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SUMMARY

of

"Proposal to Establish US Contact with Pietro Nenni"

The purpose of this memo is to renew a suggestion made in June 1956 that the US Government establish both direct and indirect contact with Pietro Nenni with a view to determining his basic motivation in the move to merge his party (PSI) with that of Saragat (PSDI). It is suggested that such contact might be established on various levels, official and non-official, open and covert. It also recommends maintaining close liaison with the leaders of the Western European Democratic Socialist Parties in monitoring this movement. Finally, it advances the position that some form of merger is probable and that the US Government should be prepared for the readjustment of our political thinking concerning Italy, which such a development would entail.

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DOCUMENT NO. 14  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. 1  
[ ] DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S ©  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1992  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 24 MAY 82 REVIEWER: 103430

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c. We should indicate that we have only one fundamental concern, that a merged party should be uncompromisingly democratic in its principles. Apart from that we should recognize that a black and white, totally unambiguous platform cannot readily be achieved. Insofar as our advice is desired, we should not urge an explicit anti-Communist program, but rather a progressive dissolution of the complex linkages between the PSI and the PCI. We should also be willing to accept a somewhat less than fully "American" orientation toward NATO and the Western Alliance, so long as it did not continue the pro-Soviet neutralism which the PSI has expressed in the past. We would hope that, internally, the new party would give full tolerance to the wide range of views from the right wing of the PSDI to the left wing of the PSI. If this latitude were maintained, we should have little fear that the merged party would become an instrument of Communist manipulation.

d. We should indicate to Saragat that we would be disturbed by any outcome which resulted in further fragmentation of the Socialist left, such as the three-party situation referred to in paragraph 3. d. above. If Nenni emerges from the PSI in effective control of the party, we should urge Saragat not to pursue tactics of obstruction but to enter into specific positive negotiations for merger. He should make every effort to hold the right wing elements of his party with him in this endeavor.

e. Within the limits imposed by time and discretion, we should make advance preparations to negotiate a rapprochement with Nenni in the event that he emerges victorious from the Congress. We should be prepared to deal with him on a basis of forgetting "by-gones" and seeking to determine the outlines of a modus vivendi, if not positive support.

f. We should work through our contacts with the Socialist International leaders to establish the basis of an accommodation in the event of a successful merger, so as to insure ourselves against any loss of prestige or influence through having viewed it, hitherto, with palpable misgiving.

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Chief, SRS/DDI

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