Leonardo - Baykar Technologies: the Future of War Drones

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In an operation that shakes the balance of the aerospace and defense industry, Leonardo has chosen the Turkish giant Baykar Technologies as a strategic partner for the development of next-generation war drones. An industrial alliance that promises to redefine the technological assets of the sector and open new scenarios for the European market.

Baykar, a symbol of Turkish innovation, is closely linked to Ankara's political leadership: its president and chief technologist is **Selçuk Bayraktar**, a prominent engineer and son-in-law of **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan**, while the role of CEO is held by his brother Haluk. Their leadership has transformed Baykar into a global reference point for the production of combat drones, known for their effectiveness on modern battlefields.

A Visit Full of Political and Industrial Significance

To underline the importance of the partnership, the Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy, Adolfo Urso, visited Baykar's plant in Istanbul, just three weeks after the preliminary agreement - authorized by Mimit - for the acquisition of Piaggio Aero's activities in extraordinary administration by the Turkish group. A step that not only ensures industrial continuity but opens the doors to a broad collaboration between Leonardo and Baykar.

"The two companies, among the main global players in the aerospace and defense sector, will be able to develop industrial and technological synergies for the creation of advanced systems, with particular attention to the production of drones for the European market," reads an official note from Mimit.

Minister Urso reiterated the strategic scope of this agreement: "The acquisition of Piaggio Aerospace by Baykar represents a fundamental step for strengthening the Italian industry and opens a new season of cooperation with Turkey. Our goal is to enhance innovation, competitiveness, and Italy's technological leadership in the aerospace and defense sector".

Accompanying him on the visit were Leonardo's president, Stefano Pontecorvo, and the Turkish Minister of Industry and Technology, Mehmet Fatih Kacir.

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Drones, Defense, and Geopolitics: The New Frontier of the Rome-Ankara Axis

The agreement between Leonardo and Baykar fits into a context of growing economic exchange between Italy and Turkey. "In the last three years, the value of trade between the two countries has grown by a third, from 24 to 32 billion euros," Urso declared at a press conference in Istanbul. An increasingly solid bond, also reflected in the industrial cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting between **Urso and Minister Kacir** confirmed the willingness to further expand economic relations, with new investments and greater integration of their respective production chains.

Baykar and Leonardo: A High-Tech Synergy

The Turkish giant, which last December won the bid for the acquisition of **Piaggio Aerospace**, boasts an excellent portfolio in the production of unmanned aircraft and combat drones. In 2023, Baykar recorded a turnover of about 2 billion dollars, 90% of which came from exports.

It is no coincidence that Leonardo is interested in the partnership with Baykar. The Turkish company has gained global notoriety thanks to its Bayraktar TB2 drones, successfully used by the Ukrainian armed forces in the conflict against Russia.

"We are exploring important industrial synergies in the field of unmanned technologies," said Leonardo's CEO, Roberto Cingolani. The goal is to integrate Leonardo's know-how with Baykar's expertise in the creation of advanced drones, creating new opportunities for the European and international market.

Opportunities and Challenges of an Ambitious Alliance

The partnership between Leonardo and Baykar represents an unprecedented opportunity for the Italian aerospace industry, but it is not without challenges. The integration of two entities with different corporate cultures and strategies will require careful management to avoid tensions and overlaps in the market segments where both companies operate.

An alliance that promises to transform the defense and aerospace industry, bringing Leonardo and Baykar to the center of a global technological revolution.

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