



Admiral Cavo Dragone: Moscow wants what it lost with the fall of the USSR

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The balance of global security is undergoing a phase of profound reconfiguration. Amid transatlantic tensions reignited by Donald Trump's return to the White House, the new war front in Iran, and the weariness of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Atlantic Alliance is redefining its strategic priorities.

Providing an update on the situation, on the sidelines of the Kyiv Security Forum, is **Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone**, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. In an exclusive interview, the high-ranking Italian officer outlines the Alliance's defense strategy: from Moscow's imperial ambitions to tactical lessons learned in the field, to the new role of a Kyiv that is no longer just a "consumer" of security, but a true "provider" of expertise for the West.

The number one threat: "Moscow wants what it lost with the fall of the USSR"

Russia's geopolitical stance leaves no room for interpretation: the Kremlin is officially designated as the main threat to Euro-Atlantic stability. According to Admiral Dragone, Vladimir Putin's long-term goal goes well beyond Ukrainian borders.

"We must expect Russia to try to reclaim what it had before the fall of the Soviet Union," warns Dragone.

When asked if the primary target is the Baltic States, the admiral's response is clear: **"It's not just about them"**. NATO is therefore implementing a 360-degree deterrence and defense strategy, constantly monitoring the Arctic, the eastern front, and the southern quadrant.

The strategy of attrition

Despite Russian pressure, the situation on the Ukrainian front is described as an effective stalemate (*stalemate*). However, the price paid by Moscow in terms of human lives is unprecedented in recent history:

- **Current Russian losses:** about **35,000 soldiers per month**.
- **Comparison:** in 10 years of war in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union lost a total of about 20,000 men.

The way to defeat Moscow, admits Dragone, lies precisely in the **economic and military exhaustion of the Russian war machine**, combined with maintaining the qualitative technological gap that NATO boasts over the sheer Russian "quantity".



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The "Trump Factor" and the 5% GDP goal

Donald Trump's return to the presidency of the United States has reignited discontent towards European allies, accused of not spending enough on their own defense and of offering little support in recent operations in Iran. At the recent summit in The Hague, member countries yielded to Washington's pressure, committing to **increase defense spending to 5% of GDP**.

Admiral Dragone, however, tempers alarmism about a total disengagement of the United States:

"I don't believe there will be a massive NATO disengagement by the United States. But Europe must stand up, and we have started to do so."

If Washington were to redirect part of its contingents towards hot scenarios like the Indo-Pacific, a "mature and strong" alliance will be able to fill the gaps (*fill gaps*) by redistributing forces across European territory. Investment priorities for Europe are already outlined:

1. Advanced air defense shields.
2. ISR systems (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance).
3. Electronic warfare (*electronic warfare*).
4. Integration of Artificial Intelligence and drones.

Ukraine and Iran: the two faces of modern warfare

The interview highlights a strategic paradox in the analysis of contemporary conflicts. On one hand, the war between Russia and Ukraine is fought almost entirely on the ground and through the massive use of drones and missiles, with an almost total absence of conventional air power. On the other hand, the conflict in Iran has reaffirmed the absolute centrality of **total air superiority**.

Another crucial challenge is the economic aspect of defense: countering low-cost drones with million-dollar missiles is not sustainable. This is where Ukraine is making a fundamental contribution to NATO.

Kyiv from "Security Consumer" to "Security Provider"

Ukraine is no longer just a country to assist, but a partner to learn from. Through the *Joint Analysis Training and Education Center* (JATEC), Ukrainian forces are training NATO units, often acting as *red team* (simulated enemy forces) in drone counter-exercises. Their experience has already helped Gulf countries defend against Iranian air attacks.

Are large ships obsolete?

Finally, a reflection on the philosophy of military production. Faced with billion-dollar vessels destroyed by infinitely cheaper maritime drones, Dragone defends the utility of large naval units, such as aircraft carriers: "The point is not the size, but how you use them, how far you keep them from the danger area, and how you protect them. If left alone, an aircraft carrier can be sunk; if protected, it remains a formidable war machine".

The global security game is therefore played on a double track: massive technological investments in Europe to compensate for Washington's political fluctuations and a strategy of economic and military firmness to contain the returning imperialism of the Russian Federation.

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