er

verywhere apidly

Issue 30 - December 2020

FIGHTING COVID-19

NATO OTAN

NRDC - ITA UBIQUE CELERE

The Magazine of the
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy

NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Italy
Ubique Celere

CONTENTS

1 **THE GEOPOLITICS OF CORONAVIRUS: WINNERS AND LOSERS** Page 5
Lt. Col. **Luca TRACCO**, Italian Army

2 **THE GLOBAL MACROECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19** Page 9
Lt. Col. **Luca PASSANTE**, Italian Army

3 **COVID: A MULTIFACTORIAL CHALLENGE** Page 13
Col. **Federico LUNARDI**, Italian Army

4 **THE COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN** Page 16
Col. **Raffaele DELLA ROCCA**, Italian Army

5 **HAS THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT CHANGED?** Page 20
Lt. Col. **Antonio TARTAGLIONE**, Italian Army

6 **HOW TO FACE THE COVID EMERGENCY** Page 24
Lt. Col. **Francesco LOCCI**, Italian Army

7 **COVID 2.0** Page 24

/NRDCItaly

@NRDCITA

NRDC ITA

NRDC-Italy

Everywhere Rapidly is the authorized official publication of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, Italy. All editorial content of Everywhere Rapidly is coordinated, for publication, by the Public Affairs Office.

The contents of Everywhere Rapidly are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Nations thereby represented. All intellectual property rights, including copyright in the content displayed on Everywhere Rapidly, belong to their respective owners.

Printed by: Grafica Olona

er everywhere rapidly

FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented and multidimensional crisis, affecting not only citizens' health, their way of life and the global economy but also international security. Allied armed forces are playing a vital role in support of national authorities. National forces have implemented own solutions to cope with the emergency first and the evolution of pandemic thereafter. This includes logistics and planning, field hospitals, transport of patients, disinfection of public areas and at border crossings. They also reinforce national police to ensure the respect of preventive measures. Meanwhile, Armed Forces focus on preserving their ability to fight and manage crises.

NRDC-ITA is contributing to this effort in many ways, providing logistic support to population for the distribution of humanitarian aid and medical apparels, augmenting the health system with doctors, personnel, ambulances, field hospitals. NRDC-ITA is facing the pandemic working in three lines of effort: preserving our ability to deliver credible and effective deterrence and defense while continuing to exercise and train; prevent the spreading of the virus and minimize risks to our personnel and the community; supporting national civilian efforts. In doing so, we are adopting all mitigation measures necessary to ensure continuity to activities planned for this year in terms of mutual training support, adapting scheduled events, planning and doctrine development. We almost daily review our plans, to tailor our actions to the array of options available, according to the evolution of the outbreak and its implications for both the NATO Command Structure and NATO Force Structure.

COVID-19 became one of the most interesting topics at stake in the Alliance today. Several conversations are ongoing at different level in the Alliance on how Nations cope with the pandemic and what should be the role of Armed Forces and their implications for the Alliance. NATO is exerting an active role as platform for sharing information, best practices and lessons learned among Allies. NRDC-ITA is at the forefront of this intellectual debate, hence we have decided to dedicate this edition of ER Magazine to the COVID-19 pandemic and the way we tackle this issue.

The arc of history

When we look into the darkest corners of our past we ask ourselves if we are destined to wander back into the darkest of days. Can our cooperation, connections, and technology allow us to shake off the terrible circumstances of old, such as pandemics? This trying year replied with a resounding and heart-breaking answer: no. Pandemics are part of humanity and we are relearning that lesson.

In December of 2019, following the breakout of a deadly pneumonia in western China, a new contagious virus was identified, now known as "coronavirus"(COVID-19). What we, and the world initially believed, might be a local event soon turned into a worldwide contagion.The virus disrupted our lives and our health. During the initial weeks of 2020, nations and organisations across the world, including NATO, were starting to understand the impact of the pandemic. Reactions included the closing of borders, travel restrictions and quarantines which were accompanied by anxiety, econmic recession, and significant implications for geopolitics.

This emergency allowed the NRDC-ITA community to work together to face and contain our new enemy. We strove to protect our personnel families, remain fit, remain connected, and to support local authorities. Preventive measures and continuity plans at our headquarters were implemented to reduce the risk of infection while ensuring that our essential work continued.

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted our lives. In addition to the negative health impacts we find our communities, our economies and our politics bending under the weight of the pandemic. However, they will not break and we will adapt to changing roles, relationships and realities.

This edition of ER magazine focuses on how our multinational community dealt with the pandemic. We describe our actions, the lectures that helped keep our minds sharp and our communities connected, the implications of the pandemic, and how we've improved. If dark days return, we shall find the light that follows.

The geopolitics of Coronavirus: winners and losers

Lt. Col. **Luca TRACCO**, Italian Army

The Coronavirus pandemic is impacting many facets of life in our connec world. Earlier this year the NRDC-ITA staff asked Professor Paolo Magri, a journalist, publicist and Executive Vice President and Director of the Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), to identify possible geopolitical scenarios created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Professor used his expertise to identify and share his opinion on the potential winners and losers in the ongoing unconventional war against a new universal enemy.

The virtual event, attended by members of the 18 contributing countries to the NRDC-ITA NATO HQ, was an extraordinary opportunity to investigate if the "my country first" approach prevails. And once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, in fact, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm you won't be the same person who walked in".

(Haruki Murakami)[1]

Everything will be different

The thought of a global crisis that could negatively impact all of the earth's inhabitants was almost unfathomable especially for those in western countries born within the past fifty years as they did not experience the individual or collective traumas associated with World War II or other conflicts. Whether one identifies as a boomer, millennial, or Generation Z, it was convenient to believe that such dramatic events were confined to the past, were a part of a gripping fiction novel, or were adapted for a TV series. This was not something we wanted or expected to experience first-hand.

Although climate change is recognized as a looming global catastrophe; its effects including famine, desertification or resource driven conflicts are generally geographically localized thus far. Therefore, the traditional regionally focused approach made a worldwide event seem unlikely or impossible.

Arguably, even when compared to wars of the 20th century, the pandemic of 2020 is the most significant global challenge in centuries. All countries were brought to their knees, economically and politically, within a few months, with continuing negative impacts in the social and political sphere as well.

All aspects of life have been impacted: consolidated habits and practices, including how to work, travel and socialize had to change and continue to evolve as we learn more about the virus. Simultaneously, populations degraded, health networks were strained, and education halted or reduced. This unforeseen and ongoing emergency will leave a painful and enduring legacy for generations.

For this reason, politicians and commentators made an understandable comparison between the current pandemic and war. There is an enemy, a virus named SARS-CoV-2, which is killing civilians and military personnel. It does not respect borders, treaties or pacts. And, although it is too early to identify, like all conflicts, this battle will have winners and losers.

1 Haruki Murakami (born, 12 January 1949) is a Japanese writer, and university academic. His books and stories have been bestsellers in Japan as well as internationally, with his work being translated into 50 languages and selling millions of copies outside his native country.

United we stand, divided we fall

The logic of everyone for themselves seems to prevail over long-lasting relationships, friendships and alliances. The "my country first" approach appears to be rapidly overtaking previous progresses in the field of solidarity and mutual understanding; disrupting well-established cooperation and coordination among departments and nations, unions or coalitions.

Perhaps for the first time, people are beginning to understand the depth of connectivity in our world. The original, some may argue natural, instinct of self-preservation as a first response to the virus led to the raising of walls, the closing of borders, and the locking of doors.

However, it soon became apparent that such drastic and reactive measures were extremely vulnerable to this communal, invisible enemy. From individuals to nations, it is no longer viable to view the current crisis from a regional perspective. Militarily speaking, the Area of Interest is overlapping with the Area of Operations and covering the whole globe. If there is a possibility for victory in this war, the way to achieve it is through a global coalition. The survival of humanity, in its current structure, strongly depends on collective health. The interest of self-preservation is and will continue to be exacerbated by the pandemic.

This unprecedented catastrophe has demonstrated, even to the most sceptical, that the strong connections between national economies are like dominoes; when one falls others will follow. Therefore, having acknowledged a potential collective collapse, it is now mandatory to quickly intervene to recover: a balance must be struck between reviving human health and avoiding an exceedingly long economic paralysis.

It is detrimental to future security that the idea of autonomous state recovery from the pandemic is exposed as fundamentally flawed. Perhaps the XVI century English writer John Donne[2] quote, "no man is an island"[3] has never been so relevant and applicable.

Come back of the state

Nations intervened at their level, focusing inward with pride and hubris, within their best means and capabilities to solve their internal situation. Additionally, governments set in place all available protectionist measures and relied on strategic economic assets to save human life and (or) economy. Earning debt over the debt was the solution pursued, under the silent approval of national and regional central banks. Authorities seemed free to adopt any action they wanted to contain the situation; waiting for better times to recover the debt. Once again, a perfect comparison can be made with wartime, when reconstruction drives a new boom

As the first country to impose strict control measures, China initiated stringent lockdown proce-

2 John Donne (22 January 1572 – 31 March 1631) was an English poet, scholar, soldier, cleric in the Church of England and Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London. He is considered the pre-eminent representative of the metaphysical poets. His poetical works are noted for their metaphorical and sensual style and include sonnets, love poems, religious poems, Latin translations, epigrams, elegies, songs, and satires. He is also known for his sermons.

3 "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee". Meditation XVII, Devotion upon Emergent Occasion, first published in 1624.

dures on the population of Wuhan; while citizens of western democracies watched these events unfold believing that such restrictions would be unthinkable in their nations.
Authoritarian states seemed to have the freedom to act more decisively and to impose substantial restrictions on movements and freedoms, quicker than western democracies could. However, as the situation escalated, nearly all nations were forced to apply comparable control measures on their citizens. It was apparent that uncoordinated local regulations had the unintended consequence of increasing levels of confusion and panic.

Citizens began to demand a robust, coordinated state response requiring leaders who are capable to lead and guide them to the light at the end of the COVID tunnel. It was clear that the quicker and more decisive a government acted the more support they received from the electorate.

The pandemic has brought the problems associated with isolationism to the surface. The role of each state, as a sovereign institution over its territory, is being reassessed because of the critical situation in progress. Unsurprisingly, the pandemic has highlighted the need for global unity in the face of such an unforeseen threat. Governments have shown themselves capable of making rapid decisions to face this extraordinary scenario. However, it is clear, that with all the ensuing challenges in terms of health, economy, social and political aspects, going it alone is not the safest or wisest option.

Authoritarian states

It could be reasonably argued that nationalism is winning the battle on the democracy field; citizens are calling for their leaders to respond firmly, to provide efficient guidance and to limit the death tolls. The war rhetoric has returned; it has not only enabled governments to exert extraordinary power but has also mobilized people to act in unexpected ways. This new war climate encouraged cohesion among citizens. Initially, national pride was used to paint other nations as scapegoats. Later, flags waved from balconies and terraces as a sign of national unity, and inspired people to believe in a possible recovery.

Recent calls within European countries for powerful leaders have uncomfortable and undemocratic undertones. It could be argued, that this virus contributed to an idea that an authoritarian solution is better. For the historian and jurist, this could conjure an image from ancient Rome: the role of the *dictator rei gerendae causa*. This coveted position was free from negative connotation and only invoked in times of extreme crisis. However, its final implementation in 44 B.C. resulted in *Giao Julio Caeser* becoming *dictator perennis*. This should act as a stark reminder.

People may demand for a more decisive, direct authority to solve problems in times of crisis; believing that everything moves better and faster if one leader makes decisions on behalf of all their citizens. However, it would be a hasty and poorly informed argument that western democracy is turning towards authoritarian 'democracy'.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that unity across nations has been a force for good. This is most apparent in Europe where relationships have facilitated an unprecedented period of peace and economic prosperity for over 70 years.

It is easy to observe that consolidated balances can shake during crisis, and the hard and long path made by the EU seemed to be on the edge of collapse. Nevertheless, most of the governments understood - sooner or later - that working together, collaboratively, was the only way to face the situation. Seeking a multilateral solution was the crucial turning point. It took just four weeks to agree on a shared emerging plan; and likely a bit more to pass to a recovery one. While not quite sufficient, it proved to be a vital step in the right direction: a step towards the holding of the system, and possibly to an upgrade of the Union.

New alliances

Europe has historically considered itself as a free-rider on the international exchequer: a fair relationship with Russia, good business relations with China and an ally of the US. However, it may now recognize that the old continent is only a field for the bigger players. The current geopolitical balance between each of them will most likely be different from the recent past. In conflicts, new alliances are formed, and old ones tested. Countries or groups of countries linked by a long tradition of cooperation in the commercial, economic, cultural and military sectors may start to find themselves reassessing their respective positions and roles.

Consequently, if Europe is not imposing itself as regional power, future generations may be at risk in the medium and long term, as a result of the current crisis. Notwithstanding that European countries and the US are connected by strong historical links, and, on top of that, by the sharing of same liberal principles. As Eve born from Adam's rib, like any husband and wife's relationship may fall into tension and crisis before fixing and restoring their love.
Nevertheless, in Professor Helg's view it seems that new partnerships are emerging. For the Italians, it will not be easy to forget Russian soldiers, togeth-

NATO
RAPID DEPLOYABLE CORPS
ITALY

THE GEOPOLITICS OF CORONAVIRUS

Professor Paolo Magri is Executive Vice President and Director of the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) and Professor of International Relations at Bocconi University. He is also a member of several prestigious boards and organizations such as the Strategic Committee of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Europe Policy Group of the World Economic Forum (Davos); the Advisory Board of the Italian Entrepreneurial Association of Lombardy region; the Board of Directors of the Italy-China Foundation and the Secretary of the Italian Group of the Trilateral Commission.
Previously, Professor Magri also served as Programme Director to the UN Secretariat in New York and, up to 2005, he was also the Director of International Affairs at Bocconi University in Milan.
Professor Magri is a regular speaker, writer and commentator to diverse media outlets on global issues, US foreign policy, Iran and Middle East.

#WEARENATO

er with those of 7th ITA CBRN Defence regiment[4] employed to sanitize hospitals and hospices in Bergamo's area; or cargo full of protective equipment from China landing at Milan international airport. Most probably, this was merely an instrument of propaganda, a calculated attempt to move the public opinion towards a pro-Russia and China sentiment and an effort to form new coalitions.

The end of globalization

This year has demonstrated the deficiencies of globalization and the current network of international trade. Real and *de facto* lockdowns created temporary shortages for some critical goods and resources and exposed the paralysis of resupply systems. This crisis reinforces the idea that that the world market will take a long time to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Each country has learned that strategic industries cannot rely exclusively on other country's markets. Nations are reconsidering whether goods that are deemed important for internal security and health should be produced internally or at least within the same regional power. Europe, as a unique regional actor, must build up its champions of industries whilst also acknowledging cost and quality differences.

Conclusion

The war against coronavirus is the new mantra in the scribing our age of pandemic. It is "a war that will change everything, what we do and how we operate".
European countries have acknowledged, more than others, that the defeat of a common enemy and subsequent recovery is not the journey of a single nation. Final victory requires synchronization, strong commitment, and mutual support. All will suffer if solidarity and coordination do not prevail within and between states.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Luca TRACCO (ITA-A), after being responsible for the set up and development of NATO military exercises, is currently serving as Exercise Programme & Studies Staff Officer at the HQ NRDC-ITA.

4 The 7th CBRN Defence Regiment "Cremona" is the Italian Army specialized unit dedicated to Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear reconnaissance, identification, sampling and decontamination.

The Global macroeconomic impacts of COVID-19

Lt. Col. **Luca PASSANTE**, Italian Army

During the spring of 2020, Professor Cottarelli conducted a digital lecture with the NRDC-ITA community during the early stages of the Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) pandemic.
The pandemic has negatively impacted the entire world not only in terms of the loss of human life and the strain on health services, but also in financial terms. The anti-COVID containment measures adopted in countries and communities have severely impacted economic activity, including the closure of firms, increases in unemployment, and a sharp drop in commodity prices, to name only a few examples.
At that time, it was difficult to predict the short and long-term impacts on economies and the global financial sector, particularly in Europe, as we know now.

The April 2020 "World Economic Outlook"

Professor Cottarelli started his lecture by presenting the forecast data for global growth, as reported in the April 2020 "World Economic Outlook" (WEO) published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[1] This document depicts unprecedented global economic growth since the end of the Second World War, characterised by the first-time negative growth in the first quarter of 2020. In fact, the WEO reported a decrease of -3%, for advanced economies, and this sharp decrease was a surprising figure considering the previous projection for the same period was about +3%. The result is an economic loss of 6%, as depicted in the figures below, an outcome far worse than during the 2009 crisis.

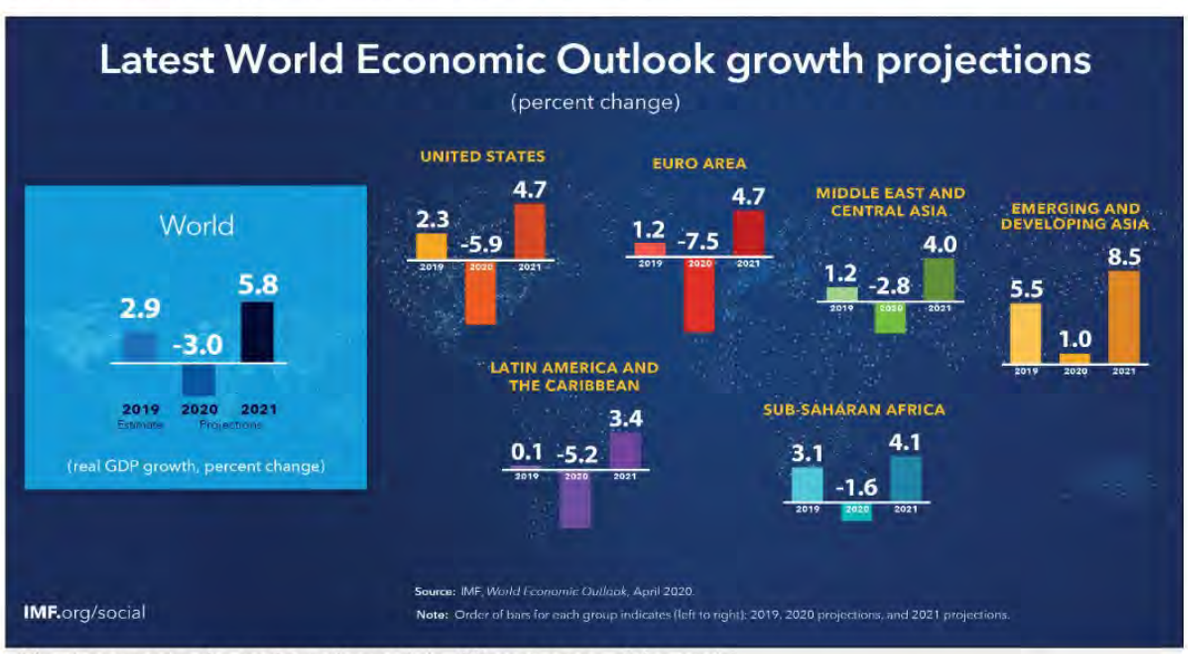

Fig. 1 compares the projected growth in different areas of the world.

1 The *World Economic Outlook* (WEO) is a survey by the IMF that is published twice a year, in the spring and the autumn. The WEO is drafted by IMF staff and has benefited from comments and suggestions by Executive Directors following their discussion of the report.

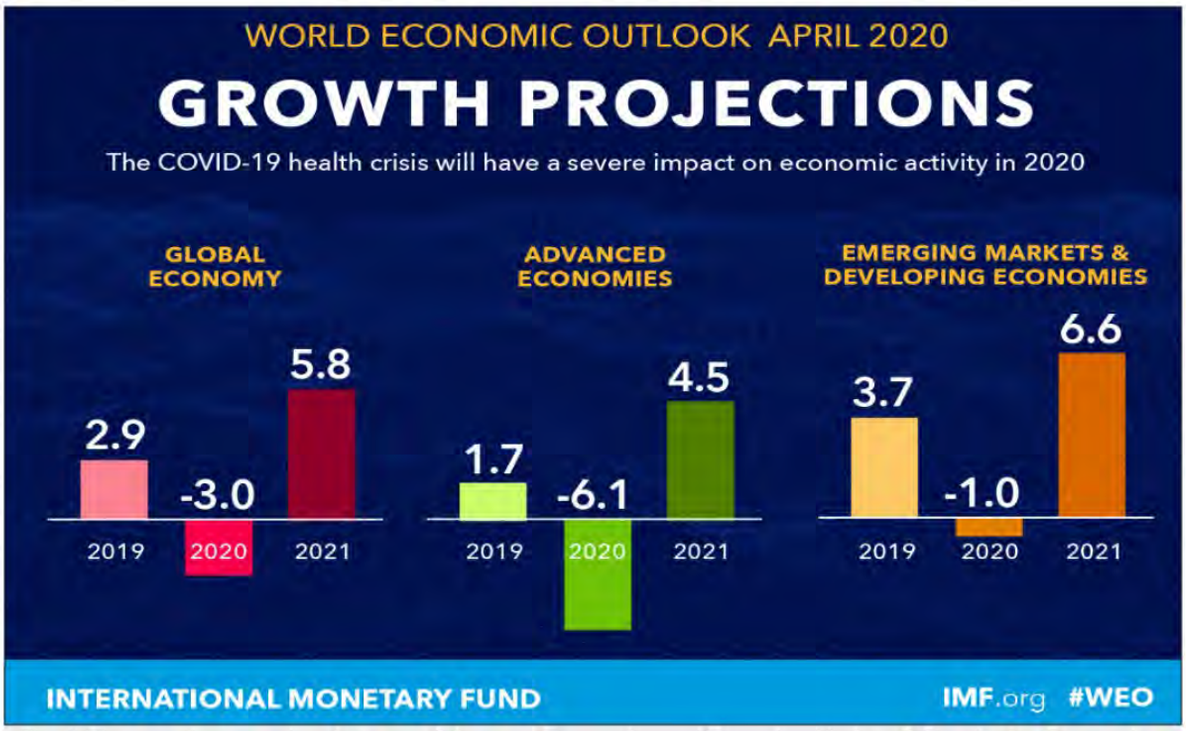

Fig. 2: The growth comparison between Advanced Economies and Emerging Markets & Developing Economies.

The shock has spread and mostly affected advanced economies, while in emerging economies the impact has not been so severe, especially when considering the low pre-pandemic forecasts for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. China is likely to be one of the only countries to have positive GDP growth, of roughly 5%.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic shock is substantially different compared to the Spanish Flu in 1919, the Great Depression in 1929 and the more recent 2008-09 recession. The Spanish Flu pandemic killed 15 million people, but at that time, the world was capable of accepting a high number of casualties and the economic consequences were limited due to the lowers levels of regional and global economic integration. We now live in a different world where mass casualty events are rarer, concerns about the value of human life are more pronounced and economic shocks frequently have a global impact. Furthermore, even though the 1929 crisis was caused by a drop in the demand for goods, this pandemic has produced a shock to manufacturing because of lockdown. The stringent and harsh anti-COVID containment measures aimed at protecting lives and reducing the spread of the virus have had a severe impact on the activities of consumers and producers, disrupting supply chains, forcing the closure of firms and limiting mobility, with acute effects on sectors that rely on social interaction (such as travel, entertainment and tourism). Additionally, the lockdown measures had substantial follow-on effects, with an increase in job losses and a drop in investments. Shortly afterwards, domestic disruptions spilled over to trading partners through linked trade and global value chains, adding to the overall negative macroeconomic impact and amplifying the crisis.

Economic policy response to COVID-19

The uncertainty of this virus, its duration, the number of the infected people and, in general, the medical emergencies in connection with an expected second wave, do not allow economists to develop a clear picture of the 2021 global economy. That said, the IMF forecasts a reboot of economic activities in the world with a +5.8% growth rate. Global growth is forecast at -3% percent in 2020 and the trend should remain negative in 2021 among advanced economies. Negative growth has been forecast for several advanced nations: United States -6%, Europe -7.5%, Japan -5.2%, United Kingdom -6.5%, Germany -7.0%, France -7.2%, Italy -9.1% and Spain -8%.

The global economy has become much more connected, especially in terms of supply chains. For example, production disruptions in China had immediate negative repercussions for foreign trade.

Given the aforementioned economic depression, governments had to adopt measures to counter the negative impacts on the micro and macro economy and on the financial industry. Government policies to counter the pandemic are occurring in three temporal phases: policies and actions implemented in the short, medium and long term and with the support of the Central Banks.

In the short-term, governments must limit the spread of the pandemic by adopting containment measures to reduce the number of people infected, e.g., lockdowns, social distancing and healthcare measures. Concurrently, nations must introduce fiscal policies that support the damaged sectors. The main negative effects are the loss of jobs, limitations and closures of production/supply chains, the reduction of investments and bankruptcies.

Professor Cottarelli explained that, for those who are forced to stay home, governments can implement measures that augment income reductions and also provide sufficient liquidity to firms. By these measures, many countries in the world have released guarantees on loans permitting firms to return loans and avoid bankruptcy. Unfortunately, bureaucracies and political fights have slowed this process in many countries, the United States being an example, where the Federal Reserve Bank has quickly and effectively intervened but legislative policies have been much slower to support income losses and firms. On the contrary, in Europe, due to a limited shared budget, EU member states were forced to intervene individually, increasing a never ending discussion on a common economic, financial and monetary policy.

In the second phase, which is when the pandemic fades, the main objective, in the medium term, will be the graduated return to normality. Governments should create the conditions to boost demand and to re-launch the economy. In this vein, governments should encourage an increase in their deficits by purchasing directly items and services, consumption goods, medical supplies and investing in infrastructure. This method is more effective, with greater positive effects than direct monetary transfers to citizens.

Without a doubt, a return to a pre-pandemic state is more difficult for the countries that have been hit hardest, such as Italy, Great Britain and Spain. The recovery phase will be undeniably slower. Production - the main part of GDP - has to be maintained not with macroeconomic policy, but by allowing people to go back to work as soon as possible, but ensuring a high degree of health safety. Lockdowns that force people to stay at home reduce income and spending. Furthermore, the negative psychological impact of the initial shock, the continuing pandemic and lockdown itself have forced people to put off purchasing goods and services. This also holds for the entrepreneurs who have decided to suspend or delay investments to expand their businesses because they do not know whether there will be another lockdown or if there will be enough demand to support their business or service.

Therefore, in this second phase, demand should be supported by adopting economic policies that cushion the impact of a drop in activities. Central banks using monetary stimulus and liquidity facilities to support government financial strategies should encourage and facilitate the renegotiation of existing loans.

The third phase, even if not detailed by Professor Cottarelli, should be characterised by investments that address infrastructure problems, with the required external support. In this phase, the ECB should play a pivotal role in releasing liquidity (funds or cash flow) to the central banks of member states. This monetary process should boost measures to overcome negative economic and financial effects. However, at the same time, governments will have to borrow and increase their deficits, a strategy that will only have positive results if governments resist the temptation to raise taxes.

This year Italy will increase its public deficit from 135 to 155%. Germany is not challenged in borrowing money because of its ability to reduce its GDP rate. For this reason, Italy requires the support of other countries and the solidarity of the EU through the measures adopted by the ECB. This European institution has responded quickly by purchasing government securities totalling over 1 trillion Euros. This operation transfers monetary liquidity to the banks. In this way, at the end of 2020, the ECB will own a quarter of Italian public deficit. Through the intermediation of banks directly connected with the European Bank, Italy will borrow over 500 billion for its recovery: 125 billion from public deficit and the remainder from the financial markets. Additionally, European institutions are looking for distributing the already announced and confirmed European Recovery Funds to finance the remaining gap, notably for medical expenses and new facilities. All these instruments will limit the financial crisis and bankruptcies in nations. Prof. Cottarelli concluded his lecture by hoping that Europe will be united in implementing additional measures that avoid a financial crisis and support the integrity of the EU.

The revised WEO growth projections and conclusions

The most recent WEO data, released in October 2020, after the reopening from the lockdown of the spring and summer of 2020, are illustrated in figures 3 and 4. The negative economic impacts are now evident: low demand for services and goods, a loss of working days, severe contraction in both economic activity and the financial investment market. Many countries are expected to contract their per capita income growth by the end of 2020 and in 2021. Additionally, emerging markets and developing economies have and are incurring a greater loss of output in 2020-21. For advanced economies, growth is expected to be moderate and lower when compared to the April 2020 projections. At the same time, sovereign debt levels are set to increase significantly, as well as a sustained increase in unemployment rates because fiscal interventions have not been able to reallocate workers from impacted sectors, such as travel, to growing sectors like e-commerce.

In sum, the October WEO report indicates that global growth is forecasted at -4.4% in 2020 and the 2021 is projected at -5.2%. Only China's GDP is projected to return to positive growth. These positive outcomes in China result from implemented recovery policies, which prevented widespread

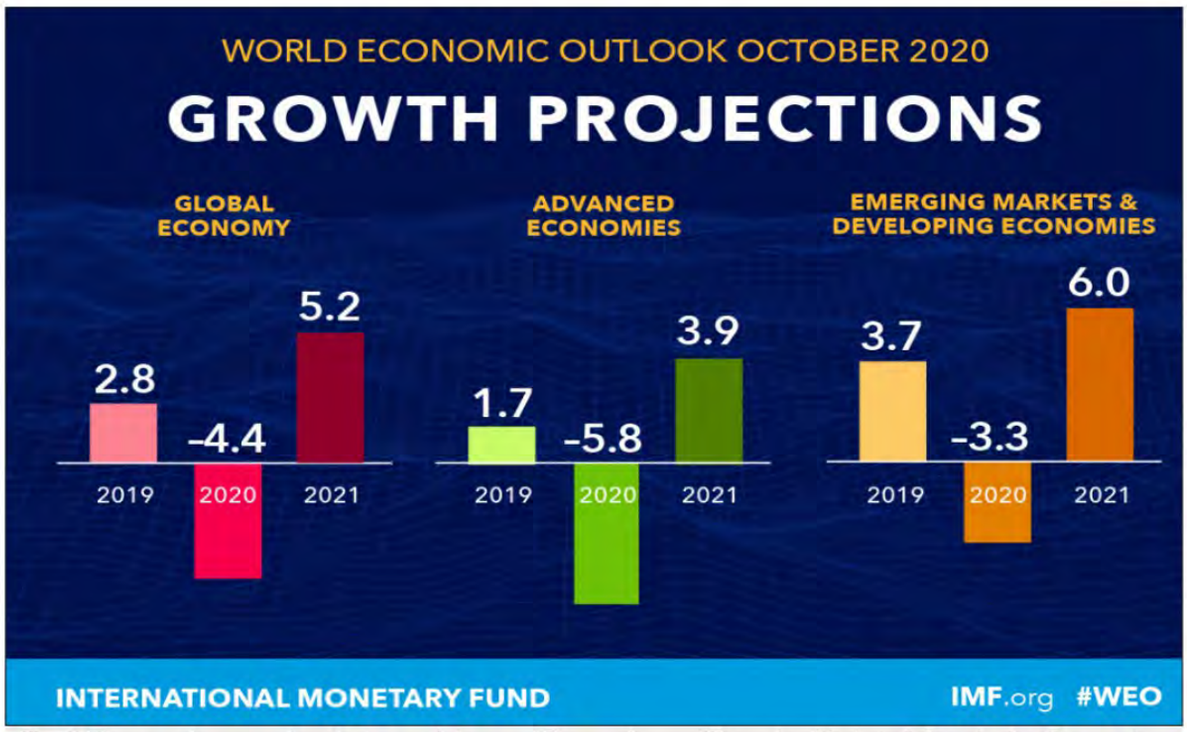

Fig. 3: The growth comparison between Advanced Economies and Emerging Markets & Developing Economies.

bankruptcies; freezes in debt services; the intervention of the Chinese government in delivering direct spending and liquidity support.

Conclusion

Since the lecture and the return to some normalcy in Europe during the summer of 2020, pandemic has returned in force during the last two months. As we publish this article and magazine countries and communities are returning harsh measures to combat the pandemic, such as to stringent lockdown measures, closing schools, and limiting or suspending some business activities. These measures, and the resurgence of the virus, will certainly reduce these negative projections for economic growth.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Luca PASSANTE (ITA- A) currently works as JLSG J1 OPS/PLANS in the NRDC-ITA Headquarters.

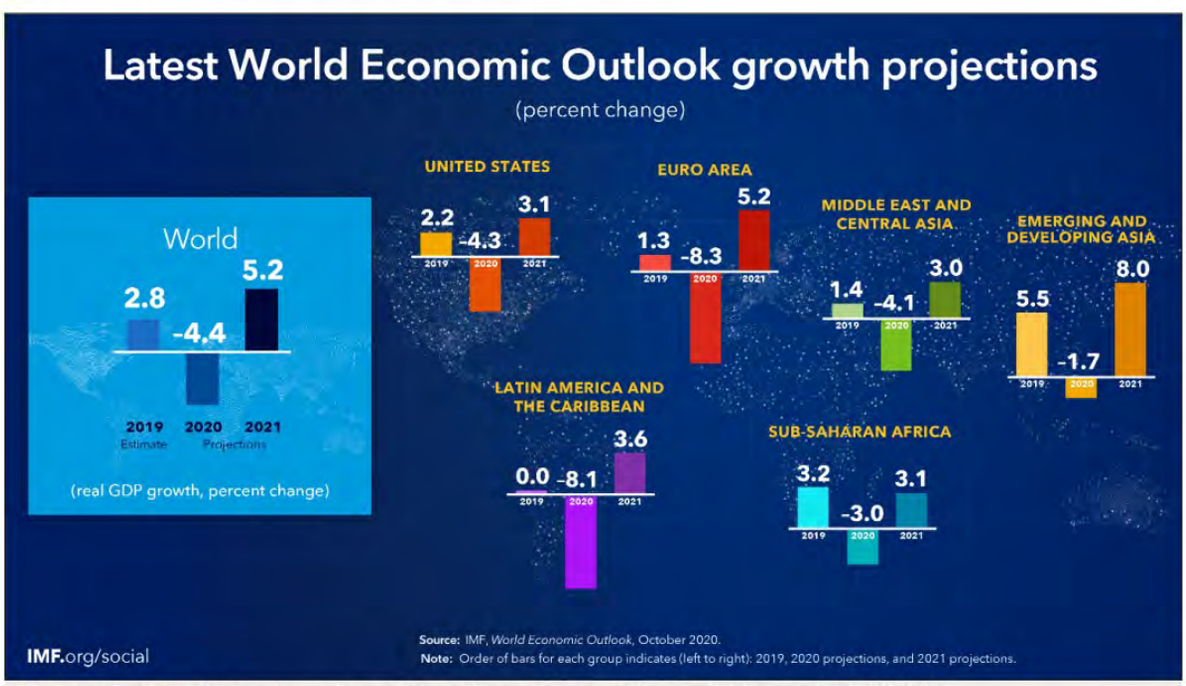

Fig. 4 compares the projected growth in different areas of the world forecasted 2020-21.

COVID: a multifactorial challenge

Col. **Federico LUNARDI**, Italian Army

During the 2019 Christmas period our attention was drawn to TV reports from China. The large Chinese city of Wuhan was completely isolated and all inhabitants were forced to remain at home. Related news stories highlighted a viral epidemic that caused respiratory distress and that was highly contagiousness by air.

Like the pieces of a puzzle we started to analyze the information found on open source systems to gain a better understanding, even if a rough picture of the situation. Importantly, we need to see if the viral disease could impact our community. A classified report was written and some days later a presentation was delivered to Command Group, DCOSs and ACOSs inside our headquarters. At that time some cases had manifested in Europe, in France and Germany, and others were still under medical investigation.

The main message was "to pay attention during travelling, exercises and meetings outside of Italy". Less than a month later the press reported the case of a Chinese couple, in Rome on their honeymoon who were admitted to the hospital. A few days later the first cases were identified in Lodi and the first death in Vo Euganeo occurred. This was the beginning of the fight against SARS CoV2 (the virus was also named during this period).

Since the beginning of human history contagious diseases had a great impact on battlefields and developed during conflicts. The first case that comes to mind: Athens suffered for a "plague" outbreak (431- 411 b. c.) as Thucydides wrote in his book; during the Caffa's siege (1346) the corpses of those killed by the plague were used like bio-ammunitions and thrown with catapults into the town. Pizzaro gave to the American indigiounous people blankets infected with smallpox to neutralize the enemy's army without fighting. This trend continued until the First World War when the flu pandemic played an important role, for some historians the most important, on the course of final months of the terrible conflict.

As the medical branch our task was to provide verified pieces of news and medical guidelines to our multinational military personnel and their families. It was essential to deliver simple and clear information to our multinational community since they faced a figurative tsunami of medical uncontrolled information. The initial situation was challenging and stressful and we communicated to the world that what was happening in Italy was a preview for the rest of the developed world. China and Italy seemed far away but that distance was quickly erased as the virus spread.

So we then wrote medical bulletins statistics, percentages and useful information including phone numbers to contact the local health care system, etc. With each passing day the scope and scale of the bulletin grew beyond the national statistics for Italy. The spread of the contagion and the multinational mix within our headquarters required us to broaden our perspective to include all of NATO to keep our personnel and their families fully informed.

Travelling during a pandemic is, in fact, one of the most dangerous situations because it requires meeting people, sharing small spaces, and exposure outside of your local area. Alternatively, staying at home requires a better understanding of the general situation and also to stay better connected to your relatives and friends. As we have learned in life, crucial moments there is often not the right choice but the individual has to carefully evaluate specific pros and cons and make the least worst choice.

We also added scientific information related to the treatment of the disease to permit a better vision of the issue.

One key collective lesson learned was remaining connected with our colleagues in sister HQs. In staying connected we shared our experiences, lessons learned, suggestions, and documents. This sort of common background was essential to remain connected with our community of different NATO entities.

The medical personnel of MED Branch was involved also in clinical activities inside the compound both at the infirmary than giving the physiological support from the very beginning to the drivers and the soldiers involved in the operation

er everywhere rapidly

Fig 1- A medical test

of the coffins transportation from Bergamo. The defusing activity was performed for any transportation's activity.

A positive working environment with the Military Hospital in Milan also allowed us to cooperate and to support both the Corps' infirmaries and other military personnel. This Military Hospital was at the center of the storm and performed exceptionally well as it collaborated with the civilian hospitals of Milan.

Additionally, from April until the end of May one of the Branch's physicians was tasked as an On Scene Commander (OSC) for the "Lombardia e Piemonte Orientale Covid 19 Task Force."This demanding assignment required coordinating with up to 140 military physicians, pharmacists and nurses employed in local civil Hospitals (Lodi, Bergamo, Alzano Lombardo, Novara and Peschiera del Garda) or in the replacement of family doctors in Codogno, Lodi and Bergamo provinces. It's worth noting that among these practitioners there was also an Ugo Mara barrack's military doctor.This Task Force supported the public health system, including the many health care providers impacted, if not killed, by COVID.

It is important to emphasize a few points about this collective effort to combat the virus. First, it was built in a short amount of time in a joint, combined and interagency way. Military and civilian personnel were essential to the hospitals and in the practitioners' ambulatories when combating a common overwhelming enemy. It's not possible to count how many patients were treated by military personnel. All the men and the women in uniform, as well as their families, involved are grateful for the exceptional support provided by our team.

During those dark and challenging months, our normal rotuines were abandoned. In Lodi, where the highest quantity of militaries) personnel was on duty night and day according with the schedule delivered by the civilian authorities: each provider had to follow a different time line that made not only impossible any common moment (included meals) but also required a very active logistic support (ensuring military vehicles being ready, at any moment, to transport military personnel from

er everywhere rapidly

Fig 2 - Activities performed in hospital

accommodation to hospital and vice versa). Being from seven o clock in the morning to eight in the evening was the only possibility, for the On Scene Commander, to have a daily contact with everyone. Saturday and Sunday gave the chance to wear the DPI1 and sharing time inside the ward and ICU with the colleagues.

In Alzano Lombardo, Bergamo, Novara and Peschiera del Garda other military medical teams were deployed with an Officer in charge who guaranteed support to and with both military and civilian comrades. At least weekly, the OSC visited these groups and had frequent contact with the local civilian Health Authorities to collect information on which the military chain of Command (Comando Operativo Interforze and Army Staff) located in Rome, could make informed decision and plan future efforts.
Another important activity was performed by the sanitizer team of the Support Brigades which keep save and clean not only our barracks but also the nearby civilian hospitals inBusto Arsizio, Saronno, and Legnano.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the initial months of this ongoing pandemic we can say that this pandemic has been and is still a demanding real life exercise with multifactorial aspects. We have applied our experiences from previous Vigorous Warrior (VW) medical exercises in which an Italian joint, combined and interagency team was assembled not only with Role 2 personnel but was combined with logisticians, and RDOITs (Rapid Deployable Outbreak Investigation Teams). The pivotal role of the Military Health and Veterinary School and the Multinational Medical Joint Training Center permitted to generate an efficient and fruitful LI/LL process that became helpful in this situation. The next VW edition was scheduled to take place in Italy in 2021 but, because of COVID, it will be postponed to 2022 and it will be the best opportunity to test and refine our common procedures in a biological outbreak. This pandemic is a dramatic and unwanted "opportunity" for our medical experts to learn how to work together, along with a litany of civilian and military agencies, to protect our communities.

About the Author

Colonel Federico LUNARDI (ITA-A) serves as the ACOS MED / MEDICAL ADVISOR of NRDC-ITA.

er verywhere apidly

4 The communication campaign

Col. **Raffaele DELLA ROCCA**, Italian Army

A communication campaign is a planned sequence of communications and interactions that leads to a defined and measurable outcome. A campaign brings together a series of media activities, public relations, advertising (if needed), digital media content, public diplomacy and strategic engagements. In this way, all communications are integrated and complementary to achieve the campaign objective. This definition refers to a complex activity which requires significant resources and is conducted at the highest levels of command.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic was the first truly global health emergency in over a century. At other times nations and communities have experienced challenging situations like nuclear incidents, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters. But, never has an event touched almost everyone, directly or indirectly, in such a short period of time. During the early weeks of 2020, the prevailing thought was that virus was a distant problem that did not require too much of our attention. This perspective was proven wrong since the virus quickly spread all over the world, to bother developed and developing nations. Among the different fields which deserved and still deserve attention, communication has a high priority. Since the first cases of COVID-19, the media environment revealed its complexity and it is undoubtable that the huge amount of information contributed to our sense of individual and collective anxiety. If we consider the wide-reaching lockdowns adopted across Europe and the increased weight of the virtual dimension, the reliability of information was paramount.

When the pandemic reached Italy and Europe it's tenacity and quick spread indicated that it was a real and close danger to NRDC-ITA and the region of Lombardy. The speed of the outbreak required quick decisions to preserve individual and collective safety. Our adopted approach was to enhance mitigation measures with the aim of maintaining the required level of commitment. These measures were in concert with measures taken by similar organizations and agencies in Italy and Europe. A series of actions were implemented to achieve these goals. Once the manning level was reduced we still needed to communicate, both to and from, our military community. Not only about activities within the headquarters, but also the general situation at the local, regional and national level. As a multinational Headquarters (HQ), NRDC-ITA can count on 18 contributing nations to provide

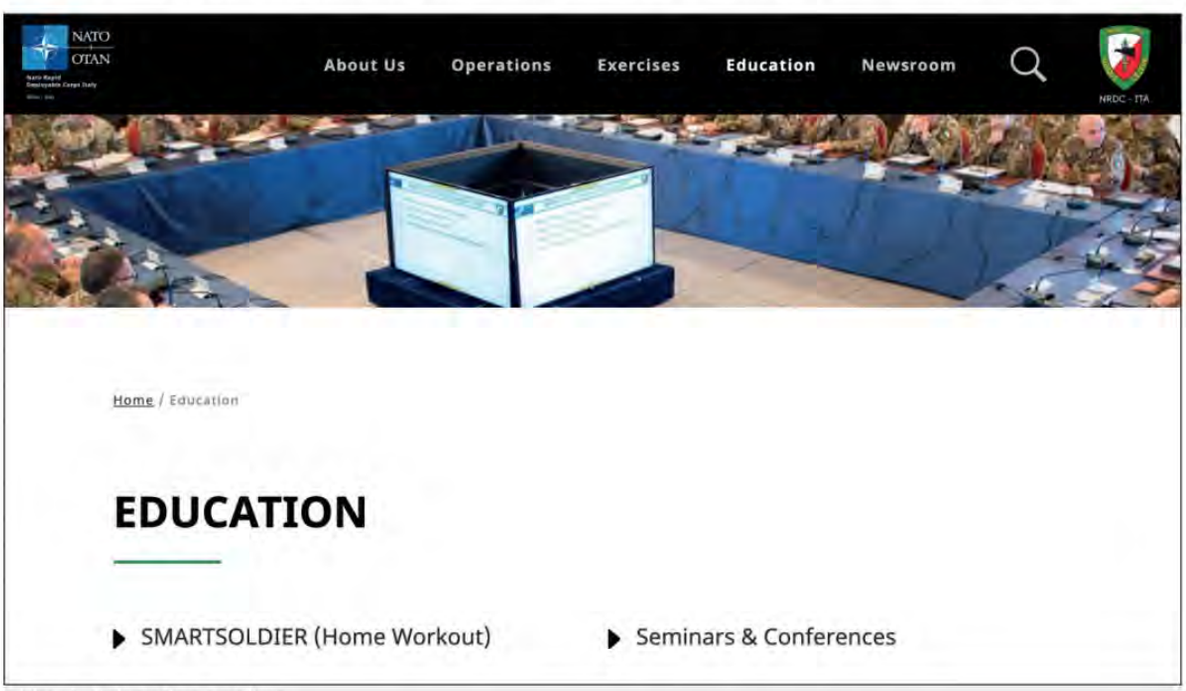

Fig. 1- Education section

1/3 of our personnel. While our contributing nation personnel were kept fully informed of local developments by their appropriate diplomatic and consular services we were obligated to provide additional support. From the perspective of non-Italian staff member who is serving abroad, often with their family, it is paramount to understand the local situation, restrictions, and suggested behaviours. With a focus on our entire community, including our multinational co-workers, our Public Affairs Office (PAO) and some of our Special Advisors, acted. First, in accordance with directions and guidance given by Higher HQs, a dedicated communication plan was drafted, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The plan highlighted key messages for the staff with a central focus on maintaining the health and safety of NRDC-ITA staff and the supporting community. The communication objectives included:

a. Reassure the NRDC-ITA community affected by the Covid-19 situation
b. Prevent the spread of rumours and misinformation
c. Enhance situational awareness within key Italian military and NATO audiences
d. Reinforce Community Relations (COMREL)
e. Ensure communication between NRDC-ITA, the Italian Minister of Defence (MOD), the NATO Chain of Command (CoC) and Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs).

Soon afterwards, we investigated which tools could be used to support the dissemination of messages. The initial focus was NRDC-ITA website in which a new section was created (Fig. 1).

Brainstorming sessions identified the website's content. Reporting information on the pandemic was the most pressing endeavour and occurred in close coordination with NRDC-ITA Medical Advisor (MEDAD). Although the pandemic information included was already widely disseminated, we sought to serve as a trusted source for our team. The second section was dedicated to the preventative measures to combat the virus. This section was intentionally brief, with clear guidance that sought to support behavioural change based on recommendations from scientists and government leaders. Additionally, a portion of the website included the various regional and national decrees with a summary informed by our Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Furthermore, a psychological guide was included to support personnel in this unique situation. The document, which has been issued in cooperation with Italian Army General Staff, aimed at providing useful suggestions for coping mechanisms for those managing the anxiety associated with living in a pandemic whilst no longer practicing our daily routines. As the lockdown was extended, including limitations on physical activities, we created a "Smart soldier" section to support personal fitness, whilst observing the restricted movement rules (Fig. 2). Our effort confirmed that one could stay fit during a lockdown at home. We provided a complete list of different exercises and related videos, performed by a military combat method instructor to keep our team fit and active.

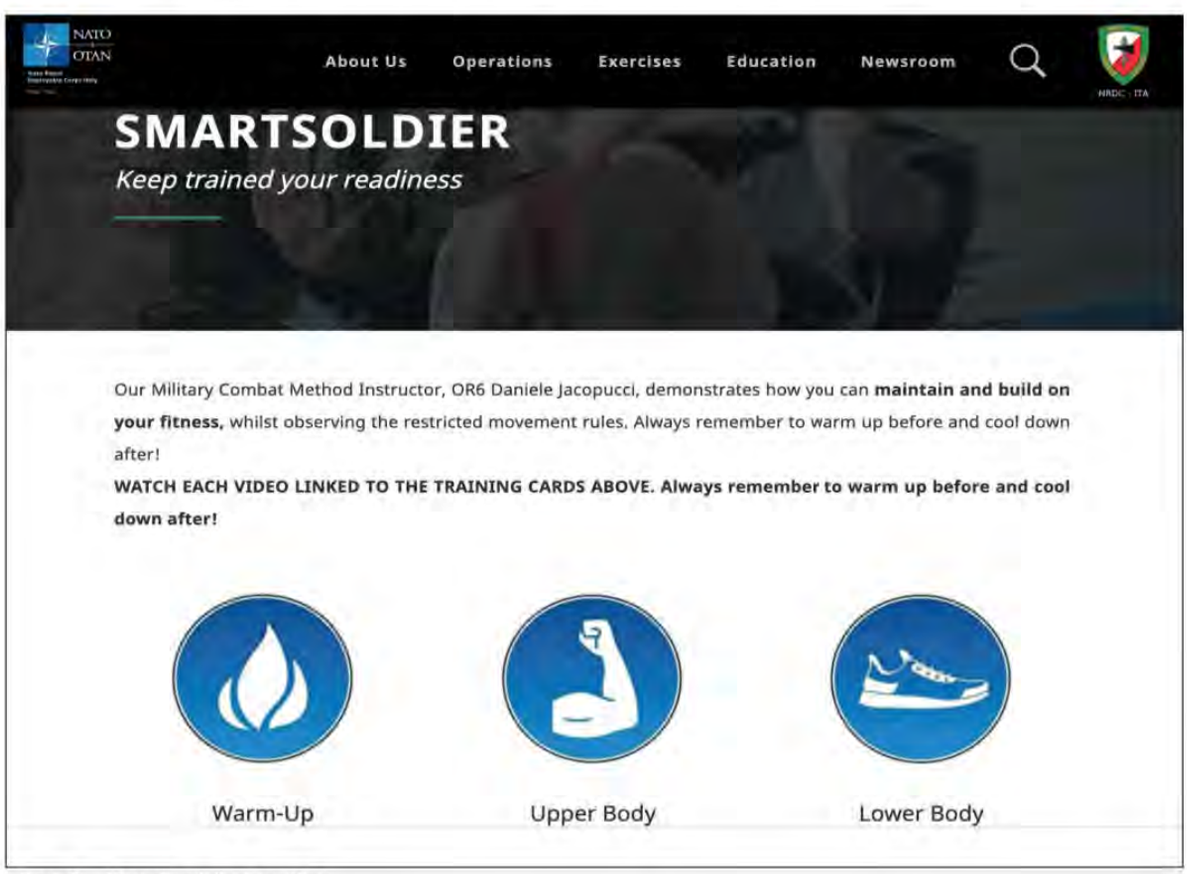

Fig. 2 – Smart soldier section

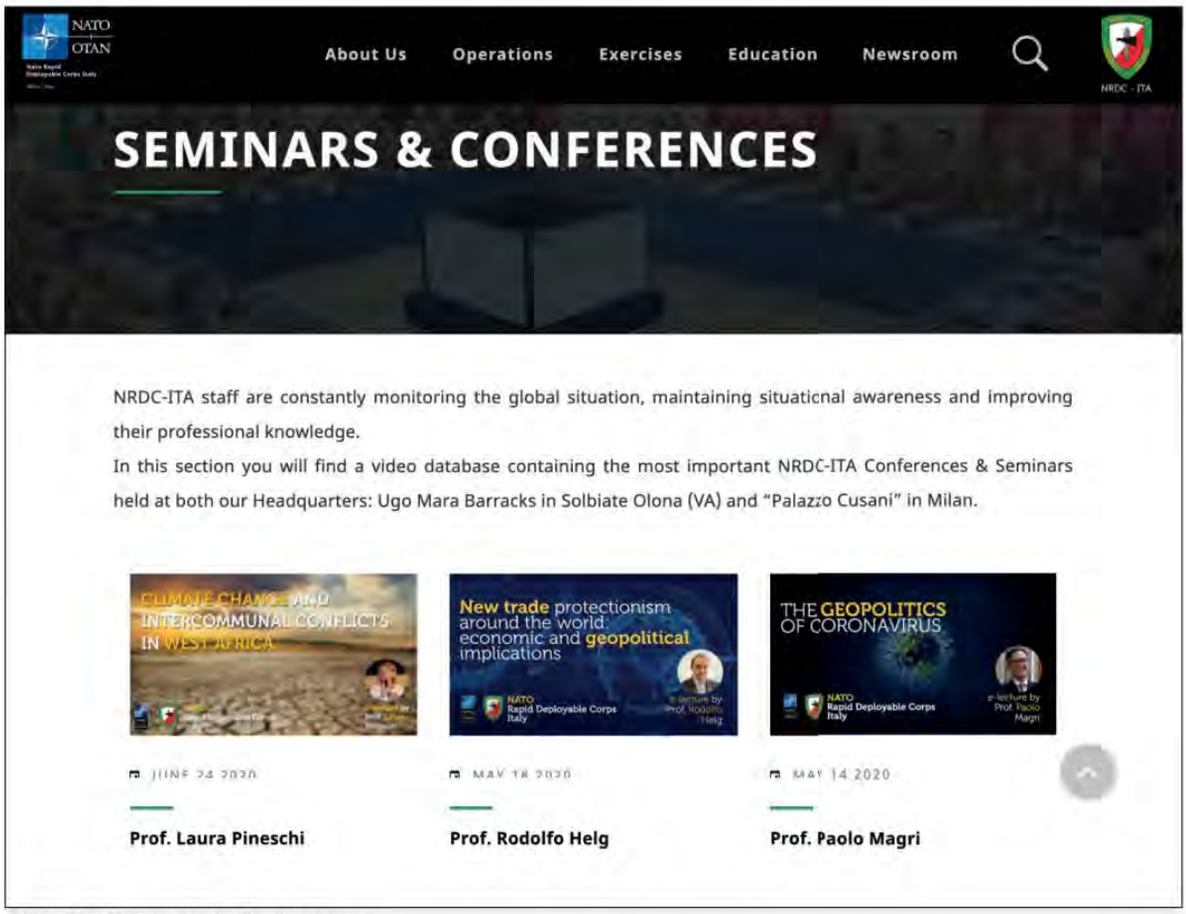

Fig. 3 – Seminars & Conferences

Once the website was amended we focused on how we distribute information via email. Our Morale and Welfare Agency (MWA) generally coordinates an email communication system that was designed to communicate commercial, leisure, recreation, or spiritual activities that could benefit NRDC-ITA. During the pandemic lockdown we used the MWA distribution to send routine and ad hoc messaging since the recipient list had a wide reach and could also be used to disseminate unclassified information. This approach was well received by our multinational staff and their families as it was considered useful to follow routine and events occurring in the barracks.

As previously noted, the pandemic forced us to think about the normal life planning and action. Like other organisations that have been encouraged to introduce alternative measures to carry out their tasks, NRDC-ITA managed to keep personnel updated and trained regardless of their location. Therefore, we used the Zoom web platform to organize recurring e-lectures to continue the professional development of the staff. The briefers focused on a wide range of diverse topics, some of which are covered in other articles in this edition. Examples included economics, geopolitics, strategy, and leadership. The subject matter experts, mostly academics, were requested to present briefings and take questions from our staff. (Fig. 3). The lectures facilitated valuable discussions and proved a valuable method of retaining connectivity if needed in the future.

Our communication about these events was shared, mostly through press releases, published on NRDC-ITA website. At times social media platforms also amplified our messages. Our communication professionals understand the value of the internet and social media so they gravitated to those methods to share our story. The messages aimed to inform the wider audience about of efforts to support the local community while sharing the important efforts by all members of NRDC-ITA. One example of our efforts supporting the Italian Army and Italy is highlighted in Figure 4.

Under these auspices, we focused on sharing the activities that NRDC-ITA soldiers conducted to counter the spread of the virus. Therefore, proper space was dedicated to a whole series of initiatives whose list would be too long to share in full. An example include the logistical transport of sanitary material at the Malpensa airport. The most delicate task requested of NRDC-ITA was helping transport the coffins of fallen citizens from Bergamo to some Lombardy areas. This tragic mission, which dealt a heavy psychological tool on our personnel, received local, national and international media coverage. Additionally we executed vital sanitation efforts for local hospitals on the front lines of the Covid fight. Our soldiers kept our medical partners in the fight to continue so that they communities continued to receive quality medical care (Fig. 5).

Fig. 4 – NRDC-ITA Twitter

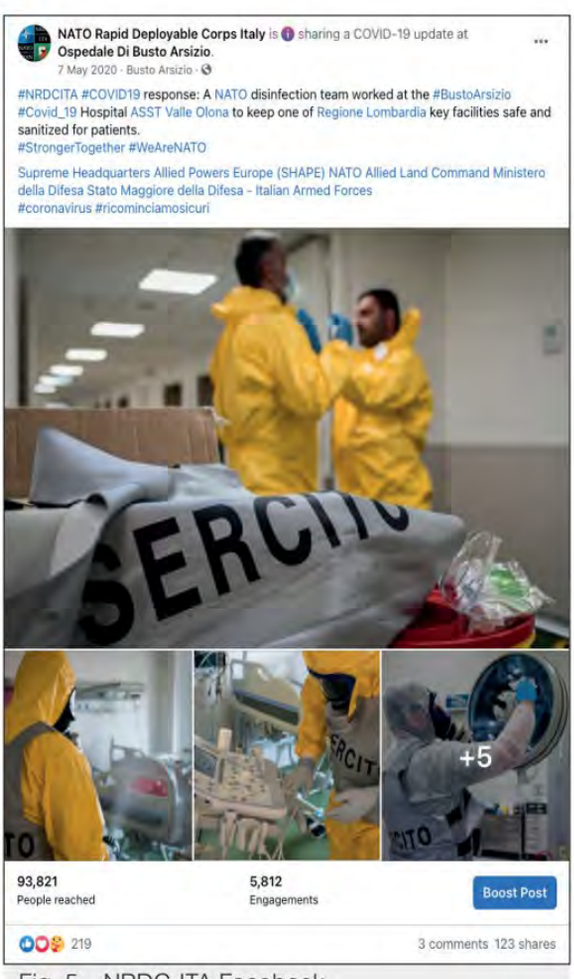

Fig. 5 – NRDC-ITA Facebook

Conclusion

Reflecting on our communication plan describes the enormous efforts made by NRDC-ITA to deal with this emergency. Frequent commitment to our community of Italian and multinational military personnel and their families, allowed us to provide an effective response. In grave times, it is necessary to draw upon the passion for work that animates those who wear a uniform and which allows them to face challenges of this magnitude. Soldiers act with the intimate awareness of rendering a service to their country and to their own people. The spread of the virus has not yet been stopped; indeed it seems to be returning more dangerous than ever. However, NRDC-ITA, strengthened by the lessons learned from the recent past, is more determined than ever to be a responsive supporter of the NATO alliance and those who fight this battle against a viral enemy.

About the Author

Colonel Raffaele DELLA ROCCA (ITA-A) has served at NRDC-ITA since 2018 as Chief PAO. His previous experience was in ITA Army General Staff as the Head of Digital Communication.

er everywhere rapidly

5 Has the Information Environment management changed?

Col. **Antonio TARTAGLIONE**, Italian Army

This year, 2020, will be remembered for the global COVID-19 outbreak. The pandemic's tremendous impact on social and economic life has changed the world. But the pandemic is also an opportunity to understand an unplanned and unavoidable change in the Information Environment (IE). The article focuses on the outcomes of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis by observing how national and international public affairs organisations are dealing with the pandemic.

The world has and still is experiencing an unexpected worldwide crisis due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. What started as a local and then global healthcare emergency soon became a social and economic emergency as well. Its full impact and magnitude remains to be clearly identified and understood. Unfortunately, social and economic indicators illustrate a dire picture that has not been seen since Second World War. The pandemic, with its litany of negative consequences, also provided opportunities. Specifically, a silent revolution in the way communication takes place and is exploited, in its array of expressions and possible aims. Information is communication and communication is information and they both have the same recipient regardless of communication/information tool used: the people. The aim is always the same, which is to represent a possible truth or, in simple words, to influence. All these things happen in the IE that permeates all aspects of daily life, like it or not. A well-known principle states that, "we cannot not communicate". The pandemic experience of 2020 demonstrates that nobody can disregard or escape from the IE. It is like the air people must breathe as it fills the space around us. It is only a matter of how they, the people, are reached by the IE. What happens in the IE does not remain in the IE! It is transformed by and with public opinion, which is the sum of individual opinions that might be the same or different.

This crisis has identified new considerations for the IE in its three main doctrinal aspects: physical,

Fig 1- A MSNBC program

Fig. 2- Fox News Digital

virtual and cognitive domains. This article is an opportunity to identify and discuss them. The first, the physical facet, was driven by special limitations driven by the virus. The aim was to maintain the necessary social distance directed by medical professionals whilst significantly limiting physical contact among people. And then using Information Technology (IT) tools to attempt to fill the resulting space. The social portion of the IE, which is the closest part to physical reality, had to change and find a new physical dimension without our normal human contact. People were close to their screens but far from their co-workers. The COVID threat has allowed the virtual environment to capture another piece of reality by empowering a virtual representation of daily life. Social interactions were limited to essential requirements and were replaced by IT opportunities. This change clearly impacts the quality and nature of social interactions and the way communicators/influencers were used to understand them.

The second facet, the virtual, is where the information exists and is easier to manage and control. In a manner never seen before, digitalisation experienced an acceleration to "counter" social distancing measures and lockdowns to keep people in contact and aware of the current situation as the whole world remained at home, with movement/travel restrictions. Information consumers experienced an incredible explosion of virtual opportunities that superseded our true reality, which became untouchable and not usable like it was before lockdown. No access to virtual reality could mean no access to the "new normality." The interdependence between reality and virtual became so thin they can be seen as two sides of the same coin!

The third facet, the cognitive domain, is the psychological environment that is the main target area for communication activities. It is the place where individual and group sentiments, feelings, beliefs and customs come together and interact to form an opinion and consequently to justify action. The pandemic period of 2020 is considered the INFOrmation PanDEMIC (INFODEMIC). INFODEMIC[1] can be considered as the large-scale, orchestrated or natural, dissemination and use of controlled and uncontrolled information about the virus to manage actions and reactions related to COVID-19. The INFODEMIC is characterised by a long and heterogeneous list of information providers that influence all aspects of daily life at all levels. The psychological and social survey about INFODEMIC outcomes remains to be understood and solved. "Magically", people have been disregarding all other problems and issues unless they were COVID related.

Fig. 3- Fox News channel

1 The term INFODEMIC was coined by Gunter EYSENBACH in 2002 to point to the misinformation about medical issues and it has come back into fashion for the COVID crisis, gaining major interest and power thanks to the enhanced social media environment.

Fig. 4- A MSNBC program

The term "people" in the communication arena stands for "Target Audience" and/or simply "audience". This dichotomy ruling the life of influencers (Information Operations, Psychological operations, etc.) and communicators (PAO, CIMIC, etc.), within the NATO policy framework, doesn't have a reason to be applied anymore. It is not possible to not influence a receiver when communicating. Nowadays it is anachronistic to separate the two aims because the COVID-19 experience clearly showed that while informing, there will be an impact on the individual or public opinion. Therefore, it is not useful to state "we just inform" or "we want to influence" thinking since they are two separate aspects. Policy makers and human rights' defenders should accept that any kind of information activity, by its nature, aims to influence. An audience is inherently a target for information. Consequently, Information Objectives (IO) change their area of application. They can keep their doctrinal name as IO or be renamed (we will leave this task to the doctrine refiners), but what is important is that they are the framework for all information activities, and not just for the current Information Operations operators. The new IO will aim to inform the people and convince them about the validity of the information that has been spread. It is not correct to declare that information can be used in different ways, inform and influence; instead, it is more correct to state that the real nature of information is twofold, having both the capacity to communicate and influence at the same time - without any way of separating these two aspects.

During the COVID-19 emergency, the information end state was and still is the "COVID-19 narrative accepted and applied in the daily lives of the targeted receivers." Several narratives have been populating the IE and each of them has its own unique and different entities, agencies or organisations. Examples include nation states, international organisations like the United Nations, European Union, World Health Organization, and scientific research Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the USA, *Istituto Superiore di Sanità (*ISS) in Italy that are used as echo chambers. In recent months, those entities, which are expected to work synergistically, echoed a complex narrative to pursue the relevant IO and therefore the end state.

The information providers, as those entities are known, that filled and dominated the entire IE were mainly from two spheres: the political and the scientific. The entire narrative could be seen as an effort to balance political convenience with scientific needs. They were countered by a sort of counter-narrative, that some may consider propaganda, by all other information providers such as private bodies, corporations, etc. However, in such an emergency there was no time for confusion or

Fig. 5 – Fox News channel

confrontation. What people wanted was the truth and to be reassured as everyone faced an uncertain future. It seems the voice of public officials won the IE management battle.

The picture painted above covers the IE during the last seven months. This raises the question: who played the most relevant role in this crisis? In recent months, but not in the future, as demonstrated in their article, communicators played a substantial role in managing the IE in such a worldwide crisis. The second common, and consequential question asked at NATO meetings is: So what? The answer, which is really designed to encourage future brainstorming, is to think differently about what is taken for granted in doctrinal terms. Doctrine is a continuous living process feeding on experiences and the consequent debates and discussion. It is not a static and unmoving monolithic body of knowledge. In NATO doctrine, Information Operations operators play a coordinating role for the main influence and communication tool. Nevertheless, public information played the major role in countering the spread of the virus, supporting the legitimacy of state enforcement measures, keeping people informed, supporting the local population, and making them aware of the importance of individual responsibility to support the greater good.
Our IE experience during the pandemic offers a series of considerations. Should the Public Affairs Office (PAO) reroute all information capabilities and opportunities in crisis management because of the direct and unique link and contact with the people? It is not an option anymore to avoid any redundant and duplicated organisational structures dealing with the IE. Robust, properly centralised PAO organisation could be more than enough to fight the IE battle, regardless of who the enemy is. We conclude that nowadays, it has become mandatory to look at the IE in a new way, unchained by doctrine for the first time ever, to properly face the new challenges and understand the new roles for communication capabilities. Synergy and centralisation of functions, alongside a reduction in coordinating levels, supported by robust manning of skilled capabilities, could drive a review of all the capabilities operating in the IE, ensuring the central role of the PAO. Finally, this discussion also identified another lesson for NRDC-ITA HQ and our comrades: resource the team that manages the IE space with robust, well-educated and experienced personnel and supporting communication capabilities. Our PAO team leveraged its communication capabilities, despite the pandemic restrictions, to keep our community connected and informed.

Conclusion

The clear, indisputable truth we reached is that communicators have played a central role in IE crisis management. This has led to a new equation: "Communication is Influence and Influence is Information." This idea requires a flexible, adaptable and responsive coordination tool backed by a large-scale, continuous analysis and assessment process of the selected pieces of the IE and their respective targets. Communication and information are the two words to describe the different forms of influence. The new equation also means that Target Audience and Audience are the same thing. As such, the word "target" doesn't have to disturb the sleep of the careful readers of NATO policy who believe the two terms imply a different use of communication activities.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Antonio TARTAGLIONE (ITA - A) is currently the SO1 Information Operations. He has been working in Information Operations Branch (IOB) since October 2015.

Fig. 6 – A Fox News program

How to face the COVID emergency

Lt. Col. **Francesco LOCCI**, Italian Army

The global COVID-19 pandemic represents an epochal challenge for every organization and requires re-evaluating work schedules and events. This far reaching crisis also impacted NRDC-ITA and our team centric response demonstrated the value of our multinational headquarters.

NRDC-ITA lives and operates with an operational posture and mindset and is always vigilant and ready to react. Therefore, the COVID-19 outbreak in March of 2020 found our team capable of facing the situation. We quickly adjusted our procedures with the aim to protect our personnel and families whilst maintaining the required NATO operational standards. Additionally, we contributed to the common effort in Italy and Europe by providing support to the local population and civil authorities.

The uncertainty during the initial spread of the virus in Europe was mitigated by incorporating the fight against the virus into our operational picture. Our areas of expertise, including medical, legal, military, etc. allowed us to support local efforts to limit the spread of the virus, even within our headquarters.

In times of crisis, much like the one we are experiencing now, leadership is what really makes the difference. Within a military context, the complexity of modern operations demonstrates that decisive and informed leadership is especially important. Strong leadership and a shared vision were essential to overcome the issues and constraints that arose during the initial stages of the pandemic. So, when tasked to adhere to lockdowns our inherently flexible mindset, achieved through continuous training, allowed us to quickly react. Our headquarters reduced our manning, revised workflows, and used non-traditional communication methods to remain connected. Additionally, since the situation was fluid and uncertain we leveraged our information activities professionals to keep our community informed. We shared information on the pandemic and local and international developments, and also used our Morale and Welfare organization

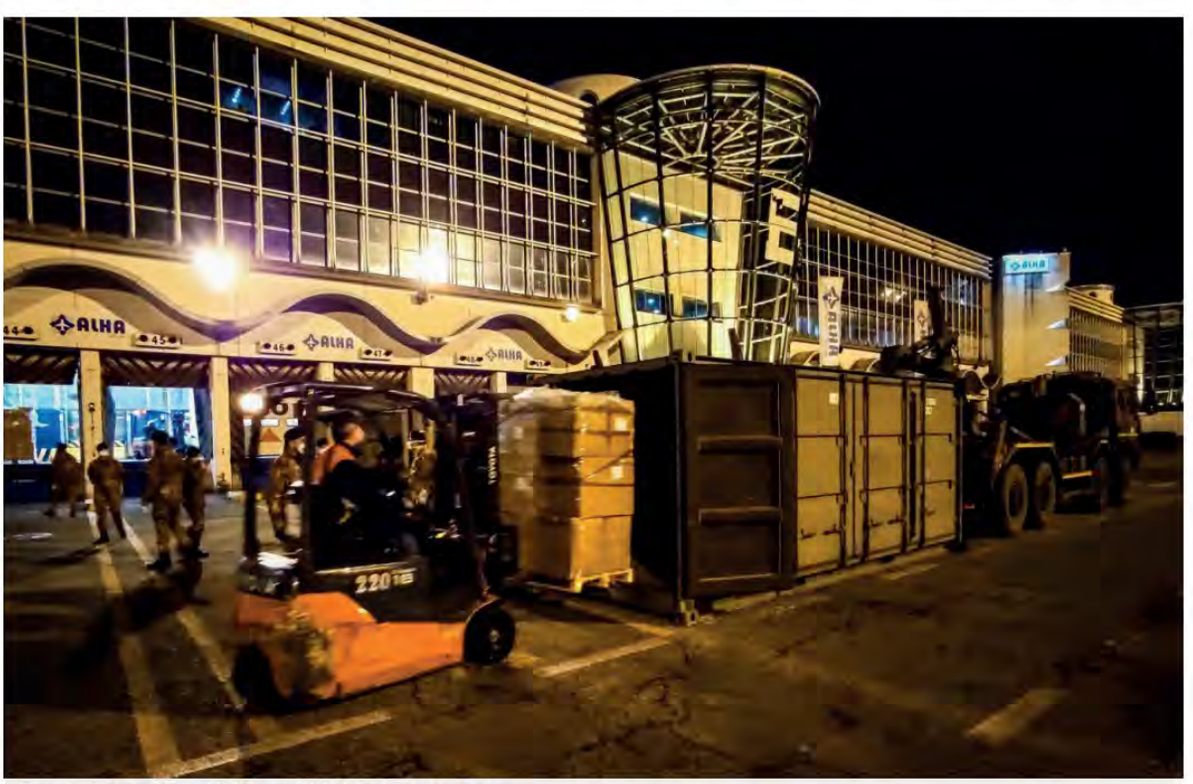

Fig. 1- Logistic activities at Malpensa Airport

er everywhere rapidly

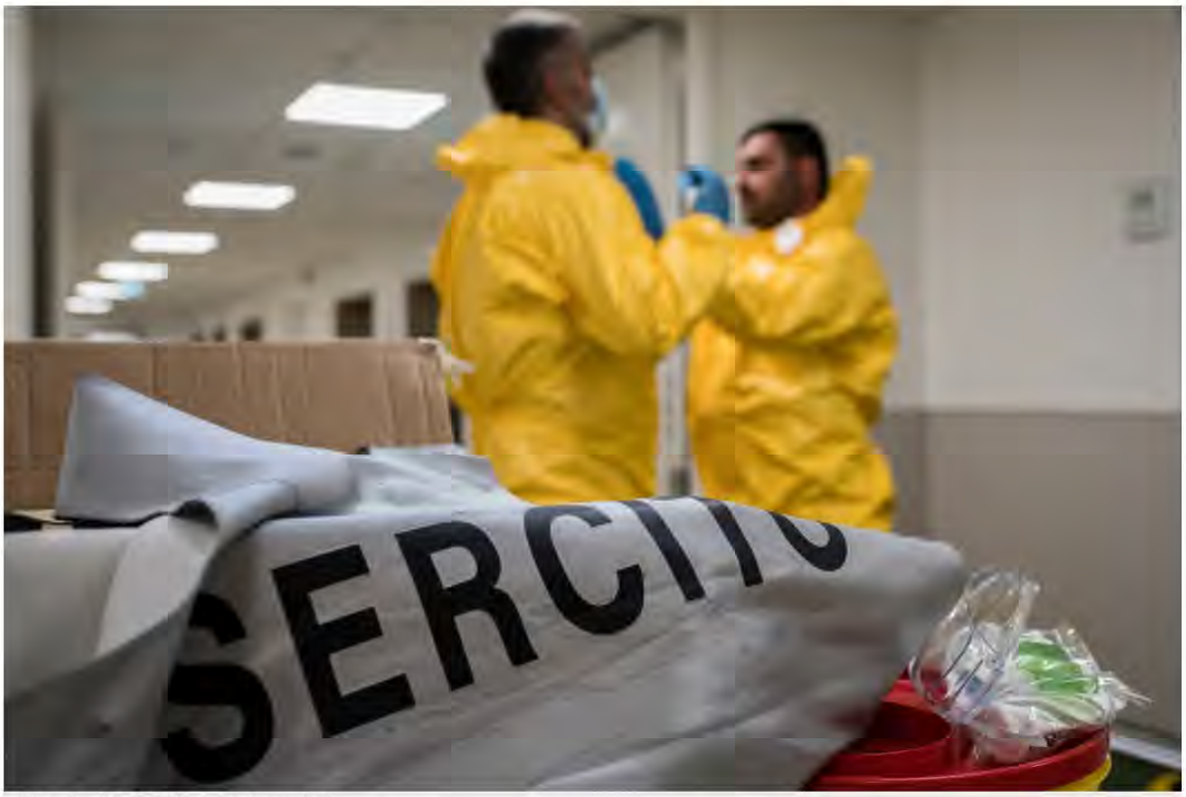

Fig. 2 – Busto Arsizio hospital

to assist as well.
The challenging pandemic provided NRDC-ITA with an opportunity to "think outside of the box", to use a "new approach" to monitor projects that were critical to our mission. Precisely, we increased our use on web-based platforms with the aim of limiting personal contact and supported social distancing. Moreover, NRDC-ITA started a series of online meetings that fostered personal and professional development, for all our staff, during the crisis. Additionally, Information and Communication technologies proved to be pivotal in increasing speed and accuracy with regard in the decision-making process.
During the most challenging initial stages of the pandemic, NRDC-ITA also enhanced coordination with the Italian Army General Staff support both to national and regional authorities mainly in Northern Italy.

Personnel and equipment from NRDC-ITA (HQ) and the subordinate Support Brigade took part in the Operations "FIDELIUM", "FENICE" and "MERCURIO." Our personnel provided direct support to civilian authorities, including transport, distributing medical materials, providing medical support to hospitals, sanitizing infrastructure, support to medical personnel, and transporting remains. Additionally, units from NRDC-ITA Support Brigade assumed a Homeland Security Operation Strade Sicure, in the regions of Lombardy and Trentino Alto Adige. This delicate balancing act confirmed that our team could simultaneously support both national and NATO tasks. This required a situational awareness concerning the legal framework of homeland operations in light of governmental decrees and Health System situation both at National and NATO level.

Conclusion

In conclusion, NRDC-ITA faced the COVID-19 emergency with the same vigilant posture used for military operations. This required establishing tailored internal procedures as well as the enhancing liaison with both relevant military and civilian actors. Our leaders and staff used their experience in thinking outside of the box, to find innovative solutions to monitor projects that were critical our mission. The lessons from this experience will increase our flexibility and resilience. NRDC-ITA used the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to be proactive and successfully adapt to a "new normalcy" that was thrust upon our international community. Our response to this new challenge demonstrated our flexibility and adaptability. Finally, the knowledge gained is a rich and substantial legacy for our headquarters.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Francesco LOCCI (ITA-A) served as Rifle Platoon leader in the 5th Airborne Battalion "El Alamein" and Coy Commander in the ITA Paratrooper Airborne School Staff appointments. From 2014 to 2018 he was posted to NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain in Valencia as Land Officer in G3OPS/CURRENT OPS section. In the last two years he has been the J3 Branch coordinator in NRDC-ITA.

er verywhere apidly

7 COVID 2.0

As we created this ER magazine in November of 2020 the world, Europe, and our community were slipping into a second wave of COVID-19 outbreaks and restrictions. The previous articles in this edition highlighted our reactions to the outbreaks of March and April. As mentioned we used novel processes to stay connected as a multinational military community whilst supporting civilian efforts and the alliance. In short, we reacted to protect the alliance, Europe, Italy, our community, and our families.

From June to October of 2020, Europe experienced a lull in the pandemic. The virus remained in our community but in a fragmented state due to the harsh restrictions of the spring. We enjoyed a nearly normal summer and used the calm of those months to refine how we operated. As we enter this second tranche of pandemic related restrictions one might ask: How have we improved to deal with an inevitable second wave of the virus in our community? This brief article provides eight short and sharp answers to this question.

- Equipment: Noting the limitations related to operating in a classified information environment we invested in additional hardware to increase opportunities for unclassified work when not in the barracks.
- Government Notices: When a new regional or national decree was published we sought to translate and disseminate summaries and related information within 24 hours.
- Maximum Effect: Unclassified mandatory forms and government notices were shared via multiple communication methods such as email and what's app to maximize their reach.
- Push Communication: We improved our information sharing and reach with platforms like zoom by providing week medical updates to our staff not in the headquarters.
- Reducing Contact: We changed our processes in locations like our Tax-free center and mess to limit contact, while simultaneously making access and transactions easier.
- Schedules: We staggered our schedules when entering and using shared spaces to reduce opportunities to spread the virus.
- Sharing: We shared our lessons learned with other NATO headquarters to learn from others and to share our best practices.
- Training Calendar: We adjusted our appetite for multiple exercises and training events whilst always researching how we could still support our commitments given the restrictions.

The above list is not inclusive. There were other refinements, some small and some large, that prepared NRDC-ITA for the current second wave of COVID-19. Even with our efforts we will suffer at times, as all of humanity is suffering, but this crisis in an opportunity to demonstrate our value and commitment to each other. We will work together, as we did in the early months of 2020, to remain connected and relevant.

nrdcita
Milan

WE ARE
UNITED
WE ARE
SAFE

#WEARENATO

nrdcita Follow us on our Official Social Media Accounts.
NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy #WeAreNATO

FACEBOOK
/nrdcitaly

TWITTER
@NRDCITA

INSTAGRAM
@nrdcita

YOUTUBE
nrdc ita

er

verywhere apidly

nrdc-ita.nato.int