

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES IN EUROPE
AND THE UNITED STATES
ON CUTS AND SHARING OF DEFENSE EXPENSES
(1969-1972)**

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This report is part of an Italian inter-university project aimed at better understanding the process of détente policy in East-West relations. During the four-year period 1969-72, the era of changing relations seemed right for realizing potential solutions toward a peaceful coexistence between East and West, but the various coalitions, as well as their single member states – the USA and the USSR, above all, as well as all other NATO and Warsaw Treaty Organization members - were characterized by profound transformations of their precarious internal political balances.

During this period parliamentary debates became particularly fierce and harsh. This is particularly true in Italy where certain political parties used the debates on the military budget question as a way to try to enlarge the distance between Italy and its NATO allies. In the USA, instead, Democrats as well as conservative Republicans used the same budget question as an opportunity to contrast Nixon's new East-West policy. Democrats desired to induce Nixon to follow a more neutralist orientation in order that the USA be less involved in European problems. The conservative Republicans judged Nixon's East-West «era of negotiations» as a too generous form of legitimation of Soviet policy. For a great number of Americans it was difficult to understand that an increase in East-West relations was a good method for interrupting a very dangerous trend which, during the years 1967-68, was bringing a new escalation in armaments as well as too many advantages to the Soviets.

In all the Western European countries both the necessity to reinforce and realize an East West détente policy and the desire to preserve one's own high level of military security was widely perceived and shared. The European governments were more concerned over American requests connected with a different partitioning of military responsibility and larger involvement in the sharing of defense expenses.

Priorities in each individual State program were deeply different, of which it is possible to briefly summarize in the following manner.

The USA, in order to reduce its own military involvement, but not its security, and notwithstanding its prevalence for new technologies, needed to change its «power confrontations» on military escalation with Moscow into a «peaceful competition» instead, fostering implementations of social and economic development for all countries of the world. For this reason, with the strategy of «open negotiations», the United States government was ready to search out any further partnerships, including with countries of different political systems. But the situation was particularly difficult due to the dimension of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia; the concern expressed during the NATO meeting held on November 15-16 1968, was a very serious one because the right of intervention in the affairs of other States ran counter to the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. The use of force and the stationing in Czechoslovakia of Soviet forces not hitherto deployed there aroused grave uncertainty about the real situation and about the calculations and intentions of the USSR. This uncertainty seemed to demand great vigilance on the part of the NATO allies who considered the above dangerous for European security as well as a source of grave anxiety giving rise to fear of further possible use of force in other cases.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, and notwithstanding its military strength and ideological success in its expansion in the Mediterranean and Arabian countries, needed to reduce the causes of its weaknesses due to political dissent in Eastern European countries and to Chinese rivalry. It also tried to induce Western European countries to renounce any possibility of using their strength against her in the event of a China-USSR war through promoting the necessity of a Pan-European conference¹. Insisting on demanding their adhesion to a Pan-European conference, to be held in the spring of 1970, Moscow desired to appear eager to involve also Western European countries in that expansion, but it was suspected, instead, to be interested in binding itself to a renunciation of their possibility of a military intervention in Europe, whether in Czechoslovakia or in any

¹ For a vaster look at the theme of the Pan-European Conference see the vol. Pia G. Celozzi Baldelli, *Richard M. Nixon : Una politica americana per l'Europa ed il Medio Oriente*, Roma Gangemi, 2006.

other Warsaw Treaty country, in the occasion of a hypothetical Moscow-Peking conflict.

And lastly, the Warsaw Treaty Organization, although demonstrating power and military cohesion, nevertheless needed to bring Western European countries into a joint alliance system through a Pan-European conference in order to avoid that Eastern European countries could be attracted by Western political ways of life.

In some NATO member countries, for example, the parliamentary debates on defense policy became extremely fierce and heated, due, above all, to Article 13 coming into effect in 1969, which gave NATO country members the possibility of exercising the unilateral right to withdraw from the Alliance with a one-year notice. NATO, therefore, was looking to increase its political cohesion through directing « more efficient attention of the Alliance in the tackling of common environmental problems which could imperil the welfare and progress of modern societies ». Nevertheless, due to the situation in Czechoslovakia and to the violation of the freedom of access to Berlin, the NATO Council agreed that « it was extremely important that during an era of negotiations the defense posture of the Alliance should not be relaxed », and that « Members of the Alliance would reaffirm the continuing determination to make appropriate contributions to joint efforts for defense and deterrence at all levels, both nuclear and conventional¹ ».

The European Community, instead, and notwithstanding its interest in peaceful coexistence, was particularly weak due to mutual rivalries and to its inability to find a common foreign policy, as it was constantly uncertain between enlargement first or structural development first. It also was at constant odds for its ambivalence towards the protective umbrella of NATO, which, although desired, was, nevertheless, continuously criticized.

Other factors, however, also contributed to making the year 1969 a turning point : 1) the extreme speed in the progress of weapons technology ; and 2) the new emphasis on *détente*, begun by Nixon both with his policy of *open negotiations* and with his proposal of searching out – including within Nato members – a third dimension in East-West relations. Nixon, in his address to commemorate the Twentieth Anniversary of Nato, in fact declared : « Now the Alliance for the West needs a third dimension » ... « A social dimension to deal

¹ Manlio Brosio's Final Communiqué, NATO Meeting, on April 10th 1969 at Paragraph 8 and 9.

with the last third of the 20th century ». This attention to a third dimension did not, however, contrast with his intention to negotiate from a position of strength.

This American policy was in conformance with the NATO General Secretary's Final Communiqué of April 10, in which it was expressed that « The maintenance of effective defense is a stabilizing factor and a necessary condition for effective détente policies¹ ». Notwithstanding all these difficulties, in Washington whether Nixon's program to proceed in his intention to realize an East-West détente policy or Congress' determination to induce the government to a consistent reduction of military involvement abroad was confirmed. The reactions to these new situations were deeply different, but both superpowers were interested in reducing their involvement in cold war competition. Moscow for her difficulties on technology, was moving toward a continuing improvement in her ideological and territorial expansion on the Near and Middle East and an increasing interest on African countries.

All these above factors generated substantial changes in strategic choices relating to the different geographical areas, changes of which solicited a different type of partitioning of political responsibilities and defense expenses, and which were brought into question within each of the country members' individual parliamentary chambers. More friendly coexistence was desired in all these countries, but there were differences about the means in which to reach it.

For a multitude of varying reasons, in the Italian Parliament and in the United States Congress the differences in the means toward reaching more friendly coexistence appeared particularly controversial. Some Italian Parliament members belonging to communist-inspired parties were extremely committed in asking the Italian government to follow the French example and leave the NATO Alliance. They also asked to proceed with an immediate dismantling of the military bases in Italy. In the U. S. Congress, instead, the main difficulties of the government came from a group of congressmen that, coordinated by Democratic Senator Michael Mansfield, requested, as I previously have mentioned, a drastic decrease of

¹ Manlio Brosio's Final Communiqué, NATO Meeting, on April 10th 1969 at Paragraph 6. These changes, which were planned later in the Nato Council of May 6, 1969, were adopted on December 4 of the same year in the Defense Planning Committee then in ministerial session.

American military commitment abroad and, moreover, pressed for an immediate and more substantial involvement of European countries in NATO defense expenses¹.

Senator Gordon Allott of Colorado supported the Mansfield resolution with particular vehemence. He believed that it would be necessary to force European countries into such an expense involvement because « the NATO countries had not, were not, and are not doing their share ». He insisted in pointing out that there was : « a general feeling in the Senate that the only way they could be forced to do so is for the reduction of American contribution to the effort ». He also insisted on pointing out that Nixon would be forced to consider USA difficulties in financing its military policy overseas more seriously when it would be time to decide on American investments in European countries.

In the Legislative Leadership Meeting of February 17 1970, discussion was brought up on the withdrawal of American forces. President Nixon warned that a withdrawal of all American forces from Europe, for example, « would be a very detrimental policy ». He recommended caution : « We may do it ourselves, but we have to do it our way² ». At the very least he said : « we ought to retain a *trip-wire* ; there is a significant shift indicated in this statement. We are telling all Asia and Europe they must do more on their part and we are going to do less on our part ». Senator Griffin indicated that the President should emphasize how he had reorganized and taken control of policy development, and Senator Taft asked what effect this would have on the National Commitments Resolution.

Besides other difficulties, the fact that U.S. public opinion, which in turn had to be informed by Congress, was not in the position to assess the impact of the changing international equilibrium was in itself worrisome. Nixon was particularly conscious of this, also in light of the fact that coming back from Europe he knew he had to keep Congress abreast of what was going on. During his visit to Europe,

¹ Having once been presented in 1966, the request was then presented again in May, 1971.

² Memorandum from the President's special Assistant (Buchanan) to President Nixon, « Notes from Legislative Leadership Meeting », 17th February, 1970, FRUS, 1969 – 1976, vol. I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, 1969 – 1972, doc. 59, p. 190-194. Although recognizing the accuracy of these arguments, Nixon yet warned, in his rough pragmatic manner, that a rushed withdrawal, and under pressure of such a resolution, could upset the NATO equilibrium with great detriment to the United States.

Nixon, constantly conscious of the necessity to refer to the Congress on this subject, continuously discussed the thorny problem of reduction of the American budget for European defense, but several European country members pretended to be exempt from having to pay more.

For example, the Federal Republic of Germany did not consider it at all correct that it be called up to face still further sacrifices. In fact, it considered itself to be in the front lines, (being as it were the dividing line between East and West), in conducting the more complex and burdensome part regarding East-West relations. The Italian governments, instead, not only had to deal with clashing communist opposition from within, but had also many problems to handle deriving from its coastal exposures in the more neuralgic points of the Mediterranean within the conflict, on which shores arms continued to pour in from every part. Also Italy resulted, therefore, as a front line border, and necessitated a collective defense. According to Ambassador Ortona's testimony during a State visit in September, 1970, Saragat, on this subject, had said to Nixon : « The major service to the cause of the West on Italy's part is not that deriving from an increase in arms, but that which could be had in defense of democratic institutions ». Reiterating a leitmotiv of the responses given to the USA by the Italian governments of the second half of the 1950's, Saragat had also said at that time : « Italy would render a greater service to the cause of the West spending billions on social reform instead of increasing its armed forces". And again : « The situation in Italy is a difficult one given the relevant size that a communist party such as ours is" [...]» Those (ideas) are illusions according to which, if communism arrives in Italy, it would be in an insignificant form » [...] « Communism must be fought not with colonels, but with adequate social reforms¹ ».

As far as the general question of the sharing of defense costs, Ambassador Ducci, in his role as Director General of Political Affairs of Italy, noted that « the favourable tendency toward the infrastructure solution – that is the inclusion of infrastructure costs sustained up to that moment by the United States – is that it ? be part of the mutual NATO expenditures ». For European countries this meant a rise in costs which, according to certain approximate estimates, would have amounted to about 150 million dollars per year. The Italian quota,

¹ Egidio Ortona, *Gli Anni d'America : La Cooperazione 1967-75*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1989, p. 244-5.

« considering that the contribution for common NATO costs of infrastructure was fixed at 7,58 %, would have been around 11 million dollars per year ». And even this sum appeared to be susceptible to increase, seeing that Europe, more than likely, would have to proportionately assume the US percentages of its participation to the infrastructure costs up to that moment, that is to say 29,67 % of the 150 million¹.

Also Great Britain had no intention whatsoever of assuming other financial burdens due to the entrance costs to the EC and anticipating what it would probably lose in its import-export relations with African countries of the Commonwealth : Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria². Nevertheless, membership of Great Britain to the EC was considered by many, and especially by the US, to be a fundamental element for an effective cohesive European politic and its capability of keeping things in balance.

France, instead, constituted a case apart, both in that it was a huge supplier of arms and planes, as well as because it had, already for a time, made its desire to exit from NATO official. However, notwithstanding Paris's propensity in finding motives for agreement with Moscow more than with Washington and other countries of the Atlantic Alliance, in the summer of 1970 it seemed as though, instead, it intended to keep a certain distance from both of the two superpowers. This perhaps due to the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the resignation of Dubcek, or more importantly because of some

¹ Appunto dell'ambasciatore Ducci, Roma 15 settembre 1970, in « Partecipazione europea alle spese derivanti dalla presenza delle truppe americane in Europa » (« European Participation to the expenses derived from the presence of American troops in Europe »), foglio 6, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Visite di Stato, Visite Ufficiali, 1970.1, USA, Messico, Etiopia, URSS, CEE, Segreteria Generale. Changes which were planned in the NATO Council of May 6, 1969, and adopted on December 4 of the same year in the Defense Planning Committee, then in ministerial session.

² Ricciulli a MAE, Londra, 29 settembre 1970, telegramma n. 904, in cifra, Oggetto : Brimelow su visita Presidente Nixon in Gran Bretagna, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, vol. III, n. 67, Londra, Arrivo. Manzini a MAE, Londra, 3 ottobre 1970, telegramma n. 923, in cifra, Oggetto : Sosta Nixon in Regno Unito, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, vol. III, n. 67, Londra, Arrivo. Manzini a MAE, Londra, 6 ottobre 1970, telegramma n. 930, in cifra, Oggetto : Sosta Nixon in Regno Unito, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, vol. III, n. 67, Londra, Arrivo.

articles of the new treaty between Moscow and Prague coming into effect¹.

The situation, in fact, had become even more worrisome for the West when, on the 6th of May of the year following the Czechoslovakian repression, and on occasion of the signing of the new Treaty between Prague and Moscow, world attention was attracted to Article 10 of the Treaty which established a reciprocal military assistance between the two countries in case of conflict, and no longer referring only to attack from Europe, but also in case of attack from the part of « any State or group of States ».

Also for this reason if Nixon considered it opportune to feign distraction and not pay sufficient attention to the gravity of the so-called « normalization » in Czechoslovakia, on the other hand he was perfectly aware of the necessity to take protective measures such as strengthening the network of bases in Europe. Bases in Italy in early 1969 were also rendered more efficient. In fact, planning specialists of great prestige were commissioned to render, for example, the base of Monte Telegrafo near Bressanone more effective and qualified to host missiles targeted on Czechoslovakia in order to dissuade an eventual new repression.

As a result of that situation, the signing of the Washington-Madrid Treaty on August 6, 1970 assumed a particular significance. It generated new impulses for an « Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation » along with the common concern of peace and security, and realized a far more ample and satisfying range of advantages to both parties than the convention on military bases of 1953 did. For example, from its inception on September 26, 1970, Spain received many advantages, including 50 million dollars and complete ownership of military bases². Also foreseen in the Treaty were

¹ Research for a stable peace with the Eastern Countries, within the detente policy already launched for some time, was expressly in any case already enclosed in 1967 and in 1968 in the *Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance*. In November 1968 the « defense of the West and the search for a stable peace with the East » as recalled in the Final Communiqué by NATO General Secretary, Manlio Brosio : « Notwithstanding the serious setback to hopes for improvement in East-West relations as a result of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, Ministers in November 1968 stated that secure, peaceful and mutually beneficial relations between East-West remained the political goal of the Allies » were emphasized. Manlio Brosio, Final Communiqué Chairman 15-16 November 1968.

² Marchiori a MAE, Madrid, 26 settembre 1970, telegramma n. 288, in chiaro, Oggetto : Accordo amicizia e cooperazione tra Spagna e Stati Uniti, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, n. 69, Madrid, Barcellona, Siviglia,

scientific and technical exchanges, cultural and educational collaboration, and common analysis of the problems brought by modern society and urban living ; its validity also extended expressly to the sectors of agriculture, finance, the economy, information and mass media. The transformation to the highest level of a simple agreement for the concession of military bases into an agreement in which both parts benefited enormous political value of great potential was made official. Programming a major collaboration between two countries in a sector as general as that of « cultural renewal for the development of moral and material progress of the two peoples » acquired even more significance thanks to its very generalness and to the special moment in which at that time a dictatorship was nearing its end. Particularly indicative was the phrase in Nixon's salute to Franco « I hope that the Administration which I today lead is capable to such an end (increase Hispanic-American friendship and cooperation) as to secure to your country that it can have the most complete collaboration on the part of the United States as you proceed in the development of your economy as well as other sectors of humanity¹ ». What was at stake, therefore, was much more than the official end of the isolation of the Franco regime and the beginning of those steps which would have brought a transition period.

For the United States the Treaty meant not only easing the end of a dictatorship, but also the launching of future alliances as an alternative to those with other Mediterranean countries considered to be too Soviet oriented, as France, or unstable, as Italy could become if, due to internal political problems, it were not able in the future to

Huelva, Bilbao, Arrivo. Madrid, 26 settembre 1970, n. 289, in cifra, Oggetto : Colloqui Segretario Tesoro USA con Ministri spagnoli a Madrid, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, n. 69, Madrid Barcellona, Siviglia, Huelva, Bilbao, Arrivo. Marchiori a MAE, Madrid, 3 ottobre 1970, telegramma n. 303, in chiaro, Oggetto : Commenti Franco e Nixon al termine visita presidente americano, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, n. 69, Madrid Barcellona, Siviglia, Huelva, Bilbao, Arrivo. For the original texts Remarks on Departure From Spain, October 3rd, 1970, Public Papers of President Richard Nixon, 1970, doc. n. 322, <http://www.nixonfoundation.org/Research_Center/1970_pdf_files/1970_0322.pdf>.

¹ Marchiori a MAE, Madrid, 3 ottobre 1970, telegramma n. 303, in chiaro, Oggetto : Commenti Franco e Nixon al termine visita presidente americano, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, n. 69, Madrid Barcellona, Siviglia, Huelva, Bilbao, Arrivo. For the original texts : Remarks on Departure From Spain, October 3, 1970, Public Papers of President Richard Nixon, 1970, doc. n. 322, http://www.nixonfoundation.org/Research_Center/1970_pdf_files/1970_0322.pdf

maintain its choice to remain in NATO¹. Clear signs of this were present in the discussions held during some Italian parliamentary sessions.

In that matter, that is Italy's political instability, parliamentary debate in Italy was in fact a mirror of internal divisions². In the years considered in this paper, political positions in Italy were in such contrast that they generated six different governments and several weeks of political crisis. I will introduce only a few elements in order to describe the differences of orientation between three separate debates which took place within a period of just a few months : April 17 and September 12, 1969 and June 26, 1970. On April 17, the same day in which Dubcek was induced to resign, we find the position of Foreign Affairs Minister, Pietro Nenni. Nenni was against the exit of Italy from NATO, but, nevertheless, supported the Pan-European conference so decisively as to propose that Italy actively favour such a conference³. The position of Minister of Defense, Luigi Gui, and of some of his supporters, was also against the exit of Italy from NATO, but he was very prudent and cautious, instead, on the validity that a Pan-European conference could generate. The third and last, but

¹ Marchiori a MAE, Madrid, 8 agosto 1970, telegramma n. 244, in chiaro, Oggetto : Conferenza stampa Lopez Bravo su Accordo di amicizia e cooperazione tra Spagna e Stati Uniti, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, n. 69, Madrid, Barcellona, Siviglia, Huelva, Bilbao, Arrivo. On. Cardia, Atti Parlamentari, V Legislatura, 26 giugno 1970, p. 18679. From the date of effect of the new Agreement, that is September 26, 1970, all the permanent installations of Spanish military bases, up to that time used in conjunction, now remained to the complete property of Spain, including the Rota-Saragozza pipeline. For certain particulars of the talks between Lopez Bravo and Nixon and Rogers for the drafting of the new Agreement, Ricciu examines the aims of the Madrid government and tempts an evaluation of the negotiations thus far taken up and the great stalling on the part of the Spanish. Francesco Ricciu, « Verso l'accordo per le basi spagnole », *Relazioni Internazionali*, (Milano), n. 17, 25 aprile 1970, p. 419.

² According to an expression of Amb. Ortona : "The vigilant eye of our Left conditioned even the better intentioned to the point that such obligations would not come to the surface ». On 11 September, Ortona had noted in his diary his preoccupation on the Italian internal problems affirming that all possible was doing by the part of the opposition of the Left so that the visit take place with ascetic overtures, the furthest possible point from the position of the obligations of Italy within the Atlantic Alliance. Egidio Ortona, *Gli Anni d'America : La Cooperazione 1967-75*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1989, p. 243.

³ Atti Parlamentari Italiani, V Legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Bollettino delle Giunte e delle Commissioni Parlamentari, Affari esteri (III) e Difesa (VII), seduta del 17 aprile, 1969, p. 1-16. Deputies Caiati and Granelli sustain Nenni's position.

strongest, position was that which asked an immediate exit from NATO and an immediate dismantling of all types of US and NATO military bases in Italy in perfect tuning with suggestions of Gromyko and Brezhnev. In fact, all the representatives of the Communist Party and of some socialist parties were asking the Government to follow French example and recede from Nato.

In his speech Nenni deeply insisted on the opportunity of adhering to an East-West distension. He was particularly incisive in listing all the new elements calling for such adherence, such as : new the world tendency to convert bipolarism into multipolarism ; new the rapport between nuclear and conventional armaments ; new the orientation of the Alliance aimed at transforming itself from a prevalently military organization to a prevalently political one ; and new the sense of greater responsibility and consciousness of each single member State due to Art. 13 taking effect. Minister Nenni underlined how, under a unique idea, that is that of « distension », the NATO Alliance could result to be capable of better reinforcing its democratic principles ; of better easing its dialogues with Eastern Europe ; of better favouring the Reykjavik appeal for disarmament, the control of armaments and the balanced reduction of military potential ; and finally of offering new dimensions to the study of problems connected to the technological growth of « modern society ». In other words, through support for the realization of a Pan-European conference¹.

In this same debate, Minister of Defense Luigi Gui, although part of the same 1st Rumor Government as Nenni, expressed a different position. He was very prudent and cautious, instead, on the validity that a Pan-European conference could have. Declaring his hope to see Italy confirm « its continuing contribution to the common efforts for the defense of Europe » Gui seemed to fear that the relaxation on international relations which, in July 1955, had already been generated from the Geneva summit, could happen again. At that time, the only result was an increased tendency toward neutralism, and the result of which only reinforced parties of the Left and increased difficulties between Italy and its Western allies. Deputy Giuseppe Vedovato supported Minister Gui's considerations, underlining all the advantages Italy had had by its Nato membership. He also pointed out the main reasons for Italy to remain in the Atlantic Alliance : 1) the spatial dimension of strategic defense,

¹ Harmel Plan (from the name of the Belgian minister) December 1967.

based on new technologies and requesting high financial efforts for a gigantic defense system ; and 2) the necessity to realize an efficient policy of peace and community solidarity in order to prevent that new isolationism could emerge in the U.S. Congress, as happened after Yalta.

In total contrast to these governmental positions were deputies Luzzatto, Vecchietti, Galluzzi, Granelli and Orilia, all asking for exit of Italy from NATO, following French example. Once again these Deputies, in tune with Gromyko and Brezhnev, in continuing statements were asking the immediate dismantling of all military bases existing in Italian territory¹. Deputy Riccardo Lombardi, in argumentative fashion, and notwithstanding the fact that he belonged to the government coalition, addressed four questions to Minister Nenni : 1) whether or not during the last NATO Council the Italian Government had or had not « renounced every hypothesis of recession », 2) whether or not, in the event of a conflict in the Middle East, a military and political intervention would be included in the obligations of the members of the Alliance ; 3) whether or not the autonomy of decision, guaranteed by the Treaty, was to remain untouched or undermined ; (if not, then one would have to presume that Italian military participation would be rendered automatic in eventual conflicts and not conditional) ; and 4) he then asked « what was the significance of the agreement of the naval manoeuvres integrated in the Mediterranean », a question clearly directed in a demonstrative sense to the development of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean and to the Middle East situation².

Deputy Boldrini called attention to the military structure of NATO, which he maintained had taken the upper hand and which was « at the beck and call of the United States ». According to him, France's exit was none other than a consequence of this very general tendency. He argued that the constitution of a multilateral naval force in the Mediterranean and the creation of a new command in Naples for air surveillance in the Mediterranean would bring new and burdensome political, financial and military obligations (commitments) to NATO member countries. He also made reference

¹ See also speeches of Gromyko of June 27 to the Supreme Soviet and of July 10 1969, in *Reprints from the Soviet Press*, New York, n. 3, August 8th, 1969.

² Atti Parlamentari Italiani, V Legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Bollettino delle Giunte e delle Commissioni Parlamentari, Affari esteri (III) seduta del 12 settembre, 1969, p. 1-17.

to the European obligation to buy U.S. arms in the amount of 1.500 million dollars which were, according to him, nothing more than a cover for the costs of the presence of American troops in Europe. Concerning the shift of the NATO axis to the Mediterranean, Deputy Boldrini underlined how the substitution of *massive retaliation* with a military *flexible response* was not applicable in Europe, nor was it convenient for it. A *flexible response*, in fact, favouring local wars instead of a world war, would favour local wars in Europe. As for the « great number of nuclear missile war heads put by the US at the disposal of their allies », he asked « whether or not special agreements had been stipulated with Italy with the double-key system for their activation ».

After more than a month of political crisis, on August 8, 1969 Italy had its new Rumor Government (monocolore D C). Aldo Moro assumed the charge of Foreign Affairs Minister in substitution of Nenni. In its program, delivered to Parliament, this 2nd Rumor Government sustained that Italian membership in NATO had to be considered « a basic and lasting interest for Italy », because it strongly believed that the reasons for such membership in the North Atlantic Defense Alliance was still most effective for the security of Italy. Of course, the desire to establish closer relations with Eastern European countries was also confirmed. On September 12, 1969, during the second debate I wish to consider, and once again requested by the communist group, Moro extensively explained how the distension policy to the East could be well coordinated with the new NATO defense policy. This speech reflected optimistic hopes, spread throughout the Western countries during the second half of 1969, on the possibility « to realize a permanent cooperation between nations of different social and political organizations and belonging to different military systems ». Moro was very clear when he also affirmed the necessity to have an adequate American military presence in Europe as an indication of U.S. engagement on the defense of Europe.

The third debate I wish to quote was held on June 26, 1970. It was held during the 3rd Rumor Government, which survived for only a few months (March 27 to July 6). On this occasion, Deputy Riccardo Lombardi raised a question in Parliament which was due to the particular stir which public opinion had generated as a result of a document which some deputies believed had been distributed by the NATO Press Office. This document was widely used, as Deputy Domenico Ceravolo had done, to purport the possibility of a potential plan for a violation to the independence of Italy : « We are to face

crucial problems concerning the sovereignty of our country and of its independence ». In the *Kastel document*, as it was generally called, possibilities to transfer the military divisions stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany to northeast Italy appeared to be recommended to the defense ministers of all NATO members. The reason for this transfer was supposedly the danger to the security of members of the Alliance which could occur due to the weakness of the Italian democracy, seen as a consequence of the strength of the Italian Communist Party¹.

Deputy Lombardi's question in Parliament was supported by Deputies Luzzatto, Ceravolo, Lattanzi, Cardia, Iotti, Galluzzi and Sandri. Several questions were widely discussed. I will say only a few words on this subject. Notwithstanding the assurance of the Italian Undersecretary, Angelo Salizzoni, that this « Kastel » document did not exist and that, if it did, it was a total artefact, the questioners nonetheless continued to insist on the danger to Italy's security. Deputy Ceravolo, particularly, affirmed : « I believe that the Italian government is exposed to be criticized for its membership in a political and military system which foresees military intervention within member countries ». In other words, Ceravolo pointed out that the military invasion into Czechoslovakia from the Warsaw Treaty group was, according to him, not really different from what NATO had intentions to do and was preparing to do in Italy in the event of a government headed by a communist party².

The importance of these Italian debates as that of all European parliamentary debates found confirmation in the proceedings of a meeting of November 19, 1970, of the American National Security Council which had, as its theme, « NATO and the MBFR ». From these proceedings (made available to public review only in the last few months of 2006) the importance of NATO for the entire U.S. foreign policy of that period was made highly evident : « As part of its overall review of U.S. foreign policy, the Nixon White House looked closely at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ». There

¹ In this meeting in Rome, May 25, 1970, the Ministers of Defense had received, in accordance with the meeting in Brussels of December 4-5 1969 (point 7) « the first report on the newest task of the Alliance ».

² Honorable Cardia, Jotti, Galluzzi, Sandri, Origlia, Mattalia and Natoli directed their major insistence on the Jörg Kastl document. This discussion was defined by Undersecretary Salizzoni as « an irresponsible gesture of provocation », *Atti Parlamentari Italiani, V Legislatura, Camera dei Deputati, Discussioni, Seduta del 26 giugno 1970*, p. 18678-18685.

was also a tight connection between the pressures of Congress for a U.S. reduction of foreign military obligations and the U.S. concerns for an eventual development of an increase in ties between Bonn and Moscow ; this situation induced Nixon to have concerns about future relations with Western Europe, in light of Congressional pressures to withdraw American troops, and also to insist with the European Western countries to assume a larger participation in the costs of their own defense. In fact of Nixon's first overseas trips, two were to Western Europe, as a sign of the Alliance's importance to the new Administration.

Conclusion

Grave incidents which took place in September 1970 due to the rekindling of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, the crisis of air hijacking and the war in Jordan, would soon demonstrate that the potential represented by the union between the Sixth American Fleet and that of the Atlantic Alliance was capable of carrying out efficient deterrent actions useful in discouraging any potential aggression and reducing western policy turmoil. Above all, it was possible to demonstrate that the NATO's primary objective was not that of threatening other countries, nor that of interfering in their internal affairs, but to put the potential of this union to the cause of the defense of peace and democracy¹.

¹ Ortona a MAE, Washington, 6 ottobre 1970, telegramma n. 988, in cifra, Oggetto : Ritorno di Nixon a Washington, Archivio Storico MAE Italia, Telegrammi Ordinari, 1970, vol. II, n. 118, Washington, Arrivo.