March 30, 1948
Message, Willems to Chamberlin, Ennis

Citation:
http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/144998

Summary:
A memorandum from the US Army's Intelligence Division, detailing the Army's contingency plan in the event of a communist takeover in Italy's 1948 parliamentary elections.

Original Language:
English

Contents:
- Scan of Original Document
TOP SECRET MESSAGE

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From: USMILATTACHE AMBASSADOR Rome, Italy sgd Willems
To: CSIGD PERSONAL for Chamberlin or Ennis

Nr: MAR 129 30 March 1948

Proposed reaction in event Communists controlled government established Italy per discussion item carried Ennis Frankfurt is subject. Proposal discussed most important officials Rome Mission. Viewed here as possessing extremely grave implications, carrying with it probability plunging Italy into bloody civil war and seriously hazarding start World War III.

However as final positive though desperate action to hold Italy for western bloc in event Communist successes, consider proposition cannot be discarded. Therefore recommend immediate exploration and development United States proposals for implementation.

Considered here conception this move should not be only military in aspect but should represent resurgence democratic political forces. Hence calls for strong political figure as leader who, with some assumption governmental authority, could call upon all armed force, police, and non-Communists as well as anti-Communist elements. Thus presented believe strong elements police, army, air and navy would support movement. However great dependence would have to be placed on anti-Communist partisan organizations. Leader suggested Ennis memo, while professionally competent, not recommended head movement considering requirements personality, broad popular appeal and national greatness.

CM IN 6135 (30 Mar 48)

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From: US MIL ATTACHE AMBASSADY Rome, Italy sgd Willems
Nr: MAR 129 30 March 1948

While realizing necessity expediting preparations, we are not yet prepared recommend Italian element to be approached nor do we feel approach should be made at this moment. However do concur in suggestion send 1 or more United States representatives Rome for discussions. Would not concur unless representatives can come prepared state details United States assistance and be authorized commit our government on this venture.

End.

ACTION: Gen Chamberlin
INFO: Gen Wedemeyer, Lt Col Bowen, Mr Forrestall, Mr Royall, CSA
CM IN 6135 (30 Mar 48) DTG 301700B hh1