A More Modern Defense Against Hybrid Threats and Drones: Crosetto's New Strategy

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The Italian Defense is preparing for a paradigm shift. During the **Question Time in the Chamber**, Minister Guido Crosetto outlined the need for “a new architecture to respond to hybrid warfare,” illustrating a comprehensive project to counter the new technological threats that daily affect the country. Hybrid warfare, he explained, targets critical infrastructures, essential services, strategic industries, communication networks, and democratic institutions, undermining national stability through continuous and borderless attacks. For too long, Crosetto emphasized, the Italian approach has been “wait-and-see,” based on delayed reactions that can no longer suffice. Hence the need to move to a completely new, proactive, and multilateral posture, capable of acting “with timeliness and legitimacy” and supported by updated regulatory tools and a “predictive and adaptive” operational capacity. In this process of redefining Defense, Crosetto also addressed the issue of the Strade sicure operation, explaining

that “the military personnel employed in the project must return to doing their job in perspective.” He added that, while recognizing the utility of territorial presence, this function should be performed by dedicated and specifically trained professionals, supplementary to the current police forces. The goal is to make the system more efficient, allowing soldiers to focus on the role for which they are trained, also through the introduction of figures like the auxiliary carabiniere of the voluntary reserve.

The Italian Cyber Corps

The Non-Paper: Cyber Corps, Hybrid Warfare Center, and Comprehensive Reform

To achieve this transformation, Crosetto has developed a non-paper that will be sent to Parliament, containing the regulatory and operational guidelines to make the national response to hybrid threats more modern and ready. The document provides for the recognition of the cyber domain as a true national defense space and the establishment of a “cyber corps” with an initial capacity of between 1,200 and 1,500 operational units, equipped with adequate legal protection for civilian and military personnel. It is an entirely dedicated force to cyber defense, capable of countering complex digital attacks and intervening in the protection of the country's strategic networks. Alongside this will be a hybrid warfare center, focused on countering disinformation, cognitive manipulation, and informational interference aimed at destabilizing public opinion and democratic processes. The update of the regulatory framework, contained in the same document, aims to allow faster defense postures, consistent with scenarios where threats develop in very short times and require integrated responses across different domains.

All these measures will be included in a future bill for the comprehensive reorganization of Defense, which, Crosetto emphasized, represents an indispensable step to provide the country with tools adequate to current challenges.

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The International Dimension, Resources, and the New Cyber Corps

Crosetto expressed satisfaction that the issue of hybrid warfare is finally starting to be discussed at European tables, where it was almost entirely absent until now. He reiterated that the central question is no longer “what do we need to do,” but “how quickly will we be able to do it together with our allies.” At the same time, the minister's strategy takes into account NATO objectives and the guidelines of the Multi-Year Programmatic Document. The Alliance foresees a total commitment of around 5 percent of GDP for defense, security, and intelligence functions, a goal that Italy aims to progressively achieve. The minister assured that, once the excessive deficit procedure is overcome, an increase of 0.15 percent of GDP allocated to defense is already planned for next year, followed by a further 0.15 in 2027 and 0.20 in 2028. Crosetto clarified that these investments are not a concession to international requests but a necessary responsibility to ensure national security in an increasingly unstable global context, where it is necessary to be ready for any scenario.

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