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**THE US-ITALY RELATIONSHIP DURING THE PRODI  
GOVERNMENT: MORE SOUND THAN IT MAY SEEM**

*by Jason W. Davidson*

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**I. Introduction**

A casual reader of news accounts of US-Italy relations since the May 2006 seating of Romano Prodi's center-left government would be justified in having a sense of concern about the state of the US-Italy relationship.<sup>1</sup> In the past year the Italian government has withdrawn its troops from Iraq and Italian judges have called for the extradition of Americans working for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) so that they could be tried in Italy. Moreover, Prodi resigned in February 2007 primarily because far-left legislators opposed extending Italy's mission in Afghanistan (far-left legislators also took issue with plans to expand an American military base in Italy's northeast). Finally, in March the Italian government provoked the ire of American policymakers when it won the release of an Italian journalist by pressing the Afghan government to release Taliban prisoners.

A closer look at the evidence confirms that the US-Italy relationship, while not without trouble, is fundamentally sound. The Prodi government has demonstrated that it is firmly committed to maintaining good relations with Washington even when it is very costly to do so. Prime Minister Prodi and his foreign minister, Massimo D'Alema, stood firm on the Italy's troop deployment in Afghanistan and also on the enlargement of the US base at Vicenza—two of the most important issues in US-Italy relations. While the Prodi government underwent a major crisis in February, it was reinstated in early March without any compromise on the disputed issues. In fact, the Italian parliament has since passed legislation providing funds for the Italian mission in Afghanistan for another year and work has recently begun on the expansion project at Vicenza.

This paper will provide an overview of the most salient issues in US-Italy relations from May 2006 through May 2007 and will argue that the US-Italy relationship is fundamentally sound.

**II. Rome and Washington: The Cast of Characters**

In April 2006 Italians went to the polls and chose to be governed by a center-left coalition headed by Romano Prodi. The Prodi government replaced a center-right government headed by Silvio Berlusconi, who had gone out of his way to develop close ties with

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Denis Boyle, "Italian Lesson," *The National Review Online*, 23 February 2007, <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZTk0OWMzMjZkMTJiODZiY2U5YzQ0YzcyZDQ2NDJkNGM=>.

American president George W. Bush.<sup>2</sup> Many thought the election of the Prodi government would lead to a stark turn for the worse in US-Italy relations. For example, Nile Gardiner of the Heritage Foundation warned that with the election of the Prodi government "...the U.S. must watch for a potential anti-American axis developing between Rome, Paris, and Madrid."<sup>3</sup>

While the center-left coalition's leaders are more committed to Europe than their predecessors, they are also firmly rooted in a fifty year tradition of strong ties between Washington and Rome.<sup>4</sup> Romano Prodi, as a former president of the European Commission, is certainly committed to European integration and Italy's role in the EU but he has stated that he sees the Italy-EU relationship as largely complementary to its relationship with the US.<sup>5</sup> Foreign Minister D'Alema developed his reputation as a defender of the Italy-US relationship as prime minister during the 1999 Kosovo War; he led the Italian government as it provided aircraft and basing for the air campaign, despite criticism of the war from the far left of his coalition and the Vatican. D'Alema has stressed the importance of Italy's relationship with the US on numerous occasions.<sup>6</sup> D'Alema has also recently argued that Italy can be pro-Europe and maintain strong ties with the US, saying that

...Europe's identity cannot be built in opposition to the United States: the theory of Europe as a potential "counterweight" belongs to the past. Indeed, the opposite is true: we need a stronger and more united EU if we wish to have a transatlantic relationship that works.<sup>7</sup>

Legislators from the governing coalition's far left parties—especially in the Senate where the government has a razor thin margin—constitute the greatest threat to US-Italy relations under the Prodi government as they are highly critical of the US and embrace hardcore pacifism. The February/March 2007 government crisis, as will be discussed below, provides evidence that Prodi and D'Alema will not allow the far left to hijack Italian foreign policy, especially in the policy areas that matter most to Washington.

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<sup>2</sup> For recent surveys of Berlusconi's foreign policy see Sergio Romano, "Berlusconi's Foreign Policy: Inverting the Traditional Priorities," *The International Spectator* 41, no. 3 (2003): 101-107; Elisabetta Brighi, "'One Man Alone?' A *Longue Durée* Approach to Italy's Foreign Policy under Berlusconi," *Government and Opposition* 41, no. 2 (March 2006): 278-97.

<sup>3</sup> Nile Gardiner, "Italy's Regime Change: What Washington can Expect from Romano Prodi," *WebMemo* (April 12, 2006), <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/wm1036.cfm>.

<sup>4</sup> On the Prodi government's Europe policy see Ettore Greco, "La politica estera del governo Prodi," in Alessandro Colombo and Natalino Ronzitti eds., *L'Italia e la politica internazionale, 2007* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 39-44.

<sup>5</sup> Romano Prodi con Furio Colombo, *Ci Sarà un'Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2006) p. 40. See also Romano Prodi, "L'Italie doit repartir de l'avant", *Le Monde*, 12 avril 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Massimo D'Alema, "Diplomacy At Dente", *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 June 2006. See also Secretary Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks After Meeting With Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Massimo D'Alema," June 16, 2006, Washington, D.C., <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/67995.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Massimo D'Alema "Italy in Euro-American relations," Venice, Italy, 28 May 2007, [http://www.esteri.it/ita/6\\_38\\_227\\_01.asp?id=3032&mod=3&min=1](http://www.esteri.it/ita/6_38_227_01.asp?id=3032&mod=3&min=1).

Recent trends in Washington have also made better relations with Rome more likely. Much evidence exists that the Bush doctrine of preventive, unilateral war used to spread democracy is effectively moribund.<sup>8</sup> Popular discontent with the Iraq War—the Bush Doctrine’s most striking manifestation—led to the Democratic party’s sweep of the 2006 Congressional elections. Democratic control of Congress means that future preventive wars are highly unlikely, as the Congress would have to fund them. The elections also led to the forced resignation of Donald Rumsfeld—seen as a leading proponent of the Bush Doctrine—and his replacement by Robert Gates, who is seen as more moderate than his predecessor. The Bush administration’s February 2007 negotiated settlement with North Korea over its nuclear program provides further evidence that unilateral, preventive war is not as attractive to Washington as it once was.<sup>9</sup> The Bush administration’s turn away from unilateral, preventive war means that major rifts between Washington and Rome over how to deal with important, emerging security crises (e.g., Iran) are less likely than they would have been in the administration’s first term.

### III. Lebanon: Italy as an important stabilizing force in the Middle East

In July 2006 the Israeli military began a series of attacks on Lebanon which it said were in retaliation for Hizbollah’s attacks on Israel and its abduction of Israeli soldiers. Soon after the August 11, 2006 United Nations Security Council passage of resolution 1701, Italy volunteered to take a leading role in what would become the United Nations International Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) II. Italy committed roughly 3,000 troops and the Italian contribution fueled a larger than initially pledged troop commitment from France (2,000). UNIFIL II’s mission is to monitor the cessation of hostilities and assist the Lebanese government and armed forces in securing southern Lebanon.<sup>10</sup> Italian General Claudio Graziano took command of UNIFIL II on February 2, 2007 from French General Alain Pellegrini.<sup>11</sup> The Prodi government made this large and risky commitment—given the potential for new violence—in order to improve Italy’s international image; to balance its domestically controversial military mission in Afghanistan with a more overtly peace-focused deployment; and to show that it could act independently of the US without acting against it.<sup>12</sup>

While the US and Italy do not agree on every aspect of the war and related issues, the US has expressed its sincere gratitude for Italy’s leadership role. The American and Italian

<sup>8</sup> Philip H. Gordon, “The End of the Bush Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2006): 75-86.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Edward Luce, Lionel Barber, and Guy Dinmore, “A return to realism? How Rice has learnt to play a weaker US hand,” *The Financial Times*, 23 April 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 1701 (2006), United Nations Security Council, August 11, 2006, New York, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/465/03/PDF/N0646503.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>11</sup> Alberto Mattone, “Il commando in Libano passa al nostro Paese,” *La Repubblica*, 3 Febbraio 2007.

<sup>12</sup> See Ian Fisher, “Italy’s Peacekeeping Offer Signals Shift in Its Foreign Policy,” *The New York Times*, 30 August 2006; Tony Barber, “Mixed motives drive Italy to take leading role in peacekeeping force,” *The Financial Times*, 1 September 2006. See also “Lebanon: Italy Sees Advantages in Leading UN Force,” *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, August 22, 2006, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/0afdd9e6-2165-46f7-bb6c-4ca97321fc32.html>.

governments disagreed about the conflict itself: the Italians pressed for an immediate ceasefire, while the US backed Israel's attempt to weaken Hizbollah by bombing Lebanon. As UNIFIL II began its mission Rome pressed for dialogue with Hizbollah whereas Washington remained firmly opposed.<sup>13</sup> Despite these disagreements, the US government has welcomed Italy's contribution to UNIFIL II. The US announced early on that it was not capable of committing troops to the mission in Lebanon because of its obligations in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>14</sup> The US favored a robust UNIFIL II force so it stands to reason that Washington would appreciate a country that took the leading role in making the force robust. In fact, Bush offered his "sincere thanks" to Prodi in a phone conversation and U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy traveled to Rome to personally deliver thanks from Bush for the "incredible courage" Italy demonstrated with its commitment to UNIFIL II.<sup>15</sup> As the US Ambassador to Italy Ronald Spogli has said with regard to Italy's contribution to peace in Lebanon "...Italy, even when it undertakes security operations outside the Alliance, never stops acting as an Ally in the interest of regional and global security. By what it believes and what it does, Italy is at the forefront of our security relationships."<sup>16</sup>

#### IV. Afghanistan, Vicenza, and the Prodi Government's Crisis

The Prodi government was born with an Afghanistan problem. Prodi and D'Alema are committed to preserving the roughly 2,000 troops committed by the Berlusconi government but the NATO mission in Afghanistan is too violent and too subject to American leadership for radical legislators in the Italian Senate, where the center left commands the slimmest of majority margins. In July 2006 the Prodi government was only able to guarantee passage of a refinancing measure for Afghanistan by making it a confidence motion in the Senate. Radical pacifists in the Senate voted in favor while making clear to the government that it was the last time they would vote for funding for the Italian mission in Afghanistan—the funding measure only covered the following six months.<sup>17</sup>

In the months from July 2006 to February 2007 the Prodi government faced conflicting pressures from the US and other NATO allies on one side and the pacifist far left on the other. The US and other NATO allies pressed the Prodi government to increase the size and expand the role of Italy's force.<sup>18</sup> In February Ambassadors to Rome from six NATO countries (including the US Ambassador) wrote an open letter in the daily *La Repubblica* urging Italy to maintain its commitment to Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, far left pacifists called on the Prodi government to shift Italy's troops in Afghanistan to Lebanon; for an exit

<sup>13</sup> Greco, "La politica estera del governo Prodi," 49-53.

<sup>14</sup> Colum Lynch, "U.N. Urges Europe to Join Mideast Effort," *The Washington Post*, 19 August 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Governo Italiano Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, "Medio Oriente: colloquio telefonico Prodi-Bush," 24 Agosto 2006, <http://www.governo.it/Presidente/Comunicati/dettaglio.asp?d=28984>. See also Alberto Mattone, "Ted Kennedy da Prodi: bene in Libano," *La Repubblica*, 10 Novembre, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald P. Spogli, "U.S.-Italy Relations in the Field of Security," October 11, 2006, Rome, [http://italy.usembassy.gov/viewer/article.asp?article=/file2006\\_10/alia/a6101111.htm](http://italy.usembassy.gov/viewer/article.asp?article=/file2006_10/alia/a6101111.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Giovanna Casadio, "Afghanistan, si alla fiducia via libera alla missione," *La Repubblica*, 29 Luglio 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Greco, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Chaplin, et al., "Italia, restiamo uniti in Afghanistan," *La Repubblica*, 3 Febbraio 2006.

strategy from Afghanistan; and for an international peace conference to end fighting there.<sup>20</sup> The government pressed the other NATO governments for an international conference but refused to decrease its contribution to Afghanistan or to discuss an exit strategy.<sup>21</sup> The Prodi government's stance was particularly courageous given that public opinion—especially among voters of the center left—favored withdrawal.<sup>22</sup>

On 16 January 2007 Romano Prodi made public his intention to allow the enlargement of the US military base at Vicenza in the Veneto region of northern Italy. In so doing Prodi chose to go along with plans originally approved by his predecessor, Silvio Berlusconi. The enlargement plan was important for the US because it was designed to allow the base to house the entire 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade. In approving the base expansion plans Prodi ignored many on the far left who opposed the expansion because they claimed it would have a severe negative environmental impact and because they were generally opposed to American foreign policy.<sup>23</sup> American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice personally thanked Foreign Minister D'Alema for the government's support for the base expansion during a meeting in Brussels in late January.<sup>24</sup>

In February it became increasingly clear that a handful of far left Senators would vote against the government on a general foreign policy resolution because of their opposition to the Italian commitment to Afghanistan and—perhaps to a lesser extent—its permission for expansion of the American base at Vicenza. Prodi and D'Alema refused to back down—the latter said on 20 February that if the government lost the vote it should “go home.”<sup>25</sup> The next day two dissident far left senators—the far left parties had grudgingly ordered their members to vote in favor—voted against the government. As a handful of Senators for life abstained—at least one to punish the government for its policy on civil unions—the government lost the vote on the foreign policy resolution and Prodi tendered his resignation.<sup>26</sup>

Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano determined that only Prodi commanded a majority in both houses and asked him to continue as Prime Minister. Meanwhile, Romano Prodi put forward twelve non-negotiable points that all parties would have to agree to if he were to retake the helm as Italian Prime Minister: the first of the points was “respect for international commitments and for peace”, including Afghanistan and, implicitly, Vicenza.<sup>27</sup> On 28 February the Senate offered a fresh vote of confidence in Prodi's

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<sup>20</sup> Marco Marozzi, “L'Italia resta in Afghanistan,” *La Repubblica*, 10 Settembre 2006; Giovanna Casadio, “Subito una exit strategy o no ai militari in Afghanistan,” *La Repubblica*, 18 Gennaio 2006.

<sup>21</sup> “Parisi: Per l'Afghanistan nessuna exit strategy,” *La Repubblica*, 21 Settembre 2006; Pietro Del Re, “Prodi a Bush sull'Afghanistan Il nostro impegno non cambia,” *La Repubblica*, 17 Febbraio 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Tony Barber, “Prodi in crisis talks on foreign policy rifts,” *The Financial Times*, 6 February 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Tony Barber, “Plans for US base split Italian coalition,” *The Financial Times*, 19 January 2007; Peter Kiefer, “Protesters Oppose Plan to Expand American Base in Northern Italy,” *The New York Times*, 18 February 2007.

<sup>24</sup> “D'Alema rassicura la Rice Ma sulla base sentite Vicenza,” *La Repubblica*, 27 Gennaio 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Gianluca Luzi, “Afghanistan, oggi il voto D'Alema,” *La Repubblica*, 21 Febbraio 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Ian Fischer, “After the Fall, Italy Considers Its Options,” *The New York Times*, 23 February 2007; Tony Barber, “Prodi quits after losing key foreign policy vote,” *The Financial Times*, 22 February 2007. See also Massimo Giannini, “L'amarezza di D'Alema,” *La Repubblica*, 22 Febbraio 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Gianluca Luzi, “Le consultazioni, Prodi blinda la maggioranza Dodici punti per continuare,” *La Repubblica*, 23 Febbraio 2007.

government, in which D'Alema remained foreign minister, with 162 votes in favor and 157 votes against.<sup>28</sup>

Prodi's resignation and his reinstatement as Italian prime minister ended up demonstrating how pro-American his government is. First, the Prodi government could have chosen to cave in to the far left Senators' demands and withdraw from Afghanistan and reverse course on Vicenza. Instead, Prodi and D'Alema chose to hold firm on Afghanistan and Vicenza and face the negative internal consequences of government crisis. Second, Prodi could have improved his chances of forming a new government by compromising on Afghanistan or Vicenza after the government had fallen and/or by urging Massimo D'Alema to resign from his foreign minister post. Instead, Prodi chose to remain firm on both issues and kept D'Alema as foreign minister. In late March the Senate passed a bill refinancing the Afghanistan mission for another year and construction has begun on the Vicenza enlargement project.<sup>29</sup> In the end, Prodi and D'Alema stood firm and won on the issues that are most important to US-Italy relations.<sup>30</sup>

## V. Potential Points of Tension (that are not as bad as they seem)

The US-led occupation of Iraq provided two potential points of tension in US-Italy relations as of May 2006. First, the center left made clear during the 2006 election campaign that it would withdraw Italian troops from Iraq if elected. Second, popular discontent remained over what was seen as the overly lenient treatment of an American soldier responsible for the death of Italian intelligence agent Nicola Calipari in early March 2005. Calipari was escorting journalist Giuliana Sgrena from her kidnappers (she had been held by insurgents since early February) to the Baghdad airport when he was shot and killed by American soldier Mario Lozano. Neither of these policy positions ultimately had a significant negative effect on US-Italy relations because the Prodi government's policy stance did not differ significantly from its predecessor's.

The Prodi government's withdrawal policy did not negatively impact US-Italy relations because it only slightly accelerated the schedule of the Berlusconi government, which had promised to withdraw by the end of 2006, and Prodi and his colleagues consulted Italy's withdrawal with the appropriate Iraqi and American authorities.<sup>31</sup> The Calipari case did not worsen US-Italy relations because the Prodi government's protests did not differ substantially from the protests that had been offered at the time of the incident by the Berlusconi government.<sup>32</sup> The Italian government is unlikely to ever be satisfied by the US

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<sup>28</sup> Ian Fischer, "Slim Vote of Confidence for Italy's Leader," *The New York Times*, 1 March 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Enrico Bonerandi, "I rapporti Italia-USA, Vicenza, partono già I lavori della nuova base," *La Repubblica*, 2 Marzo 2007; Silvio Buzzanca, "Il decreto, Afghanistan, si al decreto l'Udc vota con l'Unione," *La Repubblica*, 28 Marzo 2007.

<sup>30</sup> For initial reactions from Washington that support this claim see Alberto Flores D'Arcais, "le reazioni, Gli Usa pensano alla missione," *La Repubblica*, 23 Febbraio 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Greco, 45-46.

<sup>32</sup> Marco Clementi, "L'Italia e la politica internazionale: il caso Sgrena-Calipari," in Grant Amyot and Luca Verzichelli eds., *Politica in Italia: I fatti dell'anno e le interpretazioni, 2006* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006); Alberto Mattone, "Calipari, D'Alema agli Usa Avete perso un'occasione," *La Repubblica*, 4 Marzo 2007.

response to this case and Italian public opinion undoubtedly will be adversely affected but the Calipari case is also unlikely to have sustained negative effects on relations between the two countries.

Another issue from the past threatened to disturb US-Italy relations. In 2003 American CIA operatives, apparently working with Italian officials, seized radical Egyptian cleric Abu Omar from a Milan street and secretly flew him to Egypt where he was reportedly tortured. On 5 July 2006 Milan judges ordered the arrest of Italian intelligence officials whom they alleged had participated in the seizing of Abu Omar. In 2005 prosecutors in Milan asked the Berlusconi government to request the extradition of twenty-two (later expanded to twenty-six) Americans suspected of seizing Mr. Omar in violation of Italian law. Berlusconi denied any role in or knowledge of the “extreme rendition” and declined to ask the US to extradite the accused. The Abu Omar case has not soured US-Italy relations under the Prodi government because of the government’s role and actions in the case. The Milanese judiciary’s extradition requests have come independent from the government.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the Prodi government has also refused to request that the US extradite the CIA operatives.<sup>34</sup> In short, while the Abu Omar case may continue to generate offense among the Italian public, it is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on US-Italy relations because the pressure for extradition is coming from the judiciary and because the Prodi government has refused to request extradition.<sup>35</sup>

On 5 March 2007 Daniele Mastrogiacomo, journalist for *La Repubblica*, was kidnapped by Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan. Within two weeks the Italian government admitted that it secured his release by gaining the Afghan government’s agreement to release five Taliban prisoners from its custody. The US State Department joined other NATO members in criticizing the Italian government for increasing the threat of kidnapping in Afghanistan and elsewhere. While US government officials were certainly not happy with the outcome, it would also have been foolish for them to ignore the domestic political pressure the Prodi government was under to achieve Mastrogiacomo’s release. In fact, some suggested the government’s efforts on Mastrogiacomo’s behalf may have secured the March 2007 winning vote on Afghanistan refinancing.<sup>36</sup> The State Department spokesperson made clear on March 22 that while the US government’s longstanding policy is to oppose hostage

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<sup>33</sup> Democrats of the Left judiciary expert Massimo Brutti said of the case: “The judiciary is absolutely independent and the current initiative has nothing to do with the government.” Stephen Grey and Elisabetta Povoledo, “Italy Arrests 2 in Kidnapping of Imam in ’03,” *The New York Times*, 6 July 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Tony Barber, “Italian judge orders CIA trial,” *The Financial Times*, 17 February 2007. A legal official in the US State Department has made clear that the US would not extradite the operatives if requested. Carlo Bonini, “Abu Omar, linea dura delgi Usa Non estraderemo agenti Cia,” *La Repubblica*, 1 Marzo 2007.

<sup>35</sup> One might ask whether the negative public reaction toward the US on the Calipari and Abu Omar cases will ultimately undermine US-Italy relations. The Prodi government has judged that it can ignore the public and not suffer politically, which seems to indicate that public opinion on these issues will have a limited impact on US-Italy relations.

<sup>36</sup> Jeffrey Donovan, “Afghanistan: NATO Allies Criticize Italy Over Hostage Deal,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 22, 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/03/93aa4810-7a96-4646-b613-1788c4dbdd5.html>.



exchanges, “Italy is playing a key role supporting the people and Government of Afghanistan and remains our important partner in other areas around the world.”<sup>37</sup>

## VI. Potential Future Flashpoints: Afghanistan and Iran

The preceding analysis provides support for the recent claim by Massimo D’Alema that while recent US-Italy relations may not have been “serene” they remain “good.”<sup>38</sup> Some would argue, however, that it is just a matter of time before US-Italy relations take a turn for the worse, citing Afghanistan as a major potential future flashpoint. It is likely that the US will continue to press Italy and other contributors to provide more troops and fewer restrictions on the use of their forces and it is likely that Italy will continue to press for more emphasis on political solutions to Afghanistan’s problems.<sup>39</sup> These differences are unlikely to lead to a rift, however, because the Bush administration knows that it needs Italy’s contribution in Afghanistan. Moreover, given the Prodi government’s unwillingness to compromise on Afghanistan during February and March 2007, it is unlikely to scale back the mission in the near-to-medium term. Moreover, the far left agreed to the reconstituted government under the threat of a center-right election victory; one reason the center-right has done well in recent polls is the popular view that the Prodi government is too divided.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, it would be suicidal for the far left to provoke future crises on this issue.

Iran provides another future point for a potential worsening in US-Italy relations. The US and Italy both share the same goal: to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Italy—as Iran’s largest trading partner within the EU—supports the current United Nations sanctions on Tehran.<sup>41</sup> The worst case for the US-Italy relationship would be if the US decided that only preventive war could keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons. It is highly unlikely that the Rome would support such a war. Fortunately, for reasons outlined above, Washington will almost certainly not choose preventive war as a solution to the Iranian nuclear program.

It appears that while the US-Italy relationship may not always be serene it will continue to be sound.

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<sup>37</sup> Sean McCormack, “United States and Italy Discuss Terrorist Concessions,” March 22, 2007, Washington, D.C., <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/mar/82073.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> Massimo Giannini, “Afghanistan, D’Alema all’attacco,” *La Repubblica*, 25 Marzo 2007.

<sup>39</sup> For recent statements see “President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer,” Crawford, Texas, 21 May 2007, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/05/20070521-3.html>; D’Alema “Italy in Euro-American relations.”

<sup>40</sup> Ian Fisher, “Fear of Return of Berlusconi Reunites Left Behind Prodi,” *The New York Times*, 24 February 2007.

<sup>41</sup> “D’Alema rassicura la Rice.”