



Achieving 2% of GDP for Defense: Between Realism and Controversy

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The recent announcement of achieving 2% of GDP allocated to Italian defense has sparked mixed reactions, both within and outside the government. The [Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto](#), celebrated the milestone as a success, emphasizing that this goal represents a "starting point" and not a final destination. "What we committed to doing, we have done," he stated, highlighting that the government's true aim is not just to reach a numerical target, but to build "the capabilities that NATO asks us to provide to the Alliance" while ensuring the country's security.

Crosetto and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani, reiterated that Italy has reached the 2% target, starting from a previous 1.57% of GDP allocated to defense. Tajani confirmed the achievement also on the sidelines of the informal NATO ministerial meeting in Antalya, Turkey, adding that the document certifying the achievement of 2% has already been sent to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. This result will be officially announced by Prime Minister

Giorgia Meloni during the summit in The Hague, scheduled for the end of June.

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Criticism from the Opposition

Despite the triumph proclaimed by the government, the opposition has raised strong doubts about the transparency and legitimacy of the result. The vice-president of Italia Viva, Davide Faraone, spoke of "accounting tricks" and mocked the methods by which the necessary funds were found to reach 2%. According to Faraone, without an economic maneuver, it would have been impossible to increase defense resources so quickly. He also insinuated that among the items counted in defense spending were military pensions, Civil Protection, and even other items not directly related to military defense, raising suspicion of a broad interpretation of the defense budget to inflate the figure.

The Five Star Movement also demanded clarifications, with Francesco Silvestri speaking of a "shell game," asking Minister Crosetto to explain how the funds for this sudden increase in defense spending were obtained. The M5S deputy requested an urgent briefing, highlighting that in just 24 hours, Italy would have moved from 1.5% to 2% without any official measures or extra funding.

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The Approach to the Future: Gradual Increase in Defense Spending

The debate on increasing defense spending does not stop at 2% of GDP. According to internal NATO sources, Secretary Stoltenberg will request a gradual increase in allies' defense spending up to 5% of GDP by 2032. This proposal will be discussed during the summit in The Hague, with Italy in favor of a discussion on a more equitable division between defense and security, suggesting an allocation of 3% to defense in the strict sense and 2% to security.

The achievement of 2% of GDP for defense, while celebrated as a victory by the government, raises legitimate questions about the method used to reach this goal. While the government

insists that the result is the fruit of concrete commitment and an important step for national security, the opposition does not hesitate to define this move as a clever accounting trick. It remains to be seen how the debate will evolve and whether Italy will manage to maintain a long-term commitment to respond to NATO's challenges and the country's defense needs.

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