Question Time for the Minister of Defense

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On May 21, 2025, during the question time at the Chamber of Deputies, the Minister of Defense, Guido Crosetto, was called to address numerous sensitive topics, including **defense spending, the relationship with Israel, and Italy's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**. The discussion saw moments of high tension, particularly with the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) and Alleanza Verdi e Sinistra (AVS).

2% of GDP for Defense: The Minister's Responses

The main question of the day was raised by Luigi Marattin, who asked about the percentage of GDP dedicated to defense spending. Crosetto explained that, despite Italy having benefited from the NATO umbrella's protection for the past 80 years, the geopolitical reality is changing, with the United States shifting its focus towards the Indo-Pacific. In this regard, he anticipated that **during the NATO summit in The Hague, scheduled for June, a higher commitment is expected, which could reach a contribution between 3.5% and 5% of GDP**. The

minister clarified that the resources needed for this commitment also include cybersecurity and other resources dedicated to defense in a broad sense.

Marattin responded by highlighting how Italy had already been spending 2% of GDP for years without real public awareness. His main criticism concerned the lack of a real increase in defense spending.

Clash with Movimento 5 Stelle: "Rearming Italy"

The discussion heated up during the questioning by Francesco Silvestri of Movimento 5 Stelle, who accused Crosetto of wanting to rearm Italy excessively. The Minister responded sharply, reminding that the defense budget is decided by Parliament, and that any increase in military spending, such as the one to 3.5%, will be under parliamentary supervision. He then recalled that, in the past, even the Cinque Stelle had supported the 2% commitment within the NATO framework, referring to the motions voted by party members.

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Riccardo Ricciardi (M5S) countered with a criticism of the minister, accusing him of being too close to the interests of the arms industries, particularly BlackRock, and of not respecting the popular will. According to Ricciardi, the minister chose to spend billions on weapons, while Italian citizens would be forced to pay for private healthcare.

The Relationship with Israel: Crosetto's Clarifications

One of the most discussed topics was the relationship between Italy and Israel, especially regarding arms supplies. **Crosetto explained that, while being a great supporter of the State of Israel, the Italian government has decided to suspend the export of arms to Israel, in light of the situation in Gaza**. He emphasized that each military material export is carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must comply with specific international laws, avoiding their use against the civilian population. Crosetto also reiterated that, although legally Italy could continue to import military material, **it has decided to also suspend imports from Israel.**

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Deputy Grimaldi of Alleanza Verdi e Sinistra (AVS) raised another critical point, recounting having seen Italian humanitarian aid blocked at Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip. Grimaldi accused the Italian government of being complicit in a genocide against the Palestinian population, using very strong tones.

Geopolitical Reflections and the Role of NATO

During the debate, Crosetto also discussed the future of NATO, highlighting the need for an **internal reorganization to face new geopolitical challenges**. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte stated that many allies are in favor of increased defense spending, but emphasized that the details of these requests are not yet final. The summit in The Hague at the end of June will be crucial to define new defense commitments. Rutte also stressed that, without continuous pressure on Moscow, it will not be possible to achieve a "just and lasting peace" in Ukraine.