

Italian fighter jets for Kyiv, North Korea slows Moscow: two strategies compared

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As the conflict enters a decisive phase of logistical and diplomatic reorganization, the latest developments highlight **two diametrically opposed approaches** to managing alliances and wartime procurement: on one side, Ukraine, working to strengthen and diversify its air defenses through **formal negotiations with Western partners**; on the other, Russia, whose **dependence on isolated regimes** is showing deep cracks.

The Ukrainian approach: technological integration and institutional diplomacy

Kyiv is focusing on the **qualitative modernization of its fleet** to counter Russian missiles, drones, and glide bombs. According to *La Repubblica*, the Ukrainian government has submitted a formal request to Italy for between **10 and 20 Tranche 1 Eurofighter Typhoon fighters**, early-generation aircraft that the Italian Aeronautica Militare plans to retire starting in 2028 and

replace with **24 new aircraft ordered from Leonardo**.
Kyiv's strategy is operating through **well-established diplomatic channels** — the issue was also raised during the meeting in Dublin between Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and President Volodymyr Zelensky — but it must contend with **democratic procedures and domestic political balances within allied countries**:

- **The parliamentary and political hurdle:** No official decision has yet been made in Rome. Any transfer of aircraft still in service would require **parliamentary approval** and faces domestic resistance to extending aid through 2027, as well as recent diplomatic tensions linked to **Ukrainian attacks on Russian ships in the Libyan port of Benghazi**.
- **The standardization challenge:** Should the deal go through, the Eurofighters — primarily optimized for **air interception** — would become the **third Western fighter model** in Kyiv's arsenal after U.S. F-16s and French Mirage 2000s (with Swedish Gripens expected in 2027). This choice provides resilience but requires **complex training and maintenance efforts**.

The Russian approach: tactical alliances and strategic vulnerabilities

On the opposing side, Moscow has based its firepower on the **massive support of authoritarian partners**, a strategy that is now revealing its full **political fragility**. According to Ukrainian military intelligence (GUR), North Korea has **temporarily suspended military aid to Russia** by direct decision of leader Kim Jong Un.
The halt was not caused by industrial constraints, but rather by a **diplomatic rift**: statements by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko regarding Moscow's future willingness to promote **detente between the two Koreas** angered Pyongyang. North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui deemed this position incompatible with the strategic partnership treaty between the two countries, imposing immediate measures:

- **Suspension of supplies and airspace access:** A halt to deliveries of **ballistic missiles** (such as the KN-23) and **new artillery ammunition**, accompanied by a **ban on Russian military transport aircraft** overflying North Korean airspace.

- **Hesitation over troop deployment:** Pyongyang is also delaying the Kremlin's request to expand the North Korean military contingent in Russia from the current **8,500 personnel to 50,000 troops**, partly due to the **high number of casualties** already sustained at the front.

The contrast between the two dynamics highlights a structural difference: while Ukraine faces the **transparency and inherent slowness of European democratic processes** in building an integrated and enduring military capability, Russia is paying the price for the **instability of an alliance lacking genuine shared values**, in which a single diplomatic statement is enough to paralyze one of its main supply lines.