

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: SEP 2000

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INID 84-029JX

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National Intelligence Daily

Saturday
4 February 1984

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS INID 84-029JX
TCS 2/29/84
4 February 1984

Copy 553

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ITALY: Possible Cabinet Dispute

A decision to try the Bulgarian, Sergey Antonov, accused of plotting to kill the Pope could prompt new wrangling among members of the coalition. [REDACTED]

Magistrate Martella has completed his inquiry, and the judiciary will rule later this month whether there is enough evidence to warrant a trial. Antonov is under house arrest in Rome, pending appeal of a lower court decision to return him to prison. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Andreotti's efforts to improve relations with Bulgaria were set back last month when Socialist Prime Minister Craxi vetoed a plan to send a new ambassador to Sofia any time soon. The former Ambassador was withdrawn in November 1982 when allegations of Bulgarian complicity in the assassination attempt against the Pope surfaced. [REDACTED]

Comment: Disagreements last week among members of the coalition over economic policy and high-level appointments suggest that Craxi will be increasingly preoccupied with squabbles in the cabinet in the weeks ahead. The Antonov case is one of several issues that could provoke new infighting in the five-party government. [REDACTED]

The Christian Democrats and the Socialists, the two largest parties in the coalition, have different views on the Antonov affair. The Socialists, who endorsed the theory of a Bulgarian role in the assassination attempt, almost certainly would be embarrassed by a decision to release Antonov. The Christian Democrats have become increasingly vocal in their calls for easing East-West tensions, and they may believe that they can turn Antonov's release to their advantage. [REDACTED]