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THE POLITICAL DEBATE ON DEPLOYMENT OF
EUROMISSILES: THE ITALIAN CASE

by

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Italian political parties had until recently taken little interest in national and international security problems. After Italy's entry into the Atlantic Alliance, no efforts were made to elaborate a military policy which, though set in the context of NATO's defense strategy, could be seen as the result of a wide domestic debate. Italian governments tended to delegate responsibility to the Atlantic Alliance, more or less acritically accepting the decisions taken in the NATO framework. Parliament limited itself to approving the defense budgets requested by the military and presented by the government, eventually with cutbacks imposed by the economic situation, but without questioning the validity of the new arms procurement programs. In other words, the development trends of the national military instrument were neither assessed nor controlled by parliament. The sort of "white paper" on defense matters which most Western governments publish annually was issued by the Italian government for the first and last time in 1977.(1)

Italy seemed to be content to play the role of "most loyal ally", even if the military commitments it undertook within the Alliance were often not fulfilled in the way or in the time period originally established, due to lack of funds or organizational shortcomings.

It was therefore not surprising that the Italian political parties found themselves unprepared to competently

discuss the issue of deployment of Pershing-2 and cruise missiles in Europe. The questions of the nuclear balance in Europe after the SALT-2 accord between the United States and the Soviet Union, the need to maintain a credible deterrent force, the political and military significance of the new Soviet SS-20 missiles at a time when strategic parity between the two superpowers had been reached, and the growing vulnerability of NATO's long-range nuclear forces had never formed part of the Italian political debate, traditionally focussed almost exclusively on domestic issues.

While in other European countries such questions had been the subject of debate since 1977 - and NATO had also begun discussing them that same year (2) - in Italy they became an important topic of discussion only two years later, as the December Atlantic Council meeting and the need to decide what attitude the government should take in the NATO context approached.

The speech made by German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt at the Institute for Strategic Studies of London in October 1977 commemorating Alastair Buchan had no political echo in Italy, except within the narrow circle of strategic affairs experts. The debates within NATO were not even reported by the Italian media and remained confined within the foreign affairs and defense ministries, with no political feedback. Even a political force like the Communist Party, usually so sensitive to anything that affects East-West relations, had

Ignored the problem. In 1979, two years after NATO had set up the High Level Group to study the Euromissiles issue, the Communist Party was still expressing doubts on whether the Soviet SS-20s had created an imbalance and asking how come NATO had discovered its inferiority only then.(3)

On the other hand, the fact that Italy had not been invited to the Guadeloupe summit held in early 1979, at which the Euromissiles question was discussed, deprived the Italian government of precious elements of evaluation.

The lack of a tradition of debate on strategic problems, the political parties' lack of knowledge and interest in security and arms control issues, the lack of preparation on the specific topic of the nuclear balance in Europe (4) help explain why it took so long for the Italians to open a debate on the matter and at the same time tended to increase the weight of domestic political factors in the discussions. As had frequently been the case in the past, this foreign policy problem was used by the parties as a card in the game of domestic politics. The stands taken were aimed at determining conditions, establishing precedents and prospects in view of their impact on the future domestic balance of power among the national political forces.

Italy's adhesion was essential to the survival of NATO's missile-deployment program. West Germany had in fact posed three conditions for the deployment of missiles on its territory: that the decision be unanimous; that another

continental European country install the missiles; that the new systems remain unequivocally American so as to avoid any mistaken impression that Germany had assumed a specific nuclear role within the Alliance. Excluding Great Britain, whose adherence was certain but which is not a continental European country, and considering the more or less explicit reserves of Belgium and Holland, Italy automatically became the key country on whose decision the viability of the deployment depended.

It would have been difficult for Italy to duck this responsibility. On the one hand, there was its thirty-year tradition of coherent support for Alliance policy; on the other, there was its desire to be included in the circle of European powers "that count and can be counted on", after the humiliating experience of being excluded from the Guadeloupe summit. And finally there was its concern for the Soviet nuclear build up.

Numerous references to the German government's position and to Chancellor Schmidt's declarations (5) were made to emphasize these links between Italy's decision and its international standing and to indirectly legitimize the decision at the domestic level. The fact that another European country, with a Social Democratic government, had accepted the stationing on its territory of the Euromissiles whose deployment it had promoted, strengthened the Italian government's stand and lent greater credibility to the

argument that the Pershing 2 and cruise missiles did not represent a NATO rearmament effort but simply an attempt to re-establish the balance between the two alliances' theater nuclear forces which had been upset by the Soviet Union's deployment of SS-20 missiles and Backfire bombers.

The parliamentary debate held in October and December 1979 - the second important debate on national security policy after that of 1949 which preceded Italy's decision to join the Atlantic Alliance - was characterized by an unusual lack of ideological argumentation, by fair play, a tendency to concentrate on the real problems and competent analysis of the technical problems involved. But no speeches, not even those of the representatives of the government, seriously tackled the fundamental question of deterrence.

The Christian Democrats, Republicans, Liberals and Social Democrats were in favor of the deployment. The Christian Democrats argued that the military balance had to be re-established in order to ensure reciprocal security. The decision to go ahead with the deployment of the U.S. missiles was the best way to get the Soviets to enter into serious negotiations. No more than a request to the Soviet Union that it suspend production of the SS-20s risked leaving Italy isolated while undermining NATO's credibility and effectiveness. At the same time, the decision to deploy the Euromissiles directly affected the Europeans' interests and their autonomous capacity to maintain a regional balance in

the context of the wider global equilibrium between the two superpowers formalized with the signing of the SALT-2 accord.(6)

The resolution presented by the Christian Democrats called for Italy's adherence to the NATO decision to modernize its theater nuclear forces. A proposal to initiate negotiations was to be advanced contemporaneously with the hope that in the interval of time between the decision to modernize and the actual deployment of the missiles an agreement could be reached.

For the Republican Party the imbalance produced by the SS-20s had undermined the credibility of NATO's strategy and had made Europe more vulnerable to Soviet political pressure. It was therefore necessary that the Europeans respond to the Soviet move with an initiative aimed at safeguarding their political independence. The stakes in Europe were mainly political. If a balance were not re-established, European defense would suffer deeply, leading to a loss of bargaining power and political weight. The question was not whether negotiations should be undertaken. It was clear that it was necessary to negotiate with the Soviets, but "only a minute after deciding to continue to exist politically as Europeans."(7)

The Republican Party's resolution focussed on two points: produce and then deploy the number of missiles needed to re-establish a balance; immediately advance a concrete

proposal for negotiations with the Warsaw Pact for the limitation of Soviet missiles and Backfire bombers. (The Republicans were the only Italian political party to include the bombers with the missiles among the nuclear systems to reduce).

The Liberals and Social Democrats reasoned in much the same way. It was first of all necessary to re-establish the balance between the two blocs' theater nuclear forces and then proceed along the path of balanced and verifiable arms reductions.

The Communist Party's opposition was "soft" rather than intransigent and some elements of its stand coincided with the positions of the parties of the governing coalition. The Communist Party questioned neither the Atlantic Alliance nor Italy's security and defense needs nor the importance of and the need for balance in the military field.(8) It even admitted, though with strong doubts and reservations on the accuracy of the West's figures,(9) that the production of SS-20 missiles had indeed created a problem which could not be ignored but at the same time should not be exaggerated and overemphasized.(10)

In any case, if the balance had indeed been upset, it had to be re-established at a lower rather than higher level. The Communists called on the Italian government to move in three directions: suspend or delay for a period of at least six months any decision to make and install the Euromissiles;

invite the Soviet Union to suspend production and deployment of the SS-20s; propose the immediate opening of negotiations between the two alliances to establish a military balance in Europe at the lowest possible level and such as to guarantee reciprocal security.(11)

The Communist Party was clearly trying to adopt a stand that was independent enough to avoid charges of pro-Sovietism,(12) but also different enough from the government's position to avoid giving the impression of being too openly pro-Atlantic and in favor of nuclear rearmament. It was just as evident that it was striving to avoid isolation in Italy and the European left by referring to the positions of American experts like McGeorge Bundy, members of the German Social Democratic Party like Egon Bahr or the British Labour Party like Frank Allaum or the Danish Social Democratic Prime Minister Joergensen, European labor organizations and Italian Catholic organizations like Azione Cattolica, ACLI, Comunione e Liberazione and Pax Christi, and even citing a speech by the Pope to the United Nations on 2 October 1979.

The Communists knew that this was a "test" for them and that their stand on the Euromissiles would be interpreted, if positive, as another step away from Moscow and hence towards the Westernization of the party and, if negative, as a confirmation of the importance of its international ties with the Soviet Union and as an instrument with which the Communist Party's credibility as a governing force could be attacked.

The Communist Party could reject the logic of this equation, but it could not ignore its reality and its impact on the domestic political balance.

For these reasons the Communists were more or less obliged to take the stand they did (just as the Christian Democrats were obliged to take the stand they did). The Communists' opposition to the NATO decision could be moderate - hence the proposal to suspend or delay deployment for at least six months - and it could be ambiguous enough to avoid external ruptures and maintain internal ties; but it could not become unconditional acceptance of the government's decision if the Communists wanted to preserve their identity and the support of their electoral base. For the Communists it was unacceptable that their legitimacy as a governing force be tested on the basis of the level and intensity of their pro-Atlanticism.

It was of course in the Communist Party's interest to preserve those domestic ties, especially with certain sectors of the Christian Democratic Party, that it had established during the years of "national solidarity" and not jeopardize their further development.(13) It was just as important to keep faith with the thesis, openly accepted, that a balance of forces in Europe was essential to security and peace. From this stemmed a dual need: to play down the destabilizing effect of the SS-20s (14) while at the same time demonstrating that they shared NATO's concerns by proposing that the

production and deployment of new Soviet SS-20 missiles be frozen.(15)

It was obviously difficult for the Communist Party to reconcile a series of contradictory elements - if Soviet Communist Party Secretary Brezhnev had not replied to West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's request to suspend the production of SS-20s, what sense did it make for the Communist Party to ask the Italian government to do so? - and it was evident that it needed to find support in other forces of the Italian left.

The attitude of the Socialist Party thus became the logical point of reference, also because initially positions close to those of the Communist Party had emerged: De Martino supported the proposal for a six month moratorium, while Achilli favored a postponement of the Atlantic Council's December 1979 decision and the initiation of negotiations.(16) At the same time, the Socialists' attitude became decisive for the position of the Italian government itself and hence, indirectly, for the West German government's decision. In fact, among the negative consequences of a Socialist stand against the Euromissiles Socialist Party Secretary Bettino Craxi listed: the fall of the Cossiga government and the opening of a difficult political crisis; a blow to the German Social Democrats just when they were facing a fierce political offensive by Strauss's party; the serious crises that would be opened in

the Alliance, blocking any possibility of negotiations and creating a situation of political tension contrary to the peace process.(17)

Awareness of the impact of the Socialists' position on the life of the government was, however, only one of the factors that determined the Party's attitude. The Euromissiles issue offered the opportunity for a policy that could pay off handsomely.

Starting from the premise that "a peace strategy is impossible without a military balance", pointing out that "no power that finds itself in a position of military superiority resists the temptation to make this supremacy felt at the political level" and considering that in Europe there was indeed a "qualitative" imbalance of theater nuclear forces in favor of the Soviet Union, the Socialist Party maintained that it was necessary to back the NATO decision. But the Socialist Party's resolution established a temporal link between the start up of production of the American missiles and the initiation of talks aimed at re-establishing a balance at a lower level which would make the deployment of new arms totally or partially superfluous.

According to the Socialists, if negotiations were opened immediately, the three-year interval before installment of the U.S. missiles in Europe would allow the "dissolving clause" to come into force: the decision to produce the missiles did not automatically mean they would be deployed; the deployment

could be suspended or reduced depending on the outcome of the talks.

The evident difference from the Communist Party's stand, (19) precisely because it could be convincingly justified by an objective analysis of the military situation in Europe, offered the Socialist Party the opportunity to relaunch itself politically. The special domestic and international relevance of the missiles issue allowed the Socialists to project the image of a party which, while keeping faith with its disarmament traditions, could also assume great responsibility in the defense field without being conditioned by ideological traditions.

The close connection and substantial identity with the the West German Social Democratic Party's position - and hence with that of the West German government - gave the Italian Socialist Party's stand a European dimension. Their backing of the Cossiga government's stand further legitimized the party as a force willing and able to play a decisive role in Italian policy-making - with repercussions at both the domestic and international level. Its legitimation at the domestic level was all the greater because the Socialist Party could boast that the Cossiga government had accepted all the conditions proposed by the Socialists, including the "dissolving clause".(20) At the international level, the U.S. administration could not but be interested in and sensitive to the new elements the Socialists' position had introduced into

the Italian political situation and could not but be pleased with and indebted to the Socialist Party for the helpful role it had played in determining Italy's stand, which would in turn be essential for approval of NATO's missile-deployment program in Brussels .

At the same time, the Socialist Party's adhesion to the government's "Atlantic" policy isolated the Communist Party, leaving less room and fewer prospects for an eventual resumption of the national solidarity formula, emphasized the Communists' incapacity to take truly independent stands from Moscow,(21) opened new possibilities of collaboration between the Socialists and Christian Democrats, and set the stage for a governing coalition which would include the Socialists.

It is difficult to say to what extent the Euromissiles question was exploited by the Socialist Party as a symbol of its "diversity" with respect to the other parties of the Italian left; as a means for establishing a new balance of power with respect to the Christian Democrats - the Socialists, too, could show their "loyalty" to the Atlantic Alliance by backing, though not unconditionally, its rearmament decisions - as an act of responsibility aimed at gaining the consensus of those who shared the Socialists' reformist policy but were wary of their willingness to take Italy's security and defense needs into due account; and as an external signal (directed at Washington in particular) of the Party's maturity in the field of particularly controversial

and difficult foreign policy choices.

In retrospect, the Socialist Party's stand in 1979 seems to be the starting point of that political climb that would take the secretary of the party, Bettino Craxi, to the head of the government formed after the 1983 general elections, following its participation in a five-party coalition government and the creation of Italy's first "lay" government, with the Republican Giovanni Spadolini as prime minister and the Socialist Lello Lagorio as defense minister.

In the summer of 1981, the announcement of the choice of the Vincenzo Magliocco Airport near Comiso on the island of Sicily as the base of the 112 cruise missiles to be deployed in Italy confirmed the continuity and the firmness of Italy's commitment to the NATO decision and its readiness to supply the West German government with timely political support.

Once again, in fact, the West German government, bound by the condition of "another continental country", found a valid and precious point of reference in the Italian decision to proceed with the construction of the infrastructures needed to house the missiles, precisely at a time when political difficulties were growing because of the internal opposition to the missiles, fueled by a growing pacifist and anti-nuclear movement, and Belgium and Holland were still expressing reservations.(22)

As in 1979, domestic politics continued to dictate the rules of the game. The debate on Comiso went on at the level

of joint meetings of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Commissions of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. The Communists continued their "soft" opposition,(23) did not press for a debate in Parliament,(24) reiterated that their position was not conditioned by "the diplomatic and strategic lines of other countries" (25) and insisted that Italy take an initiative to verify the real willingness of the allies and the Soviet Union to negotiate (forgetting that in the month of May at the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Rome the United States had told its allies that it intended to resume talks with the Soviet Union for the reduction of nuclear forces in Europe by the end of the year).(26)

The Socialists, while reiterating their opposition to nuclear rearmament, maintained that the Comiso decision showed Italy's determination to live up to its NATO commitments and made it possible to apply concrete pressure to get the negotiations going, a condition which could be neither waived nor delayed.

Each side continue to play its role even during the political campaign for the June 1983 general elections. Marsha McGraw Olive rightly spoke of the "unmentionable missiles".(28) All the parties kept the issue of Comiso and the cruise missiles in the background. Almost no one, among those in favor of the deployment, was willing to risk testing consensus on the issue. All the public opinion surveys conducted in 1981 and 1982 showed that a large majority of the Italian

electorate was against the deployment of nuclear arms.(29) No party had an interest in fomenting a controversy which, given the nature of the problem and the pre-electoral climate, would inevitably have led to more rigid positions and a radicalization of the political debate.

The forecasts of the results of the elections, though uncertain and varying, suggested that none of the major parties would benefit from forcing a clash on foreign policy questions that centered on Italy's position in NATO and risked recreating the deep divisions that had characterized Italian politics in the cold war period.

Thus, even the Communist Party, intent on preserving the "Western" party image it had strove so long and hard to create while at the same time anxious to maintain its identity as a major left-wing force with a tradition of struggling for disarmament, kept a low profile on the question of the Euromissiles .

The Communists knew that their foreign policy positions would be taken as a measure of their credibility as a "party of government" not only by the other parties but also by a large majority of public opinion. They had to keep in mind, especially in the pre-electoral period, the need to reconcile their domestic and foreign policy platforms.

The Euromissiles were one of the issues but not the issue of the Communist campaign. The party preferred not to mount the tiger of the pacifist and anti-nuclear movement, and

avoided committing its powerful organizational machine to the cause. Perhaps the elections would produce a new political balance of power and the opportunity to form a democratic alternative. In any case it was deemed inopportune to insist on a problem which divided the left-wing parties. On the other hand, the United States and Soviet Union had been negotiating in Geneva since November 1981 and the possibility of an agreement by the end of the year could not be excluded. An accord would have made the polemics useless, while a clash over Comiso would have made it more difficult to establish an alliance with the Socialist Party.(30)

The results of the elections, with a sharp drop in the Christian Democrats' votes and little change in the Communists' share, gave to the Socialists, even though they had made modest gains, more weight than their absolute share would seem to merit.(31)

It was therefore a government headed by a Socialist which had to deal with the deployment of the Euromissiles, made inevitable by the failure of the Geneva negotiations to come up with a satisfactory accord, and in a political climate rendered more difficult by the Communists' changed attitude.(32) The Communists had in fact become more explicitly and openly opposed to the missiles and more willing to back the initiatives of the anti-nuclear movements.

Italy kept its word and the first 16 cruise missiles became operational in March 1984, a few months later than in

Great Britain and West Germany because of delays in the work to adapt the Comiso base.

But the steadfastness shown by the European countries in respecting the spirit and letter of the 1979 double-track decision, though it saved NATO credibility and avoided a crisis of incalculable consequences, did not resolve the problem. Apart from the risky reservations of Holland, which postponed its decision and does not seem willing to say yes, and apart from the vote of the Danish parliament to block the funds with which Copenhagen was to contribute to the NATO expenditures for the infrastructures for the missiles, the prolonged suspension of the Geneva talks and hence the prospect of having to accept more Pershing and cruise missiles in a few months poses big problems for West Germany and Italy.

Italy once again appears to be the indispensable link for the solidity of the entire European front and, at the same time, the country on which the concern and uncertainty of the allies and the United States are concentrated.

Will Italy be able to resist to the bitter end, even if the stalemate in the Geneva negotiations lasts beyond the U.S. presidential elections in November, as appears likely? Or will domestic political factors once again play a major role, as in 1979, but this time in the opposite sense? How should Prime Minister Craxi's recent declarations during his visit to Lisbon in early May be interpreted? Is Italian foreign policy going off in a new direction? And, if so, in what direction?

Craxi's initiative to favor the resumption of talks (not a formal proposal but an "idea" expressed frequently),(33) precisely because it was extemporaneous, appeared to stem more from domestic political considerations than from a pondered assessment of foreign policy. There was the style of Craxi the politician, his "decisionism" and the image of the Socialists as a "dynamic" party. There was the desire to reaffirm the supremacy of the prime minister in the conduct of foreign policy so as not to leave Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, a Christian Democrat, with all the credit for diplomatic bridge-building between East and West.(34) There was the desire to show that Italy, with a Socialist-led government, does not intend to "sit mute" at the NATO table; that, while respecting the commitments made, it is capable of taking its own initiatives for renewing the dialogue with the Soviet Union. And there were two upcoming events: the 43rd Socialist Party congress and the European elections, and hence the need to propose a security policy capable of gaining maximum consensus inside and outside the party by making it both firm and flexible. But there was also the excessively optimistic feeling that the Soviets were now more willing to resume the talks,(35) there was genuine concern over the rising tensions with the East bloc countries, there was the sensation that the United States was not all that eager to pressure the Soviets into returning to the bargaining table, and there was the

conviction that Italy's loyalty to the West should be above all a loyalty to Europe, and hence aimed mainly at furthering European interests.

And yet Craxi's initiative appeared neither opportune nor pondered: the timing was bad considering the bitter debate going on in Holland; the wrong signals were sent to the Soviet Union (Moscow could think that intransigence pays in the end) and the United States (where is Italy going and how many security policies does NATO have?); the impression was given that the Italian government has a "climatic" conception of detente and has been conditioned psychologically by the rigidity of the Soviet stance; it seemed that the gap between the two missile deployments and the substantial impracticability of any proposal of a moratorium had not been taken into due account (36)(even if Craxi specified that he was not suggesting a unilateral and unconditional NATO suspension or moratorium and even less an Italian suspension)

On the other hand, the U.S. State Department spokesman's statement that Craxi's ideas would not be included on the agenda of the NATO ministerial meeting at the end of May and Defense Minister Spadolini's explicit confirmation during his talks in Paris with his French counterpart Hernu and President Mitterand (37) that Italy would keep its word and respect the timetable for deployment of the Euromissiles, reduced the weight and significance of the statement Craxi had made in

Lisbon.

However, it gave the impression that Italian foreign and security policy it is exploited for domestic political purposes, more than in other Western countries. That seems to depend not only on the peculiar characteristics of the Italian political system but also on the substantial detachment (due also to special geostrategic factors) with which the country's defense needs are perceived and assessed, especially with regard to the use of nuclear weapons.

Unlike West Germany, Italy does not fear a surprise land attack from the East. However hypothetical, this is a possibility along the north-central European front, where the category 1 Soviet divisions in East Germany have the capacity to launch one, but not along the Italian north-eastern front, thanks to the existence of a considerable "buffer zone" constituted by the territory of Austria and Yugoslavia. Italy does not share borders with Warsaw Pact countries and hence even in the case of a surprise attack in central Europe it would have a certain amount of time to organize its defense, especially if (as appears very likely) Yugoslavia defended its territorial integrity, opposing the passage of Soviet and Hungarian forces. The territory's orography, with the exception of the Gorizia gap, makes the use of armored divisions difficult, and favors forward defense. If the West had to resort to first-use of nuclear weapons because

of an unsustainable military situation, they would almost certainly be used first on the central and northern rather than Italian fronts. The Italian parties and public opinion have therefore debated the question of "no first use" of nuclear weapons much less than in Germany.

Still, the Euromissiles have opened a breach in the parties' and public opinion's indifference toward security problems. Today there is a greater awareness, more attention, and even greater competence, and the mass media are dedicating more space to strategic questions and Italy's military policy.

It would be hard to imagine Italian policy outside the Atlantic and European context. And I don't think the distrust and concern of our allies are fully justified.

NATO continues and will continue to be the indispensable point of reference. However, the need to reduce the dependence of European defense on nuclear weapons is increasingly felt. This could be done by strengthening conventional forces and revitalizing the drive toward European integration in the field of defense as well. This sentiment is growing in the other European countries, too.

This is a field in which the opinions of the Italian political parties, including the Communist Party, tend to converge. It is therefore reasonable to presume that in the future, if the European countries of the Alliance move in that direction, domestic politics - which have until now played an abnormally and illogically important role in foreign policy

decisions because of the peculiar characteristics of the Italian political situation - will find fewer possibilities and opportunities to affect the foreign and defense policy lines.

NOTES

1. The 1977 white paper was entitled: "La sicurezza dell'Italia e i problemi delle sue forze armate" (Italy's security and the problems of its armed forces). That first attempt to inform public opinion has not been repeated.
2. At the meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group in the fall of 1977, a group of experts brought together in what was later called the High Level Group was given the task of examining the role of theater nuclear forces in NATO strategy after the Soviets deployed their SS-20 missiles.
3. See the article by Giancarlo Paletta in La Repubblica, 7 November 1979.
4. Confirmation of this can be found reading the party daily newspapers.
5. See the speeches of Italian Foreign Minister Malfatti and Prime Minister Cossiga during the parliamentary debate on 31 October and 4 December 1979. Camera dei Deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Resoconto stenografico, 49, 31 October 1979, pp. 3592-3596 and Resoconto stenografico, 70, 4 December 1979, pp. 5076-5091.
6. See the speeches by Gerardo Bianco and the secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, Zaccagnini, during the

- parliamentary debate. Camera dei Deputati, Atti Parlamentari, 31 October 1979 and Atti Parlamentari, 71, 5 December 1979, pp.5189-5194..
7. See the article by Adolfo Battaglia in La Repubblica, 8 November 1979 and his speech during the December parliamentary debate, Camera dei Deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Resoconto stenografico, 71, 5 December 1979, pp.5168-5178.
 8. See the speech by Natta, Camera dei Deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Resoconto stenografico, 49, 31 October 1979.
 9. A verification of the real state of nuclear arms in Europe in the context of a conference between NATO and the Warsaw Pact was proposed. See "Risoluzione della Direzione del PCI del 16 ottobre 1979," in l'Unità, 18 October 1979.
 10. See the article by Giuseppe Boffa, l'Unità, 30 October 1979.
 11. See the speech by Communist Party secretary Enrico Berlinguer, Camera dei Deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Resoconto stenografico, 71, 5 December 1979, pp. 5178-5188.
 12. The diversity of the Italian Communist Party's position on the Euromissiles with respect to that of the Soviet Union was in fact recognized and underlined by other parties, including the Christian Democrats, and by Prime

- Minister Cossiga during the parliamentary debate.
13. In the Liberal and Social Democratic parties there were some who maintained that for certain sectors of the Christian Democratic Party these ties were so important that they would rather have a government crisis than break them. The difficulties encountered by the Cossiga government in mid-November 1979 were cited as evidence of this position.
 14. The Communists affirmed that what really counted was the global balance between the two superpowers sanctioned by SALT 2, that NATO had the missiles of the American Poseidon submarines assigned to SACEUR, and that in any case the figures supplied by Western sources had to be duly verified.
 15. The title of an article by Antonio Rubbi in *L'Unità* on 7 November 1979 was significant in this sense: "Anche gli SS-20? Certo che sì" (The SS-20s, too? Of course.)
 16. For De Martino's position see the interview in *La Repubblica*, 8 December 1979. For Achilli's position see the article published in *L'Avanti!*, 1 December 1979 and his speech in parliament, Camera dei Deputati, *Atti Parlamentari, Resoconto stenografico, 71*, 5 December 1979, pp. 5210-5216.
 17. See article by Bettino Craxi in *L'Avanti!*, 9-10 December 1979.
 18. See U. Intini, "Si tratta con prospettive migliori,"

L'Avanti, 13 December 1979.

19. During the debate among the leaders of the Socialist Party, Landolfi affirmed: "We have to make a qualitative leap in the sense of political responsibility and of our international position.. We cannot go along with the Communists on this subject: we are on a different wavelength." See the minutes of the meeting in L'Avanti, 14 December 1979.
20. See the article by Antonio Landolfi, "La clausola dissolvente e il negoziato sui missili," La Repubblica, 14 December 1979.
21. A few months earlier, in an article commenting Berlinguer's trip to Moscow, Federico Coen had written: "One would say that comrade Berlinguer, after reviving the historic compromise and hurling anathemas against the alternative, is attempting to revive its pro-Sovietism of the cold war years." See L'Avanti, 9 September 1979.
22. In October and November 1981 hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated against nuclear arms in the major West European cities.
23. Senator Bufalini even defined Defense Minister Lagorio's speech as "not negative". See Senato, Giunte e Commissioni, 299, 20 August 1981, p. 9.
24. The Radical Party defined the commission debate "a farse". See the speech by Cicciomessere in Camera dei Deputati, Bollettino delle Commissioni, 21 August 1981,

- p. 27.
25. See Camera dei Deputati, Bollettino delle Commissioni, cit., p. 30, the speech by Communist deputy Pajetta. As an example of the Communist Party's independence, Pajetta pointed out that it had not participated in the meeting in Paris of the Communist parties at which disarmament was discussed before one of the parties involved.
 26. See the final communique of the Atlantic Council meeting in Rome on 5 May 1981 in Notizie Nato, June 1981, pp. 100-102.
 27. See speech by Senator Boniver, Giunte e Commissioni, 299, 20 August 1981, p. 16.
 28. See M. McGraw Olive, "Dateline Rome: the unmentionable missiles", unpublished paper, pp. 10-15.
 29. The surveys conducted by Americans show that even though 62% of the Italians consider NATO essential for their security, from 41 to 52% of the population is against the installation of the missiles.
 30. At its congress in Milan in March 1983 the Communist Party opted for the democratic alternative and the secretary of the Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi, had underlined the willingness of his party to open a dialogue with the Communists.
 31. The Christian Democrats dropped from 38.3% to 32.9%. The Communist Party slipped from 30.4% to 29.9% and the

- Social Party rose from 9.8% to 11.4%.
32. This attitude was evident during the peace demonstrations in October and during the parliamentary debate on Euromissiles on 14-16 November 1983.
 33. Craxi said he thought it was only logical that both sides should suspend deployment for a brief and specified period of time if negotiations were resumed and if there were concrete signs of a willingness to bargain seriously. He said he considered the Soviet demand that NATO remove the missiles installed so far absolutely unreasonable and unrealistic. But he considered it just as illusory to think that the Soviets would go back to the bargaining table without some sort of stimulation on the part of the Atlantic Alliance.
 34. See the article by Paolo Garimberti, "Da Andreotti a Craxi la mossa sui missili," La Stampa, 9 May 1984.
 35. This perception was also the result of talks at Easter in Moscow between Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Andreotti and Soviet leaders, including Chernenko.
 36. At the end of December 1983 the Soviet Union deployed 378 SS-20s, of which 243, for a total of 729 nuclear warheads, were targeted on Western Europe. NATO had 41 Pershing and cruise missiles deployed in Great Britain, West Germany and Italy.
 37. The talks were held on 10-12 May 1984.

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