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History of ANuclearPower Never Born: the Italian Military Hypotheses of the Fifties

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Abstract: The possession or not of nuclear weapons has affected – and still affects – the international influence of each State. Since the world was finally split with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) between holders and not-holders of nuclear technology for military purposes – officially placing a limit to its spread – those who do not belong to the club of nuclear powers are effectively downgraded. This was the case of Italy.

Notwithstanding this, during the Fifties and in parallel with negotiations for the European Atomic Energy Community, Rome with Paris and Bonn started a series of initiatives that pushed towards a Community cooperation in the military field, not excluding the hypothesis of the production of nuclear weapons.(1) It was an important effort that led to the signing of the Italian-French-German secret protocol of November 28, 1957 for the construction of a common nuclear deterrent.(2) Although this agreement was not ratified, it is interesting to know the evolution that have brought Italy to try to develop a knowledge nuclear; this despite the veto imposed by the peace treaty signed after the Second World War.

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the steps of this Italian course, starting from the scientific promises developed in Italy since the 1940s. In this framework, the European nuclear cooperation is also important to understand how started the collaboration among the EEC countries. On the other hand, the military agreement between Italy, France and Germany is important in comparison to the French nuclear ambitions and the German attempt to retrieve a certain international prestige. There is extensive literature on the Italy as a nuclear power; for instance: Albonetti (1976 and 1998), Cacace (1999 and 2004), Gaia (1959, 1964 and 1986) and Nuti (2007). Nonetheless, this manuscript analyze the issue with the support of new archival materials, such as the documents of the Historical Archives of the European Union.

Keywords: Nuclear Powers; Italian Nuclear Projects; Non-Proliferation Treaty; European Nuclear Cooperation; Military agreement between Italy, France and Germany.

(1) For Community or European countries the author refers to the European Economic Community (EEC) governments.

(2) Cf. P. Quaroni, L'Italie et la demande de l'Angleterre, in «La Revue des Deux Mondes», 1971, pp. 70-78; G.W. Maccotta, Alcuneconsiderazionisulla «force des frappe». Le sue origini e ilsuosignificato politico, in «Rivistamarittima», 1982, pp. 23-28.

Regarding the Italian nuclear power in relation to foreign policy cf. A. Albonetti (ed.), L'Italia e l'atomica. Il governo, ilparlamento, idiplomatici, gliscienziati e la stampa, Faenza, FratelliLega, 1976; Id., Storiasegretadellabombaitalianaedeuropea, in «Limes», n. 2, 1998, pp. 157-171; P. Cacace, L'atomicaeuropea: iprogettidellaguerrafredda, ilruolodell'Italia, le domande del futuro, Roma, Fazi, 2004; Id., L'Italia e la bombaeuropea. L'accordoitalo-franco-tedescosulnucleare, in «Nuova StoriaContemporanea», 3, n. 1, 1999, pp. 87-104; R. Gaja (alias R. Guidi), Le conseguenzepolitichedellabombaatomica, in «BibliotecadellaRivista di studipolitici», s. 2, n. 9, Firenze, 1959; Id., Politicaesteraedarminucleari, Bologna, Cappelli, 1964; Id., Introduzioneallapoliticaesteradell'eranucleare, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1986; Id., L'Italianelmondobipolare: per unastoriadellapoliticaesteraitaliana (1943-1991), Bologna, Il mulino, 1995; L. Nuti, La Sfidanucleare. La politicaesteraitaliana e le armiatomiche 1945-1991, Bologna, Il mulino, 2007.

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1 Introduction and the Scientific Premises

In the context of the hypothesis of use of the devastating explosive force of nuclear power, Italy had already expressed several personalities who initiated a number of promising studies.(1) For instance, Enrico Fermi and Bruno Rossi – forced to emigrate to the United States in the late Thirties – had greatly contributed to the advancement of general studies on atomic physics.(2) Furthermore, Fermi in 1926 transformed the Institute of Physics of Panisperna street in Rome in a modern research center, with the support of the Director Orso Mario Corbino. The Italian physicist cooperated with young researchers such as Franco Rasetti, EdoardoAmaldi and Ettore Majorana, known as the "Boys of Panisperna street"(3), to which was added later also Bruno Pontecorvo.(4)

After the Second World War, although the resources available to invest in the research were practically nonexistent, studies in the nuclear industry received a major boost with the use of atomic weapons; so it became virtually impossible not to continue on the way taken previously.(5) In 1945 the analysis of the possibility of a peaceful use of atomic energy was also conducted at the Milan Politecnico by Giuseppe Bolla and his pupils, among which there were Giorgio Salvini, Carlo Salvetti, e Mario Silvestri.(6) On the other hand in Italy soon came the so-called "Smith Report", the American White Paper on the nuclear weapons program that included an analysis on the assumption of uranium used also for civilian purposes. It contained a number of important indications on the basis of the "Manhattan Project", the research program conducted by the US during the Second World War which produced the building of the first atomic bomb – and in which participated Enrico Fermi as well as Scientific Director.

The first problem that the Italian scientists had to face was the eventuality that the peace treaty also prohibited the use of the atomic energy for pacific purposes. This was avoided through the direct attendance of the same scientists of the Milan group to Paris peace conference.(7) The Italian researches were supported by several private industries, interested in the possibility of exploiting this new source of energy to produce electricity primarily. The first of these was the Edison, private at that time, but there were also FIAT, Cogne, Montecatini, SADE, Falck, Terni, Olivetti and Pirelli. Thanks to funds provided by the major northern industrial groups, on November 19, 1946 the Centro InformazioniStudiedEsperienze (CISE) was created; it was considered the first footstep toward the development of the nuclear energy in Italy.(8)EdoardoAmaldi and Gilberto Bernardini, the maximum researchers on the nuclear physics in Italy, collaborated from the beginning with CISE. Subsequently also worked in partnership Bruno Ferretti, well-known theoretical physicist, Gustavo Colonnetti, President of the ConsiglioNazionaledelleRicerche (CNR) – the National Research Council, the largest research council in Italy – and Felice Ippolito, Neapolitan geologist who in those years was beginning to take an interest in uranium research on Italian territory. As a result, the CISE was the only Italian research center oriented towards the study of nuclear energy until the creation of the ComitatoNazionale per le RicercheNucleari (CNRN) in 1952. The main aim of CISE was to develop a national reactor on their own. But this was a complex undertaking since no Italian scientist knew at that time what were the working principles of a similar device.

However, the Italian nuclear research was not immune from the influences exerted by the international scenario of the second half of the Forties. Scientific discoveries in this area – as known – were first protected by military secrecy. As a matter, in August 1946 the McMahon Act was approved by the US: it suspended any exchange of information on nuclear questions

(1) Cf. L. Belloni, Da Fermi a Rubbia, Milano, Rizzoli, 1988, pp. 7-62.

(2) About Enrico Fermi cf. L. Fermi, Atomi in famiglia, Milano, Mondadori, 1954; E. Segré, Enrico Fermi, fisico. Una biografiascientifica, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1971.

(3) Cf. G. Battimelli (ed.), L'IstitutoNazionale di FisicaNucleare. Storia di unacomunitàscientifica, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2002, pp. 3-33.

(4) Cf. L.W. Alvarez, Recent Developments in Particle Physics, in M. Conversi, Evolution of particle physics. A volume dedicated to EdoardoAmaldi in his sixtieth birthday, Milano, Periodiciscientifici, 1970, pp. 1-2; E. Amaldi, Da via Panispernaall'America. I fisiciitaliani e la secondaguerramondiale, edited by G. Battimelli and M. De Maria, Roma, Editoririuniti, 1997.

(5) Cf. E. Amaldi, Gliannidellaricostruzione, Institute of Physics Archives, University of Rome "La Sapienza", File EdoardoAmaldi, AmaldiEredi, 89E; this writing was subsequently re-elaborated and published in «Giornale di fisica», XX, 3, 1979, pp. 186-225.

(6) Cf. P. Fornaciari, Il petrolio, l'atomo e ilmetano: l'Italianucleare, 1946-1997. Dallosviluppo a un'irragionevolerinuncia, Milano, 21mo secolo, 1997, pp. 11-12.

(7) Cf. G. Battimelli (ed.), L'IstitutoNazionale di FisicaNucleare, cit., p. 63; M. Silvestri, Il costodellamenzogna: l'Italianucleare (1945-1968), Torino, Einaudi, 1968, pp. 29-30.

(8) Cf. G. Paoloni, Gliesordi del nucleare, in V. Castronovo (ed.), Storiadell'industriaelettrica in Italia, vol. 4, Dal dopoguerraallanazionalizzazione 1945-1962, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1994, p. 384.

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with all foreign countries. Moreover, the chances of being able to obtain supplies of uranium were very limited.(1) Nevertheless, the large technological gap towards highly advanced American research on the atom – which did not relate only Italy but all European countries – stimulateddiscussions arose on the possibility to unite all continental forces in this field. These developments can be considered the first steps toward the start of a European cooperation in the sector of nuclear energy. Furthermore, they were a prelude to the creation both of EURATOM and the world's greatest laboratory for the study on particle physics: the *ConseilEuropéen pour la RechercheNucléaire* (known as CERN)(2).

2 The European Nuclear Cooperation

After having signed the institutive treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community in Paris(3) another organization was established: the European Community of Atomic Energy (known as EURATOM). Its purpose was to coordinate common research programs related to nuclear energy.(4)The idea to set up a European Community for a peaceful use of the atomic energy followed the definitive failure of the European Defence Community (EDC);(5) in that framework EURATOM represented an important tool for the raising of European integration. The aim was to achieve the European energy independence through the atomic source so as to solve the lasting lack of the so-called "traditional energy", which was one of the main problems of the '50s. The intend of the institutive treaty was to contribute to the formation and the development of the European nuclear industries as to guarantee the safety of energy provisioning. At the same time the agreement reassured the population on the fact that atomic supplies would be destined to civil rather than to military purposes.(6) After a preceding

(1) Cf. N. Frandi, La questionedell'uranioneglianniQuaranta e Cinquanta, in M. Guderzo, M.L. Napolitano (eds.), DiplomaziadelleRisorse. Le materie prime e ilsistemainternazionale del Novecento, Firenze, Polistampa, 2004, pp. 87-93.

(2) For a study on the events and on the discussions for a European scientific cooperation during the following years of the Second World War cf. L. Belloni, Da Fermi a Rubbia, cit., pp. 58-94. For a complete analysis on the genesis of the CERN cf. L. Belloni, Sulla genesi del CERN, in «Storiacontemporanea», XVII (1986), f. 4, pp. 615-663; J. Krige, History of CERN, vol. III, Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1996, pp. 3-38.

(3) Cf. W. Diebold Jr., The Schuman plan. A Study in economic cooperation, 1950-1959, New York, Praeger, 1959; D. Spierenburg, R. Poidevin, The history of the high authority of the European coal and steel community: supranationality in operation, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994.

For a study on the creation of the European institutions cf. A. Varsori, P.L. Ballini (eds.), L'Italia e l'Europa: 1947-1979, SoveriaMannelli, Rubbettino, 2004; E. Noël, Le istituzionidelleComunitàeuropee, Roma, Ufficio per l'ItaliadellaDirezionegeneralestampa e informazionedelleComunitàeuropee, 1972.

(4) For a study on European energy cooperation cf. J. Cailleau, Energy: From Synergies to Merger, in M. Dumoulin (ed.), The European Commission, 1958-1972. History and Memories, Bruxelles, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007, pp. 471-490; P. D'Amarzit, Les entreprisespubliques pétrolières et l'approvisionnement en énergie de la Communauté Economique Européenne, Paris, Éditions Technip,1978; Id., Essai d'une politique pétrolière européenne, 1960-1980, Paris, Éditions Techniques et Economiques, 1982; J. A. Hassan, A. Duncan, Integrating Energy: the Problems of Developing an Energy Policy in the European Communities, 1945-1980, in «The Journal of European Economic History», 22(1994), fasc. 1, pp. 159-175; M. Ippolito, Contribution a l'étude du problèmeénergétiquecommunautaire, Paris, R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias, 1969; **N.** Lucas, Western european energy policies: a comparative study of the influence of institutional structure on technical change, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985; N.J.D. Lucas, Energy and the European Communities, London, Europa Publications, 1977; J.H. Matlary, Energy Policy in the European Union, London, Basingstoke, 1991; H. Wallace, C. Webb,W. Wallace (eds.), Policy-making in the European communities, London, Wiley, 1977.

(5) About EDC, the Italian diplomatic action and the attitude of the Italian government and the Italian Armed Forces see: A. Breccia, L'Italia e la difesadell'Europa. Alleorigini del piano Pleven, Roma, Rocca, 1984; Id., L'Italia e le originidellaComunitàEuropea di Difesa (CED), in G. Rossini (ed.), De Gasperi e l'età del centrismo, Roma, Cinque Lune, 1984, pp. 243-257; D. Caviglia, A. Gionfrida, Un'occasione da perdere. Le ForzeArmateitaliane e la ComunitàEuropea di Difesa (1950-54), Roma, Apes, 2009; D. Preda, Storia di unasperanza. La battaglia per la CED e la federazioneeuropeanelle carte delladelegazioneitaliana (1950-1952), Milano, Jaca Book, 1990; Id., Sulla sogliadell'unione. La vicendadellaComunitàPoliticaEuropea (1952-1954), Milano, Jaca Book, 1993; Id., CPE e integrazioneeuropea: un'ipotesiinterpretativa, in «Storiadellerelazioniinternazionali», XIII-XIV, 1998 - n. 2, 1999 - n. 1, pp. 117-150; Id., De Gasperi, Spinelli e l'art. 38 della CED, in «Il Politico», LIV(1989), fasc. 4, pp. 575-595; A. Varsori, Italy between Atlantic Alliance and EDC, 1948-1955, in E. Di Nolfo (ed.), Power in Europe?, vol. II, Great Britain, France, Germay and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957, Berlino-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1992, pp. 260-299; Id., L'europeismonellapoliticaesteraitaliana, in L. Tosi (ed.), L'Italia e le organizzazioniinternazionali. Diplomaziamultilateralenel Novecento, Padova, Cedam, 1999, pp. 392-415; Id., L'ItaliafraAlleanzaatlantica e la CED, in «Storiadellerelazioniinternazionali», IV(1988), fasc. 1, pp. 125-165.

(6) Cf. B. Curli, La tecnocrazianucleareitaliana e le originidell'EURATOM, in L.V. Majocchi (ed.), Messina quarant'annidopo: l'attualità del metodo in vista dellaconferenzaintergovernativa del 1996, Bari, Cacucci, 1996; Id., Le originidellapoliticaenergeticacomunitaria, 1958-64, in M. Guderzo-M.L.

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agreement reached in the Venice Conference (1956), the institutive treaty was signed in March 1957 with the European Common Market (ECM) treaty in Rome. The energy question also appeared in the third part of the Spaak Report. This section contained a series of recommendations on the measures considered urgent and the energy was the first one.(1) The European countries have also undertaken to set some proposals for a European energy policy when the institutive treaties of the EEC and EURATOM were signed(2).

Despite the important targets, the project clashed with the French military intentions. In fact, Paris had already started a national atomic program but it aspired to the construction of a plant of isotopic separation, which was considered necessary to get a sure source of U235 enriched uranium-type for civil and military uses. In this way, France aimed to create the bases for the development of an atomic military program at the same time. From this point of view, the strengthening of the French nuclear program, thanks to the European project, would have caused many problems in the relations with the United States. Consequently, the European countries preferred dropping the project in order to establish a *Syndicatd'études* with the only purpose to compile and evaluate the project for a possible setting up of an isotopic separation plant.(3)However, in this way European cooperation in the atomic sector came out strongly limited: first of all because the absence of that project was an important restriction. Secondly, the EURATOM was not equipped with those instruments acts to prevent the possible military nuclear proliferation of EU countries. The latter situation caused many frictions among both European partners and, above all, towards the United States: on one side, Washington accepted favourably EURATOM, able to revive the integration process after the failure of the EDC. On the other hand, the White House looked with fear the possibility of a nuclear Europe able to create an independent military program(4).

Notwithstanding this, in a way the Suez crisis had the effect of accelerating the Community cooperation in this field. Some EEC partners – France *in primis*– saw in EURATOM the possibility of recovering the European prestige lost during the 1956 conflict. The US, instead, decided to insert a clause in all peaceful nuclear agreements under negotiation by which the contracting governments undertook to use new knowledge only for industrial uses. Washington also accepted the systematic sending of inspectors for the control of materials and equipment supplied. To turn this process into a supranational control system US thought to create a special agency within the UN. As a matter, during the Washington Conference of February 1956 the International Atomic Energy Agency's constitution (IAEA) was decided.(5) This institution – officially founded on July 29, 1957 with headquarters in Vienna – was intended to promote nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to prevent its use for military purposes by the international control system already experienced by the US in agreements signed previously.

In this scenario there were two major official agreements for Italy in the peaceful uses of atomic energy: the first with Washington in the July 3, 1957.(6) The second with London on December 28, 1957.(7) Officially ratified in 1958, these agreements provided for exchanges of information, supply of materials and fuels, checks, training of personnel, as well as exclusion of liability for States suppliers. Furthermore, within the process of European cooperation was established another institution inside OEEC – the Organization for European Economic Co-operation – in 1957: the European Nuclear Energy

Napolitano (eds.), DiplomaziadelleRisorse, cit., pp. 95-118; Id., L'Italie et l'EURATOM : l'attitude des hautsfonctionnaires et des experts, in E. du Réau (ed.), Europe des élites? Europe des peuples? La construction de l'espaceeuropéen, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1998, pp. 277-289; Id., L'Italia e la sceltanucleareeuropea, in «StoriadelleRelazioniInternazionali», XIII(1998), fasc. 2, pp. 41-79 - XIV (1999), fasc.1, pp. 295-313; L. Hubert, La politique nucléaire de la Communauté européenne (1956-1968) Une tentative de définition, à travers les archives de la Commission européenne, in «The journal of European Integration History», 6(2000), fasc. 1, p. 129 and following; F. Ippolito, L'EURATOM e la politicanucleareitaliana, cit., pp. 20-45; L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., p. 120.

(1) Cf. B. Curli, Le originidellapoliticaenergeticacomunitaria, 1958-64, cit., p. 98.

(2) For European energy policy the author refers to the attempts to create collaboration in this sector among Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.

(3) For close examinations cf. B. Curli, Il progettonucleareitaliano (1952-1964), SoveriaMannelli, Rubbettino, 2000, pp. 192-194; L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 120-124.

(4) Ibidem.

(5) Cf. Statut de l'Agenceinternationale de l'énergieatomique, New York, October 26, 1956, Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), File Jules Guéron, n. 112.

For further examinations cf. A. Albonetti, Energianucleare e crisienergeticaeuropea, Roma, Studium, 1974, pp. 92-96; D. Fischer, History of the international Atomic Energy Agency: the first forty years, Vienna, IAEA, 1997.

(6) Cf. Accordotral'Italia e gliStatiUnitid'Americasugliusipacificidell'energiaatomica, Washington, July 3, 1957, ACS, File MinisteroPubblicaIstruzione, Direzionegenerale per l'istruzioneuniversitaria, Ispettoratogenerale per la ricercascientifica, Divisione X, 93.

(7) Cf. Accordo di cooperazionetrailgovernodellaRepubblicaitalianaedilgoverno del RegnoUnito di Gran Bretagna e d'Irlanda del Nord nel campo degliusipacificidell'energianucleare, Rome, December 28, 1957, HAEU, File Edoardo Martino, n. 227.

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Agency (ENEA)[1] with the task of setting up joint nuclear companies open to all members and to coordinate existing projects.[2] The nuclear industry was consequently the focus of European cooperation in this period. A further demonstration of this was the agreement for the peaceful uses of atomic energy made directly between EURATOM and US in May-June 1958[3].

3 The military agreement between Italy, France and Germany

Italy during the negotiation for the European nuclear cooperation supported, against all expectations, French demands for the construction of an isotope separation plant – actually built in Pierrelatte in southern France.[4] Between Rome and Paris was in fact born a closer cooperation which, together with the discussions for the EURATOM, also involved the military fields. In this scenario, Rome also defended the French idea not to give up any future military involvements. As a matter, Italy officially sided with who criticized the Anglo-US nuclear monopoly, lobbying within the Atlantic Alliance to find solutions alternative able to offer a greater sharing of the existing atomic technologies.[5] In this scenario, the French idea took shape to create a study group – linked with similar groups eventually created in Italy and Germany – which would have done concrete proposals in the next session of the North Atlantic Council – in program in Paris in December. Duringthis meeting, in fact, it was expected an American proposal about a European nuclear sharing.[6] The Parisian hypothesis, strongly supported by the Italian Ambassador Quaroni, represented the premise for closer Italian-French-German military cooperation that did not exclude *a priori* the possibility of making nuclear weapons.[7] On the other hand, the Italian ambassador had long supported the need not to «neglect, collaterally to our initiatives to the US, a contemporary action with France and other Western European countries, which are closest to the economy and Italians guidelines».[8]Quaroni was concerned that Italy would find itself «in the technical impossibility to reproduce and maybe use the new weapons that the Americans were willing to give us». On the contrary, «the collaboration with the French [would give] the means to keep us still in operation and decrease techniques distances»[9].

Notwithstanding this, the French proposals on the military cooperation between Italy, France and Germany did not fit with the Rome wishes. Paris from the beginning wanted to pursue an agreement even without the support and consensus within the US Atlantic Council meeting of December; instead in the Italian Foreign Ministry there were different opinions.[10] Nevertheless, the fear of being excluded from a potentially important project put aside initial differences. In fact, on November 28, 1957 the Ministers of Defence of the three countries involved – Paolo Emilio Taviani, Jacques Chaban-Delmas and Franz Joseph Strauss – signed a secret protocol that foresaw the collaboration in the military nuclear sector in order to achieve the creation of a European nuclear deterrent. This cooperation was to take place according with NATO and EEC constraints. The three governments also agreed to conceal the true purpose of the agreement up to the forthcoming session of the North Atlantic Council[11].

The latter choice was not particularly appreciated by the Italian diplomats, especially in the Washington headquarters. According to the Italian Ambassador EgidioOrtona, on the eve of the second visit in US of the Foreign Minister Giuseppe Pella, not all in the Italian Embassy had agreed to hide to Eisenhower the tripartite project. In fact, if the Italian Ambassador ManlioBrosio was a French supporter, the same Ortona claimed to «not be able to conceive an initiative totally independent

(1) Cf. A. Albonetti, Energianucleare e crisienergeticaeuropea, cit., pp. 99-103.

(2) For further examinations cf. B. Goldschmidt, Il nucleare: storiapoliticadell'energianucleare, Napoli, Liguori, 1986, pp. 281-282.

(3) Cf. Accord de coopération entre la Communauté Européenne de l'Énergie Atomique (EURATOM) et le gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique concernant les utilisations pacifiques de l'énergie atomique, Bruxelles, May 29, 1958-Washington, June 19, 1958, in «Journal Officiel des Communautés Européennes», II(1959), f. 17.

(4) Cf. B. Curli, Il progettonucleareitaliano (1952-1964), cit., pp. 193-194; L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 126-127.

(5)Ivi, pp. 127-131.

(6) Cf. Telespresso n. 088 from Pietro Quaroni (Italian Ambassador in Paris) to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, October, 1957, ArchivioStoricoDiplomatico del MinisterodegliAffariEsteri (ASMAE), Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 76.

(7) Ibidem.

(8) Letter from Pietro Quaroni to Vittorio Valletta (President of FIAT), Paris, January 11, 1957, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 75.

(9) Ibidem.

(10) Cf. Telegram n. 940/784 from Pietro Quaroni to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, November 22, 1957, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 75.

(11) For further examinations cf. Cacace, L'Italia e la bombaeuropea, cit., pp. 87-104; L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., p. 131 and following.

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and detached from the American allies»[1]. Ortona for this reason advised to properly inform the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Of the same opinion was Massimo Magistrati, Director General of the Political Business of the Farnesina. Ortona and Magistrati succeeded in convincing Pella to make a fleeting mention of the Italian-French-German agreement during the meeting of December 6, 1957 with Dulles. Moreover also Paris and Bonn had leaked something in the previous days. As a matter, the Italian Foreign Minister then told to the US Secretary of State about the talks with France and Germany, but focusing on the problem of discrimination between the allies in the Atlantic Alliance. In this way the essence of the project was diminished and Dulles was not alarmed[2].

Indeed several were the leaks from all three countries involved, so that it was not possible to keep the official secret on the Italian-French-German protocol before the Atlantic Council meeting. To officially inform Washington was Chancellor Konrad Adenauer during a private conversation with the Secretary of State.[3] Notwithstanding this, when the Parisian Atlantic Council meeting started, the French Prime Minister Felix Gaillard d'Aimé made no mention of the secret protocol and the cooperation in the field of nuclear weapons. Conversely, he just inform allies of the existence of a generic initiative with Rome and Bonn on arms, opening the door to all the countries that desired to participate. Expressed in these terms the question during the meeting passed into the background. Consequently the attention of the audience moved on Americans announcements about the deployment of new medium-range missiles in Europe and other similar concessions which effectively relaunched the role and functions of the same NATO[4].

The tripartite project was not entirely set aside, even if Paris seemed at that stage a lot more interested in the US proposal, creating doubts about the French real purposes. In fact, it is certain that the signing of the secret protocol served to increase pressure on Washington and get more concessions within the Atlantic Alliance. On the other hand, for the same reasons it appeared decidedly illogical at that time altogether abandon the Italian-French-German project.[5] As planned, the three Ministers of Defence met in Bonn on January 21, 1958, agreeing to a temporary postponement of the nuclear cooperation[6]. To push this choice was Chaban-Delmas who «thought it better to that point to invite Mr. Taviani and Mr. Strauss to "defer" to the development of the atomic part of the agreement».[7] The French minister seemed to be affected by US pressure and, above all, wanted to evaluate the new Washington proposals[8].

As a result, without its main strategic element, the Italian-French-German agreement gradually lost its importance. France was increasingly embroiled in the North African issues, while Italy seemed to take more and more distanced from those positions that exposed Rome to Washington's criticism.[9]Taviani, Chaban-Delmas and Strauss met again on April 8, 1958 for a new and final important meeting about the tripartite project, officially deciding to scrap any nuclear plan waiting to know the US opinion of the US. At the same time, however, the three Ministers of Defense signed a memorandum for the construction of an isotope separation plant in France, setting the shares of each country: forty percent for Paris and Bonn, ten percent for Rome.[10] The agreement sanctioned a new support for the French nuclear intentions, not excluding *a priori*, in fact, the risk of utilization also for military purposes of the enriched uranium produced[11].

This scenario was destined to change radically after the return to power of Charles de Gaulle. According to the Italian Ambassador Rossi-Longhi, the French General had «too much interest to try to reconstitute the "Directory" of the three Westerners and consequently he [was] apparently led to improve its relations with the Anglo-Americans: so the idea of an alliance between Italy, France and Germany [could] not have had in his mind that a secondary function. Only if these attempts should fail de Gaulle [could be] induced to fall back on that idea, but then that would be clearly anti-

(1) E. Ortona, Annid'America. La diplomazia 1953-1961, Bologna, Il mulino, 1986, p. 269.

(2)Ivi, pp. 270-272.

(3) Cf. L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 138-139.

(4)Ivi, pp. 139-140.

(5) It was the Italian idea that with Taviani tried in every way to reassure Washington about the goodness of the intentions of Rome (for further examinations cf. ivi, pp. 143-148).

(6) For a different report of the meeting of January 21 cf. G.H. Soutou, L'allianceincertaine. Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954-1996, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 106.

(7) Note from the Italian General Giuseppe Mancinelli to the Italian Ambassador Alberto Rossi-Longhi, Rome, August 26, 1958, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 80.

(8) Cf. Telegram n. 195 from the Italian Ambassador Pietro Quaroni to the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, February 10, 1958, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 83.

(9) For further examinations cf. L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 154-163.

(10) Cf. G.H. Soutou, L'allianceincertaine, cit., pp. 110-111.

(11) On the other hand the agreement of April 8, as reported by Soutou, was only verbal and Strauss refused to officially sign it (cf. ibidem.)

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British and [...] anti-Atlantic».(1) Practically, de Gaulle, who kept the interim the Ministry of Defense, decided to temporarily suspend all agreements with European allies in the military field(2).

However, this change in strategy was not immediate and did not seem to be the official cause of the end of nuclear cooperation with Rome and Bonn. In fact, in many circumstances the French representatives openly declared the wish to continue the tripartite project. In addition, on the occasion of the official visit in Paris of the Italian Prime Minister AmintoreFanfani (August 7-8, 1958), the documentation prepared by the *entourage* of the Foreign Ministry made no mention of problems regarding the Italian-French-German agreement: «It does not appear so far to be any change in the good dispositions of France after the establishment of the new government».(3) Furthermore, during the official interviews de Gaulle clearly said that «the job to three had to be continues».(4) The General also said that he did not like any entrance of London in the agreement, which insisted from time to participate; this emphasizing «the relevant specific weight that the Anglo-Americans [had] in the production of armaments, including the NATO»(5).

As a matter, the end of the tripartite agreement, in absence of further official documentation, can be depended instead by Italy's autonomous choice. This is the thesis of Albonetti Achilles, director of the Division of International Affairs and Economic Studies of the ComitatoNazionale per l'EnergiaNucleare (CNEN) – the Italian Committee for Nuclear Energy, born in 1960 to replace CNRN: «Many people believe that the agreement between Italy, France and Germany in 1957 was stopped by the arrival to power of de Gaulle in 1958 and its desire to create independently the French nuclear force. This is an inaccuracy. In fact we were ourselves Italians, worried by the French General, considered authoritarian and disturbing man, to withdraw and to delete from the Italian budget funding required for participation to the system of Pierrelatte».(6) Of the same opinion was another character of the time, Felice Ippolito, Secretary General of the CNRN. According to him, who declared to not know the military part of the agreement, Italy's exit from the project had only economic nature and was decided in 1957.(7) Anyway, despite the official motivation is not identified, it is a datum of fact that the nuclear cooperation agreement between Italy and France and Germany fell into oblivion. On the other hand, with future scenarios – including the *force de frappe*, the deep crisis of centrism in Italy and the forthcoming Berlin crisis – there were not anymore the conditions for a revival of the tripartite agreement.

4 Conclusions

The nuclear hypotheses of the Fifties allow to advance different suppositions on the real Italian intents in this field. It needs to exclude previously the possibility – sustained by some in past – that Rome wanted to become an atomic power developing an autonomous nuclear strategy and in contrast with Washington. This not only for the absence of political wish in this sense, but also for the financial impossibility to effect a similar choice. Furthermore, Italy did not have the government stability and the strength to develop nuclear weapons, circumventing the veto imposed by the peace treaty signed after the Second World War. Probably the agreement with Paris and Berlin, if signed, would have been an opportunity for Rome to really develop a nuclear policy. Anyway, for Italy there were no the political conditions for making such a choice in complete autonomy. Instead it appears reasonable to believe that in Italy many leaders – especially in the Foreign Affairs Ministry – had understood the importance and the necessity both to get the atomic know-how, and to succeed in directly participating in international institutions – within the NATO or the EEC – with nuclear military responsibility. These aims, not achieved by the Italian-French-German agreement, were – for instance – at the base of the doubts expressed by several Italian leaders on the occasion of signing the NPT. Signed on July 1, 1968, the treaty aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament.(8)

The limitations imposed by the NPT produced a series of polemics with the non-nuclear countries. This was the case of Italy

(1) Cf. Telegram n. 0887 from the Italian Ambassador Alberto Rossi-Longhi to Adolfo Alessandrini, General Secretary of the Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Paris, June 11, 1958, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 83.

(2) For further examinations cf. G.H. Soutou, L'allianceincertaine, cit., pp. 136-139.

(3)Viaggiodell'On. MinistroFanfani a Parigi (7-8 agosto), Internal Note of Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, DirezioneGeneraleAffariPolitici (DGAP), Uff. I, Rome, August 6, 1958, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 130.

(4)Colloqui del presidenteFanfani con ilgenerale de Gaulle e Couve de Murville (Parigi 7-8 agosto 1958), Internal Note of Italian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Rome, not dated, ASMAE, Ambasciata di Parigi 1951-1958, b. 81.

(5) Ibidem.

(6) A. Albonetti, Storiasegretadellabombaitalianaedeuropea, cit., p. 159.

(7) Cf. B. Curli, Il progettonucleareitaliano (1952-1964), cit., pp. 194-195; for further examinations on the decline of the tripartite accord and on the various hypotheses cf. L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 164-169.

(8) For further examinations cf. L. Nuti, La sfidanucleare, cit., pp. 287-345.

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worried that controls – carried out by the IAEA – produced even too much binding restrictions in the pacific use of the atomic energy.(1) As a result, States that still did not possess nuclear weapons decided to convene an international conference in Geneva from August 29, 1968 to September 29, 1968 to discuss the consequences that could have been having since the signing of the NPT.(2) The meeting was attended by the delegations of ninety-five governments – including those of the four nuclear countries: US, URSS, France and GB but without the right to vote – and three specialized agencies of the United Nations: IAEA, the International Labour Organization and World Meteorological Organization.(3) Italy was represented by Foreign Minister Giuseppe Medici. In his speech, he stressed the need that the NPT was also a guarantee instrument for free access to the supply of atomic raw materials and to acquire the necessary know-how for countries without nuclear weapons(4).

Notwithstanding this, concomitant Czechoslovak events did not favor the positive evolution of this dialogue. Moscow, just few weeks after the signing of the NPT, had in fact manifestly violated the part of the preamble to the document which referred to the Charter of the UN on the commitment of States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of every State.(5) As a matter, although the validity of the NPT – strongly criticized during the conference of non-nuclear countries – was not in question, several countries decided to delay the definitive adhesion to the Treaty. Italy, for instance, did it only with the parliamentary ratification of the May 2, 1975, six years after the official signing of Pietro Nenni (January 28, 1969). Moreover, this signature was accompanied by a protocol which contained twelve reserves on the conditions in which the government accepted the membership. For instance, Rome officially renounced the creation of a national atomic force, but not the so-called European clause: the participation in a possible EEC military nuclear project, to be carried out only in the event that the global disarmament process – which is also required by Italy – had not occurred(6).

However, doing this important and inevitable choice, the Italian foreign policy, like that of all the non-nuclear countries, has undergone as a downgrading. In fact, with the NPT the world was finally split between holders and not holders the atomic technology for military purposes, placing the first in a privileged position within the international scene. Moreover, it is a fact that a nation with a military nuclear potential has greater bargaining power able to influence the outcome of any possible controversy. In the case of Italy, to this contingency has been added a progressive general decline, accelerated in the last fifteen years by some completely wrong and often self damaging foreign policy guidelines(7).

Finally, the renunciation of the creation of a national atomic force and the absence of a EEC military nuclear project have accelerated the Italian downgrading process; and this without having been made a foreign policy to offset this negative trend. In other words, Rome was unable to improve its international status under the two mainstays that have distinguished its diplomatic history since World War II: Europeanism and Atlanticism.

(1) For a study about the explanations that Italy would have had to ask before sticking to the TNP cf. Letteradell'ing. Giulio Cesoni a Emilio Bettini, Turin, October 27, 1967, ASMAE, File Emilio Bettini (1941-1983), b. 13.

For a direct testimony cf. Rapporto di AchilleAlbonetti dal titolo "Accesso degliStatimilitarmente non nucleari - chehannorinunciatoallaproduzione, all'acquisto e all'utilizzazionedellearminucleari - alletecnologie per l'utilizzodell'energianucleare, giugno 1968", ASMAE, File Emilio Bettini (1941-1983), b. 13; E. Bettini (ed.), Il Trattatocontro la proliferazionenucleare, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1968.

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(2) Cf. Internal Note "ConferenzadeiPaesi non nucleari", New York, May 6, 1968, ASMAE, File Emilio Bettini (1941-1983), b. 14; Sintesidelledieciemorie per la Conferenzadei non nuclearipredisposte da espertiindipendenti, enclosure of an Internal Note of MAE, DGAP, Ufficio XIV, Rome, August 19, 1968, ibidem.

(3) Cf. RelazionesullosvolgimentodellaConferenzadeiPaesi non nucleari, Compiled by the President of the Italian delegation, Alberto Folchi, Rome, September 30, 1968, ASMAE, File Emilio Bettini (1941-1983), b. 14.

(4) Cf. Discorso del senatore Giuseppe Medici ministrodegliAffariEsteridellaRepubblicaItalianaallaconferenzadeipaesimilitarmente non nucleari, Geneva, September 5, 1968, ASMAE, File Emilio Bettini (1941-1983), b. 14.

(5) Cf. article n. 2, subparagraph 4 of the Charter of the UN.

(6) For further examinations cf. A. Albonetti (ed.), L'Italia e l'atomica, cit., p. 27 and following.

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