

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 13015 01 OF 02 101742Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----075047 101803Z /53  
O 101635Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6464  
INFO USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 13015

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: NATO, NPG  
SUBJECT: ALLIED ATTITUDES ON NEUTRON BOMBS

REF: STATE 184569

1. " NEUTRON BOMB" ISSUE HAS SO FAR SEEMED GEOGRAPHICALLY AND POLITICALLY REMOTE TO MOST ITALIANS. HOWEVER WE HAVE A SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE, PERHAPS PRESAGED BY THE OPENING IN LAST FEW DAYS OF A LEFT PRESS ANTI-NEUTRON-BOMB CAMPAIGN. SIZE OF THE PROBLEM WILL BE DICTATED BOTH BY DEVELOPMENTS OUTSIDE ITALY AND BY MANNER IN WHICH GOI AND USG GRAPPLE WITH IT.

2. PUBLIC DISCUSSION SO FAR HAS ITS ORIGINS LARGELY IN EXTERNAL STIMULI. THE AMERASINGHE STATEMENT AT HIROSHIMA, THE NAGASAKI CEREMONIES, EXTENSIVE SOVIET PRESS CAMPAIGN INCLUDING THE ANTI-NUCLEAR BOMB STATEMENT OF 28 EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES (THE PCI AMONG THEM), CONTINUING DEBATE IN THE FRG, HAVE BEEN REPLAYED IN L'UNITA (COMMUNIST), AVANTI\* (SOCIALIST), MESSAGERO AND LA REPUBBLICA, AND MORE RECENTLY PICKED UP IN A FEW PARLIAMENTARY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ROME 13015 01 OF 02 101742Z

INTERPELLATIONS (WHICH WILL NOT BE DEALT WITH UNTIL SOMETIME IN THE FALL).

3. CURIOUSLY, ITALIAN COMMENTATORS HAVE NOT SO FAR DEALT WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE "NEUTRON BOMB" IN A SPECIFICALLY ITALIAN CONTEXT. THEIR TREATMENT HAS BEEN MORE GENERAL, CAST IN ADVERSE AND MORALISTIC TERMS AND

SEEMING TO ASSUME THAT THE QUESTION OF DEPLOYMENT IS RELATED TO THE CENTRAL FRONT.

4. THE ONLY INDICATION TO DATE OF AN OFFICIAL GOI VIEW DERIVES FROM PRIMIN ANDREOTTI'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT CARTER (STATE 179716) WHICH SEEMED TO SUGGEST A TACIT AND HIGHLY GENERALIZED "NO OBJECTION" SHOULD THE U.S. DECIDE TO PROCEED. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE ISSUE BECOME THE SUBJECT OF DOMESTIC HEAT, THE GOI STANCE COULD BECOME VEN MORE AMBIVALENT.

5. CURRENT LEVEL OF DEBATE, IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, POSES NO SPECIAL PROBLEM FOR U.S. INTERESTS. HOWEVER WE WILL BE ALERT FOR EITHER (OR BOTH) OF TWO DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COULD MAKE THE SITUATION MORE DIFFICULT TO HANDLE. FIRST, LOCAL DECIBLE LEVEL WILL DPEND IN LARGE PART ON HOW GOES THE DEBATE ON THE CENTRAL FRONT. IN PARTICULAR, IF POLEMICS IN FRG DIE DOWN, ANY ITALIAN DEBATE IS LIKELY TO GO THE SAME WAY.

6. SECOND BUT MORE IMPORTANT IS WHETHER ITALIANS BEGIN TO DEBATE "NEUTRON BOMB" IN TERMS OF POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT AND USE IN ITALY, E.G., AS A STOPPER FOR THE GORIZIA GAP. A DEBATE CAST IN THOSE TERMS WOULD GRASP ITALIAN ATTENTION, SUMMER DOLDRUMS OR NO, AND OUR PROPOSED DEPLOYMENTS WOULD BECOME A SHARP  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ROME 13015 01 OF 02 101742Z

FOCUS OF ITALIAN ATTENTION.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 13015 02 OF 02 101742Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----075030 101807Z /53

O 101635Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6465  
INFO USMISSION NATO

SECRET SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 13015

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

7. WE NOTE THAT ANY SUCH DEBATE COULD BE COMPLICATED AND INFLAMED IF THE "NUCLEAR BOMB" ISSUE BECOMES PUBLICLY ENMESHED WITH THE PRM-10 CONTROVERSY. ANTI-NUCLEAR-BOMB WRITERS WOULD READILY ADDUCE ANY U.S. PRODUCTION DECISION AS EVIDENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF OUR INTENT OR WILLINGNESS TO GIVE GROUND IN EUROPE UNDER WP ATTACK. THAT THE ARGUMENT COULD BE RUN AS STRONGLY IN THE CONTRARY DIRECTIONS (I.E., THE WEAPON IS EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO FORWARD DEFENSE) WOULD ONLY STIMULATE THE CONTROVERSY.

8. SHOULD ITALY MOVE TO THE LEVEL OF DEBATE FOUND TODAY IN, SAY, THE FRG, THE INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND ITSELF IN A QUANDRY, AND HOPING NOT RPT NOT TO HAVE TO MAKE A HARD, PUBLIC DECISION EITHER WAY. IN ANY EVENT, OF COURSE, THE GOI WILL EXPECT TO BE CONSULTED PROMPTLY AND FULLY SHOULD U.S. PLANS INCLUDE POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF THE WEAPON IN ITALY.

9. WITH THE FOREGOING AS BACKGROUND, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ROME 13015 02 OF 02 101742Z

-. FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, PENDING U.S. ACTION, OUR OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT USG IS IN A CONSULTATIVE AND DELIBERATIVE STATE RE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT. NO DECISION YET TAKEN, IN SHORT.

B. WE HARMONIZE OUR DECISIONS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE WITH OUR CENTRAL EUROPEAN ALLIES AS WELL, OF COURSE, AS WITH THE GOI IF EVENTUAL DEPLOYMENT IN ITALY IS CONTEMPLATED.

C. AS RECOMMENDED BY PRIMIN ANDREOTTI TO PRESIDENT CARTER, "ANY DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE NEUTRON BOMB BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CLEAR EXPLANATION TO THE WORLD AT LARGE ABOUT THE NATURE, PURPOSES AND DOCTRINE OF THE WEAPON", INCLUDING THE CHANGING NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE THREAT WHICH IT WOULD HELP COUNTER.

D. SHOULD THE PRM-10 CONTROVERSY STILL BE CURRENT IF AND WHEN ANY AFFIRMATIVE USG DECISION IS ANNOUNCED, OUR RATIONALE FOR PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT SHOULD COUNTER,

OR AT LEAST NOT REINFORCE, THE ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO DISTRUST THE  
VALIDITY OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO FORWARD DEFENSE.

E. SEEK AND EMPLOY ALL APPROPRIATE WAYS TO MINIMIZE THE  
DAMAGE INHERENT IN THE TERM "NEUTRON BOMB", WITH ITS  
CATAclySMIC CONNOTATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE,  
THIS EMBASSY PUBLICLY NEVER USES "NEUTRON BOMB"  
WITHOUT QUOTES AND IN ITALIAN TEXTS WE IDENTIFY IT  
AS THE "NEW TACTICAL WEAPON" ("NUOVO ORDIGNO TATTICO").  
RATHER THAN REFERRING TO THE "NEUTRON BOMB" OR  
STRESSING THE WEAPON'S PRINCIPAL HOMICIDAL ELEMENT  
("ENHANCED RADIATION"), USG SPOKESMEN SHOULD IN OUR  
VIEW USE A MORE APPOSITE TERM. WE WOULD SUGGEST  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ROME 13015 02 OF 02 101742Z

SOMETHING LIKE "REDUCED BLAST WARHEAD".HOLMES

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ALLIANCE, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, NUCLEAR WARHEADS, MISSILES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 10-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977ROME13015  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770288-0084  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** ROME  
**Handling Restrictions:**  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1977/newtext/t19770876/aaaacmon.tel  
**Line Count:** 190  
**Litigation Code Aides:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 1abd305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS, STADIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS, STADIS  
**Reference:** 77 STATE 184569  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 25-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1645707  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ALLIED ATTITUDES ON NEUTRON BOMBS  
**TAGS:** PARM, US, NATO, NPG  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/1abd305d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009