



National Security: Japan's Lesson and Challenges for Italy

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The global geopolitical landscape is undergoing a phase of profound change. Historically cautious countries are rapidly enhancing their *intelligence* capabilities to counter hybrid threats, technological espionage, and destabilization attempts. The case of Japan, recently described as a “textbook case” with **dangerous similarities to Italy**, offers fundamental insights for our national security.

The Context: Vulnerabilities and Reforms

For decades, both Rome and Tokyo have operated under regulatory constraints inherited from the post-World War II era, which have limited the coordination capacity between different *intelligence* agencies. In both contexts, this fragmentation — with vital information scattered among the police, Ministry of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and other administrations — has left them vulnerable to foreign actors, who have been able to act almost undisturbed.

Tokyo's shift, led by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi with the recent creation of the *National Intelligence Council*, marks the transition towards a model of centralization of the information apparatus. It is a necessary path to align with the standards of major Western powers, but it is not without international friction.

Insights for Italy

The analysis of the Japanese experience raises crucial questions for our country:

1. **Centralization vs. Fragmentation:** The need to overcome the “regulatory void” and the poor coordination capacity among the various state sectors. Italy, like Japan, must assess whether its current structure is sufficiently agile to manage 21st-century threats, which are no longer just military but range from cyber-espionage to disinformation.
2. **The Challenge of Hybrid Threats:** Japan is taking steps to counter *Foreign information manipulation and interference* (Fimi). In Italy as well, protecting public debate and transparency towards public opinion are becoming pillars of national security, just as much as protecting industrial or military secrets.
3. **Technology and Control:** The reported case of using Aeroflot's headquarters in Tokyo as a secret Russian operational base highlights how vulnerable the national fabric is if effective cross-checks are lacking. For Italy, this means not only monitoring sensitive technology abroad but ensuring that control over its own territory is pervasive and technologically advanced.
4. **Strategic Autonomy:** Tokyo had to seek help from its allies to define new priorities. This highlights the delicate balance between the need for international cooperation (essential for *intelligence* exchange) and the need to develop autonomous and sovereign capabilities capable of responding to specific crises, such as the protection of Taiwan or stability in the Mediterranean for Italy.

Conclusion

Japan shows us that the modernization of *intelligence* is not just a technical issue, but a political necessity. The risk, ignoring the need for such reforms, is twofold: suffering foreign interference in total silence or finding oneself isolated when geopolitics demands a more active and coordinated posture. For Italy, the challenge is to transform the awareness of its own limitations

into a structural reform capable of looking to the future, without remaining anchored to outdated security schemes.