The MND S - NATO at the forefront in Steadfast Dart 2026

Published on 21/02/2026

The main cycle of activities of STEADFAST DART 2026 (STDT26**)**, the largest NATO exercise of 2026, designed to **test the rapid deployment and multidomain employment** of the new **Allied Reaction Force (ARF)** under realistic conditions, from *deployment* to execution on the ground and subsequent repositioning, has concluded.

The exercise – conducted between January and February in Germany with "climax" activities in the North of the country – involved **over 10,000 military personnel** from **13 Allied Countries** and an impressive array of strategic and tactical mobility.

Italy at the "forefront" of command: NRDC-ITA leads the ARF

The distinctive element of STDT26 was the **Italian leadership role**: the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy (NRDC-ITA), based in Solbiate Olona, was entrusted with the **command of the ARF** (ARF HQ), which is NATO's high readiness capability called to respond quickly to

crises and threats to collective security.

One of the objectives of the Dart was to **validate procedures and interoperability** (contributing nations and *host nation*), as well as to stress the phases of **Reception, Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM)** on a large scale.

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MND-S: the land component under Gen. Giuseppe Scuderi

On the land side, the leadership of the **Land Component Command (LCC)** of the ARF was entrusted to the **Multinational Division South (MND-S)** based in Florence. The MND-S, built on the “Vittorio Veneto” Division, is a command capable of planning and conducting multinational and joint operations, ensuring interoperability and flexibility.

Leading the deployment and employment of the MND-S during Steadfast Dart 2026 was Major General Giuseppe Scuderi, an officer from the paratrooper specialty, who operated as the pivot of the multinational land command in the ARF architecture.

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Italian “logistical muscles”: ports, ships, air, and rail

One of the most concrete messages emerging from the exercise concerns **military mobility**: the deployment in Germany required a combination of maritime, air, and rail transport, in addition to large road convoys.

According to the Ministry of Defense, the projection into the German area involved **3 naval units** and **24 aircraft**, plus **3 rail convoys**, **6 helicopters**, and **11 road convoys**, with the movement of about **6,000 linear meters** of materials and vehicles, even in difficult weather conditions (snowfall on routes and very challenging sea conditions on the Atlantic).

Already in the initial phase, the role of the **port of Emden** is cited as an RSOM hub and the progressive arrival of Italian ships with thousands of vehicles and support equipment (numbers reported in the communications on the start of the exercise).

In the ARF framework, under the land command of the MND-S, the **Alpine Brigade “Julia”** was the main maneuver unit, along with multinational contributions.

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The strategic message: deterrence, unity, and rapid reaction

The STDT26 was presented as a demonstration of NATO’s ability to **deploy “with speed and flexibility”** to strengthen the Alliance's territory, with a clear deterrence value. In particular, in statements attributed to the Commander of the Joint Force Command Brunssum, Gen. **Ingo Gerhartz**, the exercise is described as an **important sign of unity and strength** and as proof of the ARF's readiness.

If Steadfast Dart 2026 aimed to verify the “**decide–deploy–integrate–fight**” chain in a multinational key, Italy emerges with an evident political-military result:

1. **Command leadership**: NRDC-ITA leading the ARF (Corps level) and MND-S as the ARF land command.
2. **Logistical credibility and mobility**: transport numbers and projection capabilities supported by a complex joint structure.
3. **Real interoperability**: personnel and units integrated into a multinational device, from C2 to operational components.