

E.R.

INGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT, FLORENCE, 12 MARCH 1986

MEETING WITH SIGNOR SCALFARO ITALIAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

Present:	Home Secretary	Signor Scalfaro
	Mr Partridge	Signor Lattarulo
	Mr Tantum	
	Mr Boys Smith	

Signor Scalfaro welcomed the Home Secretary cordially and recalled the meeting they had had in London on 9 January.

Terrorist incidents in Italy

2. Signor Scalfaro outlined recent incidents in Italy. A former Mayor of Florence had been assassinated and a senior official of the Prime Minister's office attacked. The possibility of an international dimension to these crimes could not be excluded. There might also be some connection with electronics industries; the former Mayor of Florence was a member of an electronics company which undertook defence work.

3. Responsibility for the attack on the Prime Minister's official had been claimed by the "Unione del Comunisti Combatti". Documents left by the organisation had been well written and showed a sophisticated understanding of Italian political life, suggesting they had been written by people from Universities or journalism. The documents claimed that the organisation's purpose was to destroy the bourgeois state. It was significant that the attacks had been made not on the most senior figures, but on those close to them who were not fully protected. There would have to be careful inquiries, including in universities, trade unions and among journalists to see who might have been behind the latest incidents. The Italian authorities had been undertaking a detailed analysis of the attacks and the documents the organisation had left, and he would be very ready to make the fruits available to the British authorities.

4. Though a member of the Red Brigades had been involved in one of the attacks, there were differences between these incidents and what was normally expected of the Red Brigades: the documents were better written and better informed than those normally prepared by the Red Brigades, and would have an appeal to a wider public; and in contrast to the Red Brigades, which tended to be very nationalistic, this organisation indicated its availability for co-operation with organisations in other countries.

5. Signor Scalfaro had no further information about the attack at Rome airport at Christmas to add to that he had given the Home Secretary on 9 January. The Italian authorities now held in prison not only the survivor of that attack but those involved in the Achille Laro hijacking, and there must therefore be some risk of further incidents. Signor Scalfaro would ensure that any new information on the Rome incident was passed to the British authorities. But whatever precautions were taken there would be no guarantee against attacks.

E.R.

International Co-operation on Terrorism

4. Signor Scalfaro said it was essential to enhance co-operation between the agencies in different countries concerned with terrorism and international crime. He was very grateful for the welcome given to the Italian security experts who had visited the United Kingdom on 23 January, following his visit, to discuss airport security. The Home Secretary expressed his pleasure that their visit had been successful.

5. Signor Scalfaro referred to the danger of countries acting unilaterally to solve their own immediate difficulties over terrorist incidents without regard for the interests of others. This could be very damaging to the international effort against terrorism. The Swiss and French authorities had recently allowed offenders to leave their jurisdiction.

6. The Home Secretary agreed it was vital that countries should not act in isolation. The British Ambassador in Madrid had, for example, recently made representations to the Spanish Government following reports that it had agreed to free Arab prisoners in Spain in return for 3 Spanish Embassy hostages in Beirut. Countries undoubtedly faced different threats, but if they yielded matters would become a great deal worse.

7. Signor Scalfaro had had a long talk about terrorism with Mr Whitehead, US Deputy Secretary of State. He had mentioned to Mr Whitehead the responsibility the US Government had to support freedom throughout the world, but had explained that there were difficulties if it pressed ideas on other countries which, though they might make very good sense in American terms, were not attuned to local realities. The Achille Laro incident was a case in point. The US Government had pressed its principles very hard, but the reality lay in the Mediterranean and in Italy, not Washington. Moreover, the US Government had not understood that as Interior Minister he had been little involved in the handling of the incident which, because of its nature, largely fell to his Ministerial colleagues. The hijacking of ships on the high seas added a new dimension to international terrorism.

8. The Home Secretary asked whether Signor Scalfaro thought it would be valuable to hold meetings of Interior Ministers to discuss the whole range of their responsibilities, or whether it would be better to adhere to bilateral exchanges. Signor Scalfaro hoped the time might come when discussions amongst Interior Ministers collectively might bring all the issues together, but in his view the time was not yet right. If 2 countries shared a concern or proposals they had added strength in pursuing their ideas with the Governments of other countries; that was the best way to proceed.

9. The Home Secretary referred to the Working Group on terrorism set up by EC Foreign Ministers within the framework of political co-operation. He was anxious to ensure that there was no confusion between this group and Trevi. There must be clear lines of responsibility and communication to avoid differences arising between these 2 necessary kinds of exchange. The Working Group had already suggested to Trevi that a list of nations regarded by

E.R.

Member States as involved in Terrorism should be drawn up. This request could be discussed at the Ministerial Trevi meeting in the Hague on 24 April. The Dutch Government was aware of the need to ensure there was harmony between the EC Working Group and Trevi. When the UK assumed the presidency he would consider whether other steps were needed to preserve and promote that harmony.

10. Signor Scalfaro appeared by his response to have only a very limited understanding of the EC Working Group. Speaking personally, he said he was not jealous of the involvement of others, but he did not think terrorism could be discussed in several different places at one time. Terrorism was for Interior Ministers, and only they had access to all the necessary information. Interior Ministers should co-operate with Foreign Ministers, but ought always to concert their position before Foreign Ministers engaged in discussions on terrorism. He welcomed the fact that Interior Ministers would be able to discuss matters in the Hague before the EC Working Group next met.

11. In response to questions from the Home Secretary about talks between the Italian Government and the Governments of Austria, Switzerland and Germany, Signor Scalfaro referred to the number of different groups which engaged the interests of Interior Ministers. Most prominent were Trevi and the Pompidou group. The Club of Five to which the Home Secretary referred consisted of Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France and Italy; the first 2 did not join in the other groups. It was still very important to have bilateral discussions.

Frontier Controls

12. The Home Secretary referred to pressure within the EC to ease movement between countries. At the same time there was concern about the vulnerability of the EC's external frontiers to infiltration by terrorists. These 2 factors had to be reconciled. He recollected Signor Scalfaro's concern about terrorists gaining access to Italy, as they had before the attack at Rome airport at Christmas.

13. Signor Scalfaro recognised there was a contradiction. He was anxious to encourage free movement within the EC but it was hard to do that and secure effective monitoring of undesirables. The Rome airport terrorists had entered Italy with legitimate documents, although they had later changed them for illegal ones and had been without documents at all when they made the attack. The Italian Government had recently proposed new laws to Parliament to restrict migrant workers who had entered the country clandestinely, and who incidentally were as a result sometimes exploited by their employers. There were no startling new ideas in the legislation but he would ensure that the text was made available to the British authorities. It was interesting, however, that whereas at the time of the Rome attack he had been criticised for having inadequate checks on foreigners, he had now been accused by some of trying to harrass foreign workers through his proposed legislation.

E.R.

Extradition

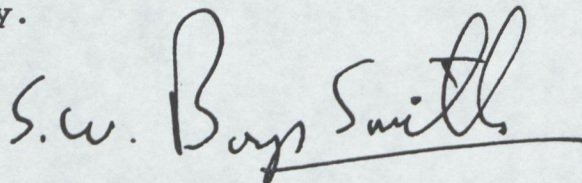
14. The Home Secretary welcomed the new extradition treaty. He understood that parts of the Italian press appeared to expect it would produce early results. But the treaty needed first to be ratified. The Italian authorities then needed to make applications and only when such applications were successful in the British courts could people be returned to Italian jurisdiction. He would be proposing changes in the UK extradition law to Parliament later in the year which would reduce the level of evidence required by an English court before it could agree to extradition. These changes, when enacted, would make extradition easier.

15. Signor Scalfaro pointed out that responsibility for extradition lay with the Minister of Justice. He welcomed the new treaty and the part his Ministerial colleague had played in bringing it about. The staff of the Justice Ministry had not been keen but he felt it was better to proceed by gradual steps, such as this one.

Residence Permits in Italy for British Subjects

16. The Home Secretary thanked Signor Scalfaro for his efforts to ease the difficulties which had recently arisen over renewing residence permits for long term British residents in Italy and for students. There might still be room for further progress, and he hoped there would be talks between experts to take things forward.

17. Signor Scalfaro said he saw one of the jobs of a politician as overcoming procedural difficulties. He respected the law, but was impatient with formalities, and believed the political will existed to solve the present problem. He wanted to achieve the best outcome as soon as possible. He greatly welcomed the presence of British students in Italy.



Private Office
13.3.86

S W BOYS SMITH
Principal Private Secretary

cc. Mr Pike
Mr Duke-Evans
Miss Stewart
Mr Partridge
Mr Hyde
Mr Phillips
Mr Head
Mr Hilary
Mr Mower
Mr Harrington
Mr Nagler
Mr Fries
Mr Durbin
Mr Bickham
Mr C Powell, PS/No 10
Mr L Appleyard, PS/FCO
Mr Herbert, WED/FCO
Mr Tantum, British Embassy, Rome

cc. Mr Pike
 Mr Duke-Evans
 Miss Stewart
 Mr Partridge
 Mr Hyde
 Mr Phillips
 Mr Head
 Mr Hilary
 Mr Mower
 Mr Harrington
 Mr Nagler
 Mr Fries
 Mr Durbin
 Mr Bickham
 Mr C Powell, PS/No 10
 Mr L Appleyard, PS/FCO
 Mr Herbert, WED/FCO
 Mr Tantum, British
 Embassy, Rome

E.R.

COP
 13/3

Mr Harrington

ANGLO/ITALIAN SUMMIT 12 MARCH

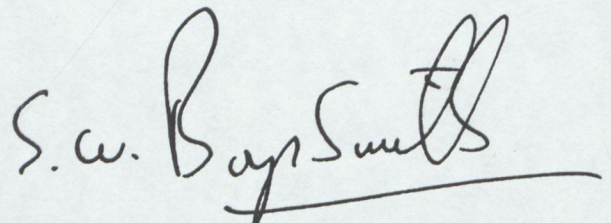
I attach a note of yesterday's discussion between the Home Secretary and the Italian Interior Minister. The Home Secretary was most grateful for the briefing you and others prepared.

2. In the plenary session the Interior Minister summarised his meeting with the Home Secretary, expressing thanks for the co-operation received from the British authorities. He reiterated his willingness to make available the documents left by those claiming responsibility for the recent attacks on the former Mayor of Florence and the associate of the Prime Minister, together with the analysis the Interior Ministry had undertaken of the incidents. He referred to the importance of exchanging intelligence about terrorists and to the need to prepare the ground well for the forthcoming Ministerial Trevi meeting. He emphasised the international nature of terrorism and the importance of co-operation between countries, drawing attention to the fact that terrorist organisations of left and right were ready to co-operate with each other and that both might feed on the profits of drugs and other organised crime. He welcomed the extradition treaty, pointing to the fact that until it was ratified and applications from the Italian authorities had been examined by the British courts it could not have practical effect. He drew attention to the proposed change in the prima facie requirement, which he welcomed. In speaking of frontier controls he emphasised the need to ensure a balance between the desirable movement of people and the importance of preventing terrorists from entering countries clandestinely. He referred briefly to the difficulties which had arisen over residence permits for certain British citizens in Italy. He concluded by drawing attention to the dangers for international co-operation against terrorism if countries acted unilaterally to relieve pressures upon themselves without regard to the implications their decisions might have for others.

3. In responding briefly to the Interior Minister, the Home Secretary endorsed his summary of their discussion; expressed sympathy for the recent attacks; and emphasised the importance of effective exchanges of intelligence on terrorists. He looked forward to the Trevi meeting and welcomed the initiative taken by EC Foreign Ministers within the framework of political co-operation, adding that there must be no confusion between the two activities. He believed that the measures already taken or contemplated would prevent such confusion arising. He described the extradition treaty as an important step forward and believed that the proposed change on the prima facie requirement in UK law would also prove a useful development: it was a step the UK Government was taking in the interests of international co-operation.

4. In opening the plenary session the Italian Prime Minister said that in their bilateral talks he and the Prime Minister had expressed their approval of the extensive collaboration on terrorism between the two countries. The Italian Foreign Minister said that he and the Foreign Secretary had spoken about the extradition treaty.

5. I have no doubt we will be receiving a record of those parts of the plenary session and the bilateral discussions in which Home Office matters were mentioned.



S W BOYS SMITH
Principal Private Secretary

Private Office
13.3.86