



General Masiello: “Drones must become an integral part of operational culture.” Workshop in Rome on capability development and countering the threat

The workshop addressed employment, training, emerging technologies and procurement in the UAS and C-UAS sectors.

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A workshop in Rome focused on the development of remotely piloted systems and counter-drone capabilities. Training, artificial intelligence, electronic warfare, and cooperation with the defense industry took center stage.

The Esercito Italiano brought together representatives from the Armed Forces, industry, and the media to examine the role of drones in modern operational scenarios and the strategies needed

to counter their hostile use.

The workshop, entitled “Drones in modern operational scenarios: capability development and countering the threat,” was held on October 29, 2026, at the “Giuseppe Perotti” barracks in Rome, with the participation of the Chief of Staff of the Esercito Italiano, Lieutenant General Carmine Masiello.

The event addressed the changes brought about by the increasingly widespread use of unmanned systems in contemporary conflicts, with particular attention to the development of UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) and C-UAS (Counter Unmanned Aerial System) capabilities.

Masiello: the main challenge is changing mindsets

In his remarks, General Masiello stressed that unmanned systems have taken on a decisive role in military operations, making it necessary to accelerate their adoption throughout the Armed Force.

«The decisive role of unmanned systems in modern operational scenarios is now clear: for this reason, the Esercito is making every effort to ensure they are progressively deployed throughout the Armed Force», the Chief of Staff stated.

However, Masiello emphasized that introducing new technologies is only one part of the transformation underway. The most important change concerns the cultural and operational approach of military personnel.

«The most demanding challenge, however, concerns mindsets: drones must become an integral part of operational culture», he said.

With this in mind, the Esercito is investing in education and training to prepare personnel to employ remotely piloted systems as integrated tools in operational activities.

The General also highlighted the importance of cooperation among institutions, industry, and the research community, which is considered essential to meeting new technological and operational requirements.

The mass use of drones is changing the battlefield

The workshop was organized into three thematic panels dedicated to the evolution of the threat, emerging technologies, and the processes for developing and acquiring new capabilities.

The first discussion examined the impact of the mass use of drones in recent conflicts, highlighting how these systems have changed the conduct of combat and the protection requirements of forces and critical infrastructure.

The widespread proliferation of unmanned assets therefore requires the development of new defensive capabilities based on detection, identification, and countermeasure systems able to operate at multiple levels.

The topic was examined by RAI journalist Barbara Carfagna, who moderated the discussion, together with Major General Giuseppe Bossa and Filippo Scarante, Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations at Rheinmetall Italia.

The discussion highlighted the need to adapt military capabilities to the evolving threat by developing solutions that enable both the effective use of drones and protection against adversary systems.

Artificial intelligence, sensors and electronic warfare

The second panel focused on technologies set to further transform the employment of remotely piloted systems and counter-drone defense capabilities.

Il Foglio journalist Cecilia Sala and Lieutenant General Lorenzo D'Addario explored the contribution of artificial intelligence, advanced sensors, electronic warfare and autonomous systems.

These technologies are becoming increasingly important in the development of unmanned assets and Counter-UAS systems, particularly to improve threat detection and support operational decision-making.

Technological advances also require greater integration among the various components, so that surveillance, protection and countermeasure capabilities can operate in a coordinated manner.

Leonardo and AIAD: accelerating the development of new capabilities

The third panel addressed the industrial and organizational requirements associated with the growing proliferation of unmanned systems.

The evolving threat makes it necessary to shorten the development and procurement timelines for military technologies, strengthening cooperation among the Armed Forces, industry and research institutions.

The discussion was led by Gianluca Di Feo, Defence Correspondent for la Repubblica, with the participation of Leonardo Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Lorenzo Mariani, and Luisa Riccardi, Director General of AIAD and former Deputy National Armaments Director.

At the heart of the discussion was the need to develop effective, sustainable UAS and Counter-UAS systems suited to the rapid pace at which operational requirements change.

Cooperation between the industrial sector and the military therefore plays a key role in turning technological innovations into capabilities that are readily available to units.

Gagliano: training and experimentation to expand drone use in the Esercito

Lieutenant General Giovanni Gagliano, Commander of the Forze di Supporto al Combattimento and lead official for developing the Esercito's drone capability, drew attention to the studies and experimentation currently underway.

Among the workshop's objectives is the need to foster greater integration of remotely piloted systems into the activities of the Armed Force, supporting their wider adoption with appropriate training programs.

Particular importance is attached to personnel training and the ability to integrate new technologies with the systems and procedures already employed by units.

The objective is to develop the skills needed to enable increasingly widespread use of drones, moving beyond an approach that limits their employment exclusively to specific specialist

components.

Drones and counter-drone systems: two capabilities to develop together

The workshop highlighted how the technological transformation of the battlefield requires the Army to advance simultaneously along two lines of effort: increasing its ability to employ unmanned systems and strengthening the tools needed to counter adversary systems.

The proliferation of drones requires not only new equipment, but also updates to operational procedures, training programs, and personnel skills.

In this context, dialogue among the Army, industry, and research institutions is one of the means of accelerating technological development and promoting the integration of new capabilities.

As General Masiello emphasized, the transformation concerns not only the equipment available to military personnel, but above all their training and ability to adapt to an ever-evolving operational environment.

Source: [Esercito Italiano – Drones in modern operational scenarios, October 29, 2026.](#)

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