

(Unofficial translation)

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Rome, 25th November 1979.

Dear Colleague,

I am sure that you will agree with me that the issue of the modernization of the TNF and the simultaneous offer of negotiations by the countries of the Atlantic Alliance to the Soviet Union for the control and limitation of the nuclear weapons is of vital importance for all members of NATO and requires, in the opinion of my Government, a solidarity in its treatment by all the interested parties.

In this conviction and in full respect of this requirement of solidarity, of which the Italian Government has always given proof towards all its allied countries, let me tell you, dear Colleague, that the position that your Government has publicly adopted, as it appears from the news given out by the agencies following the statement that you have made in Copenhagen on the 23rd November, has provoked my surprise and perplexity.

For some time all the Governments of the Alliance have been considering the problems concerning the modernization of the TNF, as well as those of the contextual negotiations for the reduction of such weapons, in the competent fora of the Alliance, in the full freedom for the positions adopted by each Government, avoiding however that each of them put the others in front of the public adoption of positions.

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H.E.
the Hon. Kjeld Olesen
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Copenhagen

In fact, these unilateral stands are not in the interest of any of the interested parties, beginning with Denmark, a responsible and appreciated member of the Alliance.

Several allied Governments - including mine, through the declarations of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Malfatti, in the Chamber of Deputies on 31st October - have not failed to show to the countries of the Warsaw Pact their availability to reach negotiated agreements in view of a restoration of a balance of forces, hopefully at the lowest possible level. However the expression of willingness demonstrated so far by the Soviet Union has not reached the stage of the intention to block unilaterally the realization of its own programme of new SS 20 missiles and to destroy those already in existence.

The reality of the ratio between the forces of East and West caused by the deployment of SS 20 missiles by Moscow has not been a surprise and has not damaged the solidarity of the West; other statements which do not take into account the attitude of the Soviet Union do not appear to the Italian Government to be beneficial either to the common interest of the NATO countries or to the objectives which all of us propose to reach through the negotiations which we offer to the Soviet Government.

Moreover let me point out that the possibility of a postponement of six months of the decision to proceed with modernization, as it has been reported by information sources, does not seem conducive, in such a short period of time with the counterpart, in the framework of the SALT III, to concrete results which might render totally ^{or} partly superfluous - as all of us are hoping - the modernization programme.

Finally I would like to draw your kind attention to the danger that the negative conclusion, which is not difficult to foresee, of a negotiation to be conducted within the period of six months, followed by the decision of the countries of the Alliance to modernize and to deploy the TNF, would give to such a decision a dramatic character, thus compromising any future negotiation or postponing it far into the future. That is precisely against our intentions.

I am sure that these considerations still represent the foundation of the convictions of your Government, beyond stands which have perhaps been hastily interpreted by the press, and that we will be able to rely as always in the past on the solidarity of the Danish Government in respect of the decisions which we will have to make also in view of the negotiations to start in order to reach negotiated agreement.

I avail myself of this opportunity, dear Colleague, to renew to you the assurances of my highest consideration.

Francesco Cossiga
Minister of Foreign Affairs ad interim |