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GOVERNMENT CRISIS, NOV./DEC. 1944
NOV., DEC. 1944

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AIR MINISTRY

R O M E

14th December 1944

To : A.V.M. W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARLET C.B.E., D.F.C.

Dear Air Vice Marshal,

I thank you profoundly for your congratulations sent to me on the occasion of my appointment as Minister for Air to the Italian Government, and in particular for your assurance of the most complete collaboration.

As far as I am concerned I want to assure you that I shall not fail to keep in mind in any work that I have to undertake, the various points you set forth in your AFSC/R/S 1/Air of December 12th in order that the work we undertake together will effectively produce, in the fight against the common enemy, greater developments and results in the Italian Air Force. This is made possible by the desire that animates the personnel of the Italian Air Force and by the sentiments inspired in the Italian People towards a noble and generous Great Britain and her Allies.

I want also to thank you for having reminded me of the promise made by Air Marshal Tedder to the effect that the measure of collaboration of the Italian

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I have to undertake, the various points you set forth in your AFSC/R/S 1/Air of December 12th in order that the work we undertake together will effectively produce, in the fight against the common enemy, greater developments and results in the Italian Air Force. This is made possible by the desire that animates the personnel of the Italian Air Force and by the sentiments inspired in the Italian People towards a noble and generous Great Britain and her Allies.

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I want also to thank you for having reminded me of the promise made by Air Marshal Tedder to the effect that the measure of collaboration of the Italian Air Force in the common struggle will count in the Allied Peace Treaties.

I am yours cordially

Sgd. Carlo Scialoja

TOP SECRET

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES OF MEMBERS OF NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.

1. Ivanoe Bonomi, President of the Council and Home Secretary.

Born Mantova, October 18th, 1873. Commenced his career as a journalist and then passed to politics. He served in Nathan's Government some years before the first World War. Passing from the orthodox Socialist Party, he became one of the founders of the Reformist Socialist Party.

At the commencement of World War I, Bonomi played the part of an interventionist, and following Italy's entry in the war he held posts in several Cabinets and later took an active part in the Rapallo pact negotiations.

From June 1931 to February 1932 he was President of the Council, and after the advent of fascism took up the occupation of lawyer.

During the clandestine period he was President of the National Committee of Liberation, and since the liberation of Rome he has formed two Cabinets. He belongs to no political party, although it is known that his sympathies are with the Labour Democrats, among whose adherents he numbers many friends.

2. Palmiro Togliatti, Vice President. Communist.

Born Genoa, March 26th, 1893. He left Italy in 1935, because of the persecution he received from fascism, and changed his name to Ercole Pacci.

He spent many years in France, Spain and Russia. While in France he was for a lengthy period the chief of the Communist Party's foreign centre, and was subsequently appointed assistant secretary to the Communist International.

Togliatti is one of the cleverest men in this country to day, and he treats politics as he would a game of chess. It cannot be said that all the moves have gone in his favour during the recent crisis. He had received express orders from Moscow that he must persuade De Gasperi to form a Government instead of Bonomi. The reason for this order is that it was the Comintern's desire to put De Gasperi in a position where the responsibility for the country's misfortunes would fall on him, and thus his followers, the Christian Democrats, would be weaned from him to the Communist Party. That Togliatti did not succeed in his object was in no wise due to De Gasperi's astuteness in seeing through the move, but rather because of his weakness and inability to shoulder the burdens. We have also occasion to be grateful to the tenacity of

that his sympathies are with the Labour Democrats, among whose number he numbers many friends.

2. Palmino Togliatti, Vice President. Communist.

Born Genoa, March 26th. 1893. He left Italy in 1915, because of the persecution he received from fascism, and changed his name to Breole Ercoli.

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The inability of Togliatti to obtain the Home Office portfolio was another failure for him, and he will surely attempt to remedy this in part by seeing that a Communist is appointed Under Secretary at this Ministry.

3. Giulio Di Rodino. Vice President. Christian Democrat.

Born Naples in the year 1874. Belongs to a very old Naples family. Has been practising law for forty-eight years. His political activities before fascism were very extensive: He has represented both the Catholic Party and the Italian Popular Party in the Italian Parliament, and, together with Don Sturzo founded this latter named party. He was Vice President and Minister in one Government, and Secretary for War in Nitti's and Giolitti's governments. During Bonomi's term of office in 1931 he held the portfolio of Under Secretary at the Ministry of Justice.

The first Christian Democratic Congress held in Naples after the liberation of that city was presided over by him, and he subsequently became Acting Cabinet Minister in the second Badoglio government.

A sound man, though, as is the case with almost all the other members

of the new Cabinet, not as young as he might be in order to participate in political life, *the best advantage.*

4. Aloisio De Gasperi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Christian Democrat.

Born in the Trentino, April 3rd, 1881. Secretary of his party. At the age of twenty-four he was director of the 'Nuovo Trentino', a political paper which became, under his direction, one of the most read papers in that region.

In 1911 he was appointed representative for the Trento region in the Austrian Parliament, and before the commencement of World War I, and also during it he made many speeches in favour of the oppressed and persecuted Italians.

In 1919 he was president of the first congress held by the Italian Popular Party, and since that time he has always been a member of the direction of that party.

In 1921 he was appointed representative in the Italian Parliament for his region, which had by that time become part of the Italian Kingdom.

When Staro was obliged to leave the direction of the Italian Popular Party, De Gasperi took place until the fascists suppressed the party. In 1926 he was arrested because of his activities against the fascists and sentenced to four years imprisonment. After his release he retired from the underground political life and devoted himself to library research; and it is only during these last years that he has resumed his active interest in politics.

5. Francesco Cossiga, Labour Democrat, Minister of Transport.

Born Aliano, Basilicata, in the year 1884. An ex-Reform Socialist deputy, he was returned for the first time in 1919, and then he began to follow the famous Amendola's democratic trend.

Cossiga was well-known for his anti-fascist activities, and he was much persecuted by the fascists who forbade him to return and live in his native town.

He enjoys a sound reputation as a penal lawyer, is one of the outstanding men of the Naples Forum, and has a large following in Southern Italy.

Was Under Secretary for Public Works in Bonomi's former government.

6. Ugo La Malfa, Minister of Public Works, Labour Democrat.

Born Reggio Emilia, Dec. 14th, 1877. A lawyer by profession, he was working in the Administration of Public Works when he became director of the Southern Italy region.

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6. Meuccio Ruini. Minister of Public Works. Labour Democrat.

Born Reggio Emilia, Dec. 14th. 1877. A lawyer by profession, he was working in the Administration of Public Works when he became director of the Southern Italy region.

As a representative of the Radical Party he was appointed ~~26880~~ Secretary for Labour in the Orlando Cabinet and Secretary for the Colonies in the third Nitti Cabinet in 1920. He is the founder of the Institute for Employees Homes; the National Enterprise for Tourist Industries; and the National Exportation Institute, and in 1923 he was one of the founders of the National Union which was endeavouring to establish a new democracy, later becoming the president of the Union.

In 1913 he was made a State Councillor, and in 1927 joined those who were retired on account of their anti-fascist activities.

This man is considered to be one of the best prepared men in the Government. He is not, however, extremely popular with all his colleagues, and not the last reason for this is his overruling political ambition.

He was acting Cabinet Minister in the last Bonomi Government.

7. Giovanni Gronchi. Minister of Industry, Commerce & Labour. Christian Democrat.

Born Pontedera, in the year 1887. Was formerly Pisa's representative in the Italian Popular Party. He is a Progressist, and headed the parliamentary group of the Popular Party with De Gasperi.

His speech in the House of Deputies against the fascist reform in 1924 is famous. In the last Government he was Under Secretary for Labour, Industry and Commerce.

8. Fausto Gullo, Minister of Agriculture. Communist.

Born Cosenza, in the year 1884. A political candidate for the Communist Party in the 1924 elections, he was very active in the campaign against fascism. For many years he was confined to the island of Sardinia, and only resumed his political life after the liberation of Naples. Togliatti has great faith in this man, and it is to be observed that he has held the post of Minister of Agriculture in both Bonomi Cabinets. Rightly, the Communists consider this portfolio to be one of the most, if not the most important in the Government, for most assuredly it is only through her agriculture that Italy will be able to rehabilitate herself after the war has been brought to a conclusion.

9. Count Alessandro Casati, Minister of War. Liberals.

Born Milan, March 3rd. 1881. The grandson of the famous Casati who was Mayor of Milan at the time of the 'Five Days Of Milan' in 1848.

A student of Italian modern history, he was appointed Under Secretary of Education in Badoglio's Government.

During the German occupation of Rome he represented the Liberal Party in the National Liberation Committee, and was Minister of War in Bonomi's former Cabinet.

10. Admiral Raffaele De Courten, Chief Of Admiralty. Independent.

Born Milan, November 23rd. 1838. Entered the Naval Academy at Livorno in 1806 and proved to be an excellent cadet. In 1940 he had attained the rank of Rear Admiral, and it was not long after that he was promoted Admiral.

On July 27th. 1943 Badoglio nominated him Chief of Admiralty and Chief of Navy Staff, and it was under his guidance that almost the whole of the Italian Fleet reached Allied waters, in accordance with the terms of the Armistice.

Extremely well liked by his men and his colleagues, it will be recalled that his resignation was one of the principal reasons for the dissolving of the former Bonomi Cabinet.

11. Doctor Carlo Scialoja, Minister for Air. Labour Democrat.

Born Procida, in the year 1884, our new Air Minister comes from a family which has given the country many learned patriots.

During the German occupation of Rome he represented the Grand Party in the National Liberation Committee, and was Minister of War in Bonomi's former Cabinet.

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11. Doctor Carlo Scialoja, Minister for Air. Labour Democrat.

Born Procida, in the year 1834, our new Air Minister comes from a Neapolitan family which has given the country many learned patriots.

For many years he was the director of the juridical paper 'Foro Italiano', and he himself is a lawyer of no mean repute.

He is very close to the Prime Minister, on whom he exerts much influence.

Always anti-fascist, he is one of the few who were never members of the fascist party.

He was Under Secretary at the same Ministry in Bonomi's former Government.

12. Umberto Tupini, Minister of Justice. Christian Democrats

Born Rome, May 27th, 1889. A lawyer, taking his degree at the Rome University.

Tupini entered public life at an early age, and founded and directed a national Catholic federation of high school students. He then became editor of the 'Corriere d'Italia', and director of the 'Difesa del Popolo' and 'L'Organizzazione' which were syndical and cultural magazines.

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At the age of twenty-five he was appointed Communal Counsellor of Rome, and for many years headed the Catholic professional organisations in the Capital; he was also one of the founders of the Popular Party.

In 1919, 1921 and 1924 he was returned to Parliament as deputy for the Marches, and was secretary to the Parliamentary group of the Aventine.

Always a staunch anti-fascist, he was persecuted for his political views.

13. Antonio Pesenti, Minister of Finance. Communist.

The youngest member of the Government, being thirty-six years of age.

Since early youth he has been an ardent Communist, and was condemned by a Special Court For The Defense Of The State to twenty-five years imprisonment for carrying out Communist propaganda. During his trial he was defended by Mario Cevoletto, Minister for Post and Telegraphs in present Government, a Labour Democrat.

Pesenti is an exceedingly well educated man, the most dangerous type of Communist. He is a student of economic problems and finance, and formerly taught political economy at the Saseari University.

He was Under Secretary for Finance in first Bonomi Cabinet, and liberated at the fall of fascism he crossed the lines and reached Bari during the clandestine period.

14. Marcello Soleri, Minister for the Treasury. Liberal.

Born Cuneo, in the year 1882. A lawyer, and Liberal Democratic representative in Parliament before the advent of fascism.

In the first Nitti government he was an Under Secretary; in 1919/1920, General Commissioner for supplies; held post in Giolitti's Cabinet; was Minister of Finance in Bonomi's 1920 government; Under Secretary for War in the second Patta government in 1922. He represented Italy at the Paris Financial Conference in August 1922.

Soleri is a brave soldier and fought well in World War I. An honest Piedmontese, he resigned his post as Finance Minister in Bonomi's former government, thus accelerating the crisis, because of the unfair way in which the Epuration, directed by our friend Scoccimarro, was being carried out. His appointment in the present Government has met with general approval.

15. Mauro Scoccimarro, Minister for Occupied Italy. Communist.

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15. Mauro Scoccimarro, Minister for Occupied Italy. Communist.

Born Udine, in the year 1894. A member of the Italian Communist Party executive, he was arrested because of his activities in 29/4/38 and sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. After serving his sentence he was sentenced to 6 years confinement, most of which was spent on the island of Ventotene where he remained until liberated after the fall of Mussolini in 1943.

During the German occupation of Rome he represented the Communist Party in the National Committee of Liberation, and took an active part in organising sabotage and the partisan bands.

He was appointed Assistant Commissioner For Epuration when Bonomi formed his first Cabinet, and in this post he cannot be said to have been a success, at least from our point of view. He has now been removed from the Epuration Commission and we hear that a new commission is to be constituted to deal with this question.

16. Mario Cevolotto, Minister for Post and Telegraphs. Labour Democrat.

Born Treviso, in the year 1887. A graduate of law from Padua University. He took up journalistic work and became the director of the paper 'Province of Treviso'. At an early age he entered into politics by join-

ing the Radical Party and becoming the secretary of it. He represented the Labour Democrats in the National Liberation Committee, and was most active in the underground effort against fascism and the Germans. In addition to holding a portfolio in the Cabinet he is the Secretary General of the Labour Democratic Party.

17. Vincenzo Arangio Ruiz, Minister of Education. Liberal.

Born Naples, in the year 1884. A lawyer, who taught Roman law at the University of Camerino, and then passed to the Universities of Perugia, Modena, and Naples where he holds the Chair of the Institution of Roman Law.

In October 1931 he was sent to Egypt in order to teach at the University of Gizeh, and he has international fame as a scholar, also having written numerous works on Roman and Latin law.

Arangio Ruiz is without a doubt the most learned man in the present Government.

18. Gino Bergami, General Commissioner for Alimentation. Liberal.

Born Naples, in the year 1904. A student of physiological problems, and a teacher at Naples University.

Always a Liberal, he organized the Liberal movement together with more well-known personalities from Southern Italy.

In the last Cabinet he was Under Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, and then passed to the Alimentation Department as Under Secretary.

Gileen Brent

Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

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Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

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Dec. 12th. 1944.

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TOP SECRET
AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION
ALLIED COMMISSION

SECRET.

AFSC/5/S.1/AIP.

12th December, 1944.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to present my formal congratulations to you on your appointment as Air Minister to the Italian Government. I would like to take this opportunity of assuring you of my utmost co-operation, and that my wish is to build the Italian Air Force up into an efficient and happy organisation which will always be fit to take its part beside the Allies against the common enemy. I shall be very willing to discuss any problems with you at any time and give you the best of my advice.

2. I should also like to take this opportunity of reminding you of three points in my directive from Allied Headquarters which may often be touched upon in our relations with each other. The first point is that the operational part of the Italian Air Force is to be placed unreservedly under the orders of the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. You will no doubt realise that this has always been the case up to the present, and that the operational units are now co-operating and are engaged in active operations against the enemy. Together with the Chief of Staff I shall use every effort to maintain, and if possible, improve their state of efficiency. I am convinced that there is room for improvement within these units, and particularly in their organisation and administration, and I would remind you that up to the present it has been our aim to try to re-organise them on the lines of the Royal Air Force. I have never concealed my opinion that there is also room for an improvement in the organisation and administration within the Italian Air Ministry, and within the other higher formations.

3. My second point is that I am ordered to approve of the appointments or supersession of all Senior Officers to or from posts in the Air Ministry or the Italian Air Force. Up to the present I have laid down that this is to apply to all Officers over the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and to Officers who may be selected as heads of Departments or Services in the Air Ministry, or the higher formations if junior to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. I can assure you that I will do my utmost to co-operate with you in this matter to the best of my ability. In the past, it has unfortunately sometimes been the case that notification of these appointments has appeared in the Press before I have given my approval, and I must earnestly request that you will take steps to

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4. My third point is that one of the most important functions of the Italian Air Ministry is the rehabilitation of the Italian aircraft industry in aid of the Allied war effort. This implies not only the use of personnel, material and industrial plant in support of the Italian Air Force, but also of use in support of the Allied Air Forces.

5. No doubt there are other points which will arise during the next months, and I can only repeat that I will do my best to give you my advice and to co-operate with you in every way. Please do not hesitate to call on me to visit you on any matter at all, however small.

6. Finally may I remind you of Air Chief Marshal Tedder's promise that whatever the Italian Air Force was able to do in active aid of the Allies would count in the favour of Italy at the Peace Conference table.

Yours

W. A. B. Boscawen-Barnard

W. A. B. BOSCAWEN-BARNARD,
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING.

S. E. DOTTOR CARLO SCIALOJA,
MINISTRO DELL'AERONAUTICA.

TOP SECRET

SOTTOCOMMISSIONE AERONAUTICA - COMMISSIONE ALLEATA

R O M A

SECRET

AFSC/R/S.1/AIR

12 Dicembre 1944

Ho l'onore di farVi le mie congratulazioni per la Vostra nomina a Ministro dell'Aeronautica del Governo d'Italia. Nel congratularmi con Voi colgo l'occasione per assicurarVi la mia più completa collaborazione e per dirVi che mi auguro di vedere nella Vostra aeronautica una organizzazione efficiente e felice, sempre pronta e preparata a prendere il suo posto a fianco degli Alleati contro il comune nemico.

2. Desidererei anche cogliere questa occasione per intrattenervi brevemente su tre punti che sono parte essenziale delle direttive che mi sono state impartite dal Comando in Capo Alleato, e che avremo occasione di frequentemente toccare nei nostri contatti. Il primo di questi punti stabilisce che la parte operante dell'Aeronautica Italiana debba esser messa senza riserva agli ordini del Comandante in Capo delle Forze Aeree Alleate del Mediterraneo. Voi Vi renderete conto che così è stato fino ad ora e che così deve essere in quanto le Vostre unità operanti stanno ora collaborando con le unità Alleate e sono attualmente impegnate contro il nemico. Assieme al Capo di Stato Maggiore farò ogni sforzo per mantenere e, se possibile, migliorare le loro condizioni di efficienza. Sono convinto che queste unità possono essere migliorate, particolarmente nella loro organizzazione ed amministrazione, e desidero mettere in evidenza il fatto che fino ad ora il nostro obiettivo è stato quello di tentarne la riorganizzazione sulle linee di quella della Royal Air Force. Non ho mai fatto mistero della mia opinione che anche nella organizzazione ed amministrazione del Ministero e degli altri Comandi sia possibilità e necessità di miglioramento.

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nerVi brevemente su tre punti. Il primo punto viene dal Comando in Capo Alleato. Le rettifiche che mi sono state impartite dal Comando in Capo Alleato, e che avremo occasione di frequentemente toccare nei nostri contatti. Il primo di questi punti stabilisce che la parte operante dell'Aeronautica Italiana debba esser messa senza riserva agli ordini del Comandante in Capo delle Forze Aeree Alleate del Mediterraneo. Voi Vi renderete conto che così è stato fino ad ora e che così deve essere in quanto le Vostre unità operanti stanno ora collaborando con le unità Alleate e sono attualmente impegnate contro il nemico. Assieme al Capo di Stato Maggiore farò ogni sforzo per mantenere e, se possibile, migliorare le loro condizioni di efficienza. Sono convinto che queste unità possono essere migliorate, particolarmente nella loro organizzazione ed amministrazione, e desidero mettere in evidenza il fatto che fino ad ora il nostro obbiettivo è stato quello di tentarne la riorganizzazione sulle linee di quella della Royal Air Force. Non ho mai fatto mistero della mia opinione che anche nella organizzazione ed amministrazione del Ministero e degli altri Comandi vi sia possibilità e necessità di miglioramento.

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Il secondo punto viene dagli ordini che ho avuto di dare la mia approvazione ai movimenti degli Ufficiali Superiori nelle loro destinazioni o sostituzioni al Ministero ed alle unità, operanti o no. Fino ad oggi avevo stabilito che questo dovesse riguardare i movimenti degli ufficiali di grado superiore a quello di Tenente Colonnello ed, indipendentemente dal loro grado, i movimenti di quegli ufficiali destinati a capo delle varie direzioni del Ministero e delle formazioni più importanti. Vi posso assicurare che darò quanto potrò della mia esperienza per collaborare con Voi su questa questione. In passato si è però disgraziatamente verificato qualche caso di movimenti come quelli in discussione di cui la stampa ha dato notizia prima che io li avessi approvati, e Vi prego ora vivamente di dare disposizioni perché la cosa non si ripeta in avvenire.

4. Il terzo punto viene dal fatto che una delle più importanti missioni del Ministero dell'Aria è quella della ri-organizzazione della industria aeronautica in aiuto alle sforzo di guerra Alleata. Ciò porta con sé non solo tanto l'impiego di personale e di impianti per l'assistenza all'Aeronautica Italiana, ma può anche essere utile per l'assistenza che può dare alle Aeronautiche Alleate.

5. Non vi è dubbio che altre questioni sorgano nel corso dei prossimi mesi e non Vi posso per ora che ripetere che farò del mio meglio per consigliarvi e per cooperare in ogni senso con Voi.

6. Vi rammento in fine la promessa del Maresciallo dell'Aria Tedder e cioè che quanto l'Aeronautica Italiana farà in collaborazione con gli Alleati sarà tenuto nel dovuto conto nelle trattative per la pace.

W.B.

A.V.M. W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARLET
AIR VICE MARSHAL
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

A S.E. DR. CARLO SCIALOJA
MINISTRO DELL'AERONAUTICA

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dovuto conto nelle trattative per la pace.

Wb:

A.V.M. W.A.B. BOWEN-BUSCARLET
AIR VICE MARSHAL
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

A S.E. DR. CARLO SCIALOJA
MINISTRO DELL'AERONAUTICA

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TOP SECRET

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AIR MINISTRY CRISIS ACCORDING TO MAJOR SANDON OF S.I.M.

Major Sandon (who is Air Intelligence Officer under Col. Agrifoglio at S.I.M. and who has kept aloof from this office for some time as relations between S.I.M. and Ufficio "I" are not cordial) called on me this morning and, in the presence of Fl/Lt. Morrow expressed the following views on the political situation. His views are not personal, but reflective of a group of younger senior officers.

The new minister, Scialoja, is liable to be influenced to a large extent by his entourage, which has communistic leanings.

Major Sandon thinks that Scialoja will replace Piacentini by some other General, which will have an unfavourable reaction in the operational units who have a great admiration for Piacentini. The only suitable alternative to Piacentini, especially regarding the operational units, is Gen. Gaeta, who has been a fighter pilot and has proved himself an excellent leader.

There is a movement on foot to sabotage Remondino, who is considered by operational units as one of the most promising officers in the I.A.F.

He also said that he had approached Col. Agrifoglio for his opinion on the situation, but Col. Agrifoglio was reluctant to express any views though he did agree that, failing Gen. Piacentini, Gen. Gaeta was the only man to fill the post. Major Sandon also stated that in the course of conversation with Gen. Messe it was his impression that Messe considered Gen. Gaeta with favour.

Our talk with Major Sandon was interrupted by the arrival of Lt/Col. Santini and Lt. Venturini. Major Sandon then left.

AIR MINISTRY CRISIS ACCORDING TO LT/COL. SANTINI AND LT. 2073

for Piacentini, is Gen. Gaeta, especially regarding the operational units, who has been a fighter pilot and has proved himself an excellent leader.

There is a movement on foot to sabotage Remondino, who is considered by operational units as one of the most promising officers in the I.A.F.

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AIR MINISTRY CRISIS ACCORDING TO LT/COL. SANTINI AND LT. 2073 VENTURINI OF UFFICIO "I".-

Their views on the political situation proved to be practically identical with those of Major Sandon, though it appeared obvious that there had been no contact between them previously.

Scialoja will, in their opinion, tend to leave decisions to his subordinates. He is surrounded by people like Capezzone and Bucellato and, if I remember rightly, De Feo. It is felt that this entourage will have considerable influence on his appointments.

Among the people who have been intriguing against Piacentini are Col. Moscatelli (since recalled by the Americans) and Gen. Gastaldi. Lt/Col. Santini admitted that Piacentini was rather brusque in his dealings with Gastaldi and the Italian volunteers, but the attitude was partly justified by the fact that he and other I.A.F. officers resented the

fact that Gastaldi and his men rather looked upon themselves as a separate entity, namely the Italian Volunteer Air Force which indication they carried on the flashes of their tunics.

(e) Lt/Col. Santini stated that we were facing a conflict between the older generals and the younger senior officers. The younger officers supported Piacentini. The communist party was out to weaken the Air Force, as also the other Armed Forces, by creating dissention and by influencing the Minister through his entourage.

(c) It is known that a meeting of Roman Generals took place recently at the Casa dell'Aviatore (ostensibly a meeting of the Committee) during which the present Air Ministry crisis was discussed.

(f) Lt/Col. Santini then stated that it had come to his knowledge that Col. Luca had been approached by someone at the Allied Commission who wished to have information on Gen. Pellegrino and Gen. Grande. This led him to remark that Gen. Grande would be a good man to place in the post of Under Secretary as he was a conscientious officer, though without any outstanding qualities, and would follow whatever directives were laid down by the Allied Authorities.

Lt/Col. Santini was most anxious that Gen. Piacentini remain Chief of Staff, he stated that all reports about Piacentini's black market deals were false. He referred to a report of four trucks of foodstuff which had been bought from Bari and of spare parts which were bought in Florence. All this was, in fact, supplied to the R.Aeronautica. He was most emphatic that none of the people who bring these accusations against Piacentini would be in a position to maintain the truth of their accusations.

(b) If the worst came to the worst and Piacentini did not remain Chief of Staff he considered that Gen. Gaeta would be an excellent choice as he was well liked by the operational crews. Like Remondino he was a fighter pilot who is always there to lead his squadrons into action.

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Referring to Remondino he stated that about a month ago Capezzone had called upon the Commission of Enquiry to suspend Remondino. The suspension did not take place as documents were forthcoming signed by Major Page of I.S.L.D. and Captain Rollo C-2 (C.I.) A.F. H.Q., but Lt/Col. Santini foresaw that, as the result of the change in the Ministry, the campaign against Remondino would be re-opened.

In order to avoid any drastic changes taking place which might have had repercussions amongst the operational crews, Lt/Col. Santini suggested

- 1) that you see Scialoja as soon as possible to inform him verbally and in writing, without any equivocation, that you must be given due notice of any proposed appointments or changes of Ministry personnel from the rank of Lt/Col. upwards;
2. that no mention of such prospective appointments or changes be made to the press before your consent has been obtained.

15th December 1944

F. W. Sturges

TOP SECRET

35⁸

INTERVIEW WITH MAJOR MAGINI

Major Magini's views on the recent crisis in the Italian Air Ministry were somewhat more tempered and balanced than one would expect from a man representing the younger Staff Officers. He has, by nature of his position as editor of the "Giornale del Aviatore" a large circle of friends and acquaintances, and his opinion tends to represent a conservative element.

For a long time Major Magini has not seen eye to eye with Gen. Piacentini. Months ago, feeling the hostility that Gen. Piacentini's dictatorial attitude was arousing among the younger Staff Officers, he wrote a long personal letter to Gen. Piacentini pointing out that such fascist behaviour must ultimately create an impossible situation. There was no reply either verbal or otherwise.

Gen. Piacentini, he concluded, was admirable as Chief of Staff, but in his capacity as Minister he was intollerant, ambitious and inexperienced enough to be a political tool.

He had heard talk of Gen. Aimone Cat as a possible Chief of Staff. He did not think that the appointment would react unfavourably in operational quarters. However, the general outlook was not encouraging, since Italy does not possess a man of outstanding honesty, objectively sincere personality, who could influence the situation for any length of time.

D. L. L. L. L.

8/12/41

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Dec 1941 104

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Dec
Sept. 13th 1944

D. L. Lunny
8/LN
2071

TOP SECRET 35

GEN. ERCOLE'S REACTION TO NEW AIR MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS

He phoned me up this morning to state that he thought the choice of Gen. Pellegrino as Under Secretary was excellent. Gen. Pellegrino and he had flown side by side in the last war as bomber pilots.

Pellegrino was not outstanding as a pilot, but he was a conscientious officer who always did his duty. He is honest and can be relied upon.

Gen. Ercole saw him last night and congratulated him.

13th December 1944

P. Lusham
S/LW

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8/22

1944 DECEMBER 1944

TOP SECRET

35

MAJOR SANDON'S REACTION TO NEW AIR MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS

He states that whilst he is sorry that Piacentini has gone, he undoubtedly laid himself open to criticism. Sandon had personally spoken to Piacentini in August last and suggested to him that he had better watch his step, but Piacentini treated the matter lightly.

With regard to Aimone Cat, he considers him a good choice as Chief of Staff though he is a difficult man. When in Libya he quarreled with everybody on principle and with Rommel for preference.

What the crews are dreading is the return of the Roman generals for whom they have no use whatsoever.

He also warned me about Moscatelli who has been intriguing and will make a come back.

13th December 1944

P. W. Sandon
S/has

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(U) intriguing and will make a come back.

P. H. H. H. H.
8/24

13th December 1944

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TOP SECRET

MAJOR RUSPOLI'S REACTION TO NEW MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS

I did not have much time to talk to Major Ruspoli as I was busy with Major Sandon.

Major Ruspoli is dreading the reaction of the operational pilots as they were very attached to Piacentini and oppose the Roman generals.

The operational crews will require a lot of nursing. They are not politically minded and are out to do their part in the war, nothing more.

13th December 1944

P. W. H. S/ur

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SECRET

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AFHQ

E-392

12 DEC 44

MOST IMMEDIATE

SECRET PD

FURTHER TO MY SUGAR THREE EIGHT SEVEN OF TEN DIAGNOSTIC

PAKED TO AFHQ PERSONAL FOR SACRED CMA AIR COMMANDER IN CHIEF CMA UNITED STATESPOLAD AND BRITISH RESIN FROM HQ ALCON FROM STONE PERSONAL PAKEN

GENERAL PELLEGRINO IS UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR PD THIS APPOINTMENT

IS ENTIRELY AGREEABLE TO AIR VICE MARSHAL EDWIN BISCARLET AND MYSELF

DISTRIBUTION:

Sir Noel Charles
 Hon. Alexander Kirk
 Political Section
 A.V.M. Bowen-Buscarlet
 Chief of Staff
 A Files

2067

Chief Commissioner

222

J. A. QUAYLE
 Major, R. A.
 Staff Officer to CC

SECRET

**SUMMARY OF EVENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE BEFORE CONSTITUTION OF
NEW AIR MINISTRY.**

1) At 1.30 p.m. on Saturday last we were informed that H.E. Scialoja had agreed to accept the Air Ministry portfolio.

2) At 2.30 p.m. the A.V.M. left Rome for Gaeta to discuss the new appointments.

3) At 4.50 p.m. he telephoned this office in code to say that:

- a) Scialoja received full approval as Air Minister.
- b) The posts of Under Secretary and C.A.S. must not be combined.
- c) A Service man must not be appointed to the post of Under Secretary; a good civilian must instead be chosen.
- d) General Aimone-Cat was approved as C.A.S. should they decide to dismiss General Piacentini.
- e) The C.A.S. was to advise the Air Minister on Service matters.
- f) Colonel Remondino was to remain as Vice Chief of Staff, without promotion.

4) On being informed of point c) Scialoja threatened to resign, saying that if civilians were appointed to both the post of Air Minister and Under Secretary it would be felt that the Air Ministry was to be handed over entirely to civilians, and the repercussions to this would be great both in the Italian Air Force and in the general public. Moreover, it was said that an excellent technician was needed for this post, and one who was well versed in aeronautics.

5) This was referred to the A.V.M. by telephone, and on Sunday morning he informed us from Naples that he agreed to an Air Force officer being appointed Under Secretary.

6) After consulting with Aimone-Cat, whom Scialoja proposed should be appointed Under Secretary in the event of them retaining Piacentini as C.A.S., we were informed that Aimone-Cat would, under pressure, accept the post of Under Secretary but that he preferred to be C.A.S.

7) There appeared to be some reluctance on the part of Scialoja to replace Piacentini -- in spite of the very poor opinion he had of this general -- and we gathered that this was due to the fear he had of his causing trouble among the units should he be dismissed.

It was, however, finally decided to dismiss Piacentini, and this

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It was, however, finally decided to dismiss Piacentini, and this decision was influenced to a great extent by the fact that it was stated that guarantees could not be given that charges would not be brought against Piacentini during the present Government's term of office.

8) This morning we were informed that General Pellegrino had been offered and had accepted the post of Under Secretary.

Thus the new Ministry is as follows:

- a) Air Minister, H.E. Doctor Carlo Scialoja.
- b) Under Secretary, General Ernesto Pellegrino.
- c) C.A.S., General Mario Aimone-Cat.

EB

Intelligence Staff;
Air Forces Sub-Commission.
Allied Commission. ROME.

Dec. 12th. 1944.

~~TOP SECRET~~
AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION
ROME.

32

PERSONAL AND
TOP SECRET.

AFSC/R/17/SPEC INT.

12th December, 1944.

Dear

I have just heard through unofficial channels that General
TELLEGRINO has been offered the post of Under Secretary for Air, and
has accepted it.

Yours

WB

Comodore Ellery W. Stone,
Chief Commissioner,
Allied Commission,
Rome.

2065

~~TOP SECRET~~
AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION
ROME

31

PERSONAL AND
TOP SECRET.

AFSC/R/17/SPEC INT.

12th December, 1944.

I have just heard through unofficial channels that General
PELLEGRINO has been offered the post of Under Secretary for Air, and has
accepted it.

Yours

WB

H.E. Sir Noel Charles, KCMG, MC,
H.M. Ambassador to Italy,
Via 20 Settembre,
Rome.

30^A
EWS/afe

11 December 1944

My dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I thank you for your letter of December 11th
informing me of the forthcoming appointment of the
new Chief of Staff of the Royal Air Force.

Yours very truly,

ELLERY W. STONE
Commodore, USNR
Chief Commissioner

His Excellency Ivanoe Bonomi
President of the Council of Ministers
Italian Government
Rome

cc: Air Vice Marshal Bowen-Buscarlet
'A' Files

Translation

29^A

The President of the Council
of Ministers

Rome, 11 December 1944

Dear Admiral,

I assure you that at the first meeting of
the new Council of Ministers, Generale di Squadra Aerea
H. E. Mario Aymone cat will be appointed Chief of Staff
of the Royal Airforce.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

s/ L. Bonomi

Admiral Ellery A. Stone
Chief Commissioner of the Allied Commission
R o m e

Trans. E.C.

2064

TOP SECRET

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

1) Although on Dec. 7th, it was announced that H.E. Bonomi was to form a new Cabinet, the situation remained fluid until Dec. 9th, when finally the announcement of the constitution of the Government was made. Many revisions were made to the originally proposed set-up, and it will be noted that the suggestion for a Vice-Presidential Council of four (one member for each participating party) was dismissed, and in its place the original plan for two Vice-Presidents was carried out.

2) We see with satisfaction that the extremists have not succeeded in obtaining the Home Office portfolio, and this can be said to be a victory for the President. The Communists have retained the Ministry of Agriculture, considered by many to be the most important in the Government, and so while they have not seriously increased their power -- if one excludes the Vice-Presidency given to the leader of the Communists -- they have not conceded an inch of the ground they held. Scoccimarro, it is true, has gone from the Epuration Commission, and we trust that he will be able to do less mischief as Minister for Occupied Italy.

3) The Action Party, while not participating in the Government, remains one of the six Parties in the National Liberation Committee. It is said that Count Sforza, honorary leader of the Party, intends to resign as Chief Commissioner for Epuration.

4) Particulars of the new Cabinet are given below. A thumbnail sketch of each Minister will be forwarded to you within the next two days.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Ivanoe Bonomi. | President of the Council and Home Secretary. |
| 2. Palmiro Togliatti. | Vice President. Communist. |
| 3. Giulio de Rodino. | " Christian Democrat. |
| 4. Alcide de Gasperi. | " Foreign Affairs. |
| 5. Francesco Cerafina. | " Labour Democrat. |
| 6. Meuccio Ruini. | " Public Works. |
| 7. Giovanni Gronchi. | Industry, Commerce and Labour. Christian Democrat. |
| 8. Fausto Gullo. | Agriculture. Communist. |
| 9. Alessandro Casati. | War. Liberal. |
| 10. Admiral De Courten. | Navy. Labour Democrat. |
| 11. Carlo Scialoja. | Air Force. Christian Democrat. |
| 12. Umberto Tupini. | Justice. Communist. |
| 13. Antonio Pesenti. | Finance. |
| 14. Marcello Soleri. | Treasury. |

3) The Action Party, while not participating in the Government, is one of the six parties in the National Liberation Committee. It is said that Count Goffredo, honorary leader of the Party, intends to resign as Chief Commissioner for Epuration.

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2. Palmiro Togliatti. Vice President. Communist.
3. Giulio de Rodino. " Christian Democrat.
4. Alcide de Gasperi. Foreign Affairs. " Labour Democrat.
5. Francesco Cerabona. Transport. " " Labour Democrat.
6. Meuccio Ruini. Public Works. " " Labour Democrat.
7. Giovanni Gronchi. Industry, Commerce and Labour. Christian Democrat.
8. Fausto Gullo. Agriculture. Communist.
9. Alessandro Casati. War. Liberal.
10. Admiral De Courten. Navy. Labour Democrat.
11. Carlo Scialoja. Air Force. Christian Democrat.
12. Umberto Tupini. Justice. Communist.
13. Antonio Pesenti. Finance. Liberal.
14. Marcello Soleri. Treasury. Communist.
15. Mauro Scoccimarro. Occupied Italy. Labour Democrat.
16. Mario Cevolotto. Post and Telegraphs. Labour Democrat.
17. Vincenzo Arancio Ruiz. Public Instruction. Liberal.
18. Manlio Brosio. Without Portfolio. " "
19. Mario Bergami. Commissioner for Alimentation. " "

5. As regards the Air Ministry, the appointment of Carlo Scialoja appears to have met with general approval. We feel that in Scialoja we have a man who has the interests of the Italian Air Force and his country at heart; who is, and always has been, pro-ally (and in particular pro-British); who was never in any way connected with fascism; and who is honest and has no axes of his own to grind.

6. Until this morning the post of C.A.S. was still under discussion. Last night Scialoja saw General Messe, and the principal point to be discussed was whether General Piscentini was to remain as C.A.S. or be replaced by General Aimone-Cat.

2063

22.

The new Air Minister decided yesterday to ask Aimone-Cat to accept the post of Under Secretary in the new Government, but the General's reply was that the post he would preferably fill was that of C.A.S. This morning it was decided to replace Piacentini with Aimone-Cat.

7. Aimone-Cat is a general of whom I have seen very little during these war years. He was for about one year in command of the Italian Air Force in North Africa, and it was due to his differences with General Rommel that he was recalled to Italy. After his return to this country he was made General Inspector of the Training Schools. During the clandestine period he carried out no activities, and was for some time in hiding in a monastery. Aimone-Cat is probably the most complete air force officer of his generation, and it is felt that he is a good choice as C.A.S.

8. The appointment of the Under Secretary has not yet been made. The choice rests between: Generali Pellegrino, Grande and Biffi. Pellegrino is at present president of the discrimination tribunal for senior officers; Grande is the president of a similar tribunal for lieutenant colonels and below; and Piffi is the commissioner for the Italian Air Force welfare.

Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission. ROME.

le B
Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission. ROME.

2062

Dec. 11th. 1944.

SECRET

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AFHQ

8-390

11 DEC 44

EAST IMMEDIATE

SECRET PG

REFERENCE MY SUGAR THREE EIGHT THREE OF NINE DECEMBER

FAHREN TO AFHQ PERSONAL FOR SACRED CMA UNCLE SUGAR POLAD AND BRITISH RESUMEFROM HQ ALCON FROM STONE PERSONAL FAHREN

CHIEF OF AIR STAFF IS NEITHER PLACENTINI NOR RAYMONDINO BUT LIEUT GENERAL

ALMONS CAT WHO IS PREFERRED BY AIR COMMANDER IN CHIEF

DISTRIBUTION:

Sir Noel Charles
 Hon. Alexander Kirk
 Political Section
 Air Subcommittee
 Chief of Staff
 'A' Files

Chief Commissioner

222

J. A. QUAYE

Major, E. A.

Staff Officer to CC

SECRET

2061

TOP SECRET
 AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,
 ROME

26^A

AFSC/R/17/SUBC IRE.

PERSONAL &
TOP SECRET.

11th December 1944.

I have to inform you that, following discussions with H.E. Scialoja, it has been agreed that General Aimone Cat shall become Chief of Staff.

2. I visited Caserta on Saturday evening, 9th December, and discussed the matter with Sir John Slessor. He is in agreement with the appointment.

3. The nomination of the Under Secretary for Air is not yet settled, as Scialoja has asked for a few more hours to make a decision. The choice lies between:-

- (i) GENERAL PELLEGRINO.
- (ii) GENERAL GRANT.
- (iii) GENERAL BIFFI.

Probably Pellegrino will be chosen, and we do not entirely favour Biffi.

I have the honour to be
 Sir,
 Your obedient Servant,



W.A.B. BOWEN-BUCARLET,
 AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
 AIR OFFICER COMMANDING,
 AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION.

2060

H.E. Sir Noel Charles, KCMG, MC,
 H.M. Ambassador to Italy,
 Via 20 Settembre,
 ROME.

TOP SECRET
ALL FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ARMED COMMISSION,
ROME.

AFSC/R/13/SPEC INT.

TOP SECRET.

11th December, 1944.

Dear

The situation as regards the Air Ministry under the new Italian Government is now almost stable. Definite decisions are that Scialoja is Air Minister, and that Aimeone Cat is to be Chief of Staff.

2. The latter decision was only arrived at after much vacillation, and some attempts to make us take the responsibility. The end came when Scialoja said that he could not undertake that charges would not be preferred against Piacentini while he was holding office under the new Government. I pointed out that this made the situation quite impossible, and this caused Scialoja to make up his mind once and for all. So that he would not change it later I took him along to Stone, and got him to confirm his choice.

3. I am sure that this is the best solution under the circumstances. Up to the very end Scialoja was rather afraid that Piacentini might stir up trouble in the Italian Air Force if he was not kept on, and this is something that we must keep a look-out for. However the new C.A.S. is a strong character and I am sure will know how to deal with any such situation. Piacentini will be sent "a disposition", that is on leave pending a further appointment, which is quite a normal state of affairs for I.A.F. Generals! There is no necessity to give him an appointment whatever, nor is one suggested.

4. I asked whether, now that Piacentini was out of the Air Ministry, they would prefer any charges against him, and the reply was that they would not. We may have to think this over, I feel.

5. The question of the Under Secretary requires some explanation. At our meeting on Saturday evening you pointed out that in your view a civilian was essential in this post. I duly put this over to Scialoja, and met with a storm of protest culminating in a threat to resign or rather refuse to take office as Minister if we insisted on this. The view was that if we had civilians as Minister and as Under Secretary the Air Force would consider that they had been sold out to the civilians, and that there would be a tremendous drop in morale and no one would have the least confidence in the Air Ministry. Of course their organisation within the Ministry cannot really be compared with ours, and in the past they have been used to an entirely Air Force set-

trouble in the Italian Air Force if he was not kept on, and this is something that we must keep a look-out for. However the new C.A.S. is a strong character and I am sure will know how to deal with any such situation. Piacentini will be sent "a disposizione", that is on leave pending a further appointment, which is quite a normal state of affairs for I.A.F. Generals! There is no necessity to give him an appointment whatever, nor is one suggested.

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6. In order to avert another crisis I agreed to an Air Force man in this post, and the choice lies between:-

- (i) GENERAL HELLERFING.
- (ii) GENERAL BIFFI.
- (iii) GENERAL GRANDE.

I have left the choice to them, although I was obliged to call their attention to the fact that although Biffi had been a very good man in the past, the fact that his wife and family are in German occupied Italy has been telling on him and he has not been really efficient for some time. We have every reason to believe that the Germans would carry out reprisals on his family if he were given this post, and he could hardly expect to do himself justice under the circumstances. Either of the other two candidates would be suitable, but I think that the betting is on Pellegrino. From our information he would be a good choice. Grande would also be quite suitable.

Continued /2....

2059

-2-

7. The final nomination of the Under Secretary is expected later today, or first thing tomorrow.

8. I must say I am sorry about Piacentini, and I know that Pussy Foster will be very upset. Even if he was bit of a rascal, he was a brave man, and was very well liked by the operational crews. I got on well with him, and I think he did his very best to do everything that we wanted him to do. If only we had not been forced into making that unfortunate dual appointment of Minister and C.A.S. all would have been well.

9. I am attaching the latest report on the Political situation.

Yours

W.B.

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCM., DSO., MC.,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.
C.N.E.

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCB., DSO., MC.,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

2058

TOP SECRET

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.Dec. 7th.

1) At 5.30 today it was announced that the Communists had agreed to collaborate with Bonomi. The Prime Minister then sent a final appeal to the Socialists asking for their collaboration in forming a Coalition Government. Later in the evening it was learned that a refusal had been received from the Socialists.

2) During these days of crisis Nenni has endeavoured to dissuade Togliatti from participating in a Bonomi Cabinet. Happily, he has not succeeded, and there now seems to be no obstacle to prevent Bonomi from forming a Government; it will not, of course include members of the Action and Socialist Parties.

One wonders how many portfolios will go to the Communists in the new Government. It is possible that the Vice-Presidency will go to Togliatti. Bonomi's original intention was to have two Vice-Presidents in his Cabinet, but with the participation of only four instead of the six parties which comprise the National Liberation Committee only one Vice-President will be nominated.

Dec. 8th.

1) This morning Bonomi is at work on his new Cabinet. It is expected, however, that the nominations will not be officially announced until after the arrival, announced for today, of the seven or eight Italian politicians who are expected from Switzerland.

It is proposed to form three new Ministries:

- a) Ministry of Labour. To be headed, probably, by Communist Scoccimarro. This appointment would enable another nomination to be made for the post of Assistant Chief Commissioner for Epuration, and most assuredly everyone except the Communists themselves would welcome a change in this quarter.
- b) Ministry for Occupied Territory. Should Gasparotto not be appointed Air Minister, it is not unlikely that he would be given this Ministry.
- c) Ministry of Post and Telegraph.

In addition, a Commissariat General for Alimentation is to be formed. This department will probably be given to Bergami, who will not have a portfolio but will occupy a seat at Cabinet meetings.

24

Dec. 8th.

the formation of the formation of Vice-President will be nominated. This morning Bonomi is at work on his new Cabinet. It is expected, however, that the nominations will not be officially announced until after the arrival, announced for today, of the seven or eight Italian politicians who are expected from Switzerland.

It is proposed to form three new Ministries:

- a) Ministry of Labour. To be headed, probably, by Communist Coccozzarino. This appointment would enable another nomination to be made for the post of Assistant Chief Commissioner for Epuration, and most assuredly everyone except the Communists themselves, would welcome a change in this quarter.
- b) Ministry for Occupied Territory. Should Gasparotto not be appointed Air Minister, it is not unlikely that he would be given this Ministry.
- c) Ministry of Post and Telegraph.

In addition, a Commissariat General for Alimentation is to be formed. This department will probably be given to Bergomi, who will not have a portfolio but will occupy a seat at Cabinet meetings.

- 2) The assigning of the Home Office portfolio is giving rise to much discussion. As will be recalled, one of the reasons for this portfolio was that the Socialists, and namely Nenni, asked for this portfolio. It is to be hoped that Bonomi will be in a position strong enough to avoid handing this Ministry to the Communists.

- 3) At 4 p.m. we received the following information:

- a) Instead of a Vice-Presidency Bonomi intends to form a Vice-Principal Council of four, one for each participating Party:

- 1) Togliatti, Communists. (without Portfolio.)
- 2) De Gasperi, Christian Democrats.
- 3) Ruini, Labour Democrats.
- 4) Soleri or another, Liberals.

- b) Bonomi is to hold the Foreign Ministry portfolio in addition to that of head of the Government.

- c) There are to be sixteen portfolios in the new Government. This

2.

is an increase of four on the last Government. Three of the new Ministries are given on page one of this report; the fourth is to be a Ministry for Prisoners of War, and Welfare. There will be four portfolios for each Party in the Government.

Lilian Brella

Intelligence Staff.
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission, ROME.

2056

Dec: 8th, 1944.

TOP SECRET

AFSC/R/1/SPEC. INT.

8th. December 1944.

TOP SECRET.

1. Thank you very much for your letter JCS.1828 of 7th. December. As the attached report will show, the situation as regards the Cabinet remains to a great extent the same as that given in our report forwarded with my letter of the 6th. There have been some anxious moments since this was written, but I do think that we have now got to the point when a Bonomi Cabinet is a certainty.

2. As regards the Air Minister. The Italians are now as certain as we are that to combine his office with that of C.A.S. is a mistake. I have taken steps to let Bonomi know that we favour a civilian as Air Minister and what we consider should be his sole aim as Air Minister.

I myself think that Scialoja would be better than Gasparotto as Air Minister, as he has had recent experience in the Ministry and his integrity is beyond all question. Gasparotto is rather an unknown quantity, although all I hear about him is in his favour.

I think it is wise not to exert any undue pressure on Bonomi to appoint either one or the other, but I have let him know that we would agree to either of them.

3. As regards Piacentini. I share your dislike of political Generals, and if Remondino is acceptable to the Government I would prefer to have him. On the other hand, as Stone pointed out to me, if we annoyed the Communists by superseding Piacentini they are quite capable of trumping up all sorts of charges against Remondino. There is also a question of Remondino's seniority, and I understand that Bonomi's and, others opinion is that his appointment as C.A.S. over the heads of a large number of more senior officers, some of whom have recently been on operations, would arouse a storm of protest. In any case we

I have been thinking about this for some time as an Air Minister and what we consider should be his sole aim as an Air Minister.

I myself think that Scialoja would be better than Gasparotto as Air Minister, as he has had recent experience in the Ministry and his integrity is beyond all question. Gasparotto is rather an unknown quantity, although all I hear about him is in his favour.

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As regards the change of front on the part of the Prince and Bonomi. I am inclined to think that their opposition was exaggerated in the first instance by Stone and in the second by my representative who was told the form by Stone in my absence. In all of my conversations with Stone he was at pains to point out that I appeared to have an exaggerated idea of the strength of their opposition. My talks with the Ambassador have confirmed this. On the other hand I am fully aware of the sorry figure we should cut if Piacentini was retained as C.A.S. and then had to answer all sorts of charges against him.

4. I have talked the matter over with Stone and the Ambassador in the light of your views on the subject. We have agreed that it is best to hand the ball to the Italians and to let them make their choice of these two, the responsibility for any future trouble in respect of either of them will then be theirs. As a result Stone has sent a letter to Bonomi, and I enclose a copy of this for you. It is perhaps not exactly what we, as members of the Service, would have liked to do but I feel that, under the circumstances, it is the best solution.

5. I fully agree with you that the efficiency of the Italian Air Force is not of such great importance, and that we must not be put into the position of having pressed the appointment of an undesirable character as C.A.S. As regards the efficiency of the I.A.F. it is this Sub-Commission's job to see that the C.A.S. runs the show properly and we get the greatest possible efficiency out of it. If Piacentini retains the job I shall at once give him a sharp lecture on the evils of his ways, and our relations are such that he will take it from me and I hope profit by it.

6. The intrigues and general dirtiness of all these proceedings almost pass belief, but I do feel that our course of action as outlined in Paragraph 4 above is the best answer.

I should like to say how grateful I am to you for your help over this, at a time when I am sure that you have far more important things to think of.

WBE

W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet,
Air Vice-Marshal,
Air Officer Commanding.
Air Force Sub-Commission.

W.A.E. Bowen-Buscarlet,
Air Vice-Marshal,
Air Officer Commanding,
Air Force Sub-Commission.

Air Marshal Sir John Blesser, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

2054

From: Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, K.C.B., O.O., M.C. 22

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES

JCS.1828

TOP SECRET

7th December, 1944.

Dear Bowen Buscarlet

1. I have just seen your report dated 4th December on the Piacentini situation and your letter of the 5th.

It seems quite clear that your and my original main contention, that Piacentini should no longer be Air Minister, is satisfied. The points now are:-

- (a) who should be Air Minister, and
- (b) who should be C.A.S.

It being clear that, whoever they are, they should not and must not be one and the same man. We have had proof of the evils, from a military point of view, of having the C.A.S. also a member of the Cabinet.

2. As regards (a) I don't much like the sound of any of the three suggested, mainly because they are all ex-Air Force officers. I wish Scialoja would take it on. If he will not, is there not some civilian of ability and integrity, not necessarily with any particular political background, who would take it on with the sole object of serving Italy by directing the rehabilitation of the Italian Air Force and Aircraft industry, now and after the war?

We cannot at present say anything officially about a post-war Italian Air Force; but I have again asked Air Ministry for a policy in this respect and have myself very little doubt that there will be a small I.A.F. after the war - which it will be in our interest to sponsor.

3. As regards (b). I see the advantages of keeping Piacentini, and if we could get reliable undertaking that no charges would be brought against him while we control the I.A.F. I would not object, though there must be no question whatever of our forcing P. on Bonomi or the Prince against their better judgement.

2053

Air Vice Marshal W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet, C.B.E., D.F.C.,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission,
Rome.

/But could.....

- 2 -

But could any such undertaking really be reliable? How could we hold them to it? And anyway we do not know that the next Government will stay the course, and we might well find ourselves with P. installed as C.A.S. and a new Government in power who would be out for his blood, and would be bound by no pledges to us.

4. I can't help thinking that P. has proved himself to be unsuited for a responsible position like C.A.S. I have a rooted mistrust of political Generals and if, at the same time, we have any reason to think he is also a crook, I think we would do better to get rid of him.

5. So if you can I would strongly advise you to put in Rimondino, though I do not want to bind you to this if, in your considered opinion and that of Charles and Stone, it is really desirable to retain Piacentini. But I wouldn't if I were you. After all, the efficiency of the Italian Air Force isn't really of such very great importance; whereas it is important that we should not be in a position of having put in or kept in as C.A.S. a man who is evidently a bit of a political mischief-maker, who has proved himself tactless and stupid (in his dealings with Scialoja), and who is probably a wrong 'un into the bargain.

6. I have just seen your letter of the 6th. If the Prince and Bonomi both want P to stay on, well all right. But surely that is a sharp reversal of form? I would still like to see him out, but I leave that to you. Gasporotto sounds just the chap - a bit old, but I don't think that matters.

Yours truly

M. S. S.

2052

SECRET

EWS/dfe

21

8 December 1944

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

First, I want to congratulate you upon your success in securing the support of four of the six Parties.

With reference to appointments in the military ministries, I desire to modify the request which I made regarding the Chief of Staff for the Air Ministry. At the time when we requested that General PIACENTINI be retained as Chief of Staff, we were unaware of certain incidents in his past service which might cause embarrassment either to your Government or to the Supreme Allied Commander. We are unable to evaluate the seriousness of these incidents which your Government alone is able to determine.

Consequently we feel you should have more latitude with respect to this appointment and propose an additional name, namely

Colonel Aldo REMONDINO

who will be equally acceptable. Presumably he could be promoted to suitable rank if selected.

Having the records of both officers available to you, and reposing the fullest confidence in your judgment and your desire to make the fullest contribution to the Allied war effort, we shall accept your choice of either of these two officers.

Very truly yours,



ELLERY W. STONE
Commodore, USNR
Chief Commissioner

2051

His Excellency Ivanoe Bonomi
The President of the Council of Ministers
Italian Government
Rome

cc: Air Sub-Comm. ✓
CofS
A Files

SECRET

AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION, ROME.

TOP SECRET

AFSC/R/1/SPEC.INT.

DECEMBER 6TH.1944.

TOP SECRET.

Dear

I have sent a report on the political situation direct to Sir John Slessor as I had to make comments in the covering letter.

Naturally, I do not want too many of these reports to be at large, so I did not send a copy to you also.

If you wish to keep your files up-to-date I suggest you ask Sir John for the report in question.

Yours

W.B.

W.A.B. Bowen-Buscarlet,
Air Vice-Marshal,
Air Officer Commanding,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.

Squadron Leader W.C. Van Wyck,
Allied Liaison Section,
Headquarters.
M.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

2050

TOP SECRET
 AIR FORCE
 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE,
 ROCE.

AESC/P/A/SPEC INT.

TOP SECRET.

6th December, 1944.

Dear

I am attaching a report on the political situation as at 1100 hrs this morning. I was able to let Sir Noel Charles have this information before he had been told anything about it from his own sources. He considers the position to be very satisfactory, especially as, up to the receipt of this information he was much depressed about the whole situation, in view of the American attitude to our action in the case of Sforza, and he could not see how a Cabinet could be formed.

2. The proposed new Air Minister, Gasparatto, is supposed to be a good man.

3. The Ambassador told me that he had met a member of the Prince of Piedmont's household and also Bonomi's last night, and they both agreed that Piacentini was the right man to stay on as Chief of Staff, so I hope there will be no further bother in that quarter.

4. You will note the appeal which has been made for us to give the new Minister for Air some prestige, by handing over some more equipment to the I.A.F. They obviously have in mind the re-equipment of the Bomber/Transport Wing with some Allied type of aircraft. I have always been careful never to encourage any hopes in this direction, but if we could manage a squadron or even two of Wellingtons or some other obsolescent type, there is no doubt that it would have a very good effect, both on the Ministers prestige and on the morale of the I.A.F.

5. Of course the new Government is not yet actually formed, and there is just a chance that it may not come off, but the Ambassador seemed to think that it will probably be a certainty.

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Yours

W.B.

2049

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCB, DSO, MC,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.,
C.M.F.

AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION. ROME.

TOP SECRET

AFSC/R/1/SPEC.INT.

December 4th, 1944.

Confidential.

Herewith two copies of a report on the latest political situation. It is requested that you pass one copy to C.I.O.

I think that Sir John Slessor should see this at once and that you should point out to him that H.E. Scialoja is a close personal friend of H.E. Bonomi, and exerts much influence on him.

W.A.B. Bowen Buscarlet,
Air Officer Commanding,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.

Allied Liaison Section,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F.
C.M.F.

2048

TOP SECRET
 AIR FORCE SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION,

AFSC/FA/SEC INT.

5th December, 1944.

Dear

Charles.
 Since I last saw you I have seen Commodore Stone and Sir Noel

From Stone I gathered that the opposition to Piacentini as Chief of Staff had decreased as far as the Prince of Piedmont was concerned, and was also very much less on the part of Bonard.

Sir Noel Charles suggested that I should ask Stone to point out to the Prince that we were very well satisfied with Piacentini as an operational commander, and that, as Italy had been promised that whatever active help she gave in aid of our war effort would count in her favour at the Peace table, it might be in the interests of Italy to let him remain as Chief of Staff. He might also remind him of the effect which Piacentini's removal from any sort of appointment might well have on the operational aims of the I.A.F.

I have managed to convey much the same to Bonard, through Sciolaja, and I think the reception of it has been good.

In any case it would have to be on the distinct understanding that no charges were trumped up against Piacentini until we have ceased to control the Italian Air Force.

The Ambassador also said that he would lend his support with the Prince.

If this falls I have a suitable substitute in mind, a Colonel Ramorino, who is, I think suitable in all respects, and would be a popular choice in the Service. Unfortunately he has been through neither the Epuration nor the Discrimination Tribunals, but I think that this can be overcome.

The Italians seem to think that the Air Minister has complete freedom in his own personal choice of a Chief of Staff, and I shall have to

operational commander, and that, as Italy had been promised that whatever active help she gave in aid of our war effort would count in her favour at the Peace table, it might be in the interests of Italy to let him remain as Chief of Staff. He might also remind him of the effect which Piacentini's removal from any sort of appointment might well have on the operational crews of the I.A.F.

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If this fails I have a suitable substitute in mind, a Colonel Ramondino, who is, I think suitable in all respects, and would be a regular choice in the Service. Unfortunately he has been through neither the Epuration nor the Discrimination Tribunals, but I think that this can be overcome.

The Italians seem to think that the Air Minister has complete freedom in his own personal choice of a Chief of Staff, and I shall have to rid them of this idea.

I shall let you know of any further developments, and unless I hear from you to the contrary I shall take it that you approve of the I am taking as outlined above.

Yours

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, KCM, DSO, MC,
Headquarters,
M.A.A.F. C.M.F.

TOP SECRETOUTGOING MESSAGE

FROM : AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ROME.

TO : AIR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, BARI.

SECRET (.) R.A. 233 (.) 30th OCTOBER 1944 (.)

PERSONAL FOR AIR VICE-MARSHAL BOWEN-BUSCAFFEE (.)
IMPORTANT CHANGES IMMINENT (.) BROWN SAID TO BE GOING (.)
NOTIFY E.T.A. (.)

TO BE ENCRYPTED IF SENT BY W/T.

T.O.O. 301710 Oct.

PRIORITY

IMMEDIATE

E. Brenta
E. BRENTA, G/C.
AIR VICE-MARSHAL,
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

2046

TOP SECRET

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

1) As was given in my yesterday's report, Bonomi had been led to believe that the Communists would collaborate with him so that he would be able to form a new Cabinet within a few hours.

Late yesterday afternoon, however, he was given to understand by De Gasperi that the Communists subordinated their participation in the Government to that of the Socialists. It must be pointed out that up to 11 a.m. today the Communists had made no official statement to Bonomi to this effect.

2) It is evident that the Communists are acting in bad faith for they are well aware that the Socialists would not in any circumstances collaborate with Bonomi.

3) Scialoja says that the Communists have offered the Presidency to De Gasperi, who, apparently, has already offered some portfolios.

The point of difference which existed between De Gasperi and the Socialists on the Home Office portfolio has been settled.

4) This morning at 9.30 Bonomi called De Gasperi, Brosio, and Vacallato hoping to form a Cabinet with these three parties (Christian Democrats; Liberals; Labour Democrats.) and intending to inform His Royal Highness of his inability to form a Government should no agreement be reached.

After two hours discussion no solution was arrived at, for in spite of the Christian Democrats' press organ's announcement today that they are supporting Bonomi this, in fact, is not entirely true.

5) Bonomi, carrying out De Gasperi's suggestion, has sent a further letter to Togliatti making a last attempt to obtain the Communists' collaboration.

A reply is expected at 5 p.m. today.

Gilan Benton

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A reply is expected at 5 p.m today.

Lilian Benton.

Intelligence Staff, 20.45
Air Forces Sub-Commission
Allied Commission. ROME.

Dec. 7th. 1944.

TOP SECRET

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

At 10 a.m. today, the latest developments were:

1) A new Bonomi Cabinet is expected to be formed during the next few hours. The Action Party and the Socialists will not participate; the Communists will unless something unforeseen should happen at the last moment.

2) The following men will be included in the new Cabinet:

- a) De Gasperi, leader of the Christian Democrats.
- b) Gronchio, Liberal.
- c) Brozio, Secretary General Liberal Party.
- d) Aldisio, High Commissioner for Sicily, Minister of Interior in Badoglio's second Cabinet.
- e) Togliatti, leader of the Communists.
- f) Scoccimarro, in order to remove him from the post of Vice-Chief of the Epuration Commission.
- g) Soleri, Liberal, and Minister of the Treasury in Bonomi's last Cabinet.
- h) Casati, Minister for War in last Cabinet.
- i) De Courten, Chief of Admiralty in last Cabinet.
- j) Forti, Liberal, to be Minister of Justice in new Cabinet. He is a Jew, and an eminent jurist.
- k) Ruini, leader of Labour Democrats. It is considered necessary that this man be given a portfolio; he is not, however, a very popular choice.
- l) Cerraboli. The Ministry of Transport is to be split into two: a Ministry of Transport and a Ministry of Post and Telegraph. This man is to be given the portfolio of the former.

3) The Air Ministry.

a) The new Air Minister will probably be Luigi Gasparotta, a lawyer from Milan, aged about seventy years; He is a member of the old Lombardis democracy, and is a former president of the War Veterans Association. During World War I, he fought extremely well, and following the cessation of hostilities he formed a War Ministry (probably under Bonomi's Presidency.) At present he does not belong to any political party, but he will most likely join the Labour Democrats or the War Veterans Party, which is outside the National Committee of Libera-

k) Hume, leader of the opposition, has said that this man be given a portfolio, he is a very popular choice.

1) Cerraboli. The Ministry of Transport is to be split into two: a Ministry of Transport and a Ministry of Post and Telegraph. This man is to be given the portfolio of the former.

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a) The new Air Minister will probably be Luigi Gasparotto, a lawyer from Milan, aged about seventy years. He is a member of the War Veterans' Association. During World War I, he fought extremely well, and followed the cessation of hostilities he formed a War Ministry (probably under Bonomi's Presidency.) At present he does not belong to any political party, but he will most likely join the Labour Democrats or the War Veterans Party, which is outside the National Committee of Liberation.

Gasparotto is a Scialoja candidate, for he will not accept the portfolio for himself, and he is acceptable to Bonomi. He is now in Switzerland, but is expected to arrive in Rome on Dec. 8th. Having been asked whether he would accept the Air Ministry portfolio he agreed on principle.

The appointment of Gasparotto, who, although a sound man, cannot be said to be a genius but had an excellent political past before fascism, would allow for the appointment of an experienced man as Under Secretary. It is considered that should a man of less prestige be given the portfolio of Air Ministry it might be difficult to find a worthy man who would accept the post of Under Secretary. And with Gasparotto as Minister and a reliable man under him it will be possible to keep Piacentini under control. No new names have been mentioned as likely candidates for Under Secretary, but it is not unlikely that Gasparotto will propose his own candidate for this post. Should this prove to be the case we would be requested to make an immediate enquiry into the background of this man.

2.-

b) Scialoja emphasized that the prestige of the new Air Minister would be greatly increased if the Allies were able to give the Italian Air Force some new equipment shortly after his taking office.

This would also have a very beneficial effect on the morale of the air crews.

It is said that General Piacentini is to remain as Chief of Staff.

Lt. Gen. Breda

Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.
Allied Commission, ROME.

when open
Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.
Allied Commission, ROME.

2043

Dec. 6th. 1944.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

- 1) The following information was given to an intimate during the course of a conversation which he had with H.E. Scialoja this morning.
- 2) The question as to whether General Piacentini remains as Chief of Staff cannot be discussed until a new Cabinet has been formed. The holder of this post is nominated by the Air Minister, and, supposedly, can only be dismissed by him. Bonomi is, however, still of the opinion he was at the time of his talk with Air Vice-Marshal Bowen Buscarlet on October 23rd, 1944; namely, that Piacentini had to remain as Chief of Staff. As Minister, Piacentini will not return in a Bonomi Cabinet.
- 3) This morning Bonomi again attempted to induce Scialoja to accept the Air Ministry portfolio. One of the principal reasons for Scialoja's refusal is his reluctance to collaborate with Piacentini as Chief of Staff. He considers that Piacentini's popularity with the units ought to be checked now, as it may have diminished during these last months. His own opinion, which is already known to us, is that Piacentini is a most dangerous element.
- 4) Scialoja is in agreement that if General Piacentini should not remain as Chief of Staff a member of the new generation could be chosen to take his place. He would support Colonel Remondino's candidacy for the post, but he made the observation that up-to-date he has not been discriminated nor has he been absolved by the Epuration Tribunal.
- 5) That Piacentini is in danger of losing his post as Chief of Staff he is well aware, and about four weeks ago when there was talk of a Government crisis he arranged for the approval and publication of a decree pronouncing him Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force. Up to that time he had made no attempt to be officially recognised as holding this post.
- 6) The three most likely candidates for Air Minister are:
 - a) Colonel Helbig, former Air Force officer, a chemical specialist.
 - b) General Aimone Cat.
 - c) General Pellegrino.
- 7) A few weeks ago, Colonel Santini, Italian Air Force Intelligence, approached H.E. Scialoja in order to discover whether he would consider accepting the portfolio of Air Ministry if it were offered to him. Scialoja is distrustful of this officer, believing that he collects information in order to carry it to his Minister, General Piacentini. During these days of crisis, Santini has endeavoured to discover from

remain as Chief of Staff a member of the new generation could be chosen to take his place. He would support Colonel Remondino's candidacy for the post, but he made the observation that up-to-date he has not been discriminated nor has he been absolved by the Epuration Tribunal.

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8) The rumours of this merge have been put into circulation by the Extremists, who wished to dispense with H.E. Casati, former Minister of War. It is their wish to form a super-inspectorate of the armed forces with the object of placing at their respective heads three of their own men. Most assuredly, this transformation will never take place under Bonomi's auspices.

9) The latest political news is that the Catholic Party has not yet taken a decision; the noon papers published the text of a letter which Bonomi sent to the leaders of the Communist, Socialist, and Christian Democrats Parties. What has not yet been made public is that Bonomi has received a conciliatory reply from Togliatti, a less conciliatory one from Nenni, and up to midday today no reply from De Gasperi.

Wileen Breen

Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.
Allied Commission. ROME.

Dec. 4th. 1944.

TOP SECRET

LAST MINUTE NOTES ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

Today, at midday, Colonel Brenta saw H.E. Scialoja, ex-Under Secretary for Air, at the Presidency. Scialoja is constantly with H.E. Bonomi during these days of crisis, and he is probably more au fait with the situation than anyone with the exception of the former President himself.

The following information was received:

- 1) The Catholic Party (Christian Democrats) is to meet today in order to determine whether they will collaborate with Bonomi.
- 2) Even though he should not receive the support of the Christian Democrats, Bonomi has decided to continue negotiating in order to form a Government, for he considers it his duty to do so.
- 3) Bonomi has offered Scialoja the Air Ministry portfolio. Scialoja definitely refused the charge, he thinks, however that he will accept the post of Under Secretary at the Presidency. (He is one of Italy's foremost jurists.)
- 4) Scialoja considers that a Benuccio Ruini Government would be a calamity for the country, for its leftist tendencies would be accentuated. Ruini also offered Scialoja the Air Ministry portfolio in the event of him forming a Cabinet.
- 5) A letter was received by Scialoja proposing the nomination of General Gaeta (appointed by General Piacentini to be Chief of Sardinian Air Force.) as Air Minister. He considers the suggestion preposterous, knowing full well that this man made his career through the fascist protection which he was afforded because of his friendship for Mussolini and his children.
- 6) Among the proposed candidates which would receive the backing of Bonomi and Scialoja are featured the names of General Aimone Cat and General Polligriano. (See attached report.)
Should a civilian be appointed Air Minister it is probable that Aimone Cat would be asked to become Under Secretary, for Scialoja believes General Piacentini to be such a filibustiere as to require severe control even as Chief of Staff. He says he is a man who would bomb Rome and the Vatican in order to further his own interests, and if Scialoja had his way Piacentini would not even remain as Chief of Staff. He also states that Piacentini is seen five days out of seven at lunch with Saragat, Scoccimarro, and Togliatti.

- 7) It is definite that Piacentini will not return in a new Bonomi Government, and even if he were to return there is a possibility

a calamity for the country. For the Air Ministry position, Ruini also offered Scialoja the Air Ministry position in the event of him forming a Cabinet.

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6) Among the proposed candidates which would receive the backing of Bonomi and Scialoja are featured the names of General Aimone Cat and General Pelligrino. (See attached report.)

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7) It is definite that Piacentini will not return in a new Bonomi Cabinet, but should Ruini come to power there is a possibility of him appointing Piacentini because of influence from the Left; and also because Piacentini is a Freemason, and Ruini was one, although he may be no longer.

8) Piacentini is much criticised for controlling his Air Force through his spies, three of whom are:

- (1) Colonel Dentice, Naples.
- (2) Colonel Santini, Intelligence Officer, Rome.
- (3) Colonel Remondino, Vice-Chief of Staff.

From another source it is learned: that the Leftists are bringing their influence to bear in order that the post of Air Minister be suppressed; that Aimone Cat has been suggested as a new Chief of Staff.

Allen Davis

Intelligence Staff,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission.

ROME.

Jan 2 1944

TOP SECRET

THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT CRISIS

Making a brief survey of the events which led to the resignation of the Bonomi Government, it is apparent that it was divergences between the right and the left Parties which caused the crisis.

The Socialists' and Communists' request for more power in the Government, and in particular for the Ministry of Interior portfolio, which, it is said, was intended for Pietro Nenni, leader of the Socialists, was rejected by Bonomi. The Lieutenant General, one heard, flatly refused to concede the Home Office to the Leftists.

An important factor which precipitated the crisis was the resignation of Admiral De Courten, Chief of the Admiralty, and H.E. Soleri, Minister to the Treasury. The resignation of these Ministers, two of the worthiest men in the Bonomi Cabinet, came about through the decision of the Communists to epurate the Admiralty and the Treasury, using for the purpose, of course, their henchman Mauro Scoccimarro, Vice-Chief Commissioner for Epuration. (He is spoken of in my political report of November 22nd. 1944.)

I believe I am correct in saying that if there is one institution in this country which can be said to have always had pro-British sympathies it is the Navy; and the Italian Navy is the recipient of a certain amount of respect from England. De Courten knew that if the epuration was carried out by a Communist justice would not be done, confusion would be created, and the prestige of the Navy diminished. Therefore, he resigned. Soleri, a Piedmontese and a Liberal, to whom a Communist is anathema, also resigned, for he believed that his Ministry would not received fair play from the Epuration Commission.

The resignation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Marchese Visconti Venosta, also played its part in the crisis. The Foreign Minister maintained that the Communists wished to epurate the career diplomats in order to replace them with their own men, and in particular their wish to epurate Prunas, Director General at the Ministry met with his strong protest. Whether Visconti Venosta is justified in wishing to save Prunas from epuration is another matter. Certainly no one can deny that he received the protection of fascism.

Bonomi, with the Right Wing thus diminished, and the Left Wing whilst participating in the Government attacking it freely through their press organs, the Avanti and l'Unita, thus aggravating the situation in the country.

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 ustion of unrest and dissatisfaction which exists in the country, felt himself unable to continue carrying the burden of the coalition Government and handed in his resignation to the Lieutenant General of the Realm on Saturday, November 25th. Before doing so he requested the withdrawal of Scoccimarro as Vice-Commissioner for Epuration, but this request was met with refusal on the part of the Communists.

On the following day the six parties of the National Liberation Committee met and asked Count Sforza to become President of the Committee. There was one abstaining vote: that of the Liberal Party.

During the days which followed it became evident that it would be almost impossible for Bonomi to reform a new Cabinet from the six parties which comprise the National Liberation Committee. The Leftists flatly refused to collaborate, and Togliatti accused the former President of having made changes in the Government policy which contrasted with the democratic ideals represented by the Committee.

Then came the Sforza veto, which resulted in the Action Party, of which Sforza was the honorary leader, declaring that they would not participate in the formation of a new Government although they did not

CONTD.

intend to abandon the National Liberation Committee.

On the morning of November 28th., a delegation consisting of: Alberto Clences, Action Party, De Gasperi, leader of the Christian Democrats, and Saragat, Socialist Party, visited Sir Noel Charles with the object of discovering if the nomination of Count Sforza as President of the Council and Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be sanctioned by Britain. The answer was in the negative.

The nomination of Sforza would have met with little support outside his own party and that of the Extremists. And it is clear that Togliatti gave his support for two reasons only: First, because he knew that Sforza is 'persona non grata' with the British, and secondly that Sforza as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs would have been as clay in his hands. Sforza's ruling ambition is to become the first President of the Italian Republic, and it is to be considered fortunate that he has no more brains than he has. In the evening of the day when his candidacy was rejected, Sforza resigned the Presidency of the National Liberation Committee.

The fourth day of the crisis saw the vital points reviewed -- without any solution being arrived at, -- and ended with the National Liberation Committee dividing itself into two camps:

- 1) Socialists; Communists; Actionists.
- 2) Christian Democrats; Liberals; Labour Democrats.

The principal reasons for this break were:

- 1) Differences of opinion as to whether Scoccimarro should continue to control the Emuraton.
- 2) Indecision as to whether the National Liberation Committee must be considered superior to the Government, or whether it should only represent the political anti-fascist front.
- 3) Insistence from the Extremists that the post of Minister of the Interior be given to one of their Party.

- 4) Differences of opinion as to whether the Military Ministries should be given to men with leftist tendencies.

On November 30th. Bonomi was called by the Lieutenant General and asked to reform the Government, but being unable to obtain the support of the Leftists he was obliged to refuse the charge.

The former President was, of course, left with the alternative of composing a Government from elements outside the National Liberation Committee, and it is quite likely that he would have done this -- he would have had the support of the Liberal Party -- had

20/11/44

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The former President was, of course, left with the alternative of composing a Government from elements outside the National Liberation Committee, and it is quite likely that he would have done this -- he would have had the support of the Liberal Party -- had 2000 been for the repercussions which a move of this nature would inevitably have had in the North. It would have been an easy matter to find a dozen men out of the more than twenty political parties existing today in Italy who would have willingly followed Ponomi even though only prompted by personal ambition. But the North has been loud in its voice during these days of crisis that the new Government should be formed from the parties which comprise the National Liberation Committee; and it is that part of the country which will be the deciding factor in the political future of this country.

Following the announcement of Ponomi's incapacity to form a new Government came the news that the National Liberation Committee had designated Meuccio Ruini to form a Cabinet. Ruini, actual leader of the Labour Democrats Party, is not a man of outstanding qualities, but it was thought that in the eventuality of him forming a Government Ponomi, who is Ruini's life-long friend, would be the actual leader while Ruini himself would merely play the part of a figurehead. The ex-President, however, was not in agreement with this combination, so the crisis continues. Ponomi endeavouring to overcome

CONTD.

3. the Hostility of the opposition.

It is now one week since the Government resigned. The crisis is profound, and it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory solution.

From the latest news that I receive as I type this report it would seem that there is a good chance of Bonomi finding himself able to form a Cabinet. The Liberals and the Labour Democrats are with him, and it remains for the Christian Democrats to promise their backing to enable him to realise his project. De Gasperi, the leader of the Christian Democrats is willing to follow Bonomi, but he is meeting with much opposition to this move within his Party.

Mencio Ruini could be another solution, but it might only be a temporary one.

Of one thing we can, however, be certain: the future President of the Council will not be drawn from the Extremists.

Eileen Bate.

Intelligence Section,
Air Forces Sub-Commission.
Allied Commission. ROME.

N.B. It is said that:

General Messe proposed to the Lieut. General that he should form a Cabinet, assuring H.R.H. that he had the Leftists with him. It is known that the Russian Embassy holds a very thick dossier containing evidence concerning Messe's command of Italian troops in Russia. Messe's name, and also Bencivenga's, has been mentioned during these last days as likely nominees for the War Office. In any case, Casati will not return.

At the time of his resignation Admiral De Courten told Togliatti that he would order all his crews to land and leave the Communists to run the Navy, which, he reminded Togliatti, was His Majesty's.

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2038

Dec. 2nd. 1944.

SECRETPolitical Crisis and the
Italian Air Ministry

Col. Smith came to see me this morning his main object being to ask me to suggest to you that you come at once to Rome. The question of abolishing the Air Ministry is again under consideration. Several Air Force Generals, whose main grudge against Piacentini is that he has not found them good jobs, are out to down him at all costs even if by doing so the Regia Aeronautica be made to suffer. Rumours are being spread regarding Piacentini's activities and some of these Smith has discussed personally with Piacentini. According to Smith all the foodstuffs, wine and oil which has been brought to Rome from Bari by order of Piacentini was for Regia Aeronautica requirements but Piacentini made the mistake of transacting these deals through one officer only. This created suspicion and Smith has advised him in future to transact such business not through one but through a number of officers. Among the candidates for the post of Minister is Generale di Brigata Aerea Rompelli, late head of the Press Bureau of the Regia Aeronautica under Valle. At that time he was an ardent Fascist but he now poses as an out-and-out Socialist and Freemason. General Gasti is favoured by many and might be a possible solution. On the other hand Piacentini is liked by the operational crews even though he is at times criticised. He is recognised as a leader. Supposing he retained the post of Chief of Staff and a civilian Minister for Air were appointed everything would rest on the choice of the civilian. Smith was going to see Scialoja

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P. H. Smith
of Gen

TOP SECRET

9^A

Commodore Stone sent for me at 0930 1st December and stated:

He had this morning seen the Prince and afterwards Bonomi.

He informed the Prince of the views held by the Allied author-

ities regarding the heads of the Service Ministries and laid

particular stress on the requirements in connection with the

Ministry for Air. (see Memo to Commodore Stone) The

Prince clearly does not favour Piacentini either as Minister or

Chief of Staff. He referred to rumours to the effect that

Piacentini had dabbled in finance and it was also stated that

he had made a large sum of money on coffee. This related to

pre-war days. Commodore Stone then asked me whether I had heard

about this.

I stated that there were rumours current but I could not say whether

they were well founded or not. As regards coffee, if it related

to a pre-war transaction the deal may have been connected with

the barter of S.55 against coffee. When Balbo carried out his

formation flight to Brazil the 12 S.55 were left in Brazil and

"sold" to the Brazilian Government for coffee. This was common

knowledge at the time.

Commodore Stone then stated that whilst Bonomi did not seem to

favour Piacentini either as Minister or Chief of Staff he did

not oppose him as strongly as the Prince. Bonomi had also heard

unfavourable reports. In no case would Piacentini be appointed

Minister.

I then stated that I understood the position was as follows:

Piacentini would in no case be appointed Minister and since

the Prince and the A.V.M. concurred, that

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I then stated that I understood the position was as follows:

Piacentini would in no case be appointed Minister and since

M.A.A.T. held the same views and the A.V.M. concurred, that point was settled. On the other hand it would be extremely difficult to replace Piacentini as Chief of Staff.

Commodore Stone's comment was: if we decided to retain Piacentini as Chief of Staff we must do so at our own risk and take the rap when they came. He might be brought up for trial and if the charges were proved the Allies would cut a sorry figure if it were then said that Piacentini had been retained as Chief of Staff contrary to the wishes of the Lieutenant General and of the Prime Minister (prospective)

I stated I would send the A.V.M. an immediate signal explaining the position.

2037

TOP SECRET

CIPHER MSGE

IMMEDIATE 0571

TO AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION AC BARI

FROM AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION AC ROME C 11 SIGNALS CENTRE

PSE PASSO SECRET . ROGER INT 292 . DEC 1 .

FOR AVM BOWEN BUSCARLET FROM DE HAAN . COMMODORE STONE SUBMITTED

THIS MORNING TO THE PRINCE AND BONONI THE ALLIED VIEWS REGARDING

HEADS OF SERVICE MINISTRIES THE PRINCE CLEARLY

DOES NOT FAVOUR PIACENTINI'S APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF CHIEF

OF STAFF AS ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION PIACENTINI HAS BEEN

CARRYING OUT FINANCIAL DEALS FOR PERSONAL PROFIT AND IS ALSO

ACCUSED OF HAVING MADE PREWAR LARGE PROFITS ON COFFEE TRANSACTIONS.

BONONI FOR SIMILAR REASONS LIKEWISE DOES NOT FAVOUR PIACENTINI

IN EITHER CAPACITY BUT OPPOSITION FROM THIS QUARTER NOT SO

STRONG . COMMODORE STONE STATES THAT IF WE INSIST ON PIACENTINI

REMAINING CHIEF OF STAFF IN SPIE OF OPPOSITION FROM PRINCE

AND FROM PROSPECTIVE PRIME MINISTER WE MUST ACCEPT FULL

RESPONSIBILITY . IF SUBSEQUENTLY AN ENQUIREY REGARDING PIACENTINI'S

ACTIVITIES WERE INSTITUTED AND THE DECISION WENT AGAINST

HIM THIS WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO ALLIED INTERESTS I EXPRESSED

THE FOLLO WING VIEWS . WE HAD HEARD RUMOURS OF PIACENTINI'S

RECENT ACTIVITIES BUT ONLY RUMOURS . REGARDING PRE WAR COFFEE

DEALS WHEN BALBO FLEW SOUTH ATLANTIC WITH TWELVE SAVOIA SUGAR

FIVE FIVE SEAPLANES HE BARTERED THE LOT FOR BRAZILIAN COFFEE.

IT MIGHT BE THE SAME DEAL . COMMENT. RUMOURS RE COFFEE MAY

CARRYING OUT THE TRANSACTION.

ACCUSED OF HAVING MADE PREWAR LARGE PROFITS ON COFFEE TRANSACTIONS.

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ACTIVITIES WERE INSTITUTED AND THE DECISION WENT AGAINST HIM THIS WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL TO ALLIED INTERESTS I EXPRESSED THE FOLLOWING VIEWS. WE HAD HEARD RUMOURS OF PIACENTINI'S RECENT ACTIVITIES BUT ONLY RUMOURS. REGARDING PRE WAR COFFEE DEALS WHEN BALBO FLEW SOUTH ATLANTIC WITH TWELVE SAVOIA SUGAR FIVE FIVE SEAPLANES HE BARTERED THE LOT FOR BRAZILIAN COFFEE.

IT MIGHT BE THE SAME DEAL. COMMENT. RUMOURS RE COFFEE MAY

REFER TO POSSIBLE TRANSACTIONS UNDERTAKEN WHILE STATIONED ABYSSINIA 20/36

AND OF WHICH WE HAVE NOT EVIDENCE SUGGEST YOUR PRESENCE HERE

WOULD BE OPPORTUNE.

TOO 01230A. TOR 011434A. DECY 011555A/13.

DIST:- AIR FORCE SUB COMMISSION BARI.

TOC EAW 1707.

TOP SECRET

For the attention of the A.V.M.

COPY.

General Infante, to quote his own words, is attempting to influence Commodore Stone so that the Chief Commissioner will propose General Tedeschini Lalli as Minister for Air to replace General Piacentini.

You will, of course, remember this general as having collaborated with the Germans during their occupation of Rome. For some unknown reason his case has not yet come before the Discrimination Tribunal, although the Epuration Tribunal absolved him on Nov. 26th. 1944. It will be recalled that he was President of Ala Littoria from September 16th; to December 19th. 1943.

Infante has obtained a concession which he values at 12,000,000 lira. His business is to obtain the whereabouts of hidden lorries and purchase them, which is not difficult to arrange when the owner is in fear of them being requisitioned. He then proceeds to rent them to the Royal Italian Navy for transport purposes.

Consider that any remarks of mine would be superfluous!

from ? I.R.N.

111.

Nov. 29th. 1944.

2035

6^A
R O M E

29th November, 1944.

1A
Dear Squadron Leader,

Please accept my thanks for your letter of 27th November communicating a message from Air Vice Marshal Bowen-Buscarlet concerning the policy of M.A.A.F in regard to the position of the Air Ministry. I am grateful to receive the views of Air Marshal Sir John Slessor with which I agree.

Yours sincerely

Noel Hawkins

Squadron Leader P. de Haan,
Air Forces Sub Commission
Allied Commission.

2034

TOP SECRET

Outgoing Message

FROM : AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION, A.C. ROME

TO : AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION, A.C. BARI

SECRET R.INT.287 TOO 281000 NOVEMBER 1944 (.)
FOR A.V.M. BOWEN-BUSCARLET FROM DE HAAN (.)
COMMODORE STONE FULLY SHARES YOUR VIEWS ON POLICY BUT
IS REFRAINING FROM TAKING ANY ACTION AT PRESENT BECAUSE
FIRSTLY LIEUTENANT GENERAL HAS NOT YET CALLED ON ANYONE
TO FORM A NEW CABINET SECONDLY COMMODORE STONE IS
CONSULTING WITH SACMED REGARDING ALLIED COMMISSION'S
CHANGED POSITION IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH WHETHER NAMES
OF NEW MINISTERS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO ALLIED COMMISSION
OR TO AMBASSADOR FOR APPROVAL (.)

To be encyphered if sent by W/T

TOO 281000

Priority Important

P. DE HAAN S/LDR INT
AIR VICE MARSHAL
AIR OFFICER COMMANDING

AFSC/INT/20

2033

ATR FORCES SUB-COMMISSION, ALLIED COMMISSION.

DO/WABB/208.

~~SECRET.~~

27th November, 1944.

Dear Peter,

Unless I receive an urgent summons from you recalling me to Rome I intend to go on with my programme which should bring me back to Rome on either Monday or Tuesday of next week. I will let you know which later.

2. I think that it is better if I remain at a distance while these Ministerial changes are in progress. I hope you got my Most Immediate signal and that you have been able to do something about the first two paragraphs, also that some action has been taken about the car for the A.O.C.-in-C. His own has now definitely cracked up and he really wants the one which he is relying on us to get for him.

3. I shall be back in Bari on Wednesday evening and should be here all Thursday in case you want to talk to me on the telephone. On Friday I go to Biferno and back, and I will leave for Naples on either Saturday or Sunday. You will probably be able to get me on Friday night in Bari if you want me.

All the best,

Yours *very truly,*

W. B. B. - B. B. B.

Squadron Leader P. De Haan,
Air Forces Sub-Commission,
Allied Commission, Rome.

2032

Cyber Message

To: A.F.S.E. A.E. Rome
From: A.F.S.E. A.E. Bari

REF 0161 Nov 27

TOP SECRET

Para 1. Venturi saw me this morning ~~to~~ obviously trying to get my views on impending Ministerial changes. Naturally did not commit myself, his view apparently that civilian Air Minister probable with Brown as Chief of Staff. Scialoja probable in which case he warned me that his Secretary Succubato was most dangerous having been wanted here by Togliatti's. Every effort should be made to keep him out and you should inform Stone and Ambassador if your information confirms.

Para 2. Shortage of boots & clothing is being made vehicle for spreading disaffection in this and use every effort for immediate release of substantial quantities.

3A
400/27

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 of your information concerns.

Para 2 Exchange of boots & clothing is being
 made vehicle for spreading disaffection in
 this and use every effort for immediate
 release of substantial quantities

Para 3 Gastaldi is spreading disaffection 02034
 have said that if Air Ministry put him to
 some job in which he can do maximum
 of harm we will agree the posting

MOST IMMEDIATE

Too 271020H
 TOR 271200Z
 TOD 271730Z

[Signature]

Dist AFSC A E Rome

AIR FORCE SUPPLEMENT

ALLIED COMMISSION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref. AFSC/2/Spec. Int./1

27th November 1944

Subject: New Italian Cabinet and prospective changes
at the Air MinistryTo: Commodore Ellery W. Stone, USNR,
Chief Commissioner, Allied Commission

Air Vice-Marshal W.A.B. Bowen-Bueserlet phoned me this morning from Bari and requested me to convey the following message to you:

2. On receipt of the news of the Cabinet crisis he consulted W.A.A.F. by telephone and was informed that Air Marshal Sir John Slensor's policy with regard to the Air Ministry is as follows:

a) On no account is there to be a combination of Italian Army and Air Force under the Minister for War.

b) The posts of Minister for Air and Chief of Staff must be held separately and not jointly by one individual as was the case up to the present.

c) It would be preferable if a civilian were appointed Minister for Air.

d) General P. Piacentini, up to the present Minister for Air and Chief of Staff, should remain Chief of Staff.

3. Air Vice-Marshal W.A.B. Bowen-Bueserlet has also been in touch with the C. in C. who holds substantially the same views.

(P. de Maré S/AF. D2030)

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(F. de Huen 3/Ldr. D2030

TOP SECRET

AIR FORCES SUB COMMISSION

ALLIED COMMISSION

ROME, 27th November 1944

His Excellency

Sir Noel Charles, Bt., K.C.M.G., M.C.

H.M. Ambassador to Italy

British Embassy

R O M E

Your Excellency,

New Cabinet and prospective changes
in the Italian Air Ministry

Mr Vice Marshal W.A.D. Bowen-Escarlet, A.C.U. Air Forces
Sub Commission, Allied Commission, 'phoned this morning from
Bari and requested me to convey the following message to Your
Excellency:

On receipt of the news of the Cabinet crisis he consulted
M.A.A.F. by telephone and was informed that Air Marshal Sir John
Stessor's policy with regard to the Air Ministry is as follows:
a) On no account is there to be a combination of Italian Army
and Air Force under the Minister for War.

b) The posts of Minister for Air and Chief of Staff must be
held separately and not jointly by one individual as was
case up to the present.

c) It would be preferable if a civilian were appointed Minister

In the Italian Air Ministry
 Air Vice Marshal W.A.D. Bowen-Buscalet, A.C.G. Air Forces
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 held separately and not jointly by one individual as was ²⁰²⁹
 case up to the present.

c) It would be preferable if a civilian were appointed Minister
 for Air.

d) General E. Piacentini, up to the present Minister for Air and
 Chief of Staff should remain Chief of Staff.

Air Vice Marshal W.A.D. Bowen-Buscalet has also been in touch
 with the C. in C. who holds substantially the same views.

I have the honour to be

Your obedient servant

(E. de Haan S/Lt. Col. Int.)

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