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Italy - Dossier

# A Vote of Confidence with a Time Limit

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**We publish here the joint declaration of 16 senators opposed to the decree financing the Italian military mission in Afghanistan. It was signed by (the name of their party is in brackets): Mauro Bulgarelli (Verdi), Jose Luis del Rojo (PRC), Loredana De Petris (Verdi), Anna Donati (Verdi), Fosco Giannini (PRC), Claudio Grassi (PRC), Gigi Malabarba (PRC), Marco Pecoraro Scanio (Verdi), Oskar Peterlini (SVP), Franca Rame (IDV), Natale Ripamonti (Verdi), Sen Fernando Rossi (PdCI), Gianpaolo Sivestri (Verdi), Dino Tibaldi (PdCI), Franco Turigliatto (PRC), Massimo Villone (DS).**

Today we are giving vote of confidence in the government but we reaffirm our "NO!" to the military mission in Afghanistan, which we have always refused (by voting against, for those of us who were in parliament) since November 2001, faithful to the principles which are contained in Article 11 of the Constitution.

We had strongly asked the new executive to give a clear sign of discontinuity with the war policy of the Berlusconi government, by quickly demonstrating - at the same as the withdrawal of the Italian contingent from Iraq, which was in the programme of the Union - at least by putting an end to Italian participation in Enduring Freedom and by working out a projected strategy of withdrawal from the multinational mission FIAS, [\[1\]](#) which each day is becoming further integrated into Washington's military plans.

Whereas the withdrawal from Iraq took place late, no withdrawal, not even partial, has been announced concerning the Afghan theatre of war, where on the contrary a dramatic increase in war potential is envisaged by the allied forces - both in terms of troops and the relative enlargement of the rules of their engagement, and concerning devastating means of destruction.

The fact of not having accepted an increase in the instruments of death such as NATO proposed to Italy cannot be presented as a "success", because in war a policy of presumed "damage reduction" is not acceptable.

The beginning of the "reflection" that is envisaged concerning Italian military missions will for us be the occasion to strongly argue for the withdrawal of our contingent from Afghanistan, by exerting pressure on the government to develop in all international bodies an initiative against war as a means of realizing peace objectives. The war has increased and not reduced terrorism, peace is prepared by peace.

In the Middle East, faced with the very dangerous escalation that we are seeing at present in Lebanon, neither Italy nor Europe will be able to exert influence in a sufficiently credible way and with enough authority in favour of a negotiated solution, if at the same time we are engaged on other war fronts.

We hope that if the very many voices which have been raised throughout the country against the war missions and that the opinion polls which reflect the hope of a majority of the Italian people which even goes beyond the union's electorate, are heard by the new government. We appreciate that our positions are today considered by all the political forces of the majority as not only legitimate but even serious and representative. But so that that will not just be empty words, we are asking to be expressed by acts. The same scenario concerning Afghanistan in a few months time, with the umpteenth prolongation of the military mission, would be a regressive step and would be unacceptable for us.

To continue our battle inside and outside the institutions of state, in favour of Italy conducting a real peace policy, we

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will fight not only for the withdrawal from Afghanistan and for all the theatres of war, but also, as envisaged in the electoral program of the Union, against nuclear weapons and military bases in our country, for the reduction of military spending and for affirming a culture of peace in all aspects of society.

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[1] The International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), which is conducting the war in Afghanistan under US command, is not a United Nations force, but a voluntary coalition of countries, under the authority of NATO. To start with its role was supposed to be to guarantee security in the city of Kabul. Subsequently its activity was increasingly enlarged to cover the entire territory of Afghanistan.