



Two Navies, Two Visions: The Royal Navy's "Hybrid" Approach Challenges the Traditional Model

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The future of European fleets is at a strategic crossroads. On one hand, the Italian Navy maintains a course based on the centrality of the complex ship and its crew; on the other, the British Royal Navy has embarked on a radically alternative path, betting everything on a "Hybrid Navy" that sees drones and automation as the core of its evolution.

The Royal Navy: The "Distributed Lethality" Alternative

The Royal Navy, through the new *Defence Investment Plan* (DIP), proposes a paradigm shift: abandoning the replacement of destroyers with new large units to instead build a distributed force. This choice sharply contrasts with the conventional vision, based on the following pillars:

- **Replacement of traditional assets:** Instead of investing in costly destroyers like the planned Type 83, the RN intends to develop *Common Combat Vessels* (CCV) that act as

"command hubs" to manage swarms of autonomous ships and drones.

- **Reduction of human and structural costs:** The British logic aims to eliminate the logistical needs associated with human presence on board (mess halls, living spaces, life support systems), drastically reducing operational costs and overcoming personnel shortages through technology.
- **Resilience through dispersion:** The strategy aims to "disperse" firepower (as in the case of the Type 91 "missile barge") to make it extremely difficult for an adversary to neutralize a tactical group with a single targeted attack.



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The Italian Navy: The Persistence of the "Human-Centric" Model

While the Royal Navy seeks to dismantle the classic warship model, the Italian Navy moves along a different path. As stated by Admiral Giuseppe Berutti Bergotto, the priority remains the projection of advanced military capabilities based on a strong human and technological apparatus.

- **Integration rather than replacement:** Italy uses drones as force multipliers integrated on multipurpose ships, not as substitutes for manned ships.
- **The primacy of human decision-making:** Despite experimentation with artificial intelligence for data analysis, Admiral Bergotto clarifies that "in the end, it is the human being who makes the decisions."

- **Growth of personnel:** Unlike the United Kingdom, which attempts to reduce personnel through automation, Italy is actively working to increase its personnel, aiming to grow from the current 27,000 to over 30,000 members.

Conclusions: Two Philosophies Compared

The Royal Navy presents a bold and disruptive alternative: the idea that modernity coincides with the removal of the human factor from the line of fire to maximize machine efficiency.

The Italian Navy, on the other hand, interprets modernity as an enhancement of its conventional capabilities, where technology supports the human operator in an integrated naval ecosystem.

The future will tell whether the British bet on the "Hybrid Navy" will truly offer more effective protection or if the Italian model of versatility and human presence will remain the most reliable pillar for maritime security.