

October 26, 1962

American Embassy Rome Telegram 436 to the Secretary of State, Washington, DC

Citation:

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Summary:

On October 26, 1962, as the Cuban Missile Crisis is unfolding, U.S. Ambassador G. Frederick Reinhardt replied to a State Department inquiry about possible Italian reactions to withdrawal of the Jupiters, stating that they "would probably be manageable," but also recommending early consultations with the Italian government if they were to "form part of negotiated settlement." In particular, Reinhardt suggested offsetting the withdrawal with gestures to appeal to the Italian government's craving for status, such as (a) presenting the removal as an Italian contribution to the relaxation of East-West tensions, (b) some kind of "big power consultation" between the U.S. and Italy, coupled with assurances on "the presence of Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean," (c) "public emphasis on Italy's role in NATO in order to counter-balance loss of value which missiles have for Italy in calling attention to its role and position in alliance," and (d) a promise to halt further reductions of U.S. military commitments in Italy. In short, Reinhardt saw a phase-out as a possibility but something to be "be very carefully handled."

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Transcript - English

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the United States of America

OUTGOING American Embassy ROME

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Charge:

SECRET
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Control: 377

Date: October 26, 1962

ACTION: Secstate WASHINGTON 936

INFO: Amembassy PARIS TOPOL 18
Amembassy ANKARA 38

DISTR:
RU-2
AMB-2

4/eab

EYES ONLY Secretary and Ambassadors Finletter
and Hare.

Reference Department telegram EYES ONLY 865

(1) Removal Jupiters from Italy would probably be manageable but we should consult GOI in early stages if it seems likely that they might form part of negotiated settlement. I would strongly recommend we do this before making final affirmative decision in our own minds, so as give us more accurate basis for estimating consequences in Italy of action, and for assessing means for best accomplishing objective in harmony with Italians.

(2) Public awareness of Jupiter installation in Italy is, considering all circumstances, minimal. Even Italian communists have thus far given installation relatively light attention. Deliberate policy of GOI from beginning has been

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430.1
FROM
(Italy)

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Date:

to maintain security on inter-governmental agreement involved to and to play down to minimum any attention/nature, purpose or even location of actual installation. This policy was probably motivated primarily by desire to head off political opposition until local impact was fully absorbed, in both negative and positive terms, eg. concern over vulnerability to retaliation, creation of jobs in construction phase, etc.; but from first Italians may well also have had in mind time when installation could be removed.

(3) GOI agreed to Jupiter installation primarily because we wanted it to do so. Additional but incidental consideration was prestige factor and leverage which presence of installation in Italy gave her within NATO. But from very beginning GOI leaders were not entirely persuaded installation had critical military value and clearly have given subject periodic consideration since. Andreotti agreed readily to Secretary McNamara's suggestions in Washington last month for annual reappraisal of military value of installation and for its

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disestablishment when no longer needed. In occasional references to "next generation missiles", knowledgeable Italian officials have shown obvious and almost eager preference for seaborne strategic weapons, which by avoiding land-based installation do not entail political problem. This general aspect of how GOI leaders view problem would obviously be accentuated by current association of essentially neutralist Nenni Socialist Party in governing process.

(4) GOI and general public attach great psychological importance to readily apparent evidence of our own commitment to defense of Italy. Size of US forces present carries more weight with public than nature of facilities or weapons. This has in past been extremely important factor in contributing to relative political stability. Jupiters probably of relatively little significance in this regard because they have created thus far only slight public impression ~~XXX~~ because they are in a remote area and, as an Italian installation, they necessitate presence of very small number of Americans.

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(5) Our tentative assessment is that GOI would agree to withdrawal of Jupiters under combination of offsetting circumstances such as these:

(a) Clear demonstration that security of Italy and overall military posture of NATO were not adversely affected, with specific (and presumably public) indication of how present military requirement was being otherwise met. Also, GOI might find attractive opportunity present Jupiter withdrawal as Italian contribution to relaxation East-West tensions.

(b) Assurances and occasional publicity on presence of Polaris submarines in Mediterranean would help to serve above purpose. More effective would probably be kind of "big power consultation" on which Italians were so insistent two and three years ago, which we found difficult and sometimes then tiresome to accord them, but which nevertheless paid, ~~XXXXX~~ and would again pay, substantial dividends. If means can be found to give effect to European desire for greater share of "control", this too would help this aspect of problem.

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(c) Public emphasis on Italy's role in NATO in order to counter-balance loss of value which missiles have for Italy in calling attention to its role and position in Alliance, an aspect to which Andreotti referred in most recent talk with McNamara.

(d) Continuation of American participation in SETAF at present level, and postponement of further "Italianizing" of this force. This would be important part of package, since withdrawal US ground combat forces from Northern Italy (even though relatively small numbers involved) at same time as Jupiters were being liquidated would have cumulatively bad psychological effect, especially on Italian armed forces and on so far reliable sector of political leadership.

(6) From point of view of Italian problem and under above circumstances, we see little value in talking of possibility of multilateral seaborne nuclear force. While GOI prefers seaborne to land-based missiles for political reasons, it is doubtless staggered by cost to Italians of participation

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in a multilateral force, especially in relation to heavy competing domestic requirements. In any case we believe GOI may be expected to be content, at least so long as there are not a number of other European members of Alliance making further progress in national nuclear capabilities, to leave to US task of providing strategic forces of Alliance.

7. In spite of cautious official position of Italian Government and political parties, we sense widespread approval in Italy of US determination to oppose Soviet intrusion into area of vital American interest. They respect display of strength on grounds which can be readily understood. Any phase-out of Jupiter missile installations would have to be very carefully handled so as not to undercut favorable effects of our present posture.

REINHARDT

MIN:OHorsey/MDA:MGannett:ms 10/26/62

 
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TELEGRAM

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