Review of the Obligation: The Turning Point That Changes the Ethics of Command

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The career landscape for senior officers of the Italian Army is about to undergo an epochal transformation. The recent guidelines expressed by the top of the Army General Staff mark the overcoming of a historical paradigm: the command obligation for Lieutenant Colonels of the Regular Role will no longer be a bureaucratic constraint, but a choice based on aptitude and merit.

From "duty" to aspiration: the vision of the leadership

The cornerstone of this turning point lies in the very nature of command. According to the guidelines expressed by the Chief of Staff of the Army, battalion command cannot and should not be interpreted as a mere administrative task to "check off" in order to advance in one's career.

A command exercised by imposition, rather than by vocation, risks eroding that heritage of trust and belonging that binds units to their commanders. The declared objective is therefore to eliminate the constraint that today weighs exclusively on Lieutenant Colonels of the Regular Role, restoring to this position its nature as a **noble aspiration**.

Overcoming disparities: merit and specialization

The review of the command obligation addresses a dual need for organizational efficiency:

- **Aptitude selection:** Entrusting the leadership of units only to motivated officers with outstanding leadership skills.
- **Enhancement of skills:** Avoiding that officers highly specialized in staff, technical, or project areas have to interrupt strategic paths to fulfill a formal obligation.

It is essential to emphasize that the failure to assume command should not be interpreted as a professional demerit. On the contrary, remaining in complex staff positions often responds to institutional priorities that require continuity and consolidated technical skills.

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Towards a new advancement model

The definitive turning point will concern career progression. Currently, fulfilling the command obligation is a necessary condition for advancement to the higher rank only for the Regular Role. A structural review in this sense would not only eliminate an internal disparity but ensure a more equitable professional growth system, where the value of an officer is weighed based on

effectiveness in their specific field of employment, whether operational, technical, or leadership.

This regulatory evolution promises to restore the command to its authentic **ethical value**, while ensuring that the Army can rely on leaders employed where their talent is most functional to the needs of the Armed Forces.

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