



Let Us Not Neglect NATO's Southern Flank: Russia Is Strengthening Its Position in Libya and Italy Is on the Front Line

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While international attention remains focused on Eastern Europe, **a new front of geopolitical pressure is taking shape less than a thousand kilometers from Italy's shores.**

Moscow's growing **militarization of Libya** is not an isolated development, but part of a broader Kremlin strategy to reshape the security balance across the European continent.

Moscow's maneuver in Cyrenaica: drones, bases and logistical support

Recent satellite imagery and recruitment announcements highlight [a step change in Russia's presence in North Africa:](#)

- **Landings and military materiel:** Approximately 3,000 tons of military equipment intended for areas controlled by the Haftar clan have been unloaded in Tobruk. It consists primarily of logistical assets (Tornado-U trucks, mine-resistant vehicles and armored vehicles) used to build fortifications and sustain long-range operations from four key bases (Benghazi, Sirte, Al-Jufra and Brak al-Shati).
- **Africa Corps recruitment:** Russian channels linked to Wagner's successor are promoting contracts with substantial bonuses for attack-drone operators to be deployed in Libya.
- **Strategic control:** Expansion toward the border with Niger and Chad allows Moscow to position itself as a regional arbiter and potentially gain control over migration routes, a tool already used in the past to exert pressure on Europe's borders.

Russia's new doctrine: Europe as the primary adversary

Its presence in Libya is part of a strategic vision in which Moscow regards Europe – not only the United States – as its main geopolitical adversary.

As strategic affairs experts such as Dmitry Adamsky have analyzed in *Foreign Affairs*, Russia is developing the concept of **Non-Nuclear Strategic Deterrence (NNSD)**. This doctrine calls for the use of advanced conventional capabilities (drones, ballistic missiles and electromagnetic pulse tools) to conduct long-range precision strikes against critical European infrastructure. Its long-term objective goes beyond the conflict in Ukraine: it seeks a wholesale revision of the post-Cold War European security order.

Why Italy and Europe are at risk (and the system's contradictions)

Italy is geographically and strategically exposed on the front line in the central Mediterranean:

- **The financial paradox:** The Haftar clan finances the Russian presence through proceeds from energy concessions. Revenue generated by the activities of major European companies (including ENI, TotalEnergies and Repsol) thus ends up indirectly paying for Moscow's security services, fueling its strategic pressure campaign against Europe.

- **Vulnerability of trade routes and infrastructure:** Recent incidents in the Black Sea show how Russian intimidation of merchant vessels bound for or departing from European ports can paralyze trade flows, disrupting food and industrial supply chains.
- **The political response dilemma:** Despite awareness of the threat – as demonstrated by interactions between Rome and Kyiv on countering drones – the lack of coordinated action by European governments limits their leverage over Libyan warlords.

Conclusion

The security of NATO's southern flank cannot be regarded as secondary to the eastern front. Without unified action by European governments to assert their political and economic weight in the Mediterranean, **Europe's strategic weakness will continue to represent a vulnerability that Moscow will not hesitate to exploit.**

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