Defense at a Crossroads: Crosetto's Pressure on Giorgetti for the 15 Billion of the EU SAFE Plan

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ROME – A fifteen-day countdown that risks blocking the key projects of Italian Defense. The Minister of Defense, **Guido Crosetto**, has broken the delay and initiated a formal and intense pressure on the colleague from the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), **Giancarlo Giorgetti**. At the center of the political-financial clash is Italy's participation in the European program **SAFE** (*Security Action for Europe*), a package of community loans amounting to **14.9 billion euros** intended for security.

Without the MEF's approval by the end of May, the contracts for the country's technological and military modernization risk being stalled.

The End of May Deadline and the "Frozen" Projects

Crosetto confirmed that he has officially written to Giorgetti to urge a decision that can no longer be postponed. "*By the end of May, a decision should be made whether to access SAFE or not and sign the contracts. This is a decision that belongs to the MEF, I am neither pessimistic nor optimistic,*" declared the Defense Minister, effectively calling for a government summit to untangle the situation.

The funds from the SAFE program are considered vital by the military apparatus. It's not just about new equipment, but about financing existing contracts already in execution that cover strategic sectors:

- **Modernization of the military instrument:** Acquisition of next-generation weapon systems.
- **Cybersecurity:** Funds for the protection of critical infrastructures from hacker attacks.
- **NATO Commitments:** Without these resources, it becomes almost impossible for Italy to reach the 2% GDP target for defense, an increasingly stringent international constraint in light of global tensions.

The MEF's Barricades: The Debt Trap and EU Constraints

On the other side of the barricade, Giancarlo Giorgetti preaches extreme caution. The MEF's position is not an ideological no to Defense, but a rigorous defense of public accounts. Italy is currently under the scrutiny of Brussels due to the **excessive deficit procedure**, which drastically reduces the margins for maneuver on the deficit.

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During a recent question time in the Chamber, Giorgetti clearly expressed his doubts:

> "*It will be difficult to incur further debt just for the purchase of weapons, without considering other priority social spending chapters, unless greater flexibility comes from the European Union.*"

The loans from the SAFE program, although at favorable and European rates, still inflate the **overall public debt** of the State. For the Treasury, subscribing to almost 15 billion in new loans risks breaking the strict parameters agreed with Europe in the deficit reduction plan.

The Political Knot: A "No" That Would Weigh Internationally

The case has now become political and has forced Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to convene top-level meetings with the deputy prime ministers to mediate between the two sides of the government. While Palazzo Chigi wants to maintain the line of firmness and international reliability within NATO and Europe, it cannot ignore budget constraints.

The ball now definitively passes to the Council of Ministers. **If Italy decides to forgo the SAFE funds,** it will not be a technical choice of the MEF, but **a heavy political responsibility that the entire executive will have to assume in front of international allies, certifying the slowdown of national security plans.** However, time is almost up.