

Europe, Masiello's Warning: “Peace is a Parenthesis Between Two Wars” - VIDEO

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The institutional opening of the fourth edition of the conference for the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Pavia—with **Defense Minister Guido Crosetto**, representatives of the Government and NATO—soon gave way to a fundamental reflection on the continent's security. While the start focused on the international scenario and common defense, the second part shifted to realism: the intervention of **General C.A. Carmine Masiello**, Chief of Staff of the Army, marked the most concrete moment.

A Phase Change for Europe

“**The United States is no longer there**.” The phrase—explained immediately afterward—does not evoke a total disengagement but captures a **shift in the center of gravity**: for Washington, the priorities are now the Western Hemisphere and competition with

China. Europe is no longer at the center of the US agenda as in the past. Hence the assumption: ***“Dependence on the American umbrella is no longer sustainable.”*** It is an invitation to rethink the role, responsibilities, and tools of the Old Continent.

According to Masiello, the exceptional European stability of recent decades cannot be taken for granted. *“**Peace is a parenthesis between two wars**”*, he warned, recalling the open fronts from Ukraine to the Middle East. International balance is fragile: **preparing**—mentally, organizationally, industrially—becomes part of deterrence itself.

Cognitive Warfare, Technology, and the Return of Heavy Capabilities

The Ukrainian conflict is the paradigm of a **hybrid way of fighting**: conventional, technological, and cognitive. Artillery and armored vehicles that Europe had almost removed are returning; drones, cyber, and artificial intelligence are advancing; but above all, **the human mind fully enters the battlefield**, between propaganda and disinformation.

The harshest criticism concerns the **European posture**: thirty years of peacekeeping have weakened the **heavy capabilities**—idle tanks, marginalized artillery, neglected air defense. It's not just the means that are lacking: **the mentality is missing**. The priority, Masiello insists, is **a cultural shift**. *“We must learn to anticipate, not just react... **Mistakes are important**: without error, there is no growth, and without growth, there is no innovation.”*

The Civil Dimension: Defense as a Collective Responsibility

Broadening the focus beyond the military sphere, Masiello recalls **Article 52 of the Constitution**: *“Defense is the duty of all citizens.”* He denounces a cultural fragility that views the presence of the Armed Forces in schools and public debate with suspicion.

The goal is clear: **to be a force understood and supported**, not just respected.

For the Chief of Staff, the real “bottleneck” is **industrial**. The **European production and supply times** are not compatible with the **speed of the threat**. A **more agile and integrated decision-making system** is needed, capable of overcoming bureaucracies and rivalries between countries.

And here the issue becomes openly political: **“Common defense is a political choice, not a technical one.”** The armed forces can cooperate, but the **will to build a European defense** rests with the governments.

“We can become a military power in ten years — he warns — *but we must be **ready to manage the crises that may erupt before then**.”*

The Lesson of Pavia

The reference to the **fifth centenary** is not folklore. At Pavia, those who **first understood the technological leap** won. Today—amid AI, space, and cybersecurity—the lesson is the same: **those who do not adapt, lose**.

General Masiello closes with a warning that is both **program and responsibility**: Europe can no longer afford the role of spectator of its own security.

Either it **builds strategic autonomy**, or it risks, once again, **arriving too late**.

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