

## The Italian Carabinieri Corps Abroad: Combat and Crowd Control in a Special Professionalism

W artykule omówiono misje zagraniczne włoskich karabinierów – specyficznej formacji łączącej funkcje sił wojska oraz służby policyjnej. Autorka przedstawiła szerokie tło historyczne zagranicznego zaangażowania karabinierów skupiając uwagę na misji w Iraku. Przedstawione zostały uwarunkowania włoskiej operacji w Iraku, warunki polityczno-wojskowe rejonu działań, podstawowe formy działalności operacyjnej. Autorka szeroko wykorzystuje przy tym swoje doświadczenia osobiste, będące wynikiem jej wizyt w bazach włoskiego kontyngentu. Jej uwagę zwróciła przede wszystkim tak zwana współpraca cywilno-wojskowa (Civil Military Co-operation, CIMIC). W podsumowaniu Autorka stwierdza, że działania ekspedycyjne stanowiąc będą coraz ważniejsze zadanie karabinierów, co wymusza zmiany zarówno w procesie szkolenia tej formacji, jak i jej uzbrojeniu oraz wyposażeniu.

It is even too easy to speak about the tradition of the Italian Arma dei Carabinieri, a police with a military status – since the year 2000 the fourth Armed Force of Italy, before part of the Army, considered as its first Arm -, in pace-keeping reconstruction missions in countries completely or partially collapsed. In this essay of course we will not speak about one of the institutional task of the Carabinieri which is to be Military Police and we will obviously skim details about international organizations' authorizations (UN, NATO; EU) to develop the military interventions, combat and reconstruction. And we cannot speak also about all the missions deployed by Carabinieri, but we will remember only some of them, underlining the many tasks that they have fulfilled.

It is important just to recall here the important fact – for those who are not acquainted with the special characteristic of this Institution – that this Corps has a double soul, a double identity, the one of an Armed Force and the second one of a Police with a military asset (status), as above remembered. With this double professionalism the Carabinieri have always participated in Italian military missions abroad, both as a combat unit, as MP and/or guarantees of public order, also taking care to support social and humanitarian aims; missions caring for humanitarian values and the global threat to world peace and security. The history of Carabinieri involved in this kind of missions is strictly connected with the Italian history all along two centuries.

For a long time Carabinieri have been doing an important role in abroad missions, since the XIX century, when the UN were not on the horizon but when the *Concert of the Great Powers* decided where and when peace should have been maintained. If in the second part of the XIX century and in the first half of the XX, missions abroad for Cara-

binieri have been numerous, in the second part of the XX<sup>o</sup>, their international involvement and projection has increased terribly.

Since 1989 the doctrine relating to *peace keeping* has changed a lot, involving more and more civil components together with the military ones; nowadays, with the new European Security Strategy (ESS) policy, again at a European level, and of course with influence on a global level, the new doctrine sees a *comprehensive crisis management*, with multidisciplinary strategies, which will explain also the new tasks that – may be – will be given to the Carabinieri in Herat – Afghanistan, always in the path of the long tradition of this Corps since its foundation in 1814.

As we know the terminology *peace-keeping* operations or *peace support* operations in recent times has been substituted with *Crisis Response Operations*, may be to better define all the possible interventions like for example what it is happening in Afghanistan with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams<sup>1</sup>. There is an intimate interconnection between security and development at all levels because in a frame of security, legal economic development increases and this increase has as a consequence an increased stability, opening a virtuous circle. CRO: this has been recently the way in NATO, nowadays, to call missions and it contains many concepts in it, like preventive diplomacy, peace making, and peace building, even if many times also peace enforcing is to be considered, in order to achieve and support a framework of stability and security.

## 1. Some historical remarks

I think that the collective memory sometimes is very short because it does not remember old multinational and interforces missions that have some of the characteristic of the contemporary missions under the authority of UN and NATO, and recently of the EU. In the past century (XX) the Kingdom of Italy used the military instrument not only to conquer new territories, but also to assert itself among the Great Powers, also participating to special missions to maintain the international security, under the authorization of the dominating powers of period. We have to say of course that the historical situations were different, but the purpose and the deployment for those missions was exactly that one of maintaining in a territory a situation of stability.

In those times the important voices in the international context were few, four or five, in comparison with the almost 200 voices of our times in the UN, but the important leaders of the world, sitting in the Security Council, are still now very few....the Great Powers of the contemporary period.

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<sup>1</sup> It would be too long to give all the details of the missions in which the Carabinieri Corps of Italy participated. In this essay only few of them will be given, because the accent is on the particular tasks performed during the presence abroad. All the Carabinieri missions have been studied in details in 2 books written by the Author of this essay: *Le missioni all'estero dei Carabinieri 1855-1935* (vol. I) and *Le missioni all'estero dei carabinieri 1936-2001* (vol. II), Roma, 2000-2001. For the time being no other volumes have been published covering all the Carabinieri missions up to June 2001.

If once upon a time it was the *concert* of the European powers to call for missions of this kind, now the UN do the same job, but in particular these problems are discussed within the Security Council, where only the real Powers of the world seat.

Of course in order to analyse missions of this kind in the past, it is important to put them in the right historical context and period in which they were thought and implemented, to the operational aspects at the time of their realisation and of course to the economic ones also, correlated to national interests of the countrys involved...more or less, as it is now: stability and security of a territory means global peace but it means also opening of new potential markets and in the past, also colonies.

This is one of the main differences with military missions in the past times: before there was an enemy to destroy in the napoleonic or Clausewitz view of the world; now the international community has to comply with the coexistence principles and in sensible areas it has to impose respect of human rights, order, security, conditions for economic development connected with the development of the population's lowerest classes. Some of these tasks may justify sometimes the use of force, for the major benefit of the international community. At least this what sometimes the international community thinks it is a right thing to go for.

May be the first mission at international level that was also multinational and for Italy also inter-Forces has been the one in Crete in 1897–1906<sup>2</sup>: this is also the first one in which the Carabinieri showed for the first time abroad their particular skills as a military status Police. Crete represented for Italy, in its role of maintaining the Mediterranean equilibrium in the *concert* of the Great Powers recently joined, one of the priorities of the Italian foreign policy in that historical period. The Mediterranean Sea was the more interesting strategic sector for the young Kingdom of Italy, also because at the very end of the XIX century the scramble for partition of the former powerful Ottoman Empire was at its zenith: in this period riots of a certain importance started in Crete – christians against muslims – while Athens and Costantinople wanted to get the absolute power on the island.

An international force was sent by the Great Powers in order to sedate the riots, and above all to keep a situation of security in the island and the equilibrium in the Mediterranean, which was so sought for by all the European powers, not only by Italy. Little by little the internal administrative and political structures collapsed completely. And in this collapsed situation, they were necessary also substitutive missions of a strong police intervention in order to impose the respect of laws and public order. In this context the Italian intervention was not of a colonial type, but as a demonstration of power in the international community.

As it is known it was decided at an international level – besides allowing the military heavy intervention which was done by troops of many European countries -, to form a regiment of International '*Gendarmerie*' to replace the local one, Turkish, which was composed in the majority by muslims elements; it was higly corrupted and above all unable to secure public order. The abuses and the corruption of these gendarmes had

<sup>2</sup> Documents related to this mission can be seen in Archivio del Museo Storico dell'Arma, Rome, and in AUS-SME (Archivio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito E 3 – R 21–22. See also Bagnaia A., *L'Anatolia. 1919–1923*, in „Studi Storico-Militari 1992”, Ufficio Storico SME, Roma, 1994, pp. 255–350.

been also one of the reasons for the heavy riots leading to the insurrection of May 1896. Members of the new *Gendarmerie* regiment should have been military people, coming from all the powers involved in the affair, that is, Russia, Great Britain, Austria –Hungary, France and Italy. Italy sent for this purpose the Carabinieri Reali: they reached Crete in February 1897.

Waiting to perform their institutional tasks, they were employed by the Admirals' Council, governing Crete, in observation and investigation missions also inside the island, while waiting for the international *Gendarmerie* to be formed with mixed companies and to start their job within it.

Italy was the leading country in this international intervention because the Italian Admiral Canevaro was the President of the Admirals' Council, who had taken in their hands the crisis and would not allow Greece to take power if the island, waiting to occupy it completely at the end of the Ottoman Empire, event thought to be very very near in time. But the Powers had to wait for another 20 years to reach their objective.

While the studies and projects were laid down for the international *Gendarmerie*, it was also considered that it was necessary also in the meantime to reorganize the local one, that is the Ottoman one, even if on different bases and above all on a different training. Notwithstanding the good proposals, 10 of March 1897 the international *Gendarmerie* was disbanded, because it had not been quite successful. Following a decision taken by the Admirals' Council on August 14, 1897, since September of the same year the Ottoman *Gendarmerie*, reorganized in the meantime, with the purpose of substituting the *International* one, was put under the orders of an Italian captain of the Carabinieri, Federico Craveri, waiting to organise a new local one, formed by all the representatives of the communities existing on the island. Captain Craveri and his colleagues were charged to form and train the new Crete *Gendarmerie* under constitution.

Not giving many details about this international mission, because they can be easily found in every history book, we have to underline that since 1899, the year in which all soldiers of other countries had left the island, because the military administration had come to an end, due to the improved internal situation, the Italian Carabinieri stayed and started their task to reorganize the local *Gendarmerie*, a task performed for the first time of many others in the future: a contribution to guarantee the stability and security in the island through a local police, trained in what was for that time a 'modern' way.

In Crete up to 1906, when their mission ended, the Italians had an interesting success in re-establishing the order and the internal security and in maintaining it, controlling the two different parties, muslims and christians, acting as an interposition force, performing also a kind of economic and social reconstruction of the civil society, establishing good and normal relations with the local population and the clergy, trying to win a popular consent and enhance the authority of the local Institutions. Within the tasks performed, there was also a 'harvest of weapons and ammunitions', in a place where there was the habit for men to consider weapons as a part of their male personality.

The Crete mission is particularly interesting if we want to compare it with contemporary missions, of course taking into account the right historical moment and context: the mission was multinational; the area of the island was divided into AOR for the countries participating in it; the mission looked for the consent of the two armed parties; the

military command was unified in order to reach the political and diplomatic strategies sought for by the Powers involved; involvement of the military components of the mission in activities not strictly military like the administration of justice, local disarmament, building and reorganizing the local police, this task particularly given to the Italians, to the Carabinieri.

In this strategy for stabilization, it was also done an effort to relocate 1300 muslims fled from their houses in La Canea, during the greek-turkish conflict in that city. Also in China, after the Boxers rebellion and the international intervention to save the Legations'Quarter, the Carabinieri present in the Italian contingent in Tientsin, the italian area obtained from the Chinese Empress<sup>3</sup>, established a nucleus of 20 chinese men as a local police, under the order of an Italian non-commissioned officer (maresciallo), and trained by him, to guarantee the internal order of the Italian Concession, together with twelve italians. Not only the Chinese were trained in professional skills, but their Commander established also rules for a civil life, including sink drainage, collection of the waste material....

The reputation for the Italians, especially for the Carabinieri, to be professional reorganizer of local police forces started to be quite well known. We must also remember that at the beninning of the century even the Persian Shah Kadjar asked for the Italian Carabinieri to reorganize his police forces: but the international powers, namely Great Britain and the Zarist Empire, forbade the presence of the Italians because they did not want the influence of a new power on the Persian territory they were going to split into two spheres of influence in 1907 and were afraid of a possible interference of Italy and its Armed Forces that had started to be appreciated on an international context.

Between 1904 and 1911 the Italians were called to re-organize the Macedonia (still part of the Ottoman Empire) local *Gendarmerie*: the Diwan asked directly the Roman government for it and a mission was sent: a high officer of the Italian Army, division general Emilio de Giorgis, and later on, at his death in 1908, general Mario Nicolis di Robilant, was the *Lieutenant Général Réorganisateur* of the Macedonian police. Among the officers who took part in this mission, there was a very special Carabinieri officer, colonel Balduino Caprini, who had already proved his knowledge in this kind of job in Crete. Most of the members of the mission were taken from the Carabinieri. It is also interesting to remember that at the court of the Sultan there was a military counsellor, from the italian Army, captain Giovanni Romei and as aid-de-camp to the Sultan, a Carabinieri officer, captain Tomassi<sup>4</sup>. Both of them were members of the Sultanal Commission of the War Ministry settled for the reorganization of the Macedonian *Gendarmerie*. Of course with the Libian war (1911), the Italian mission had to leave Macedonia, without ending the project<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Italy had the Tientsin Concession up to 1938, when the Japanese occupied the Chinese territory. From the legal international point of view, the *Concessione* was dissolved only at the end of the second world war.

<sup>4</sup> See Pasqualini M.G., *Il Levante, il Vicino e il Medio Oriente. 1860-1939, i Documenti storici dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito*, ed. Stato Maggiore Esercito, Roma, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> To study in a more detailed way this historical period see Renouvin P, *Histoire des Relations internationales*, vol. III, De 1871 à 1945, Parigi, ed. Hachette, 1994, p. 200 e ss.

For 2 years, 1909–1911, Carabinieri went also to Chile as instructors for the *Cuerpo de carabineros de Chile*, training them also in the operational systems of the Corps. In the meantime also the sovereign nation of Greece had asked the Italian Armed Forces to help in re-organizing its military police, besides the local one. So the Carabinieri were active in that country for some years (1911–1923): the interesting thing in this mission is that it was not in a collapsed or anarchic country, but in a sovereign state asking the international help for its military (France and Great Britain were involved in training the Army and the Navy)<sup>6</sup>. Jumping to the end of the first world war, we arrive to the occupation of Constantinople in 1919, when the Golden Horn saw 55 warships at its shores<sup>7</sup>.

The Chief Commander of the Allied Forces had to nominate an international committee controlling the Ottoman Police that was not able to maintain the internal order in the city, neither to provide the security in the area of the city. In this particular sector – police training or monitoring – once again the leader nation was Italy, with its experts, the majority of which were members of the Carabinieri Corps. The capital city of the still unbelievable alive Ottoman Empire was divided into what we call with a modern name AOR (Area of Responsibility) and the Italians had to guarantee the area of Scutari, where the Headquarters of the Allied Forces had settled.

How we can consider this mission to Constantinople? A supporting mission of the local police with monitoring, guiding, training and recruiting of the agents; it was also a supporting mission in the investigations for any kind of crimes, in the sense that the Italians did not substitute the local Police, but helped with the tasks to be performed. It seems quite a contemporary mission for support to a local police. The presence in Constantinople ended in 1923, when the Allied Powers signed a peace treaty with the laic Republic of Turkey led by the powerful and winning Mustafa Kemal, the new middle-eastern power, heir to the Ottoman Empire, definitely buried.

In this period Italy participated in some other external missions in difficult areas always with the presence of the Carabinieri, as Military Police or performing special local tasks. In order to analyse successive historical missions, we have to remember that at the end of the first world war a new organization substituted in a way the *concert* of the Great Powers in 1920: the League of Nations, with many more voices, than five ones, and a different impact on the international community and a different philosophy regarding the world stability and security, even if again national interests of the major Powers were more considered and important than others.

One of the missions that seems more similar to the present ones is undoubtedly the one connected with the referendum to annex to France or to Germany the very wealthy region of SAAR or to maintain the *status quo*: the League of Nations wanted the referendum to be implemented in a secure way, above all at the polling stations and asked some of its members to send a contingent, because the situation was not one of the most calm,

<sup>6</sup> For details about this mission, Pasqualini M.G., *I Carabinieri Reali in Grecia (1912–1923)*, in „Missioni militari italiane all'estero in tempo di pace. (1861–1939)”, in „Atti del convegno di studi tenuto a Milano presso la Scuola Militare dell'Esercito nei giorni 25–26 ottobre 2000”, Roma, 2001, pp. 321–341.

<sup>7</sup> For this period see among many books, Davison R., *Turkish diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne*, in „The diplomats 1919–1939, a cura di Craig G. e Gilbert F., University Press, Princeton, 1953, pp. 172–209.

and the two countries involved (France and nazist Germany) used a heavy propaganda. Among the international (Holland, Sweden, Great Britain, Italy) military contingent that at end of 1934 reached the Saar region, the Italians were present with a framework regiment with a core of Carabinieri whose main task was, besides monitoring the referendum, to guarantee the internal order and to escort, once the referendum done, the ballots cards to the collecting centre, without any gerrymandering. Germany, having done the heaviest propaganda and above all an inside strong individually pressing, was the winner of the referendum.

Italy sent, with other troupes, a battalion of Carabinieri; together with the other elements of the Italian military presence, they organised an efficient info-investigation system, in order to calibrate the service to the internal situation and guarantee the public order: so was it done. In March 1935 all the foreign military people left the region after performing a kind of a mission that can be called a true peace-keeping mission in a modern way.

As a matter of fact there has been a precedent in this kind of referendum, in High Slesia, 1920, where an international contingent (Italy, France and Great Britain) had been sent, always with the purpose of monitoring the referendum that was to be held and secure internal order. This one was a peace-keeping mission that evolved in a peace enforcing mission: the Italians who had the task to control the borders, faced problems of internal security, because of continuous riots between Germans and Polish, conflicts really dangerous also because of the very depressed social and economic situation. Inhabitants went to the polling stations in February 1920, but the result was not accepted by either parts. Cosel presidium, in charge of the Italians, was attacked by the Polish people: the Italians guaranteed the opening of the bridges on the Oder river. The order was reestablished; the Italian Commander became the Civil and Military Governor of the small city. The Italian military force, at the very beginning just a monitoring Force, was compelled to act as an interposition Force to maintain the order and the small core of Carabinieri were very useful in this special task.

These are some examples of what the Italian Armed Forces and especially the Carabinieri Corps did before the second world war, already showing what will be one of its main features in missions abroad: to know how to maintain public order and how to reorganize and train local police forces.

After the second world war, a new era of international missions started. United Nations, founded in 1944 while the conflict was still going on, in 1949 decided to give Italy the trusteeship of Somalia: in 10 years Rome should have guided the new country to its complete international maturity. A *Corpo di Sicurezza*<sup>8</sup> was sent by the Italian government to secure the necessary framework of stability, to accompany the country to the full sovereignty and again the Carabinieri Corps was called to perform its institutional duties and to organize and train the Somali local police, inherited from the British organized Somali Police. It was not an easy task in those years to form this kind of police also because nine years of British occupation in the territory had heavily changed the previous

<sup>8</sup> Documents related to the Italian AFIS (Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana in Somalia), *Corpo di Sicurezza*, can be seen at Archivio del Museo Storico dell'Arma dei Carabinieri (Rome) and at AUSSME (Rome).

organization given by Italy during colonial times, always applying the operations' system of the Corps. So the Commander of the Carabinieri first of all had to absorb all the Somali Police Force created by the British and start again a reorganization, following the peculiar operational methods of the Carabinieri, but not forgetting of course the special traditions, cultural, social, ethnics of Somalia: the danger was to be again in a colonialist atmosphere. But a great effort was done to avoid it.

A Police School was founded in Muqdishu with courses for officers and non-commissioned officers and also the training for simple agents was started. Another problem to solve was the one of the 'somalization' of the Police: but little by little, local agents started to substitute the Italians, so that by 1957 all the members of the Local Somali Police forces had been trained enough to take over the task of maintaining the internal order of the country. The Command of the Force was then transferred to a Somali colonel. In 1958 an agreement for collaboration was signed between the Italian Government and the Somali one: for this it was possible for the Corps to continue to give to the new Somali Police Force a support in recruiting and training. The Carabinieri had to intervene later another time in Somalia, during the UN mission, in 1992.

In Lebanon, in 1982, the Carabinieri were part of the Italian military presence, within the international contingent. The parachutist Regiment 'Tuscania' had the task to patrol Beirut east on pre-established itineraires, acting as a force of interposition and prevention, not substituting, in this case as in others, the Lebanese Armed Forces. In this particular mission, the armed-force identity of the Carabinieri was particularly useful, together with their professionalism in facing also civil population, when it was the case to maintain public order and security in the AOR<sup>9</sup>.

Not saying anything about the mission in Albania in 1991–1993, in Salvador in 1991–1995, in Cambogia 1992–1993, where the Corps expressed its professionalism also in training local police forces, we go directly to the mission *Restore Hope* in Somalia in 1992–1995, a very difficult one for the international forces there operating. UN had decided that in parallel with military operations it was necessary to reconstruct, once again, the Somali administration. One of the major tools, among the others, to have it done was to reorganize the Judiciary system and a civil police, that could support the Judiciary. The Italian Carabinieri acted in two different institutional and juridical frames.

The first one was within the Italian military contingent ITALFOR: in our AOR, besides acting as an armed force, I should say as a Special Force, with the parachutist Regiment 'Tuscania', and doing the duty of the Military Police, as usual, Carabinieri had also to rebuild and organize a local police force (the previous one, still the one trained by the Italians during the trusteeship period, had been disbanded in its majority when President Siad Barre had been overthrown and officially dissolved in December 1992) for the particular area, waiting that a special general program for Somalia could take place in this field.

Apart from this, Kofi Annan, at that time Deputy Secretary General of the UN and Chief of the Department of Peace Keeping (DPK), asked the Italians to charge one officer of the Carabinieri to study a plan to reorganize a neutral Civil Police Force in Somalia,

<sup>9</sup> For details of this mission, see Pasqualini M.G., *Le missioni...* vol. II, p. 16.



together with a Dutch and a German colleague. The team reported to the Deputy Secretary General in short time. An advanced party was sent on the field for a better study and planning of the reorganization project. A general program considering also the reorganization for the judicial administration, was written and it became known as Somali Justice Program (SJP), approved by Italy, Great Britain, Holland, Egypt Germany and Norway. The program stated in a clear way, may be for the first time, that for the stability and security in Somalia, it was highly necessary a new system of civil and penal law able to act in an efficient bureaucratic situation, with the support of a very well organized and efficient Police.

Activities in favour of the Somali police started beginning of 1994, also with the help of the Italians: training, logistic support, and everything was important to put up a sound and efficient Police, of course based on western schemes, mainly Italians and Germans, who were collaborating in this task. Situation in that part of Africa deteriorated; there was no more security for the trainers to do their job and the Italian component, as the others, had to leave.

Remembering another mission, in 1994 and 1997 the Carabinieri, without weapons as the others observers, were again in Palestina with the *Temporary International Presence in Hebron* (TIPH), with tasks of Police monitoring, patrolling in multinational teams. The organization scheme of the TIPH has been an interesting comparison and pattern for some other missions, *support* or *peace-keeping* ones, above all as an example of a multinational activity completely integrated in the Command chain and operational systems.

And nowadays Carabinieri are, always in a multinational team of which they have the Command, at the Palestinian border with Egypt, monitoring the situation and controlling the right application of agreements concerning a normal use of movements rights to pass the border, guarantees for the security of it.

In March 1995, some Carabinieri were part of the PM Multinational Company of the Multinational Division East and of the Civil Police of the UEO; same period some others reached Sarajevo to act as Military Police, but they did also patrolling in the city in order to guarantee the security in the city. It is exactly in Sarajevo in this period that we can appreciate the important flexibility of the Corps whose members acted as a PM, supported the rest of the personnel and the Special Forces of the Italian contingent, with a vast network of intelligence; another task of the Carabinieri has been to monitor the polling stations and the preparatory activities for popular elections.

In the same period in Mostar within the frame of the EUAM (*European Union Administration of Mostar*), it was felt the urgency for a civil Police, efficient and representative of all the ethnic components of the territory. In particular it had been decided that the core of the reconstruction of the city would have been a nucleus of European police with a double task: to build and train a croato-bosniac-muslim police (UPFM, *Unified Police Force in Mostar*), and in the same time to maintain public order. In march 1995 a group of Carabinieri WEUPOL (*Western European Union Police*) was sent to Mostar: mainly they had to organize, instruct, monitor the activity of the local police, besides training them to reach a highly efficient level.

As in Mostar, also in Albania (where the Carabinieri were present in MAPE-UEO (*Multinational Advisors Police Element*)) administrative and social reconstruction passed

also through the path of eliminating the illegal criminal organizations, imposing the respect for law and human rights.

Unify the two different civil police forces present in Mostar has been a very difficult job. May be one of the winning method was to organize patrolling group with a Carabiniere in command and composed by a muslim from Mostar east, a croat from Mostar west, a croat from the Croatia republic and an interpreter. In october 1996 WEUPOL was dissolved because the problems had been solved by 90%.

Before the creation and deployment of the first MSU, new international military tool, we have also to remember the presence of the Carabinieri in the IPTF (*International Police Task Force*) in Sarajevo within the UNMIBH (*United Nations Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina*), starting in May 1997, integrated in the structure of the UNCIVPOL.

## 2. MSU – Multinational Specialised Unit

It has been especially in the Balcans, not to mention Iraq, that the secular tradition of the Carabinieri in reorganizing and training local police forces, and of course in restoring public order and security, beside normal combat activities, had its most important professional point: it showed not only its professionalism, but also the high capacity in proposing and establishing normative and doctrinal contributions, later implemented with success. It is in the Balcans that what is an original contribution to the solution of present security problems in some countries was first time experienced, the MSU, *Multinational Specialised Unit*.

In 1998 with the formation of this new regiment a very important change was introduced in the employment of a multinational police force. The Carabinieri Corps has been protagonist in elaborating the relevant doctrine and in implementing it<sup>10</sup>.

In few words, for the ones who did not have any experience with this regiment, the MSU, Multinational Specialized Unit, is an extremely flexible military tool, thought to fill a gap; a security gap, in a grey area when the phase *combat* has not yet finished but the *reconstruction* one has started already and it is compulsory, not only to fight rebels or still resisting rebellion movements, but also to be able to face security civil problems, maintain public order and impose the respect for the existing laws.

So in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1997, for the first time, in order to implement the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreements, where SFOR (*Stabilization Force*) and IPTF could not fill their tasks as needed, it was felt the necessity for a new kind of unit, that could perform both the tasks, *combat* and *crowd control*. Local Police was not able or did not want to intervene in public order operations for many reasons, mainly for ethnical ones, not to forget the political ones and, may be also, for a lack of the right professionalism to cope with this kind of delicate situations, still in a fighting time.

<sup>10</sup> For details on the creation and the doctrine of MSU, see Paris A., *Aspect of military doctrine on the MSU*, in 'Proceedings of the Seminar on the MSU', held in Rome, March 30–31 2004, p. 151–158; Libertini D, *International environmental and juridical aspects*, in the same 'Proceedings...', p. 133–138; see also Paris A., *Lo strumento militare italiano in operazioni di polizia*, in 'Rivista Italiana di Difesa', n.10/2004, p. 70–74.

The experience gained by a Corps with a military asset, like Carabinieri, all along through more than a century, led to the idea of this multinational unit, the role of which is absolutely different from the one of a normal traditional or military police force and the Alliance asked the Carabinieri to form a MSU.

It was so authorized the constitution of a MSU regiment within SFOR, at the direct Command of the Operations of FOF (*Follow on Force*- a reduced Force intended to substitute SFOR as it did though maintaining the name of SFOR). MSU was intended to give SFOR a special contribution in the professional field of a military asset police force specialized also in crowd control and public security. MSU mandate in BH was quite complex, but it had a) mobility and flexibility of deployment due to its framework and its operational systems; b) professionalism in providing *intelligence*, with official powers and authorizations, bearing in mind the efficient info-investigative system of Carabinieri, always able to interact in a mutual exchange with the system or structure of the operation intelligence on the spot, created by military Commands in theatres; c) right equipment to face civil population if needed.

In fact it was not easy to secure public order, a progressive stability and a legal environment without being possible to *harvest* informations, investigations on illegal activities and without performing *special operations*. At that time it was also important to reconstruct the social network of BH, stimulating the coming back of the refugees, giving a frame of security for local political elections and the formatin of a local government. The regiment was at the orders of an Italian Carabinieri Officer, as it has been established also in other similar experiences. Italy will always be, according the the present international agreements, the *leading nation* for a MSU regiment.

In synthesis, in BH, the MSU had the task to promote and assist public security; to assist the refugees in their going back to their original lands; to give the necessary support to the re-building of local institutions, according to the instructions received by the international community; to maintain public order, with a prevention policy, and managing crisis situations and controlling crowd and riots of any kind; to perform on the territory all the activities indicated by the Chain of Command and of course to implement the indications of the High Commissioner of the United Nations, having them repeated locally.

A MSU regiment acted and is acting in Bosnia, Albania, in Kosovo and in Iraq, for the time being. The Kosovo experience was in a way quite similar, with the more or less the same mandate.

### 3. MSU in Iraq

The last experience in time for a MSU is at present in Iraq; an experience being rather different from the others because of a different chain of Command, but always led by Italy, and with a Carabinieri full colonel as the Commander. The special experience gained by the MSU deployed in Iraq will be surely, if I may say, a leading one, not only for the doctrine in progress, but also as far as operational procedures will be definitely set-

tled, keeping in mind that flexibility of this instrument will always be required, because operational theatres have all their own particular characteristics and above all because professionalism in the field of police with military status and flexibility are among the winning assets of a Multinational Specialised Unit: these assets are indeed in the MSU at present deployed in Iraq, the lesson learned of, is to be taken into account for future deployments in this area or similar ones, in this *Arab* sector, which proves to be much more difficult than thought before.

In order to better understand which has been and which is the role and the tasks performed by the MSU, at Regiment level, in Nassiriya- Iraq, lead by the Italian CC, within an Italian military contingent – ITALFOR – we have first of all to remember the very difficult historical and geo-political situation in the country after the fall of Baghdad and the nearly total, if not total collapse, of every Iraqi governmental and bureaucratic institutions, army and local, traffic or whatever other kind of police was, included. On the top, as everyone knows, Iraq is not an homogenous country, with many ethnic and religious conflicts that have complicated, and still are doing it, the necessary transfer of power to Iraqi authorities.

This transfer of power has not improved the situation, in my opinion, though the international community may hope or think the contrary. Law enforcement and the fight against terrorism are indeed the very first actions to be taken there, if really there is a will to reinstate stability and security in this strategic sector of Middle East, an exceptionally difficult and ambitious program.

We can also say that the combat period is in a way still going on there; though the international community has started to try to stabilize and secure the country, the area of transition to the time of a combat replacement, is still very wide, that 'grey area', in which a MSU can perform the best and for which it has been conceived, since its first deployment years ago in the Balcan.

The operational AOR of the Italians and of course of the MSU there deployed, integrated in the IT-JTF is the small, in comparison with all the Iraqi territory, but sensitive region of Dhi Khar, all Shi'ite area, not only the city of Nassyiria. The region is also characterised by the presence of many powerful tribes, whose sheiks are also political leaders, and by the muslim shi'ite clergy, as powerful as the tribes chiefs; to complicate the landscape, some of the powerful sheiks are also religious leaders; the consequence being that the task of collecting sensitive reliable information is quite hard. This is one of the tasks performed by some of the components of the MSU in the Dhi Khar region and we can say that especially in the present days the political situation of this territory is quite well known to the Italian authorities over there, thanks to these investigations. You cannot do anything at all, especially in an Arab country, if you do not know the environment, in a situation which is so far away from our way of thinking and behaving.

We must add that the region is also very poor, deprived of the basic conditions of life, including water, drinkable or not, or a city sewer system; electricity was a problem in the past when Saddam Hussein used to convey it, produced in the south, to the north, exactly the same as he did with water. Now the problem seems to be solved unless, for some reasons, again the electricity will be conveyed in large quantities to the North.

### 3. A synthetic chronology

The Italian Advanced Party for this Unit reached Nassiriya around middle of June 2003, while the Main Body reached the operational theatre middle of July, same year, finding nearly total destruction in this city and all the possible turmoil in this Southern zone of Iraq, the almost total population of which follows the Shi'ia confession.

The first turn-over of people took place between October 20 and November 14; February–March 2004, the second turn over; every four to six months personnel changes.

As everyone knows, the Iraq MSU has been integrated by a contingent of Romanian army and Portuguese National Republican 'Guardia', the last one reaching the Unit, after November 12, as it was scheduled much time before the Event, the terrorist attack to Base Maestrale, one of the two bases of MSU.

The total components of the Unit are, average number, almost 600 men (among them there were very few women), the Italian personnel being around 350 Carabinieri in the different operational situations, chosen for their professional special skills required for the mission to be performed in that area, belonging, to the Paratroopers Regiment 'Tuscania', to the 7° Regiment 'Trentino A.A.' and to the 13° Regiment 'Friuli V.G.', to the G.I.S.- this for the 'combat' component, the strong military component, so much necessary in this particular case – and to some other specialisations in the Corps, like experts in environment (NOE), cultural heritage protection (TPC), the Iraqi one being constantly looted; anti-sophistication (NAS), to take care of other 'civil' tasks, added values to the work already performed and in progress.

### 4. Local climatic conditions

We have also to stress the fact that the mission performed by this Unit has undergone very particular difficulties connected also with the Iraqi climate, reaching more than 50° C. from July to September-October, which made the logistic settlement of the bases quite hard. After those months, mud and cold weather have been also a noticeable difficulty. Not to forget the frequent desert storms that sometimes hinder the normal duties or make them very difficult to be performed – personal experience – and can heavily damage, with a kind of talcum powder sand, mechanical engines and sophisticated electronic tools. Which means that a complete analysis of the climatic conditions must always be done beforehand, in order to send over right equipments and outfits.

Therefore this is also a new experience to be taken into account for this kind of Unit. As I had the chance to stay there, in the MSU HQ in Nassiriya, November 2003, I had the opportunity to watch daily how the different tasks were performed, leaving the HQ on many different occasions during the patrolling activities or the humanitarian ones, like to escort the Italian Red Cross releasing humanitarian help in villages or to Hospitals and medical consulting places. There have been some positive results that shows the different tasks performed by a MSU regiment

As you know, one of the most important tasks to be carried out in Iraq has been the control of the sensitive areas, performed by patrolling critical spots, also to gather information in order to prevent crimes of every kind (above all, arms and explosives smuggling or illegal digging or drugs' traffic, and of course terrorism), a night and day job. Just a few figures will give you the idea of what has been done in few months, in this regard, before and after that 12 November 2003 by the Unit:

**Table 1.** July 20–2003/November 12–2003.

External duties	2.800
Arrested/detained persons	0
Weapons sequestrated	265
Ammunition sequestrated	15.063
Explosives sequestrated	1.047

Source: Carabinieri General Headquarters.

**Table 2.** November 13–2003/ March 11–2004.

External duties	3.803
Arrested/detained persons handed over to local police	102
Weapons sequestrated	665
Ammunition sequestrated	33.299
Explosives sequestrated	1.737

Source: Carabinieri General Headquarters.

This is to show not only the amount of work performed in a relative short time – eight months – , but also the strong *reaction* and *the cohesion* shown by all the components of the MSU regiment after the attack at 'Maestrale Quarters'.

These outstanding operational results are important for one of the primary objectives of Carabinieri presence there: the executive mission for law enforcement and the re-establishment of public order and security. During the period I was there, every single day and most of the nights the presence of the various components of the Unit was necessary or required even by local authorities in order to control the crowd, for example: every kind of queuing up, be it policemen to be enrolled, salary to be received or the changing of the old paper money with the new currency has been an occasion of a possible turmoil and the Unit has always been able to control the crowd, without the use of fire. Many times the Unit acted as an interposition force, like for example, among the many more occurred, one action; it took place March 9, 2004, in the evening, when there had been a very harsh problem between some militia men of political parties and local policemen: four of these policemen were killed and four injured. Members of the Unit intervened, controlled the crowd (almost 150 policemen gathered to counteract against militia people) recuperating also the bodies of the dead ones, put under arrest 9 persons, seized quite a number of weapons and ammunition, escorted the arrested people to the

local prison in the HQ of the Local Police, after identifying them: all without firing a single bullet. I want to underline the fact that the control of the crowd in an Arab country is particularly delicate for the very special way of behaving of those people, easy to be enflamed and easy to use weapons, even when not needed, but very weak in front of the right show of force, anyway very dangerous.

The criminal investigation and intelligence carried out is always necessary in order to isolate violent persons or crypto- agents of disrupting groups, in view of securing the area, also with counter terrorism objective: and this has been and is done constantly, also getting into contact and obtaining the local society's confidence, to a better understanding of the real situation over there: humint helps a lot also in decisions concerning in which areas or spots, not only to enforce peace, but also to give a humanitarian help, where it is most needed or even asked for, as I saw it was done there, by those Carabinieri assigned to this kind of delicate investigation.

## 5. Organizing and training of local Police forces

Always in the field of the preparatory activity for the transfer of power and police responsibility to the various kinds of local Police, which have already been settled or will be in the future, much work has been done by some of the Italian components of the Unit. In Nassiriya, Local Police and Traffic Police have been re-organized and trained by the Italian Carabinieri personnel, according to a Program outlined by the CPA (Coalition Provisional Authority) , sometimes starting even from re-building the premises and handing over new uniforms. Following the training by the MSU, Traffic Police in Nassiriya started to be respected by the population and the numerous traffic jams, in a possible way, started to be directed by the Iraqi Traffic policemen. As far as the Local Police is concerned, in this case the Italian help (at the Academy in Al-Zubayr, organized by the UK, 10 Carabinieri together with 34 British elements, 10 from Czechoslovakia and 4 from Denmark) had taken care of training, mentoring the new and old recruited policemen, with control of duties performed by them during normal police service and a kind of 'on the job training', patrolling with them, to show practically the way it is to be done.

People under arrest for different crimes are handed over to the Local Police, who is charged to keep them in custody, until a local Court of law decides the case, but frequent checks are done by the Unit on how these prisoners are treated as far as the Human Rights are concerned: I should say that frequent controls at these latitudes are compulsory to obtain some results. Part of the program of re-organizing and training had included also to supply them with new tools, like for example it has been done with the 12 pick-up Mitsubishi given by the CPA, through the Italian Force – MSU, November 2003 at the HQ of the Local Police.

## 6. CIMIC activities

The Unit worked and works in collaboration with the CIMIC Center of the Italian Brigade in order to put into action, for example, also what have been called quick impact projects, concerning the restructuring or rebuilding of Police stations or the maintenance of city streets, roads and side walks, normally in very poor conditions: in fact it is compulsory to try to start again also small local enterprises, besides the greater important reconstruction projects (difficult to 'take off') and to circulate money trying to produce legal profits in such a depressed area, where the flux of financial means depends quite only on smuggling weapons, explosives and archaeological relics and artcrafts.

One of the winning ideas of the MSU has been also to offer medical assistance to local population, besides giving great help in the city hospitals, also going into small villages around Nassiriya: the medical situation is very poor in those places, where it lacks many basic medicines, above all for children, who must be constantly treated for even simple pediatric pathologies. This has been done in the past also by means of a vehicle acting as a moving medical consulting room, intended also for a tele-medicine.

The idea was winning, as I said, but the vehicle was too high, too big and in a way too sophisticated for that climate and those difficult roads around Nassiriya, where most of the streets do not have tarmac laid on. The need would have been for a special car, equipped with medical instrument, but easier to use in those sometimes extreme conditions.

As I mentioned before, one added value is the *TPC*. In fact, one of the special tasks performed by this particolare MSU is related to the protection of the Iraqi Cultural Heritage in Sumerian Dhi Khar area, a very rich one.

Just, as above, a few figures, because words are not so effective, for a very interesting period:

### **July 2003–November 2003**

Registered archaeological sites: 25

Air reconnaissance (with the support of the IT-JTF): 7

Preventive and repressive motorised patrols: 15

Sequestrated archaeological sites: 101

Identified persons: 61

Arrested persons: 19

### **July 2003–March, 10, 2004**

Registered archaeological sites: 60

Air reconnaissance (with the support of the IT-JTF): 16

Preventive and repressive motorised patrols: 65

Sequestrated archaeological sites: 302

Identified persons: 94

Individuals under arrest: 46

Weapons sequestrated: 1

Source: Comando Tutela Patrimonio Culturale dell'Arma dei Carabinieri.



The work of this special team, integrated also by a specialist in problems related to the environment and biology, identifies and monitors the archaeological sites, surveying them. An accurate archaeological map of the region has been drawn. The team had also watch-towers and fences built, radio-connections established. Besides this, they instruct, also at the use of weapons, a sort of 'archaeological guards', to whom the Iraqi Police can extend a Temporary Weapon Card (TWC).

An incredible amount of work has been done also to prevent illegal digging, forbidden during Saddam Hussein period, and the subsequent looting, normally performed by a nearby living tribe, whose members specialised in this kind of survival, knowing the places where to dig by oral tradition and a thorough familiarity with those sites. In my visit over there, I saw a good amount of illegal pits, left over in the middle of the action of digging, most of the time, because of the intense surveillance of the Carabinieri team. In this field also investigations have been done to cut the illegal traffic of archaeological Sumerian valuable pieces.

We have to note also that a complete list of all seized pieces has always been written down, photographs were taken, before sending them to Baghdad, where they had been handed over to the competent Iraqi authorities at the Archaeological Museum.

This is a positive help for a country to be reconstructed and is well accepted by the Iraqi society; the area is very wide and it is necessary or to have more experts there or to increase and speed up the training of the archeological guards.

## 7. Synthesis

- A) The tasks performed by the Iraqi MSU are the ones needed in such a situation and in this kind of area, up to now not very much known from the operational point of view and from a psychological one; if I may add, also from the historical point of view – recent history -, which is also fundamental to understand what is going on in these days. Of course, the fact that the area has a wave of 'combat' still in act, means that the 'combat' component of this MSU is to be studied, as it has been, with care, in order to see if it fits to the present moment, but also previewing possible abrupt changes of the situation; may be it is necessary to deepen the knowledge of the country, at the light of the experiences made and the information gathered, so as to ameliorate the already effective composition of the Unit. Surely there is a need for more people knowing arabic language, or, at least, a good English, because, by the way, locally interpreters speak a very poor English, which means that sometimes communication is not very easy;
- B) the activities of training and monitoring local civil police and the ones carried on by CIMIC should be enhanced, since they are the most effective on the local population, and of course they must be done with the consent of the local authorities, state or religious ones, in order not to alter local balances of every kind. This kind of activities will help really to stabilize and secure the country, and consequently also that

strategic sector, up to now, as anyone knows, far from being stabilized and secured, notwithstanding the efforts done and the toll of victims.

Altogether the Regiment MSU there had been developing a very good, though very difficult job, showing also to the Coalition Forces and to the local authorities and population, the way in which the Italians perform their activities – be it military or humanitarian help – with a strong sense of discipline and duty. In the case Iraqi had MSU the entire Command and control of the region it could have performed even much better its functions, already well known in the area to the Higher Commands of the Coalition Forces.

## 8. The future

For the future, there are discussions for Afghanistan, in the Herat region, AOR of Italy for PRT (Provincial reconstruction Teams). In this area training of local police forces had been performed by the Germans; but in the re-organization of the area responsibilities, there are consistent rumours that this task will be assigned to the Italian Carabinieri, internationally known in this respect for exceptional results obtained in various countries where they had been called to act.

The success has been built mission after mission, with a very careful response to the international crisis response to the necessities of different countries, be them collapsed or semi collapsed. Many are the officers of the Carabinieri who have important Staff responsibilities in the international organization connected with the crisis response operations. Secular tradition.

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