

January 14, 1963

American Embassy Rome Telegram 1367 to the Secretary of State, Washington, DC

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Summary:

When Reinhardt met with President Antonio Segni, a Christian Democrat, the latter accepted the reasons for replacing Jupiters with Polaris, but nevertheless emphasized the "grave psychological and political implications" because the Jupiters had been a "symbol of Italian determination" to take part in the defense of the West. Worried that there was "too much neutralism" in Italy, Segni was concerned about the electoral impact of the Jupiter decision and believe that the "operation should be carried out in such a fashion as to leave no inference of a lessening of Italian participation in nuclear defense."

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

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Action

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FROM: Rome

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1367, January 14, Noon

PRIORITY

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Embassy telegrams 1327 and 1336.

President Segni received me yesterday January 13 for private conversation. With respect to Jupiter replacement, he expressed understanding of necessity for replacement of obsolescent weapons with more modern systems but was not responsive to argument that presence of Jupiter at Giolia Del Colle increased vulnerability of west. He asserted firmly doctrine that any war in NATO Europe would inevitably be nuclear.

Segni emphasized that it had been politically difficult for Italy to accept MRBMS at outset (he was Defense Minister at the time) and they had now become symbol of a rather unique Italian contribution to NATO defenses, and more than that a symbol of Italian determination to participate in the defense of the west. Their removal had grave political and psychological implications. He was particularly worried what effect this might have if carried out prior to forthcoming parliamentary elections. Even thereafter, though easier to accomplish, it would be of greatest importance that operation be carried out in such fashion as to leave no inference of

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-2- 1367, January 14, Noon from Rome

a lessening of Italian participation in nuclear defense and of Italian determination in general. There was too much neutralism in Italy and the center-left government as yet to bring the Socialists to any significant change in their point of view. Almost half the party was pro-Soviet and therefore anti-western, and the balance at best was still neutralist. He had had long discussions on subject with both Prime Minister Fanfani and Defense Minister Andreotti and he was sure former would fully explain problem while in Washington this week.

REINHARDT

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