

The Role of Italy's Military in Supporting the Civil Authorities

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National Policy on the Domestic Deployment of Military Forces

Italy has a long tradition of deploying military forces in domestic contingencies, as will be described below. Hence we can look to a substantial and conspicuous body of legislation regarding this subject, as there has long existed a well-developed attitude among the various constituent bodies responsible for national defense to cooperate in all circumstances. Although the categories used in Italy are not the same as in the United States, for the sake of this essay reference will be made to the general terms of classification as they are used in the U.S.

Extraordinary Circumstances

National defense in Italy comprises all political, military, economic, industrial, and financial activities that are carried out by the state to ensure its own security and national integrity in all given circumstances. National security is based upon two main branches—military defense and civil defense—which are strictly interconnected through a permanent structure called the Agency for Civil-Military Cooperation (COCIM), which has the responsibility to face any kind of extraordinary circumstance. This structure is based on the Military-Political Nucleus (*Nucleo Politico Militare*), which is part of the prime minister's cabinet and is headed by the prime minister himself (or his delegate). All relevant institutions are represented, among them the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Department for Civil Protection. At its headquarters, the National Decision Center, there are a number of operations rooms (one for each ministry or agency) activated at the beginning of an emergency situation, which manage the flow of information to and from the area of operation. Coordination is the main purpose, and is exercised by the Nucleus in permanent session.

Under the rubric of “military defense” are grouped all those activities which are typically carried out by the military forces in cases of threats to the national territory by an external aggressor. The principles for the deployment of the Italian armed forces are laid out in the Constitution of Italy, where two the main points are stated: the defense of the homeland is a sacred duty of all citizens, and war is a means of last resort to settle international disputes, unless the Italian territory is under attack.

The president of the republic is the supreme commander of the armed forces, but he does not have the authority to decide upon their deployment. This decision is made by the government with the approval of the parliament, and the execution of the following

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actions falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense, and is coordinated within the COCIM (in fact, within the Political Military Nucleus) in coordination with the other ministries concerned.

The chief of staff for military defense, a four-star general or admiral, is responsible for keeping the armed forces ready for deployment and for updating the operational plans for extraordinary circumstances, such as armed attacks on the nation. He operates through an operational staff, namely the *Comando Operativo di Vertice Interforze* (COI), or the joint operational headquarters, based in Rome. Forces are made available by the chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air force, and by the *Carabinieri Comando Generale*.

Civil defense comprises a vast number of activities, which are linked to all sectors of the socio-economic life of the country. Its most relevant aim is to ensure:

- The continuity of the functioning of the government;
- The survival of the telecommunication system;
- The operation of the national warning and alert system;
- The protection of the civilian population;
- The safeguarding of public health;
- The continuation of public information activities;
- The preservation of the nation's cultural and artistic patrimony.

The various elements of civil defense fall under the primary responsibility of the Minister for the Interior, who coordinates (according to the directives of the Military Political Nucleus) all other institutions through the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee for Civil Defense. Responsible for civil defense throughout the national territory are the prefects, who represent the government at the provincial level. Each of them has an operations room that somehow replicates the central organization. Hence those responsible for civil defense have the difficult task of coordinating the activities that are to be carried out by the various state departments and other non-governmental agencies, developing prevention capabilities, and ensuring that everything is accomplished in good order and subject to the financial constraints established by the government. In other words, the framework of civil defense is the organizational pillar of the country in cases of extraordinary circumstances for all activities except combat.

Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) attacks are considered as actions that have to be dealt with as an emergency, and must be faced by the organization established to manage disaster consequences. The armed forces contribute within the limits of the priorities established by their primary mission: the defense of the nation.

Emergency

The declaration of a state of emergency is a governmental responsibility that has been exercised rather frequently in Italian history, mainly on the occasion of natural disasters. In fact, due to the geological structure of the nation, the intervention and the effort

of military forces as part of the Civil Protection organization have often been required in order to face the consequences of heavy earthquakes and floods, as well as hurricanes and other natural calamities.

Military participation in these relief efforts is established by law whenever the armed forces operate within the structure of the National Service of Civil Protection (PROCIV), but only when the dimension of the disaster is of such a magnitude that it cannot be dealt with by the nation's firemen (organized in fire brigades and in fire mobile units), who are the first institutional asset to be used in emergency situations.

The National Service of Civil Protection is an independent department of the ministries' council that is under the direct authority of the prime minister and head of the government. Once a state of emergency is declared, the Operational Committee of Civil Protection coordinates the intervention. This committee is led by the chief of the Department of Civil Protection; the Ministry of Defense is represented by the Commander of the COI (Joint Operational HQ). A senior prefect is also present on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior.

At the local level, the provincial prefect represents the central government, but the operational instrument is the Civil Protection Operational Center, headed by an official of the regional, provincial, or city Civil Protection Department. Other members are the appointed military commander and the representatives of the firemen's organization, the police forces, the Health Department, and others.

In order to manage an emergency, PROCIV has the authority to issue "ordinances," acts that have the force of law, enabling PROCIV to carry out requisition and expropriation, establish limits to the freedom of movement of the population of a certain area, and possibly to mobilize doctors, drivers, and so on.

PROCIV has in its headquarters an operations room (the *Sala Crisi Italia*), which is open around the clock and receives all alerts, requests for intervention, and available information about any event. The director of the operations room has the power to initiate all immediate measures that are foreseen by the emergency plan that is in place.

As for the role of the armed forces, there are two general cases. When there is immediate danger to human life, local commanders are authorized to intervene on their own initiative, without waiting for formal approval from their superior headquarters (which, of course, they keep informed at all times). Nevertheless, these units must be replaced as soon as the situation allows PROCIV to operate with its own assets. In all other cases, the deployment of military units must follow the normal procedures, which foresee a formal request to the cabinet of the Ministry of Defense. The approval is conditioned by the necessity to maintain the capability to carry out their primary task, and is granted only when civilian resources are not sufficient. In this case, the cost of the military contribution requires a special governmental financial act, or must be reimbursed by the requesting authority. The military intervention, under the guidance of the Department of Civil Protection's chief, is carried out by one of the two operational headquarters commanders (one for the North and one for the South), who share responsibility over the whole of the Italian Peninsula.

Special mention should be made of cases of the intervention of military units in emergency situations resulting from natural disasters abroad. These interventions are

possible on the basis of specific requests or bilateral agreements with other countries, or by a request coming from one of the numerous international organizations established to coordinate international assistance (the United Nations Office for Coordination of Human Affairs, the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center, or the European Union Monitoring Information Center).

As far as terror attacks are concerned, this is a case that has been intensively studied and implemented by the armed forces since after the Second World War. However, during the period of the Cold War, it was dealt with mainly as a national (or internal) threat; in the last fifteen years, however, increasing stress has been put on the threat deriving from international terrorism. It is considered that the highest risk in this respect is linked to the possibilities of CBRN attacks, and to attacks carried out from the air using civilian aircraft, similar to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York and Washington, D.C.

The initial response to terror attacks is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, as far as the security measures to be immediately taken in the area are concerned. In terms of rescue of and assistance to the victims of such an attack, there are a vast number of organizations which will respond according to existing local plans—local hospitals, the Red Cross, voluntary assistance organizations, elements of the state civil protection apparatus—but their coordination is the responsibility of the local prefect and/or the local mayor. In the immediate aftermath of an attack, units of the armed forces will intervene to assist in the rescue operation only if they are in the area. In the longer term, their participation will occur within the framework of the overall measures decided by the governmental authorities.

The response to terror attacks relies almost entirely upon the military only in case of air-terror attacks. For these emergencies, the National Governmental Authority (AGN) is the Ministry for Defense, and the assets of the Italian Air Force are always ready to scramble in order to face the threat posed by detoured civilian aircraft.

Temporary

The provision of temporary support to civil authorities by the military is a relatively common practice within the Italian security system, both as a means of providing direct support to law enforcement, and as a contribution to the security measures for special events.

The armed forces—and particularly the army—has provided temporary support for civil law enforcement agencies since the beginning of the history of the Italian nation-state in 1860, when a large part of the army was deployed to fight rebel formations in the south of Italy which opposed the newly united Italian Kingdom. Nowadays, these interventions are always carried out under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, in support of the state police. The juridical status of the military units deployed in these situations can be different, ranging from the status quo, to active military status, to the awarding of soldiers the full status of “Public Security Agents.” In the first case, all units, down to the lowest level, must be accompanied by police officers in the accomplishment of the assigned missions; in the latter case, soldiers are entitled to directly carry out the usual functions of the police. The duration of these deployments can vary

from a few weeks to several years, and must always be supported by a governmental decision, followed by a specific decree, where the purpose, duration, status of soldiers, and the financial limits of the mission are described and approved.

The military contribution to providing security for special events has become nowadays a commonplace, due to the prevalence of terrorist threats. All the services of the military can be involved in different areas, and often particular military capabilities are required. The air force has to maintain air surveillance over the area of the event and be ready to counter possible aircraft trying to strike the area where the special event is taking place. Fast- and slow-moving targets require different responses, including anti-aircraft batteries, armed helicopters, fighter aircraft, and surface-to-air portable missiles. If the event takes place near the coast—which in Italy, due to its geographical profile, is rather common—Navy and Coast Guard units will also play a role. The army deploys infantry units to form security cordons around the area of the event, and provides “Rapid Response Forces” and Special Forces to ensure the evacuation and special protection of VIPs and distinguished visitors. Military capabilities are also very often required for the establishment of a command and control network, to man operational or situation rooms, or to grant an immediate response to biological or chemical attacks. Engineer units and EOD teams are always present to deal with explosive devices. In addition, these contributions need to be exercised within the framework of a decree or some other governmental act that legalizes the deployment of the military in such events.

Routine

The most traditional mission carried out by one component of the armed forces in support of the Ministry of the Interior is the routine and practically permanent assignment of the *Carabinieri* for the execution of police tasks. The *Carabinieri* are the fourth service of the armed forces, and are a gendarmerie corps. They are established under the authority of the Ministry of Defense, and perform security and military police tasks for the other three services, but in the aggregate these are limited in number. The majority of their units are dedicated to the security of the nation’s territory through about 5000 *Carabinieri* stations spread across the country. Moreover, they have a number of battalions, called Territorial Battalions, which are a sort of general reserve that can be deployed to secure law and order, in anti-riot situations, to sweep areas where searches have to be carried out, or as reinforcements to other security forces when required. Another component of the *Carabinieri* is the Mobile Brigade, which is usually engaged in providing the Italian contribution to the various multinational specialized units deployed on peacekeeping missions overseas. It should be noted that the *Carabinieri* are the only force that is always present in all kind of contingencies, performing a military and a police role simultaneously.

The navy and its coast guard component are in charge of providing security in Italian territorial waters. They operate in international waters or at their limits, in the so-called blue waters. In territorial waters (“brown waters”), maritime security is mainly provided by the *Guardia di Finanza*—a force with military status, but technically part of the Ministry of Finance, that has been established as a maritime border and customs

police unit. Along the long Italian coast, the *Carabinieri* have also developed some control and security missions, although they usually confine themselves to waters very near the shore. Their task has become particularly relevant during the last decade, due to the problem of illegal immigration, which is virtually always accompanied by illicit traffic of a different nature: drugs, tobacco, and weapons. Due to the proximity of the Balkan and North African coasts, Italy is particularly engaged in combating this trend, and it has become a routine activity that constantly involves all the forces that have been mentioned.

Other duties, which are routinely carried out by the navy, either directly or by the coast guard, are:

- Search and rescue at sea, including the entire logistical support structure that this activity requires (coordination, control, and communications, around the clock);
- Navigation security, carrying out regular inspections on all national merchant shipping, and also acting as the state port control authority over foreign ships in transit through Italy's ports;
- Water supply in support of a number of islands;
- Assistance and control of the Italian fishing fleet;
- Maritime policing in territorial waters (performed by the coast guard) and international waters (the navy).

The air force also provides permanent control over Italian national airspace. This is an assignment that is carried out by a special unit, the Airspace Brigade, which is responsible for the management of all radar stations, allowing the air force to monitor the airspace along with the civilian air traffic control organization and elements of the air defense units (which include aviation units and missile units). The Italian air defense, as such, is normally carried out within the framework of NATO, through the CAOC 5, whose commander is double-hatted, being always an Italian general. Within the CAOC 5 structure, there is also a national cell; in the case of a threat that has to be dealt with at the national level, a transfer of authority immediately takes place, and the Italian Air Force's operational headquarters assumes responsibility for the conduct of defense operations.

Historical Precedents

Post-World War II

During the period from 1945 to 1990, the Italian military went through an initial period of reconstruction and reorganization due to the events of the Second World War. Resources were very limited, and the financial constraints that existed imposed the necessity to build an instrument capable of facing a possible conflict more through quantity rather than quality. Quantity in fact was available through the institution of the national service, which provided a large number of young men at a very low cost.

The Italian forces slowly started their renovation when, in 1949, Italy joined NATO, and the Alliance gave a great boost to their effort to improve the level of their

preparation. One good example of this international consideration was the decision of the United Nations, in 1950, to give to the Italian republic the responsibility for the temporary administration of Somalia. The Italian military played a significant role in this enterprise, which had a positive influence upon the morale of the rank and file, who were still frustrated by the events of the recent war. The NATO exercises also played an important role in bringing the Italian armed forces into a cycle of continuous verification of their capabilities, compelling a large number of officers and other ranks to learn English as a vehicle of more modern ways of thinking, modifying the curricula of most of the military schools and procuring the essential equipment to progressively update the navy and the air force, and then the army. From 1963 on, Italian troops regularly took part in the ACE Allied Mobile Force training, with both land and air components. The experiences of these activities were spread out to a large number of other units, bringing up the standard of many of the Italian formations, especially the Mountain Brigades.

During the 1960s Italy had to face an insurgency in the northern region of Alto Adige carried out by local clandestine organizations belonging to the German-speaking minority, who were demanding a higher level of autonomy from Rome. The army was called in to support the police forces, and a number of units were deployed along the border with Austria to prevent the illegal movement of armed groups across the Alps. Units were deployed in the rest of the region to secure railways, electric power stations, to guard national institutions, and to carry out—in direct support of the police—cordons and searches, check points, and other similar activities. The deployment required an average of ten thousand men, under the command of the Fourth Army Corps of Bolzano. After about seven years, the problem reached a political resolution, and the army units in the region went back to their normal duties. During that time, in 1963, a terrible disaster occurred in the province of Belluno, where an enormous landslide collapsed into an artificial lake, the Vajont. A mass of water was pushed over the dam and swept away a number of villages and their inhabitants, causing more than three thousand deaths. For weeks, hundreds of soldiers from the surrounding units worked day and night to try to rescue people and to recover the bodies of those drowned in the flood.

At the end of the 1960s, the so-called Red Brigades, as in other European nations, started to attack national institutions in Italy with terrorist actions, assassinations and kidnappings of politicians, journalists, judges, and police officers, and with bomb attacks against innocent civilians. Again, in a number of circumstances the army was brought in to support the police, to protect installations, railways, airports, ports, telecommunications sites and, in particular cases, to organize checkpoints and to implement other measures in order to allow a strict control of the territory. Some units were also assigned to provide personal security to VIPs. This situation lasted about ten years, until the end of the 1970s. Beyond the challenges posed by these deployments, this was also a difficult period for the military because the Red Brigades tried to influence the internal discipline of the armed forces, infiltrating among the draftees their own elements who carried out propaganda actions and stimulated a subversive attitude among the troops. Fortunately, they did not meet with much of a response, and major

problems were avoided by the strenuous engagement of all the officers who stood against these attempts with great moral courage.

It was in this period (1975–76) that the army went also through a major reorganization. Doctrine, structure, training, and equipment were carefully reviewed and renovated.

Another major commitment for the army came about in 1976, when a tragic earthquake hit the Friuli region in the northeastern part of Italy, claiming more than one thousand victims and the destruction of a huge number of houses. Troops were deployed in support of the local population, providing every kind of assistance. One of the local divisional commanders was appointed Governmental Extraordinary Representative, responsible for the coordination of all civilian and military rescue and assistance organizations. A few years later, in 1980, an earthquake of even greater magnitude occurred in southern Italy, in the Irpinian region. The difficult terrain, the damage caused to the communication network, and the lack of a capable Civil Protection organization in the region put the military on the front lines of the relief effort, and much of the weight of the rescue operation fell on their shoulders.

Aside from these major events, military forces were assigned to intervene in a number of other situations related to local natural disasters, thus giving continuity to the excellent relationship between the armed forces and the rest of the country, and enabling the military to acquire more and more respect from the Italian populace, who appreciated the military's capability to provide an immediate response to their needs with generosity and efficiency.

As far as the institutional task of the armed forces is concerned, their integration within the structure of NATO increased over time, progressively closing the gap that existed earlier between Italy and some other members of the Alliance. By the 1980s, the general standard of efficiency of the Italian military reached acceptable levels. Most of the military effort in this period was aimed at countering the possible threat of the Warsaw Pact against Italy's northeastern border with Yugoslavia and Austria and, by the navy, in the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1981 and 1982, Italian forces took part in an international mission in Lebanon, together with troops from the U.S., the U.K., and France. Italy's troops performed well on this mission and gained general recognition, which was another step in the right direction.

In summary, in the post-war period the Italian military stood ready to intervene in extraordinary circumstances, in particular to face possible aggression on the part of the forces of the Warsaw Pact, an event that never took place. On the other hand, they had to face a series of emergency situations at home caused by natural disasters, and a number of temporary missions in support of civil authorities in a law enforcement role.

The variety of the missions accomplished in those forty years, and the progress made in a number of areas, allowed the Italian armed forces to increase their credibility and to contribute to the enhancement of Italy's relevance on the global stage. What is even more important, the armed services were ready to face the challenges of the post-Cold War strategic situation, and were capable to play a major role under any and all circumstances.

Post-Cold War Period (1991–2001)

In Italy, as in many other Western nations, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened a debate over the possibility of reducing the size of the defense budget in view of the fact that the threat posed by the Soviet Union was gone, hoping to achieve what has become known as the “peace dividend.” But soon everybody realized that, having broken the existing balance established by the confrontation of the two superpowers, the Pandora’s Box of global instability had been opened, and a number of minor conflicts started to take place. Just to mention a few in which Italian troops played a role:

- In 1991, Italy took part in Operation “Provide Comfort” in Iraqi Kurdistan;
- In 1992, one Italian brigade was sent to Mozambique for two years to support the peace process started after a long period of guerrilla warfare;
- Again in 1992, an additional brigade took part in Operation “Ibis” in Somalia, initially within a “coalition of the willing,” and subsequently with the UN mission;
- Soon after this intervention, the Balkans were in flames, and the conflict quickly spiraled out of the control of the UN mission, UNPROFOR. When NATO was asked to take over the mission, Italy deployed troops in Sarajevo from the Garibaldi Brigade, the first brigade to complete the transformation from being made up of draftees to an all-professional unit;
- In 1997, Italy led a multinational coalition in Albania;
- In 1999, a contingent was sent to East Timor, and another one to Kosovo.

This was the non-marginal commitment of Italian forces in overseas missions. However, in this same period, major changes were decided about the structure of the three services, and in particular that of the army. The total strength of the forces was planned to be around 230,000, with 130,000 in the army and 50,000 each in the navy and the air force. In the process, the army lost about 60 percent of its previous manpower, decreasing from about 300,000 men to 130,000.

The second major change was the transformation of the Italian armed forces into a fully professional organization, with a plan in place to suspend the national service (or draft) by the end of 2004. Another relevant change was the recruiting of women without restriction in number or role. In the same period, the Chief of Staff for Defense, through a legal decision, was given full authority over the armed services and acquired full responsibility for the functioning of whatever units were deployed in operations.

Besides these decisions, more changes occurred with reference to the structure of the three services. For instance, the army gave more mobility to its units, improved their equipment, provided a better command and control capability, introduced wheeled armored vehicles, dramatically cut the number of tanks and artillery, enhanced its helicopters’ capabilities, and reviewed its procedures for logistic support. For the navy, an air/helicopter carrier was built, and an air component was acquired; special care was taken for the amphibious component; and the renovation of the fleet was started, modernizing the long-range support ships. The air force made a major effort in

modernizing the air transport brigade, replacing the old C130-H “Hercules” transport aircraft with the “J.” Other changes concerned the acquisition of tankers for in-flight refueling, and assets for battlefield surveillance. At the same time, Italy was also heavily involved in the Eurofighter project.

Apart from what has just been described, which falls in the area of the traditional processes and missions of the military, the 1990s have seen the Italian armed forces deployed on a wide range of temporary missions in support of the police in a law-enforcement role, and on a good number of emergency missions to help the National Civil Protection Service manage disasters caused by natural calamities. It must be underlined that in this decade the National Civil Protection Service has become much better organized; hence the army has in part been disengaged from the leading role that in previous decades it was compelled to assume, due to the fact that no other state organization was capable of managing these events.

The most relevant missions accomplished in support of the police forces in a law-enforcement role in this period began in 1991, when Albanian citizens started to illegally cross the gulf that separates the Italian coast from the Albanian one (a distance of about 150 km). This was a mass exodus that involved up to 20,000 people at one time, causing both a humanitarian and a law-and-order problem of vast scale. A full brigade was put in charge of bringing the situation under control.

In the following years, between 1992 and 1997, the political authorities decided on a number of occasions to use the army to support the police due to the intensification of criminal activities carried out by gangs belonging to organized criminal groups, and in order to enhance the control of Italy’s borders, in order to stop the wave of illegal immigration. To better accomplish these missions, and to give to the military a more proactive role, the government decided to grant the soldiers, through a Parliamentary Act, the status of “Public Security Agents,” which enabled soldiers to stop people and identify them, to search persons and vehicles and, in particular circumstances, even to arrest people. The first deployment took place in Sardinia in the summer of 1992, in order to enforce the presence of the state in areas where the police did not have the capability to properly operate due to rough terrain. At the same time, a similar operation was started in Sicily in order to limit the freedom of action of elements of the local Mafia. In 1995, Italian troops carried out border control operations on the Italian–Slovenian border, and performed coast control functions along the Adriatic Sea near the city of Ancona and more to the south near the city of Brindisi. Subsequently, other anti-crime operations took place in the Neapolitan area and in the region of Calabria, each lasting up to two years. In the first case, the main task was to protect local magistrates and judicial facilities (tribunals, the external perimeter of prisons, judges’ residences) from attacks by criminal organizations that were being investigated. In the second case, the main task was to patrol areas where hostages were detained by criminal organizations.

Most of these activities have been carried out by infantry units, altering military techniques as needed due to the fact that all their activities were carried out among civilians, and in streets and areas where often there were no particular restrictions on the movement of individuals. The employment of the military in a police support role sent

a strong message to the local population, which sometimes was intimidated by members of the local gangs, or, on the contrary, was part of the criminal network itself. But the locals—who had in the past in some cases complained about the lack of any state presence, and about being left alone to face the impunity of the criminal organizations—in general appreciated the increased sense of security.

Post-9/11

After the terrorist attacks of September 2001, and the new awareness of the dangers posed by terrorist organizations to Western countries, the entire national security system in Italy has been reviewed. There is now a general understanding that a terrorist attack could come without warning, at any time, and be of an extremely violent nature. Therefore, two areas of security have been particularly enhanced: the gathering of intelligence and the prevention of attacks. The armed forces have been involved in the latter area, in a variety of ways.

First of all, the concept that terrorist organizations have to be fought not only at a national level, but also, when necessary, at an international level, is a cornerstone of the anti-terrorist security strategy. Italy's participation in Operation "Enduring Freedom," and later in Operation "Iraqi Freedom," is a clear signal of the Italian commitment to this concept.

As far as the military contribution to homeland security in Italy, all the services have new tasks to perform. The army has deployed a contingent of 4000 soldiers to protect more than 150 possible targets from terrorist actions (Operation Domino). Such targets are distributed in different regions, and include areas surrounding airports, ports and railways stations, telecommunications sites, and other specific installations such as major electric power stations, water distribution systems, and similar facilities.

The navy is engaged with its own forces in Operation "Active Endeavor," under the umbrella of NATO, in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, in an effort to control the maritime traffic in the region and to prevent any illegal use of ships to carry out activities linked to a terror organization. The navy is also ready to exercise a more stringent level of control over movements in international waters once these are detected by the intelligence network. The coast guard is also specifically tasked to maintain constant focus on possible clandestine immigration vessels trying to approach the Italian coasts, not only as a matter of respecting the Schengen immigration rules in Europe, but also to enable the early identification of members of terrorist groups.

The air force have received a particularly difficult assignment: interventions against "renegade aircraft." New rules have been established to better define the responsibilities of pilots and the responses to be made in case civilian aircraft should be used to carry out attacks. The existing procedures foresee that, in peacetime, the NATO air defense system is responsible for conducting the identification, interdiction, and eventually for engaging the air asset that is violating the navigation rules and is suspected to be an aggressor. Up to this point it was always assumed that it would have been a military plane that represented a threat, but this is no longer the case. To act against a civilian aircraft with possibly hundreds of innocent passengers on board is a different matter, one involving moral and political aspects. Due to the fact that NATO has de-

cided that such cases are no longer a NATO responsibility, but that they fall under national sovereignty, the Italian government's decision was to delegate this authority to the Ministry of Defense, and special procedures have been activated to enable the minister to face whatever circumstances might arise. This applies mainly to fast-moving aircraft. The case of slow-moving targets has also been considered, but this requires a more articulated response. In order to achieve such an end, "no-fly zones" have been established around sensitive areas that can be defended using armed helicopters, and this system is always applied in case of special events (G-8 meetings, international summits, state visits, international sporting events), and on a case-by-case basis in other situations.

As far as the *Guardia di Finanza* is concerned, they contribute to the general security of the borders, both on land and at sea, with a much higher degree of attention since 9/11. In particular, their troops have been given specific responsibilities to implement the security measures foreseen by two projects which have been supported by the United States: the "Container Security Initiative" and the "Proliferation Security Initiative."

In summary, all branches of the Italian armed forces have received new tasks in order to increase the efficiency of the national counter-terror security system, through the deployment of units, the introduction of new procedures, and an awareness campaign that is constantly carried out at all levels.

Legal Authority for the Deployment of Military Forces in a Homeland Security Role

National Legal Framework

In order to arrive at a clear definition of how military forces are employed for purposes of homeland security in Italy, it is important to note that the first bills promulgated to this end were issued as Royal Decrees as early as 1907 and 1909. They state that the armed forces can be called in to ensure public security if/when the police forces are not available or insufficient. Military units continue to be under command of their respective commanders, but the mission to be carried out remains under the responsibility of the police officers concerned. A request for the deployment of military units to support the police should be forwarded by the provincial prefect according to the established procedures. These laws still form the basis of the present-day participation of military units in operations in support of the police. Through subsequent legislation, the employment of the military was extended to support the magistrates carrying out particular investigations (1941), to provide security during elections at the polling stations (1957), and to the prison police in cases of disorder in penal institutions (1976). In 1978, the parliament approved a complex act concerning the armed forces, covering a number of important aspects, above all their tasks. The first of these tasks, homeland defense, is described as "to contribute to safeguard the national free institutions," which is a wide definition that also includes what is meant by the term "homeland security." In 1981, another law was issued to define the new procedures to be followed in order to ensure public security. Among other points, it includes the confirmation of the

possible requirement to support the police forces with military augmentation, and the setting up of the National Committee for Public Order and Security at the ministerial (of the Interior) and provincial (prefect) level, with the presence of one representative of the armed forces as a member of the committee.

Finally, in 2001, another law relevant to internal security was issued. Three articles of this law (n. 128–26 March 2001) specifically concern the armed forces. These articles confirm that, in specific and exceptional situations, soldiers can be deployed to free police officers from their surveillance and security tasks so as to allow them to dedicate all their efforts to fighting crime. These troops are made available to the provincial prefects involved, according to specific plans, for six months at a time. These plans are initially approved by the National Committee for Public Order and Security, which includes the Chief of Staff for Defense (usually represented by the commander of the Joint Operational Headquarters). The JHQ commander makes sure that the level of forces required is compatible with the other priority tasks of the armed forces, in consultation with the chief of staff of the concerned service. The plans are then forwarded for final approval to the relevant parliamentary commissions.

Scope of Permissible Activities

The general principles established by these laws are supported by more specific regulations issued by the Ministry of Defense specifying, in more detail, the procedures and modalities to be applied in such cases. Military commanders, taking into account the general directives decided at the governmental level, will define the execution plan for the assigned tasks and will elaborate the subsequent orders. Plans and orders will have to be agreed upon by the prefect in charge, and shared with the police commander responsible for the area.

There are two main options for how the military is to be employed. The first one is in a relieving role; the second one is effective integration. The first one, in fact, allows a consistent number of police officers to disengage themselves from static duties and routine patrolling in order to be put to use in more qualified police duties. The second model allows the conduct of combined operations for dynamic actions, where army units provide territorial control over a large area while, inside that area, the police conduct more specific actions and investigation. The army commanders usually try to accomplish their mission while limiting the static activities (target surveillance, guarding) to the bare minimum, opting, whenever possible, for dynamic actions such as patrolling and conducting mobile checkpoints. This concept brings higher morale, good results, and keeps sections and platoons together without breaking the formations' ties. After years of intense cooperation with the police forces, an agreement has been reached in substance with the Ministry of the Interior to assign to the army units the following tasks:

- Surveillance and protection of sensitive targets (tribunals, justice facilities, prisons, magistrates' residencies, persons at particular risk, peculiar installations and so on);
- Establishment of checkpoints and road blocks;

- Maintaining a cordon around urban areas where the police will carry out searches;
- Sweeping of rural areas;
- Patrolling along the rail and highway networks, verifying the integrity of bridges, tunnels, and flyovers. Mobile activities are carried out according to military standards adopted in area interdiction operations and in large-area surveillance. The static activities are also implemented as closely as possible in line with basic military criteria.

Authorizing Authority and Command and Control of Forces

As was described in the previous section, once the request for military reinforcement presented by one or more provincial prefects to the Ministry of the Interior has been processed and approved at the governmental level, the bodies that will exercise command and control functions over the deployed troops are:

- The National Committee for Public Order and Security (NCPOS), under the direction of the Minister of the Interior (to whom all provincial prefects report). The committee includes the Chief of Police (who is at the top of the nationwide police structure) and the Commander of the Joint HQ (who reports to the Chief of Staff for Defense). The NCPOS also includes the commander of the *Carabinieri* (part of the Ministry of Defense), who is subordinate to the Chief of Police and whose troops on the ground always respond to the local head police officer (namely, the *Questore*);
- The Provincial Committee for Public Order and Security, headed by the provincial prefect, which includes the local senior *Questore* as police chief, flanked by the provincial commander of the *Carabinieri*, and by the appointed military commander.

Before reaching any definitive decision about the scope of operations, discussions and negotiations about potential options take place within these bodies. Once their respective positions are clarified and all constituents agree, final orders are issued.

As far as the military chain of command is concerned, the Chief of Staff for Defense is at the top. He can delegate his authority to the Commander of the Joint Operational Headquarters or, in case only one branch of the armed forces is involved, to the chief of staff of that particular service. The next level down in the military chain of command is the army operational commander, followed by the other commanders according to the normal hierarchical sequence (Divisional HQ, Brigade HQ, Regimental HQ, and Battalion HQ). Bottom-up reports go straight from the commander on the ground to the provincial operation room, and in parallel to the military chain of command.

A special chain of command is envisioned in order to best face airborne terrorist attacks. In this case, a direct link would be established between the commander of the

air force and the Minister of Defense, who is the national governmental authority responsible for issuing the order of engagement.

Rules of Engagement

All units deployed in support of police forces for purposes of homeland security are given specific rules of engagement to be followed in case the use of force is required. Weapons can generally be used only for self-defense, and proportionality must be observed in relation to the severity and nature of the offense. The use of weapons is allowed:

- By individual initiative, to face an attack that endangers a soldier's own life or the lives of others;
- On order, given by the commander of the unit, when it is necessary to counter threats against the unit or to safeguard the lives of others.

Rules of engagement are also issued to define the procedures to stop unauthorized people from approaching protected targets, and to be followed in cases of resistance to inspections or searches. Rules of engagement are usually issued in catalogues, and are graduated according to the situation. The closer the situation is to normal, the stricter the rules of engagement.

Navy units are given specific rules of engagement to be followed in order to stop suspected vessels, board them, and deal with possible clandestine materials or illegal immigrants on board. To face the case of a civilian aircraft suspected to have been diverted to execute a terror attack, specific rules are also set by the commander of the air force and approved by the Minister of Defense.

While NATO rules of engagement are usually followed during peacekeeping operations, they are adopted without relevant changes, and are substantially the same for all missions. In case of interventions that are being made for homeland security purposes, the rules of engagement must be agreed upon by the Ministry of the Interior, and must reflect those being used by the police.

Types and Capabilities of Available Forces

Active Military Forces

The Italian military is made up of four services: the army, the navy, the air force, and the *Carabinieri*. All forces are built on a base of professional soldiers, since national conscription came to a halt at the end of 2004.

The armed forces are under the authority of the Chief of Staff for Defense, who exercises his authority through the joint operational headquarters. This headquarters, as was mentioned above, is also responsible for exercising the necessary command and control capability over all forces deployed nationally for homeland security-related missions, and overseas for all peacekeeping and other stabilization missions.

The army, navy, and air force are all organized along the traditional lines of all other Western military forces. The *Carabinieri* reflect in their structure the basic model

of the army, but with the necessary adjustments to carry out their gendarmerie duties nation wide.

The army is 120,000 soldiers strong. Its operational structure is based upon one operational command (CONFOTER), located in Verona, which is responsible for the preparation of subordinate commands and units. The subordinate commands are:

- Command, Control, Information Command;
- Air Defense Artillery Command;
- Army Aviation Command;
- Artillery Brigade;
- Engineers Brigade;
- Logistic Brigade.

There are three headquarters at the divisional level:

- First Defense Force Command, with three brigades (one armored, one mechanized, one paratrooper);
- Second Defense Force Command, with five brigades (one armored, four mechanized);
- Alpine Troop command, with two mountain brigades.

From these forces the army draws the necessary units in case it is required to contribute to any of the possible scenarios foreseen for matters of homeland security or to the National Civil Protection Service in cases of natural disasters. All regiments are trained to accomplish infantry-type missions, even the artillery and the armored units. This allows the army to count on having a sufficient number of units to carry out most of the activities that can be foreseen in support of the police units. From the other units—besides ensuring direct support to the army's own infantry units—the army can offer communications, logistic, air transportation, ground surveillance, engineering support, and medical assistance. Special capabilities, such as EODs and CBRN abatement, can also be made available.

The navy is about 40,000 sailors strong, including the coast guard. Its operational structure is based upon the Naval Fleet Command, located near Rome, which is responsible for operational preparation and support and, in some cases, has direct command of the subordinate commands and units. They are usually organized for deployment into task forces. The subordinate commands in the navy are:

- COMFORSUB, for submarines;
- COMFORSBAR, for amphibious forces;
- COMFORAER, for navy aviation;
- COMFORDRAG, for the minesweeper fleet;
- COMFORPAT, for patrol boats;
- COMFORAL, for the deep-sea fleet.

The coast guard has functional lines of subordination to the Ministry of Transport, to the Ministry for the Environment, to the Ministry of Agriculture (this ministry is also responsible for fisheries), and to the Ministry of the Interior, because they also exercise maritime police duties. Specifically, they have full police authority in all ports and on all coasts, together with the other police forces. Coordination is sometimes difficult, but conflicts are avoided through the use of common operational rooms.

From all these forces are drawn the necessary units that are deployed when missions related to homeland security are to be carried out and, in cases of natural disasters, to support the National Civil Protection Service.

The air force consists of about 45,000 pilots and support personnel. The operational structure is based on the Air Fleet Command, located in Rome, which is responsible for operational preparation and support, and in some cases has direct command of the subordinate commands and units, which are normally organized for deployment into task forces. It should be noted that the chief of staff of the air force is the national commander of the air defense system, reporting in this particular role directly to the Minister of Defense. The subordinate air force commands are:

- Air Operations Command, co-located with the Fifth NATO CAOC in Poggio Renatico;
- Fighter Division “Aquila,” which includes five interceptor groups (flying Eurofighters, F-16s, and Tornados);
- Fighter Division “Drago,” which includes five attack, interceptor, and reconnaissance units (flying Tornado IDS, Tornado ECR/SEAD, AMX, MB.339);
- The First Air Brigade, based on surface-to-air missiles for the air defense system;
- The Ninth Air Brigade “Leone,” which includes all SAR units;
- The Forty-sixth Transport Air Brigade, based on three transport groups, two of C130-Js, and one with G-222s.

In addition, helicopters are widely distributed in most units. These units contribute the needed air assets in cases of missions related to homeland security or natural disasters.

Paramilitary Police Forces

Carabinieri

As was mentioned in the previous section, the fourth military service within the Ministry of Defense is the *Carabinieri*. They are fully recognized as an independent service, and possess the full status of a police force as well as that of a military force. They report to the Chief of Staff for Defense regarding their military duties, and to the Ministry of the Interior in relation to their tasks in the areas of policing, public order, and public security. They also provide special units to the Ministry of Health, the Ministry for the Environment, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry for Social Policies, the Ministry for Agriculture, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to carry out compulsory regulatory activities related to the application of their ordinances.

The *Carabinieri's* primary military duties are:

- Homeland defense and homeland security, and safeguarding the nation's free institutions, the same as all the other armed forces;
- Military police and security tasks for all the other armed services;
- Judicial military police tasks for the military justice system;
- Providing security for Italian embassies and military attachés' offices.

Their police duties are all those that are foreseen for the state police.

The total strength of the *Carabinieri* is about 120,000. Their organization partially reflects the structure of the army (same ranks, same disciplinary code, same denomination of units, and also a similar command structure). The operational structure is adapted to the accomplishment of their distinctive tasks, having a territorial organization that covers the entire territory of the nation through the capillary presence of their 5000 stations (*Carabinieri* stations are located everywhere, in rural areas and small villages as well as in all cities). They also have a mobile component of about twenty territorial battalions distributed in all regions, which serve as a strategic reserve. In addition, the *Carabinieri* also have a mobile brigade that includes one parachute regiment, two infantry-like battalions, and a special forces unit. This brigade provides the Italian component for the MSUs (Military Specialized Units) deployed in peacekeeping missions, and can also be assigned to provide security for special events and support to law enforcement missions. The special forces component is trained to carry out SWAT tasks, to protect special targets, to free hostages, and to intervene in cases of aircraft hijacking, ships, and so on.

In case of the implementation of specific homeland security measures, the territorial battalions and the mobile brigade are the first line of reinforcement in manpower and capabilities that may possibly fill gaps that the state police forces are not able to fill. In cases of emergencies due to natural disasters, the 5000 *Carabinieri* stations distributed throughout the nation are part of the warning and alert system, and provide an immediate response within their limited capabilities until the national civil protection organizations take over, and other forces begin to carry out assistance and rescue operations. Again, the territorial battalions and the mobile brigade are also immediately available to the National Civil Protection Service, if required.

Guardia di Finanza

The *Guardia di Finanza* is a militarized corps, but they report directly to the Minister of Finance. They possess the fully recognized status of a police force and of the customs police, which they exercise in four areas: financial and tax, customs, judicial, and security.

The last area is of particular relevance to homeland security, because the *Guardia di Finanza* have the responsibility to guard the external borders of the country, to contribute to maintaining public order, and to carry out law enforcement activities (together with the state police and the *Carabinieri*), and to counter terrorism and clandestine immigration. After the introduction of the Schengen Accords, according to which

citizens enjoy freedom of movement within the European Union, the *Guardia's* attention was partially shifted from the traditional tasks of securing the nation's borders (all Italy's neighbors belong to the EU) to securing Italy's maritime borders.

The total strength of the *Guardia di Finanza* is about 80,000 men. The commander of the *Guardia di Finanza* is always a three-star army general. Their organization partially reflects the organization of the army (same ranks, same disciplinary code, same denomination of units, and also a similar command structure). Their operational structure is adapted to the accomplishment of their tasks, with interregional and regional headquarters, and a headquarters for special units, which is also responsible for managing the air and maritime components. This last element is particularly significant, consisting of 6 patrol boats, 84 coastal vessels, 74 speed boats, 115 very high-speed boats, and 194 minor boats that operate under the auspices of the navy. The *Guardia di Finanza* has also a large canine unit, with more than 350 teams capable of searching for drugs and explosives.

They contribute to homeland security according to the capabilities described above, and they are particularly concerned with those measures that have been decided on at the international level to combat terrorism, which require inspections of all freight entering the country across both land and maritime borders, and on all ships entering Italian ports or crossing territorial waters. They also contribute to assistance and rescue efforts in cases of emergencies due to natural disasters.

National Response Plans and Programs

During the Cold War, emphasis was placed on those response plans concerning a full-scale war situation, where all resources needed to be coordinated in order to provide maximum support to the armed forces. In more recent years, on the other hand, international terrorism has emerged as the main threat to the states of Western Europe, a threat that falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of the Interior is then responsible for facing all possible domestic contingencies, with the support of the Ministry of Defense and the other ministries, each with its own particular capabilities and responsibilities. The overall coordination is always in the hands of the government, within the Ministers' Council, which can activate the Political Military Nucleus mentioned at the beginning of this essay if the circumstances are considered "extraordinary." In an "emergency" or "temporary" situation, the responsibility remains at the level of the Ministry of the Interior, both in terms of coordination and the general planning for such circumstances. There are three areas where specific planning is carried out, with different forms of involvement of the military:

- The first concerns homeland security as such. The Ministry of the Interior, with the cooperation of all the other ministries, has compiled a list of sensitive targets that could be subject to terrorist attack. The list is the basis for the deployment of the military in support of the police forces and *Carabinieri* units on protection missions. The list is regularly updated at the provincial level, under the supervision of the local prefect; then a national list is elaborated;

- The second area concerns cases of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attacks;
- The third area is planning for cases of natural disasters. For such cases, a general plan exists, which is the responsibility of the National Service for Civil Protection. Within this plan, the military have ensured different levels of possible support according to the gravity of the situation. To this end, they have elaborated some basic planning outlines, which include the subdivision of the national territory into areas of responsibility under the various operational commanders, the designation of the commanders of every area of responsibility, and the identification of the necessary forces for the first phase of the emergency response (recognition of the limits of the disaster area, identification of the level of damage, initial assistance to the population concerned). For the second phase of the emergency, which involves a more structured intervention, the elaborated planning lines provide security (prevention of looting, cordons, traffic control, guarding of institutional sites), logistic support (transportation, setting up of tent camps and field kitchens, distribution of clothing and food), and medical assistance (field hospitals, distribution of medicines, medical evacuation, prevention of diseases). There are also two specific plans concerning two areas in which disasters could be expected. The first one is an evacuation plan for the population living around the Vesuvius volcano, which seismologists believe could erupt in the near future, with serious consequences in the area. The other plan concerns the Messina Strait, which is an area where earthquakes or the Etna volcano could cause a major disaster.

Protection of Critical Infrastructure

As mentioned in the previous section, in cases of a terrorist threat, the military plays a specific role providing support to police forces for the protection of critical infrastructure elements that have been identified in the list of sensitive targets. The list includes all kinds of possible targets, such as agriculture and food systems, water networks, energy grids, telecommunication sites, information technology systems, banking and finance networks, and chemical and hazardous materials industries. Other institutional sites that are included are governmental sites, prefectures, embassies and consulates, and political party offices.

This protection is normally carried out by army units, and is based on mobile patrolling and permanent guards. The army general staff has recently issued a new publication with detailed instructions on how to carry out this security task. This manual indicates:

- The general elements of the juridical norms to be observed in the execution of this mission. In most cases, the soldiers deployed are granted the special status of police agents, which allows them to carry out basic police activities, like stopping, identifying, and searching persons and cars;

- The procedures to be applied at the company (or equivalent) level for the (material) execution of the mission;
- Other instructions detail the level of force protection to be acquired for the security of the personnel carrying out the mission.

Special attention is given to the rules of engagement, due to the fact that these activities are performed in the domestic, friendly civilian environment. Military personnel of all levels have been trained to balance requisite firmness with the need not to provoke resentments among civilians, and to stimulate consensus and participation. In more backward and underdeveloped areas of the country, the presence of young soldiers—well trained, disciplined, efficient, smart and, most important, devoted to their country—has been a welcome surprise for a number of citizens, with a positive effect on the success of the mission. Surveys that are regularly carried out to test the reaction of local and national public opinion have normally shown that these activities are well received by the absolute majority of the population.

These operations to secure Italy's domestic territory, when they are carried out according to military techniques, also represent an exceptional form of deployment for military units, which are basically trained to accomplish missions that are substantially different in nature. The army did not foresee to form any specialized unit in the area of such missions, although the frequency of these engagements, the large requirement of troops, and the need to rotate the soldiers have raised the decision to train artillery, engineer, armored, and logistic units as light infantry units as well. The light infantry training for these units has been limited to weapons handling, area interdiction techniques, setting up of roadblocks, protection of sensitive targets, and handling of suspected individuals. Furthermore, each unit that has been identified for deployment on such missions undergoes a period of specific training before deployment. In addition, in the area of equipment, new acquisitions have been made, such as light body armor, shields, combat batons, material for roadblocks, special helmets, etc. The long experience gained in accomplishing this task has been entirely positive for army units, and it has been found that, with an appropriate rotation of personnel, it does not negatively impact on other priority missions.

Border and Transportation Security

Border Security Support

As has already been mentioned, the Italian Army has been assigned on a number of occasions to contribute to border security. This has always happened on a temporary basis, and under particular circumstances, since border security is the primary task of the *Guardia di Finanza*. Only when clandestine immigration requires the intensification of vigilance over certain segments of the nation's borders will the Army—stronger in manpower than any other force—be called in, covering the critical areas around the clock. Due to their specific preparation, the army units have been very successful, and have in fact become so good at such missions that it has always been difficult to disengage. The activity is carried out following the principles described above. Soldiers are

either granted the status of “public security agents,” which allows them to execute police essential duties, or each patrol or section includes one or two *Carabinieri* or police officers. The modalities can vary, but they are usually based upon techniques adopted by military forces engaged in battlefield interdiction or territorial control.

Air and Maritime Security

Air security is ensured by the air forces according to the criteria described in previous sections, both as part of the routine air defense system and in the exceptional case of a terrorist threat. The other military services can contribute on occasional basis with assets that are present in certain areas but that are not included in the security organization itself. The maritime borders, which are under the responsibility of the *Guardia di Finanza* and the coast guard, do not normally require much support from the military proper, but the navy has also sometimes been asked to contribute, eventually placing one or more light ships in critical areas.

Interdiction of Illegal Immigrants and Materials

The case of illegal immigrant and material interdiction falls under the scheme for the prevention of clandestine immigration. However, this activity is mainly carried out in airports and seaports, and is conducted by the *Guardia di Finanza* and by the state police forces. In particular, the *Guardia di Finanza* is engaged in the two projects mentioned above that are sponsored by the U.S. government. The first one is the “Container Security Initiative,” which is targeted at preventing the traffic in materials usable for terrorist actions or to build weapons of mass destruction. It implies the intensification of controls over freight moving between ports of the European Union and the United States. In Italy, such measures already cover the ports of Genoa, La Spezia, Gioia Tauro, Livorno, and soon also Naples. A similar project is the “Proliferation Security Initiative,” aimed at interdicting the transfer—by air or sea—of weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and related technologies.

Highway Security

Only a special department of the state police, the *Polizia Stradale*, usually carries out the task of policing Italy’s major roadways. It regularly patrols all highways by car and motorbike, as well as monitoring them by helicopter. When the temporary reinforcement of security measures is required, then the military can be assigned—following the established procedures—to contribute to the security of the more critical installations, such as bridges, tunnels, and flyovers. This job can be accomplished either through permanent guards or by patrolling. They will report to both the police operations room and their normal chain of command.

Rail Security

In most of the described cases of the deployment of military forces in support of the Ministry of the Interior for law enforcement purposes, the security of railways and rail stations is included. Differing from the case of highways, the Rail Police carries out its duty only on board of trains and convoys and in the main railway stations. The military

reinforcement is then asked to provide security along the lines and to the main installations, such as bridges, tunnels, and power stations. As far as rail stations are concerned, the military can augment the security provided there through patrols and inspections inside and around the facilities.

Defense and Response to Catastrophic Threats

The primary responsibility to respond to a catastrophic threat falls on the National Civil Protection Service, even if there is some overlapping of responsibility with the Ministry of the Interior. The Civil Protection Service is also responsible for coordinating the appropriate response to major attacks, including CBRN attacks. The planning for such emergencies, along with responsibility for consequence management, is carried out by a special operational group that is part of the Civil Protection Service. The military is not initially involved. All the activities set up to face the emergency are carried out by fire brigades and the police. The warning of the attack will normally come through the police or *Carabinieri* operations rooms. The first step is to precisely identify the concerned area. This is a task assigned to special fire brigade units. They are present at the provincial level, and carry out the initial reconnaissance of the area, using special equipment, including protective clothing, mobile laboratories, and decontamination kits. A security cordon manned by police officers closes off the area. Outside the area, decontamination centers are organized, and an evacuation plan dealing with the extraction of the inhabitants from the affected area is immediately implemented. The military does not play a particular role, but within the framework of their participation in activities carried out by the National Civil Protection Service, they can be asked to provide support with their CBRN battalions and their medical and logistic units. If the emergency also requires the military to contribute to the law enforcement function, their intervention will be requested following established procedures.

Civil Support

The military can provide other forms of support to the civil government, in a variety of domestic contingencies. This includes the activities that would be foreseen in cases of:

- Military assistance to the civil authority, such as disaster relief, fire fighting, and essential services;
- Military support to law enforcement, such as training support, intelligence, EOD, and drug interdiction;
- Military assistance in civil disturbances, including riots and insurrections;
- Support for providing security for national special security events (NSSE), including elections, conventions, athletic events, etc.

In the above-described cases, the military would provide support according to the procedures approved by the national regulations. It is of interest to note that no exclusions of the military from any possible areas of intervention for civil support are stated in principle.

Conclusion

In all democratic countries, the responsibility for homeland security is a function carried out by civil authorities. Ensuring law and order is a responsibility carried out by police forces, which are expressly dedicated to the accomplishment of this delicate function, one which requires particular instruments, special training, and adequate procedures.

The same applies in cases of natural disasters or consequence management. When such events occur in Italy, the National Civil Protection Service takes responsibility.

In extraordinary situations, in emergency cases, and other unexpected events, on the other hand, the armed forces can be asked to provide support to the civil authorities, and their military capabilities can be easily exploited to fill gaps in a very wide range of activities in support of those civilian organizations which are primarily responsible for accomplishing their institutional tasks in those areas. Nevertheless, the contribution of the armed forces must always be envisioned as a temporary one.

In Italy, the armed forces have a long tradition of cooperation with civil institutions, and the existing laws are well established in order to allow a most productive interaction between all the available forces, above all the military. Their capability to contribute to the solution of problems linked to extraordinary or emergency cases is well proven, and will continue to be even more valuable in the foreseeable future.