Technology, Philosophy, and Initiative - General Masiello's Soldier

Published on 17/07/2025

The soldier of the Third Millennium is not just a fighter trained in the use of weapons, but a complex and multifunctional figure: technologically competent, intellectually autonomous, and capable of acting swiftly in fluid and multidimensional contexts. This new figure is outlined by General Carmine Masiello, Deputy Chief of Defense Staff, who in a lucid and detailed analysis offers his vision for the future of the Italian Armed Forces.

A new operational paradigm: speed, initiative, and national cohesion

According to Masiello, Western democracies must contend with an increasingly unstable geopolitical reality and threats that manifest with unprecedented speed. Faced with slow decision-making processes and institutional structures still tied to past models, it becomes urgent to synchronize the timing of politics with that of military action. War, the General argues,

is no longer just a military matter: "it involves the entire national system."

The soldier as an integrated system

In the contemporary battlefield, the military is part of an advanced operational ecosystem. The conflict in Ukraine has shown that individual capabilities must integrate with complex technological tools: from drones to cyber systems, from electronic warfare to the protection of IT networks. "Thinking of replacing humans with an army of drones is illusory," states Masiello. "Controlling the terrain still requires the physical presence of the soldier."

Confirming the growing importance of the cyber domain, the General cites the "Dome" system, a digital shield that protects troops in the field by neutralizing cyber attacks and safeguarding operational communications.

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Modern conflict: conventional, technological, and cognitive

Masiello identifies three dimensions of current warfare:

- **Physical**, with trenches and traditional combat;
- **Technological**, where drones and artificial intelligence change the face of the battlefield;
- **Cognitive**, marked by disinformation, manipulation, and attacks on the cohesion of Western public opinion.

Another central issue is the speed with which Defense can adapt. Minister Guido Crosetto, Masiello recalls, has repeatedly denounced the delays in military procurement. Bureaucratic slowness is incompatible with the rapid evolution of threats. For this reason, the National Armaments Directorate is called to become not just an administrative center, but a place where strategic thinking is developed and industrial production and technological innovation are integrated.

Distributed leadership and independent thinking

The modern soldier must also be a leader. Leadership, says Masiello, cannot be limited to reaction: it must be the ability to take initiative, especially at the lower levels of the command chain. The Ukrainian example shows how young soldiers often find operational solutions with minimal resources, autonomously building drones, software, and effective tactics.

To support this evolution, the Army must break free from the mental rigidity typical of hierarchical organizations. It is precisely with this in mind that the General has introduced the study of philosophy in military schools: "We want to train officers capable of thinking critically, laterally, and independently. Ideas have no ranks."

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In an era where wars are fought with unconventional tools and in hybrid domains, technical competence and discipline are no longer enough. A cultural revolution is needed. The contribution of young people is crucial: not only for their familiarity with technologies but because they represent the lifeblood of an army capable of transforming and anticipating

challenges.

Ultimately, the "soldier of the future" that Masiello outlines is not just a war professional, but an integrated operator, an innovator, a thinker. A man – or a woman – capable of acting effectively in chaos, making responsible choices under pressure, and contributing with intelligence and creativity to the defense of the country.

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