



Defense and Surveillance: The Italian Air Force Monitors the Ship Admiral Flota Kasatonov off Sardinia

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In the delicate chessboard of the central Mediterranean, the Italian Air Force confirms its role as a strategic sentinel. The latest surveillance operation featured a Beechcraft King Air 350ER SPYDR, engaged in monitoring the passage of the Russian frigate *Admiral Flota Kasatonov* in the waters south of Sardinia.

The Watchful Eye of Decimomannu

The monitoring mission focused on the waters southwest of Sardinia, a natural route for naval units heading towards the Strait of Gibraltar. It was here that the frigate *Admiral Flota Kasatonov* and the tanker *Akademik Pashin* were intercepted by Italian reconnaissance activity. To keep navigation under control, the Italian Air Force launched its Beechcraft King Air 350ER SPYDR from the Sardinian base of Decimomannu.

The aircraft, specialized in ISR (*Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance*) missions, operated at low altitudes, a fundamental tactic for acquiring precise data on maritime movements in transit. This intervention is part of an extremely intense patrolling activity that sees the Italian military aviation — and NATO partners — constantly engaged in monitoring routes from North Africa to the heart of the Mediterranean.



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Why Monitoring is Strategic

The Russian convoy, sailing westward, not only represents a military presence but is also the subject of careful intelligence analysis. The comprehensive monitoring guaranteed by the Italian forces meets two fundamental needs:

1. **Operational Security:** Ensuring constant control of naval units crossing waters of national interest.
2. **Geopolitical Assessment:** The potential exit of the *Admiral Flota Kasatonov* from the Mediterranean would mark a further reduction of Russian naval projection in this sector, a signal that requires a precise analysis of Moscow's capabilities and tactical routes.

The Capability of the *Kasatonov*

The attention of the Italian forces is justified by the technical caliber of the Russian unit, a frigate equipped with advanced weapon systems:

- **Attack Capability:** 16 cells for anti-ship and cruise missiles, including Kalibr, Oniks, and Zircon systems.
- **Integrated Defense:** *Palash CIWS* systems for close protection and a modern *Prosvet M* electronic system.
- **Autonomy:** Capability to operate for 4,000 miles at a speed of 14 knots, supported by a COGAG propulsion allowing it to reach speeds of up to 29.5 knots.

The precision with which the Italian Air Force tracked the movement of this naval asset confirms, once again, how data collection capability has become the cornerstone of national security for crisis management in the Mediterranean.