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E.O. 12065: RDS-1,3 3/18/00, (PAGANELLI, R.P.), OR-M
 TAGS: PARM, MNUC, TECH, ENRG, IT
 SUBJECT: (U) NONPROLIFERATION ASSESSMENT

REF: STATE 68365

1. (U) SCIATT, WHO HANDLES NONPROLIFERATION MATTERS AT THIS EMBASSY, IS OUT OF TOWN THIS WEEK. NEVERTHELESS, THE FOLLOWING REPLY ADDRESSES THE MAJOR POINTS RAISED BY REFTEL. IF NECESSARY, FURTHER COMMENT WILL BE CABLED NEXT WEEK.

2. (C) THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ITALY IS NOT HEAVILY INVOLVED IN DEFINING THE COUNTRY'S NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY, WHICH -- FOR GOOD OR ILL -- IS LEFT ESSENTIALLY IN THE HANDS OF THE "TECHNICAL" PERSONNEL IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY COMMISSION (CNEN). NONPROLIFERATION ISSUES COME TO THE ATTENTION OF GOI POLITICAL LEADERS ONLY WHEN SOME UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCE (EG: NEGOTIATION OF A MAJOR EXPORT DEAL, MENTION BY A VISITING DIGNITARY, ETC.) CAUSES THEM TO BE RAISED.

3. (C) AT THE SUB-POLITICAL AND TECHNICAL LEVELS, US POLICY IS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD TO BE FIRMLY OPPOSED TO NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION. THE MOTIVES BEHIND THAT POLICY ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD; ASSUMPTIONS ARE FREQUENTLY MADE (AND PROPAGATED) THAT IT HAS BEEN ADOPTED FOR UNDEFINED COMMERCIAL REASONS OR TO PRESERVE OUR STATUS AS MEMBERS OF AN EXCLUSIVE NUCLEAR CLUB. THE MEANS WE HAVE CHOSEN TO EFFECT OUR POLICY ARE FREQUENTLY CRITICIZED AS BEING UNILATERAL, ARBITRARY AND OVERLY RIGID. WHILE THE CONDUCT AND COMPLETION OF THE INFCE EXERCISE HAVE DEFINITELY SERVED TO CLARIFY US VIEWS AND INTENTIONS FOR THOSE OFFICIALS WHO ACTUALLY PARTICIPATED, A GOODLY RESERVOIR OF SUSPICION BORN OF THE MISAPPREHENSIONS WHICH AROSE DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS IN THIS FIELD PERSISTS AND CONTINUES TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE ATTITUDES OF RKING-LEVEL OFFICIALS. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING US POLICY AND ACTIONS FOLLOWING INFCE ARE ILL-DEFINED; WHILE THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE US WILL (ONTINUE

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TO ESPOUSE NON-PROLIFERATION, THE DIRECTION OF CURRENT POLICY IS SEEN AS A PRODUCT OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, AND IS REGARDED AS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH ANY CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT NEXT YEAR.

4. (C) JUST AS OUR POLICY IS SEEN AS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, SO OUR RELIABILITY AS A SUPPLIER IS OPEN TO QUESTION. US-ITALIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION IS BROAD AND DEEP; IT HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. WE DOUBT THAT ITALIANS REALLY CALL INNO QUESTION US WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE A SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ITALY, BUT THEY HAVE OBSERVED OUR CONTACTS WITH OTHER STATES, BOTH IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THROUGH THEIR PARTICIPATION IN EURATOM. THOSE OBSERVATIONS HAVE PRODUCED DISTRUST OF WHAT SOME OFFICIALS TERM OUR TENDENCY TO UNILATERALLY MAKE OUR DOMESTIC RULE-MAKING PROCESS APPLY IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

5. (S) ITALIAN GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON NONPROLIFERATION RISK ARE RIVEN BY A MARKED DICHOTOMY BETWEEN RHETORIC AND ACTION. THE STATED POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT IS CHARACTERIZED BY STRONG ADHERENCE TO THE GOALS OF THE NPT, DEEP CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF PROLIFERATION, AND A WILLINGNESS TO DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY ON ITALY'S PART TO KEEP PROLIFERATION RISK TO A MINIMUM. IN PRACTICE THAT HAS MEANT STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER -- AND NOT NECESSARILY THE SPIRIT -- OF THE NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS' GROUP GUIDELINES AND THE ZANGGER LIST. THERE IS A GROWING BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT ITALY'S CLEAR-CUT STAND AGAINST PROLIFERATION BECOMES RATHER FUZZY AROUND THE EDGES WHEN PROLIFERATION CONCERNS COME INTO CONFLICT WITH COMMERCIAL POLICY. THUS, WHILE ITALY AND THE US APPEAR TO SHARE THE SAME NONPROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES, ITALY DOES NOT, IN PRACTICE, SHARE THE US VIEW OF THE IMMEDIACY AND BREADTH OF THE PROBLEM.

6. (C) US POLICY IN THIS AREA HAS INFLUENCED THE HOST AUTHORITY'S PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM BY REMOVING IT FROM THE "TECHNICAL" AREA AND BRINGING IT TO THE ATTENTION OF NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. THIS IS A CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT, SINCE ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADERS, AS NOTED ABOVE, DO NOT

NORMALLY TAKE AN INTEREST IN NONPROLIFERATION POLICY. TO THE EXTENT OUR POLICY IN GENERAL AND OUR RAISING SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WITH THEM IN PARTICULAR CAUSES NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS TO TAKE NOTICE OF THEIR OWN NON-PROLIFERATION POLICY, WE MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR PERCEPTIONS. GARDNER
BT

TO: SAC, ROME
FROM: ROME
SUBJECT: [Illegible]
DATE: 1/28/77
CLASS: CONFIDENTIAL
AUTHORITY: [Illegible]

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