

#1 att to OIRA-53054

*the Ambassador*  
*Pat Gordon*  
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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American Embassy  
Rome, Italy  
January 26, 1970

SUBJECT: The National Front and the Italian Political Situation  
PARTICIPANTS: Prince J. Valerio Borghese  
Oddone Colonna - Italian Representative for Northrop  
Charles R. <sup>CS</sup> Stout - Second Secretary of Embassy  
COPIES TO: Ambassador POLIT  
Minister POL (4)  
Department - EUR/AIS

(Note: Political/Military Counselor Gordon had been asked by Mr. Colonna who in the Embassy might see Borghese, and Mr. Gordon gave him my name.)

Borghese said that he had not been in touch with anyone in the Embassy for many years. He was not sure what our sources of information are and suspected that we might not be completely aware of the desperate state of Italian opinion, or of the work of his movement, the National Front (Fronte Nazionale). He continued that the public is utterly fed up with the government and party system, which is corrupt, inefficient and self-serving. They do not care about Lenin or Duce, or any other politician. Furthermore, the country is very rapidly sliding toward Communist control. The PCI now influences public policy to a considerable degree; in a short time it will be in absolute control. Few public figures seem to worry about this, but the thinking public does. He came to the Embassy because the U.S. is the world's leader and because it has considerable influence in Italy. He cited President Kennedy's alleged decisive support for introducing the center-left in Italy.

Borghese continued that the Front is not a party. He refuses to have anything to do with them. The Front aims at getting together people who are worried about what the postwar era has brought to Italy -- businessmen, professional men, intellectuals, and petty bourgeoisie. There are hundreds of small, local organizations in the country that have a similar viewpoint; the Front tries to bring them together. Its

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long range aim is to catalyze public opinion and eventually supplant the parties and the present system of government. It has already set up a "shadow" government, with "prefects" in each province and a central staff of experts in many fields.

I said that I could sympathize with many of his criticisms of the Italian system, but is it realistic to think that a group outside the system could overthrow it as simply as he had explained? Borghese insisted that it was a matter of getting public opinion on the side of justice -- or rather, the opinion of people who can lead, since the people as such follow the decisive leader.

In reply to a question, Borghese said that the Front is conservative in the sense of wanting to preserve public order, respect for the law, and Italy's position in NATO. But it favors a social policy that is much more realistic and progressive than that of any Italian party. The Front has no membership formality, and thus no estimate on how many people adhere to it.

I asked Borghese whether he was still active in the MSI. He said no, that he had consented to become the MSI's honorary president in the early 1950's under particular circumstances. When the circumstances no longer applied, he resigned a couple of years later. The MSI is no better than any other party.

I said that we were always interested in receiving various political views and would be glad to see him in the future if he had something to add. Borghese gave me a copy of a memorandum that had been given to a member of President Nixon's entourage in Rome last February.

Biographic Note: Borghese was famous during the war as the regular Navy officer in command of torpedo boats that performed daring actions against the British. He stayed with the Republic of Salo and was condemned after the war to a number of years of prison because of action taken against the partisans. His English is fairly good, but he preferred to speak Italian.

The Front has received occasional newspaper coverage but nothing of importance.