Italy and Leonardo at the Forefront of GCAP: The Future of Military Fighters

Published on 04/04/2025

The **GCAP (Global Combat Air Programme)**, born from the strategic alliance between **the United Kingdom, Italy, and Japan**, represents one of the most ambitious projects for the future of air defense. The goal: to develop a **sixth-generation fighter** that can ensure technological and operational superiority in the decades to come.

In this context, Italy plays a leading role thanks to the leadership of **Leonardo**, a flagship company in the national aerospace and defense sector, tasked with **coordinating the Italian industrial contribution** to the program. Leonardo will be responsible for the development of advanced sensors, radar, mission systems, and strategic technologies, confirming Italian excellence in the sector.

A Strategic Shift from the USA: Trump Effect

According to the Spanish magazine INFODEFENSA, the birth and consolidation of GCAP is not only the result of technological choices but also of **an autonomous geopolitical strategy** by its three founders. The arrival of Donald Trump to the presidency introduced a more commercial and less cooperative approach to alliances, raising concerns among Washington's historical allies. During the presentation of the future American fighter **F-47**, Trump stated that the aircraft could also be sold to allies, but at a higher price *"because they might stop being our allies"*.

Words that cooled the interest of some countries, already oriented towards greater strategic and industrial autonomy. GCAP was born precisely as a Euro-Asian response to the need to break away from a **US-centric vision of defense**, focusing on shared technological sovereignty and equal multilateral collaboration.

It was reported a few weeks ago that Boeing won the contract for the development of the sixth-generation F-47 fighter.

A Program Looking Beyond: New Alliances and Industrial Opportunities

After consolidating the initial core, the GCAP program is seeking new strategic partners. The United Kingdom has already initiated contacts with **Australia and Canada**, while **Italy has left open the possibility of involving Saudi Arabia**. In this context, the **general manager of Leonardo**, Lorenzo Mariani, has suggested **the possibility of setting up production plants in Saudi Arabia**, confirming the expansive potential of the project and opportunities for the national industry.

GCAP: Italy, UK, and Japan together for the next-generation fighter. Leonardo, BAE Systems, and Mitsubishi are involved. The three companies signed a trilateral cooperation agreement in 2023, officially launching the conceptual phase of the program.

The Successor of the Eurofighter, in Synergy with the F-35

The fighter developed under the **GCAP program** will be intended, in the next decade, to **replace the Eurofighter Typhoon fleets** currently in service with the air forces of Italy and the United Kingdom. However, it will not be an alternative to the **F-35**, but a **strategic complement**, designed to operate in synergy with the latter, enhancing air defense capabilities and superiority in airspace.

The new aircraft will integrate **cutting-edge technologies** such as artificial intelligence, advanced data fusion, and coordination between autonomous systems, representing a true generational leap compared to current platforms.

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