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Talking Points for the ADDI

Foreign Policy Implications for Italy of the Hijacking

The hijacking of the Achille Lauro has been one of the most serious international challenges that any Italian government has faced in the postwar period. It brought down a stable governments whose foreign policy was characterized by strong support for both NATO and the US. [redacted]

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The crisis has driven home to Italian leaders and public that Italian interests and American interests will not always coincide. Italy's ties with US and NATO have been keystone of postwar Italian policy. [redacted]

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--Prime Minister Craxi, Foreign Minister Andreotti, and Defense Minister Spadolini are all determined to maintain Italy's ties to NATO and the US, but Craxi and Andreotti are more ready to break with the US on specific issues, especially the Middle East. [redacted]

[redacted]

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--Craxi almost certainly blames the US in great measure for the fall of his government.

--He probably believes that he has been too accommodating to the US and that Washington has come to take his acquiescence for granted.

--He will probably be determined to extract a larger price in future for concessions on whole range of issues. [redacted]

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Italian officials, especially in the military, probably will be more wary of US requests and more determined to safeguard Italian prerogatives: they will go by the book [redacted]

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--US assertiveness on the tarmac at Sigonella and surveillance of the Egyptian airliner during its flight from Sicily to Rome almost certainly have angered Italian military commanders.

--This is the second time that special US military units have raised Italian hackles; Italian officers were offended by what they considered US highhandedness during the Dozier kidnaping in 1983. [redacted]

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