Portolano in Poland: more cooperation, more defense, more Europe

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Warsaw, October 2, 2025 – The official visit to Poland by the **Chief of Defense Staff, General Luciano Portolano**, concluded today. He held bilateral talks with Polish military authorities and participated in the burial ceremony of the remains of 31 Italian soldiers who died during World War II as internees in the Lamsdorf prison camp (now Łambinowice).

Strategic Talks and Cooperation

On the first day of the visit, Gen. Portolano was received in Warsaw by his Polish counterpart, **General Wiesław Kukula**, with whom he discussed the transformation, adaptation, and operational readiness of their respective military forces.

The topics covered included current geopolitical and geostrategic scenarios, with particular attention to:

- the Arctic region and NATO's eastern flank,

- the Western Balkans,
- the Middle East and North Africa.

The Italian and Polish Armed Forces already cooperate in various operational theaters, including Kosovo, Bosnia, Lebanon, Iraq, and Somalia, and the value of this cooperation was reiterated.

Another central theme was support for Ukraine, in terms of donations of defense systems and ammunition, as well as training initiatives aimed at regenerating Ukrainian Forces.

On the NATO front, financial commitments in defense and future capability goals in key areas such as *main battle tank*, *armoured infantry combat systems*, air defense, maritime assets, *cyber*, electromagnetic spectrum, *UAV*, counter-UAV, satellite communications, and artificial intelligence applications were discussed.

In the field of industrial cooperation, the two generals evaluated strategic cooperation initiatives – not only as purchases but as integrated projects of technology transfer and interoperability between Italian and Polish industry. Concrete ideas concerned *Government to Government* (G2G) agreements and the increase of national production capacities, elements considered fundamental also for deterrence.

A specific focus was dedicated to the role of the **Final Assembly Check Out (FACO) – MRO&U in Cameri**, which could be used for the assembly and maintenance of the F-35 aircraft purchased by Poland. Additionally, the opportunity to use the future **Pilot Training School** of the Italian Air Force in Trapani to train Polish F-35 pilots was offered.

At the end of the first day, Gen. Portolano laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and met with the Italian Ambassador to Warsaw, Luca Franchetti Pardo, as well as the staff of the Italian diplomatic mission.

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Commemoration and Historical Memory

The second day of the mission had a high symbolic and commemorative value. At the **Cathedral of the Polish Armed Forces (Katedra Polowa Wojska Polskiego)**, Gen. Portolano participated in the solemn ceremony officiated by the **Apostolic Nuncio in Poland, H.E.R. Mons. Antonio Guido Filippazzi**, and the **Ordinary Bishop of the Polish Armed Forces, H.E. Wiesław Lechowicz**, in honor of the 31 Italian soldiers interned in Stalag 344. The remains, found near Warsaw after long searches, will be buried in the Bielany cemetery in Poland.

In a moment of high emotional value, Gen. Portolano addressed the families of the fallen present, reminding them that "Defense never leaves anyone behind." After more than eighty years, these Italian soldiers will finally receive the recognition and honor they deserve. It is planned that the remains of another 29 soldiers found at the same site will be brought back to Italy, with flights provided by the Italian Air Force for this purpose.

Analysis and Strategic Significance

This visit by the Italian Chief of Defense Staff is significant on multiple fronts:

1. **Strengthening Italy-Poland Bilateral Relations**
   The military, industrial, and technological cooperation between the two countries is strengthened by a high-level meeting like this, with potential concrete impacts in industrial

(FACO, training) and strategic terms.

2. **NATO Cohesion / European Defense Vision**
   The talks on capability goals, financial commitments, and the use of tools like the EU's SAFE fund show how Italy wants to contribute to synergistic developments in the Euro-Atlantic area.
3. **Symbolic Value and Historical Memory**
   The attention to the memory of Italian fallen interned in Poland, and the commitment to recover their remains, demonstrate how Defense intends to intertwine operational activities with a moral, national, and institutional mission.
4. **Industrial and Technological Dimension**
   The discussion on the involvement of Italian industry, the transfer of know-how, and strategic cooperation goes beyond mere military exchanges: they are essential segments of a vision of strategic autonomy and international competitiveness in the defense sector.

In summary, the visit represents a diplomatic-military action that goes beyond institutional rituals: it is a political-strategic investment, a focus on future alliances and capabilities, with a strong symbolic component linked to historical memory.

News link: https://www.difesa.it/smd/casmd/eventi/difesa-visita-in-polonia-del-capo-stato-maggiore-difesa-generale-luciano-portolano/80353.html