

Arctic Shield 2025: the Army Leads Innovation for the Arctic

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In recent years, the Arctic region has regained increasing strategic relevance in the international geopolitical scenario. Climate change, with the progressive reduction of ice, has opened new maritime routes and access to previously inaccessible natural resources. However, these economic opportunities come with new security and defense challenges, making the development and maintenance of specific military capabilities for the Arctic environment essential.



The Italian Example: the Arctic Shield Exercise and the “Volpe Bianca 2025” Cycle

In the context of this renewed focus on operations in the Arctic environment, Italy has demonstrated its ability to face the challenges of an extreme operational theater. The **Arctic Shield** exercise, held at over 2000 meters altitude in the Puster Valley Dolomites, is a clear example of the commitment of the Italian Armed Forces. The activity, part of the training cycle Volpe Bianca 2025, involved over 1300 military personnel and was characterized by high technological content and the integration of cyber capabilities, electronic warfare, and autonomous systems.

Under the direction of the Alpine Troops Command and in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the Army, General of the Army Corps Carmine Masiello, the exercise took place with the participation of elite units: the 3rd Alpini Regiment of the “Taurinense” Brigade, the 5th and 7th Alpini Regiments, the 4th Alpini Paratroopers Regiment “Ranger”, and the 5th Artillery Regiment “Superga”. The cyber capabilities of the 9th Regiment “Rombo” provided support to operations through the use of advanced drones and electronic warfare tools, demonstrating the growing importance of the interconnection between the physical environment and the digital domain.

The activity was completed with collateral events such as the **Ice Patrol** and the **Ice Challenge**, moments that combined esprit de corps with inclusion, paying tribute to the Fallen in international missions.



The Arctic: A New Geopolitical Center of Gravity

The growing attention on the Arctic is not only Italian. Internationally, the region is the subject of intensified military activities and defense cooperation, as emerged at the Arctic Circle Assembly last October. During the event, Admiral Rob Bauer, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, reiterated the Alliance's concerns about the Russian military buildup in the area and the growing military cooperation between Russia and China in the Arctic.

According to Bauer, “NATO will defend its interests in the Arctic, protecting all its Allies and ensuring respect for the rules-based international order, including freedom of navigation.” He also emphasized the importance of Nordic cooperation, strengthened by the entry of Sweden and Finland into the Alliance, and investment in capabilities and technologies to maintain credible deterrence in the High North.

Particular attention was also given to the strategic role of Iceland, a crucial hub for air surveillance and satellite communications thanks to the **NORTHLINK** initiative, aimed at developing secure and resilient Arctic satellite communication capabilities.



Technological Innovation and Operational Adaptation

The extreme environmental conditions of the Arctic require not only particular physical and technical preparation but also the use of advanced technologies. NATO forces, as well as Italian ones, are investing in the development of dedicated equipment, adapted logistical capabilities, and autonomous platforms for surveillance and defense.

The **Pentagon**, for example, has published a new strategy for the Arctic, while Italy has demonstrated its projection in the region through the **Forum Arctic Dolomites 2025**, an occasion for international dialogue on Arctic security and sustainability issues. On this occasion, Senator Isabella Rauti, Undersecretary of Defense with a mandate for the Arctic, highlighted the need for an integrated approach, where security, economic development, and environmental sustainability intersect.

Conclusions

The Arctic is increasingly a crucial strategic area, both for its resources and for geopolitical and military implications. Italy, with its alpine troops and technological capabilities, is proving ready to operate in these challenging contexts, contributing to NATO's collective security and reaffirming its commitment to international stability. The Arctic challenge is not only military but concerns the future of international relations and the management of global resources. In this scenario, preparation, innovation, and multilateral cooperation are the keys to facing the future.

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