



ITALY, THE UNO AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRISES

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Abstract:

In post-war Italy, the refusal of nationalism and the aspiration to a policy of international cooperation both at the European and world level were widely shared. At the Potsdam conference American President Truman proposed to admit Italy to UNO, however, this was met with Soviet opposition. In the context of the Cold War, Italy entered the UNO in 1955, together with other 15 countries. At the UNO, Italy's performance, for example on decolonization issues, was conditioned by her links with the USA, by the membership of the Western bloc and by her economic interests. Italy recognised Communist China only in 1970 and in 1971 voted for its admission to the UNO. In 1969 Prime Minister Moro described at the UN General Assembly a «global strategy of maintaining peace», a manifesto of a détente based on the UNO and on the equality of states as opposed to the «concert of powers». These ideas contrasted the détente pursued by Nixon and Kissinger that were based on traditional power politics and on bilateral relations between the superpowers. In the 1970s Italy's international status was seriously handicapped by its internal crisis. In the latter part of the Cold War and afterwards, Italian Armed Forces started to participate in military missions abroad with or without UN mandate. These missions aimed to give support to international security and to enhance Italy's international status within and outside UNO. Italy successfully opposed plans to increase the number of permanent members of the Security Council by proposing a new category of semi-permanent members. In 1999 and 2000, Italy was the fifth contributor to the UN budget and the third in providing troops to UN missions. In 2006 was elected for the 6th time as a member of the Security Council.

Keywords: UNO, Internationalism, Multilateralism, Peacekeeping.

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**Resumen:**

En la Italia de post-guerra el rechazo al nacionalismo y a la aspiración a una política de cooperación internacional tanto a nivel europeo como mundial eran ampliamente compartidas. En la Conferencia de Potsdam Truman propuso la admisión de Italia en el seno de la ONU, pero se encontró con la oposición de la URSS. En el contexto de la Guerra Fría, Italia solo pudo entrar en 1955, junto con otros 15 países. En la ONU, la participación de Italia, por ejemplo en asuntos relativos a la descolonización, se veía condicionada por sus lazos con los EEUU, por su pertenencia al bloque Occidental y por sus intereses económicos. Italia reconoció a la China comunista solo en 1970 y en 1971 votó a favor de su admisión en la ONU. En 1969 el primer ministro Moro describió en la Asamblea General de la ONU su “estrategia para una paz global”, un manifiesto de distensión basado en la ONU y en la igualdad de los estados y no en un “concierto de potencias”. Tales ideas contrastaban con la distensión llevada a cabo por Nixon y Kissinger, basada más bien en una política tradicional de poder y en las relaciones bilaterales entre las superpotencias. En los años 70 el estatus internacional de Italia se veía seriamente limitado por su crisis interna. En el último periodo de la Guerra Fría, las Fuerzas Armadas italianas empezaron a participar en misiones en el extranjero con o sin mandato de la ONU. Tales misiones tenían como objetivo dar apoyo a la seguridad internacional y reforzar el estatus internacional de Italia dentro y fuera de la ONU. Italia se opuso con éxito a los planes para incrementar el número de miembros permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad proponiendo a cambio una nueva categoría de miembros semi-permanentes. En 1999 y el 2000 Italia fue el quinto mayor contribuyente al presupuesto de la ONU y el tercero en contribuir con tropas en misiones de la ONU. En el 2006 fue nombrado por sexta vez miembro del Consejo de Seguridad.

Palabras clave: ONU, Internacionalismo, Multilateralismo, Mantenimiento de la Paz.

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1. Introduction

Italy's intervention in the Second World War in some way marked the conclusion of the extreme power politics that Fascism had always strived for. The disastrous outcome of the conflict proved fatal to the regime. The political forces that subsequently came to power had ideals and cultural conceptions of foreign policy that were distinctly different from those espoused by the Fascists and the early stages of this foreign policy developed while the international anti-Fascist coalition was still in place with power in the hands of National Liberation Committee factions who were in substantial agreement about basic aspirations and the new orientation of the foreign policy that seemed to be affirming itself on an international level. There was no choosing of sides yet, as such, and this helped the country to define a new and shared foreign policy, especially where method was concerned. The Internationalist ideals and the need to safeguard national interests were elements shared by most of the political parties, although in different ways and with diverse emphases depending on the political tradition from which they came².

The rejection of nationalism and a desire for international cooperation, European and worldwide, was also reflected in most of Italy's public opinion. The Italian Society for International Organisation (SIOI) was formed in October of 1944 by a group of authoritative men of law and culture, and supported by Palazzo Chigi (i. e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The Society's promoters had a vision of highly innovative international relationships that optimistically strove for the creation of supranational bodies - bodies which would limit the principles of national sovereignty that had led to such disastrous consequences. They aimed to reconnect with similar ideals that were emerging in other countries, especially in the United States.

As interpreters of the orientation of the political forces of the National Liberation Committee (CLN) that supported it, the second Badoglio government approved a declaration on Italy's international relationships during a session of the Council of Ministers on 23rd May, 1944, formulated by Carlo Sforza, a Minister without Portfolio, in which it was declared, among other things, that the "ultimate objective" of Italian foreign policy was to "contribute to the creation of a new international law that would assure liberty and prosperity for all peoples as delineated in the Atlantic Charter, and which, through the interdependence of nations and their cooperation on a wholly democratic basis, would prevent any new danger of war." Soon afterwards, the Bonomi government closely watched the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, which took place from 21st August to 7th October of 1944, as it strove to lay the basis for the foundation of an international organisation for security and peace.

Alcide De Gasperi became Foreign Minister on 12th December, 1944 and his work left its mark on all of Italy's post-war foreign policy. He worked, above all, to ease the way to Italy's rejoining the community of nations and, through international actions, to consolidate

² In matters of international cooperation, the new Catholic ruling class closed the apparent dichotomy between its pursuance of national interests and its ideals of an international community. In substantial accord with the Catholics were the left-wing parties, with their traditional internationalism, awareness of an increasingly interdependent economy and conviction to the continuance of the great war alliance between the USSR and Western democracies. Lay parties were also strongly in favor of international cooperation as the most important aspect of international relations and Italian foreign policy. As opposed to the DC and the PCI, who in their formulations looked above all to a world order, they were more concerned with the European scenario. The leaning towards international cooperation by the right, the monarchists and neo-fascists, on the other hand, was either feeble or practically inexistent.



its image and the country's true nature.³ His efforts were guided by his strong sense of patriotism and, more generally speaking, of the nation, together with its ideals of liberty, justice and democracy. He had a vision of international politics as collaboration between peoples and nations, not just on a political level, but also on an economic and social one as well.

De Gasperi also had a clear perception of the structural weaknesses of his country, intensified by the destruction suffered during the war, and was very aware of public opinion. He moved, therefore, with circumspection and with his well-known pragmatism. As the international reality of the post-war era gradually came into clearer focus, making certain nationalistic views which were still tied to the legends of the recent past seem naïve and old-fashioned, De Gasperi, while still aiming to give the country an international role in keeping with its history, made international cooperation one of his primary foreign policy objectives, leaving behind the methods and substance of the foreign policy that had characterised the country under its Fascist rulers, yet still championed by an authoritative functionary or two at Palazzo Chigi⁴. He believed in a style of cooperation that, on the one hand, safeguarded peace by seeking just solutions to international political problems, and, on the other hand, safeguarded the economic and social interests of various countries, a conception which, furthermore, helped to advance the various objectives of Italian foreign policy as well.

From the time he had become Foreign Minister, De Gasperi followed the nascent United Nations with great interest and worked energetically to be granted admission to the San Francisco Conference which opened on 25th April, 1945. He saw Italy's presence in that conference as a chance, in view of the discussions on the Peace Treaty, for the country to be fully readmitted into the international community⁵. The desire to participate in the birth of the United Nations was also a way to irrevocably prove to its allies that the new mindset of Italian politics was one that revolved around the repudiation of war and favoured international cooperation, as well as a choice favouring liberty and democracy.

He put his trust in the long wartime cooperation with and personal favour of Roosevelt⁶, but his attempts at getting Italy admitted to the conference, even as an observer failed: Italy, in keeping with the accords stipulated at the Yalta Conference, was not invited⁷. On the other hand, it could not be any other way. The Allies did not want it and did not know

³ Pombeni, Paolo; Corni, Gustavo: "La politica come esperienza della storia", in Conze, Eckard; Corni, Gustavo and Pombeni, Paolo (ed) (2005): *Alcide De Gasperi: un percorso europeo*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 42 – 46.

⁴ See Tosi, Luciano: "Governo e diplomazia nell'Italia repubblicana: il confronto su alcune scelte di politica estera", in Petracchi, Giorgio (ed) (2005): *Uomini e nazioni. Cultura e politica estera nell'Italia del Novecento*, Udine, Gaspari, pp. 155 – 180 and also Lorenzini, Sara (2007): *L'Italia e il trattato di pace del 1947*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 26 – 27.

⁵ Cf. Ortona, Egidio (1984): *Anni d'America, I, La ricostruzione (1944 – 1951)*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 126 – 129 and Andreotti, Giulio (1956): *De Gasperi e il suo tempo*, Milan, Mondadori, p. 212.

⁶ See in this regard Mae – Sioi (2005): *Obiettivo Onu: l'Italia e le Nazioni Unite, 1945-1955*, Napoli, Editoriale Scientifica, doc. n. 3.

⁷ "Documenti diplomatici italiani", *Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Mae) (1985 – 1992), serie X, 1943 – 1948, Libreria dello Stato*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, (from now on DDI, X) vol. II, 116, 123, 133 and 150; Tarchiani, Alberto (1955): *Dieci anni tra Roma e Washington*, Milan, Mondadori, pp. 28 – 39 and 44 – 47, Ortona, "Anni d'America I", *op. cit.*, pp. 125 – 131, Di Nolfo, Ennio (1999) "La mancata ammissione dell'Italia all'Onu nel 1945-1947" in Tosi, Luciano (ed.) (1999): *L'Italia e le organizzazioni internazionali, Diplomazia multilaterale nel Novecento*, Padova, Cedam. p. 181 and Mae – Sioi, *op. cit.* pp. 6 – 21.



enough – at and as far as they were concerned, the changes in the ruling class of the country had much less significance to them than the events of the Fascist war⁸.

De Gasperi was deeply pained by the exclusion and personally wrote a resolution, which he had approved by the Italian Council of Ministers, in which he expressed the disappointment of the Italian people at its exclusion and highlighted the country's contribution to the cause of democracy alongside its allies, as well as Italy's willingness to participate in the reconstruction of the world⁹. Subsequently, at the Potsdam Conference which took place from 17th July to 2nd August, 1945, US president Harry Truman proposed Italy's admission to the United Nations, in view of the fact that his own country had, in the meantime, declared war on Japan¹⁰. His proposal was not accepted. Great Britain's initial opposition was substituted by that of the Soviet Union, who would not agree to admit Italy unless Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria were also admitted. Truman abandoned his efforts and postponed the admission of former enemy countries to after the ratification of their respective peace treaties¹¹ and by doing so, especially after the Moscow Conference of December 1945, he favoured the link between the admission of Italy to the UN together with that of the three Eastern European countries and Finland. The particular situation of Italy, however, is evident in the final document that emerged from the Potsdam Conference. In point IX of the document it was written that preparation of the peace treaty with Italy had to be one the Allies' priorities in view of the fact that Italy had been the first to break away from the Germans, had contributed to its defeat and had now declared war on Japan; it had freed itself from its Fascist regime and was moving towards the reestablishment of a democratic government and institutions. It affirmed that the signing of a peace treaty with a recognised and democratic Italian government would have made it possible for the Allies to "satisfy their desire to support Italy's petition to join the United Nations"¹², a formula which was then transferred to the preamble of the peace treaty¹³.

In Italy, in the meantime, there was a strong desire to renew international political life. In the second half of 1946, at Italy's Constituent Assembly, while discussing the internationalist norms of the Constitution, there was wide agreement among the various political forces regarding several innovative principles of foreign policy: maximum openness towards the international community, pacifism, the promotion of the values of liberty and democracy on an international scale, international cooperation and Parliamentary control over foreign policy. These principles were tightly intertwined and had their origins in the programmes and ideologies of various political parties constructed around the ideals of liberty, democracy, justice, the value of the human being, a shared reaction to the disastrous Fascist war and on ethical grounds. These ideals also found expression in various articles of the Italian Constitution, in particular in article 11 which, apart from "rejecting war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes", affirms Italy's commitment, "on conditions of equality with other States, to the limitations of sovereignty that may be necessary to a world order

⁸ Pastorelli, Pietro: "L'ammissione dell'Italia all'Onu", in Tosi, Luciano (ed) (1999): *L'Italia e le organizzazioni internazionali, Diplomazia multilaterale nel Novecento*, Padova, Cedam, pp. 190 - 194.

⁹ "Cf. De Gasperi to Tarchiani", 26 April 1945, DDI, X, II, 150.

¹⁰ Cf. G. Filippone Thaulero, Giustino (1979): *La Gran Bretagna e l'Italia dalla Conferenza di Mosca a Potsdam 1943 - 1945*, Rome, Edizioni di storia e letteratura, pp. 86 - 87 91 - 93 and Pastorelli, "L'ammissione...", *op. cit.*, pp. 192 - 193.

¹¹ *Ibid.* and Bedeschi Magrini, Anna: "Le condizioni internazionali che favorirono l'ingresso dell'Italia nell'Onu" in *Id.* (ed) (1997): *L'Italia e l'Onu. Esperienze e prospettive*, Padova, Cedam, pp. 11-12.

¹² "Great Britain's representative in Rome, Charles, to Foreign Minister De Gasperi", 3 August, 1945, Mae - Sioi, *op. cit.* p. 22.

¹³ See "Preambolo del Trattato di Pace con l'Italia", 10 febbraio 1947, *Ibid.*, pp. 23 - 24.



ensuring peace and justice among the Nations” and to promote and favour “international organisations furthering such ends.”

Nonetheless, as the Italian peace treaty gradually took shape, De Gasperi pointed out the “injustices” that the victors were setting out to commit where Italy was concerned, noting how they had given life to an organism that was based on rules of international conduct that were at extreme odds with the politics of power which seemed to inspire the solutions they were about to adopt where Italy was concerned. De Gasperi aimed, on the one hand, to highlight the contradictory behaviour of its allies and, on the other hand, to enhance coherence of the solutions hoped for by Italy with the founding principles of the United Nations. He projected confidence in the organisation’s ability to find a fair solution to the problems facing the peace treaty, but in July 1946, with regards to the Conference of the 21, he realistically commented how the will of the Four was imposing itself on the will of the smaller powers and raised the question – a grave one in the presence of an organism such as the UN – “if... and up to what point the smaller states should passively subject themselves to the will of a very restricted directorship of Major powers.”¹⁴ Hope and misgivings also featured in De Gasperi’s noted speech at the Conference of Paris¹⁵ on 10th August, 1946, where he presented Italy’s positions on the peace treaty, the preamble of which, as already mentioned, called for, should it be ratified, the admission of Italy to the United Nations.

De Gasperi’s reactions to the treaty were very harsh. He still, his doubts notwithstanding, had faith in the potential of the United Nations, and in December convinced himself that it should be ratified in the hopes of being able to modify it once Italy had become a member. On 10 February, 1947, he placed his signature on the document. The Truman Doctrine was launched in March of that same year by the United States, who had begun to close the ranks of the western camp. There they found De Gasperi who, having put his disappointment in the peace treaty behind him, was busy stabilizing the country and constructing a realistic foreign policy framework, aimed also at helping resolve the country’s dramatic economic condition. On 20th March, the US Department of State alerted the government in Rome to the possibility of presenting an admission request to the United Nations ahead of schedule, even before ratification and the coming into force of its peace treaty¹⁶. The date was not a random one: the invitation to present the petition of admission had been extended to Italy just eight days after the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine. The aim of this move was, in substance, to facilitate Italy’s entry into the western bloc and avoid its falling under the influence of the Soviets, an event considered not unlikely seeing as the Italian CLN coalition government was still in power and had not yet made its definitive choices on an international level.

¹⁴ “De Gasperi to representatives in Brussels, The Hague, Oslo, Rio de Janeiro, Nanking and Pretoria”, 12 July, 1946, DDI, X, III, 698.

¹⁵ See De Gasperi, Alcide (2008): “Per una pace nella fraterna collaborazione dei popoli liberi” in *Scritti e discorsi politici*, vol. 3; Capperucci, Vera; Lorenzini, Sara (eds.): *Alcide De Gasperi e la fondazione della Democrazia Cristiana, 1943-1948*, vol. 2, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 1738–1746.

¹⁶ “Tarchiani to Sforza”, 20 March, 1947, DDI, X, V, 228, see, furthermore, “Appunto”, 21 April 1947, *Archivio Storico Ministero Affari Esteri (from now on Asmae)*, n. 31/246/I in AP, 1946 – 1950, Carte ONU, b. 15 and “Sforza to Tarchiani”, 25 March 1947, DDI, X, V, 251. Once contact regarding admission had been made with the United States, Acheson brought to Tarchiani’s attention that the Peace Treaty would have been ratified at the same time as discussion regarding the petition, see

“Tarchiani to Sforza”, 9 April, 1947, DDI, X, V, 320; “The Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of State”, 09 April 1947, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (from here on forward to be known as FRUS), 1947, III; *The British Commonwealth; Europe*, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1960–1992, pp. 536–537 and Pastorelli, “L’ammissione...”, *op.cit.*, pp. 192–194.



Encouraged by the favour manifested by public opinion and the major political forces for international cooperation, the government did not delay, quickly overcame remaining objections to entrance into the UN, most of which came from its own diplomacy¹⁷, and, on 7th May, 1947, presented their petition for admittance to the United Nations¹⁸. For the country it symbolized the conquest of equal status among nations, its re-entry into the international community and a chance to participate in the discussions revolving around its former colonies and the governor of the Free Territory of Trieste. It would also favour desired changes to their peace treaty.

After the treaty was ratified by the Constituent Assembly on 31st July, 1947 Italy's admission to the UN was less of an automatic step than the Italian representatives had presumed it would be. The Italian petition to join the international organisation was presented by the American delegate and supported by France and Great Britain but found resistance from the Soviets, who tied their support for it to their own request for admission of the other three former enemy states – Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria. The United States was opposed to the admission of the latter three because of their domestic situations. When on 21st August the question was voted upon, Italy's petition was rejected by the Soviet Union's veto and, in return, the Eastern European countries supported by the Soviets were denied entrance by the veto of the United States¹⁹. The event was emblematic of the new international order that emerged after the breakup of the anti-fascist coalition: the Cold War had broken out and Italy found herself entrenched with the Western bloc before she even had a chance, for purely internal reasons, to make her own foreign policy decisions. Once it had conquered the Italian peninsula for the Western camp, the United States did not have any intention of backing off from their position regarding Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania in order to favour the admission of Italy to the UN, even though it had declared its full support for it. The reasons for the Cold War were, to them, vastly more important than Italy's aspirations, even though, in this case, membership in the UN of the three eastern European countries would not have substantially changed the power balance within the organisation, considering the overwhelming majority of pro-Western member states.

Perhaps the bitter rivalry between the USA and the USSR, of which the counter-vetoes were merely a reflection, was not yet clear to the Italian representatives. De Gasperi and Sforza had counted on Italy's merits during the last part of the war, on the democratic and pacifist mindset of the new and republican Italy, and on the promise made by its allies in the preamble of the peace treaty, not to mention the support it had from the United States. Fully aware of Italy's responsibility and the price that had to be paid, they were convinced – De Gasperi in particular – which a stable international balance could not be built on punishment

¹⁷ See Tosi, Luciano: "Alle origini della politica estera della Repubblica. L'Italia e la nascita dell'Onu", *La Comunità Internazionale*, LIX, 3 (2004), pp. 449 – 452.

¹⁸ "Sforza to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Lie", 07 May 1947. in Mae – Sioi, p. 35.

¹⁹ "Tarchiani to Sforza", 19 (2), 20, 21 August 1947, DDI, X, VI, 347, 348, 351, 364; "The Italian Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", 21 August 1947 (5) in ASMAE, AP 1946 – 1950, *Carte ONU*, b. 15, "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Italian Embassy in London", 21 August 1947, *Ibid*; furthermore *United Nations, Security Council, Official Records, Second Year, 81*, New York, (1947), pp. 2117 – 2136. At Palazzo Chigi the failure of the admission petition to the UN was the subject of variously remarked upon and if on the one hand it helped to clear the international question, on the other hand it gave credence to the position of the "realists", those that saw Italy's admission to the UN only in terms of advantages and disadvantages, without too much consideration about the ideals it implied and they considered the admission petition humiliating, ill-timed and useless, flaunting a realism which had always been denied by the insistent re-proposal of Italy's role and failing to either understand or accept the international downsizing of the country, above all its new foreign policy; on this topic see Tosi, "Alle origini della politica estera della repubblica...", *op. cit.*, pp. 456 – 457 and 460.



and retaliation. The government, invited to do so by the United States, had, in fact, forced the timing somewhat, presenting their petition for admission before the procedures leading to the ratification of the peace treaty had even been completed²⁰. Timing aside, Italy would anyway have been denied admission in view of the grave conflict of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Sforza and De Gasperi did not, however, give up their quest and, encouraged by the approval they had received from the Italian Constituent Assembly, they continued their efforts to gain admission to the UN. They saw that their chances could lie in an agreement between the two superpowers to allow a “block” admission of the various countries requesting it²¹ and, seeing how inflexible the Americans were on the question of the Balkan countries, they decided not to put all of their faith in just the actions of the US but to promote their own autonomous action to favour the compromise²². The US Department of State, however, remained inflexible, especially where the exclusion of Bulgaria and Albania were concerned, countries it considered non-democratic states and that actively supported the Greek communist partisans. The only issue on which it might have shown some flexibility was an exchange between Italy and Finland²³. The Soviets, for their part, made their refusal to engage in any sort of compromise or concession clear if it did not fit in with their “everyone or no one” formula.²⁴ The second Soviet veto to Italy’s admission took place on 1 October, justified by the American veto of the membership petition by the three eastern European countries and the US violation of the commitments it had made in Potsdam²⁵.

The failure of Italy to gain entrance to the UN also had consequences on the political front in Rome, where it became the object of heated discussion between the majority and the opposition. The United States, on their part and aiming to favour those political factions of the country that supported the western countries, proposed, in view of the elections to be held on 18th April, 1948, to once again open the question of admission and, once again, promised to support it²⁶. Once they had obtained the approval of those running the Italian government²⁷, they, together with France and Great Britain, requested that Italy’s candidacy be re-examined by the Security Council. On 10th April, 1948, once again, however, the Soviet Union vetoed

²⁰ In this sense also Di Nolfo, “La mancata ammissione dell’Italia...”, *op. cit.*, in particular pp. 184–187.

²¹ “Tarchiani to Sforza”, 09 September, 1947, in Mae–Sioi, pp. 56–57.

²² “Sforza to Tarchiani”, 07 September, 1947, DDI, X, VI, 426; “Sforza to Brosio, Donini and Migone”, 15 September 1947 in Mae–Sioi, pp. 60 – 61 and “The Italian Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, 21 September 1947, in ASMAE, AP 1946 – 1950, *Carte ONU*, b. 15 and “Sforza to Tarchiani”, 20 September 1947, DDI, X, VI, 487 and “Memorandum of Conversation Lovett – Tarchiani”, 15 and 28 August 1947 in Frus, 1947, I, *General; The United Nations*, pp. 249 – 251, “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State”, 28 August 1947, Ivi, III, *The British Commonwealth; Europe*, pp. 957–959 and “Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Armour)”, 11 September 1947, Ivi, pp. 965–967.

²³ *Ibid* and “Tarchiani to Sforza”, 11 September, 1947, DDI, X, VI, 446.

²⁴ “Tarchiani to Sforza”, 24 (2), 26, 27 September, 1947, DDI, X, VI, 514, 517, 528, 530.

²⁵ “The Italian Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, 01 and 02 October 1947, ASMAE, AP 1946–1950, *Carte Onu*, b. 15, “Brosio to Sforza”, 2 October, 1947, DDI, X, VI, 551, Vedovato, Giuseppe: “La revisione del Trattato di Pace con l’Italia”, *Rivista di Studi politici internazionali*, vol. 43, no. 3 (1974), pp. 438 - 439 and Pastorelli, “L’ammissione...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 193 – 194. Denied admission, Italy, in October of 1947 had an “observer” credited to the United Nations.

²⁶ “Tarchiani to Sforza”, 4 and 26 March, 1948, Mae – Sioi, pp. 65 – 66 e 68 – 69. Andreotti already noted that American support was “conditioned by other admissions and was a purely theoretical support”, Andreotti, Giulio (2005): *1948, L’anno dello scampato pericolo*, Milan, Rizzoli, pp. 48–49.

²⁷ “Sforza to Tarchiani”, 27 March 1948, in Mae – Sioi, pp. 69–70.



the petition – for the third time – insisting on the admission of all of the former enemy states²⁸.

New roads, in the meantime, were opening up that might secure Italy's full reinstatement to the international community and the politics of international cooperation that were coming into being in other circles. Between April and May of 1949, Italy joined the Atlantic Pact and became a member of the Council of Europe. The United Nations, in the meantime and without Italy, dealt with problems that nonetheless affected it: Trieste and the destiny of its former pre-Fascist colonies. De Gasperi and Sforza monitored the negotiations on the two problems from the outside²⁹, trying to promote the Italian stance with various members of the organisation³⁰ who, with a resolution of the Political Committee dated 21st November, 1949, gave Italy the Trusteeship of Somalia for ten years. On 13th September the UN Security Council once again called for a vote on the admission to its ranks of Italy, and once again the motion was vetoed by the Soviet Union – for the fourth time. Two months later, however, the General Assembly, acting on a proposal by Argentina, reaffirmed, with 51 votes for, 5 against and 1 abstention³¹, Italy's right to be admitted to the United Nations.

In the summer of 1950 the Korean conflict broke out and the UN intervened. De Gasperi, while in favour of the objectives to the UN intervention³², feared Italy's involvement in the conflict, both because of the devastating effect the heavy military costs would have on the country, which could ill-afford it, as well as for the repercussions it could have on the Italy's fragile democracy and in a 10th July, 1950, meeting he asked Sforza to retract Italy's UN admission petition. Italy's entrance to the UN at that time, he felt, could have "caused the country embarrassment and perhaps even participation in the Pacific"³³. The Korean War and the fact that the United Nations had declared communist China an aggressor, among other things, and De Gasperi's position notwithstanding, had killed any illusions Sforza might have nurtured in the latter half of the 1950s to have Italy be admitted to the UN together with China, whose admission he saw as imminent after the People's Republic had been recognised by Great Britain³⁴ in January 1950.

When in July 1951 De Gasperi took over as Minister of Foreign Affairs from Sforza, who was unwell, he put renewed energy into the effort to have Italy admitted to the UN, a problem which continued to be linked, in some way, to the revision of the peace treaty. His conviction that Italy was the victim of wrongdoing, not only by the USSR but also, and above all, by the United States, who continued to oppose the admission of the Balkan states without considering its consequences for Italy, steadily increased. The USA and Italy had, after all,

²⁸ "The Italian observer at the United Nations in New York to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", 10 April, 1948, *Ibid*, pp. 70–71.

²⁹ Sforza was called upon twice, 11 April and 1 October, 1949 to lay out Italy's point of view regarding the destiny of its former colonies to the Political Committee. On 1 October 1949, Sforza defended the principles of full independence for African nations; cf. Sforza, Carlo (1952): *Cinque anni a Palazzo Chigi. La politica estera italiana dal 1947 al 1951*, Rome, Atlante, pp. 145–157 and 171–182.

³⁰ Regarding cf. Mae (2005-2007): "I documenti diplomatici italiani", s. XI: 1948–1953, vol. I - III, Rome, Istituto Poligrafico and Zecca dello Stato, *passim*.

³¹ "The office of the Italian observer at the United Nations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", 01 December, 1949, Asmae, AP, 1946 – 1950, *Carte Onu*, b. 7.

³² See Andreotti, "De Gasperi e il suo tempo..", *op. cit.*, p. 361.

³³ See in this regard see Ballini, Pier Luigi: "De Gasperi, La costruzione della democrazia (1948 –1954)" in De Gasperi, Alcide, *Scritti e discorsi politici*, vol. IV, Lorenzini, Sara; Taverni, Barbara (eds.), "Alcide De Gasperi e la stabilizzazione della Repubblica", 1948-1954, vol. 1 *op. cit.*, pp. 100–101.

³⁴ Cf. Pini, Mario Filippo: "L'azione diplomatica dell'Italia per l'ammissione all'ONU e il fattore Cina", *Nuova Storia contemporanea*, vol. 10, no. 6 (2006), pp. 83–102.



become allies and yet the former's position became increasingly hard-line, although, realistically speaking, Italy had many advantages to offer the United States. It was a great delusion for the man who had chosen to side with the West, and the United States in particular, to favour his own country's re-admittance onto the world stage. It was a great disappointment to the enthusiastic supporter of the universality of the UN³⁵.

De Gasperi brought up the topic once again during a trip to Ottawa to participate in the seventh session of the Atlantic Council in September 1951. In an attempt to offer the Americans a concrete proposal to favour Italy's admission, De Gasperi gave Dean Acheson, the then Secretary of State, a memorandum prepared by several Italian jurists which, after the Atlantic session, was then discussed in Washington DC and in which Italy asked, among other things, to be admitted together with the other democratic states. In it, De Gasperi underscored the particularity of the Italian case and sustained that it should be up to the General Assembly, the "guardian" of the statute, to decide the case with a 2/3rds majority. In support of his petition, he recalled several cases in which the Assembly had substituted the Security Council and, above all, the resolution Uniting for Peace, approved on 3rd December, 1950, to overcome impasses at the Council - in such cases as, for example, the Korean War - and on the basis of which, should there be a paralysis at the Council, the Assembly could intervene with a recommendation³⁶.

The Italian memorandum did not, however, meet with the approval of Department of State experts, who maintained that the Security Council could not be overruled and a negative vote could not be overturned³⁷. Acheson made these opinions his own and declared that the United States could never have violated the UN Statute, reiterating, nonetheless, their promise to do everything within their power to assure Italy's admission³⁸. The only concrete result achieved at this point was a tripartite declaration dated 26th September, 1951, in which the United States, France and Great Britain would work in unison to, among other things, "expend every effort to assure Italy's admission into the United Nations", in the hopes that the declaration would receive the consensus of the other peace treaty signatories and that "they too would be equally disposed to act on Italy's behalf"³⁹.

In a note written by the Soviet Union to the three powers dated 11th October, 1951, it denied any responsibility for Italy's exclusion from the UN and reiterated its well-known

³⁵ According to De Gasperi: "l'Onu o è un organismo universale o non lo è. E pertanto non si debbono in via pregiudiziale porre divieti neppure agli Stati balcanici che ora sono esclusi. I regimi dei vari Stati non debbono costituire una questione pregiudiziale"; *Verbale del Consiglio dei ministri*, (17 February 1951), in De Gasperi, Alcide, "Scritti e Discorsi politici...", IV, *op. cit.*, Lorenzini, Sara; Taverni, Barbara (eds.) *Alcide De Gasperi e la stabilizzazione della Repubblica, 1948-1954*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 707.

³⁶ "The Italian Prime Minister (De Gasperi) to the Secretary of State." Aide Mémoire, Frus, 1951, II, *The United Nations; The Western Hemisphere*, pp. 335 – 341 and Pastorelli, "L'ammissione...", *op. cit.* pp. 196 – 197.

³⁷ "Memorandum of Comment on the Italian Government Memorandum on the Admission of Italy to the United Nations, by Mr. Paul B. Taylor of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs" [s.d.], Frus, 1951, II, pp. 342-344 and also pp. 345-347; see also "Memorandum of Conversation, Guidotti, Lucioli, Hickerson, Greene, Taylor", Italy's Membership in the United Nations (16 October 1951), *Records of the Office of Western European Affairs Relating to Italy, 1943-51, box 9, National Archives and Records Administration* (from now on Nara).

³⁸ De Gasperi, *Scritti e discorsi politici*, IV, 3, *op. cit.*, pp. 2415 – 2416.

³⁹ Editorial Note, Frus, 1951, II, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-349; Declaration by the United States, France, and United Kingdom on the Italian Peace Treaty, 26 September 1951, Frus, 1951, vol. IV, part. I, *Europe: Political and Economic Developments 1951*, pp. 717 – 718.



position⁴⁰. De Gasperi responded harshly to this note during a speech to the Italian Senate five days later⁴¹. Italy, he maintained, was the victim of the crossed-vetoes of the two superpowers. He understood the motivations behind the Soviet vetoes, as well as those of the United States, so as not to circumvent it. In his opinion, they were political, and not juridical, reasons, which nonetheless did not justify American behaviour against an allied nation. De Gasperi's reaction to America's hard line position against the Soviet Union was a series of three energetic speeches aimed at American Secretary of State Acheson – on 23rd October⁴², 23rd November⁴³ and 27th November⁴⁴ - urging him to approve the admission petitions of Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary and decrying the lack of incisive action on the part of the Americans, as well as the lack of follow up to the 26th September tripartite declaration⁴⁵. The Secretary of State, however, remained evasive in his answers, which confirmed American commitment to the issue but also reiterated the fact that the United States would not stoop to any compromises with the Soviet Union and that it would not violate the United Nations Statute⁴⁶, something which De Gasperi denied ever having had intentions of doing.

The Secretary of State actually had little interest in having Italy admitted to the United Nations and did not want to make concessions of any sort to the Soviets in the tense climate of the Cold War, but in his memoirs he wrote that the Italians had too quickly forgotten their own culpabilities and defeat and that they considered themselves absolved by the merits of their late wartime alliance, misinterpreting the favours requested for justice which, "if denied, could abnegate the firm identification of Italian interests with those of its allies in the NATO. Only De Gasperi's transparent honesty prevented this posturing from tainting them with any hint of blackmail."⁴⁷

Realistically speaking, while Acheson was right about some of the power politics methods adopted at times by Italian diplomacy, he nonetheless minimized the differences in interests between the two countries, which were substantial, and at the time manifested themselves, for example, not only in the realm of admission or lack thereof to the UN – which was certainly not a favour – but also on the theme of emigration and economic aid, not to speak of Trieste⁴⁸. Not even the requests sent out by Italian diplomats helped to soften the Secretary of State's position, according to whom American public opinion would not have been able to justify a favourable vote for Eastern European countries and the vote itself would have taken a card away that they could have played in exchange for the admission to the UN of Japan⁴⁹. And so, on 6th February, 1952, the proposal to admit Italy to the United Nations was once again turned down by the USSR in the Security Council. It was the fifth time Italy had had to suffer a veto for its candidature, while the Soviet proposal for the "block"

⁴⁰ De Gasperi: "Intervento al Senato della Repubblica", 16 October, 1951, in *Id. Scritti e discorsi politici*, IV, Tonzzer, Elena; Bigaran, Mariapia and Guiotto, Maddalena (eds.): "Alcide De Gasperi nel Trentino asburgico", vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 874.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp. 874–877.

⁴² Frus, 1951, II, pp. 351–365.

⁴³ Cf. "transcripts of a meeting between De Gasperi-Acheson", 23 November, 1951 in De Gasperi, "Scritti e discorsi politici", vol. IV, 3, *op. cit.*, pp. 2458 – 2459.

⁴⁴ "The Italian Prime Minister to the Secretary of State", Dean Acheson, 27 November, 1951, *Ibid*, pp. 2467 – 2468.

⁴⁵ "The Italian Prime Minister (De Gasperi) to the Secretary of State", 23 October 1951, in Frus, 1951, II, pp. 365–366.

⁴⁶ "The Acting Secretary of State", 30 October 1951, *Ibid*, p. 367 and "the Secretary of State to the United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin)", Washington, 15 December 1951, *Ibid*, p. 410.

⁴⁷ Acheson, Dean (1949): *Present at the Creation. My Years in the State Department*, New York, Norton, p. 732.

⁴⁸ See in this regard also Craveri, Piero (2006): *De Gasperi*, Bologna, Il Mulino, p. 499.

⁴⁹ "The Secretary of State to the United States Representative at the United Nations (Austin)", 18 January, 1952, Frus, 1952, II, pp. 431- 432.



admission of 14 states was rejected with 6 votes against, 2 for (the Soviet Union and Pakistan) and 3 abstentions (Chile, France and Great Britain)⁵⁰. The abstentions were a signal that the American position was losing its consensus, while the Soviet one was gaining ground, just like the principle of the universality of the United Nations, but the Cold War tensions did not leave much room for either side to manoeuvre in, for the moment. The Italian government protested angrily with the Soviet ambassador to Rome and used the episode to inform Moscow that it no longer had any intention of further applying the obligations Italy had towards it as per the peace treaty⁵¹. At the same time it let Washington DC, Paris and London know that Italy was convinced that they had not “expended every effort” to favour Italy’s admission to the UN as they had promised in their tripartite declaration of 26 September, 1951, and that Italy reserved the right to re-examine its own position on the basis of the decisions taken regarding allied powers⁵².

Interest in Italy’s admission to the UN awakened once again towards the mid-1950s, when Austria was easily admitted, after the signing of its peace treaty and with the Conference of Bandung, which opened the doors to admission for developing countries. The first weak signs of détente, after the death of Stalin in March 1953 and the rise to power of the more pragmatic Eisenhower in the United States, brought with it renewed hope. The positions of the superpowers changed and they accepted a Canadian proposal which, reworking the Soviet – and Italian – proposal, called for, as is known, the admission of a group of 16 states, Italy among them, to be voted on as a block. And so, on 14th December, 1955, Italy was, at long last, admitted to the United Nations⁵³. Ten years had passed since the birth of the organization!

2. Atlanticism and Collective Security (1956-1968)

The formula of *neo-Atlanticism*⁵⁴ now began to mature in Italy. It was born in left-wing Christian-democratic political environments and espoused a new vision of Italian foreign policy that blended a commitment to Atlantic and European alliances with a renewed interest in the Mediterranean area, the Arab world and, more generally speaking, the so-called Third World. The promoters of neo-Atlanticism, which included Amintore Fanfani, Giovanni Gronchi and Enrico Mattei, sought to gain a parity status for the country with its allies and, at the same time, expand its diplomatic horizons by creating an international political strategy founded on the call for international cooperation, dialogue with Mediterranean countries and the mediation between western interests and the requests of the Third World. The United Nations was, in this context, the ideal multilateral framework within which to realise these political aspirations and see results, even though inside the government there were those who

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 448, 451–452 and United Nations (1951): *Yearbook of the United Nations*, V, New York, United Nations Office of Public Information, pp. 204–206.

⁵¹ “Mae to embassy in Washington – Paris – London”, 23 february 1952, Mae–Sioi , pp. 80 - 81 e De Gasperi, Alcide: “Intervento alla Camera dei deputati”, 28 July 1953, in *Id.*: “Scritti e discorsi politici...”, vol. IV, 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 1095.

⁵² “Mae to embassy in Washington – Paris – London”, 23 february, 1952 in Mae-Sioi, pp. 80-81.

⁵³ See Perfetti, Francesco: “L’ammissione dell’Italia alle Nazioni Unite: il ruolo della diplomazia italiana”, *La Comunità Internazionale*, vol. 61, no. 2 (2006), pp. 254-275 e Costa Bona, Enrica; Tosi, Luciano (2007): *L’Italia e la sicurezza collettiva. Dalla Società delle Nazioni alle Nazioni Unite*, Perugia, Morlacchi, pp. 179–183.

⁵⁴ See Martelli, Evelina (2008): *L’altro atlantismo. Fanfani e la politica estera italiana (1958-1963)*, Milan, Guerini, and also Bagnato, Bruna (2002): “Introduzione”, in *I diari di Luca Pietromarchi: ambasciatore italiano a Mosca, 1958-1961*, Firenze, Olschki, pp. XXIV-XXVI.



preferred the Atlantic side, while others tended towards the UN, and thus Italian foreign policy was not altogether cohesive all of the time, sometimes siding with the United States, other times with the UN⁵⁵.

From the time it was admitted to the United Nations, Italy worked to enhance the organization's image as the most appropriate forum for international crises. There was ample agreement on this point by both the majority and the opposition parties within the government, as well as on the need to make Italian foreign policy more dynamic. During its first five years at the UN, if you exclude the brief period of the second Fanfani cabinet, Italy's main priority was, however, to gain a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, symptom of the search for prestige and visibility so desired by the centrist governments, and, more generally speaking, the strengthening of western cooperation. In line with the logic of the Three Essay Report, composed at NATO headquarters and to which the Italian Foreign Minister, the Liberal Gaetano Martino gave a substantial contribution, the Segni government sought to blend the renewal of the Atlantic alliance with the creation of institutionalized forms of consultation among the western countries in New York. And so the challenges posed by the new course of Soviet politics were dealt with not so much by promoting the reasons for an East-West dialogue, something that was only just beginning, and the need to put a distance between themselves and the colonialist positions of several allied countries, as the neo-Atlanticists claimed, but rather maintaining on a strong position in their relationship with the Soviet bloc regarding security and disarmament, hoping to promote the role of NATO through public opinion and asking that the Atlantic alliance be given competences to be able to assist underdeveloped areas⁵⁶. This would have allowed, in the view of the Segni government, a limitation of the possible repercussions from the East-West dialogue inside the Italian political system itself, *in primis* the prospect of involvement by the PSI in government, which would have had echoes in the country's foreign policy as well, for example, in its relationship with the United Nations, which was one of the common grounds between the DC and the PSI, the latter still tied to an image of the organisation as the "centre of irradiation of a coherent Italian peace policy" marked by détente, disarmament and collective security⁵⁷.

The Suez crisis was one of the first occasions in which Italy could test its policies at the UN. The main political forces of the majority and the opposition were in agreement on two aspects: that any diplomatic solution to the crisis must take into account the needs of Egypt and that the UN was needed to resolve it. It was a middle road between the aggressiveness shown by the governments of London and Paris, the latter an essential partner in the negotiations of the treaties of Rome, and the support of Egypt, considered a representative of the Third World and its requests⁵⁸.

Nonetheless, divided between orthodox Atlanticists and neo-Atlanticists, the Italian government chose to contribute to the formation of the emergency forces in the Sinai Desert

⁵⁵ De Leonardis, Massimo: "La politica estera italiana, la NATO e l'ONU negli anni del neoatlantismo (1955-1960)", in Tosi, Luciano (ed.) (1999): "L'Italia e le organizzazioni internazionali...", *op. cit.*, pp. 204-206; Bagnato, "Introduzione...", *op. cit.*, pp. XVII; Brogi, Alessandro (1996): *L'Italia e l'egemonia americana nel Mediterraneo*, Florence, La Nuova Italia, pp. 58-65, 176-207, 237-339.

⁵⁶ Villani, Angela (2008): *Un liberale sulla scena internazionale. Gaetano Martino e la politica estera italiana (1954-1967)*, Messina, Trisform, pp. 96 and foll.

⁵⁷ Nenni, Pietro (1974): *I nodi della politica estera italiana*, in Zucaro, Domenico (ed.) (1974), Milan, Sugarco, p. 129.

⁵⁸ *Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei deputati* (from now on Aa Pp, Camera), II, Discussions, vol. IV, p. 3348; Martino, Gaetano: "L'Italia e il Canale di Suez", *Oggi*, no. 37 (13 September 1956). See also Riccardi, Luca (2006): *Il "problema Israele". Diplomazia italiana e Pci di fronte allo stato ebraico (1948 - 1973)*, Milan, Guerini, pp. 124-130.



(UNEF). They supported the peacemaking efforts of the UN but at the same time chose to abstain when the UN asked the Anglo-French occupation forces to leave Egypt. Basically, there was a continuous effort to find ground for mediation, as the United States was doing, appealing to the universal values of the United Nations and their role as guarantor of collective security. At the same time, they did not want to risk the positions of their European allies, indicating that through the strengthening of the Atlantic alliance and in their choice of shared Western-leaning politics lay the only road to deal with relationships with the Third World in the face of the Soviet threat⁵⁹.

When the crisis in Hungary broke out, Italy requested the intervention of the United Nations, even threatening to break off diplomatic relations with the Moscow. In this case, however, Italy's rigid position found itself isolated since its allies considered the Hungarian problem of lesser importance than the Suez⁶⁰ crisis.

The attitude of the Italian delegation during the two emergency sessions at the UN would be a precursor to the general framework of conduct Italy pursued during the 11th General Assembly meeting inaugurated 12th November, 1956. Beyond professing faith in the organisation and its ideals of peace and cooperation, in substance, Minister Martino confirmed a strategy of mediation determination and the development of not-yet-independent or recently independent countries should be "encouraged but guided" in order to prevent nationalistic degeneration. To this end, he cited the case of Somalia and said that only in a climate of international cooperation could decolonization be effected without trauma⁶¹. The general debate and discussions that took place between November and December in the Commission of the Protection of Rights confirmed that Italy rejected the interpretation offered by the Afro-Asians, according to whom the General Assembly should have competences covering the activities of colonial powers in non-independent territories.

On other topics Rome showed itself to be more open to mediation and dialogue, as in the case of Southwest Africa⁶². Sensitive to topics regarding racial discrimination and well aware of their impact on the Afro-Asian world, in December 1956 Italy proposed the institution of a new and restricted committee at the Fourth Commission, or, alternatively, to ask the Secretary General to direct negotiations with the South African government; an attempt at conciliation evidently stemming from the need to prevent a break with its bond with the Pretoria government and embarrassing reproaches against that government, to whom Italy was tied by important commercial interests⁶³.

⁵⁹ See Martino, Gaetano (1977): *Discorsi parlamentari*, Rome, Grafica Editrice Romana, pp. 696-705; 713-728; Brogi, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-225; Riccardi, "Il "problema Israele...", *op. cit.*, pp. 128-130.

⁶⁰ Pastorelli, Pietro: "Italy in the double crisis of 1956", in Nuti, Leopoldo (ed.) (1998): *Diplomatic Sources and International Crisis, Proceedings of the 4th Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents*, Rome, Ipzs, pp. 197-198; Ispi (ed.) (1957): *L'Italia alle Nazioni Unite: dicembre 1955 – Marzo 1957*, Milan, Ispi, pp. 127-131; Ortona, Egidio (1986): *Anni d'America, II, La diplomazia, 1953-1961*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 209-211; de Leonardis, Massimo (1999): "La rivolta d'Ungheria e la situazione internazionale", in Betizza, Enzo et al. (1999): *La crepa nel muro: Ungheria 1956*, Roma, Fondazione Ugo Spirito, p. 109.

⁶¹ A/Pv. 588, XI, 21 November 1956.

⁶² See Vismara, Maria (1966): *Le Nazioni Unite per i territori dipendenti e per la decolonizzazione 1945-1964*, Padova, Cedam, pp. 399- 485; Slonim, Solomon (1973): *South West Africa and the United Nations: an International Mandate in Dispute*, Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press; Megevand, Beatrice (1982): *La questione della Namibia*, Giuffrè Milan; Emiliani, Marcella: "Namibia l'indipendenza negata", in Emiliani, Marcella; Ercolessi, Maria Cristina and Gentili, Anna Maria (eds.) (1987): *Sud Africa: i conflitti dell'apartheid*, Roma, Editori Riuniti.

⁶³ Villani, Angela (2007): *L'Italia e l'Onu negli anni della coesistenza competitiva (1955-1968)*, Padova, Cedam, p. 69.



The mediation line chosen by the Segni government seemed, nonetheless, increasingly difficult to uphold. The neo-Atlanticists put pressure on the government until it abandoned its fears of breaking western solidarity. They saw, in the new course of American politics, a chance to definitively distinguish the Italian position from that of colonialist countries and to assume a role of regional power, which worked, apart from safeguarding national interests, to stabilise and develop the area. It was an intertwining of economic, political and cultural interests which greeted the Eisenhower Doctrine⁶⁴ with favour, but which did not find agreement with the caution shown by Segni government when it came to the Afro-Asian world in and outside of the United Nations⁶⁵.

Following the same train of thought, in February 1957 and during the subsequent General Assembly meeting, the Italian delegation followed the debate about the crisis in North Africa and in Cyprus, not giving in to pressure from anti-colonialist nations but attempting to find compromises that would be valid for all. For the first time, Paris that year had accepted the addition of the Algerian problem to the agenda, giving its allies the difficult task of adopting a position on it. Martino proposed a postponement of the problem, also to avoid the serious embarrassment the request to send UN observers to Algeria would cause to Italy, brought up by several delegations, for the similarities it had with the Hungarian situation. Italy agreed, in that session and in following sessions, to all of the resolution proposals that invited the parties to cooperate in order to find a peaceful solution to the problem and thus also avoid condemnation of French policies⁶⁶.

In much the same way, the Italian delegation attempted to find compromises to help solve the problem on Cyprus, facilitating negotiation between the conflicting parties even outside of the realm of the United Nations. In both cases and, more generally speaking, when dealing with questions that brought the right to self-determination to the forefront, Rome always moved with extreme caution, supporting the defense of the principle of private domain, reluctant to set a dangerous precedent should the Austrians appeal the question of the South Tyrol area⁶⁷.

Italy's commitment to the United Nations got a fresh boost during the second Fanfani cabinet. In the summer of 1958, the Jordanian-Lebanese crisis and the Anglo-American intervention in the Middle East gave rise to a new Italian initiative. In the Chamber of Deputies on 15 July, Fanfani supported the role of the United Nations in resolving the crisis, with the support – in this case - of Pietro Nenni⁶⁸, the secretary of the socialist party, and moved the focus from a military operation to a more comprehensive program for the stabilization and economic development of the Middle East. Much like the Pella plan⁶⁹, the

⁶⁴ Brogi, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251. Regarding the Eisenhower Doctrine Cf. De Luca, Daniele: "Gli Stati Uniti e i nuovi rapporti di forza in Medio Oriente: la dottrina Eisenhower, 1957-1958", *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1995), pp. 117-146.

⁶⁵ Regarding the role of ENI as a tool of neo-atlantic, Mediterranean and Middle East policy, Cf. Bucciante, Giovanni (2005): *Enrico Mattei: assalto al potere petrolifero mondiale*, Milan, Giuffrè; Tonini, Alberto (2003): *Il sogno proibito. Mattei, il petrolio arabo e le "sette sorelle"*, Firenze, Polistampa; Bagnato, Bruna (2004): *Petrolio e politica. Mattei in Marocco*, Firenze, Polistampa; Maugeri, Leonardo (1994): *L'arma del petrolio. Questione petrolifera globale, guerra fredda e politica italiana nella vicenda di Enrico Mattei*, Firenze, Loggia de' Lanzi.

⁶⁶ Luard, Evan (1989): *A History of the United Nations, II, The Age of Decolonization, 1955-1965*, London, Basingstroke, pp. 96-98; Villani, *L'Italia e l'Onu, op. cit.*, pp. 82- 83.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 67 foll.

⁶⁸ Nenni, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-157; Aa Pp, Chamber of Deputies, 3rd Legislature, debates, vol. I, 15 July 1958, p. 192.

⁶⁹ About the Pella Plan Cf. Brogi, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 - 289; Ortona, "Anni d'America...", vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 271.



Fanfani proposal was based on the need to provide multilateral economic assistance, on a regional level and within the framework of the Eisenhower Doctrine, to be, however, developed under the aegis of the United Nations and not exclusively by the West⁷⁰ as Pella had called for. Unfortunately, the reference to the UN of the Fanfani plan did not pass: much like the Sunfed case in which the USA appeared reluctant to give the UN functions and competences where economic assistance to developing nations was concerned, instead conferring to it less far-reaching tools of strictly US hegemony that excluded Soviet participation⁷¹.

The Fanfani government had tried to introduce a different orientation than the line followed by the Segni and Zoli governments, identifying friends within the Arab world, and not just Western solidarity, as a sort of benefit to hold on to, proposing solutions all of which fit into the multilateral framework of the United Nations. This choice expressed the desire to give the organisation not so much the function of a body that manages assistance, but that of one guaranteeing a wider involvement of the countries that benefitted from it and a de-politicization of aid itself. His desire to enhance and support the role of the United Nations as the forum in which to resolve international crises was, nonetheless, in line with the thinking of his predecessors. Turning to the UN was a useful tool to remain involved in Middle Eastern decision-making and to play the role of regional power to which Rome so aspired. Beyond the politics of being present, the ruling class in Italy sought to use their country's potential to contribute to containment strategy, to the stabilization of the area and to the development of a region to which Italy was tied by close economic interests and cultural affinity⁷². This tendency matured in the context of the new orientations of the Catholic church, which with the election of Angelo Roncalli to the its highest power and the prospect of an ecumenical council, began to pay more attention, as compared to the past, to human rights, freedom and the development of the Third World and the UN's peacemaking⁷³ efforts.

It cannot be said, however, that the second Fanfani government took a more markedly anti-colonialist stance compared to its allies and friends. With regards to the question of Algeria, for example, Italy continued to avoid condemnation of French conduct so as not to jeopardize the negotiations that General De Gaulle was involved in during that phase and prevent bothersome meddling⁷⁴. A similar mode of conduct was clear during the discussion revolving around the question of Cyprus, which had been once again placed on the agenda of the General Assembly to be dealt with in its 13th session and regarding which the Italian delegation expressed its habitual tendency towards mediation⁷⁵. The commitment to a program of expanding freedom and prosperity did not translate into a specific change in the

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-315, 433-435; Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 90-94, 364-368.

⁷¹ Brogi, *op. cit.*, p. 323. About the US position see Kaufman, Burton I. (1982): *Trade and Aid. Eisenhower's Foreign Economic Policy 1953-1961*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, pp. 141-145. On the UN debate see Weiss, Thomas. G.; Forsythe, David P. and Coate, Roger A. (2007): *The United Nations and changing world politics*, 5th, Boulder, Westview, pp. 234-236. Regarding Sunfed Cf. Toye, John; Toye, Richard (2004): *The UN and Global Political Economy. Trade, Finance, and Development*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, pp. 172-174.

⁷² Villani, Angela: "Fanfani, l'Onu e la politica italiana di distensione internazionale", in Giovagnoli, Agostino; Tosi, Luciano (eds.) (2010): *Amintore Fanfani e la politica estera italiana*. Venezia, Marsilio, p. 212.

⁷³ On the new direction of the Catholic Church see Tosi, Luciano: "La cooperazione allo sviluppo dalla Pacem in Terris alla Populorum Progressio", in Giovagnoli, Agostino (ed.) (2003): *Pacem in terris: tra azione diplomatica e guerra globale*, Milan, Guerini, pp. 147-167; *Id.*: "Il Terzo Mondo", in Impagliazzo, Marco (ed.) (2004): *La nazione cattolica. Chiesa e società in Italia dal 1958 ad oggi*, Milan, Guerini, pp. 481 foll.

⁷⁴ Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* On the Cyprus question see Greco, Vincenzo (2007): *Greci e Turchi tra convivenza e scontro. Le relazioni greco-turche e la questione cipriota*, Milan, Angeli.



allied position neither in the UN nor in other contexts. Apart from the brevity of the duration of the government, which ended within one semester, the other factor limiting the Fanfani government was opposition inside his own party, which interpreted the principles of the Premier mainly as permission to openness towards the left. It cannot be denied that this was an integral part of the Fanfaniana vision, but it is also equally true that the country's international dynamism had generated an economic boom and that the possibilities offered by decolonization could bring with it a different sort of benefit for the Atlantic alliance, bringing the exigencies of neutral countries closer to those of western positions and thus avoiding the possibility that Moscow could gain advantage from the serious differences that separated the allies and conferring to Italy a role as bridge, a role to which it had always aspired to raise its own status within the alliance.

This last tendency also marked the Italian request to participate in UN disarmament debates⁷⁶. The Fanfani government tried, on several occasions, to reopen these negotiations, careful, as in the past, to make known its preference for debate in a multilateral forum and the need to safeguard Western security. It did not, however, fail to underline the need to find openings, however small, to enter into a dialogue with the Soviet bloc. An ampler need, therefore, aimed at favouring international détente and to deal with the topic of disarmament not just as an anticommunist move, as centre governments had insisted on, but with a new attitude which, among other things, was closer to the positions of the PSI⁷⁷.

As we know, the Italian suggestions were not welcomed by its main ally, but it marked not only the need to be included in talks but also the desire to exercise a mediating role at the United Nations to facilitate a compromise with the Soviet bloc, with whom Italy had begun a policy of openness towards trade. The accent on peace, solidarity with neutral countries and disarmament, as well as the desire to contribute to international détente, also aimed to remove these themes from the realm of PCI propaganda and help towards easing domestic tensions that prevented the PSI from getting close to the area of the government⁷⁸.

The subsequent phase, characterised by a return to a more orthodox foreign policy line, did not erase the mark of this experience, which came back in the years during which Fanfani presided over the two governments which between July 1960 and June 1963 readied themselves for a turn towards the left. Before that, Italy had obtained its much-desired entrance onto the Security Council and, there, through the actions of Egidio Ortona, the permanent representative, dealt with various issues: the crisis in Laos, which caused the Council to send a commission of inquiry to that country, which included an Italian representative, to verify the communist infiltration from neighbouring Vietnam; the Sharpeville episodes, which confirmed apartheid as a menace to collective security; the U-2 issue and the resulting USA-USSR tensions on the eve of the meeting between the Big Four in Paris; and the Congo crisis. On all of these issues Italy sided with moderate positions, close to those of the United States, except when facing the South African problem towards which its position was more advanced, not failing, however, to underscore the special circumstances

⁷⁶ Fanfani, Amintore (1959): *Da Napoli a Firenze: 1954-1959. Proposte per una politica di sviluppo democratico*, Milan, Garzanti, pp. 255, 306-307; Damilano, Andrea (ed.) (1967): *Atti e documenti della Democrazia Cristiana, 1943-1967*, Rome, Cinque Lune, pp. 928-937 (cit. p. 936).

⁷⁷ Nenni, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149 and Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu.", *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

⁷⁸ Martelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196 and Bagnato, Bruna (2003): *Prove di Ostpolitik. Politica ed economia nella strategia italiana verso l'Unione Sovietica, 1958-1963*, Florence, Olschki.



surrounding the UN intervention in the case of the Sharpeville massacre and the fundamental respect for the principle of reserved domain⁷⁹.

Starting in 1960, the United Nations was involved in intense debates about decolonization, the fight against racial discrimination, the development of the Third World and petitions for the reform of the organisation which saw its first massive wave of admission to newly independent African countries. The conduct of the new Fanfani government, the fine intentions announced at its installation notwithstanding, was restricted by several evident limitations. The actions of the Italian representatives were first of all conditioned by the South Tyrol issue which, as mentioned, had been placed on the agenda of the General Assembly in the autumn of 1960 and forced, during the two subsequent sessions, extreme containment on all themes linked to the principles of self determination of nations and in cases in which direct intervention by the UN seemed to exceed the concept of reserved domain sanctioned by its Charter⁸⁰.

The caution that characterised Italian conduct was particularly evident when dealing with the crisis in the Congo, during which Italy, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, backed the role of the organisation, and specifically the Secretary General, in its management of the crisis and participated with both financing and troops to the peacekeeping mission sent there⁸¹. These premises notwithstanding, the Fanfani government did not abandon the policy framework set up by its predecessors, above all when it came to facing the prospect of a UNOC operation in the secessionist Katanga region⁸². The Italian representative, whilst confirming Italy's support for the mission, abstained from voting on the proposal, choosing instead to safeguard western economic interests in the region and avoiding the establishment of dangerous precedents that could be used by Austria in the South Tyrolean issue⁸³. And so Italy joined ranks with the defenders of the principle of domestic jurisdiction, not, however, without seeking common ground with Western nations that could soften the most intransigent positions of Brussels and avoid a crisis within the United Nations. Evident proof of this tendency was given by its decision to support the refinancing of the UNOC, together with Great Britain and the USA, and the doubling of its contribution to the peacekeeping mission in the Congo between 1960 and 1961. This trend was also evident in the number of civilian and military personnel operating within the African nation. The growing financial and logistic aid, which saw Italy at par with such medium-sized powers as Japan, Canada and Scandinavia, further proved the interest Italy had in resolving crises through the

⁷⁹ A. Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 99-113; Ortona, "Anni d'America...", vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 379 and United Nations (1994) *The United Nations and Apartheid 1948-1994*, New York, Department of Public Information, pp. 13-16.

⁸⁰ See Toscano, Mario (1968): *Storia diplomatica della questione dell'Alto Adige*, Bari, Laterza; Conci Francesco (1961): *L'Accordo De Gasperi - Gruber e il dibattito all'ONU*, Roma, Edizione Montecitorio.

⁸¹ Regarding this aspect of Italian activity see Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 119 foll. Regarding the contribution of Italian armed forces in the Congo see also Zagarese, E.: "Il contributo dell'Aeronautica militare italiana alla causa delle Nazioni Unite e della pace", *Rivista aeronautica*, no. 3 (1966), pp. 353-383; Potre, Rock (1969): *L'Aeronautica militare italiana nell'ex Congo Belga*, Rome, Agran.

⁸² Ortona, "Anni d'America...", *op. cit.*, pp. 389, 392-393; Rognoni, Maria Stella (2003): *Scacchiera congolese. Materie prime, decolonizzazione e guerra fredda nell'Africa dei primi anni Sessanta*, Firenze Polistampa, pp. 94-98, 100-101; Vismara, Maria (1983): *L'azione politica delle Nazioni Unite: 1946-1976, I*, Padova, Cedam, pp. 1150-1154.

⁸³ Regarding reactions inside the government see Brosio, Manlio (2008): *Diari di Washington 1955-1961*, in Gentiloni Silveri, Umberto (ed.): *L'Italia e la nuova frontiera: Stati Uniti e centro sinistra: 1958-1965* Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 532-533.



efforts of the United Nations, and its commitment to guaranteeing efficiency and functionality to their operations⁸⁴.

The debate regarding the presumed right of self-determination of the German-language minority in South Tyrol made it extremely difficult to maintain the anti-colonialist and anti-racial discrimination proposals put forth by the Afro-Asian countries. As Belgium, but also in the cases of Portugal, Great Britain, France and South Africa, Italy also worked towards the acceptance of compromise formulas to avoid sanction resolutions against its allies and friends. It did so in the case of South Rhodesia, the Portuguese territories, Algeria and Cyprus both within the main organs of the UN and as a member of the special committee for decolonization, of which it had been a member since its institution in 1961.

In the case of the Portuguese colonies, in particular, both Italy and other western delegations could no longer ignore international public opinion, nor ignore the new political reality in the United States which, after the advent of Kennedy to the White House, had begun to review its approach to the Salazar regime in Lisbon. In December 1961, when the General Assembly was debating the project which listed the “Principles” on the basis of which a territory could be considered “non autonomous” and obliged the administrative and colonial powers to recognise the authority of the Information Committee, the Italian representatives, the pressure from Lisbon notwithstanding, abstained from voting together with Canada and the United States, as opposed to Great Britain and Belgium, who voted against it⁸⁵. A few months later, these same countries voted in favour of Angolan independence, underlining, however, that the intervention of the United Nations should not invade Portuguese national spheres of interest⁸⁶. Once again, in early 1963, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that it was indispensable to seek moderate solutions on the basis of an action that included the concerns of the Third World, maintaining “cordial rapports” with allied nations, in particular with that of the government of Lisbon. By speaking of “comprehension” towards the Third World and “cordiality” towards an ally such as Portugal was a sign of the slow evolution in Italian positions regarding topics of anti-colonialism. The policy of abstention, systematically practiced when dealing with these topics, was the symptom of a change that was certainly amplified by the increasing pressure Afro-Asian countries were placing on the United Nations⁸⁷.

The other factor that was influencing Italian conduct at this stage was its rapport with the South African Union, which the government in Rome did not want to strain in view of the importance of the commercial interests many Italian industries – Fiat, Macchi, ENI, and Alitalia - had with it. After the events of Sharpeville, Italy and its Western partners could not exempt themselves from condemning the policies of apartheid with even more conviction. Nonetheless, during the 1960s, the Italian representatives to the UN avoided adherence to economic sanctions and UN requests for direct intervention, both so as not to upset the South African government, but also so as not to create a precedent for the South Tyrol question⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ Villani, “L’Italia e l’Onu...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-136.

⁸⁵ A/C.4/Sr.1049, XV, 14 November, 1960.

⁸⁶ A/Pv. 992, XV, 20 April, 1961; Vismara, “Le Nazioni Unite...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-278; Firestone, Bernard J. (2001): *The United Nations under U Thant, 1961-1971*, Lanham, Scarecrow Press, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁷ Villani, “L’Italia e l’Onu...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175. See also United Nations (1980): *The United Nations and decolonization: highlights of United Nations action in support of independence for colonial countries and peoples*, New York, Department of Public Information; El-Ayouty Yassin (1971): *The United Nations and decolonization: the role of Afro-Asian*, The Hague; Martinus Nijhoff; Vedovato, Giuseppe: “La Conferenza interafricana di Addis Abeba” *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 30, no. 3 (1963), pp. 343-352.

⁸⁸ A/C. 4/Sr. 1029, XV, 31 October, 1960. A/C. 4/Sr. 1063, XV, 24 November, 1960.



The increasingly bitter confrontations that dominated UN debates regarding racial discrimination pushed Italy, in the 1970s, to favour conciliatory proposals and continue with its policy of abstention from voting⁸⁹.

The South Tyrol issue, solidarity and economic interests thus contributed to slowing the process of differentiation from the positions held by the colonial powers that Fanfani had tried to affirm. This, however, did not prevent, during a debate on the declaration against colonialism in December 1960, Italy from voting with the developing nations in favour of Resolution 1514, with which the General Assembly declared colonialism illegal on 14th December, 1960. The United States, Great Britain and France abstained⁹⁰. It also did not prevent Italy from repeatedly urging UN interventions in the international crises that marked the decade. The country's support of the organism was proven through financial and logistical support to peacekeeping missions already in operation – UNEF and UNOC – but was also evident in the management of the financial crisis the UN began to suffer starting in the early 1960s⁹¹.

Italy was a regular contributor to the UN coffers and in 1962 its contribution amounted to \$ 1,459,906. In 1957 it supported the UNEF and subsequently the UNOC, and in 1962 it also responded to the appeal sent out by the Secretary General to purchase UN bonds to contribute to decreasing the organisation's budget deficit. During the course of 1963, the Italian representatives, wrestling with problems with various organs of the UN, declared themselves favourable to a division of the financial load to be spread out in percentages between the ordinary budget and voluntary contributions, but they then distanced themselves from their allies both because they accepted differentiated contributions from developing countries, declaring a desire to make up for part of the debt resulting from the reduction of costs accorded to the Third World, as well as by their opposition to any sanctions whatsoever against defaulting countries with whom Italy felt that increasing pressure would be enough to avoid another of the crises of confidence afflicting the UN⁹².

With the aim of promoting the efficiency of the United Nations, Italy also supported the calls for reform that came from Afro-Asian and Latin-American countries. Approving their requests for a greater presence within the main organs of the UN could become a useful tool in isolating the socialist group and resizing its proposals for changes to the Statute, beginning with the reform of the Secretary General. Renewing a tendency that was already expressed in autumn 1958⁹³, during the 15th session of the General Assembly, Italy sponsored, the only Western state to do so, a plan calling for the expansion of the permanent councils⁹⁴. The accommodation requested by the Afro-Asian states would have contributed to a normalization of the political climate within the UN without, however, altering the geographical balance of

⁸⁹ Cf. A/SpC/Sr. 331, 342, XVII, 16 October, 2 November, 1962. A/C. 4/Sr. 1378, XVII, 9 November, 1962.

⁹⁰ Ris. Ag 1514-XV, 14 December 1960. Vismara, "Le Nazioni Unite...", *op. cit.*, pp. 202-211; Cadin, Raffaele: "L'evoluzione storico-giuridica del concetto di sviluppo nel diritto internazionale", in *Id. et al. (2003): Sviluppo e diritti umani nella cooperazione internazionale*, Torino, Giappichelli, pp. 16-21 See also A/Pv. 937, XV, 6 December, 1960 and Tosi, Luciano: "Sicurezza collettiva, distensione e cooperazione internazionale nella politica dell'Italia all'Onu", in Ballini Pier Luigi; Guerrieri, Sandro and Varsori, Antonio (eds) (2006): *Le istituzioni repubblicane dal centrismo al centro-sinistra (1953-1968)*, Milan, Carocci, p. 205.

⁹¹ Gerbert, Pierre et alii (1996) : *Le rêve d'un ordre mondial de la SDN à l'ONU*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, pp. 253-254; Firestone, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

⁹² Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 161-165. Mae, Servizio Storico e Documentazione: in D'Anneo, A. (ed.): *Cronistoria documentata delle attività italiane alle Nazioni Unite (1 October 1947 - 31 December 1969)*, Rome, s.d.

⁹³ A/SpC/L.29, 26 November, 1958. A/SpC/Sr. 138, XIV, 28 October, 1959.

⁹⁴ A/SpC/L.51, 3 November, 1960; A/SpC/Sr. 192, XIV, 4 November, 1960.



the allotment of seats to the detriment of the Western position⁹⁵. The competition with the Soviet bloc had to be managed, according to the Italian government, by favouring the solidity of the neutral bloc, whose greatest aspiration was not ties to Moscow, but the recognition of its political weight within the organization. If, therefore, inflexibility in the rejection of the troika proposal regarding the Secretariat was indispensable, it was, within certain limits, possible to agree to the proposals that called for the reform of the UN as advanced by the Afro-Asian countries, above all the one relative to an increase in the permanent seats⁹⁶.

If, therefore, on questions relating to the decolonization process Italy still expressed a line that was compromised by its own commitments, economic interests and the omnipresent issue of the South Tyrol, faced with the chance to weaken the organisation it sided strongly in favour of an opening, cautious but sincere, towards the calls for participation that came from the non-aligned countries, also to contrast the tendency of the Soviets to control them and their revisionist tendencies⁹⁷.

Italy's support of the organisation's role as a tool for international détente also guided its attitude during disarmament talks, an issue for which Fanfani continued to apply pressure in the summer of 1960, just after the failure of the Geneva Conference that involved the ten powers. Italy often reiterated her hopes for more flexibility regarding this complex issue, proposing a less technical approach on the question of controls, on which Moscow continued to maintain a hard line, showing herself willing to accept certain Soviet terms and showing a clear acceptance of the prospect of the involvement and participation in the talks of non-committed countries⁹⁸.

As part of the Geneva Committee, which started up again on 14th March, 1962, with the participation of eight neutral states, but without the French, and again during the subsequent debates in New York, Italy worked to act as mediator between the diverse positions, continuing to support, together with the United States and Great Britain, the choice of moving ahead in partial and gradual steps. On the basis of this framework, the Italian delegation was among the first and major supporters of a partial accord on the suspension of experimentation, anticipating the Test Ban Treaty, the compromise achieved in 1963 between Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. This agreement, according to Italy, would have smoothed the way for other and more ample measures of general disarmament, especially where issues of non-dissemination were concerned. Italy also believed that an accord regarding the suspension of atmospheric and underwater tests, but not including underground tests, would have then been easier to reach, in view of the minor technical difficulties regarding controls, and, therefore, achieve full Soviet agreement⁹⁹. Italy's position, both in matters concerning nuclear experimentation and on other issues – from non-proliferation to the use of extra-atmospheric space and from conventional disarmament to the issue of denuclearized zones – had, as final objective, to contribute to the East-West dialogue with a vision that was explicitly different from that of its allies, above all its European allies,

⁹⁵ A/SpC/Sr. 215, XV, 1 December, 1960.

⁹⁶ Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp.141-143.

⁹⁷ Ortona, Egidio: "Sono le Nazioni Unite in crisi?", *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, vol. 3 (1961), pp. 329-353 (cit. p. 353).

⁹⁸ Villani, "L'Italia e l'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 301 foll.

⁹⁹ On the value of the Italian proposal Cf. also Rossi, Christian (2006): *La Freedom Doctrine di John F. Kennedy. Cooperazione allo sviluppo e disarmo nell'Europa Mediterranea (1961-1963)*, Milan, Franco Angeli, p. 140. On the Test Ban Treaty Cf. Gala, Marilena (2002): *Il paradosso nucleare. Il Limited Test Ban Treaty come primo passo verso la distensione*, Florence, Polistampa.



where its role within the UN and the conduct it upheld with regards to Afro-Asian countries was concerned.

In Parliament, on 12 December, 1963, the President of the Council, Aldo Moro, presented his new centre-left government and confirmed Italy's interest in assuring the importance of the role of the United Nations in international détente¹⁰⁰. The tendency which saw Italy supporting Third World calls for a renewal of the UN and led it to vote for the enlargement of the permanent councils, in 1963 was confirmed once again and further enhanced by the leaders of the centre-left through a series of initiatives that supported the financing of peacekeeping missions in their efforts to find worthwhile solutions to help overcome the financial crisis of the organisation by using the tool of conciliation, chairing the debates about decolonization and safeguarding of human rights through the time-honoured tradition of mediation. With regards to the issue of human rights, however, the limits the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against South Africa and Portugal, limiting to a minimum, and compatible with the needs of national policies, the application of those decisions. It was considered, by the Italians, more useful to work with those regimes on a diplomatic level in an attempt to modify their conduct and continue to convince the UN of the utility of moral pressure in order to arrive at realistic and constructive political compromises¹⁰¹.

Italy, furthermore, continued to attribute to the United Nations a role in the political solution of conflicts, like the one in Southeast Asia, and aimed towards the transformation of the organisation into a universal one, particularly through the solution of the Chinese question. The attribution to the United Nations of such a role and the search for ways in which to strengthen its political weight meant, at this stage, making a contribution which, while still firmly anchored to Western solidarity, would open new space for international détente, of which the centre-left coalition was a result. This choice did not only point to the need for keeping the governing majority united, but expressed a more far-reaching strategy, on the basis of which the UN remained the preferred forum in which to discuss topics relating to the East-West dialogue, in which to give useful input to the solution of conflicts and through which to make a valid contribution to the disarmament debate. Enhancing the value of the United Nations meant giving the organisation the importance that the non-committed countries had given it and continue to have, with these countries, relationships inspired on the principles of international cooperation.

The return of Fanfani to the helm of the Foreign Ministry during the second and third Moro cabinet came about in this context. In front of the foreign commission of the Chamber, soon after having accepted the position, the statesman highlighted some of the main objectives of Italian foreign policy, among which the enhancement of the role of the United Nations, the reaching of a compromise regarding the organisation's finances and the renewal of disarmament talks in Geneva¹⁰² were included.

These were the same objectives which, several months later, Fanfani intended to pursue as President of the 20th session of the General Assembly. The election of the Christian Democrat leader was backed not just by the allies, who saw him as the right man to achieve

¹⁰⁰ Moro, Aldo (1996): *Discorsi parlamentari: 1947-1977*, II. Rome, Chamber of Deputies, p. 786; Id. (1986): *L'Italia nell'evoluzione dei rapporti internazionali*, in Di Capua, Giuseppe (ed.), Roma, Ebe, pp. 35-37.

¹⁰¹ On the action of the Italian government during this phase see Villani, "L'Italia e L'Onu...", *op. cit.*, pp. 189-210.

¹⁰² "Intervento del Ministro degli Affari Esteri Fanfani alla Commissione Esteri della Camera dei Deputati", 31 March, 1965.



bipartisan consensus, but also by non-Western nations, who in this way showed their appreciation of a conduct which showed particular sensitivity to the problems and role of the United Nations. Fanfani had also shown, during his previous experiences with government, a propensity towards mediation and reconciliation during debates about decolonization and the safeguarding of human rights, not only, but he was also fighting a battle in Geneva to obtain a non-proliferation treaty that more closely mirrored the needs and concerns of non-nuclear nations¹⁰³. Fanfani had, furthermore, declared his support for assistance to developing nations and had espoused a tendency which anticipated the considerations unleashed at the end of the first decade of development: the re-evaluation of social factors and of the problems relating to the redistribution of profits, jobs and poverty in view of the objective aiming at an all-inclusive human development, objectives for which the United Nations was the best arena¹⁰⁴.

Both as President of the 20th session of the General Assembly, and as Foreign Minister, Fanfani strove to give the organisation back its efficiency, convinced that it really was the very best forum for East-West mediation, but also the arena on which to manage relationships with allies and, as a result, ensure the stability of the government. It was, in fact, obvious that the call to the United Nations as a *super partes* organisation, apart from giving Italy more room to manoeuvre in and distinguish it from its allies on important issues like the Vietnam conflict and the Chinese question, would also play the delicate role of easing the tensions between the DC and PSI back home in Italy.

Fanfani's speech to the General Assembly right after his election was a strong-worded reminder for the need to support the organization, its prestige and its efficacy in solving international conflicts and crises. He decried the tardiness with which the compromise for a financial situation had been found and called attention once again on the crisis unfolding in Southeast Asia. On this last point, the new president did not hold back his criticism of the UN member states involved in the conflict who consider themselves "peace loving nations", the United States *in primis*, and hoped that the organisation would act as mediator in the region. As had been the case in the Cuban conflict, so it was also for the Vietnam conflict, the Dominican Republic conflict, the new tensions rising between India and Pakistan and, a few years later, for the Six Day War: Italy continued to demand a concrete intervention on the part of the United Nations not just a "simple appeal to good sense and humanitarian sentiments"¹⁰⁵.

The presence of the United Nations in Southeast Asia and the debate on the internal conflict racking the organisation were not touched upon by the United States, which continued to manage its affairs outside of the realm of the UN¹⁰⁶. The Italian government, while expressing a certain understanding of the American policies in Vietnam, nonetheless unanimously believed that it was necessary to find a negotiated end to the conflict and saw the UN intervention as a positive development. It still, however, harboured a caution in its dealings with the USA which represented a source of tension to the centre-left coalition then governing the country¹⁰⁷. Rome supported the peace initiatives set forth by Secretary General

¹⁰³ Regarding this aspect see L. Nuti, Leopoldo (2007): *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche 1945-1991*, Bologna, Il Mulino; Id, "L'Italia e il Tnp: esserci o non esserci", *Aspenia*, no. 27 (2004), pp. 69-77.

¹⁰⁴ Villani, Angela: "Aspetti dell'attività italiana all'Onu: disarmo e cooperazione allo sviluppo dall'ammissione agli anni Settanta", *Grotius*, no. 3 (2006), pp. 128-135.

¹⁰⁵ A/Pv. 1332, XX, 21 September, 1965.

¹⁰⁶ Bloomfield, Lincoln P. (1968): *The U.N. and Vietnam*, New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pp. 9-10. Firestone, *op. cit.*, p. 68. Gerbet *op. cit.*, pp. 302-303. On the peace initiatives of U Thant in Vietnam Cf. U Thant, Sithu (1978): *View from the UN*, Garden City, Doubleday, pp. 57-84.

¹⁰⁷ Nuti, Leopoldo : « L'Italie et l'escalade de la guerre du Vietnam », in Goscha, Christopher ; Vaisse, Maurice (eds.) (2003) : *La guerre du Vietnam et l'Europe 1963-1973*, Brussels, Bruylant, pp. 131-132.



U Thant¹⁰⁸, which, as we know, proved to be in vain mainly because of the many obstacles put up by the United States, the USSR, China and even North Vietnam¹⁰⁹. The Italian representatives often and bitterly denounced the impotence of the United Nations, both in speeches given inside the UN and at Parliament in Rome, as well as in their diplomatic relations, seeing in it the manifestation of a highly “conservative” conception of détente¹¹⁰.

Moro, then president of the Italian Council of Ministers, on 13th October, 1965, expressed himself in Parliament offering useful indications to the solution of the crisis in a context which was not as favourable as it had been in the past. Moro, moreover, linked the attitude of Peking towards the nearby Vietnam conflict to the possibility of its admission into the UN. With this mind, Moro reiterated the Italian preference for political solutions to crises, as requested by Pope Paul VI at the UN General Assembly during a visit on 4th October, 1965, and emphasized that the governments of Moscow and Peking could both serve as the essential interlocutors to reach a solution to the problem¹¹¹.

The question of Chinese representation at the United Nations was another great debate topic in Italian politics in those years. During his presidency of the General Assembly, Fanfani and the Italian representatives in New York promoted some new initiatives on that particular subject¹¹². Italy began studying the availability of those countries that had shown themselves the nearest to their own position, like Belgium, Canada and, to a certain extent, Japan, to propose an examination of the question inside of the United Nations. There was a two-sided purpose to this: one was to safeguard the US position, and the other was to show China the responsibility of expressing a true willingness to participate in the work of the organisation and accept its statutory principles¹¹³.

Talking about the application of the principle of the universality of the United Nations seemed like a good way to build a bridge between the requests from the economic arena and the left wing of the government, on the one side, and the resistance of the American administration and those Italian parties with closer ties to the US on the other. Even Nenni thought the idea of the study committee a useful one. As long as the Vietnam conflict remained open, however, a change of strategy in Washington towards the UN was not considered a possibility. The socialist secretary was well aware that the position expressed by

¹⁰⁸ Cf., for example, “interventi di Moro alla Camera dei Deputati del 6 agosto 1964 e del 12 e 18 febbraio 1965”, in Moro, Aldo (1986): *Scritti e discorsi*, vol. III, 1964 – 1965, in Rossini, Giuseppe (ed.), Roma, Cinque Lune, pp. 1623, 1736, 1740, “del 14 gennaio 1966” in Id. (1986), *Scritti e discorsi*, IV, 1966 – 1968, *Ibid.*, pp. 1987 – 1998; “del 5 maggio 1970 in Senato” in Id. (1988) *Scritti e discorsi*, V, 1969 – 1973, *Ibid.*, pp. 2834 – 2836.

¹⁰⁹ See in this regard Firestone, *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 70, 73 and 109; Harrelson, Max (1989): *Fires All around the Horizon: the U.N.'s uphill Battle to Preserve the Peace*, New York, Praeger, pp. 159, 162 – 166 and Meisler, Stanley (1995): *United Nations: The First Fifty Years*, s.l., Atlantic Monthly Press, pp. 153 – 167. See furthermore Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, and U THANT, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 – 84.

¹¹⁰ See Costa Bona; Tosi, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-219. Delusion regarding UN impotence had been manifested by Italy when Czechoslovakia was invaded; the Security Council was blocked by a Soviet veto and the Italians, in protest against the latter, had announced their suspension of the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, stating that they were against a concept of détente taken as dialogue among the superpowers, and not as a collective process of clarification in which every country should participate as equals”, and, calling for the role of the UN to be one of searching for peace; speech given 9 October 1968 by the Foreign Minister, Giuseppe Medici, to the 23rd General Assembly of the United Nations, see “La XXIII Assemblea delle Nazioni Unite”, *Relazioni Internazionali*, vol. 32, no. 42 (1968), pp. 1001 – 1002.

¹¹¹ Moro, “Discorsi parlamentari...”, vol. III, *op. cit.*, 13 October, 1965, pp. 1048-50. Speech by Paolo VI to the General Assembly in A/Pv. 1347, XX, 10 October, 1965.

¹¹² Regarding this aspect see Villani, “L’Italia e l’Onu...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-210.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*



the Italian centre-left government represented an important element for the internal stability of the PSI, and, although he was an avid supporter of the admission of China to the UN, he expressed his favour of the committee proposal *ad hoc*. Admittedly, it was an idea aimed in part at easing some of the differences between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists in matters of foreign policy, but according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was brought up mainly to “open an opportunity of international politics.” Rather than reverting to the procedure of the “important question”, in fact, it had seemed “more logical” to present the proposal preventively, in agreement with the USA and other friendly delegations; that would have been the answer to the request of public opinion the world over to rein China into the UN and, at the same time, it would have highlighted the eventual refusal of Peking to join the United Nations, thus reinforcing the position of the United States¹¹⁴.

Rome’s proposal was, furthermore, in line with the invitation that the Secretary General himself had extended in his introduction to the annual report for 1965¹¹⁵ and was, without a doubt, highly original in that it regarded the “Chinese Problem” as an integral part of a more general consideration regarding the universality of the organisation which, if properly handled, would have certainly strengthened it. Italy’s opinion that the question of Peking’s membership in the United Nations was only a matter time also came clearly into focus, seeing as Rome’s government had already begun trading with the government in Peking. The initiative was presented during the general debate on 27th September, 1965 in an expressly vague manner by Senator Bosco because, although Fanfani had given his assent, the Council of Ministers had decided to maintain a “wait and see” attitude so that the United States of America would not remain isolated on a theme of this importance¹¹⁶. The objectives where the same and shared by the entire coalition, it was a question of different methods and time frames. As far as the Italian government was concerned, the absence of the People’s Republic of China in the UN was an obstacle in the road towards détente, an obstacle the government intended to help overcome¹¹⁷.

The Department of State did not show enthusiasm for the study committee’s proposal as it remained convinced that any opening towards Peking might provoke an escalation of Chinese aggression in South East Asia and, in general, dealt with the issue outside of the political frameworks proposed by its allies. It wasn’t until the following year, during the 21st session of the General Assembly, that the project was submitted for approval by the international body. It did not pass that year, nor would it the two subsequent years¹¹⁸. Italy’s backing of China’s admission to the UN finally solidified in 1971, when Italy, who had recognised China the year before, overcame even U.S. resistance to the expulsion of Formosa¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 228 foll.

¹¹⁵ A/6001, XXI, 20 September, 1965.

¹¹⁶ Toscano, Mario: “L’Italia e il seggio cinese”, *Nuova Antologia*, no. 499 (1967), pp. 308-309.

¹¹⁷ Moro, “Discorsi parlamentari...” vol. III, *op. cit.* (13 October 1965), pp. 1048-50.

¹¹⁸ Toscano, “L’Italia e il seggio cinese” *op. cit.*, Cf. also Villani, “L’Italia e l’Onu...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 232 and foll.

¹¹⁹ See Olla Brundu, Paola: “Pietro Nenni, Aldo Moro e il riconoscimento della Cina comunista”, *Le carte e la storia*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2004), pp. 29-51 and *Id.*, “Ottobre 1971, la Cina comunista nel Consiglio di Sicurezza, Taiwan espulsa dalle Nazioni Unite: analisi di una sconfitta americana”, *Le Carte e la Storia*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2006), pp. 194 – 222.



3. The Institutional Crisis of Multilateralism in the Seventies

The role of the United Nations, already marginalized by the cold war¹²⁰, declined even further in the late Seventies with the increasing importance of détente. The crisis faced by the organisation was a reflection of the more general multilateral institutional crisis that followed on the heels of Nixon's declaration of the non-convertibility of the US Dollar. This declaration, in August 1971, was a hard blow to the monetary regulatory system created by Bretton Woods and triggered an international economic and monetary crisis of grave proportions. The crisis laid bare the contrasts between Western nations and those still struggling to develop, and the UN became a battleground for a war between the world's Northern and the Southern hemispheres¹²¹.

Weighed down by massive bureaucracy and accusations of superfluous and inefficient functions badly coordinated by the various agencies, the UN was also accused of being an overly "politicized" body with a predisposition to anti-western hostility. The UN – and all of its agencies – underwent the greatest crisis of its existence, exacerbated by financial difficulties caused in great part by a unilateral reduction of financing by the industrialized world, the United States first among them.

In Italy the détente of the Seventies, together with the deterioration of the centre-left political formula, lessened the "external constraints", spurred domestic politics into action and led to the fall of the historical fences that separated the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party. It also led to a gradual increase in the involvement of the latter in government, starting with Andreotti's third (1976-1978) government. This situation favoured a broad-based consensus among the political establishment toward several basic Italian foreign policy choices (Atlanticism, European integration, détente, Mediterranean policy, human rights protection, arms reduction and development cooperation). Italy's tendency towards open dialogue and international cooperation was, therefore, further bolstered. This became abundantly clear during various international crises and in the country's growing attention to the problems facing the Third World, a sentiment shared by the various political parties as well as a majority of public opinion¹²². Nonetheless, Italy's presence on the international scene in the Seventies was effectively compromised by internal events – terrorism, wrenching social conflict and an economic crisis. The country turned its focus on its domestic problems and the importance foreign affairs diminished considerably. Détente, which had helped the superpowers to stabilize the international scene, had also limited Italy's range of action. Not only, but Italy was also being closely monitored by the United States of America ever since it had opened to the PCI¹²³.

In August 1969, as the second Rumor government was being launched and in an atmosphere of change that also saw the development of the great détente, Aldo Moro took the

¹²⁰ Cf. Kingsbury, Benedict; Roberts, Adam (eds.) (1994): *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, New York, Oxford University Press; Meisler, *op. cit.*; Gerbet, *op. cit.*, pp. 269 – 336.

¹²¹ For more about the attitude of industrialised nations with regards to Third World requests see Toye, *op. cit.*; Benn, Dennis (2003): *Multilateral Diplomacy and the Economics of Change. The Third World and the New International Economic Order*, Miami, Ian Randle Publishers and Garavini, Giuliano (2009): *Dopo gli imperi. L'integrazione europea nello scontro Nord-Sud*, Firenze, Le Monnier.

¹²² See Graziani, Augusto (1996): "L'economia italiana e il suo inserimento internazionale", *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, vol. III, t. I, Torino, Einaudi, pp. 365 – 368 and Ronzitti, Natalino (ed.) (1977): *La politica estera italiana. Autonomia, interdipendenza, integrazione e sicurezza*, Milan, Edizioni di Comunità, pp. 119 – 149.

¹²³ Gentiloni Silveri, Umberto (2009): *L'Italia sospesa. La crisi degli anni Settanta vista da Washington*, Torino, Einaudi.



reins of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moro moved with greater ease than in preceding years, partly due to the fact that he constituted a minority inside his own party¹²⁴. In keeping with his vision of international politics and the realism that characterised him, he pursued country's autonomy in matters of both internal and foreign affairs as well as a greater participation on the part of all countries, and the European Community, in the treatment of international affairs on the basis of a wider and more comprehensive vision of détente, an alternative to international Directories. He greatly enhanced the role of the United Nations, therefore, often distancing himself from the United States' positions¹²⁵. Italy, he stated, knew it did not hold "the keys to war and peace" in its hands, but it could - and should - play an important role in the evolution of the world system¹²⁶. In a September 1969 speech he gave to the House of Representatives' Foreign Commission he underscored the positive changes taking place on the international scene and his own commitment to support, better yet, to promote, these changes. Moro felt the growing weight of international public opinion and of the "moral conscience of the people"¹²⁷. The focus was on Moro's vision of foreign policy, which was based on a rejection of the politics of power, on dependence on NATO but, at the same time, on a careful and constant attempt to overcome hurdles through dialogue and international cooperation, of which the UN was one of the most important instruments - the "forum which gives a voice to the conscience of humanity"¹²⁸ - together with the process of European integration. Moro connected the affirmation of the human condition of the world's citizens, and consequently human rights, no longer under the jurisdiction of the single states, to the advent of world public opinion and the overcoming of the principle of the sovereignty of states¹²⁹.

¹²⁴ For more about Moro's attitude towards foreign policy when he moved to the left of the Party, see the speech he gave at the 11th Christian Democratic Party Congress on 29 June, 1969 in Moro, Aldo (1979): *L'intelligenza e gli avvenimenti. Testi 1959 - 1978*, Milan, Garzanti, pp. 204 - 207.

¹²⁵ Formigoni, Guido (1997): *Aldo Moro: l'intelligenza applicata alla mediazione politica*, Milano, Centro Ambrosiano, pp. 50-52.

¹²⁶ Cf. Moro, Aldo: "Discorso preelettorale del 1970", in Baget Bozzo, Gianni; Tassani, Giovanni (eds.) (1983): *Aldo Moro. Il politico nella crisi 1962-1973*, Florence, Sansoni, p. 426.

¹²⁷ *Intervento alla Commissione Esteri della Camera dei Deputati*, 12 September 1969, in Moro, "L'Italia nell'evoluzione...", *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹²⁸ Aldo Moro's speech in General Assembly of 1971 in A/PV.1954.

¹²⁹ Moro, Aldo, "La coscienza parla più forte dello stato", *Il Giorno*, 6 settembre 1972. It was his incisive understanding of the evolution of international consciousness, as well as his conviction of the priority of the individual over the state, that led to his decrying of the anachronistic limits placed by the Charter of the UN in the organisation's handling of such cases of flagrant human rights violation as took place, for example, in Chile in 1973; cfr. "Dichiarazione dell'onorevole Ministro al Parlamento sulla crisi cilena e l'azione del governo italiano in argomento", 26 september 1973, *Archivio Centrale dello Stato* (from now on Acs), *Carte Moro*, s. I, b. 28, f. 544. His significant positioning was nonetheless marked by great prudence when it came to diplomatic relations between Italy and Chile. Italy, unlike other Western states, did not recognise the military regime even though, as its most important Atlantic partners, it did not formally break diplomatic relations with Chile - in part because of the many Italians living in Chile and in part because of the economic agreements between the two countries and, finally, because it also had to take into account its relationship with the USA, who had been favourable to the coup in Santiago; cfr. Nocera, Raffaele: "Il governo italiano e la Dc di fronte al golpe cileno", in *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2008), pp. 87 - 110. Moro had also called on the UN to intervene when civil war broke out in Nigeria in 1967, after Biafra's secession, a war in which the UN could not intervene because they were prevented from doing so by those running the country. The Italian government itself was in difficulty in this case because of the arms it had sold to Nigeria to favour Eni on the country and its ties to Great Britain; cfr. "Moro to Rumor", 9 october, 1969 ACS, *Carte Moro*, s. V, b. 127, f. 6 e Moro, Aldo: "Intervento alla Camera dei Deputati del 21 ottobre 1969", in *Id.*: "Scritti e Discorsi...", vol. V, 1969 - 1973, *op. cit.*, p. 2817. During the crisis which followed the expulsion of Italians from Libya in the summer of 1970, Moro repeatedly wrote to U Thant to inform him of the events unfolding, stressing Libya's violation of the General Assembly resolutions and Italian-Libyan accords, as well as its violation of fundamental international and



Moro illustrated his vision of international relations in its entirety at the 24th General Assembly of United Nations of 8th October, 1969 in his “global strategy for maintaining peace”¹³⁰, a true manifesto for a détente which was based and depended on the United Nations and its founding principles, equality and the integrity of states, and not on the Great Powers. Moro called for the world to free itself from “the old tenets of the Realpolitik” and thus eliminate the deepest causes of war, social, economic and technological inequality. It was not enough to simply disarm, he claimed, but armed conflict had to be eliminated and the political contrasts that caused it had to be overcome. In order to achieve this, the UN had to be an indispensable point of reference, its power had to be strengthened and renewed in all of the fields of its competence from disarmament to development, from the safeguarding of human rights to protecting the environment. Moro also touched on, with Italy in mind, the problem of the expansion of the Security Council to those members most active in UN activities. The “allure of military power, racial hatred and nationalistic exaltations”, he said, had to be resisted in favour of the need for, and the advantages of, serious multilateral discipline in international relations. The latter seemed to Moro to be the only way to create a foreign policy that would safeguard peace and the autonomy of various states, at the same time effectively serving mankind. These were not circumstantial or ritualistic affirmations, they were the authentic motivational inspiration of his actions, and through them he strove to blend the interests of Italy with those of the international community.

Moro’s ideas, however, contrasted with the détente plans promoted by Nixon and Kissinger, who sought to consolidate blocks, not to overcome them, by focusing not on multilateral dimensions but on those of traditional power politics, especially the bilateral rapport between the USA and the Soviet Union¹³¹. In 1971, at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Moro insisted that the conduction of the new international relations include all countries, and not just the superpowers. “Nor can we allow,” he argued, “that there are nations who are making history while others are still the victims of it: the democratic conscience of the world opposes it”¹³². On 2nd December, 1974, while presenting his 4th government to the Parliament and speaking about TNP, he maintained that détente in the world presumed détente among the great powers, but this “does not achieve its full significance if the agreements between them exclude constant and constructive contact among all nations”. Détente could no longer be, as it was originally, simply “a policy aimed at stabilizing international coexistence. What is needed here is an active phase of cooperation among all nations, in pursuit of a new way of conducting all international relations, not just those between the East and the West”¹³³.

After this formulation, one of Moro’s favourite foreign policy goals was the United Nations, which often represented the independent nature of the country’s foreign policy, especially where the United States was concerned, giving rise to frequent divergences. In

human rights; cfr. “Discorso di Moro alla Commissione Esteri del Senato del 13 ottobre 1970” in ACS, *Carte Moro*, s. I, b. 23, f. 503.

¹³⁰ “Aldo Moro’s speech to the UN General Assembly on 8 October 1969”, in A/Pv.1783, §§ 13-14.

¹³¹ For more about Nixon, Kissinger and détente, see among other texts, Hanhimäki, Jussi M. (2004): *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy*, New York, Oxford University Press; Thornton, Richard C. (1989): *Nixon-Kissinger Years: Reshaping America’s Foreign Policy*, New York, Paragon House; Garthoff, Raymond Leonard (1985): *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Washington, The Brookings Institution and, old but still valid, Litwak, Robert S. (1984): *Detente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976*, New York, Cambridge University Press.

¹³² A/PV. 1954.

¹³³ “Dichiarazioni programmatiche di Governo”, 2 december, 1974, in Moro, Aldo (1990): *Scritti e discorsi, VI, 1974-1978*, in Rossini, Giuseppe (ed.), Roma, Cinque Lune, pp. 3214-3215.



1970 Italy was voted in as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a second term, 1971-1972, with a large number of votes that bore witness to the commitment Italy had shown to the UN throughout the preceding decade, as well as its commitment to developing nations. It also showed the country's importance at the Security Council, where Italy, already in November 1972, had expressed its favourable view of granting independence to the Portuguese colonies.

The country continued to strive to have international crises resolved under the aegis of the United Nations, and continued to show considerable support for petitions presented by developing nations. This stance led to Italy being voted into the non-permanent Security Council for a third two-year term, 1975-1976. Never before had a country sat at this council twice in such a short period of time. It was, for Italy and the men who guided its foreign affairs, a sign of great respect from the international community.

As mentioned, the UN was a constant point of reference for Italy as it sought to contribute to finding solutions to the crisis in the Middle East¹³⁴. All throughout the 1970s, Italy had worked hard to advance peace negotiations between the parties through "discrete and prudent, but very precise interventions"¹³⁵. Moro encouraged the UN many times to favour, in particular: 1) a system of controls, by a UN commission, to govern the supplies of arms to the warring nations; 2) a renewal of the ceasefire; 3) respect for the status of the occupied territories and the populations affected by the conflict, in particular a strong commitment to safeguard the territorial integrity of Lebanon¹³⁶; as well as continuing to call attention to the "human and political" plight of the Palestinian refugees¹³⁷.

Due to his preoccupation with the ever increasing presence of the Soviets in the Mediterranean area, Aldo Moro was always favourable to the mission of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring, the UN envoy, to continue "clarification and friendly contact between all of the parties"¹³⁸, and in June of 1970 he wholeheartedly supported a plan proposed by US Secretary of State Rogers who, through intermediaries, aimed to pass resolution 242, a goal towards which Italy had also been working. The resolution, furthermore, would have led to the reopening of the Suez Canal, something Italy was most interested in¹³⁹.

After the Yom Kippur War, Moro worked hard for a ceasefire, calling upon the UN to intervene and re-proposing a close collaboration between the European Community member states. In a speech he gave to the Parliament on 18th October, 1973, he once again expressed his conviction that peace could not be imposed through an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, but had to be found through dialogue between the interested parties and could be, in fact, achieved with a united European action¹⁴⁰. Aldo Moro

¹³⁴ Riccardi, "Il "problema Israele"...", *op. cit.* e Caviglia, Daniele; Cricco, Massimiliano (2006): *La diplomazia italiana e gli equilibri mediterranei. La politica mediorientale dell'Italia dalla guerra dei Sei Giorni al conflitto dello Yom Kippur (1967-1973)*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino.

¹³⁵ "Discorso alla Commissione Esteri del Senato...", 13 October, 1970, *op. cit.*

¹³⁶ "Vinci to Moro", (12 February 1970) ACS, *Carte Moro*, s. V, b. 149, f. 2, *telegrammes 1970: The Middle East*.

¹³⁷ In September 1971, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly he spoke of the "Palestinian population". See also Ducci, Roberto (1982): *I Capintesta*, Milan, Rusconi, pp. 52-54.

¹³⁸ "Intervento di Moro al Senato", 12 March 1971 in "Relazioni Internazionali...", *op. cit.*, 20 March 1971, p. 291.

¹³⁹ "Verbale della conversazione svoltasi alla Farnesina tra l'Onorevole Ministro e il Segretario Generale delle Nazioni Unite la sera del 31 Agosto 1970" in ACS, *Carte Moro*, s. V, b. 129, f. 38; "Intervento di Moro alla Commissione Esteri del Senato del 25 giugno 1971", *Ibid.*, s. I, b. 24, f. 494 bis.

¹⁴⁰ See Moro, "L'Italia nell'evoluzione...", *op. cit.*, pp. 445-446.



expanded on his ideas in a meeting with the Italian Senate Foreign Relations committee on 23rd January, 1974. He reminded them of the “global and not partial character” of Resolution 242 and the “resulting need for Israel to leave all occupied territories”. The Palestinians, he said, were not looking for “aid, they are looking for a nation”¹⁴¹. Between 1975 and 1976 Italy was a member of the UN Security Council and as such strived to strengthen the role of the United Nations in finding a solution to the crisis in the Middle East, very mindful of Arab reasoning and the political dimensions of the Palestinian problem, convinced as always that the UN would be instrumental in finding a solution¹⁴². Moro, then the President of the Council of Ministers, also continued to press for mediation by European nations, supporting the Euro-Arab dialogue not just to favour Europe’s supply of precious oil, but also as an alternative to bipolar logic.

On 10th November, 1975, the General Assembly approved Resolution 3379 (annulled in 1991) in which Zionism was equated to a form of “racism and racial discrimination” and considered a threat to peace and security in the world. Italy, represented by its then foreign minister Mariano Rumor, voted against it claiming that peace in the Middle East would not come about by moving negotiations between Arabs and Israelis onto an ideological plain, as the UN had done¹⁴³. The differences between the political parties, and even within the majority party, between those backing the Arabs and those backing the Israelis, and the unenthusiastic reaction from both Washington and Moscow to the Rome peace initiative, nonetheless had an impact on Italian Middle Eastern policy, as did the serious economic difficulties Italy was going through after the price of fuel shot up following the Yom Kippur War. The profound commitment notwithstanding, Italy’s Middle East policies, nor the policies of many other countries, did not bring about any great results at the United Nations¹⁴⁴.

After Israel’s March 1978 incursion into southern Lebanon, following a serious attack on their territory, in 1979 Italy took part in an inter-force squadron of 4 helicopters and crew (Italair) in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (or UNIFIL) to protect the southern border separating Lebanon from Israel. Mission’s task was to prevent clashes between the Palestinians, the Israelis and their allies, the Lebanese, to supervise the Israeli retreat and help the Lebanese government re-establish authority over their own territory. The mission failed in its task to prevent armed clashes and in 1982 it was quite literally surrounded by Israeli troops who, with their “Peace in Galilee” operation, invaded all of Lebanon with the aim to locate and destroy Palestinian bases in the country. By the early 1980s, as we will see later on, Italy no longer looked to the UN for a solution to the crisis in the Middle East, and instead lent its support to multilateral, non-UN peace initiatives.

Staying within our time period, starting in 1964 and resulting from a request from the United States, Italy was constant in its support for the United Nations in their efforts to resolve the crisis in Cyprus, contributing money and ships to the UNIFICYP forces on the divided island both for its ties to NATO with Greece and Turkey (Moro even tried to act as a

¹⁴¹ See *Id.*, Discorso alla Commissione Affari Esteri del Senato del 23 gennaio 1974, in ACS, *Carte Moro*, s. I, b. 28, f. 550 and also *Id.*, “Discorso alla Commissione Affari Esteri della Camera dei Deputati del 28 Febbraio 1974”, in *Id.*: “Scritti e discorsi...”, vol. VI, 1974-1978, *op. cit.*, pp. 3136-3137.

¹⁴² See *Id.*: “Dichiarazioni programmatiche al Parlamento, 2 Dicembre 1974, in occasione della presentazione del IV governo Moro”, *Ibid.*, p. 3213.

¹⁴³ Tosi, Luciano (ed.) (2010): *Sulla scena del mondo. L’Italia all’Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite (1955-2009)*, Napoli, Editoriale Scientifica.

¹⁴⁴ Riccardi, Luca: “Sempre più con gli arabi. La politica italiana verso il Medio Oriente dopo la guerra del Kippur (1973-1976)”, *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, vol. 57, no. 6 (2006), pp. 70 - 82.



mediator between the two) and for its security interests in stability in and around the Mediterranean basin, threatened by the Cyprus crisis. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, between 1975 and 1976, Italy worked hard to mediate a ceasefire and a return to status quo after the Turks had invaded the island following a coup d'état on 15th July, 1974, by Greek-Cypriot officials who, supported by the regime of the Athens colonels, aimed to annex the island to Greece¹⁴⁵.

During the Seventies, Italy continued its involvement in disarmament negotiations, soliciting the widest possible participation in keeping with its own vision of détente and therefore trying to constantly encourage multilateral negotiations. From the beginning of the decade, however, the Italian role in disarmament negotiations was marginal at best, just like the UN had also become marginal owing to the direct negotiations insisted upon by the United States and Soviet Union. Since 1969, they had worked together on the SALT 1 and 2 treaties. These treaties were also seen with favour by Rome, although with some reserve due to their partial and highly bilateral nature. Rome continued to call for general disarmament, as well as reciprocal reduction of the forces in Central Europe, to be negotiated in the multilateral headquarters in Geneva and Vienna¹⁴⁶. Even though Italy was left out of the negotiations, it still sought to exercise an important function by working towards constructive dialogue and even helped to formulate proposals and contribute to Western statements of position, organising their initiatives with countries whose support would be concrete¹⁴⁷.

Even when the Soviet Union engaged in an energetic missile re-armament and showed expansionism tendencies towards Third World countries, Italy did not always support resolutions which mirrored those objectives it had indicated as priorities, resolutions which, while in line with the aims, more often than not remained on the paper on which they had been printed and were frequently nothing more than Member State propaganda statements or positions of Members who were not represented in the Disarmament Conference. The Italian stance towards Assembly resolutions relating to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear wars was substantially negative. On the other hand, Italy, like most NATO countries, was favourable to approving resolutions which invited the United States and the Soviet Union to negotiate nuclear disarmament, maintaining that the two superpowers were the only ones strong enough to actually make progress on that front. Furthermore, like many other Western countries, Italy also firmly believed that problems relating to controls were a top priority¹⁴⁸.

The speeches of the Italian representatives to the General Assembly also gave ample time to new emerging problems on the world scene: of particular importance to them was the safeguarding of human rights. It was one thing, however, to affirm principles and another to make concrete political choices. When dealing with the theme of human rights, Italy encountered some difficulty in balancing the importance of that particular issue with the need to safeguard national interests and keep the positions of its main allies in mind. Its position on the problem of apartheid, for example, was hardly linear because of its economic ties with

¹⁴⁵ Costa Bona; Tosi, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-242 and Moro, Aldo: "Relazione alla Commissione Esteri della Camera del 1 Agosto 1974", in *Id.*: "Scritti e discorsi...", vol. VI, 1974-1978, *op. cit.*, p. 3165.

¹⁴⁶ See Tosi, "Sulla scena del mondo...", *op. cit.*, pp. 188-191 e Bonanni, Massimo (ed.) (1973): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale (1972-1973)*, Milan, Edizioni di Comunità, pp. 196-197.

¹⁴⁷ Tosi, Luciano: "La strada stretta. Aspetti della diplomazia multilaterale italiana (1971-1979)", in Giovagnoli, Agostino; Pons, Silvio (eds.) (2003): *Tra guerra fredda e distensione*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, pp. 252-254.

¹⁴⁸ See Tosi, Luciano: "Momenti e problemi della presenza italiana alle Nazioni Unite (1955-1989)", *La Comunità Internazionale*, vol 40, no. 3 (2000), pp. 429 e Gargiulo, Pietro, "I settori prioritari dell'azione dell'Italia all'Onu", *Politica internazionale*, vol. 15, no. 11 (1987), p. 79.



South Africa – to whom it also sold arms - and the strategic ties that linked the African nation to Italy and many other Western nations. Caught between economic ties, Atlantic loyalty and the need to maintain a good rapport with developing nations opposed to the Pretoria regime, Rome, although consistently condemning the state-sanctioned segregation, it abstained from voting or voted against sanctions and the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations¹⁴⁹.

Italy's participation in United Nations legislative activity to safeguard human rights was more incisive¹⁵⁰. Italy is one of a group of nations that, since the 1960s, has ratified the largest number of UN conventions in the field of human rights, and was one of the largest contributors to specialised UN organisations (UNRWA, UNICEF just to name a few) that were active in safeguarding those rights, although at times it seemed a bit too hesitant to follow through on certain conventions. In any case, the evolution of Italian politics regarding these particular subjects was quite slow. It was not until the late 70s that the basis for a proper and homogenous, long-term strategy could be laid, and when it was, it was in correspondence with the maturation of the importance of human rights on the international scene.

Italy's efforts at the UN increased during the 1970s, especially where North-South relations were concerned. As we already mentioned, these had become of central importance to the organisation during this period. Italy, as we know, “rarely went so far as to embrace Third World countries positions in their entirety”, as Holland and the Scandinavian countries sometimes did, and did not adopt a “truly definitive and organic” policy when confronting the problems facing developing countries. Italy did, however, especially during the last phase of the period in question and just as the European Community was showing a more marked independence from Washington DC, give the impression that it was now more open to problems afflicting the Third World than it had been on other occasions, when “its adherence to American “reservations” was a ritual taken for granted”.

In the memorable 1969 speech Aldo Moro gave to the 24th General Assembly of the United Nations, he underscored the need to remove the most basic causes of war: racial hatred, hunger, misery and persistent economic, social and technological gaps. He urged commitment to fight poverty in all of its ramifications, without sacrificing and mortifying human values but through the already mentioned “global strategy” for development. His incitements were, however, destined to fall on deaf ears as relationships between North and South deteriorated in a reality marked by a grave international economic crisis caused by the end of fixed monetary exchange rates (something which Moro severely criticized calling for a rapid return to multilateralism¹⁵¹) and, two years later, by the surge in fuel prices that followed the Yom Kippur War.

Faced with the increased tension in North–South relations, Italy, who still declared itself in favour of de-colonization, took a prudent stand: in 1970 it backed out of the United Nations Special Committee for Decolonization, a seat it had held since 1961, and went to work on the General Assembly itself to encourage Western solidarity with developing countries. Its motivation for this was certainly idealistic, but not without neglecting the country's own economic interests. A perusal of UN voting records shows that, on the whole,

¹⁴⁹ See Tosi, “La strada stretta...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

¹⁵⁰ See Rossi, Miriam: “La tutela dei diritti umani nella politica estera di Aldo Moro”, in Caviglia, Daniele e De Luca, Daniele (eds.) (2011): *Aldo Moro nell'Italia contemporanea*, vol. I, Florence, Le Lettere, pp. 235 – 263.

¹⁵¹ Moro, “Intervento alla Commissione esteri del Senato del 28 Settembre 1971”, *Id.*, “L'Italia nell'evoluzione...”, *op. cit.*



when Western powers voted against resolutions that would promote decolonization, Italy abstained; when they abstained, Italy voted in favour¹⁵².

During the first half of the 1970s, in a context of increasingly difficult North-South¹⁵³ relations, Italy continued to work towards finding solutions that would bring the positions of Third World countries closer to those of the industrialized world¹⁵⁴, also keeping in mind the positive consequences an opening to developing countries could have on the severe crisis its own economy was going through. During the third UNCTAD conference in Santiago in 1972, Italy, although sharing many positions with the industrialized world, leaned favourably towards several requests set forth by the developing countries, especially where international monetary reform was concerned, with a request for a link between the creation of special taxation rights, development aid and in generalized matters regarding preferences, while it was against, for example, opening the domestic market to importation from developing countries, especially agricultural products¹⁵⁵. At the 1974 UN General Assembly Italy abstained from voting on the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, as opposed to most of the industrialized world who voted against it¹⁵⁶. Moro then repeated his belief that the industrialized world should change their attitude towards developing nations and stop merely giving financial aid. It was time, he said, to promote real integration that involved not just those who have more goods to exchange among themselves – energy resources and raw materials, technology and entrepreneurial possibilities - but also those who often had nothing to offer but, according to Moro, nonetheless had the right to “benefit from the solidarity that common democratic principles should promote around the world and share in the richness that is human life”¹⁵⁷.

4. With and Without the UN. Italy and Public Safety During the Eighties

Between the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s, the politics of détente that had marked the previous decade had come to an end and the bipolar conflict - caused by American reaction to the menacing power politics developed by the Soviet Union in Europe and the Third World – once again raised alert levels leading to the so-called “Second Cold War”. The result was a further weakening of the United Nations, already marginalized from the international stage by détente and the North-South conflict. It was during the Reagan administration that US criticism of the UN reached its peak. UN resolutions, often ritualistic and repetitive, were not followed up on as the world was racked by tension and conflict from Africa to Afghanistan, from the Falklands/Malvinas to the Persian Gulf¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵² Costa Bona, Tosi, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-246.

¹⁵³ For more about the attitudes industrialized countries had towards Third World requests see Toye, *op. cit.*; Benn, *op. cit.* and Garavini, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, the speech given by the Italian delegate, Antonio Giolitti, to the Special Session of the UN Assembly regarding raw materials and development, in Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) (1976): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale (1974 – 1975)*, vol. III, Milan, Edizioni di Comunità, pp. 313 – 314, and also, Riva, Egidio: “Contributo positivo all’attività dell’Onu, *Politica internazionale*, vol. 2, no. 11, 1974, pp. 63-65.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Garavini, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Calchi Novati, Giampaolo (1982): “Cooperazione allo sviluppo: una scelta per la politica estera italiana”, in *Cooperazione allo sviluppo una scelta per la società italiana*, Milano, Angeli, p. 35.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Aldo Moro, “Intervento alla Commissione Esteri del Senato”, 23 January, 1974, in ACS, Carte Moro, s. I, b. 28, f. 550.

¹⁵⁸ For more on the UN crisis of the first half of the 1980s see, among others, Gerbet et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 321-329 and Palsi, Alessandro (2006): *Storia dell’Onu*, Bari, Laterza, pp. 125-141.



It was only in the second half of the decade, after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and gradually eased tension between the East and the West, which new importance was given to the United Nations¹⁵⁹. Thanks to the low profile adopted by Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the UN, although still in the throes of its financial crisis, managed to play an important role on the world scene. By helping to resolve some of the ongoing conflicts, the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces earned the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize.

The transition period that marked international politics towards the end of the 1970s brought with it changes that also affected Italian foreign policy, which interacted with domestic factors. The return of the Cold War, together with the end of Italy's experience with Dc – Pci governments (the exclusion of the Italian Communist Party and the end of humanism in foreign policy) brought about (in 1979 the government had agreed to the installation of Euromissiles) a renewed relationship with the United States¹⁶⁰ which, thanks also to the improvement of both the domestic and international economic situation and the waning of terrorism, brought with it a strong showing of autonomy, to the point even of re-proposing détente. This autonomy did not, however, translate, as it had done before, into a markedly favourable view of the United Nations by Italy, but resulted in a renewed presence on the part of the country on the Atlantic stage, especially as regards to the Mediterranean area, the Middle East and Africa. The protagonists of this new, assertive and dynamic line of Italian foreign policy were the ruling governments of the country which, starting with the 1979 elections, were the expression of a renewed relationship between the Christian Democrats and lay parties (including the Italian Liberal Party) and, especially, the Italian Socialist Party (*Pentapartito*)¹⁶¹.

Italy, which already in the second half of the Seventies tended to reflect on the limitations of multilateral diplomacy, especially UN diplomacy, seemed now to give the United Nations even less weight¹⁶². The international body, perhaps because of its marginalization, continued to be ineffective in playing a central role on the international stage and could, therefore, not give the country the space it needed for the independent action which, in the past, had allowed Italy to distinguish itself on the Atlantic and international stage by manifesting its support for dialogue and détente¹⁶³. The United Nations crisis, together with the country's tendency towards a more active role on the foreign scene, resulted

¹⁵⁹ See Gerbet et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 337-348 and Polsi, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-148.

¹⁶⁰ Regarding the premises of this renewal cf. Del Pero, Mario: "L'Italia e gli Stati Uniti: un legame rinnovato", in Romero, Federico e Varsori, Antonio (eds.) (2005): *Nazione, interdipendenza, integrazione. Le relazioni internazionali dell'Italia (1917-1989)*, I, Roma, Carocci, pp. 301-312, especially pp. 311-312, and, for the time period in question, Quagliariello, Gaetano: "Oltre il "terzaforzismo". Craxi e le relazioni transatlantiche (1976-1983)", in Spiri, Andrea (ed.) (2006): *Bettino Craxi, il socialismo europeo e il sistema internazionale*, Venezia, Marsilio, pp. 23-47.

¹⁶¹ About Italian foreign policy in the 1980s cf. specifically Di Nolfo, Ennio (ed.) (2003): *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta*, Manduria-Bari-Roma, Piero Lacaita Editore; Spiri, *op. cit.*; Colarizi, Simona; Craveri, Piero; Pons, Silvio and Quagliariello, Gaetano (eds.) (2004), *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino; Romeo, Giuseppe (2000): *La politica estera italiana nell'era Andreotti (1972-1992)*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino; Coralluzzo, Valter (2000): *La politica estera dell'Italia repubblicana (1946-1992)*, Milano, Franco Angeli; Varsori, Antonio (1998): *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*, Bari, Laterza, pp. 206-245; Ferraris, Luigi Vittorio (ed.) (1996): *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, Bari, Laterza, pp. 317-511; Isernia, Pierangelo: "Bandiera e risorse: la politica estera negli anni Ottanta", in Cotta, Maurizio; Isernia, Pierangelo (eds.) (1996): *Il gigante dai piedi di argilla: la crisi del regime partitocratico in Italia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 139-188.

¹⁶² Regarding the debate in Italy in the 1980s about the role of the UN see Grassi Orsini, Fabio (2005): *Il mito dell'Onu. Un'istituzione discussa in un'Italia divisa*, Roma, Liberal Edizioni, pp. 65-76.

¹⁶³ Tosi, "Sicurezza collettiva, distensione e cooperazione internazionale...", *op. cit.*, pp. 189-211.



in a diminished interest towards it by the Italian ruling class. Not only, but the dominant ideals of the ruling parties in Italy with regards to foreign policy was also changing. The traditional Christian-democratic leadership, prone to policies of international cooperation and very aware of its UN role (sometimes finding agreement with communist internationalism) was being replaced by another mentality inspired by other ideals, less attentive to combining the safeguarding of domestic interests with policies of collective security. Leaders of the Christian-democrats, in their conduction of foreign affairs, were increasingly joined by other parties more prone towards solidarity with the West, and the solicitations of the USA (the Italian Republican Party), they were also more sensitive to Italy's role in the world, national pride, traditions from the Risorgimento era and national ideals mixed in with those of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights (PSI)¹⁶⁴. The "community" dimension of foreign policy was set aside and there was an increasing focus on protecting the interests of Italy. A tendency towards the country's independent international initiatives came to the forefront, without, however, lessening their commitment to international peace and stability. The new leadership was not shy about strengthening their own power base inside the country with sometimes audacious international policy choices. The PSI in particular, under the guidance of Bettino Craxi, who was very attentive to international relations, sought to gain advantage, although with a limited electoral consensus, by changing the traditional balance of political power that hinged on the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party, as a result of the difficulty of modernizing Italy and its political scene¹⁶⁵.

At the beginning of the 1980s attention to UN proposals for the resolution of international crises seemed to wane and the governments led by Giovanni Spadolini (*Pentapartito* DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI, PLI June 1981 – December 1982) and by Bettino Craxi (August 1983 – April 1987), during which time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was alternately run by Arnaldo Forlani, Emilio Colombo and Giulio Andreotti, demonstrated great dynamism, thanks also to the aforementioned relative improvement of the country's economic situation due to the stabilization of inflation and an increase in GDP, making Italy the fifth largest economy among industrialized nations. With the intent to carve out a new role for Italy on the world scene, traditional bilateral diplomacy enjoyed new popularity and the country began to intervene first hand in crisis areas with its own military forces, whose role was beginning to be revised through a new national defense model which included inter-force cooperation and readiness for international missions¹⁶⁶.

Italy continued to voice its support for multilateral solutions of international crises and for the role of the United Nations, considered a vital forum for dialogue and cooperation, but it also began to move increasingly towards support for its ally, the United States, and away from the aegis of the UN, not just on the diplomatic front, but also when it came to initiatives of a more military nature. The country continued working towards stability and dialogue, especially in areas where it had specific interests, with greater assertiveness and confidence in its own merits, and not those of collective security. Italian foreign political dogma no longer included the UN when faced with international crises, it had become an optional choice more

¹⁶⁴ Colarizi, Craveri, Pons, Quagliariello (eds.), *op. cit.*, especially the essays by Piero Craveri, Simona Colarizi, Agostino Giovagnoli, Francesco Barbagallo and Gaetano Quagliariello.

¹⁶⁵ Colarizi, Simona, Gervasoni, Marco (2005): *La cruna dell'ago. Craxi, il Partito Socialista e la crisi della Repubblica*, Bari, Laterza.

¹⁶⁶ See in this regard Santoro, Carlo M.: "L'Italia come "media potenza". La politica estera e il modello di difesa", in Caligaris, Luigi; Santoro, Carlo M. (eds.) (1986): *Obiettivo difesa. Strategia, direzione politica, comando operativo*, Bologna, Il Mulino and Cremasco, Maurizio (ed.) (1986): *Lo strumento militare italiano*, Milano, Angeli; cf. also Nuti, Leopoldo: "L'Italia e lo schieramento dei missili da crociera BGM-109 G "Gryphon"", in Colarizi, Craveri, Pons, Quagliariello (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 119-154.



tioned to circumstances. Even the safeguarding of Italian interests abroad tended to be less linked to collective security.

With increasing frequency, Italy began to participate in multinational initiatives with western countries outside of the aegis of the UN, and of NATO. As was already hinted at, with their renewed relationship with the United States came a vivacious dialectic rapport, often in the Mediterranean and the Middle East where, in the opinion of the Italian leaders, there was less of a question of East-West conflict and where Italy should/could play a leading regional role¹⁶⁷. If Craxi became the instigator and protagonist of renewed national pride, Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, carefully tended to specific Italian interests, which did not always coincide with those of their superpower partner¹⁶⁸. It is, nonetheless, difficult to ascertain, due to lack of adequate documentation, just how much autonomy the country effectively gained and what the advantages were of the new political mindset. And it is just as difficult to say if, on the basis of the new Italian foreign policy, there were any realistic considerations for the country's possibilities and its objectives, or how domestic political reasoning conditioned foreign policy. Generally speaking, it poses the question of what the comprehensive design of the new Italian foreign policy really was. How much did the country's search for autonomy, especially in the context of the Mediterranean, take precedence over its renewed Atlanticism (Euromissiles and multinational missions)? Or, vice-versa, how much did the Pentapartito exclusion of the PCI, which tranquilized the United States, increase the country's autonomy in foreign affairs? Did the "politics of being present", although in a different way, gain in importance once again or did Italy attempt to give a specific and effective contribution to solving international crises and to détente, seeking at the same time, and more effectively than in the past, to protect and enhance its own interests?¹⁶⁹

What is certain, with regards to this particular topic of discussion, is that the changeover from one foreign policy, in which ample space was given to collective security, to another, more rooted in traditional methods, was neither clean-cut nor irreversible. It highlighted the ambivalent character of Italian post-war foreign policy, suspended between commitment to higher ideals and involvement in the UN and Atlantic restrictions, between multilateral and unilateral diplomacy¹⁷⁰. Tradition returned to let its voice heard, as did the interests of the various political parties. The country was rocked by contrasts regarding the choices it had to make in the name of international peace and stability. Two opposing camps faced off on the political arena: one favoured the return of the peace initiative to the halls of the United Nations, and the other favoured autonomous action, mostly hand in hand with Italy's most important ally. If in the past, turning to the United Nations was agreed upon – by more or less most – and more or less explicitly by the left, it was opposed by the most orthodox of NATO adherents and now this reliance on the UN had become, more often than not, a left-wing opposition prerogative on the tails of a vast and varied emerging peace movement which blended traditional anti-imperialism with protests against bipolar logic, development, security and interdependence issues.

With the advent of the Second Cold War, the tones of the speeches given by the Italian representatives at the United Nations became ever more concerned, and if on the one hand the

¹⁶⁷ Cfr. Iai (1986): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale, 1983-1984*, Milano, Angeli, pp. 68-69 e 88-94 e Id. (1988): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale, 1985-1986*, Milano, Angeli, pp. 20 e 28-29.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

¹⁶⁹ Regarding see essays by Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, in Di Nolfo, "La politica estera italiana...", *op. cit.*, pp. 323-326, and Antonio Badini, in Spiri, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

¹⁷⁰ Ferraris in Di Nolfo, "La politica estera italiana...", *op. cit.*, pp. 324-325.



two superpowers were urged to desist from hegemonic designs, on the other hand, while still showing faith in the UN and its actions, there was no lack of mention of the crisis the organisation was going through – in fact, Italy encouraged a re-launching of the United Nations. Recurring themes included imbalance between the North and the South of the world and the lack of commitment to the safeguarding of human rights due to the “inflexible application of the principle of non-interference”¹⁷¹. The Foreign Ministers, Colombo and Andreotti – 1980 and May of 1986 – with the successive governments of Cossiga II, Forlani, Spadolini I and II, Fanfani V, Craxi I and II, Fanfani VI, Gorla and De Mita, especially stigmatized the human rights violations committed during Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan. It was the beginning of the battle against the death penalty and Italy was committed to a moratorium of the carrying out of the sentences. Its opposition to colonialism was voiced once again, as were its support of decolonization (Namibia, southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies) and its continued criticism of the interference of “foreign troops” in African nations. It saw the fall of the Nicaraguan dictatorship and the evolution of Latin America countries towards democracy with favour (Malfatti, 1979).

The Italian leaders deplored the outcome of the Polish crisis, the Soviet downing of the South Korean passenger jumbo jet, the occupation of Cambodia by Vietnam, South African aggression in Angola and its occupation of Namibia and they called for an immediate ceasefire after war broke out between Iran and Iraq in 1980, urging negotiations to re-establish peace in that area. Minister Colombo also expressed the “apprehension” Italy felt for Central America “where the local causes of crises traceable to no-longer acceptable historical conditions of privatization have now been compounded by inadmissible outside interference that are the offspring of the East-West conflict”. These preoccupations were repeated when the United States staged a military intervention in Granada in October 1983. On this occasion Italy, the only one of the NATO allies to do so, voted in favour of a resolution dated 2 November, 1983, condemning the intervention. The year before, Italy’s position at the UN had been at odds with the American one with regards to the El Salvador situation.

After Gorbachev’s rise to power in the Soviet Union, the Italian representatives to the United Nations lauded the Russian leader’s foreign policy agenda, which was based on cooperation, the resumption of talks between the East and the West and disarmament negotiations. They welcomed with particular enthusiasm the agreement for the total elimination of the Euromissiles. Italy hoped for a renewal of the role of the UN and was pleased to underscore the important actions the organisation had undertaken towards the reestablishment of peace in Iran-Iraq (Andreotti, 1987). Italy also began to support the idea that the UN should be active in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking (Italy was, at the time, the largest contributor to the coffers of the anti-drug abuse organization UNFDAC), organised crime and environmental hazards.

Italy did not limit itself to speeches at the UN Assembly meetings, but often got actively involved in solutions to international crises that erupted during the period at hand, with the UN or without it. In December 1979, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Italy held the presidency of the European Community and immediately consulted with all of the various European Member States in order to formulate a position and present it to the United

¹⁷¹ It must, however, be said that, even though the Italian government was reticent, in those same years Italy continued to do business with South Africa – including the sales of arms – notwithstanding the UN embargo due to the persistence of the apartheid policy; see Iai, “L’Italia nella politica internazionale, 1983-1984”, *op. cit.*, pp. 184 e 509-510.



Nations, which it did in front of the Security Council on 7th January, 1980. The invasion was condemned and the Soviet justifications based on article 51 of the United Nations Charter and the application of the 1978 Soviet-Afghan treaty were soundly rejected, maintaining them to be wholly inconsistent. It supported and voted in favour of Resolution ES-6/2, presented by 17 non-aligned countries and approved during the extraordinary General Assembly that took place between 10th and 14th January, 1980. In it the armed intervention by the Soviets was deplored, the immediate and unconditional retreat of the foreign troops was called for, the interested parties were urged to create the necessary circumstances for the voluntary return of displaced Afghan citizens to their homes and international organisations were appealed to for humanitarian aid for Afghan political refugees.

In 1982, as had happened many other times in the past, the United Nations was a comfortable refuge for Italian foreign policy. This time it was for the Anglo-Argentinean conflict over the Falkland/Malvinas islands¹⁷². The conflict was a huge embarrassment to the country, divided as it was between European solidarity with Great Britain and the many ties – demographic, cultural and economic – it had with Argentina. When the conflict erupted, after Argentina invaded the islands in April 1982, the Italian government attempted to favour the peacemaking actions of the United Nations, perhaps also to avoid having to take sides with either of the parties involved in the conflict. It voted in favour of Security Council Resolution 502 which called for a halt to all hostile action, the retreat of Argentinean troops from the islands and the initiation of diplomatic negotiations, as well as Resolution 505, which proposed the UN Secretary General as mediator between the two countries. It could not, however, at least in the beginning, avoid showing its support for Great Britain at the EC meetings. The EC adopted embargo measures against Argentina, and Italy adhered. The sanctions against Argentina divided Italian political forces – the Socialists, the Movimento Sociale, the communists and a part of the Christian-democrats were either critical or downright against them – and there was great embarrassment about the entire affair. The Spadolini government disassociated itself from part of the sanctions when they were renewed and repeatedly called on United Nations Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar to begin mediation (which failed) and upheld his motion.

After Great Britain had re-conquered the islands, Italy set to work mending the tense relations that now existed between the EC and Latin America. With this goal in mind, Foreign Minister Colombo embarked on a state visit to Peru, Brazil and Argentina in the summer of 1982. At the 37th General Assembly of the United Nations, when it was time to vote on a somewhat vague plan presented by Latin American countries to resolve the crisis (it was approved), Italy abstained from voting, as did all other EC Member States except for Greece, after having declared that “the problem of the islands that provoked the war must be brought in front of the General Assembly of the United Nations without any preconceived positions”. In 1983 at the 38th General Assembly, Italy once again abstained from voting on a similar resolution. The then Foreign Minister, Andreotti, repeated its support for a direct dialogue between London and Buenos Aires “without preliminary points on the contested subject matter” because, he said, dialogue should always make use of the context of the UN and the commendable actions of its Secretary General.

¹⁷² See in regard to the episode Cf. Mechi, Lorenzo: “Fra solidarietà europea e vincoli di sangue”. L’Italia e la crisi delle Falkland/Malvinas”, *Annali dell’Istituto Ugo La Malfa*, vol. 16 (2001), pp. 139-173 and Ferraris, *op. cit.*, pp. 501-502; furthermore Caracciolo di San Vito, Roberto: “Le Falkland-Malvine alle Nazioni Unite (1960-1983)”, *Rivista di studi politici internazionali*, no. 2 (1984), pp. 263-291.



The partial retreat of Italy from UN diplomacy was most evident during the crises that affected the Mediterranean area and the Persian Gulf, where tensions were rising. Rome made a great show of direct involvement and activity in the area as it tried to be more present in the management of crises than it had been in the past. It presented itself as the true, if not only, regional interlocutor able to have open dialogue with all parties. Initially, Rome moved forward taking advantage of its allies' requests to do so, later on it aimed to fill the power vacuum created by the end of Soviet presence in the area.

The objectives set by Italian foreign policy makers for the Mediterranean basin remained the traditional ones: stability of the area, economic development of countries along the southern shores and a commitment to wider and more comprehensive collaboration, political and economic accords of a "Euro-Mediterranean" nature¹⁷³. While in the 60s, and in the 70s but with less emphasis, Italy, although not neglecting bilateral diplomacy, was very committed to finding solutions under the aegis of the UN to the many crises in the Middle East, it now sought out solutions to these same problems first hand: bilateral relationships were brought to the forefront and the Italian armed forces entered the arena with a massive showing to keep the peace and maintain stability. In 1979 Italy took part in an inter-force UN military operation with four helicopters (Italair) in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The purpose of the forces was to supervise the retreat of the Israeli military from southern Lebanon, an area they had occupied since March 1978 after a serious attack¹⁷⁴. After that the Italian armed forces were increasingly involved in multinational missions that were, however, not under the aegis of the United Nations. There was no single institutional Mediterranean security force, the foreign policy of Europe in the area was inconsistent and the United Nations wielded little power, partly because of the renewal of the Cold War. This led Italy, in light of the various Mediterranean crises, to advance its own political, economic and security interests together with its allies. This sometimes meant a conflict of interest with the United States, which was not prone to orchestrating its moves in the area with others –outside of the realm of competences of the NATO – and sought these others out only for their consensus.

From 1981-1982, after the Soviet-caused failure of the creation of a United Nations military force, Italy participated – with the United States, France, Great Britain and The Netherlands – in the MFO (Multinational Force and Observers). This force was assembled to make sure that the 1979 Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel, and the disengagement of the Sinai, were respected. It was the first time that Italian forces had been deployed abroad outside of the aegis of the United Nations. The mission came about after bitter domestic political battles between the government and the opposition (the PCI and the PDUP), also because it was not clear who would have institutional responsibility for the operation. The PCI, in showing its opposition to the operation, did not hesitate to underscore that it was the first time that Italian troops would be involved in an area belonging to the Atlantic Alliance, and, moreover, without UN cover¹⁷⁵.

Later, between 1982 and 1984, as the civil war in Lebanon worsened after Israel's intervention to eliminate Palestinian camps there in 1982 and in a moment of severe paralysis at the United Nations – which, with Italy's vote in favour, condemned (Res. N° 509) the operation itself to failure– the Spadolini and then Craxi governments, responding to a request from the United States but then also acting on its own initiative, took part with the US, France

¹⁷³ Cf. De Leonardis, *op. cit.*; Coralluzzo, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-280 e Romeo, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-87.

¹⁷⁴ Biagini, Antonello e Nuti, Leopoldo: "Note sulla partecipazione italiana ai corpi di spedizione internazionali", *Studi storici militari* (1994), pp. 523-524.

¹⁷⁵ Coralluzzo, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-293.



(MNF1) and Great Britain (MNF2) in two missions with a “multilateral force” that was sent to the troubled middle eastern country (Lebanon1 26th August – 12th September 1982; Libano2 26th September 1982 – 20th February 1984). The first operation was preceded by particularly heated debates. The government tried to present the two missions as an “international police action” that involved Italy in keeping with the Security Council resolutions and as one of its obligations deriving from the UN Charter, it highlighted the humanitarian nature of the mission and repeatedly called for the multinational forces to be substituted by the so-called Blue Helmets, as soon as possible. The missions were, nonetheless, an absolute novelty in Italy’s foreign and military affairs, both from a domestic point of view (on the decision-making level) and from an international point of view (type of participation)¹⁷⁶.

The three missions had several similarities with the Italian decision to participate in a mission (to de-mine and act as an armed escort) in the Red Sea, where in the summer of 1984 mines were presenting a hazard to the shipping lines of the Suez Canal. Egypt asked France, Great Britain and the United States for help. Italy, which had initially declared itself in favour of a United Nations intervention, when asked by Egypt to collaborate, changed its mind and the government accepted the invitation also partly because of the lack of response by the UN, and without even consulting Parliament. Afterwards, in front of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the House and the Senate, Andreotti, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, maintained that a United Nations action had seemed “opportune and welcome” to the Italian government, but that a “deeper study by the Secretary General” had shown that the organisation was not “up to activating itself with the speed and efficiency necessary in the circumstances”. And so the government, while still convinced that the United Nations was the proper forum for the question, decided it should in fact participate in the operation in order to help Egypt and safeguard the right of free navigation, but also because almost a third of all cargo ships that passed through the Suez were destined to Italian ports. For Spadolini, the Minister of Defense, it was a question of national defense, and there was not much point in discussing whether the intervention would be one “mandated by the UN” or “as a surrogate UN mission”, scenarios he considered analogous. The opposition, the left, claimed to be against the operation and repeated once again that they would have preferred a UN intervention. They voiced the fear that the episode could expand NATO’s “out of area” competences¹⁷⁷.

The end of the long Craxi government, which resigned in March of 1987, coincided with a further phase of rethinking Italian foreign policy, above all because of the uncertain period international politics had been undergoing since 1985 when Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and opened up new prospects for détente. The debate about whether or not Italy should participate in peace missions outside of the sphere of the UN continued. Between Spring and Summer 1987, after an Iraqi missile attack on the US frigate *Stark*, the United States began to ask its allies to support them in their intervention in the Persian Gulf to safeguard navigation which had become dangerous since the Iran-Iraq war had broken out in

¹⁷⁶ Cf., among others, Ferraris, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-393 e Tana, Fabio (ed.) (1985): *La lezione del Libano. La missione della Forza Multinazionale e la politica italiana*, Milano, Angeli; Abraham, Antoine J. (1996): *The Lebanon War*, Westport, Praeger; Lundari, Giuseppe (1986): *Gli italiani in Libano 1979-1985*, Milano, Editrice militare italiana; Angioni, Franco (1984): *Un soldato italiano in Libano*, Milano, Rizzoli; and Tappero Merlo, Germana (1997): *Medio Oriente e forze di pace. Cinquant'anni di guerre e interventi multinazionali in Israele, Libano e Golfo Persico*, Milano, Angeli.

¹⁷⁷ Calchi Novati, Giampaolo: “La missione delle navi italiane e il confronto fra opposti schieramenti”, *Politica Internazionale*, vo. 15, no. 11 (1987), pp. 41-54 and Iai (1986): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale, 1984-1985*, Milano, Angeli, pp. 67-69 e 166-176.



1980, but also for other reasons like reassuring moderate Arab nations and as a warning to Iran. At that time, Italy was being ruled by the 6th Fanfani transition government, which took over from the Craxi government, and the Tuscan statesman answered American pressure with a famous phrase “We are hardly the Marines!”. He let it be known, with this statement, that he was against the initiative. Foreign Affairs Minister Andreotti declared that the competence for these sorts of missions belonged to the United Nations, and that it would anyway be better to avoid involving other countries¹⁷⁸. They were averse to putting Italy’s commercial relationships with the two parties at risk and preferred to resolve the issue through mediation and peace accords.¹⁷⁹

The request was also skirted, at least in the beginning, by the following government headed by Gorla. Italy, then a non-permanent member of the Security Council, helped to pass Resolution 598 on 20th July, 1987, a comprehensive peace plan conceived by Pérez de Cuéllar that aimed to put a permanent end to the conflict between Iran and Iraq. The resolution enjoined the two warring parties to unconditionally cease hostilities, called for negotiations to find a solution to their political problems once the war was over and called on the Secretary General of the UN to constitute a specific supervisorial force and begin negotiations between the parties to “reach a global accord that is just and honourable” covering all of the unresolved questions.

The resolution aimed to strengthen the purpose of the UN, whose task it was to prevent military interventions, whether spontaneous or coordinated, between nations. The interventions, however, continued, especially by the United States, who once again put pressure on Italy. Faced with the American solicitations, the political parties reiterated their positions: the lay parties, PSI, PRI and PLI were favourable to an intervention together with the USA and the communists, who were against it, held a position similar to that of Andreotti, who preferred intervention under the aegis of the United Nations. In September 1987, following an incident in the Gulf that involved the *Jolly Rubino*, an Italian cargo ship, the Council of Ministers once again faced a choice of whether or not to intervene. They had to decide if they would offer the services of Italian military forces to the UN (as Andreotti, the PCI, DP, the Verdi and most of the DC suggested), keeping in mind the Italian interests in the Gulf and the support the country was giving to the mediation efforts of the UN Secretary General in line with Resolution 98, or whether they would follow the lead of the United States and intervene unilaterally (as a minority of the DC, PLI, PSDI and PRI hoped) with the added aim of reaffirming Italy’s role in international affairs, specifically with NATO and the greater Mediterranean basin.

The government once again opted for the latter. After a parliamentary debate resulted in support for the decision, the 18th naval group (three frigates, three minesweepers, a supply ship and a support vessel) was sent to the Gulf where it joined the naval forces of the United States, France, and Great Britain, as well as the ships in arrival from Belgium and The Netherlands. On 8 September, 1987, Andreotti pointed out that the ships constituted a deviation from the traditional foreign policy Italy had always believed in, but that it served a specific and circumscribed purpose: that of protecting Italian mercantile vessels and as a warning to those who might not respect Italy’s neutrality. The government, for the rest, retained their faith in the UN’s diplomatic initiative and excluded any sort of military or paramilitary initiative that could provoke a deterioration of an already precariously instable

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181 e 413.

¹⁷⁹ Regarding Italy’s sale of arms to Iran and Iraq, notwithstanding the UN embargo cf. Ilari, Virgilio (1994): *Storia militare della prima repubblica 1943-1993*, Ancona, Nuove Ricerche, pp. 191-196.



situation. The rules of engagement called for absolute equidistance between the warring factions. The communists, radicals, green and democratic proletarian parties declared themselves opposed to the mission as it went against the policies of coexistence and peace that had always distinguished Italian politics. They interpreted it as a manifestation of lack of faith in the United Nations which, thanks to the efforts of Pérez de Cuéllar (with the efficacious collaboration of the Italian envoy Giandomenico Picco, his special operations assistant) was working hard to put an end to the conflict between Iran and Iraq. They also deemed the mission as a function of Western interests, protected in these circumstances even outside of the NATO framework and its area of competence¹⁸⁰.

The uncertainties and perplexities, which came to the forefront with increasing frequency in Italy when it came to deciding the use of the Italian armed forces in multilateral missions, were a sign of a larger and more complex process developing in the Atlantic alliance, whose aims were evolving and whose precise definition would not come into being until 1991 and 1999. The debate on whether to intervene with or without the UN was a reflection of the perplexity and uncertainties the country harboured towards the slow expansion of the objectives of NATO. With the menace of traditional enemies waning and new outbursts of instability emerging, Italy looked to the UN and its traditional stance favouring collective security. Italy was, however, also interested in playing a leading role on the international scene, in view of the opportunities that seemed to be opening up thanks to its action, and, as a result, found herself following the United States and their increasing number of interventions on an expanded Mediterranean stage¹⁸¹.

While the Italian naval mission was underway, coordinated with the multilateral international forces, the country continued to favour the UN's peace initiatives, to which Gorbachev's rise to power had given back a certain new vitality. Italy had had the presidency of the Security Council until October of 1987 and worked hard to make Resolution 598 a reality. Andreotti, in agreement with similar Soviet Union positions, sustained the idea that the end of the conflict should be based on an agreement between the warring parties under the aegis of the United Nations, conceding time and space to it in order to reach an accord without having to resort to sanctions as, in fact, 598 specifically called for and as the United States would have wanted¹⁸². Italy manifested its support for détente and autonomy in foreign affairs, although the latter remained uncertain, suspended as it was between the UN, NATO and a more specific domestic political agenda. The international arena was, as mentioned above, still somewhat uncertain after the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev. The lessening of East-West tension that resulted from the new leader in the Soviet Union favoured, as already hinted at, a renewal of the role of the United Nations, in particular that of the Security Council, in solving ongoing conflicts and even Italy was able to carve a greater role for itself in the organization.

When, on 7th August, 1988, the Iran-Iraq conflict came to an end, Italy, between August 1988 and February 1991, participated with 15 official observers in the United Nations Iran Iraq Observer Group (UNIIMOG), whose mission it was to watch over the ceasefire agreement between the two countries as mandated by Resolution 598. After that, in February

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Iai, "L'Italia nella politica internazionale 1987-1988", *op. cit.*, pp. 257, 261-265 and Buracchia, Mario: "Golfo Persico: operazioni di scorta al traffico mercantile italiano (1987-1988)", in Pizzigallo, Matteo e Alberini, Paolo (eds.) (2002): *Missioni militari italiane all'estero in tempo di pace (1946-1989)*, Rome, Commissione Italiana di Storia Militare, pp. 333-341.

¹⁸¹ See in this regard also Calchi Novati, Giampaolo: *Mediterraneo e questione araba nella politica estera italiana*, in *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana*, vol. 2, tomo I, pp. 260-261.

¹⁸² Cf. Iai, "L'Italia nella politica internazionale 1987-1988", *op. cit.*, pp. 246-247 e 251-252.



1991 and after the UNIIMOG mission, Italy participated in the United Nations Office of the Secretary General in Iran (UNOSGI), a mission that aimed to make sure the articles of the Iran-Iraq peace accord were actually being respected. In early 1989 it was also active in the UNOCHA-Salaam operation, an international initiative promoted by the UN to watch over the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan, a mission that was half real peace enforcement and half international technical assistance. It sent, together with the US, Great Britain, France and Turkey, in the framework of a quadripartite agreement for Afghanistan, 8 military officials to help with a bomb and mine-sweeping operation, and to train Afghan refugees and partisans. During that same year, in March, Italy also participated in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) mission in Namibia, instituted after accords had been signed between Pretoria, Luanda and Havana, to watch over the transition of that country from South African administrative control to independence, as stipulated in UN Resolution 435/78.

A trend had, by now, been set which – thanks also to a greater stability in fuel supplies – saw politics increase in importance over purely economic issues, although these were by no means ignored, in order to strengthen Italy's role within the international community, especially NATO countries, and resulted in a partial neglect of purely UN-related policies and a renewed alignment with the United States, although autonomy remained an important issue on the agenda.

The new orientation was also evident in the increasing willingness to participate in peacekeeping missions, both within the aegis of the United Nations and outside of its immediate realm. These missions brought together the various aspirations Italy harboured in its foreign policy agenda: the search for international peace and cooperation, the safeguarding of its own interests and the enhancement of its role on the world stage.

Italy's actions with regards to its relationships with the southern hemisphere in the 1980s were no less innovative. This innovation was part of the wider policy of openness towards the developing world Italy had already called for in the past, especially during the 1970s when tensions had increased between the North and the South due to the refusal of the industrialized countries to yield to requests by developing nations to change the mechanisms that ruled international commerce. In the 1980s, Italy continued to show its support of the requests of developing nations, due also to the substantial consensus of most of the majority political parties and the opposition. At the United Nations and within their own agencies, Italian representatives placed the accent on the need to create a new world economic balance, to restructure the system of commerce and monetary policy, and to conciliate the development policies of non-industrial nations with those of industrialized nations, and in doing so adhere to the requests of the Group of 77. At the fifth UNCTAD assembly dedicated to the reform of the institutions that govern the world economy that took place in 1979 in Manila, the head of the Italian delegation, Mario Pedini, recognised that in order to overcome under-development issues a re-examination of "the economic and institutional reality that makes up the framework of relations among states" was needed. Moreover, he said, a "restructuring of production systems and a renewal of the institutions that guide world economy" was also needed. He proposed the transformation of the UNCTAD into a "forum for discussion and study" about all of the points inherent to North-South relations¹⁸³. The following year, at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly dedicated to North-South relations, the Italian delegate, Colombo, underscored the need to find adequate solutions to the most important problems facing developing nations.

¹⁸³ Calchi Novati, "Mediterraneo...", *op. cit.*, pp. 250.



The action then taken by Italy proved it was able to conquer a certain margin of autonomy, international restrictions notwithstanding. A financially fragile nation, often at the mercy of the decisions of others and highly dependent on the import of raw material could not understand the positions of the developing nations, at least some of them, like those positions regarding the stabilization of the cost of raw materials. Not only, but Italy, for reasons linked to its own economic structure, had a particular interest in the expansion of international commerce and the increase in the incomes of emerging nations to which, in the mid-70s, it sold some 20% of its exports and from which it bought 28% of its imports. As a country with a medium-sized economy still in transformation, Italy needed to export many goods and import many others, especially raw materials. It needed the strong development of newly independent countries. Italy's weak negotiating position did not favour the success of its proposals, particularly where countries with strong economies were concerned, and it was even excluded from the Cancun Conference of October 1981, which marked the apex of attempts to find an agreement between the world's northern and southern hemispheres.

Italy's openness towards the appeals of third world countries did, however, favour its election for a fourth time, in 1986, to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council of the United Nations (for the 1987-1988 term) with 143 of the 154 votes. Furthermore, in 1989, the UN Secretary General, Pérez de Cuéllar, keeping in mind Italy's deep commitment to cooperation to development, nominated Bettino Craxi its special representative for the debt problem faced by developing nations, charging him with contacting the governments of debtor and creditor nations and credit institutions to draw up an in depth analytical report and offer recommendations. Craxi presented his report to the 1990 General Assembly, which gave it its unanimous approval¹⁸⁴.

Perhaps Italy's politics towards developing nations within the UN, and its specialised agencies, was the terrain in which the country worked its hardest for collective security through UN institutions, at the same time also favouring a closer consensus regarding foreign policy between the majority and the opposition parties within the government.

With the economic and political crises of the 70s behind it, and in the presence of an international situation that was in constant, if somewhat slow, evolution, in which the marginal quality of the UN was evident, Italy, in the 1980s, moved with increasing autonomy when it came to international crises, and not just within the framework of the United Nations. While still siding with its Western allies, it sought to identify a more independent road to follow in safeguarding collective security and its own interests. In the first half of the decade, the remaining mentality of the Cold War together with the structural limits of the country, considerably conditioned its actions. The successive changes in the international situation increasingly forced Italy to redefine its foreign policies in a world which was headed towards overcoming the bipolar system as it opened up to new protagonists and new problems.

5. Epilogue

After the end of the Cold War, the presence of the United Nations increased together with its role on the international scene. Peacekeeping operations grew in frequency, although, for

¹⁸⁴ Iai (1991): *L'Italia nella politica internazionale, 1989-1990*, Milano, Angeli, pp. 243-247 and Gozzano, Francesco: "Il piano Craxi per il Terzo mondo", *Mondoperaio*, vo. 43, no. 12 (1990), pp. 24-26. Cf. also Angeli, Andrea (2005): *Professione peacekeeper: da Sarajevo a Nassiriyah, storie in prima linea*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, pp. 31- 61.



many reasons among which was the relative lack of experience of the organisation and an increasing opposition to the missions by several UN member states, not always with the desired success. With increasing frequency, countries showed a preference for peacekeeping operations conducted by regional organisations or groups of countries, with or without UN authorisation, taking advantage of the power vacuums that came into being after the fall of the Soviet empire.

In Italy, the end of the bipolar system contributed to the end of the “first republic” and opened new doors to Italy’s diplomacy, which was redefining its own role on the international stage and its foreign policy objectives, in a difficult domestic political scenario. Its status as a medium-sized power was something which needed to be kept in mind and the justification/legitimization of various foreign policy choices, like its rapport with NATO and its traditional role as mediator between East and West, waned. Italy also lost its position as eastern frontier of the Western Bloc and consequently the profitability of its strategic position, even though it gained more freedom of movement as nuclear risks also diminished. The country found itself, at this point, on the border between the stable area and the unstable area and this circumstance re-valued its geopolitical and geostrategic position, becoming a western advance outpost towards the Balkans, the Middle East and the Gulf.

In the wake of the preceding decade, Italy concentrated itself on strengthening its role in the world and pursuing objectives of economic and commercial nature through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy or through multinational military operations conducted with its Western allies. Its affinity with the United Nations, after the end of the bipolar system, lost some of its original motivations: it was no longer needed as a forum for mediation among the various petitions of the political parties in foreign policy, while the changes in the international scenario seemed to offer new and greater opportunities. Italy, therefore, committed itself to safeguarding international stability and security and its interests within the UN framework, but also alongside its Western allies outside of the organisation. The role of the Italian armed forces, consequently, also increased in importance in the country’s foreign policy.

Italy’s desire to have a greater role in international relations was also reflected in the UN framework, where, in the 1990s, its commitment grew accompanied by a pressing and constant request to be given more importance in the organisation itself, but also to make it more respondent to the new international reality. During the international crisis caused by Iraq’s invasion of neighbouring Kuwait, Italy supported the Security Council condemnation of the aggression and then participated, with its military bases and troops, in the UN intervention against Iraq. It was the first time since the end of the Second World War that Italian troops had been involved in an armed conflict and the experience, although it took place under the aegis of the United Nations, was traumatic for the country and resulted in profound divisions in domestic politics, public opinion and inside party politics between the supporters and those opposing the armed intervention. The lay parties were in favour of Italy’s participation, the PCI/PDS and a united pacifist front that included parts of the DC and the Catholic world, were against it. The government, faced with this situation, kept a low profile regarding the Italian participation, also because the country was in the throes of redefining its foreign policy.

After the war in the Gulf, Italy took part in the United Nations operation in Somalia, a country racked by anarchy, showing once again the difficult period Italian foreign policy was undergoing. The mission ended without a positive outcome in early 1994 and was marked by contrasts between the Italian leaders on one side and America and the UN on the other. Italy



had championed keeping the various Somali factions at bay from one another, while the other side favoured action against only one faction, that of warlord Aidid.

After some hesitation, Italy also participated in a UN operation during the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, first making air bases available to UN forces, and then, as the conflict neared an end, with its own air force. Once again the country was racked by intense debate about whether or not to participate in the operation and the positions that emerged were even more distant from one another than those during the Gulf war, especially where the leftist parties, the Church and Catholics were concerned. In the end a commonly agreed upon national position prevailed that justified the participation for reasons of Italy's interest in the area. The choice, which blended collective security with national interests, was further strengthened by participation in the multinational forces put together by the UN Security Council sent to stabilise Bosnia Herzegovina, followed by other missions in the Balkans.

Over the years Italy's commitment to the United Nations remained a priority, in keeping with the international choices it had made after the end of the Second World War, Article 11 of the Constitution and the constant desire for peace on the part of public opinion, which demanded a political framework in which ethics also played a part. Another objective was that of increasing Italy's status within the UN and, more generally speaking, in the world at large. Financial contributions to the organisation increased to such a point that in 1995 Italy counted as the UN's seventh largest contributor, fourth where troops for peace missions were concerned. The country's dedication to multilateral development, although diminishing, was also generous. Its massive commitment was highly appreciated by the international community and in 1994 Italy was elected for a fifth time to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member. By now, however, Italy had other ambitions and aimed at a more stable presence in the Council to increase its political weight in the decision making processes of the organisation. It increased its activities to promote the reform of the organisation's organism through the constitution of a new category of membership, a semi-permanent membership, which would be present in the Council with greater frequency than non-permanent members. The struggle for this reform reached a peak in 1997-1998, when Italy and the United States were at odds over a procedural question. Italy won the scrimmage but left things as they were, and still are.

Italy, in the meantime, continued to participate in peacekeeping missions of a humanitarian nature. In 1997 the centre-left government guided by Romano Prodi organised and directed a mission in Albania under the aegis of the United Nations, in part to avoid a massive influx of Albanian refugees to Italy and in part to be able to take advantage of the economic and commercial opportunities Albania had to offer. The mission was a success. It prevented the outbreak of civil war in Albania, favoured free elections, stopped the influx of refugees and marked the beginning of a greater qualitative commitment on the part of Italy to the Land of the Eagles. After 1998, Italy's participation in international missions increased even further, with and without the UN, bearing further testimony to Italy's will to play an important role on the international scene, especially in the Balkans. By the end of 1999 there were some 10,000 Italian soldiers involved in overseas missions.

The most demanding operation, which was also the most emblematic one of the new line of Italian foreign politics at the close of the millennium, was, without a doubt, the one conducted in 1999 in Kosovo with NATO, an operation embarked upon without prior UN authorization. The centre-left government led by Massimo D'Alema tried to reconcile its choice of participation in the conflict with the need to keep the lack of UN consent in mind, with the country's powerful pacifist tendencies and with its own constitutional provisions. It



sought to keep a low military profile in the intervention and moved on the political-diplomatic front with energy and determination. The debate within the country of whether or not to participate in military operations outside of the UN aegis once again heated up, particularly regarding the need, or lack thereof, to intervene in the internal affairs of a country where the human rights of its citizens were being threatened. At the end of the war, in some way eventually sanctioned by the UN and on the basis of a Security Council resolution, a multinational peacekeeping force entered Kosovo, which included 5,000 Italian troops and which sought to bring back the rule of law and order to the Balkan nation.

In 1999 and 2000, Italy was the United Nations' fifth largest contributor and its third largest supplier of troops for peacekeeping operations. In 2000, however, its desire to sit on the Security Council had waned, the result of a sense of disappointment in the image of the UN, especially where its intervention in Kosovo was concerned. After the 11 September, 2001, attack on the USA, Italy, led by a centre-right government under the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi, sided with the United States and manifested less consideration for the United Nations. After some initial uncertainty, Italy took part in *Operation Enduring Freedom* against the Taliban forces in Afghanistan and later in the *International Security Assistance Force*, a NATO operation authorised by a resolution of the Security Council that aimed to guarantee a safe environment in which a new Afghan government could operate.

Italy's alignment with positions championed by the United States was once again evident in 2003, when the latter went to war against Iraq, once again without the approval of the UN and based on the doctrine of preventive war announced by then American president George W. Bush in 2002. It was a significant moment in the evolution which already for some time had marked Italian foreign policy that of an increasing will to act as a protagonist on the international scene, with and without the United Nations. Nonetheless, their response to the American unilateral operation notwithstanding, Italy's interest in the United Nations had never really been lacking. The country continued to work hard towards reforming the Security Council and to be elected to one of its non-permanent seats, which it was once again in 2006. Also in 2006, after the breakout of conflict between Israel and Lebanon, the new centre-left government under the leadership of Romano Prodi brought the country's foreign policy back onto the road of UN multilateralism and actively worked for the creation of a UN peacekeeping force in which Italy was – and still is – involved through operation LEONTE.

In Italy today, the traditional support for the United Nations and the desire to play a greater role in international politics, even outside of the realm of the UN, still appear to live together. This coexistence has its roots in its own history and in the evolution of the international body. The “constituent crisis” of the latter, perpetually divided between respecting the “old” rules of sovereignty and non-interference and the need to respect the “new” rules regarding human rights and interference, does not make it easier for Italy, a country in which the uncertainties, divisions and lacerations of the modern world are clearly reflected, to follow an unwavering line of foreign policy.

