

# Italian Antiwar MPs - A call for International Solidarity

Sunday 9 July 2006, by [ACHCAR Gilbert](#), [CHOMSKY Noam](#) (Date first published: 9 July 2006).

## Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [DON'T VOTE FOR THIS MISSION](#)
- [Noam Chomsky's Letter to \(...\)](#)

## Introduction

### **Gilbert Achcar**

Eight members of the Italian Senate and two members of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, all belonging to the left-wing of the ruling coalition (l'Unione, led by Prime Minister Romano Prodi) have announced their intention to vote against the government on the issue of Afghanistan. Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's previous Premier and George W. Bush's buddy, had sent 1,300 Italian troops to Afghanistan as a component of the Nato force operating there, as well as 2,600 troops to Iraq as part of Bush's "coalition of the willing."

The new "center-left" government, betraying the expectations of the majority of its electors, has announced a phased withdrawal of troops from Iraq that doesn't differ much from the one Berlusconi had already negotiated with the US government. At the same time, l'Unione has proclaimed its intention to extend the mission of Italian troops in Afghanistan, despite the fact that Nato forces in that country, recently redeployed toward the South, are increasingly engaged in war activities, acting as US auxiliary forces. Even if Italian troops were not sent to the South, they would nevertheless be part of Nato's war-machine. The Afghan people are of course entitled to security, but neither US troops, nor the troops of the US-dominated Nato, can provide this.

Since l'Unione holds no majority in the Senate without the eight Senators, there is tremendous pressure being exerted on the latter to get them to change their stance, in the name of coalition solidarity and interest, including a threat to move the decree by means of a vote of confidence that would face them with the choice between reneging on their stance or letting the government fall. However, the latter threat is defused by the announcement by some members of the "center-right" that they will vote for the decree extending the mission of Italian troops in Afghanistan, as they don't want to abstain on an issue that they support wholeheartedly, particularly since the Afghan deployment was initiated by the Berlusconi government to which they belonged.

To counter the pressures exerted on them, the antiwar MPs have launched a petition and called for expressions of support. These will be reported at an important antiwar assembly, organized by the Peace movement and the antiwar MPs, to be held in Rome on July 15. The debate and vote in the Senate will take place in the last week of July.

The build-up of support, including international support, for the antiwar Italian MPs is thus very

important for their fight and their ability to resist the pressure.

There are two ways for supporting them: either by signing the petition at [www.sinistracritica.org](http://www.sinistracritica.org) (see below for an English translation of the petition and the information needed to sign it) or — if you are well-known in Italy or represent a well-known organization — by directly sending them a message to: nironi1973 libero.it. Noam Chomsky's message to the MPs sent on July 7 (see below) got a wide publicity in Italy and was reported and quoted in the mainstream media.

---

## **The Petition**

### **DON'T VOTE FOR THIS MISSION**

A call for support of the Senators and Deputies who have announced that they will vote against the decree for re-funding of the [Italian participation in the Nato] mission in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, there is a war in which Italy fully participates through the mission led by Nato.

The Prodi government, carrying on from the previous government, has decided to maintain Italian troops in Afghanistan without changing in any way their military presence.

These last years, we have protested “with no if and no but” against all wars, including the war in Afghanistan.

For these reasons, Italy cannot and should not participate in this mission, and pacifist left-wing forces, starting with the PRC, should not support it.

We call on members of Parliament to cast a vote that is consistent with their own convictions, and we call on l'Unione to acknowledge this clear stance and make a turn toward an “exit strategy” from Afghanistan in conformity with article 11 of the [Italian] constitution that is written in the governmental program.

[Following is the translation of the headings for the information that needs to be filled in in order to sign the petition]

Nome e Cognome [first and last name]

Indirizzo e-mail [E-mail address]

Città [City and Country]

Struttura [Organization; you can also write here instead your profession or whatever information about you is relevant; if you wish to leave that space blank, just type any character in]

After filling the four spaces, click on Invia [Send]

**To sign, go to: [www.sinistracritica.org](http://www.sinistracritica.org)**

---

## **Noam Chomsky's Letter to the Italian Antiwar MPs**

Dear friends,

I have learned of your courageous stand against Italy's participation in military operations of NATO, as it is being converted into an international intervention force subordinate to the United States. Expansion of NATO to the East, in violation of firm guarantees to Gorbachev when he agreed to a unified Germany within NATO, was already a very serious threat to international peace and security, even apart from the deceit. The new and still more expansive role NATO is assuming poses serious threats to international order. I would like to express my personal appreciation for your insistence on upholding the principles of Article 11 of the Italian Constitution, that "Italy repudiates war as an instrument of offence against the liberty of other peoples and as a means of resolving international disputes; accepts, on the condition of equality with the other States, the limitations on sovereignty required for an order which ensures peace and justice between Nations; promotes and encourages the international organisations established with that end."

Sincerely yours,

Noam Chomsky

View online : [To sign](#)