**“Strategic narratives in Afghanistan”**

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The research illustrates the Italian military contribution to the International Security Assistance Force - ISAF (Afghanistan, 2001-2014). Despite a limited attention by literature, Italy has been one the most crucial contributors of multilateral military missions around the word in the post-bipolar era: from Iraq to Lebanon, from the Horn of Africa to Haiti. Italy became a “security provider” after having been a “security consumer” for decades during the Cold War (Ignazi et al 2012).

Consistently, Italy has been militarily engaged in Afghanistan for the entire period of the multilateral mission authorized by the 2001 Security Council resolution n. 1368, 1373 and 1386, namely from 2001 to 2014. However, Italian political actors and media have addressed the Italian involvement in Afghanistan with different, and sometimes, controversial views and strategic narratives. This study aims at reconstructing the core features of such perspectives and narratives.

What have been the main features of the public debate over the Italian military engagement (2001-2014)? What have been the most relevant traits of the Italian political and military approach in Afghanistan? What have been the main strategic narratives crafted by political and media actors to frame the war?

The report is structured as it follows. The first part serves as introduction to the analysis. It presents the methodological tools adopted to answer the research questions, highlighting the national background of the Italian security approach. The timeline of the “key events” of the Italian engagement in Afghanistan will be offered as well.

The second part illustrates the empirical main findings. First, through content and discourse analysis, we provide the findings related to the strategic narratives crafted by political leader to interpret and justify the Italian military involvement in Afghanistan. Part of the analysis on parliamentary debates has been grounded the results collected from previous research (Coticchia and De Simone 2015; 2016) that have been updated and re-elaborated consistently with the new findings of the current study. Second, and relatedly, the paper focuses on media narratives. Through this in-depth analysis, we aim to emphasize similarities and differences in the frames used by media and political leaders. Indeed, frames are crucial aspect to the analysis and understanding of political events, along with the meaning attached to them, since the framework within which these events are communicated and debated reflects the way reality is perceived and decisions taken (Entman 1993; Gitlin 1980).

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**Personale DISPO:**

Fabrizio Coticchia, Giampiero Cama

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University of the Bundeswehr, Munchen