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(12)

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S VISIT TO ROME

1. PRESIDENT RAAGAN MADE A SIX-HOUR VISIT TO ROME ON 7 JUNE. HE SAW THE POPE, WAS ENTERTAINED TO LUNCH BY PRESIDENT PERTINI, HAD TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER SPADOLINI AND SAW BRIEFLY THE PARTY SECRETARIES OF THE FIVE PARTIES THAT MAKE UP THE GOVERNING COALITION. THE MAIN PART OF THE TALKS BETWEEN PRESIDENT REAGAN AND SPADOLINI TOOK PLACE DURING THE JOURNEY BACK FROM PARIS IN PRESIDENT REAGAN'S AEROPLANE.

2. PRESS REPORTS TAKE THEIR LINE FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN'S TOAST AT LUNCH IN WHICH HE PRAISED ITALY AS A RELIABLE ALLY, DRAWING ATTENTION TO ITALIAN DECISIONS OVER TNF BASING AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SINAI MFO. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS THE US ALSO WANTED TO EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE TO ITALY FOR THE SAFE RELEASE OF GENERAL DOZIER AFTER HIS KIDNAPPING BY THE RED BRIGADES AND PRESIDENT REAGAN DECORATED THOSE MOST CLOSELY CONCERNED IN THE OPERATION LEADING TO DOZIER'S RELEASE. FROM A PUBLIC RELATIONS POINT OF VIEW, THIS WAS A HIGHLIGHT OF THE VISIT.

3. PRESIDENT REAGAN'S TALKS IN ROME WERE NATURALLY DOMINATED BY RECENT EVENTS IN THE LEBANON. SPEAKING WITH JOURNALISTS AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE, COLOMBO SAID THAT ITALY FEARED THAT THE NEW ISRAELI MILITARY ADVENTURE WOULD WORSEN THE WIDER MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. COLOMBO SAID THAT US AND ITALIAN VIEWS COINCIDED

AND HE POINTED OUT THAT THE US HAD VOTED FOR THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WHICH CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI TROOPS. IN THE EXCHANGE OF TOASTS AT LUNCH PRESIDENT PERTINI CONDEMNED THE ISRAELI INVASION OF LEBANON BUT PRESIDENT REAGAN DID NOT REFER PUBLICLY TO THE CRISIS.

4. THE US AMBASSADOR TOLD ME THAT OTHER SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WERE THE FALKLAND ISLANDS, THE BONN NATO SUMMIT AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. THE PRESS ALSO MENTIONS AFGHANISTAN AND POLAND WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAILS.

5. ON THE FALKLAND ISLANDS COLOMBO SAID AFTER THE VISIT THAT THE DISCUSSIONS CENTRED ON WAYS OF FINDING A LONG-TERM SOLUTION (I.E. AFTER THE PRESENT HOSTILITIES) WHICH OFFERS SOME SORT OF 'GUARANTEE' TO BOTH SIDES. SUCH A SOLUTION SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THE NEED TO RENEW RELATIONS BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA ON THE ONE HAND AND THE US AND EUROPE ON THE OTHER, AND SHOULD ALSO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EFFECTS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS' CRISIS ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE THIRD WORLD. ACCORDING TO THE US AMBASSADOR, COLOMBO IS INDEED WORRIED ABOUT EUROPE / LATIN AMERICA RELATIONS WHEN WE HAVE RETAKEN PORT STANLEY. IN HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN, CRAXI, THE SOCIALIST LEADER, TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT HE DISAGREED WITH THE US LINE OVER THE FALKLANDS ARGUING THAT ITALY HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT HER CLOSE TIES WITH ARGENTINA. (THE US EMBASSY REGRETS THAT THIS ATTITUDE DERIVED FROM ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS AND A RIVALRY BETWEEN THE PSI AND THE DC FOR THE VOTES OF ITALIANS RESIDENT IN ARGENTINA).

6. ON THE NATO SUMMIT THE DISCUSSION IS SAID BY THE PRESS TO HAVE COVERED TNF AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND ITALY IN THE FIELD OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS. THE ITALIAN SIDE ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR APPROVAL OF RECENT US MOVES OVER DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS .

7. THE ITALIAN PRESS SAYS THAT THE CONVERSATION WITH THE POPE COVERED THE FALKLANDS, IRAN/IRAQ, THE LEBANON AND POLAND. THE EMBASSY TO THE HOLY SEE WILL BE REPORTING SEPARATELY.

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