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Italy - Dossier

In the Chamber of Deputies: four against all!

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Four deputies voted against the Prodi government's project of maintaining Italian military forces in Afghanistan: Salvatore Cannavo, Albero Burgio, Francesco Caruso and Gianluigi Pegolo. Franco Russo and Paolo Cacchiari left the Chamber during the vote. Marilde Provera announced that "it's the last time I vote for that". All the others voted in favour, after a bigger than ever vote including both the majority and the opposition. We reproduce here the speech of the deputy Salvatore Cannavo, of the Sinistra critica (Critical Left) tendency of the Party of Communist Refoundation:

Salvatore Cannavo: Mr President, I am sorry to have to make a statement about a vote where I disagreed with my own group and my own party. However the measure that we are voting on today, although it contains the announcement that we are withdrawing from Iraq, which is very important, confirms the military mission in Afghanistan. This is a mission that not only the person who is speaking to you considers to be a war: this is also the point of view of NATO, which is directing operations; a mission that has in no way resolved the problems of the population of Afghanistan.

This is a mission which violates article 11 of the Constitution and which, in addition, was not part of the programme of the Union. So it has never been subjected to the judgment of the electors, nor to their approval, whereas 61 per cent of them are demanding that our soldiers come home.

Concerning such missions, the forces of the radical and pacifist Left have always expressed their disagreement, contrary to those parties of the centre-left which on the contrary have not hesitated to vote in favour of them, along with the Right and with the Berlusconi government [the deputy Fabris makes some comments].

Today this bipartisan unity is being expressed again in a way that does not seem natural to me; because of this the pressures on us in the name of the coherence of the vote are unacceptable; and some of these pressures are really anachronistic.

"No" to the war is a fundamental element of politics. It cannot be satisfied with the illusory hypothesis of a reduction of the war. So I will vote against this measure, without that taking on the significance of a vote seeking to deprive the majority of its legitimacy or a vote of no confidence in the government [comments from some deputies of Forza Italia (Right)].

I would have preferred to be able to vote separately on the various missions, as the programme of the Union had announced. This programme, it's as clear as it could be, is today being violated, because by engaging the responsibility of the government they are trying to prevent the real fundamental discussion about the war. [comments from deputies of Forza Italia].