Tajani “Syria, let’s avert the emergency. In the EU Forza Italia’s shield on Fitto” (Nazione – Carlino – Giorno)

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Rome – “We risk a new migration crisis and a humanitarian catastrophe in Syria. We must act quickly to prevent the worst outcomes”. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Antonio Tajani expressed his deep concerns about the resurgence of the Syrian crisis, especially as it exacerbates the broader tragedies unfolding across the Middle East, from Lebanon to Gaza, with the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah still very fragile. “I am closely monitoring the situation minute by minute”, he warns. “In recent hours, the Franciscan Terra Sancta College in Aleppo has suffered damage from a Russian attack. I urge all parties involved in the conflict in Syria to protect the civilian population. We are continuing to provide every possible assistance to Italians in Syria through our embassy”.

Minister, the Syrian issue appears to be a further escalation in an area of serious conflict.

“I am very concerned about the situation in Syria and the potential for hundreds of deaths once again. If a civil war were to erupt, the real danger for us would be a migration crisis similar to what we experienced during the first Syrian civil war. Back then, many people fled to Lebanon and Germany, where they were welcomed by Merkel. Today, we cannot afford to face another migration emergency”.

How to cope with the new danger?

“Tomorrow [editor’s note: today], I will be in Cairo to attend the Humanitarian Conference aimed at strengthening the response to Gaza. This conference is co-organised by Egypt and the United Nations. It will also mark the first opportunity for the international community to discuss the new aspects of the crisis in Syria.

Generally, the ceasefire in Lebanon is fragile, and we must ensure that it is strengthened. If the ceasefire fails in Lebanon, it will diminish any hope for stability in Gaza. We need to work towards de-escalation and prepare to address the Gaza crisis comprehensively”.

In this context comes Trump. What role can Italy also play in Europe?

“Italy can serve as an important bridge between the new administration and Europe. We will work to strengthen the relations between the EU and the US because transatlantic ties

provide stability. A unified voice can promote peace in regions like the Middle East and Ukraine, counteract Putin's aggressive ambitions, address China's expansive trade policies, and help avoid or reduce the risk of a trade war in the West. While this will not be easy, Italy must do everything in its power to support Europe. It's no coincidence that many European governments consider our country a trusted partner of Trump, who has historically maintained a favourable view of Italy".

Let's stay in Europe: were the EPP and Forza Italia in the EPP decisive for Raffaele Fitto's vice-presidency?

"Absolutely. The EPP has been a shield for us, enabling Raffaele Fitto to become the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission. It has helped us avoid attacks on the Italian government, particularly during attempts to impeach him. In the European Union, our involvement has allowed us to build a larger and more inclusive majority, collaborating with a segment of the Conservatives. Our presence in the EPP has been crucial, serving as both a driving force and a guarantee".

In this framework, how do you position yourselves for the post-Fitto period?

"We have never sought a position in the government. Our priority is not to fight for seats".

The Italian government has experienced a moment of serious tension over the RAI TV licence fee in the last week: is it all over, as Prime Minister Meloni or Minister Salvini claim?

"There has never been a clash on fundamental issues between us. Our relationship is a strategic alliance that has deep historical roots, rather than a mere electoral alliance. Although we belong different parties, we share a common heritage that includes figures like Alcide De Gasperi, Don Luigi Sturzo, and Luigi Einaudi. As Forza Italia, we assert our positions as a liberal, garantist, and reformist party. It's important to recognise that differing ideas do not indicate division; they are simply diverse viewpoints. Having different opinions is both normal and acceptable, and it is through synthesis that we find common ground. Let no one be misled into thinking that there are serious divisions within this government. We will continue our work until the end of the legislative term, so let them come to terms with that".

Will you insist on further reducing the Irpef and increasing minimum pensions during the manoeuvre?

"We will insist on finding out what financial options Minister Giorgetti can identify. We'll wait and see. If it's not feasible this year, we will take action next year. I would like to point out that with the EUR 430 million that will not be used to cover the proposed twenty-euro annual cut to the TV licence fee, we could start to either lower the Irpef or Ires taxes, increase minimum pensions, or reduce waiting lists in hospitals".

One last note: you mentioned the idea of enlarging the majority. In what direction and how?

“As Forza Italia, our task is to expand the boundaries of the centre-right and to occupy areas that the left wing has currently neglected. It is not our responsibility to seek votes from Fdl or Lega just to gain a marginal advantage. Our goal is to create a large and reassuring popular movement in our Country. In a nutshell, we must take the significant space between Giorgia Meloni and Elly Schlein, and this is not merely a matter of political flags”.

Source : https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/interviste/2024/12/tajani-siria-scongiuriamo-lemergenza-in-ue-lo-scudo-di-forza-italia-su-fitto-nazione-carlino-giorno/