



Why Control of the Atlantic Ocean Will Be Decisive for the West's Future

Published on 06/10/2026

The Atlantic Ocean was a bridge, has become a front, and risks turning into a moat. This is the central thesis of the essay ***Storm.Reykjavik, Brest, New York and Rabat*** (published by Luiss University Press), written by **Mario De Pizzo**, a Tg1 journalist and member of the Atlantic Council.

While global attention is often focused on conflicts in the East — between Ukraine, the Middle East, Taiwan, and the direct challenge between the USA and China — the crucial theater of the 21st century remains in the West, along the **North Atlantic**. This oceanic belt, for seventy years the «**backbone of the West**» (as Ambassador Giampiero Massolo recalls in the preface), has become a veritable **land of conquest**.

The four strategic nodes of the «Tempesta»

Through four symbolic locations, the essay maps the new geopolitical and technological risks threatening the global balance:

1.Reykjavik and the GIUK Gap: the race for resources and undersea deterrence

The journey begins with a future—but imminent—scenario off Iceland, in the **GIUK Gap** (the stretch of water between Greenland, Iceland and the United Kingdom).It is the chokepoint where the major nuclear powers — **the United States, Russia and China** — confront one another with advanced submarines (such as the American *Columbia*-class, the Russian *Belgorod* or the Chinese *Type 096*), **underwater drones, submarine cables, naval espionage and cyber threats**.

- **The Arctic and climate change:** Melting ice is making the area increasingly accessible .This is where **10% of global oil reserves, 30% of natural gas** and deposits of **strategic minerals and rare earths** (lithium, cobalt, nickel, platinum, and palladium).
- **New routes and artificial intelligence:** China has already launched its *Ice Silk Road*, while Russia seeks passages to the Atlantic to **divide Europe from the US and Canada** .All this is compounded by the use of **autonomous weapons with Artificial Intelligence systems** and the crisis of non-proliferation agreements.

2.Brest: European nuclear deterrence

In Brest, Brittany, lies **I'île Longue**, the French nuclear submarine base that serves as the **cornerstone of the deterrent of the European Union's only nuclear power**.

- Strengthened nuclear cooperation between **France and the United Kingdom**, together with recent drone attacks and hybrid threats (behind which suspicions of Moscow are mounting) highlight Europe's vulnerability.
- French President Emmanuel Macron has proposed a plan for **European extended deterrence**, endorsed by eight countries, which **Italy has chosen to stay out of**.

3.New York: the crisis of multilateralism

The New York leg reveals the **UN's deep crisis** and the concurrent rise of political visions that undermine the foundations of Western civilization: the idea that **power should have no limits** and that **ideology should bend the law**.

4.Rabat and the Sahel: the contest for resources and stability in the South

The competition extends into North Africa and the Sahel, the resource-rich belt where **Morocco aims to become a linchpin between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.**

- However, regional tensions with Algeria weigh heavily and Russian penetration through the militias of the **Africa Corps.**
- For Europe, stabilizing this region is essential to **contain terrorism and migratory pressures**; for the United States, it is key to **securing access to critical minerals.**

A nautical chart for navigating the storm

Although the scenario outlined is complex, the message of *Tempesta* **is not a requiem for the West, but a nautical chart for navigating the storm.** The book closes with a hopeful look at the **Great Green Wall**, the 8,000-kilometer green wall promoted by the African Union and the FAO: proof that an **alternative, cooperative future is still possible.**