



THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

WHITE PAPER

for international security and defence





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White Paper: Objectives, Criteria, Lines of Action

Armed Forces: from a joint vision to a joint reality

In entering the new millennium Italy lagged behind on many fronts. Three main areas of concern characterized the sector of international security and defence: political and institutional participation in the defence debate, the structure and functioning of the administration and the relationship between Italian citizens and Defence. A country that pays no attention to Defence themes makes it difficult to intervene on its military to improve it. A political system that steers clear from these problems hampers the establishment of a strong relationship between the people and the Armed Forces, a relationship able to strengthen their sense of belonging to the national community and their trust in the institutions. So far, these weaknesses have prevented our country from timely and effectively tackling both the modernization of the Defence system and the many challenges we have been confronting for a long time. The requirement for a State more capable of protecting our national interests stems from the changes we are witnessing in an ever more complex world. The new millennium, in fact, is especially characterized by two historical changes: globalization and the digital revolution, which nurture an ever stronger interconnection and interdependence between geographical areas, countries, economic sectors, markets and cultures. A farsighted, pragmatic international security and defence policy is of fundamental importance to provide our country with a military able to safeguard our most important achievement, accomplished at the cost of great



sacrifices: our freedom. It can, moreover, protect us from risks and possible threats and allow us to tackle our responsibilities within the international community. In the last few years the relevance of those responsibilities has increased in the face of an international scenario where crisis areas have widened, have become more complex and are approaching the European borders.

New threats - terrorism in the first place, with attacks being now carried out also in our continent- cast their shadow over our freedoms. The Mediterranean area - where our country is historically, politically and economically located- is again attracting international attention because of its many crises and conflicts, to which there seems to be no easy or quick solution. The world has deeply changed and so have many aspects of security that we had taken for granted. Within the framework of the international institutions that Italy regards as its points of reference -the UN, NATO, the EU- those challenges require a coordinated response from all our national capabilities as well as the availability of effective tools, not least a modern and capable defence system. We must all be aware that the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces are important parts of the country and of its public service, especially for the role they play as guarantors of our freedom and strongholds of our national independence.

Upgrading our capabilities to meet current requirements, improving effectiveness in actions and operations and ensuring overall cost-efficiency are the priority goals to be met by the Ministry of Defence and by the Armed Forces within the framework of the reform process of the State bodies, i.e. the objective identified by this Government since its inception.

In this perspective, the White Paper submitted by the Government to the other Institutions and to the national and international public opinion intends to set short-to-medium term objectives, criteria and actions, thus providing our country with an updated defence capacity able to safeguard our interests in cooperation with all the other national instruments. Nevertheless, in Western democratic countries the growing level of insecurity has gone side by side with a decrease in defence investments - due to the financial and economic crisis- and a reduced sensitivity toward defence themes compared with other economic and social issues. This trend, which requires a reflection and an adjustment of our Armed Forces, has become evident also in Italy.

The Armed Forces are a very valuable asset and a capable and effective reality that