

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET/XGDS

DECLASSIFIED
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NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines (Subclass)
By KBT, NARA, Date 6/29/99

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. 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?



~~TOP SECRET - XGDS (3)~~
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SECRET/XGDS

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.]



Get list of Volpe names for Vatican

P What is Robert Lodge status -

V He gets there 2-4 times / yr. It not like having full time understanding man. If you still interested I could work on it

P Brent, see if you can get me a list of names

V Complaint you are Communist choice.

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

V Pope concerned about Colombia & UR - that one prestige may sink. I called your words to his attention. Said maybe people were tired. He said it impossible after being 500000000 dollars was credit put a few more paltry \$ in. He thinks Portugal is opening some eyes in Italy. He ~~is~~ doesn't see how we could be tearing down our CIA. Every country has to have one. All these are tearing down a US image. On pol scene, Franco still authoritarian regime, but he is trying to imitate a CO. They just have shifted a few old faces from post a post. This last Cabinet has had 8 new members. w/c changes in Portugal, it looks like CO may build its own rather than being ally, as many one expects.

Franco also hopes we can improve our image.

I feel strongly that there should be State - run on Supreme Court. We are largest minority. Nixon said he would do it & we've got to it.

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If you go to Boston Apr 18-19, Volpe will be there & would like to be w/ him. Pls inform Volpe.