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# Intelligence Report

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ITALY AND THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

While Italy's full participation in NATO will continue in the foreseeable future, its specific role will be conditioned by the nature and composition of the Italian government in power. Italian adherence to the Western Alliance is dictated by the immediate requirements of national defense and the need for economic development rather than by any overriding democratic ideal. Italy's specific role in the alliance, on the other hand, is subject to change since it is dictated by internal as well as external political considerations.

A center-right government similar to the present one of Premier Segni, which depends for its support on the parties of the extreme right, can be expected to align itself in favor of a tough Western policy vis-a-vis the USSR both within NATO and in the orientation of the European Community of Six. Such a government can also be expected to align itself more readily with a continental policy such as advocated by President de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer.

A center-left government similar to the one of former Premier Fanfani, which would depend for its support on the political parties to his left, including eventually the Nenni Socialists, would, on the other hand, very likely support a more flexible policy vis-a-vis the USSR both within NATO and the Six. It would be more reluctant, however, to accept the leadership of General de Gaulle in an eventual "continental bloc," unless French initiatives were directed toward the full implementation of the European Community of Six treaties and toward the relaxation of international tensions. A reconstituted center-coalition government, difficult as that may be to achieve, could be expected to steer a middle course between the other two positions.

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In the present confused situation both within the Western Alliance and in internal Italian politics, however, Italy is likely to steer a very cautious course, so as not to antagonize either its continental friends of the Community of Six or its other NATO allies outside Europe, especially the United States. In the long run, Italian policy can be expected to be increasingly directed toward the fulfillment of the economic, military, and political integration of Europe, regardless of the composition and political orientation of the government in power.

### I. ITALIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

Italy's concern with national defense and the requirements of its economic development were the determining factors which led it to participate in NATO. Italy desired to achieve an international status which would remove it from isolation and the ignominy of its defeat during World War II and restore it to a position of equality as an accepted member of the community of free nations. The Italian governments supported NATO as the best means of 1) defense against Soviet aggression and 2) the revival of Italian influence in the Mediterranean. From the beginning of NATO Italy viewed the pact not merely as a defensive alliance but as a potential springboard for the political and economic integration of Europe which it is now attempting to achieve through the European Community of Six. Domestic factors also played and continue to play an important part in determining Italian governments' attitudes toward NATO.

Italian governments from 1949 to the present day have considered NATO as a basic weapon of the anti-Communist forces in Italy in their internal struggle against the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its former ally, Nenni's Italian Socialist Party (PSI). To anti-Communist leaders, NATO provided psychological as well as physical defense of Italy against a Communist threat by reminding Italians that a Communist accession to power in Italy would mean turning Italy over to the Soviets. The cold war made it relatively easy for former Italian governments to keep the left -- as represented by the PCI and the PSI -- relatively isolated. The obvious threat of Soviet imperialism enabled the Christian Democratic-led coalition governments to reject the advances of the left for an alliance which would have carried out a radical domestic social and economic reform policy and a neutralist foreign policy.

#### Controversy over the Italian Role in NATO

Beginning in 1955, there has arisen a controversy over the role that Italy should play in the Western Alliance. This controversy has been caused by a variety of factors, including: 1) the relaxation of world tensions following the Geneva Summit Conference of 1955; 2) the diminution of the internal threat posed by the Italian Communist Party to the Italian state;

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3) the general belief among a large sector of the Italian people that the danger of a world conflict has been reduced because of nuclear parity between East and West; 4) the disunity in the Western coalition over policy during the Suez, and more recently, the Berlin crisis; and 5) the gradual emergence of Nenni's PSI as an independent force in Italian politics following its abrogation of the "unity of action pact" with the PCI in 1957.

Italian foreign policy since 1955, therefore, has been torn by two tendencies: 1) a desire for a more active and independent role for Italy in the initiation and conduct of Western policies; and 2) the need for the continuance of the status quo within NATO. This controversy involving specific NATO policies and the Italian role in that organization took the form of a debate between the so-called "neo-Atlanticists" and the "Atlanticists."

The term "neo-Atlanticism" describes a foreign policy which seeks a more active role for Italy in the international political and economic field, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Middle East where Italy believes it possesses a special interest and competence, while still maintaining the military commitments to NATO. The leading exponents of neo-Atlanticism have been President Gronchi, oil magnate Enrico Mattei, and former Premier Fanfani. They have had the support of the center-left and elements within and outside the Christian Democratic party, including Saragat's Democratic Socialists and to a certain extent the Nenni Socialists. The Atlanticists have been led by former Foreign Minister Gaetano Martino and have been generally supported by Christian Democratic conservative elements, the Liberals, the Republicans, and the Vatican hierarchy. The Atlanticists have accused their opponents of wanting to carry out an aggressive Middle East policy that would antagonize Italy's allies, particularly Great Britain and France, and undermine NATO unity.

The controversy between Atlanticists and neo-Atlanticists took a definite form at the time of the Suez crisis in 1956. The first government of Premier Antonio Segni, based on a coalition of the Christian Democrats and three minor center parties (Democratic Socialists, Republicans, and Liberals), took an Atlanticist position when it supported US action to end hostilities but at the same time refrained from criticizing the UK and France. These Atlanticists held that Italy could not afford to weaken its association with European members of NATO. They maintained that if the US were to modify its European policy, Italy would have to close ranks behind its European allies even at the risk of weakening its alignment with the US. The opponents of this view, the neo-Atlanticists, held that in the event of a break between the major European powers and the US, Italy's alignment with the US would permit it to increase its political and economic interests in the Near and Middle East.

This controversy has been resumed from time to time along different lines, more recently during the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference and in

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the aftermath of the announcement of the exchange of visits between the US and the USSR. It was used by conservative forces both within and without the Christian Democratic Party to embarrass and eventually bring down the Fanfani government early in 1959. Fanfani's pan-Arab policy and his trip to Cairo came under constant attack by Fanfani's opponents as a neutralist policy disruptive of Atlantic solidarity and antagonistic to French and British allies. It is being used today by Fanfani's supporters in accusing the Segni government of close identification with the ~~de~~ Gaule-Adenauer inflexible stand at a time when the major Western Allies, the US and the UK, are engaged in an effort to ameliorate international tensions and bring about a detente between East and West. The controversy can be expected to rage with increasing force as the national convention of the Christian Democratic Party scheduled for October approaches. At stake at the convention is the control of the party leadership and its political direction. Fanfani is determined to wrest control of the party from his opponents and his main line of attack will unquestionably continue to be directed against the rightward direction of the present government and party leadership both in domestic and foreign policy. There is strong evidence that Fanfani's strategy is hitting the mark, is gaining increasing support both within and without his party, and may very well succeed at the party convention. The reemergence of Fanfani to the formal or implied leadership of the dominant political force in Italy, would almost certainly bring about the demise of the Segni government and its replacement with a government which would be left-oriented both in domestic and foreign policy. Aware of these dangers, the Segni government is likely to steer an increasingly cautious course in foreign policy. In domestic policy he will attempt to free himself of Fanfani's accusation that he has led his party in a rightward direction, by disavowing support of the neo-fascists and by presenting a convention platform pledged to a return to the old Christian Democratic-led center-coalition government.

## II. ITALIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF SIX

Most Italian political leaders have come increasingly to believe that NATO, while a fundamental and a necessary instrument for the preservation of peace, is too unwieldy to satisfy the particular interests of Italy. In the words of President Gronchi, Italy and the other continental European powers "should have something to say vis-a-vis certain aspects of Americanism (US policies in NATO) ... It is here (in Europe) that we must find a policy, certainly not contrary to the US, not conceived as a realization of a third force, but capable nevertheless of bringing about a safer equilibrium between East and West." Italy's long range foreign policy, therefore, will be directed increasingly toward European economic, political, and military integration. Most Italian political leaders believe that European integration is the primary means by which Italy can make its voice heard in international affairs and that the degree of initiative that Italy is able to bring to bear on NATO policies will be directly commensurate with the support that Italy is able to muster from among members of the European Community of Six.

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Italian obsession with the necessity of consultation within the Western Alliance, and its timid independent initiatives in foreign policy, are not only dictated by reasons of national interest and prestige common to all Italian governments regardless of their political composition, but are intimately tied in with the internal political situation. Internal political pressures for Italian participation in the inner councils of the Western Alliance are so strong that Italian governments are often forced to go to almost desperate lengths to satisfy them. Illustrative of this situation were the Italian initiatives during the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference and more recently in the aftermath of the announcement of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev exchange of visits and the President's forthcoming trip to Europe. The Italian Government's almost hysterical pleas for participation in the Geneva conference, a NATO Heads-of-Government meeting, and a Segni-Eisenhower meeting represent not only Segni's concern over the adverse effect that a relaxation of international tensions would have on his government, but they reflect also the necessity of satisfying the demands and nationalist aspirations of the extreme rightwing forces on whose support the Segni government depends. In addition, they represent an answer to his opponents' accusations that the Segni government by supporting the de Gaulle-Adenauer line has backed the wrong horse, thus becoming completely isolated.

#### Controversy over the Italian Role in the Community of Six

The controversy over the role of Italy in NATO also affects the role of Italy in the European Community of Six. While with the exception of the Communists, there is general support for European economic, political, and military integration, there is disagreement among Italian political leaders as to the role and the policies that Italy should advocate in an integrated Europe. The controversy has been sharpened and brought into focus by recent developments in East-West relations, including the Berlin crisis, the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference, and most important the announcement of the forthcoming Eisenhower-Khrushchev exchange of visits in Washington and Moscow.

Broadly speaking the controversy has been polarized between those who, like the present government and its rightwing supporters, conceive an integrated Europe as a third force under the aegis of a Paris-Bonn-Rome Axis designed to maintain the status quo in Europe and in East-West relations, and those on the other hand who, like Fanfani, Gronchi, and their supporters of the center-left and left, believe that the role of an integrated Europe should be a corollary of NATO and should promote or help to promote a detente in East-West relations. Illustrative of the two positions was the reaction to the recent announcement of the forthcoming US-USSR talks. Reaction to the US initiative ran from outright suspicion, skepticism, and disapproval in the extreme right parties, through lukewarm support and approval in government circles; to unqualified support on the part of the Nenni Socialists, the Italian Communists, and Fanfani and his supporters in the center-left.

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The controversy, aside from the different political concepts of the advocates of either position, has tremendous overtones in the internal political situation. The adoption of a flexible role in East-West relations either in NATO or the integrated Six as advocated by the Italian center-left, implies the eventual realignment of Italian political forces to the left, which means essentially a Catholic-Socialist rapprochement and their eventual collaboration in a government coalition. The adoption of the inflexible line, as advocated by the Italian center-right, implies, on the other hand, the continuing isolation of all center-left forces and the participation in the governing majority of the extreme right forces, including the monarchists and the neo-fascists.

### III. ITALIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD AN EVENTUAL CONTINENTAL BLOC

While there undoubtedly are potential factors which favor an Italian alignment in an eventual continental bloc or European third force, there are others which militate against such an alignment in the immediate future.

The factors which could favor an Italian alignment in such a bloc are essentially four: 1) fears of a possible US withdrawal from Europe; 2) fears of a possible isolation from the Community of Six if Italy did not join in the "bloc"; 3) fears that major changes in the world balance of power may become detrimental to Italian and European interests; and 4) the prospect (if a left-oriented government is in power in Italy at the time) of a continental policy aimed at a detente in international relations. Another important but by itself a less determinant factor, is the prospect of satisfying Italian desires and ambitions (common to all Italian governments irrespective of their composition and political orientation) for a larger voice in the formulation of Western policy which would be satisfied if they participated fully in a continental bloc.

The factors which militate against an Italian alignment are intimately connected both with the uncertainty and suspicion about the policies of such a bloc, and with the precarious position of the Segni government. They are: 1) fears that an even closer Italian alignment with the de Gaulle-Adenauer rigid line, at a time when the US and the UK are engaged in an effort to bring about a detente in East-West relations, will almost certainly bring down Segni and bring back Fanfani to a position of preeminence in the Italian political scene; 2) general Italian suspicion of de Gaulle's and Adenauer's motives, and the fear, especially among the leaders of the Italian center-left and left, that Italy might get involved in adventures in Algeria and perhaps Europe which would be contrary to Italian interests and aspirations in those areas; and 3) fears, again generally shared in Italy, that Italian adherence to a continental bloc, might find Italy backing the wrong horse if the present divisions within the Western Alliance were to be polarized between a continental bloc and a US-UK alliance working at cross purposes.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

1. In the foreseeable future, Italy will remain firmly aligned to NATO, whatever the political orientation and composition of the Italian government.

2. Italy's specific role in NATO, however, will be conditioned by the nature and composition of the Italian government then in power. A left-oriented government will advocate a more flexible policy vis-a-vis the USSR than a right-oriented government and both will seek a greater Italian voice in the formulation of that policy.

3. In the short run, however, Italy is likely to steer a very cautious course, so as not to antagonize either its continental friends of the Community of Six or its traditional NATO allies outside continental Europe, especially the United States. This will be particularly true in the present confused situation within the Western Alliance in the aftermath of the announcement of the forthcoming bilateral talks between the US and the USSR.

4. In the long run, Italian policy can be expected to be increasingly directed toward the fulfillment of the economic, military, and political integration of Europe, regardless of the composition and political orientation of the government in power.

5. Italian efforts and demands for a larger voice in Western councils' decisions will continue unabated. If these demands are not met in NATO, satisfaction will undoubtedly be sought in closer political consultation within the Community of Six. Nevertheless, it is extremely doubtful that under present international and national conditions the satisfaction of this Italian need for consultation would be the determining factor which would induce Italy to choose between the Six and NATO, should current divisions in the Western Alliance be polarized.

6. It is not likely that an Italian government will align itself with an eventual European third force or continental bloc in the immediate future unless there are major changes in the world balance of power which the Italians would consider detrimental to their own and European interests.

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