MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Ambassador John Volpe, U.S. Ambassador to Italy
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, March 25, 1975

PLACE: The Oval Office

Ambassador Volpe: I deeply appreciate your seeing me and taking my phone calls about the CSCE and the visit to Italy. It means much in Italy. I hope you recognize that if you visit Paris, Bonn and London you must visit Rome. Around the Mediterranean basin Italy is the only sound democratic nation who is an ally that will stay with us.

The President: My impression is there has been a gain in stability over the last three months.

Ambassador Volpe: There is no question about the economic improvement. They have turned their deficit around from a $12 billion deficit to $7.6 billion. They have imposed austerity. And the people accepted it. The budget situation is not turned around, but that is not unusual. There is no alternative to the Christian Democratic Government except the Communists. The third are the socialists and you never know where they stand. I don’t think you will see the Communists in the government because of your warnings and because of the Portuguese events.

I know the Pope would like to see you. He sends his regards and the message that the only country in the world which can give the moral leadership needed is the United States. The Pope is still very active and very involved.

The President: Is he concerned, and can they do anything in Portugal and Spain?
Ambassador Volpe: He came out publicly on Portugal -- he said he hoped they wouldn't go from a right dictatorship to a left dictatorship. Most of the people are Catholic but the issue is to what extent can the Church intervene. It's like the US and the Soviet Union: the Soviet Union can send $100 million into Italy without a whimper; we send $50 in and there are screams.

I had discussed getting a full-time representative in the Vatican with President Nixon. I got a list of Polish-American names.

The President: What is Henry Cabot Lodge's status?

Ambassador Volpe: He gets there three to four times a year. It is not like having a full-time outstanding man. If you are still interested, I could work on it.

The President: Brent, see if you can get me a list of names.

Ambassador Volpe: I want to compliment you on your Cabinet choices.

The President: You have seen the latest one. I think we are doing real well.

Ambassador Volpe: The Pope is concerned about Cambodia, Vietnam -- that our prestige may sink. I called your words to his attention. He said maybe the people were tired; he said it was inconceivable after losing 50,000 lives and billions of dollars that we couldn't put a few more paltry dollars in. He thinks Portugal is opening some eyes in Italy. He doesn't see how we could be tearing down our CIA. Every country has to have one. All these things are tearing down the image of America in the world.

On the political scene, Fanfani is still the dominant figure, but he is trying to invigorate the Christian Democrats. They just have shifted the same old faces from post to post. This last Cabinet though, had eight new members. With the changes in Portugal, it looks like the Christian Democrats may hold their own rather than lose badly, as everyone expects. Fanfani also hopes we can improve our image.

I feel strongly that there should be an Italo-American on the Supreme Court. We are the largest minority. Nixon said he would do it and never got to do it.

[The meeting ended.]
Small talk about UK.

I think you're going to love seeing the Vatican. I was there in Italy last year, and you must visit Rome. The Italian food is amazing, and the city is full of history.

It's been a great trip so far.

The project about Rome's history. They have turned this old church into a museum. They are hoping to open it to the public soon. The government has accepted the budget, but they are asking for more funding. There is no cut to the budget, except for the restaurant.

This is a wonderful city. You should definitely visit.

I'm glad you decided to stay in a hotel because of the weather. The hotel is beautiful, and everyone is very friendly. You were right to stay in a hotel.

I'm glad I brought my camera. I think it's still working.

To be continued.

The government is publicly discussing the new policy. They are trying to keep the country's borders closed.

I'm happy I got to see all of Paris. That was amazing.

I had a rough couple of days in Vietnam. I'm glad I got to see all of Paris. Thank you.
What is the current status?

He put time 2-3 times a year. It was like living for the time entertaining someone. If you still interested, I could work on it.

I meant if you can get me a bit ofirm.

I complained you can't choose.

You have seen a latest one. I think we doing well.

I spoke several about Connecticut. We could meet in person, I called you need to be attended to. And maybe people wanted to... He said it was 1988.

We were moving so never been before was enough to put a few more parties in. We had Portugal in opening new eyes in Italy. He doesn't know... we would be training down on EPA. Every entity lose to time and stuff there and... training down a US marine. Our goal is to force some still accomplish program, but we are trying to acquire a SO. They just have shifted. I come and went from part to part. This last cabinet etc... And, had some... Sometimes, we change in Portugal. It had, like US every bullet or even better than losing fully.

Or many and every point.

Fondness of lots of hopes we can injury some things.

I feel strongly that there should be three arms, an

Sprague Court. We are largest minority again, and he would not decide point to it.

If I were to Boston area, this will be there. I would like to hear from you. Please.