

January 17, 1963

American Embassy Rome Telegram 1411 to the Secretary of State, Washington, DC

Citation:

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Summary:

In mid-January 1963 Harvard University professor Henry Kissinger met in Rome with senior Italian political leaders, all the way up to Fanfani and President Antonio Segni, to discuss U.S.-Italian relations, including the Jupiters. At that point Kissinger had no official role in government, although during 1961-1962, he had been a White House consultant. According to his report to the Embassy, the Italian leadership understood "intellectually" why the U.S. wanted to remove the missiles but it was sorry that Italy was losing its "one-up" position among non-nuclear members of NATO. (No one mentioned that Italy retained special status as a country that the U.S. had to consult before it used nuclear weapons based there.) Segni felt some "pique" that the Jupiter decision had been made during the missile crisis and that three months had passed before his government learned of it. "Almost everyone" believed, Kissinger told the U.S. Embassy, that there had been a U.S.-Soviet "agreement" on the Jupiter withdrawal, with the 1 April deadline seen as an important clue.

The U.S. embassy report on Kissinger's findings arrived at the State Department the morning of 17 January 1963, with instructions for the Executive Secretariat to limit its distribution. Apparently the report, with its comments linking the Jupiters to the Cuban crisis negotiations, touched a nerve with Dean Rusk. He instructed Assistant Secretary Tyler to inform U.S. Embassies in Europe that Kissinger had no official role, they should not help him meet high-level officials, that he did not represent the "Adm's views," and that "we want to discourage him," although as a "distinguished professor" he should be "treated with courtesy and friendliness." Consequently Tyler drafted and sent that same day an "eyes only" telegram to U.S. ambassadors reminding them of Kissinger's non-official status. Rusk did not explain what Kissinger had done that irritated him, but with his interest in dispelling rumors of a secret deal, he was probably irked not only by the thinking of Italian officials but by the fact that other State Department officials, including code clerks, would see the Embassy telegram, as limited its distribution was.

Credits:

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Original Scan

TELEGRAM

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OUTGOING American Embassy ROME

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Control: 219

Date: January 17, 1963
2:03 PM

ACTION: Secstate WASHINGTON ~~PROXIMITY~~ NIACT 1411

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Henry Kissinger this morning gave us highlights his impressions as result conversations last three days on Nassau, Jupiter withdrawal and related matters, with Segni, Fanfani, Andreotti, La Malfa, Cattani, Nenni and Lombardi. He will also see Malagodi and Moro before leaving for Washington today, and we may have more to report. Doubtless because Kissinger is not repeat not US Government official and yet is close to Administration and is highly informed expert on these matters, Italians evidently expressed their views more frankly and freely than they have to us, and it seems clear his visit at this time provided sort of lightning rod to attract somewhat emotional Italian reactions.

Regarding Jupiter withdrawal (which he did not raise with them), Kissinger felt that all with whom he spoke accepted US reasons for withdrawal "intellectually" and nobody thinking of actually opposing withdrawal, but they were concerned/Italy would lose

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its current "one-up" position among non-nuclear alliance members. PSI leaders Nenni and Lombardi made clear removal of missiles would be welcome. President Segni was much concerned about domestic political implications and neutralist trend of Fanfani Government, covering same ground he had with Ambassador January 13 (Embtel 1367) and, in addition, expressing pique that US decision on withdrawal had apparently been made during Cuban crisis and Italy only informed three months later. In most conversations Kissinger found similar reaction that Italy is faced more or less with fait accompli which, though technically justified, ignored local political repercussions. This ascribed widely to technical approach and "tone" of ^{McNamara letter to} Andreotti. "Almost everyone", according to Kissinger, suspected that withdrawal might be result of US agreement with Russians, some pointing to April 1 date as evidence. Fanfani, Andreotti and Cattani emphasized importance of some counterpart, such as putting Polaris on Garibaldi, as solution to political problem.

As regards MLF, Kissinger found widespread support for concept but little consideration of possible means for implementation, beyond apparent desire that it be seaborne, and skepticism (especially by Andreotti and Cattani) of feasibility multinational manning approach. According to Cattani, Fanfani had commented privately

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US would merely allow Italy provide "the cooks" but that he (Fanfani) saw little Italy could do but try to upgrade its participation to extent feasible. Nenni and Lombardi explicitly supported Italian participation in a broad MLF effort as an approach offering opportunity to contain proliferation of national nuclear capabilities with possibility of ultimately absorbing present French as well as British national efforts. (They also stressed their pro-US orientation generally, and Nenni listed at length his "errors" over past decade.) Cattani was least enthusiastic over MLF, admitting nevertheless he was unaware of any more attractive alternative. He reportedly thought De Gaulle's general attitude toward US both understandable and reasonable, noting that De Gaulle alone had the stuff to tell US what it needs to be told. Cattani said he found unimpressive the technical suggestions presented by the Smith-Lee Team (having obviously misunderstood our intention that these briefings be exploratory question-and-answer sessions rather than US salesmanship). Both Andreotti and Cattani made clear strong preference for nationally-manned surface ships such as Garibaldi, equipped with Polaris missiles. La Malfa was reportedly "almost incoherent" in his antagonism to De Gaulle's attitude toward Nassau and

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UK entry into EEC.

In sharp contrast to Italian reactions, Kissinger said he found French officials whom he met in Paris last week were "furious" with Nassau Agreement. Specifically, by reaching accord with US, Britain had demonstrated conclusively its non-Continental orientation, on top of which it had joined US in trying to "encircle" France through consultations with various Alliance members. If it really had European outlook, UK would have discussed problem first with France. As result, Britain would never get into Common Market. As regards our Polaris offer, in addition to other overriding considerations, French regard nuclear missile submarine as essentially feasible only for a rich nation.

In response our question regarding Italian views on strategic concepts, Kissinger said he found no support at all for US view advanced at recent NATO Ministerial meeting that NATO partners together have potential capacity with conventional arms to restrain Soviet forces.

Comment: Kissinger said he mostly listened, but his report may of course be somewhat colored by his own views. Some reactions, e.g. Segni's reported pique, doubtless also colored

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by domestic political interests and lack of participation owing
to manner in which Andreotti and Fanfani have kept matter to
themselves.

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