

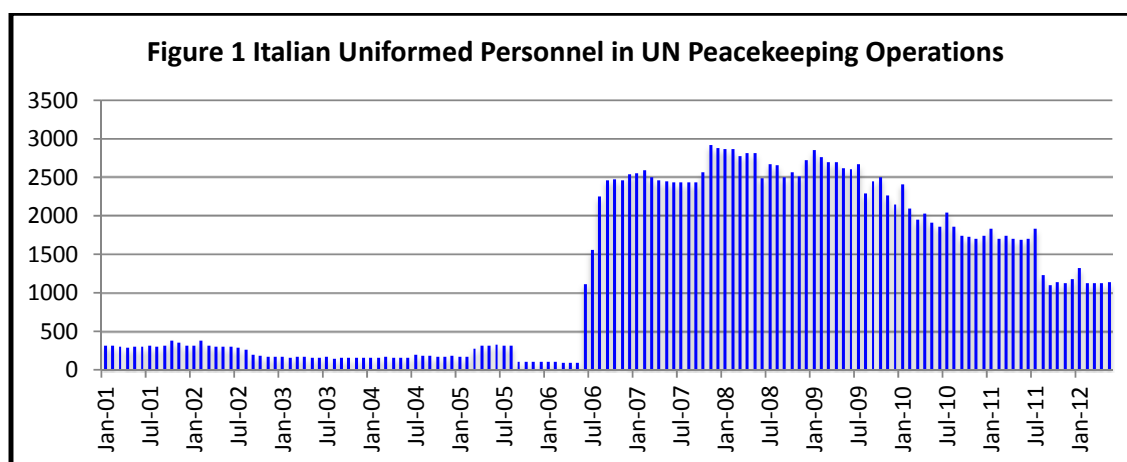
Contributor Profile: Italy

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Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defence Budget ²	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
191,231 ³ World Ranking: 27 Army: 103,945 Navy: 32,320 Air Force: 42,306 Carabinieri 117,943	Multi-role: 48 Search and rescue: 20 Transport: 31 (29 light, 2 medium)	2010: \$18.8bn (0.91% of GDP) 2011: \$18.9bn (0.90% of GDP) 2012: \$17.2bn (0.85% of GDP)	(31 Dec 2012) 1,127 (68 female) Ranking: 20 th (largest UN T/PCC among EU and NATO members)	UNIFIL 1,105 troops (68 female) UNTSO 7 millex MINURSO 5 millex UNFICYP 4 police UNMOGIP 3 millex UNMIK 1 police UNAMA 1 millex UNMISS 1 millex	(30 June 2012) ISAF + EUPOL (Afghanistan) 4,046 Joint Enterprise (Balkans) 1,234 Indian Ocean (NATO Ocean Shield + EU Atalanta) 230
Defense Spending / active troop: US\$98,300 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000) ⁴					

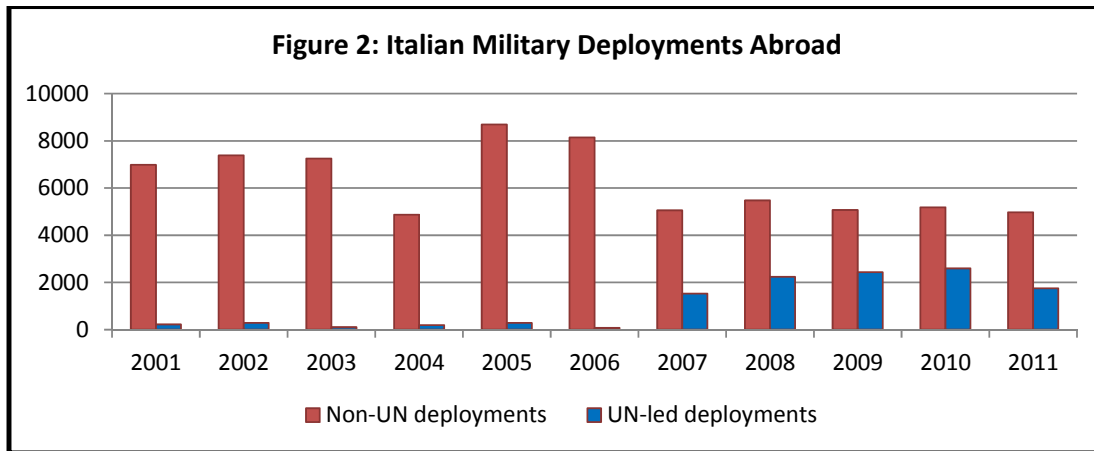
Part 1: Recent Trends

The number of Italian uniformed personnel in UN-led peacekeeping operations surged in 2006 with the expansion of UNIFIL in Lebanon. This mission has been commanded by an Italian general between 2007 and 2010 and since early 2012. From a peak of almost 3,000 troops in February 2008, Italian uniformed UN peacekeepers declined to 1,105 in December 2012. Apart from UNIFIL, Italy participates with military observers and staff officers in eight other UN-led missions.



Overall deployment abroad in both UN and non-UN missions peaked at nearly 8,700 in 2005 and has subsequently ranged between 6,500 and 8,000. As of July 31, 2012 there were 6,759 uniformed personnel deployed abroad, out of which 5,244 are in NATO-led operations, 245 in EU-led missions, 91 in other multinational coalitions and 48 in bilateral operations. The main presence is in Afghanistan (ISAF and Eupol, accounting for a combined 4,120 troops),

followed by Lebanon (UNIFIL 1,108), the Balkans (Joint Enterprise 1,079), and the Indian Ocean (NATO Ocean Shield and EU Operation *Atalanta*, combined 231).



In December 2012 the Parliament approved a [bill](#) presented by the Government to restructure the Armed Forces. Spurred by two different dynamics (i.e., the changing geostrategic situation and financial constraints) the reform aims to fully integrate the Italian Army with its NATO and EU allies and enhance its technological sophistication. The reform – which is due to be fully implemented by the year 2024 - also calls for rebalancing the distribution of funds among the three key components of military spending: personnel (from 70% to 50%), operations (from 12% to 25%) and investment (from 18% to 25%). This will require a major reduction in both military and civilian personnel: from current levels of 183,000 and 30,000 respectively, to 150,000 and 20,000. The cut will affect also senior managerial posts, with a 25% drop in the number of Generals and Admirals.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

While the Italian Constitution stipulates a formal procedure for the declaration of war, Italy has no primary legislation regulating its participation in multilateral military operations abroad.⁵ This means that the executive branch is entitled to send troops abroad without, or prior to, Parliamentary consent. However, to date, government decisions to send troops abroad have always been submitted to a Parliamentary vote.

The rationale for this praxis is twofold. On the one hand, the question of sending troops abroad is considered highly sensitive, both politically and legally, in light of Article 11 of the Italian Constitution, which states: “Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes.” While interpretations of this provision diverge, it is generally admitted that participation in peacekeeping operations, particularly those led by the UN, NATO or EU, are fully compatible with it. Possible breaches of Article 11, however, have been raised by legal experts and politicians in connection with peace enforcement operations, including the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the recent bombing campaign in Libya. While Article 11 concerns did not prevent Italy from taking part in those operations, it is commonly recognized that they influence the acceptance of the rules of engagement of certain missions. Italian troops are, in fact, at times limited in their action by operational caveats in this regard; an issue which has occasionally caused some controversy with some of Italy’s allies in those operations.

Given this legal background, parliamentary ratification is considered indispensable in order to provide political support and legitimacy to all missions abroad. On the other hand, since the defence budget does not include financial resources for operations abroad, additional financing is required, which according to the Italian Constitution can only be provided by Parliamentary decision. Over time, and given the considerable number of different ongoing operations, parliamentary praxis has evolved so that the Government now presents one, comprehensive bill every year, seeking approval for the budget of all (including UN-led) current missions.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Defense (MD) are jointly responsible, under the political guidance of the Prime Minister, for initiating the decision-making process on peacekeeping. The respective Ministers introduce the bill to the joint Foreign Affairs and Defense Committees of both legislative chambers. The [most recent bill](#) was approved on February 24, 2012. It authorizes 23 operations with a combined budget of \$1.65 billion for the year 2012 (compared to \$1.8 billion in 2011). The most costly theatre is Afghanistan (with ISAF and EUPOL operations), with a \$964 million budget for 2012, followed by UNIFIL (\$203 million) and the combined operations in the Balkans (\$126 million). Out of these 23 operations, seven are UN-led, six are led by the EU, five by NATO, two are “coalitions of the willing” and three are purely bilateral.

Deployment times vary according to technical and political considerations; e.g. the deployment of five military observers to the supervision mission in Syria (UNSMIS) took place in a matter of days after the Government’s decision.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

The overarching rationale for Italy’s participation in military operations abroad is the shared international responsibility in addressing situations of instability. National security considerations favor a concentration of Italy’s efforts in areas close to its borders or sources of direct negative consequences. The fact that Italy contributes significantly to only one UN-led mission (UNIFIL) reflects the lack of UN operations in areas considered strategically essential for Italy. Pressure from major partners within NATO and the EU, as well as decisions made in the main international fora, also exert a considerable influence over a decision to participate in a military operation.

Although UN-led missions enjoy the highest degree of legitimacy and therefore of political and popular support, those missions are seen as only one possibility among others. According to a recent update⁶ (September 2012) of a [May 2009 parliamentary survey](#), since 1945, Italy has taken part in 132 military operations, out of which 96 were conducted by an International Organization (UN 38, NATO 27, and EU 23). Forty percent of these were peacekeeping operations, 36% international assistance (police, training and humanitarian relief), 17% were peace enforcement, and seven percent were preventive or peacemaking initiatives. Geographically, 48 operations were in Europe, 30 in Sub-Saharan Africa, 29 in the Middle East, 13 in Asia, eight in Northern Africa and four in Latin America.

Political and Security Rationales: Participation in operations in key strategic areas is normally considered crucial to maintain or reinforce Italy’s influence in that region.

Economic Rationales: There are no significant economic incentives, since reimbursement from the UN only covers a fraction of actual expenditures. In addition, Italy is the sixth major contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget. Italian troops and police abroad receive a special

indemnity which, depending on locations and other factors, might represent a significant economic incentive for individuals to serve as a UN peacekeeper.

Institutional Rationales: From the point of view of the military, participation in peacekeeping is seen as a valuable opportunity for the armed forces to conduct tasks widely supported by public opinion and that receive good and generally positive media attention. It is also valuable in terms of sharing experiences with other armed forces and international organizations. However, UN peacekeeping lacks the strongly integrated command and control mechanisms that are familiar to Italy through its participation in NATO and some EU missions.

Normative Rationales: Participation in UN-led peacekeeping has often been used to emphasize Italy's contribution to the cause of peace and humanitarianism. Indeed, the "rhetoric of peace operations" has created some ambiguity (see also Part 2). The government, the military, and even large parts of the media have – at times maybe unconsciously – spread the image of the Italian peacekeeper as lightly-armed soldiers, delivering humanitarian assistance to civilian population in distress. This popular image has been fed by lack of critical information on contemporary rules of engagement and institutional coverage of UN operations. Only recently, with the high level of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan (respectively, [33](#) and [51](#) as of June 2012) has public opinion become more widely aware of the more robust nature of at least some of the "peace" operations conducted by Italian troops. In comparison, Italian military fatalities in all UN-led missions stands (as per May 2012) at [47](#), out of which 22 occurred in ONUC (1960-64) and 11 in UNOSOM (1992-95).

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Financial and operational constraints represent the most obvious limitation to Italy's contribution to military operations abroad. The European Defence Agency (EDA) estimates that Italy can sustainably deploy 12,000 troops abroad.

Alternative political or strategic priorities: Most current UN-led operations are located in areas which are not of national primary strategic relevance, with the exception of the Middle East, where almost all Italian blue helmets are concentrated.

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: As noted in Part 3, NATO and the EU offer more familiar institutional vehicles for Italian crisis management initiatives.

Financial costs: There are two different kinds of costs related to UN peacekeeping: those derived from Italy's assessed contribution to the peacekeeping budget (approximately \$350 million annually), and those incurred by the Italian contingents. The latter is directly determined by the number of Italian troops, and therefore represents an obvious limitation.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: This is not relevant, since Italy has consistently supported the expansion of mandates of UN-led operations.

Exceptionalism: Not relevant.

Difficult domestic politics: Not relevant, since there is large, bipartisan support among most of the political parties for UN-led peacekeeping operations.

Resistance in the military: While past episodes linked to the failure of UN-led peacekeeping (such as Somalia and Bosnia Herzegovina) has generated some caution, there is overall recognition within the Italian military of recent improvements in UN peacekeeping.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

Broad, solid political support for UN peacekeeping is not expected to weaken in the foreseeable future, even beyond the terms of the current legislature (spring 2013). Instead, public finance constraints and the planned restructuring of the army will shape Italy's future participation in UN peacekeeping. Drawdown in Afghanistan (where currently 57% of Italian troops abroad are stationed) is expected to take place in 2013-14 and might leave room for a larger presence within UN operations, depending on the strategic relevance of the area of deployment.

Besides the possibility of larger numbers of Italian blue helmets, participation of specialized units might likely expand, particularly in the field of police, where the Carabinieri offer a highly sought after model of civilian police with military status and training. They are particularly suitable for maintaining public order in low-security scenarios, as well as for mentoring and training activities. A recent MoU between DPKO and the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (CoESPU), a multilateral institution hosted within a Carabinieri facility in Northern Italy, is a sign of growing cooperation with the UN. This might lead to stronger Carabinieri presence on the ground (currently, out of more than 600 Carabinieri deployed abroad, only a handful serve within UN-led operations in Lebanon and Cyprus).

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There are no major, significant opponents to UN-peacekeeping, which, on the contrary enjoys broad and bi-partisan political support and widespread favor among the public. Aversion to casualties is a significant factor, which is systematically raised by some political parties (mainly the left-wing parties, but also by the Northern League) to call for an end to the Italian participation in the ISAF mission (and before that the Iraqi mission). This seems less relevant to UN-led operations, which are generally perceived to be less dangerous.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

Italy possesses a professional, well-equipped and well-trained military. Potentially, it is capable of providing specialized capacities in many areas, particularly in terms of mobility, enabling units, formed police units, and rule of law functions. The main constraint is financial. Italy hosts the UN Logistic Base (UNLB) in its southern city of Brindisi. The base has significantly expanded and now offers a unique (and probably not yet fully exploited) opportunity to strengthen cooperation between the UN and Italy in the area of logistical support.

Part 8: Further Reading

Legal expert opinions on the interpretation of Article 11:

“[La Guerra e La Costituzione](#),” Stefano Rossi, Sintesi Dialettica: per l'identità democratica.

“[Guerra e diritto, Note a margine di una tesi kelseniana](#)” Tecla Mazzaresca, Università di Brescia.

Italy's involvement with Lebanon/UNIFIL:

“[The UNIFIL II Mission in Lebanon: Italy's Contribution \(ARI\)](#),” Lucía Marta, Real Instituto Elcano.

“[Italy Steeps into the Lebanese Breech](#)” Global Strategy Project. The Daily Star. Marco Vincenzino.
Carabinieri participation in international peace operations: [Missioni dei Carabinieri all'estero](#)

Notes

¹ IISS, *The Military Balance, 2012* (London: IISS/Routledge, 2012).

² Defense Budget figures do not include the Carabinieri's budget. While a military corps, and since 2001, one of the four Italian Armed Forces, the Carabinieri's main task is policing. Currently, approximately 500, out of total of 118,000 Carabinieri, take part in military operations abroad, including UN peacekeeping, as police components.

³ Source [European Defence Agency](#). Civilian personnel in the Ministry of Defense represent an additional 30,479 staff.

⁴ Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of *active* armed forces. Calculated using figures from [Italian Ministry of Defense](#).

⁵ Several bills have been presented in the past ten years to provide a framework for legislation. However, despite broad bipartisan support, none of them is currently scheduled for a vote.

⁶ [Istituto Affari Internazionali](#). L'Italia e le missioni internazionali. Rome, September 2012