

CONFIDENTIAL

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(33/80)

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Mr. Vercher JAN 1980

DESK OFFICE

Mr. Vercher

Mr. Vercher

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Para 1-3. - Mr. Vercher
 Variation, as given
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Mr. Vercher
 16/1

PS/Secretary of State

Copies to:- PS/PUS
 DUS(P)
 ACDS(Pol)
 AUS(D Staff)
 AUS(IP)
 Head of DS17
 FCO Defence Department - Mr Gillmore
 FCO Western European Department - Mr Gladstone ✓

SIGNOR ADOLFO SARTI

1. During the weekend, the Italian Foreign Minister, Signor Malfatti, resigned for reasons of ill-health. His place has been taken by the Defence Minister, Signor Ruffini.

2. The new Minister of Defence is Signor Adolfo Sarti. He is a lawyer, born in 1928, who has been Senator for Piedmont since 1972. He was Minister for Tourism and Entertainment in Signor Moro's Governments between 1974 and 1976. He was out of Government from 1976 until July 1979, when Signor Cossiga appointed him Minister for Relations with Parliament. HM Embassy consider him intelligent and able. He led the recent debate in the Senate on Afghanistan. He was tipped to be Minister of Foreign Affairs, but clearly Signor Ruffini's greater experience has counted.

.... 3. I recommend that the Secretary of State should write to congratulate Signor Sarti on his appointment. I attach a draft.

4. It might also be worth reassessing where we now stand on a possible visit to Italy by Secretary of State in the second half of this year (you say in your MO 25/3/14 of 22 November 1979 that Mr Pym had accepted an invitation in principle). If you think that Mr Pym would still like to take this up, we could ask the Embassy to check that the invitation in principle still stands.

Mr. Vercher

15 January 1980

D C R HEYHOE
Head of DS12

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15 JANUARY

ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, ATTILIO SOTTILI, HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF DEFENCE MATTERS BUT HAS ENJOINED SINCE A GOOD REPUTATION OF HIMSELF AS AN ACTIVE AND CAPABLE MINISTER OF DEFENCE SINCE SEPTEMBER 1971. HIS MAIN MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES TO BE THE

DRAFT LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE TO SIGNOR ADOLFO SARTI

May I offer you my warmest congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Defence. I look forward to working with you in advancing the common defence aims of our two countries and furthering the aims of the North Atlantic Alliance.