Communication and the Military

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International Public Opinion:

“The Second World Superpower”
Italy 1945-1989

The critical heritage of II World War

The Fascist regime threw the country into an unjust and unsuccessful war
Italian Public Opinion (P.O) vs Armed Forces (A.F.) (1945-1989)

WWII: a (difficult) historical heritage

P.O. = not hostile = indifferent

A.F. in Italy= “the invisible institution”
Armed Forces/Public Opinion
Italy 1945-1991
A vicious circle:

Invisible A.F. vs an indifferent P.O.

Ritualism

• rite is important (for insiders)

Silence

a non-policy: “One cannot not to communicate”

Watzlawick et al., 1971

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From an attitude of closure to openness

2 sets of factors:

I Geostrategical factors

II Social factors
I. Geostrategical Factors

1989 Cold war: a blocked scenario

1989 Multipolar world: a dynamic scenario

= More potential for a Middle Power
Peacekeeping Operations/
Peace Support Operations

Assets:

* Multilateral frame (U.N., NATO, E.U)
* Soft power prevailing
* Cultural resources: impartiality, empathy, etc.
II Social Factors

Legitimacy (static, a status) = Institutions are legitimated on account of what they are

Legitimation (dynamic, a process) = Institutions are legitimated on account of what they do
Old Approach

A general: “Why are you talking of legitimacy? The legitimacy of A.F. is written in the Constitution!”

New Approach

A top journalist about Italian A.F. in PK operations:

“It was like to see a trailer truck parked in the yard for 50 years and suddenly to see it laden running in the motor way”
Armed Forces and Public Opinion in Italy after 1989: a remarkable improvement

• A different international context

• A more pragmatic P.O.
  From ideological standpoints to performance evaluations.
  It is not important what you are (the institution is).
  It is important what you do (the institution does)
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<th>Politicians: the Ends</th>
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<td>The Military: the Means</td>
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+ accepted
- not accepted
The Military and the Media: a complex relationship

A British general during WWI:

“The Press? The pain of the Armies in modern times”
Vietnam 1968 → Communication failure

Mass Media in “News Management”
Gulf War 1991 (journalists pool)

Iraq war 2003 → N.M. (“embedded journalists”)
Media attention to the event, communication emergency and institutional communication

- high attention
  - external pression
  - variation
  - event
  - routine

- low attention
  - Institutional castling

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# Communication in the Military

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Armistice 1943/09/08: a recent debate

President of Italian Repubblic Azeglio Ciampi:
“A Nation reborn through armed resistance to the Nazis”

Journalist Galli della Loggia:
“death of the Nation (State)”
Which of this position is the right one?

Both of them

At a *micro* level

At a *macro* level