NATO, show of strength in Bulgaria: live-fire exercises to secure the eastern flank

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The live-fire exercises **"Tiger Claw"** and **"White Tiger"** have concluded at the **Novo Selo Training Area** in Bulgaria, central and highly significant moments of the activity of the **Multinational Battle Group** deployed as part of the NATO Forward Land Force Bulgaria Operation. The activities, also carried out on **March 18, 2026**, involved **over 270 soldiers** and **about 70 vehicles** from **seven NATO countries**, making it one of the main recent training events on the **NATO eastern flank**.

The exercises represent a fundamental step to ensure the **operational readiness** of NATO forces, offering a realistic context to test **capabilities, procedures, and multinational integration**. In an international scenario characterized by increasing instability, activities of this kind assume strategic value, contributing to strengthening the **credibility of allied deterrence**.

At the Novo Selo Training Area, Italian units from the **8th Bersaglieri Regiment of the "Garibaldi" Brigade** and assets from the **"Pinerolo" Brigade** operated jointly with soldiers from **Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Romania**. The presence of vehicles and personnel from different nations, including **Romanian light vehicles engaged in live-fire actions**, highlighted the high level of **achieved interoperability**.

Fire, maneuver, and technology the full expression of operational capabilities

The exercises **"Tiger Claw"** and **"White Tiger"** developed in a **high-intensity simulated scenario**, with a strong focus on **conducting defensive and counterattack operations**. The live-fire training allowed for a concrete test of the units' capabilities, simulating **realistic and complex operational conditions**.

During the activities, particular emphasis was placed on **decision-making speed** and **synchronization among the different components of the Task Group**. The **command posts** managed the information flow in real-time, ensuring a **coordinated direction of operations**.

VCC 80 DARDO using GALIX smoke grenades. Source: Ministry of Defense.

The combined use of weapon systems was one of the most significant elements of the exercises. **C1 Ariete tanks**, **"Dardo" armored vehicles**, **heavy mortars**, and **artillery**, including the **PzH 2000 section**, capable of providing **high-precision indirect fire**, were used. This allowed for the simulation of complete operations consistent with **NATO operational**

standards.

Of particular note was the use of **remotely piloted systems (drones)** for battlefield observation and **fire direction**. The use of drones represented a true **force multiplier**, improving **situational awareness** and increasing the **precision of engagements**.

Integrated defense and deterrence the strategic value of the exercises

The exercises also allowed for testing the **protection of the operational area** and **low-altitude airspace** through the integration of **surveillance systems**, **counter-drone capabilities**, and **anti-tank assets**. This **multilevel** approach highlighted NATO forces' ability to respond to **complex and multidimensional threats**.

“Tiger Claw” and **“White Tiger”** were not just simple training activities, but true **demonstrations of strength and cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance**. Through joint training, the participating forces consolidated **interoperability, shared operational standards, and integrated response capabilities**.

PZH2000 covering friendly troops. Source: Ministry of Defense.

In this context, the contribution of the **Italian Armed Forces** stood out for its **level of preparation, professionalism, and integration capability**, confirming Italy's role as a **credible and reliable actor in NATO**.

The live-fire exercises conducted at the Novo Selo Training Area thus represent a **fundamental piece in strengthening NATO's presence on the eastern flank**. More than just maneuvers, they constitute a clear signal of **readiness, cohesion, and operational capability**, essential elements to ensure **security and stability** in one of the most sensitive areas of the international strategic landscape.

News link: https://www.difesa.it/operazionimilitari/op-intern-corso/operazione-eva-bulgaria/notizie-teatro/bulgaria-multinational-battle-group-conclude-due-esercitazioni-alla-novo-selo-training-area/94151.html?utm_source