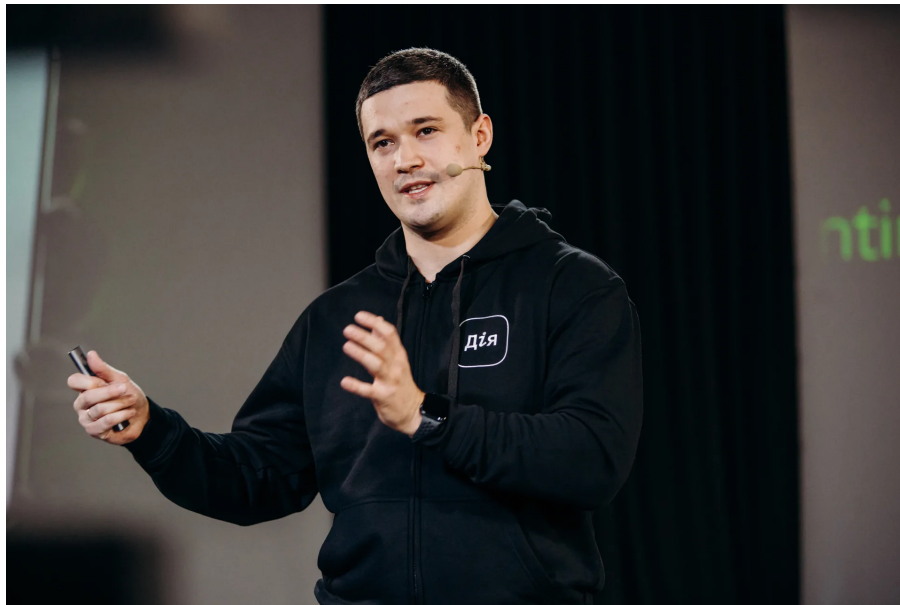




From Brave1 to Rome: The Ten Mountains Mykhailo Fedorov Should Climb to Revolutionize Italian Defense

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Imagine transplanting Mykhailo Fedorov — the architect of the [Ukrainian digital miracle](#) and the **Brave1** program, capable of transforming a besieged country into a global incubator of **asymmetric technologies and drones** in just a few months — into the Ministry of Defense in Rome. The impact would not be a simple change of pace, but a **head-on collision** between Silicon Valley logic applied to modern warfare and the solid, immovable fortress of Italian industrial and state bureaucracy.

If the objective were truly to unlock innovation, slash costs, and radically modernize the national military instrument, the “Fedorov cure” would have to face a chain of structural resistances deeply rooted in the country's system. Here are the ten monumental challenges it would encounter.

1. The monopoly of large state-owned giants

The Italian defense industrial ecosystem is historically polarized around a few **giants with state participation**. This centralizing model absorbs every multi-year spending program, acting as a sponge that absorbs resources and **eliminates real competition**, preventing the emergence of a plural and elastic industrial fabric.

2. National sovereignty as a protectionist alibi

Behind the noble banner of “national sovereignty” often lie **protectionist barriers** erected to defend entrenched interests. This formal shield is used to block openness to genuine European and international competition, isolating the domestic market from healthy competitive stimuli.

3. The political-industrial triangle and the “revolving doors”

The system rests on a closed and self-referential circuit where the top levels of politics, large industrial apparatuses, and the apex of Defense move within a constant flow of **cross-appointments, revolving doors, and clientelistic relationships** that lock in the status quo.

4. Cooptation at the expense of merit and oversight

Within this protected perimeter, strategic decisions on weapons programs rarely respond to criteria of operational effectiveness or technological merit. The result is the **sterilization of independent technical oversight** and the habituation of military leadership to mere preservation logic.

5. The desertification of venture capital

Unlike dynamic innovation-oriented economies, Italy suffers from an almost total **absence of targeted state investment funds, risk capital**, and financial instruments dedicated to *seed/scale-up* for Dual-Use technologies. Without injections of private and public capital in the early stages, ideas die before becoming prototypes.

6. The suffocation of technological startups

Young Italian innovative companies developing artificial intelligence, advanced sensing, or electronic countermeasures find closed doors in Defense procurement channels. Hostage to

asphyxiating bureaucracy, many startups end up dying or **ceding their intellectual property to foreign actors**.

7. Ideological bias in academic research

University research is hampered by deeply rooted cultural resistance and a **widespread ideological bias** against the Defense sector. This instrumental clash often leads to boycotts of joint research calls, depriving polytechnics and centers of excellence of a fundamental support for technological development.

8. The loss of the national automotive supply chain

Deindustrialization and financialization of the historic automotive pillar have deprived Italy of a mass manufacturing base. In major industrial countries, the automotive supply chain represents the logistical reservoir and assembly line ready to be **rapidly converted in case of crisis**; Italy has dismantled this strategic shock absorber.

9. Deficient strategic and geopolitical literacy

The political class displays a **chronic lack of security and defense culture**, reducing geopolitical issues to ad hoc slogans. Without a long-term vision, military spending is managed with accounting or short-term consensus logic, incapable of guiding genuine industrial transformation.

10. The speed of industrial cycles against modern warfare

The time gap between traditional procurement cycles — taking decades for a complex platform — and the speed of today's conflicts, based on **drone lifecycles measured in weeks**, renders the current system structurally inadequate to ensure survival on the modern battlefield.