Madness: Why Crosetto is Right About the British Wall in the GCAP

Published on 03/02/2026

ROME — Calling it **“secrecy”** is already an understatement. If indeed, as Guido Crosetto claims, the United Kingdom continues to **withhold key technology** within the GCAP program, then we are not facing normal **industrial prudence**: we are facing a **strategic mistake**. And yes, **“madness”** is the right word.

Because a **sixth-generation** fighter is not an aircraft “to be assembled together” in **watertight compartments**, where everyone delivers their piece and goes home. It is a **complex digital system**, built on **deep integration**: **software**, **sensor fusion**, **electronic warfare**, **data links**, **materials**, **propulsion**, **mission architectures**. If one of the three legs of the table refuses to really show what's under the hood, the table won't stand. And the project risks becoming a sum of **incompatible silos**, not a single **shared capability**.

The concept of the sixth-generation GCAP aircraft

The logic: not sharing with allies means weakening oneself

Crosetto points out the most uncomfortable issue: holding onto **decisive technologies** while asking others to invest **billions** means turning partners into **“clients”** and not **allies**. But a true industrial alliance works the opposite way: sharing serves to build **interdependence**, thus **deterrence** and **resilience**. Reluctance does not protect the program: it makes it more **fragile** , **slower**, and more **expensive**.

And this is where the accusation becomes **geopolitical**. If the GCAP slows down, fragments, or gets bogged down in **mutual suspicions**, who benefits? The **adversaries**. Russia and China do not need allies to give up secrets: it's enough for them to quarrel, duplicating costs and delaying **deployment**. Crosetto is not being rhetorical: he is describing a classic dynamic, where the lack of **internal trust** becomes an **external advantage multiplier**.

The precedent: “barriers of selfishness” is not a slogan, it's a governance risk

This is not the first time the minister has sounded the alarm. After his statements to Reuters, returning to the topic with Defense News means one thing: according to Rome, the problem has not been **resolved**. And if it is not resolved now, it becomes **structural**.

In these programs, power is not just about *who produces what*, but *who controls the standards* and *who owns the software keys*. Keeping everything **“in the safe”** may seem like a national

advantage in the short term; in the medium term, it is the quickest way to create **frictions**, **suspicions**, and — inevitably — demands for **countermeasures**: **internal duplications**, **cross-protectionism**, alternative sub-projects. The result? Less **efficiency**, less **interoperability**, more **costs**.

Italy and Japan: The Meloni-Takaichi Summit and the Future of Defense

The Italian choice: setting an example with Leonardo

The most concrete (and politically challenging) part of Crosetto's reasoning is this: **“we start”**. Saying that he has ordered Leonardo to **share technology** is a move that overturns the table: Italy exposes itself first, puts **real assets** on the table, and tries to force others to do the same.

It is also an internal message: if spending increases, the country must see a **return** in terms of **technological autonomy** and **industrial capacity**, not just an entry ticket. And here the discussion inevitably becomes **political**: when numbers rise, the public and Parliament ask **“what do we get in return?”**. If the answer is **“not everything, because someone doesn't share”**, the **sustainability** of the program weakens.

The illusion of “easy cooperation”

The GCAP is often portrayed as more **fluid** than other European projects. But fluidity is not a label: it is a daily practice of **transparency** and **mutual access**. A trilateral collaboration works only if everyone has **equal technological dignity** within the agreed perimeter. If one nation unilaterally decides that some areas are **off-limits**, cooperation becomes **asymmetric**. And

asymmetry, over time, creates **reactions**.

This is why the idea of a common industrial structure (like Edgewing) must have real content and not just a brand: without clear rules on **sharing** and **“black boxes”**, the risk is to build a joint venture that coordinates contracts but does not truly integrate technology.

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Rome and Tokyo: solid partnership, and for this reason clarity is needed

The fact that Giorgia Meloni and Sanae Takaichi have reiterated **satisfaction** with the progress is an important signal: Italy and Japan want the program to move forward. But precisely when the political framework is **positive**, it is the right time to resolve the **hard knots** — those that, if left to fester, explode later when it is too late and too **costly** to go back.

Conclusion: sharing is not charity, it is deterrence

Crosetto's thesis, read without prejudice, is **pragmatic**: in 2026, air superiority is not only bought with hardware, but with the mastery of the **digital architecture**. If the United Kingdom truly wants a **strong**, **credible** GCAP in a timely manner, it must treat Italy and Japan as equals even in the **technological heart** of the project.

Not sharing with allies today is not prudence: it is a **gift to adversaries**. And that is exactly why Crosetto speaks of **“madness”**.

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