

What Is Italy Doing for Nuclear Disarmament?

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On the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella, reiterated that "Italy strongly supports the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons." He was echoed by the President of the House of Representatives Defense Commission, Gianluca Rizzo (M5S): "I make my own the President of the Republic's words for a policy that aims at a world free from nuclear weapons." This is maximum institutional commitment therefore, but in what direction?

Let's talk of facts. Italy ratified the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1975, which states:

"Each of the militarily non-nuclear States participating in the Treaty undertakes neither to receive nuclear weapons from anyone, nor to exercise directly or indirectly any control over these weapons."

Violating the NPT, Italy has granted use of its own bases for the deployment of US nuclear weapons: currently B61 bombs, the number of which is estimated to be a few dozen, but this is not verifiable. They are installed in the Aviano base together with US F-16C / D fighters, and in Ghedi-Torre base where Tornado PA-200s of the Italian Air Force are ready for a nuclear attack under US command. Italy – as NATO confirmed – is one of the countries that "supplies the Alliance with airplanes equipped to carry nuclear bombs, over which the United States maintain absolute control, and Italian personnel is trained for this purpose." The B61 will be replaced shortly by the B61-12: a new nuclear bomb with a selectable power which targets with precision and has the ability to penetrate underground to destroy command center bunkers. The Pentagon program foresees the construction of 500 B61-12s at a cost of 10 billion dollars. The program is in the final phase: launch tests of the new bomb (without nuclear warhead) are underway in the Nevada ranges. Among certified aircraft for its use are the Tornado PA-200 and the new F-35A, supplied to the Italian Air Force. It is unknown how many B61-12s will be deployed in Italy and other European countries. They could be more than the previous B-61s and be installed in other bases as well. The refurbished Ghedi base can accommodate up to 30 F-35A fighters with 60 B61-12s. The new bombs are added to the nuclear weapons of the Sixth Fleet stationed in Italy, whose type and number are secret.

Furthermore, as the INF Treaty has been torn up, the US is developing ground-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles, which, like the 1980s Euromissiles, could also be installed in Italian bases. Although Italy is officially a non-nuclear State, thus performs the increasingly dangerous advanced basic function of the US / NATO nuclear strategy against Russia and other countries. As a member of the North Atlantic Council, Italy rejected the UN

Treaty on the abolition of nuclear weapons in 2017. In the same year, over 240 Italian parliamentarians – mostly from the Democratic Party and M5S, who are the current governing parties – pledged to promote Italy’s accession to the UN Treaty by signing the Ican Appeal. The current President of the Defense Commission, Gianluca Rizzo, and the current Foreign minister, Luigi Di Maio, were in the front row.

Three years later their solemn commitment turns out to be a demagogic expedient to collect votes, as facts prove. To implement “a policy that points to a world free of nuclear weapons” in Italy, as Gianluca Rizzo declaims, there is only one way: to free Italy from nuclear weapons, as prescribed by the NPT, and to join the UN Treaty, implementing the provisions: “Each State party that has nuclear weapons in its territory, owned or controlled by another State, must ensure the rapid removal of such weapons.” The signatories of the Ican Commitment therefore require the United States to remove any nuclear weapons from Italy. If there is anyone in Parliament who wants a world free from nuclear weapons, they should show it not in words but in deeds.

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