

## *The Chief of Defence Strategic Concept*

We are at a point of no return with regards to the challenges of the future. They cannot be evaded, except at the price of abdicating our primary interests and the very values of freedom and democracy in which Italy and Italian Defence recognise themselves. These challenges require us to engage in close and constructive dialogue at all levels, both nationally and with allied and friendly countries. The Italian foreign policy and the values on which it is based make the Armed Forces an important instrument to guarantee peace and international stability, to safeguard democratic values, civil society and the dignity of the human person. The commitment of the Italian Armed Forces is always viewed with favour and appreciation because our history precedes us and we are met with confidence and friendship.

The determination to support the Armed Forces and the need to provide them with adequate resources and attention must hopefully become a stable and entrenched element in national public opinion. Indeed, only long-term planning and commitment will enable us to achieve the technological deterrence necessary to deter aggression and armed conflict, to protect our interests and safeguard future generations.

We are the protagonists of a historical phase that is just beginning and that will demand unreserved commitment of dedication from us, as well as planning and courage. We will have to evolve rapidly towards a fully joint model of Armed Forces that is deployable simultaneously in the classical, cyber, and space domains, or in the vast cognitive environment.

Defence will be fully up to the challenges of the future and will work successfully to stand close to the Nation, safeguard its interests and protect its citizens. Indeed, the citizens are the true lodestar of the commitment of the women and men of the Armed Forces.



ITALIAN DEFENCE GENERAL STAFF

Texts authored by:  
Office of the Chief of Defence

Graphic project:  
Public Information and Communication Division  
Communication branch

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## THE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STRATEGIC CONCEPT

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*The Armed Forces are projected into a historical phase marked by phenomena of great political and strategic significance, which have radically changed our way of life and our perception of the future. There is therefore an urgent need for a continuous adjustment of the military instrument to face the direct threat to collective security and to ensure operational effectiveness in the service of Italy.*

*Among the future challenges is the evolution towards a new 'deterrence paradigm'. This paradigm is, in fact, increasingly connected with 'technological development', including through the expansion of deterrence tools. Deterrence cannot disregard a state-of-the-art military instrument that interprets a joint and multi-domain operational model and is a full player in the ongoing revolution in military technology.*

*The protection of international stability and peace and the safeguarding of human rights and dignity are a primary aspect of our strategic and military policy and part of the core tasks of the Armed Forces. At the same time, they are one of the cornerstones of Italy's action on the international stage, which is realised through missions abroad, i.e. the operational translation of the heritage of values that inspire the Armed Forces.*

*Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone*



# 1 The International Scenario and the Armed Forces

The security of Italy and the international community represents a challenge that is evolving rapidly and, in parallel, has become much more complex.

The current geopolitical scenario is characterised by complex dynamics of strategic competition accelerated by the crisis in Ukraine. It places the so-called Wider Mediterranean in a position of renewed centrality and relevance. This space is of primary strategic interest for Italy, and within it historically rooted criticalities intersect with hybrid threats, conflicts of varying intensity and multi-domain confrontations within the framework of invasive and destabilising communication strategies.

In the face of an increasingly competitive and complex world, strengthening the military component of national power is an important priority. This is a need that is also widely shared with the European Union and Atlantic Alliance partners.



Defence aims at a fully joint model, which is integrated with other state agencies, with our European and Atlantic Alliance partners, and which is able to develop effective and well-structured synergies with national industry and with the world of research and culture.

# 2 Alliances and Challenges

Within the framework of Alliances, the United Nations, NATO and the European Union are the bearers of our values and political references for the protection of security and economic and social development.

Our Country recognises the United Nations as the inescapable and shared instrument for legitimising and safeguarding peace and stability; NATO as the Alliance of reference for defence and deterrence. In this context - in line with the developments of the Ukrainian crisis and the conclusions of the Madrid Summit - the national strategy includes a marked commitment on the Eastern flank and a commitment to Cooperative Security and Crisis Management requirements; within the European Union, the need for a growing integration of resources and capabilities, to strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy and to implement the Strategic Compass.

The Atlantic and European dimensions represent the cornerstones of our international positioning. In parallel, the Wider Mediterranean is the primary area where Italy's interests are projected and must be protected to safeguard national security. Looking ahead, the constant evolution of power relations in the Indo-Pacific region will influence the area of priority national interest, likely leading to the emergence of potential needs for intervention and opportunities to be exploited.

# 3 The Armed Forces in the International Context

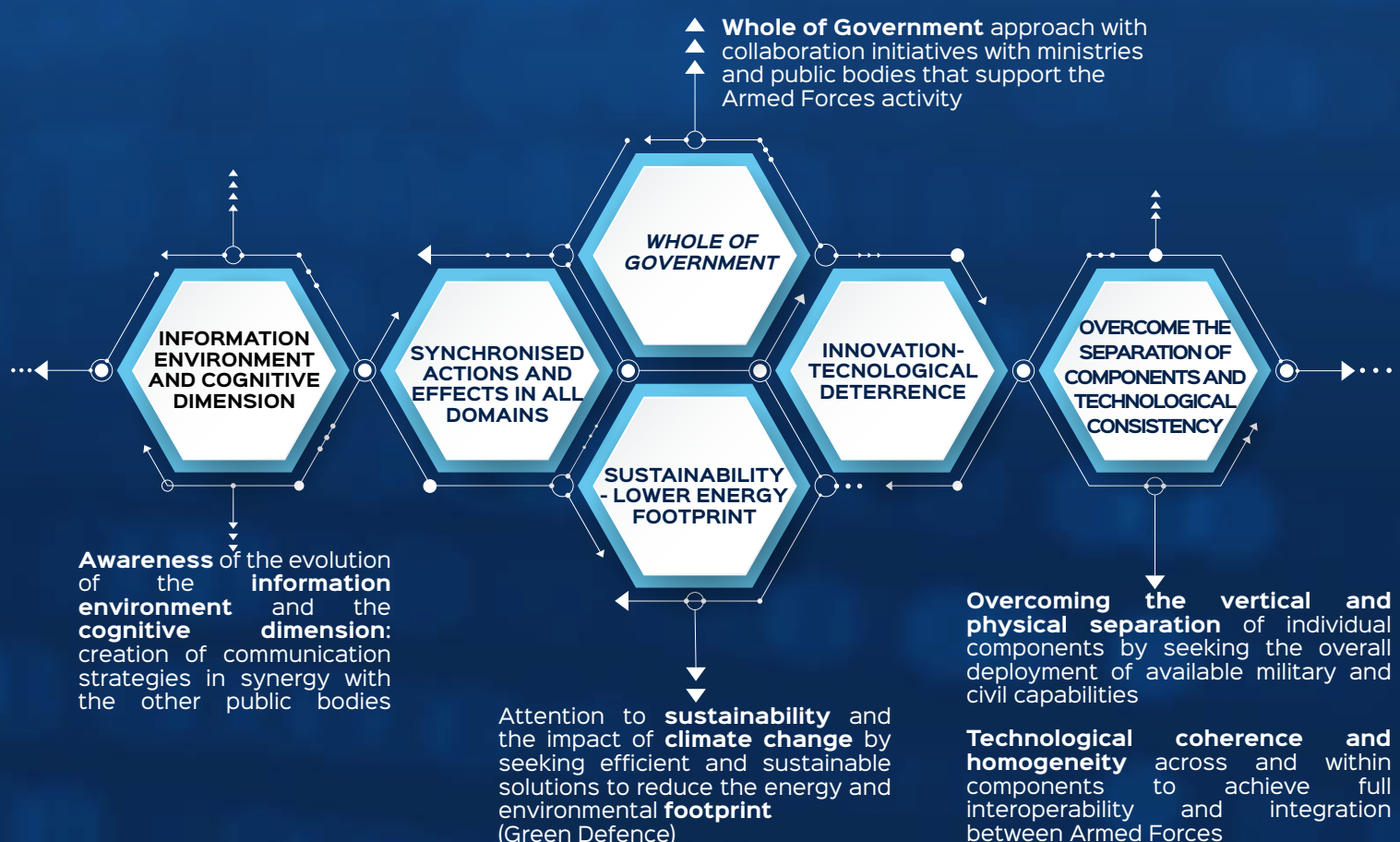
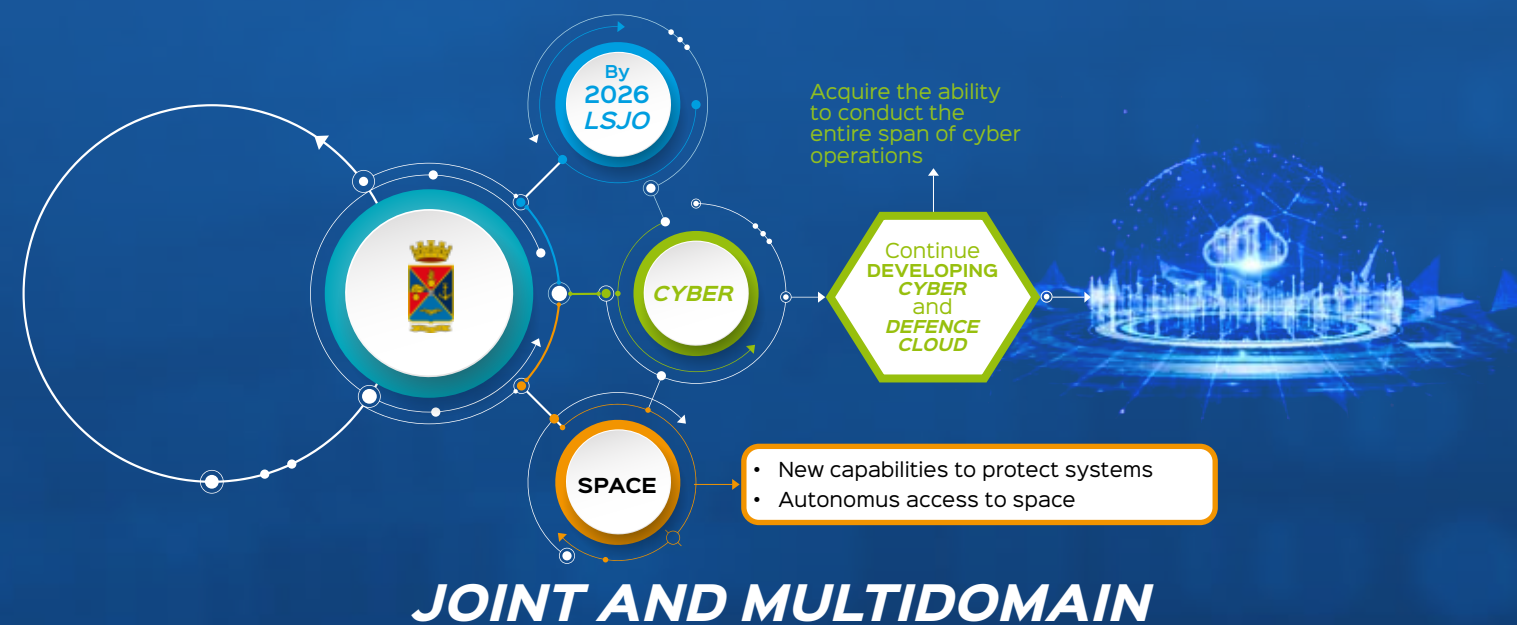
The Armed Forces will continue to be engaged at the nerve centres of the political-strategic space. This space remains crucial for global stability, and is where the main national interests to be pursued and defended lie. The processes underway call for increasing and pragmatic participation to combine - by involving the entire Country system - realism and the ability to create operational and institutional relationships that foster lasting collaboration and dialogue and facilitate the management of existing tensions.

This approach is based on the concept of interoperability and the ability to project hard power and soft power to increase our internationally recognised 'capital of credibility'. Such projection also opens up new spaces for manoeuvre and secures the perimeter of national interests, from the Arctic region and the Baltic southwards through the Alliance's Eastern Flank, from the Persian Gulf westwards through the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Sahel to the Gulf of Guinea. Looking ahead, bilateral and multilateral cooperation will have to be enhanced to promote shared visions on missions and operations.

In parallel, Defence will have to stimulate an urgent and in-depth reflection on the mechanisms for deploying and financing operations abroad (Law 145/2016). Similarly, it will have to pay more attention to inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaborations with a marked Whole-of-Government approach; adapt Defence capability building procedures in favour of partner countries; assess the sustainability of Homeland Security Operations; and finally, set up joint logistics hubs in the Wider Mediterranean to support Italian action at the regional level.

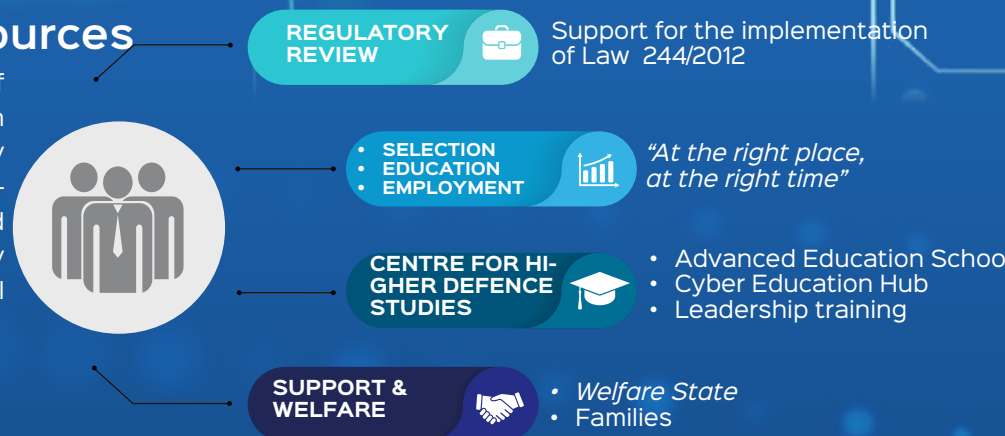
# 4 The Military Instrument

The development of the military instrument rests upon international commitments within the political and military Alliances to which Italy belongs. Within that framework, existing initiatives must be enhanced to pursue a more substantial national strategic autonomy. By 2026, Defence will have to consolidate its capabilities to conduct joint operations and to build an intervention force with combat and deployment capabilities in all domains, on a regional scale (Limited Small Joint Operation, LSJO), either autonomously or integrated into a multinational force. Thanks to dedicated forces and while maintaining full interoperability within international organisations, Defence will develop its own vision to operate effectively in the new dimensions of strategic confrontation as well as to achieve and maintain concrete levels of readiness and combat capability.



# 5 Human Resources

The availability of adequate human resources, both military and civilian, is the first prerequisite for the Armed Forces to successfully perform their institutional tasks.



# 6 Relationships with the Industry

A Country's defence potential is proportional to the level of technology and production expressed by its industrial system. The Armed Forces intend to work in synergy with industry to successfully meet the challenges of modernity.



# 7 Infrastructures

The military's effective capacity for action is related to the availability of an infrastructure asset in line with the modern needs and challenges the very military deals with.



# 8 Financial Sustainability

The Armed Forces need stable and secure financial resources. In this regard, the establishment of the Defence Multi-Annual Investment Fund to revitalise the modernisation and renewal process of the military instrument through Joint General Planning - i.e. the capability and financial planning tool - was of the utmost importance. With respect to 'urgent procurement', regulatory adjustments and the simplification of criteria for the use of accounting and contractual exceptions should be envisaged.

