

Trump-Meloni: the alliance that surprises Europe

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ROME – While the European Union struggles to speak with one voice, something unexpected is happening: **Italy finds itself at the center of the geopolitical game**, with **Giorgia Meloni** who, willingly or not, **is assuming an increasingly central role in the balance between the United States, NATO, and Europe**. This was evidenced by the high-profile meeting held at the White House, where **Donald Trump welcomed the Italian premier as a privileged ally**, praising her work and announcing a future official visit to Rome.

> *"Italy is one of our closest allies, not only in Europe," declared the US President "Giorgia Meloni is a fantastic person, she is doing a great job."*

Words as heavy as stones, especially when compared to the chilly climate surrounding many other European leaders, often perceived as weak and indecisive interlocutors by Washington. In an increasingly fragmented Europe – between migration crises, economic tensions, and the war in Ukraine entering its fourth year – **Giorgia Meloni emerges as a reference figure**.

Is Italy taking the lead?

The gesture of enormous political value was the official announcement that **Italy will reach 2% of GDP in military spending by 2025**, as requested for years by NATO. A threshold never reached before, not even in times of maximum international pressure. The Minister of Economy **Giancarlo Giorgetti** made the announcement in Parliament just hours before the premier's trip to Washington, speaking of a "*necessary choice*" dictated by current international tensions.

A turning point that caught many by surprise, especially considering **the internal political context**: from the strong criticisms of the *Movimento 5 Stelle*, which organized demonstrations against the increase in military spending, to the perplexities previously expressed by *Matteo Salvini*, who today seems to have realigned with the government's line, declaring: *"Defending Italy and Italians yes, even more than 2%"*.

Brussels limps, Rome accelerates

While Brussels promotes collective tools to strengthen defense – with strong divergences of vision among member states, between those who support greater strategic integration and those who remain cautious about excessive centralization – **the SAFE fund of 150 billion euros and the safeguard clause to exclude military expenses from the deficit calculation represent the pillars of this common strategy.** However, Italy, at least for the moment, chooses an autonomous approach.

The Minister of Economy **Giancarlo Giorgetti** clarified that the goal of **2% of GDP in defense spending will be reached without activating the clause**, despite it having been long requested, in the past, by Rome. As for joining the SAFE fund, any evaluation is postponed until after the **NATO summit in June**, when a new spending target might emerge, perhaps at 3.5% of GDP.

> *"We will respect budget discipline and international commitments with cold blood and rationality, avoiding hasty choices", declared Giorgetti.*

For Trump, Giorgia Meloni is the European interlocutor

The meeting between **Trump and Meloni** went far beyond military spending. On the table: **trade tariffs, energy, migration, and the war in Ukraine**. And on all these fronts, there was a profound **harmony between the two leaders**. Meloni even paraphrased the famous Trump slogan by saying she wants to ***"make the West great again"***, while Trump praised the Italian line on immigration and openly criticized EU policies.

> *"I am not a fan of how Europe has handled immigration," Trump stated. "But Italy is doing a great job."*

Meloni, for her part, emphasized how European policies are changing **also thanks to the Italian example**, referring to the new package of return rules enacted by the Commission.

On the Ukrainian front, however, **some divergences remain**. Trump expressed not being particularly favorable to **Volodymyr Zelensky**, stating: *"He has not done a good job, I am not a big fan of his."* Meloni, on the other hand, reiterated that ***"the aggressor is Putin"***, but also added that the common goal must be **a just and lasting peace**.

Italy sovereign or director?

The paradox is evident: Italy, long considered among the last in the international class, today finds itself **actively contributing to defining the European agenda**, surprising the traditional continental powers. **France and Germany watch with growing discomfort**, **the United Kingdom moves independently**, ready – along with Paris – to send troops to Ukraine as part of a possible **peacekeeping** mission, **while the Italian decision to bring defense spending to 2% of GDP**, according to reports from the Iberian newspaper *El Mundo*, **also puts pressure on the Spanish government of Pedro Sánchez**, left isolated and still hesitant about increasing military allocations.

Meanwhile, **Rome is perceived in Washington as the new point of reference**. There is already talk, not without emphasis, of a **"New Rome"**: a capital capable of leading the Mediterranean, strengthening the Atlantic Alliance, and **rebalancing European centrality**, shifting it from the traditional Franco-German axis to the south.

Conclusion

Are we facing a historic turning point or a clever pre-election move orchestrated by Trump to strengthen the sovereignist axis? It is still too early to say. But one thing is certain: **Giorgia Meloni has conquered the international scene**, and with it the right to sit at the table where the world's great strategies are decided.

For better or worse, **Italy is no longer just a spectator: it is a protagonist**.