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BRITISH EMBASSY COMMISSION
CHANCERY SECRETARY
28 NOV 1983
DUPLICATES
OF LETTERS
& ENCLOSURES
STATION

LUK 825

CONFIDENTIAL

LIC NR 011/28

OO FCO

OO NEW DELHI (FOR PS/PM)

PP BONN

PP PARIS

PP WASHINGTON

PP MOSCOW

GR 430

CONFIDENTIAL

FM ROME 281100Z NOV 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 618 OF 28 NOV 83

INFO IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI FOR PS/PM)

INFO PRIORITY BONN, PARIS, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW.

YRTELNOS 913/914 TO NEW DELHI: INF: ANDROPOV/CRAXI MESSAGES

1. ANDROPOV SENT A MESSAGE TO CRAXI ON 25 NOVEMBER, AND CRAXI REPLIED THE NEXT DAY AFTER CONSULTING SPADOLINI IN THE MARGINS OF AN OFFICIAL RECEPTION FOR THE TEN SPEAKERS FROM COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTS (ANDREOTTI WAS IN JORDAN WITH PRESIDENT PERTINI).

2. ANDROPOV BLAMED THE ITALIANS FOR DELIBERATELY CHOOSING TO AGGRIVATE THE SITUATION AND FOR NOT SEEKING TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION: THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE BOUND TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH ITALY. AT THE SAME TIME, AS IN HIS MESSAGE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER, HE REPEATED THAT RECENT SOVIET DECISIONS WERE NOT IRREVERSABLE: IF US MISSILES WERE NOT INSTALLED AND DEPLOYED IN EUROPE THE USSR WOULD MAKE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

3. CRAXI'S REPLY WAS AS ROBUST AS IT WAS RAPID. HE SAID THAT ITALY WANTED PEACE, BUT PEACE MUST NOT BE CONFUSED WITH "A PEACEFUL STATE OF SUBJECTION", NOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH "ACQUIESCENCE IN ALL FORMS OF INTIMIDATION". THE USSR HAD CREATED AN UNACCEPTABLE NUCLEAR IMBALANCE IN EUROPE, AND CRAXI EXPRESSED HIS SURPRISE AT ANDROPOV'S SURPRISE THAT THE WEST HAD WISHED TO CORRECT THIS. ITALY STILL WANTED TO COOPERATE WITH THE USSR, PROVIDED MOSCOW RESPECTED THE PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL DIGNITY AND RECIPROCAL RESPECT.

4. BOTH LETTERS HAVE NOW BEEN RELEASED TO THE PRESS. BOTTAI TOLD ME ON 25 NOVEMBER THAT THE IMMEDIATE ITALIAN REACTION TO THE ANDROPOV MESSAGE WAS THAT IT WAS "VERY HARD" IN TONE. THE REFERENCE TO POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO BILATERAL RELATIONS WAS NEW. HE WAS NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE ITALIAN PUBLIC'S LIKELY REACTION, BUT DID THINK A "CRITICAL MOMENT" HAD BEEN REACHED IN EAST/WEST AFFAIRS. DANОВI TOLD HEAD OF CHANCERY TODAY THAT DESPITE THE THREATENING TONE OF ANDROPOV'S LETTER, HE, LIKE OUR EMBASSY IN MOSCOW, DID NOT BELIEVE THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD NECESSARILY BE AFFECTED. THE RUSSIANS WOULD HUFF AND PUFF IN PUBLIC, BUT IN SPEAKING TO LAMBSDORFF, THE FRENCH AND "INDIRECTLY" TO THE ITALIANS, THEIR PRIVATE COMMENTS REMAINED MORE CONCILIATORY.

5. THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) HAVE CALLED FOR A REFERENDUM ON CRUISE MISSILE INSTALLATION IN ITALY. DANОВI COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS NOT NEW: THE PCI HAD PROPOSED A REFERENDUM BACK IN MARCH. IT COULD NOT (NOT) TAKE PLACE UNLESS THERE WERE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE A TWO THIRDS MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT, SINCE THERE WAS NO PROVISION IN THE CONSTITUTION FOR REFERENDUMS TO ABROGATE DECISIONS OF PARLIAMENT AS DISTINCT FROM ITALIAN LAWS.

FITZHERBERT

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P^a Dmb
28/11

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ANDROPOV ACCUSES ITALY OVER SUPPORT FOR U.S. MISSILES
ROME, SATURDAY - PRIME MINISTER BETTINO CRAXI AND YURI ANDROPOV
HAVE EXCHANGED SHARPLY-WORDED MESSAGES IN WHICH THE SOVIET LEADER
ACCUSED ITALY OF CHOOSING TO HEIGHTEN NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION IN
EUROPE, MR CRAXI'S OFFICE REPORTED TODAY.

IT SAID MR ANDROPOV'S LETTER PRESSED FOR A RETURN TO THE
SITUATION THAT EXISTED BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF NEW U.S. NUCLEAR
MISSILES IN EUROPE AND CHARGED THAT ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR THE
DEPLOYMENTS SHOWED ROME DID NOT WANT GOOD RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW.

MR CRAXI, IN HIS REPLY SENT TODAY, DECLARED: "GOOD RELATIONS
SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH ACQUIESCENCE IN THE FACE OF ANY FORM OF
INTIMIDATION."

262037 NOV 83

John.

The Andropov letter.

The PA tape in London is saying that Craxi of Italy has received a letter from Andropov, & he has replied.

FCO are trying to ascertain details.

Nicky 7.45