

2214

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785016

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10000/105/505

2213

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

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10000/105/505

TORRE ANNUNZIATA EXPLOSIONS
JAN. - MAR. 1946

2218

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

785016

C. Section

4A

TRANSLATION

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Rome, March 27, 1946

30 MAR 1946

Dear Admiral,

I thank you again for your expressions of sympathy you kindly sent me for the mournful accident which occurred in Torre Annunziata last January. I am in agreement that the operations concerning the transport and sinking of ammunitions, no longer in use, should take place in ports, of minor importance, carefully selected. - 2A

I share your opinion on the necessity of informing the local population that such work must be carried out with the utmost speed and precaution. An appeal shall be made to all population concerned as to strict discipline and understanding.

I am sending you a copy of the official communication to be published in the papers. In doing so I am responding to your own request. I hope the responsible units of the Allied Authorities will take all the necessary precautions to avoid further accidents.

Please accept my best greetings,

(s) De Gasperi.

Admiral Ellery W. Stone
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
Rome.

EC DIST - 29 Mar 46 4383

Action - Ex Commr

Info - C.C.

C.A. Sec. ✓

Econ. Sec.

Polad 'A'

Polad 'B'

PR Br.

(GR)



TRANSLATION

War operations have necessitated the formation of depots of ammunitions and explosive materials in many localities of the Peninsula. Such materials, kept in plants, subject to deterioration, is liable to be stolen, dumped or carelessly handled by inexperienced people. It represents a danger to public safety, and the Allied and Italian authorities are therefore concerned with its disposal with the greatest speed and security.

All materials will be sent to such localities where the depth of sea and landing accommodation will enable the sinking of it into sea. Transport from the depots to the coast will be made by road or rail.

The Government, conscious of the necessity of speeding up the work, has taken steps, with the Allied Authorities, for the proper handling of the explosives according to modern technic and practice.

It is necessary however, that the population would collaborate with the local authorities in observing all measures of safety issued by Allied Units, in giving free passage to all convoys, and in refraining from subtracting or stealing material from depots or during the transportation.

By observing such necessary precautions the danger of accidents like the one which caused the loss of so many lives recently will be avoided.

(s) De Gasperi

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File

(3A)

AFHQ FOR CAO (ACTION): ALLIED COMMISSION CHIEF LIAISON
OFFICER NAPLES (INFO)

797

7 FEB 46

PRIORITY

- 8 FEB 1946

RESTRICTED PD

CONFIRMING CONVERSATION BRIGADIER JOSH HYPHEN COLONEL BARRHILL PD
MINISTER OF INTERIOR INTERVIEWED TODAY SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE SITE
FOR DUMPING AMMUNITION CMA NAMELY CMA AREA TORRE GAVETA TO LAGO
DI PATRIA ABOUT FIFTEEN MILES NORTH OF CAPO MISERO PD MINISTER OF
INTERIOR HAS DELEGATED GENERAL SCOPPA WITH AUTHORITY TO AGREE TO SITE
AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION PD HE WILL CONTACT COLONEL FERTIGUICK CMA
CHIEF LIAISON OFFICER CMA NAPLES CMA THIS EVENING PD MINISTER
AGREED TO DO HIS UTMOST TO CARRY OUT REQUEST MADE IN PARA ELEVEN
PARAN BAKER PARAN OF YOUR LETTER CHARLIE ABLE ONEE SLASH TWO SIX ZERO
OF JANUARY THREE ZERO

(1A)

Copy to: CA Sec ✓

4381

Executive Commissioner

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M B LUSH

Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.



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Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NNND No.

785016

(2A)

Ref: 3642/18/EC.

4 February 1946.

4 FEB 1946

MD

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

The Chief Administrative Officer to the Supreme Allied Commander at Allied Force Headquarters has sent me the attached letter in connection with the recent and much deplored explosions of ammunition which took place at TORRE ANNUNZIATA on January 21st. You will note that I have been asked to convey to your Government the sympathy of the Allies for the relatives of those who were killed, for those who suffered injury and for those made homeless. This I do with the greatest personal sympathy.

I should be glad to have your agreement, in view of the facts described in paragraphs 2 - 9, to the Allies continuing the operation of disposing of the ammunition through the minor ports in the NAPLES area.

I would also like to bring to your attention paragraphs 11 and 12 of General MacLeod's letter and to ask you to cause steps to be taken to bring to the public notice the factors mentioned in paragraph 11.

Very truly yours,

E. J. Ellery V. Stone
ELMER W. STONE
Rear Admiral, USNR
Chief Commissioner

Dr. Alcide de Gasperi,
President of the Council of Ministers,
Italian Government,
R O M E.

Copy to: CAO, AFHQ.
AC CIO, NAPLES.
CA Section.



3109-
ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Tel No. FREEDOM 347

C/O/260

30 Jan 46SUBJECT:- Dumping of AmmunitionHQ Allied Commission (3)

1. You are doubtless aware of the major explosions of ammunition, destined for dumping in the sea, which took place at TORRE ANNUNZIATA on 21 Jan 46. Visits have been made to the devastated area by the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, by GOC 3 District and by the Italian Prime Minister. It is desired that you reiterate to the Italian Government the sympathy of the Allies for the next of kin of casualties and for the homeless.
2. The origin of the disaster is still under investigation but it is thought that the results of this investigation are only likely to reveal contributory reasons rather than a positive cause.
3. There is still in the NAPLES area a large quantity of ammunition which will have to be moved. The majority of this is serviceable ammunition which presents no greater risk in movement than the vast tonnages which have been transported, without mishap, throughout the campaign in ITALY. A quantity, however, will have to be dumped in the sea for various reasons including unserviceability. This ammunition can, however, be made safe for transport over short distances, provided that there is no unauthorised interference or tampering.
4. One of the main causes of unserviceability of ammunition is the very large scale pilferage which is taking place in the various ammunition Depots, and the continuance of these activities not only increases the tonnage of unserviceable ammunition, and therefore the risk of accidents, but also hampers and slows down Allied efforts to dispose of it.
5. Tonnages in the NAPLES area which have yet to be dumped in the sea are estimated at:-

British Ammunition	-	12,000
US Ground Forces	-	19,000
US Army Air Forces	-	15,000
6. There is cause to believe that there would be considerable local feeling among the Italian population in the towns and villages around NAPLES, particularly TORRE ANNUNZIATA, if dumping operations are resumed and this might present the Italian authorities with a delicate internal security problem. In this connection in the present state of redeployment, the Allies would not be able to offer any appreciable assistance to the

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30 Jan 46

HQ Allied Commission (3)

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6. There is cause to believe that there would be considerable local feeling among the Italian population in the towns and villages around NAPLES, particularly TORRE ANNUNZIATA, if dumping operations are resumed and this might present the Italian authorities with a delicate internal security problem. In this connection in the present state of redeployment, the Allies would not be able to offer any appreciable assistance to the Italian Government. The solution cannot be to leave this ammunition in its present dumps on account of the accumulating risk resulting from deterioration and pilferage. Further the risk that ammunition should fall into unauthorised hands cannot be overlooked. The populated nature of the country prevents destruction in situ, which in any event is not a satisfactory method since it can only be done on a small scale and would be a very protected operation.

*Copies to
Admiral / Ex Command*



- 2 -

7. It will be seen, therefore, that it is essential to continue dumping operations in order to eliminate a permanent threat to the safety of the Italian population in the NAPLES area.
8. The fact that an explosion has taken place is no reason to presuppose that a recurrence is inevitable. Ammunition Depots, in common with all others, have employed a large number of civilians, who know from their own experience that the properly supervised handling of ammunition does not represent any appreciable risk.
9. The method of moving this ammunition from depots to ports has been studied to determine the relative advantages and disadvantages of road and rail.

(a) The use of road transport undoubtedly offers a lesser risk of accident, since ammunition can be made safe for the relatively short journey to ports in the NAPLES area. However, reducing Allied resources could not allow any appreciable increase in the mileage to be covered to ports or areas further away than those used to date. It will be realised that the use of road transport permits the choice of less frequented roads and less populated areas though inevitably some towns, probably with narrow streets, have to be entered. Close supervision is, however, practicable and the danger resulting from pilferage is largely obviated.

(b) The use of rail increases the amount of handling necessary and also the time in transit between depot and port; consequently the risk of accident is greater. In addition rail routes inevitably pass through towns and villages and the incidence of pilferage and tampering on rail has been proved by experience in spite of all possible precautions, to be far higher than in road transport. The present congested state of the railways would not allow rail movement over a major distance, e.g. to the East coast or to any ports except in the NAPLES area; in any event such a course would greatly increase the risk of further accident.

10. In view of the gravity of the situation it is considered necessary to acquaint the Italian Government with the factors involved and to obtain their agreement to continued dumping operations through minor ports in the NAPLES area. There is no intention of using NAPLES port for this purpose.

11. The Italian Government could render great assistance if they initiated suitable propaganda to stress the following factors:-

(a) the necessity from the internal security point of view of completing the dumping of ammunition as early as possible.

(b) dumping of ammunition can only be completed without risk if interference and pilferage is eliminated. The full cooperation of the local population is required to arrest the activities of the irresponsible minority who are causing an unnecessary danger to the general public both through explosion during movement and to subsequent internal security.

(c) The Allied authorities have been and will continue to make

4310

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(c) The Allied authorities have been and will continue to make every effort to dispose of ammunition in order to remove all risk at the earliest possible moment.

12. It will be appreciated that the urgency of this problem requires a very early solution. Any delay in resuming operations can only increase

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the problem and the decreasing allied manpower available can only protect progressively the process of dumping.

WD-C/FR

Maximum level

L. W. M. McCLEOD, Major General,
for Chief Administrative Officer,
AFHQ.

Copy to: - HQ 3 District
PES
PES South
SLCS
BAO
G-2 AFHQ
G-3 AFHQ
G-4 MTOUSA
G-5
Q(Mov)
Ord (B)
Br POLAD
US POLAD
General L. C. JAYNES HQ MTOUSA

431.

