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Istituto Affari Internazionali

Somali Perspectives: Institutional and Policy Challenges

by Stefano Pioppi

ABSTRACT

The high-level seminar held in Rome on 6 May 2015, which saw the participation of delegations from Puntland and Jubaland, represented a relevant opportunity to trigger international dialogue on the future of Somali institutions and the security challenges affecting the Horn of Africa. The seminar was organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and the Embassy of Italy to the Federal Republic of Somalia. In the discussion, federalism emerged as the most viable option to stabilise Somalia after twenty years of conflict and fragmentation. However, federalism would appear to be an ongoing process; a specific model of division of competencies has to be defined in the complex constitutional process in order to avoid further inefficiencies and instability. Another relevant theme linked with Somali stabilisation is the nexus between security and development. A renewed attention focused more on development than on security challenges could represent the core of a new international effort in support of the Somali reconciliation and securitisation process. This report provides a summary of the meeting and highlights the key points that emerged from the debate.

Somalia | Federalism | Security

keywords

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by Stefano Pioppi*

Introduction

The high-level seminar held in Rome on 6 May 2015 represented a relevant opportunity to trigger international dialogue on the future of Somali institutions and the security challenges affecting the Horn of Africa. The seminar was organised by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and the Embassy of Italy to the Federal Republic of Somalia. The IAI library was the venue for a productive talk on the Somali perspectives, with particular attention to the current institutional process and security challenges. In the discussion, federalism emerged as the most viable option to stabilise Somalia after twenty years of conflict and fragmentation. Nowadays, federalism is a fact in Somalia as the emerging regional authorities are compensating for the inability of the central federal government to maintain control over the territory, and are providing essential services to the population. However, federalism would appear to be an ongoing process; a specific model of division of competencies has to be defined and formalised in the complex constitutional process in order to avoid further inefficiencies and instability. Another relevant theme linked with Somali stabilisation is the nexus between security and development. These two elements are connected, representing necessary steps along the way in the resolution of the huge Somali humanitarian crisis. A renewed attention focused more on development than on security challenges could represent the core of a new international effort in support of the Somali reconciliation and securitisation process. These two main themes, federalism and the security-development nexus, were discussed in the two sessions of the seminar, with the participation of the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and the First Vice President of the Jubaland State of Somalia, Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, along with scholars and experts. The seminar also saw the participation of a delegation from Puntland, composed of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, Ahmed Aden, Abdikadir Omar, and Issa Mohamud Farah from the Agency for Minerals

* Stefano Pioppi is a research intern at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).

Report of the high-level seminar on "Somali Perspectives: Institutional and Policy Challenges" organised in Rome on 6 May 2015 by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and the Embassy of Italy to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

and Oil of Puntland, and a delegation from Jubaland, including Abdighani Abdi Jama, Minister of State at the Presidency of Jubaland. Other participants were Mussa Hassan Abdulle, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Italy, and Awes Abukar Awes from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Italy, Ambassador at-large Abdirashid A. Sed, political analyst Faisal Abdi Roble, and Kadigia Mohamud from Università La Sapienza. MAECI was represented by Marco Claudio Vozzi and Carlo Campanile. Experts included Palmira Ciacciarelli (Crown Agents and former European Union Stabilisation Adviser to Somalia), Marco Massoni (Institute for Global Studies) and Gianni Bonvicini, Nicoletta Pirozzi, Natalino Ronzitti and Stefano Silvestri from IAI. This report provides a summary of the meeting and highlights the key points that emerged from the debate.



Gianni Bonvicini and Nicoletta Pirozzi

1. The federalist perspectives: policies and prospects

After the welcome address, the IAI Executive Vice President Gianni Bonvicini made the opening remarks. He thanked the distinguished representatives of Puntland, Jubaland and the Federal Republic of Somalia, and all the participants. Bonvicini underlined the great opportunity provided by the meeting to offer a renewed perspective on the Somali reconstruction process. He then introduced a general description of the current situation in Somalia.

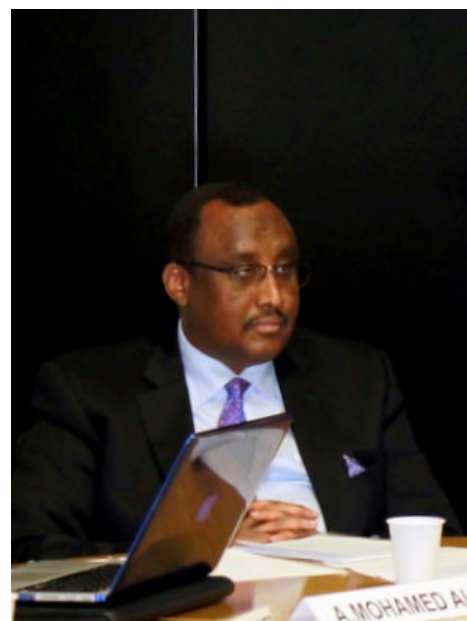
Nowadays, federalism could be considered as both a fact and an ongoing process in Somalia. The fragmentation produced by twenty years of war generated inability on the part of the central authorities of Mogadishu to maintain control over the national territory, determining the necessity to develop other forms of governance in Somalia. First, Somaliland declared its independence after the overthrow of Barre in 1991. Next Puntland established its autonomy, in 1998. Then, more recently, even Jubaland and South West declared their own autonomy as parts of a federal state. Although these regions play an important role in trying to maintain control over their territory and to provide essential services to the population, there is a lack of formalisation of the federalist model, such as would define precisely the division of powers and competencies of regional and central governments.

Concluding his opening remarks, Gianni Bonvicini invited all the participants to make their contributions to a positive and productive meeting, leaving the floor to the representatives of Puntland and Jubaland.

1.1 Federalism as a fact

The first part of the discussion in the first session of the seminar was oriented towards underlining federalism as a fact and as the main option for Somalia.

To begin, the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and the First Vice President of the Jubaland State of Somalia, Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, made their opening statements. Both thanked the IAI and the MAECI for the venue and the opportunity to improve their contacts with the international community, and for the special relation between Somalia and Italy.



Abdiweli Mohamed Ali

Both the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and the First Vice President of the Jubaland State of Somalia, Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, referred to federalism as the only option to re-establish and consolidate the national unity of the country. In their perspectives, a federal system in Somalia is inevitable, as it would be impossible to re-implement failed policies in a centrally controlled government system. Looking at the current complex situation of Somalia, federalism appears as a fact: today, regions represent an effective reality of the Somali institutional set-up. In this sense, federalism has already emerged as a necessity because of the disintegration of the central capability to defend national unity and to guarantee the conditions of peace and stability. Somalia is now testing the federalist option that appears as a concrete possibility for rebuilding a state. In comparison with the secessionist propensity of Somaliland, Puntland and Jubaland share the idea of autonomy for unity. This idea was firstly sustained and put into practice by Puntland, which has emerged since 1998 as the mother of Somali federalism. As a consequence, Jubaland's recent path to autonomy has been inspired by the Puntland experience, with a view to sharing the project of national democratic reconstruction.

Marco Claudio Vozzi gave a positive assessment of the emerging regional Somali institutions. Firstly, Vozzi expressed the MAECI's appreciation about the meeting as a great opportunity to trigger the dialogue that Somalia needs to restore its institutions. Recalling the Italian effort for peace and stability in Somalia, he stated that Puntland and Jubaland represent indispensable building blocks of Somali reconstruction. Federalism, inspired by the concept of subsidiary responsibility, could guarantee a governance closer to the population's needs. In these terms, the international effort should be directed at supporting federalism. However, intervention from the outside should be reoriented accordingly in order to reach not only central authorities, but also regional governments.

In order to offer to the meeting a complete background of the political situation in Somalia, Ambassador at-large Abdirashid A. Sed gave an historical description of the Somali federal project. He stated that federalism has been conserved as an idea since independence in 1960. Now, after the collapse of Barre's regime and twenty years of conflict, Somalia seems to be able to realise this project of decentralisation based on a general agreement on division of competencies. The central government has expressed many times that it favours formalisation of the reconstruction of Somalia through federalism.

The political analyst Faisal Abdi Roble also described the federal project as the only possibility for Somalia to rebuild its institutions, avoiding fragmentation. He maintained that the reconstruction should be based on a new concept of Somalia, no longer based on tribes and clans, but formed by autonomous regions. That is because, from the point of view of Roble, clans are shifting entities, not based on cultural membership but linked to a leadership. According to this perspective, in Somalia there are no clans but groups, and groups may be absorbed by the federal constitutional project.



Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail

Voices that underlined the existence of clans and their role were prominent in the meeting. Palmira Ciacciarelli (Crown Agents and former European Union Stabilisation Adviser to Somalia) and Kadigia Mohamud (Università la Sapienza) affirmed that clans seems to represent an intrinsic character of Somali culture that cannot be eliminated. In particular, Mohamud stated that clans are the core of Somali society but that stabilisation of the country through the clans has been attempted for twenty years without result. In her perspective, federalism represents a better opportunity to restore Somali stability and to face the main current challenge: the humanitarian crisis. Ciacciarelli stated that even if ethnicities, clans and tribes are constantly present in Somali society, federalism is already a fact. Compromises, agreements and balances that are typical of the federal model are already present in the Somali current political forum among these constituencies. In this regard, the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali added that, even though clans exist, they do not represent an obstacle to the formalisation of the federalisation of the country. Basing the federal model on a Constitutional project should legitimate it by a sort of social contract in which each part, region or clan, accepts the principles of central authority and national unity. This position was shared by Abdighani Abdi Jama, Minister of State at the Presidency of Jubaland.

1.2 Federalism as an ongoing process

During the first session of the closed-door seminar, the federal project of Somalia also emerged as an ongoing process. Indeed, even considering the current Somali situation as a *de facto* federalism, participants agreed on the need to formalise and institutionalise the federal model.

Even if federalism represents a fact, there are many open points to be resolved in a federal Constitution. For the effectiveness of the federal model, precise definition of competencies between the federal government and the states is necessary.



Seminar participants

This perspective was supported during the seminar by many experts. Marco Claudio Vozzi underlined the fact that the model of federalism should be chosen by the Somali people, in order to acquire its legitimacy and to increase its capacity to respond to the needs of the population. Faisal Abdi Roble pointed out that Somalia should adopt a strong model of federalism, leaving to the central authorities just the essential competencies. For the same reason, even the international donors should re-orientate their humanitarian intervention towards the regions, overcoming the centralised system of donorship. Natalino Ronzitti (IAI) added that the formalisation of the divisions of competencies should be considered the priority for Somali reconstruction. Indeed, there are many open points, such as the creation of an army, the composition and functions of the Federal Court of Justice, and the issue of secession possibility. As a consequence, determining the choice of model and the degree of federalism seems to be a priority. The division of competencies should be clearly fixed and institutionalised in order to avoid any risk of different interpretations and consequent conflict. The basis of each federal country is the formalisation of a compromise between the central authority and the regional entities on the division of power, resources and responsibility. Without this kind of formalisation many practical problems remain open.

Answering questions coming from the experts, the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and the Minister of State at the Presidency of Jubaland, Abdighani Abdi Jama, confirmed the necessity to let the Somali people choose which model of federalism is adopted. For this ongoing process, in the words of the President of Puntland, 2016 appears as a crucial year for the opportunity represented by the elections and the final realisation of the federal Constitution. Both Puntland and Jubaland are concentrating their efforts to obtain the recognition of a strong federalism in which the majority of competencies are delegated from the central federal government to the states. In this model of federalism, the central government would maintain only few competencies: foreign policy, defence policy and army, monetary policy, and immigration. The rest should be delegated

to the states in order to ensure the proximity of policies to the people.

The authorities of Puntland and Jubaland are now trying to affirm the principle that federalism means not only division of responsibility – but even division of powers and resources. Indeed, one of the most sensitive themes remains fiscal policy and the management of resources. Regions are trying to acquire as much as possible in terms of capability of gaining and managing those resources necessary to the provision of public services. The application of this strong model of federalism, according to the political leaders of the two Somali states, will not impair but rather strengthen the unity of the country.



Seated at the table are from left to right: Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, Abdighani Abdi Jama, Mussa Hassan Abdulle, Raffaello Matarazzo

Concluding the first session of the seminar, Gianni Bonvicini expressed appreciation for the positive and constructive debate. His concluding remarks described this current period as a determining moment for the future of Somalia. It would appear to be a period of self-evaluation, of rethinking the national project for unity. He suggested that a possible way to improve synergies and cooperation among regional states would be to direct external funds towards inter-state projects, based on the experience of the Marshall Plan for Europe. The country has the possibility to make a choice to establish the institutional order necessary to restore stability and to avoid the perpetuation of a bloody conflict.

2. Addressing the security-development nexus

The second session of the high-level seminar provided an overview on the security–development nexus. It was opened by Nicoletta Pirozzi, IAI Senior Fellow. After thanking all the participants, she outlined the strong effort sustained by Italy and the European Union in Somalia, based mostly on the financial and technical support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and on the response to the most sensitive security threats: piracy, terrorism (in particular by Al-Shabaab), and huge migrations. Then, considering the poor results obtained in twenty years of an approach oriented towards facing security challenges, she underlined the need for a new paradigm of international intervention. Donor efforts, she said, should be oriented more towards development and capacity-building in a long-term approach. The attention of the international community has been characterised by a crisis management approach, while development interventions have been progressively securitised.

The institutional debate about federalism is obviously linked to the matter of security, which is the most sensitive matter from the Western point of view. After the collapse of the authoritarian Barre regime, the instability of Somalia offered fertile ground for the proliferation of challenges that did not remain within Somali borders. However, beyond Western concerns for links with international security and stability, the matter of Somali security

firstly is about the dramatic living conditions of the Somali people. Obviously, the security challenges are interrelated and generate a complex situation in which each national, regional or international intervention has to be clearly defined. The security of Somalia appears strongly linked to its development: it is not possible to pursue one while neglecting the other. In addition, it requires a multilevel analysis that takes into account both the national and the international levels.



From left to right: Issa Mohamud Farah, Carlo Campanile, Faisal Abdi Roble, Marco Claudio Vozzi, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed

2.1 The security-development nexus at the national level

After the opening remarks by Nicoletta Pirozzi, the President of the Puntland State of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali gave an overview of the nexus between security, development and federalism in Somalia. According to the President, the security of Somalia is not only linked to its development, but also strongly related to the institutionalisation of the country. Indeed, the first step on the way to ensuring security is the creation of a functioning state that is able to defend the life, liberty and property of its citizens. To ensure security and stability, improving the capacity-building of Somali institutions is crucial. Capacity-building is generally considered as the basis for a sustainable and lasting development: it means restoration of the capability of the state to meet challenges. The President underlined that, in the complex situation of Somalia, capacity-building involves many elements including, first of all, the successful conclusion of the constitutional process; secondly, the establishment of the infrastructural network; thirdly, the formation of an autonomous army loyal to political power; and finally, the civic education of the Somali people to convince them of the benefits that derive from national unity. These elements are necessary to ensure the security of Somalia and its development. The concept of capacity-building encompasses the real security-development nexus, as two faces of the same coin.

The First Vice President of the Jubaland State of Somalia, Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail and Abdighani Abdi Jama, Minister of State at the Presidency, underlined the points stressed by the President of Puntland. If terrorism, exerted by many groups in Somalia, is the first national and regional challenge, the creation of an army should be considered the priority. For this reason, one of the most sensitive themes

is the development and reform of the Somali army and police forces. Defence bodies loyal to the legitimate power are the required guarantee for the stability of a country. According to the authorities of Jubaland, the autonomous states of Somalia should develop their own military forces and integrate them in the federal national army. The First Vice President added that, in these first steps of the military power reconstruction, the central government should increase the number of national forces granted to the regions.



Seminar participants

However, both Gianni Bonvicini (IAI) and Marco Claudi Vozzi (MAECI) stated that the creation of regional and national military forces should be clearly and pragmatically defined. The double level of the Somali army opens a problem on coordination in the chain of command and composition of the military forces.

In addition to the military question, the issue of the reconstruction of infrastructures also emerged during the debate. The representatives of both Jubaland and Puntland expressed their concern over the lack of essential services for the Somali people, outlining the efforts of the regions to restore the infrastructural network. Infrastructures are necessary to exploit the resources in an effective manner and to attract foreign investment. In the same way, education is important in order to train people to exercise democratic participation.

Puntland's President, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, particularly stressed the point of education as evidence of the strong nexus between development and security. Indeed, he affirmed the need to fight Al-Shabaab through education and ideologically rather than militarily. Considering its new asymmetrical tactics, terrorism could be defeated both through the defence offered by a national army, and through a counter-narrative aiming to give the people the perception that a new and better model of living is possible. Democratic education is a relevant step in the capacity-building process, considering that this is the first period in which power in Somalia is being attempted based on consensus, in contrast with the past when it was based on colonial control, military power and instability.

This point was stressed also by Palmira Ciacciarelli. She underlined that, in the peace consolidation process, education on consensus and agreement is required; the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) concept should also be inoculated in Somali society in order to avoid continuous revenge and desire for mutual destruction.

2.2 The security-development nexus at the international level

In the second session, the international level of analysis of the security-development nexus emerged. In every intervention, the interconnection between improvement of national capacity-building and international intervention was outlined. Obviously, the nexus between security and development involves not just the national actors, but also requires reconsideration of the international approach to the Somali crisis. The instability of the country since 1991 has allowed the proliferation of challenges that have not limited their effects to within Somali borders.

Stefano Silvestri (IAI) pointed out that the main security challenge, terrorism, is a cross-border threat requiring at least a regional approach, which opens problems of coordination between the countries of the Horn of Africa. Marco Claudi Vozzi agreed with Silvestri's perspective and underlined the need to face terrorism through a coordinated approach in which the national interventions could be separated – but always included in a regional comprehensive strategy. He also noted the Italian effort in support of Somali capacity-building. Italy has been, in part due to its historical ties to Somalia, one of countries most involved in the Somali crisis. The MAECI still contributes to Somali stabilisation in three ways: through humanitarian assistance; through participation in international missions (in particular through the European Union); and through great effort in training Somali police forces (a significant mission for training Somali police, MIADIT 3, is realised by the Carabinieri in Djibuti).

However, the international effort to ensure security in the country has been mainly realised through support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), since 2007. The current mandate of AMISOM is primarily based on military support for the federal government of Somalia. Evaluating the AMISOM impact on the Somali crisis, Faisal Abdi Roble pointed out the necessity to consider it as a short-term solution. The African Union intervention should permit the new federal Somalia to develop autonomous instruments to ensure security and development.

The Minister of State at the Presidency, Abdighani Abdi Jama, answering questions coming from the experts, stated that security challenges should be faced through three-level intervention: regional (through coordination between the African countries), national (because Somalia has to make its contribution) and international. However, the international effort should be re-evaluated in order to increase its efficiency.

The authorities of Puntland and Jubaland, in their concluding remarks, agreed about the great utility of AMISOM in facing terrorism but, at the same time, underlined that it is not sustainable in the long term. Indeed, in the long term, AMISOM would not allow a federal Somalia to strip away the international support, restoring its own capacity-building. In his remarks, the First Vice President of the Jubaland State of Somalia, Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail, underlined the necessity to

enable the Somali institutional powers to deliver, through the restoring of police and military forces, the infrastructural network and the judicial system.

In concluding the second sessions, all the participants agreed that the international donors should reconsider their interventions in Somalia. AMISOM cannot be considered as the only instrument. They agreed it is now time for a new paradigm for international intervention, based on the concept of development in the broadest sense of the term. Donors should concentrate on the quality of the assistance and not on the quantity, trying to stimulate the emergence of Somali capabilities and responsiveness and avoiding forever tying Somalia to international aid in respect of the principle of "value for money."

Conclusion

From the two sessions of the meeting a common vision on the current Somali situation emerged: this period seems to be a decisive moment for the future of Somalia. After twenty years of war, instability and fragmentation, Somalia has the opportunity to take a decisive step on its path towards the re-establishment of national institutions. Regional states of Somalia, like Puntland and Jubaland, may be the promoters of the positive exploitation of this opportunity. Indeed, in this process of institutionalisation, which will be marked by the elections in 2016, federalism seems to be the only possible option in order to guarantee stability and national unity.

Institutionalisation is probably the first step of the long journey to restoring capacity-building. In this lengthy process, security and development are strongly linked. Neither can happen without the other. To realise this nexus a strong national and international effort is required. The national effort consists mostly of a political consensus on a constitutional model, the creation of an autonomous and loyal army, and the democratic education of Somali people. From the international perspective, donors should probably reconsider their attempts, looking not just at security challenges but also at opportunities for development, as well as promoting opportunities for constructive dialogue like the one offered by the IAI.

Updated 15 May 2015

Seminar Programme

Rome, 6 May 2015, IAI Library

Welcome address **Gianni Bonvicini**, Executive Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

First Session

The Federalist Perspective: Policies and Prospects

Chair **Gianni Bonvicini**, Executive Vice President, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Introductory Speeches H.E. **Abdiweli Mohamed Ali**, President of Puntland
H.E. **Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail**, First Vice President of Jubaland

Second Session

Addressing the Security-Development Nexus

Chair **Nicoletta Pirozzi**, Senior Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Introductory Speeches H.E. **Abdiweli Mohamed Ali**, President of Puntland
H.E. **Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail**, First Vice President of Jubaland

Wrap-up **Nicoletta Pirozzi**, Senior Fellow, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome

Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

Founded by Altiero Spinelli in 1965, does research in the fields of foreign policy, political economy and international security. A non-profit organisation, the IAI aims to further and disseminate knowledge through research studies, conferences and publications. To that end, it cooperates with other research institutes, universities and foundations in Italy and abroad and is a member of various international networks. More specifically, the main research sectors are: European institutions and policies; Italian foreign policy; trends in the global economy and internationalisation processes in Italy; the Mediterranean and the Middle East; defence economy and policy; and transatlantic relations. The IAI publishes an English-language quarterly (*The International Spectator*), an online webzine (*AffariInternazionali*), two series of research papers (*Quaderni IAI* and *IAI Research Papers*) and other papers' series related to IAI research projects.

Via Angelo Brunetti, 9 - I-00186 Rome, Italy

T +39 06 3224360

F + 39 06 3224363

iai@iai.it

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- 15 | 06 Alessandro Marrone e Michele Nones, *La formazione degli ufficiali delle Forze Armate italiane nella prospettiva europea*
- 15 | 05 Chiara Franco, *Coercive Diplomacy, Sanctions and International Law*
- 15 | 04 Gabriele Rosana, *Crisi in Libia. Intervento militare o soluzione politica?*
- 15 | 03E Roberto Aliboni, *What to Do About Libya: Intervention or Mediation?*
- 15 | 03 Roberto Aliboni, *Che fare in Libia? L'Occidente fra intervento e mediazione*
- 15 | 02E Alessandro R. Ungaro, Alessandro Marrone and Michele Nones, *Technological Innovation and Italian Armed Forces Training: Challenges and Opportunities*
- 15 | 02 Alessandro R. Ungaro, Alessandro Marrone e Michele Nones, *Sfide e opportunità dell'innovazione tecnologica nell'addestramento delle Forze armate italiane*