*, cit.

<sup>13</sup> European Council, *Conclusions of the European Council 19-20 December 2013* (EUCO 217/13), 20 December 2013, [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140245.pdf).

moment. We would also need much more flexible and differentiated Armed Forces than we can actually afford, so that they can perform at the same time very different tasks, ranging from the re-affirmation (or rather reconstruction?) of deterrence in Europe, to the management of crises as well as state-building tasks in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. We must worry about our tumultuous borders, but we must also be able to contribute to the global balance. On the one hand, there is the need to give new credibility to the affirmation that forces at our disposal are able to "impose an unbearable cost" to any enemy trying to hit our security or stability. On the other hand, we must be able to contain and eliminate those forces that are producing anarchy and destruction in our neighbourhood.

We must handle a conceptual revolution. The White Paper identifies a great number of social, economic, technological, cultural and environmental factors that probably will deeply affect the global security environment. Large part of the issues on the table cannot be addressed – and solved – through military force. Yet, they will produce situations in which using military force will be necessary, and will have to be done in a way to contribute to the success of Italy's foreign policy and the management of the changes underway.

This creates a relation between the use of force and the political strategy much closer than the traditional one, something neither political elites nor military ones seem adequately ready to handle.

Most of the challenges we are facing are more related to a security strategy than to a defence one. Some phenomena such as mass illegal migration, the management of natural or caused pandemic diseases, the reduction of structural corruption and kleptocracies that trigger the phenomenon of "failed States," the parallel emergence of new criminal States (such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL), must be addressed through a wide range of civilian instruments. But addressing such phenomena also implies using military tool as well, although this tool should be used according to an approach somehow "civilian" – i.e. in terms of local institution building –to avoid negative outcomes.

In this sense, the concerns on the threats coming from non-State actors – as well as on anything that cannot be quickly and with no doubts referred to any public actor – must be considered. This is the case of criminal activities, but also the product of technological innovation, notably in the electronic and cyber field. Cybercrimes as well as the hypothesis of cyber war, are closely interrelated, also because it is pretty hard to find technical differences between them. Civil authorities bear the main responsibility to answer to cybercrimes, whereas it is the MoD and the intelligence that are responsible for cyber war. Yet, these two dimensions overlap and harm each other. It is getting more and more urgent to define the cyber space also legally, in order to protect the users' interests. However, the chances to reach binding agreements are hampered by those who are looking at cyber developments just as a way to increase their power.

These concerns are also mirrored by the current developments of the Italian military thinking. For instance, the MoD has paid an increasing attention, both at the national and international level, to the increase of asymmetric wars as well as hybrid threats, which produce very ambiguous social, political and cultural scenarios, full of unanswered questions also related to their political and constitutional legitimacy. A clash might potentially emerge between the political and the military leadership, each one convinced of the need for an integrated strategic commitment, but incapable or unable to accept to be subjugated by the other. It is thus necessary to anticipate this situation and to prepare the necessary chain of command as well as the planning system, in order to assure the coherence of civilian and military strategies, which will not emerge to the detriment of the other. This is twice as important both at the Italian level – where the well-known technical and institutional gaps of the national decision-making system play a decisive role – and at the European one – where these gaps are particularly evident in the inadequate relation that has emerged so far between NATO and the EU. Therefore, it is required a further reflection, which goes beyond the White Paper, where the dimension of “security” as well as the complex elements of a new strategy must be addressed.

To achieve these goals a stronger cohesion is necessary, which will eventually produce a more efficient integration of the existing capabilities in Europe as well as the Euro-Atlantic space – together with deep revisions of our strategic approach, by integrating civil and military capabilities at an unprecedented level. This is not only up to Italy. A greater cohesion and integration of capabilities and synergies in the Euro-Atlantic space is the only possibility Westerners have to successfully face these challenges, but this results cannot be taken for granted.

To this end, Italy should follow up the White Paper by working simultaneously on two tracks. On the one hand, Italy has to implement the reform envisaged in the White Paper, by maintaining effective Armed Forces, able to easily integrate with the Allies’ ones and to give an important contribute to existing capabilities (for example in terms of specialisation). On the other hand, Italian security and defence policy must be based on the awareness that only if Italy shows solidarity and provides a significant contribution to international security, Italians can expect the allies’ solidarity and support: Italy cannot concentrate only on national needs and priorities, but will have to accept to satisfy common needs and priorities.

The White Paper focuses mainly on the first task – implementing the Armed Forces reform – but it risks to be a mere wish list if we are not able to go ahead with the second track too.

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