



Let us not neglect NATO's southern flank: Russia is strengthening its presence in Libya, and Italy is on the front line

Published on 27/10/2026

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 event, but part of a broader Kremlin strategy to redefine the security balance across the European continent.

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

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

- **Landings and military equipment:** About three thousand tons of military equipment have been unloaded in Tobruk for areas controlled by the Haftar clan. This mainly includes logistical assets (Tornado-U trucks, mine-resistant vehicles, and armored vehicles) needed to build fortifications and conduct long-range operations from the four key bases (Benghazi, Sirte, Al-Jufra, and Brak al-Shati).
- **Africa Corps recruitment:** Russian channels linked to Wagner's successor are advertising contracts with substantial bonuses for attack-drone operators to serve 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

The presence in Libya fits into a strategic vision in which Moscow regards Europe – not only the United States – as its primary geopolitical adversary.

As strategic affairs experts such as Dmitry Adamsky have analyzed in *Foreign Affairs*, Russia is developing the doctrine of **Non-Nuclear Strategic Deterrence (NNSD)**. This doctrine envisages the use of advanced conventional capabilities (drones, ballistic missiles, and electromagnetic-pulse tools) to carry out long-range precision strikes against critical European infrastructure. Its long-term objective goes beyond the war in Ukraine: it seeks a comprehensive 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 Russia's presence through revenues from energy concessions. Resources generated by the activities of major European companies (including ENI, TotalEnergies, and Repsol) thus end up, indirectly, paying for Moscow's security services, fueling its strategic pressure apparatus against Europe.
- **Vulnerability of trade routes and infrastructure:** Recent episodes in the Black Sea show how Russian intimidation of merchant vessels bound for or departing from European ports can paralyze trade flows, affecting food and industrial supply chains.
- **The challenge of the political response:** Despite awareness of the threat – demonstrated by exchanges 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 the Atlantic Alliance's southern flank cannot be treated as secondary to the eastern front. Without united action by European governments to assert their political and economic weight in the Mediterranean, **Europe's strategic weakness will continue to be a vulnerability Moscow will not hesitate to exploit.**

News link: https://www.corriere.it/economia/aziende/26_ottobre_26/putin-militarizza-la-libia-perche-minaccia-l-italia-e-l-europa-e-che-cosa-cio-rivela-di-noi-b04afcdb-9edb-46e9-8527-73d866ce4x1k.shtml?refresh_ce