Dacian Spring 2025: Italy leads NATO response on the southeastern front

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The participation of the Italian Armed Forces in the exercise **Dacian Spring 2025** successfully concluded, one of the main training events conducted under the aegis of NATO in the southeastern quadrant of the Alliance. The activity, held in Romania and organized by the **NATO Multi National Division South East (MND-SE)**, involved over **4,000 military personnel** from **ten member countries**, engaged in a simulated scenario of **high-intensity combat** in response to a conventional threat.

Air and land integration: the Italian commitment

Italy participated in the exercise with two strategic assets: the **Task Force Air 51st Wing**, operational with **Eurofighter Typhoon** aircraft deployed at the **Mihail Kogâlniceanu** base (near Constanța), and the **NATO Multi National Battle Group Bulgaria (MNBG-BGR)**, an Italian-led land unit stationed at the **Novo Selo** base in Bulgaria.

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In the training area of **Smârdan** (Romania), the two assets operated synergistically within combined missions, simulating allied defensive operations in a high-intensity context. The Eurofighter aircraft conducted **Close Air Support (CAS) missions** with the use of **live ammunition**, in coordination with the **Tactical Air Control Party/Joint Terminal Attack Controller (TACP/JTAC)** units of the Italian Army, positioned on the ground.

In addition to CAS support, the Italian fighters carried out **simulated attacks with the onboard cannon** against ground targets, under the direct guidance of the **JTAC of the MNBG-BGR**, strengthening interoperability between NATO air and land forces.

Commanders' statements

Colonel Salvatore Abbate, Commander of the MNBG-BGR, emphasized how “participation in training activities of this level increases the **operational readiness** of the Atlantic Alliance and exercises a **clear deterrent function**, contributing to preventing the outbreak of armed conflicts.”

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Colonel Marcello Vitucci, Commander of the TFA 51st Wing, highlighted that “the Dacian Spring offered the opportunity for the crews and specialists of the Air Force to operate in a **realistic and complex** training context, further improving the level of **interoperability** with other NATO assets.”

The Italian contribution to collective security

NATO MNBG-BGR

The **Multinational Battle Group Bulgaria** is a unit created within the framework of the **NATO enhanced Forward Presence** initiative to strengthen the Alliance's deterrence posture following the Ukrainian crisis. Since **October 17, 2022**, Italy has assumed the role of **lead nation** of the battalion, currently deploying about **750 military personnel** from the Army, alongside contingents from the **United States, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Montenegro**, and **North Macedonia**.

TFA 51st Wing

The **Task Force Air 51st Wing** consists of **Eurofighter** aircraft and about **150 military personnel** from the Air Force. Active in Romania since **March 2025**, it is part of the NATO **enhanced Air Policing** device for the defense of the Black Sea airspace. Operationally, it depends on the **Combined Air Operation Center (CAOC)** in Torrejon, while at the national level it is coordinated by the **Comando Operativo di Vertice Interforze (COVI)**.