

*By Cristiana Era (Stavanger - Norway)*



Italy is a weird nation: we have many centers of excellence that keep the country going, but still most of them are basically unknown to the large Italian public. And so is their top level, high professional performance in whatever field they operate. This is the case for the Nato Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy (NRDC-ITA), one of the nine Nato rapid reaction forces distributed throughout the Alliance boundaries. Based in Solbiate Olona, in the Varese hinterland, the NRDC – ITA Command is currently experiencing a transition from a land component to a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTFHQ), according to the Nato defense restructuring that requires an increase of responsibility by the HQs at operational level, in order to address the contemporary challenges of high intensity, asymmetric and hybrid warfare. These sound like technical requirements, but they will make a difference when Nato forces will be deployed again for both article 5 and non-article 5 missions. The NRDC-ITA Command, under the leadership of Lt. General Riccardo Marchiò, has successfully completed Exercise Trident Jaguar 2015, the final stage that marks the passage to a joint command in which all the defense components – air, land and sea – are present. Trident Jaguar 2015, a computer assisted exercise, took place at the Joint Warfare Center in Stavanger, Norway, from April 15 to April 28, 2015. Italy is the second country to obtain the Nato certification, the so-called Full Operational Capability: Spain was the first last year to be engaged in a Trident Jaguar training. Still, Italy can proudly show off many new features that are increasing efficiency, efficacy and adaptability to dynamic, fast-changing scenarios. Just to mention a few: the dual tactic-operational role, which is the core of an integrated system; the involvement of civil analysts (on economic, political and social issues) next to the military ones; the so-called “influence” pillar that combines military and non

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military elements in a crisis response operations where kinetic actions interact with non kinetic aspects and with non-military actors (GOs, NGOs, IOs) who are increasingly impacting on the course of the events.

NRDC-ITA is also the first to have understood the importance of setting up a new concept of Security Assistance Force (SFA), the core of Nato missions. Of course, it can count on an extensive experience drawn from three deployments in Afghanistan (2006, 2009, and 2013), which somehow supersedes the lack of a specific doctrine. By relying on general Nato and national guidelines, and on theater of operations' outcomes, NRDC-ITA has shaped SFA activities in a well structured system that in addition to training and assistance provides advising from tactical units up to a Ministry of Defense representatives. Advising implies a follow up of all SFA activities, the identification of possible gaps, a problem-solving approach and eventually influencing behavioral attitudes and mindset.

To this respect, Trident Jaguar 2015, which is coming to an end in a couple of days, is a success story. NRDC-ITA has been praised by the Joint Warfare Command, Major General Wolski, and by other foreign top military officers during the Distinguished Visitors Day. It would have been nice to see someone from an Italian defense joint command as well, it would have shown that the Italian Defense is aware, like their foreign counterparts, that there are military professional competences that make us proud to be Italian.