

NATO/USAID VENTILATORS HANDOVER CEREMONY

18 September 2020 – NATO NSPA SOC Taranto

(Initial Speech)

<p><i>Excellences, Military and Civilian Authorities, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,</i></p> <p><i>Before I start my introduction I need to address some important recommendations about safety measures to be followed during the event:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– In accordance with Host Nation disposition to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus it is mandatory to wear a masks and to keep the minimum social distancing of 1 meter;– Sanitize your hands frequently using alcohol based solution dispensers that are available in all the base;– In case of an emergency an alarm will sound and our team will guide you towards the exit points of the building; No drill is planned this morning.– A flyer with additional Safety and Security Instructions is available in your personal folder of the event. <p>Now, back to the formal part.</p> <p><i>It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here with you, proud of being part of an important initiative in this beautiful setting of the Southern Operational Centre, in Taranto.</i></p> <p><i>I would like to start by welcoming our guests and express my sincere gratitude to the Assistant SecGen for OPS Dr. Manza, the Minister Counselor of US Embassy Mr. Silkworth the USAID representative Mr. Gustavson and the HN Authority REAR ADMIRAL Vitiello.</i></p>	<p><i>Initial Greetings to the guests</i></p> <p><i>COVID info</i></p> <p><i>Thanks for the authorities</i></p>
---	---

I would also like to convey my gratitude to the Deputy Prefect of Taranto, the Major, the president of the Province of Taranto and all the Military and Civilian Authorities here today.

Before leaving the floor to our distinguished principals, let me briefly say a few words about this site .

We are at the Southern Operational Centre, which is part of the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), one of NATO's largest Agencies operating under the North Atlantic Council.

Since its establishment in 1958, NSPA provides acquisition, logistic, medical and Infrastructural capabilities, operational systems support and services to the NATO nations, NATO Military Authorities and partner nations.

NSPA is also an unbiased link between industry and the nations enabling customers to achieve economies of scale.

Our HQs are in Luxembourg and we have main operational centres in France, Hungary and here in Taranto.

In particular, the Support to Operations Directorate includes the (SOC), where we are today.

*The Southern Operational Centre is the unit I have the privilege to command and it is the **Center of expertise** for deployable camps. We provide **Full Life-Cycle Management** and **Support to NATO** Deployable Headquarters.*

We provide direct support to NATO in terms of

- Follow-on Support (storage & maintenance)*
- Deployed Operational Support*
- Training*
- Leased Camp Solutions*

About NSPA

About SOC

*Every day, the women and men of the SOC ensure that NATO is provided with the highest standards of **skilled** and rapidly deployable personnel. We keep a very high level of readiness of 5 to 30 days Notice to Move equipment and personnel. When NATO pushes the button, we are ready to go – whenever and wherever is required!*

The SOC has been chosen to be the house of the NATO Capability Packages, full equipped camps for deployable operations of its NATO Command Structure and NATO Response Force (NRF).

On behalf of the Allied Command Operations we store, maintain and deploy camps. In fact, the recent decision to implement the acquisition of a new lighter and modular Capability Package for the NATO Response Force missions will increase the capacity with air transportable camps.

NATO is also investing a lot in infrastructure. As you can see, our site has been very recently renewed . More works will follow to accommodate new requirement. This reflects also the fact that the HN Italy through the MoD plays a great role supporting the project within its bases.

CPs

But SOC is not only engaged in military operations or exercises. We provide prompt support when SHAPE tasked us for “disaster relief” operations such as in Pakistan after the earthquake in 2005.

More recently, the government of Luxembourg asked SHAPE for support a tented solution during the COVID-19 surge and we were tasked to deploy some accommodation tents and ablutions. We had a plan within 24 hours from tasking and we deployed within 48 hours.

INFRA WORKS

Aside to these official tasks, SOC volunteered local support

during the COVID-19 emergency. We joined forces with an Italian team of engineers and made 3D printed connectors converting snorkelling masks into emergency ventilator masks. We donated the connectors to the Italian Civil Protection Department. We also printed 3D face shields that we donated to the local hospital. We are proud of this small contribution because the SOC is very much integrated in the local community.

About Covid-19...In your pack, you will see a leaflet about NSPA's key role in NATO's response to the pandemic. At the beginning of the crisis, our Agency set up a COVID-19 Management Office to respond to the nations' unprecedented demand for supplies, equipment and services in the medical field.

Today, the office remains the hub for requirements and it manages and coordinates global supplies. The office includes technical specialists - experts in the field of biomedical engineering, medicine and pharmacy.

This office also provides support to military contingents in out-of-area operations, with medical supplies and services, and collaborates with NATO entities, particularly with the NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center (EADRCC). Only this week, NSPA opened a testing laboratory in Kosovo. Last month we opened one in Afghanistan.

This conclude my introduction, I thank you for the attention and I leave now the floor to Mr. Gustavson for his remarks..

**HUMANITARIAN
OPS**

SOC vs COVID

NSPA vs COVID

END

(Final Speech)

*Excellences,
Military and Civilian Authorities,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This event is the evidence of the unique collaboration between US Government, NATO, NSPA and Italy, another example how a comprehensive approach can effectively work to solve common issues.

This closes the event and now you are all invited for refreshments and a visit to some of the equipment stored here in Taranto on behalf of the NATO Allied Command for Operations.

The materiel you will see can be used for operational requirements but also for disaster relief operations.

Please continue to observe our sanitary measures as you move around and thank you again for being here.

SOC COMMANDER
Renato LEPORE