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THE PCI'S LATEST "DEFIANCE" OF MOSCOW

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SUBJECT: THE PCI'S LATEST "DEFIANCE" OF MOSCOW

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1. WIDELY DIFFUSED INTERPRETATION IN WESTERN PRESS OF RECENT PRAVDA ARTICLE BY KORIONOV AS A WARNING TO WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES, PARTICULARLY TO THE PCI, PROVIDES LATEST EXAMPLE OF HOW ITALIAN COMMUNISTS SUCCEED IN PROJECTING AN EXAGGERATED IMAGE OF OPEN DEFIANCE OF MOSCOW WHICH THE FACTS CONSISTENTLY FAIL TO JUSTIFY. CASE STUDY FOLLOWS:

2. THE PRAVDA ARTICLE IN QUESTION "THE BANNER OF COMMUNISTS," WAS SUMMARIZED AT LENGTH IN UNITA, JANUARY 25, UNDER THE HEADLINE "PRAVDA ON ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGNS IN THE WEST." THE SUBHEAD CITES THE ARTICLE'S APPEAL TO "THE PRINCIPLES OF PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM, SOLIDARITY AMONG COMMUNIST PARTIES; AND AUTONOMY, EQUALITY AND NON-INTERFERENCE AMONG THEM." IT CITES THESE PRINCIPLES AGAIN IN THE LEAD PARAGRAPH AS THE CENTRAL THEMES OF THE ARTICLE, ADDING ONE MORE: "THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ANTI-SOVIET POSITIONS IN DEFENSE OF SOCIALISM." IN LINE WITH THE HEADLINE, THE SUMMARY GOES ON TO GIVE MOST ATTENTION TO PRAVDA'S DENUNCIATIONS OF ANTI-SOVIET CAMPAIGNS IN THE WEST THAN TO ANY OTHER THEME. INTERESTING PASSAGES QUOTED FROM PRAVDA ARE:.

3. "AN ANTI-SOVIET COMMUNISM CANNOT EXIST, A COMMUNISM DIRECTED AGAINST EXISTING SOCIALISM, AGAINST THE WARSAW PACT, AGAINST COMECON, AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES CANNOT EXIST." AFTER QUOTING THE SUBHEADLINED "PRINCIPLES" AGAIN... "(THESE PRINCIPLES) CONSTITUTE THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIP AMONG FRATERNAL PARTIES. THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF THESE PRINCIPLES IS THE NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATION AMONG COMRADES, AMONG FRATERNAL PARTIES." "...THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ANTI-SOVIETISM--AS JUSTLY OUTLINED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF FRATERNAL PARTIES--IS ALSO AN INTERNATIONAL AND PATRIOTIC (SIC.) DUTY OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMUNISTS TOWARD THEIR COMRADES OF CLASS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, AND TOWARD THEIR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES." "...THE COMMON ACTIONS OF COUNTRIES OF THE SOCIALIST COMMUNITY, OF COMMUNIST PARTIES, HAVE ALREADY BROUGHT SUCCESSES OF EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE; IT IS NATURAL THAT COMMUNISTS BE RESOLVED TO CARRY FORWARD

THE CAUSE UNITY OF ACTION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY."

4. EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE AVAILABLE COMPLETE TEXT TO JUDGE FIDELITY OF L'UNITA SUMMARY WHICH CONTAINS NO IDENTIFIABLE COMMENT. HOWEVER IT WAS DONE WITH OBVIOUS CARE, AND PRESENTED IN A MANNER WHICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF APPROVAL. TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT COMMENT IN L'UNITA OR BY ANY COMMUNIST SPOKESMAN ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ARTICLE. HOWEVER, ON JANUARY 26, L'UNITA FRONTPAGED THE SUMMARY OF A SPEECH ON "AUTONOMY AND INTERNATIONALISM" BY DIRECTORATE MEMBER PAJETTA (WHO HANDLES PCI RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTIES) AT A LARGE PCI RALLY IN MESTRE (VENICE). IN THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF HIS SPEECH, WHOSE MAIN THEME WAS A VIRTUOUS APPEAL FOR ITALIAN AUTONOMY FROM US INTERFERENCE, DIRECT AND INDIRECT, HE THUS REFERRED TO THE PRAVDA ARTICLE:

5. "THOSE WHO WRITE TODAY IN REFERENCE TO AN ARTICLE OF PRAVDA THAT IT COULD BE A WARNING OR DIRECTIVE FOR OUR PARTY CERTAINLY DO NOT KNOW US. WE DRAW OUR DIRECTIVES FROM OUR CONGRESS, WE WORK OUT OUR POLICIES IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE; NO ONE, FROM NOWHERE BEYOND THE BORDER HAS (SIC) LESSONS TO IMPART TO ITALIAN COMMUNISTS OTHER THAN EXPERIENCES TO BE CONSIDERED IN A CRITICAL SPIRIT."

"BESIDES, THE CURRENT DEBATE IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL WAYS...TO SOCIALISM...FINDS US PROTAGONISTS, LISTENED TO WITH INTEREST AND RESPECT, EVEN IF IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT FIND US PROPOSING AN ITALIAN MODEL."

6. (DIGRESSION: IN DEVELOPING HIS APPEAL TO NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY, PAJETTA REJECTED, WITH REFERENCE TO ECONOMIC POLICY, A "LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY" WHICH CAUSED ITALIANS TO PAY FOR THE INFLATION OF OTHERS, AND WHICH FORCES THEM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO SUBMIT TO THE STRONGEST SORT OF BLACKMAIL. HE ADDED THAT, "WHEN ONE TALKS OF THE NEED FOR AMERICAN LOANS, THE FACT THAT POLITICIANS OR PARTIES MUST NEGOTIATE UNDER THE BLACKMAIL THREAT OF REVELATIONS CONCERNING THE CIA'S BLACK FUNDS IS DISTURBING." HE CALLED FOR A NATIONAL POLICY NEITHER ANTI-AMERICAN OR ANTI-SOVIET, FREE OF ALL FOREIGN INTERVENTION, BUT GAVE NO INDICATION THAT ANY THREAT COULD COME FROM THE SOVIETS. ARTICLE BEING TRANSLATED IN FULL AND POUCHED.)

7. JANUARY 28 CORRIERE DELLA SERA IN FRONT PAGE STORY QUOTES UNNAMED COMMUNIST SOURCES AS STARING THAT "PAJETTA'S SO HARD (SIC*) REPLY TO PRAVDA IS A REPLY TO THOSE IN THE

SOVIET UNION WHO ARE TRYING TO MAKE CONSERVATIVE THESES PREVAIL. WRITER'S (GIOVANNI RUSSO) PCI SOURCES GO ON TO EXPLAIN THAT PRAVDA ARTICLE IS NOT REPEAT NOT REALLY AIMED AT WESTERN PARTIES BUT AT LIBERAL ELEMENTS WITHIN REPEAT WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION. THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS, SAY THE SOURCES, IS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY AGREED TO OMIT REFERENCE TO IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS AT THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, AND HAVE ACCEPTED AN OPEN POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND DETENTE. BUT THE SOVIETS COULD NOT SAY ONE THING IN EAST BERLIN AND ADOPT A HARD LINE AGAINST THE NATIONAL WAYS AT THE IMMINENT SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS. THEREFORE LIBERAL ELEMENTS ARE ALLOWING CONSERVATIVE VIEWS TO BE EXPRESSED IN THE SOVIET UNION

"TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR ACCEPTANCE OF AN OPEN POLICY AND A DIALOGUE (QED)." PCI SOURCE WERE THEN ASKED IN SUBSTANCE: BUT WHAT IS CONSERVATIVE VIEWS--WHICH YOU ACKNOWLEDGE ARE SUPPORTED BY MANY MORE ARTICLES IN SOVIET UNION--- SHOULD NEVERTHELESS PREVAIL AT SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS; REPLY WAS: THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT-- WE ADMIT--WOULD COME ON HARD TIMES." (ENTIRE ARTICLE BEING TRANSLATED AND POUCHED.)

8. COMMENT WITH REFERENCE TO ITALIAN CONTEST: PCI CHARACTERIZATION OF PAJETTA'S "REPLY" TO PRAVDA AS "HARD" NOT CHALLENGED BY CORRIERE DELLA SERA OR ANYONE TO OUR KNOWLEDGE CREDIBLE TO THE ITALIAN PUBLIC ON SUCH MATTERS. WE NOTE THAT PAJETTA WAS INDEED HARD TOWARD THOSE WHO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTERPRETED PRAVDA AS ANY SORT OF WARNING TO THE PCI. GIVEN THE SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED IN L'UNITA THE DAY BEFORE, HE IS ON FIRM GROUND. AFTER ALL, THE PCI HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED ITS FORMAL COMMITMENT TO THE TIME-WORN SHIBBOLETHS OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM. WHICH INCLUDE "AUTONOMY AND NON-INTERVENTION" AMONG PARTIES. (PAJETTA'S CLARIFICATION OF HOW THE PCI AUTONOMOUSLY TAKES DECISION IS AN ALMOST VERBATIM STANDARD REPLY TO ALL CHARGES THAT IT IS NOT ITS OWN MASTER.) AFTER ALL, THE ARTICLE REALLY ATTACKED ANTI-SOVIETING AGAINST WHICH THE PCI FIGHTS CONSISTENTLY AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL IN ITALY. A RECENT WELL-KNOWN EXAMPLE WAS THE PCI'S REPLY TO CRITICISM OF SOVIET UNION OVER THE TREATMENT OF SAKHAROV.

9. INDEED, THIS EPISODE CONFIRMS A PATTERN WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE DISCOURAGING SUCCESS: MOSCOW SPEAKS ITS MIND; THE PCI GENERICALLY REAFFIRMS ITS AUTONOMY, AVOIDING ANY DIRECT CONFRONTATION, WHILE IN L'UNITA EVEN ACCEPTING THE MERIT OF MOST OF WHAT THE SOVIETS SAY. THEN PCI SOURCES EXPLAIN (PRIVATELY) TO JOURNALISTS HOW

SHARPLY THEY DIFFER WITH SOVIETS, WHILE MINIMIZING OR REINTERPRETING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARTICLE IN QUESTION; FINALLY, THE PCI IS GIVEN CREDIT IN THE MEDIA FOR ITS "DEFIANCE" OF MOSCOW, TOO OFTEN NAIVELY REPLAYED AND AMPLIFIED IN THE WESTERN PRESS.

10. EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT PCI HAS REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED THE HIGH PRIORITY IT GIVES TO MAINTAINING GOOD FORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET COMMUNISTS, AND ON CATERING TO THE PRO-SOVIET SENTIMENT OF MUCH OF ITS BASE, EVEN TO RISKING DAMAGE TO ITS CLAIM TO AUTONOMY AND TO REJECTION OF SOVIET-TYPE SOCIALISM FOR ITALY. THE MEDIA HERE IN ITALY AND ABROAD FAIL TO EMBARRASS THE PCI ON THESE SUBJECTS, WHILE THE PCI CONTINUES TO BUILD A PHONY REPUTATION FOR OPEN DEFIANCE OF THE USSR.

11. COMMENT IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: WE PASS TO OTHERS A JUDGMENT OF THE MERITS OF THE EXEGESIS OFFERED BY PCI SOURCES ON THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KORIONOV ARTICLE. VOLPE

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