



British Embassy
Via XX Settembre 80A 00187 Rome

Telex 61049 Telephone 4755.441

Mr. Fergusson
gc
CAD
EAD
SAD
Rhodesia Dept
NAD
FRD

David Gladstone Esq
WED
FCO

Mr. Vance
Mr. Nash
10/7

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VISIT OF MR VANCE TO ROME

- (26) 1. Gardini, the Political Director-General at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave a Community briefing on this visit to Embassies of the Nine on 1 June. (You will already have seen our telegram No 8 Saving, giving Italian press reactions to the visit). Since Ministers have been very much in touch with Mr Vance, both in London and The Hague over the past fortnight, I do not suppose it necessary to report in any detail what he said to the Italians. In what follows I shall try to confine myself to the Italian response to the points he raised as given us by Gardini. We are reporting separately by telegram on the points made by the latter on Indo-Chinese refugees.
2. Gardini began by stressing that the date of this visit, which was the first made to Rome by Vance as Secretary of State, had been fixed at the time of the NATO Meeting in December. It was entirely accidental that Vance had come immediately before the Italian elections and it was wrong to give any significance to the date.
3. Gardini asked which of the many topics covered we should like to hear about, so I asked for African problems first. Gardini said that, with others, Italy had given her support to the action of the Five on Namibia and to Anglo/United States initiatives on Rhodesia. Italy was not directly involved. Italy took the view that the separate development of ethnic groups was no longer possible in Africa. On Namibia, they thought the matter must be left to the Security Council. On Rhodesia, a very critical position had been reached. They were not taking up any position on the Rhodesian elections. The simple acceptance of an internal settlement was not a realistic policy. The policy must be directed to trying to avoid further fighting and to trying to avoid the dangers of intervention by the Soviet Union, Cuba or Ethiopia. Italy would wait and see what the new Conservative Government in London could achieve. The President of the Italian Republic had stressed to Vance the importance of human rights in Africa. Vance had stressed to the Italians that

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no hasty decisions were going to be taken. On Somalia and Ethiopia, Vance had agreed with the Italian Foreign Minister that it was desirable to try to keep in contact with Ethiopia, which meant a reserved position in relation to Somalia. Signor Forlani had said that the present level of Italian contacts with Ethiopia was both the minimum desirable and the maximum possible. They had solved a few individual cases but there was no political discourse. The Somalis were bombarding the Italians with continual and excessive requests. The Italians were responding cautiously but trying to do what they could to help. The Somali situation as a country which had abandoned its dependence on the Soviet Union was unique and justified Italy in giving a certain weight to Somalia. The Italians were sceptical about the possibility of improving United States/Ethiopian relations. The two Ministers had agreed that the different religious background in Ethiopia and Somalia was significant. No Muslim country had permitted Communist ideology to gain ground. But the Ethiopians, with a Christian culture, were subject to the infiltration of Marxist-Leninist thought. Although nationalism was their main inspiration, this meant that Ethiopia was less likely to "unhook" from Moscow. The danger remained that Somalia, disappointed by the West, would turn back to Moscow, but the Italians had noted some improvement in Somali/Kenyan relations which were encouraging in this respect.

4. In a discussion of Albania, the Italians spoke on lines recorded in the record of Ewen Fergusson's conversations in Rome on 17 May.
5. The discussions on the forthcoming Tokyo summit appeared to have produced nothing new. The Italians stressed the great interest in Europe that the United States adopt an energy policy which would assist the maintenance of the world economy.
6. There was also a discussion on NATO and theatre nuclear weapons. Signor Andreotti had told Mr Vance that the modernization of Italian weapons offered no political difficulties, but technical and financial difficulties.
7. On the Middle East, Mr Vance had set out his policy and had asked the Nine to put pressure on Israel over its West Bank policy and the Lebanon. Signor Forlani had stressed the importance in the Italian view of maintaining a forward movement. During his visit to Tunisia and his conversation with Prince Fahd and with Kaddumi of the Palestine Liberation Organization, he had gained the impression that the PLO were for the time being in a less rigid posture and that it would be desirable to move forward in relations with them as a means of involving the other Arabs. But any such move was dependent on early progress in the talks between Egypt and Israel on the West Bank. My French colleague asked a number of questions about US aid to Egypt. Would it suffice to replace Arab subsidies for arms purchases? Gardini said that Fahd had been equivocal with Andreotti on this topic. He had been rigidly opposed to Sadat, but Saudi Arabia would not forget the needs of the Egyptian people. The Italians had the impression that not merely would Saudi Arabia and Kuwait permit a continued flow of remittances but would also not withdraw existing deposits in Egypt. My French colleague asked whether the Americans were proposing a coordinated plan for economic aid to Egypt. Gardini replied that he knew the Americans were asking the Germans to give loans



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to Egypt but added that the Italians had not asked Vance about all this since they did not want to come under pressure to contribute. They nevertheless thought the Americans might raise the topic at the Tokyo summit and they believed that Sadat was preparing an appeal for economic assistance to be directed to a large number of states. Signor Andreotti had said to Fahd and to others that the West must avoid a formula of giving aid solely to Egypt. It was a question of presentation. Any aid programme should cover all the poor Arab states in order to avoid accusations of alignment with one side or the other in the inter Arab quarrel. In answer to a French question, Gardini said it was not clear whether Vance had accepted this advice.

8. I am sending a copy of this direct to John Williams in preparation for his talks on Thursday on Africa with the Italians. I should be grateful if you would copy it further as you think fit.

Lawrence

Alan

A C Goodison

cc:

John Williams Esq CMG FCO

Chanceries: Washington
Paris
UKREP EEC