

acc

10000120/5319

G/32/2

T

10000/120/5319

G/32/2

TALKS WITH COUNT CASATI

JAN. 1945

4822
4824

SECRET

MEMO: TALK WITH COUNT CASATI P.M. 25th JANUARY 1945.

(with amendments reported by Maj BAUMANN 28 Jan)

1. CASATI informed me that out of the 70 Italian Generals on the active roll down to Generals of Divisions inclusive, about 35 were to be removed for reasons of epuration or incapacity. He said that the effect on the Army, the Country and the Patriots could not be but beneficial. It would be realised that the Italian Government were really taking a firm line over epuration and elimination of "the Old Gang." It would also give more encouragement for the younger men to rise and would spur them and those remaining to endeavour so that they also would not be removed.
I agreed with the above.

2. The Minister said that it was time the Ministry of War was reorganised. Certain big steps to this end have already been taken. The main difficulty however has been the anomalous position of the Chief of Staff, S.M.R.E., General BERARDI whose position has however been more in the nature of a first cousin rather than a son and subordinate of the Minister. The Minister has not wanted to remove BERARDI in view of his rank and the fact that on the whole he has put up a good show. The Minister was waiting until an opportunity occurred to put BERARDI into another post befitting his rank and experience. This opportunity has now occurred in connection with SICILY. General MARIOTTI (the Regional Commander of SICILY) will now have to be epurated on his previous records and also he did not do too well in the recent riots. The Minister is therefore putting General BERARDI in as Regional Commander, SICILY, vice MARIOTTI. I agreed particularly as I have always felt that BERARDI is much more of the commander, rather than the staff-officer type.

3. The Minister suggested 3 names for replacement of BERARDI i.e.

General PRIMIERI, G.O.C. CREMONA;
General UTILI, G.O.C. LEGNANO and
General RONCO, G.O.C. SARAUDA.

I said that I was sure General ALEXANDER would not approve of PRIMIERI leaving his Division which has just gone into the line, or of UTILI leaving LEGNANO which is about to go into the line and has already had its Chief of Staff removed recently. Therefore, the choice fell on RONCO who was very highly spoken of by General HEYDEMAN when the latter was G.O.C. 1 District, SICILY and who had done particularly well in the recent riots in SICILY.

I said I would accept RONCO vice BERARDI.

4. Proposals of a name of a General to replace RONCO will be made to me by the Minister.

5. General CASTELLANO present Commander of AOSTA Division has been playing politics and vastly exceeding his duties as a soldier. The High Commissioner for SICILY came in person to ROME to complain to BONCINI about CASTELLANO and to request CASTELLANO's removal.

General GAMBELL a few months ago asked us to look after CASTELLANO in view of the latter's service to the Allies at the time of the Armistice. As a result we interested ourselves and got CASTELLANO posted as G.O.C. AOSTA. As however CASTELLANO has since been caught and the Italian Government has since then

2. The Minister said that it was time the Ministry of War was reorganised. Certain big steps to this end have already been taken. The main difficulty however has been the anomalous position of the Chief of Staff, S.M.R.E., General BERARDI whose position has however been more in the nature of a first cousin rather than a son and subordinate of the Minister. The Minister has not wanted to remove BERARDI in view of his rank and the fact that on the whole he has put up a good show. The Minister was waiting until an opportunity occurred to put BERARDI into another post befitting his rank and experience. This opportunity has now occurred in connection with SICILY. General MARIOTTI (the Regional Commander of SICILY) will now have to be epurated on his previous records and also he did not do too well in the recent riots. The Minister is therefore putting General BERARDI in as Regional Commander, SICILY, vice MARIOTTI. I agreed particularly as I have always felt that BERARDI is much more of the commander, rather than the staff-officer type.

3. The Minister suggested 3 names for replacement of BERARDI i.e.

General PRIMIERI, G.O.C. CREMONA;
General UTILLI, G.O.C. LEGNANO and
General RONCO, G.O.C. SABAUDA.

I said that I was sure General ALEXANDER would not approve of PRIMIERI leaving his Division which has just gone into the line, or of UTILLI leaving LEGNANO which is about to go into the line and has already had its Chief of Staff removed recently. Therefore, the choice fell on RONCO who was very highly spoken of by General HEYDEMAN when the latter was G.O.C. 1 District, SICILY and who had done particularly well in the recent riots in SICILY.

I said I would accept RONCO vice BERARDI.

4. Proposals of a name of a General to replace RONCO will be made to me by the Minister.

5. General CASTELLANO present Commander of AOSTA Division has been playing politics and vastly exceeding his duties as a soldier. The High Commissioner for SICILY came in person to ROME to complain to BONOMI about CASTELLANO and to request CASTELLANO's removal.

General GAMBELL a few months ago asked us to look after CASTELLANO in view of the latter's service to the Allies at the time of the Armistice. As a result we interested ourselves and got CASTELLANO posted as G.O.C. AOSTA. As however CASTELLANO has since been naughty and the Italian Government request his removal I said that I should not oppose this. But I asked the Minister to let me have a letter as record of why it was necessary to remove CASTELLANO. The Minister proposed to replace CASTELLANO by General MANNERINI whom we know is doing well for us in APULIA.

I agreed.

6. To replace MANNERINI the Count proposed to promote a Colonel LIUZZI and I said I wished for the latter's record before I approve.

7. The above will mean replacements of all the 3 Generals in SICILY but the Minister felt that that would do no harm and in fact would be beneficial as we would be getting better men in and as BERARDI would have more prestige and weight than MARIOTTI.

I agreed.

contd sheet 2/..

Sheet 2.

The Minister outlined his ideas on the reorganisation of the War Ministry. These had not been fully worked out but they seemed very sound and will be along the lines we think right. The Minister will send us comprehensive proposals when they have been fully worked out.

trvs. LB.
3.c.

Major General.
M.M. I.A.

Amendments :- (28 Jan)

1. CASATI had decided in his own mind that RONCO should replace BERARDI as C of S. He expected to be able to persuade the President of the Council and the Cabinet to his pt of view, but there might be difficulties, since MESSE was pressing for the appointment of UTILE. If RONCO is selected, his appointment is automatically approved by GOC. Alternatively, UTILE's name will have to go to AHQ for consideration.
2. The following other appointments are proposed:- Brig Gen LIUZZI to Assistant to C of S vice SANTI, Maj Gen VANDEN HEUVEL to Comd SABAUDA Div in SICILY vice RONCO, Brig Gen LAZZARINI to Comd AOSTA Div in SICILY vice CASTELLANO, Brig Gen SANTI to 2i/c MANTOVA gp vice LAZZARINI.
3. Brig Gen MANNERINI will not go to the AOSTA Div, but remains at War Ministry in his present post of head of the Repatriated PW Branch.

I didn't know Lazzarini was going. Why?

4820

PA to GOC, Land Forces -Com.

Attached returned with compliments of
Chief of Staff.

P. Russell

PA to COS.

SECRET

Dear husk,

The attached will interest
you. This is not yet official
so please keep it to yourself
problem.

Yours

Langley Browning

P.S. Can I have this back please

W 3/11

Hous

4822

R

1823