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Victory Parade Participation of St.
Elements.

Feb. 1946



CONFIDENTIAL

Major General L. BROWNING, G.O. OBS. M.C.,
Headquarters,
Military Mission to the Italian Army,
R.O.M.E.

A.224

19 Feb. 46.

My dear

Reference our conversation yesterday, I am told that certain
ROME papers have stated that Italian partisans will take part in the
Victory Parade in LONDON in June.

My view is that it would be most unfortunate if this happened.
We here have always asserted that the new Italian Army of Liberation did
more to liberate their country and fight the Germans than the partisans.
You will remember that at one period, when the North was liberated, the
partisans took the attitude that they were "the boys" and the Italian Army
was nothing. This idea has been to a great extent dispelled but if the
partisans take part in the Victory Parade and the Italian Army do not, it
will look like the recognition of the partisans at the expense of the
morale and prestige of the Italian Army which we are working so hard to
achieve, and which is slowly returning.

It might be said that under the circumstances both partisans and
representatives of the Italian Army should take part in the parade. But
here again I feel myself that would not be right. The people at home have
not realized how ITALY has cooperated since the armistice. Perhaps natu-
rally, they still feel that ITALY is the nation that stabbed us in the back
at a critical period. There is therefore always the possibility that
Italian Army representatives might get a hostile reception at the parade,
which would thus undo a great deal of the good feelings which have been
engendered over the past year or so and would be contrary to the expressions
of goodwill from both British and American Governments which have been
publicly aired for some time past. The Italian people might then feel
that it was once more a case of "perfidie Albion" which says one thing and
actually thinks another!

Anyway, as you asked me for my views they are as above. I
gathered yesterday from your remarks that you agree.

Yours
L.B.

We have always asserted that the new Italian Army of liberation more to liberate their country and fight the Germans than the partisans. You will remember that at one period, when the North was liberated, the partisans took the attitude that they were "the boys" and the Italian Army was nothing. This idea has been to a great extent discredited but if the partisans take part in the Victory Parade and the Italian Army do not, it will look like the recognition of the partisans at the expense of the morale and prestige of the Italian Army which we are working so hard to achieve, and which is slowly returning.

It might be said that under the circumstances both partisans and representatives of the Italian Army should take part in the parade. But here again I feel myself that would not be right. The people at home have not realised how ITALY has cooperated since the armistice. Perhaps naturally, they still feel that ITALY is the nation that stabbed us in the back at a critical period. There is therefore always the possibility that Italian Army representatives might get a hostile reception at the parade, which would thus undo a great deal of the good feelings which have been engendered over the past year or so and would be contrary to the expressions of goodwill from both British and American Governments which have been publicly aired for some time past. The Italian people might then feel that it was once more a case of "perfidie Albion" which says one thing and actually thinks another!

Anyway, as you asked me for my views they are as above. I gathered yesterday from your remarks that you agree.

Yours

2.12.

Henry Hopkinson, Esq.,
British Embassy,
Rome.

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