

## **Network Centric Warfare Europe 2008**

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“Force Transformation” is a complex evolutionary process involving the digitalisation of the military component and a change of attitude and organisation for the MoD and Defence industry.

To be clear: Network Centric Warfare (NCW) is first of all a “military doctrine concept” and not an industrial or technological process.

However, doctrines are defined bearing in mind which technologies are available – or will be available in a reasonable time – for operational use.

In other words, in the long-term doctrines are influenced by technologies, as well as technology development gets inputs by the doctrines themselves.

NCW is a highly demanding approach, which requires state-of-the-art technologies to connect strategic and operational levels – from the head of chain of command to the foot soldier on the ground – into a single integrated networked system.

Moreover, in order to create net-centric capabilities it is required a shift from platform-oriented forces to a single networked architecture able to integrate all defence systems.

Platforms without net-centric capabilities are doomed to obsolescence.

The starting point which induces to develop net-centric capabilities is interoperability, which is more and more required in any kind of mission, from small-detachment special forces interventions to large-scale expeditionary multinational operations and non-military missions such as disaster relief.

Furthermore, since all our main allies are developing this kind of capabilities, there is one more reason to proceed in this direction, otherwise we could no longer be able to take part to international missions.

This is why the Italian Forza NEC approach conforms both to NATO Network Enabled Capability (NEC) and to the UK vision for the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) programme.

Interoperability is easier to obtain with NEC approach because, through the development and the exploitation of a common architecture, it allows to integrate the standard in-service platform and systems – the so-called legacy systems – into an integrated and networked system of systems.

On the other hand, the NCW development approach in the US is very demanding. For instance, if we just refer to the Future Combat System, it foresees the implementation of new full net-centric assets.

However, NATO and EU member States – who experience shrinking defence budgets – may be more at ease with a legacy systems networked approach.

Finmeccanica has a pre-eminent role in NEC: it is prime contractor of Italian Forza NEC and participate to the British FRES programmes, while it is increasingly getting a foothold in the US.

In Italy, our companies took a pro-active role in the Italian NEC feasibility study and are now partnering with Italian MoD in the “project definition” phase, with the goal to have three digitalised Brigades by 2017.

For Italy it is very positive that the integration of MoD and Defence industry into a partnership is on its way, since this approach will offer interesting opportunities on both sides.

The most obvious reason for partnering is to have the “best value for money”: via the *through-life capability management* it is possible to reduce in-service life costs for the MoD.

MoD / industry partnership is also a mean to overcome the short-term capability gaps in network centric operations.

The most important opportunity offered by partnering is reciprocal exchange: net-centric capabilities have a strong technological content and, during the life-cycle, they may change accordingly to operational experience: this is the typical spiral approach that project like NCW transformation needs to be realistic.

A well established MoD and industry partnership will allow to easily face these challenges by adapting the enabling technologies to the changing military requirements.

Thank you.