Drone Threat Near Bases: The UK Strengthens Military Powers. And Italy?

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In the United Kingdom, the drone alert has become a national security issue with numbers that speak for themselves: in 2025, **266 incidents** with “Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles” (UAV) were reported near Ministry of Defence sites, **more than double** the **126** in 2024.
Hence the political choice: **strengthen the immediate reaction capability** on the ground, without relying every time on police intervention.

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What London is Doing

With the measures included in the **Armed Forces Bill**, the British government intends to grant authorized Defence personnel **new powers to detect, counter, and "neutralize" drones** deemed threatening near military sites, **without having to wait for police assistance**.
The novelty does not concern only aerial drones: the proposed framework also includes **land and maritime drones** (even operable "on or under water"), recognizing that the threat is no longer confined to the sky.

The context is one of "layered" security: airspace restrictions over dozens of sites, integrated surveillance and monitoring systems, investments in anti-drone technologies.
In other words: not just technology, but **a clear legal perimeter** that allows those defending the bases to act in a timeframe compatible with the nature of the threat.

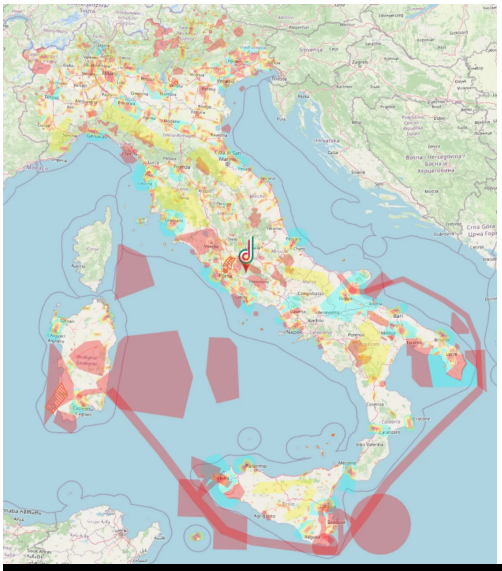
Why This Concerns Italy (More Than It Seems)

In Italy too, the availability of increasingly efficient, affordable, and easy-to-use civilian drones has changed the risk: unauthorized overflights, demonstrative activities, hostile or "hybrid" actions, up to the hypothesis of attacks on **critical infrastructure** and military targets. It is no coincidence that, at the EU level, the Commission has just published an **Action Plan on drone and counter-drone security**, calling for strengthened prevention, detection, and coordinated response.

Italy is also already investing in capabilities: there are parliamentary and administrative programs and initiatives that mention anti-drone systems, for example in the naval sector. But technology alone is not enough if **the chain of command, competencies, and intervention powers** are not precisely defined: when a suspicious drone appears, every minute counts and regulatory uncertainty risks translating into operational delay.

The Key Point: Reaction Times and Responsibilities

The British model starts from a pragmatic principle: if the event occurs **inside or near a military perimeter**, Defence must be able to **protect its sites and operations** with authorized procedures and tools, avoiding back-and-forth or “grey areas” between entities.
In Italy, however, drone risk management tends to fragment between aeronautical regulations (ENAC/UAS frameworks), public order, military needs, and the protection of civilian infrastructure: it is a mosaic that works as long as the incident is “simple”, but becomes fragile when the threat is rapid, coordinated, or deliberately hostile.



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What Italy Needs: A Similar Framework, with Guarantees

Adopting similar measures does not mean militarizing public space, but **making deterrence credible** and protecting sensitive targets. An Italian proposal should include at least five pillars:

1. **Clear and circumscribed powers** for Defence personnel *specifically authorized* to act against UAS near military sites and operations (aerial, land, and maritime), with defined intervention thresholds.

2. **“Approved” technical rules** on the tools that can be used (jamming/neutralization, interception, capture, etc.), in line with European standards and with traceability of use.
3. **Chain of command and interforce coordination** (Defence–Interior–ENAC–intelligence), with rapid alert protocols and an integrated operations room for complex cases.
4. **Dynamic perimeters and “restricted zones”** (also temporary) around bases, arsenals, ranges, military ports, and logistical hubs, with real enforcement and applicable sanctions.
5. **Oversight and transparency**: intervention registers, periodic audits, protection of rights (privacy and proportionality), to avoid abuses and ensure public trust.

This approach is perfectly consistent with the European trajectory: the Commission's Plan calls for better detection and response capabilities, as well as a more coordinated framework among member states.

Conclusion: It's Not “If”, It's “When”

The United Kingdom has chosen to respond to the numbers and the evolution of the threat with a clear response: **operational powers to Defence + investments + procedures**.
Italy is not starting from scratch on the technological and industrial front, but today the priority is **to fill the decision-making void** that can emerge in the crucial minutes of an alert.

A law (or a regulatory package) is needed that clearly states **who can do what, where, with what tools, and under what controls**. Because drones do not wait for circulars: they enter, observe, disturb, or strike. And a modern state must be able to respond with the same speed, without ambiguity.