

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 February, 1984

Dear John,

A.J.C.  $\frac{2}{2}$

f.c.

Visit of President Pertini of Italy

/ I enclose briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with  
/ President Pertini at 12.00 noon on 22 February, and a speaking  
note which the Prime Minister might draw on in proposing the  
President's health at lunch afterwards.

President Pertini will be visiting the UK as a guest of  
HM Government and will attend the 'Genius of Venice' exhibition  
at the Royal Academy on the evening of 22 February. He will be  
accompanied at his talks with the Prime Minister by the Italian  
Foreign Minister, Signor Andreotti. My Secretary of State and  
HM Ambassador at Rome, Lord Bridges, will also attend.

Lord Bridges has recently written an interesting despatch  
on 'Citizen Pertini' in preparation for this visit. The  
Despatch is at Annex D of the enclosed brief. I think that if  
she has time to read it, it would be the best possible background  
for the Prime Minister's talks with Signor Pertini

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

Please type in  
speed form 1+3  
and return this form.  
ADL  $\frac{21}{2}$

VISIT OF PRESIDENT SANDRO PERTINI, 22-24 FEBRUARY

SPEAKING NOTES FOR USE BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT LUNCH

1. A great pleasure to welcome you, Mr President on your first visit to the UK. I also had the pleasure of meeting you in Rome a month ago following a useful Summit meeting with Prime Minister Craxi and his colleagues. The last official visit by an Italian President to Britain was that of President Saragat in 1969. A lot of water has flowed under the bridges of Tiber and Thames since then. Notably, we joined the European Community, and your country supported us staunchly in our accession.

2. Our links go back very far - nearly two thousand years to the Roman conquest of Britain. We owe much to the legacy of Roman civilisation in our literature and our laws; much also to the Italian Renaissance, some of the splendour of which is illustrated in the 'Genius of Venice' Exhibition you have come to see, and of which you are Patron. We are proud to have such a magnificent collection of Venetian art on display in London, and to have contributed to it from our own great collections. Italian civilisation has become a part of our lives.

3. We want to show you some of the glories of our civilisation too. One of these is our parliament, and our parliamentary institutions. You and we share the inestimable benefit of living in free societies, with proud traditions. I am delighted therefore that you, Mr President, who occupied the position of 'Speaker' in the Italian Parliament from 1969-76 with such distinction, will tomorrow be meeting the Speaker of our Parliament, Sir Bernard Weatherill.

4. When you visit the Italian Cultural Institute, you will be meeting some of our English students of Italian. I have enjoyed my visits to Italy, as do the millions from our country

/who



who travel to your country each year; and I can well understand the enthusiasm of young people to learn more of your country and its language, and to go there themselves. It is these young people who hold the key to the future, and we can be thankful that they are an outward-looking, inquisitive, eager generation.

5. Propose health of President Pertini.

## VISIT BY PRESIDENT SANDRO PERTINI OF ITALY: 22 FEBRUARY

## GENERAL BRIEF

Introduction

1. President Pertini is visiting the UK from 22-24 February as a guest of HMG. This will be the first official visit by an Italian President since the State Visit of President Saragat in 1969. The main purpose of his visit is to attend the Royal Academy's 'The Genius of Venice' exhibition, (Annex F) of which both he and The Queen are the patrons.

Programme

2. President Pertini, who will be accompanied by Signor Andreotti, the Foreign Minister, will be welcomed at London airport on arrival at 10.00 am by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. At 11.45 there will be a Guard of Honour in the FCO quadrangle at which the Prime Minister will be present, to be followed by talks at No 10 beginning at 12.00 noon. These will be attended by Sir G Howe and Signor Andreotti, who will be holding their own meeting later in the day. The Prime Minister will host a lunch at No 10 in honour of President Pertini after the talks. A full programme is attached at Annex A.

The Talks

3. The Prime Minister last met President Pertini during the Anglo/Italian Summit in Rome on 27 January. As on that occasion there is no fixed agenda for the talks. President Pertini is a non-executive Head of State and there is no official business we need to discuss with him. Nevertheless in Signor Andreotti's presence it would be useful to exchange views on current international issues.

4. Following are subjects in which President Pertini is known to have an interest, and a suggested line for the Prime Minister to

take.

a) Lebanon and Arab Israel

The Italians attach importance to close consultations on Lebanon and will be interested in our views on the prospects for replacing the remainder of the MNF by UN forces. President Pertini caused some controversy in Italy in December by calling for a withdrawal of the Italian contingent. On the Arab Israel question we should seek Italian agreement that the Ten should respond positively to Egypt's efforts to modify US policy over Palestinian self-determination, and exchange views on whether recent developments (Arafat/Mubarak meeting and Arafat/Husseini talks) present any chance of breaking the deadlock.

b) East/West relations

The choice of Chernenko is evidence of the characteristic caution of the Soviet leadership; he is obviously a compromise candidate with little knowledge of foreign affairs or of economic policy. At his meeting with the Prime Minister Chernenko stuck closely to standard Soviet positions. It is important for the West to maintain a stable and consistent approach and we shall need to broaden the dialogue and establish recognition that the East and West have a common interest in achieving security at a lower level of weapons. But there should be no compromise on principles and we will continue to make clear our concerns in areas where we expect the East to adopt a new and more constructive approach. Progress will be gradual.

President Pertini will be interested to hear the Prime Minister's impressions of Hungary, particularly since the Italian Prime Minister and Andreotti will visit Budapest soon. The Hungarians are keen to conclude an agreement with the EC and there are sound political reasons for pressing ahead with this.

On Poland the Prime Minister might say that we believe it is time to re-engage Western influence and we shall build on the Ten's agreement to gradual resumption of official and technical talks.

c) INF/CDE

We welcome Italian participation in the modernisation of NATO's INF (the first cruise missiles in Sicily are due to become operational in March). Despite Soviet withdrawal from the INF negotiations in November, the Russians must be brought to accept through continued Western resolve that it is in their security interest to agree to limit these and other weapons.

On CDE we believe that the West's decision to open at Foreign Minister level got the conference off to a good start and our co-ordinated and substantive approach has put the East on the defensive. Little progress can be expected until the Soviet Union has a clearer idea of what it wants.

d) Human Rights in Argentina (Only if raised by President Pertini)

We welcome the moves by the new Argentine Government to investigate the violations of human rights that took place during the military regime and are encouraged by their commitment to ensuring that those responsible for these abuses are brought to justice. Since the conflict we have not been in a position to make any formal approach on this question to the Argentine Government with any hopes of success and the relatives of UK nationals concerned have also preferred that we refrain from making such approaches. The Ten have made clear to the Argentines our concern to receive information of the fate of the many Community nationals who disappeared.

e) Terrorism

This subject may be on President Pertini's mind in light of the recent assassination in Rome of the Director General of the Sinai MFO (Multilateral Force and Observers). President Pertini believes that Italian terrorism has international links. The Prime Minister could say that we accept that there are a number of terrorist movements but we do not believe there is an international conspiracy among terrorist organisations. We are concerned about the tendency towards State supported terrorism. However, it is difficult to prove State connections with specific incidents. The UK has always

taken a firm line against international terrorism and we believe it is essential to ensure widespread international cooperation against terrorism.

f) European Community

President Pertini is known to be a strong supporter of Spanish and Portuguese accession and the Prime Minister could reassure him of our commitment to progress and to completion of the substantive part of the accession negotiations by 30 September 1984. The Prime Minister may also wish to make the following points to President Pertini:

- (i) The Community faces a serious crisis. It also has the opportunity to surmount its present difficulties and, by setting itself on a sound basis, to focus more on the developments we all wish to see - especially new policies including industrial collaboration, collective research and development in the new information technologies; completion of the internal market, etc;
- (ii) The Community must manage its economy as national governments have to: finance must determine expenditure, not expenditure finance;
- (iii) This means curbing surplus agricultural production through rigorous price restraint and guaranteed threshold for all products in surplus, for which economic outlets do not exist;
- (iv) It also means establishing a guideline for all EC expenditure, including agricultural expenditure - this should be embodied in the Community's budgetary procedures so that it binds the Council, the Commission and the Parliament;
- (v) Britain, seventh on the Community GDP League, cannot go on being, with the FRG, a major net contributor to the Community budget. There cannot be an equitable settlement

unless there is solution to the problem of budget imbalances which 'lasts as long as the problem it was designed to correct'.

4. The following background material is attached:

- a) Programme
- b) Personality notes on:  
President Pertini  
Signor Andreotti  
Signor Maccanico (Secretary General, Presidency)  
Signor Cagiati (Italian Ambassador)
- c) Political Background on Italy
- d) Lord Bridge's despatch 'Citizen Pertini'
- e) Background Note on the 'Genius of Venice' exhibition.



VISIT OF HIS EXCELLENCY SIGNOR SANDRO PERTINI,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY

PROGRAMME

Wednesday 22 February

- 1000 Arrival, in military DC9, at London Heathrow, Southside  
Met by The Lord-in-Waiting to Her Majesty The Queen, The Lord Lyell and Government Representative and Ambassadors.  
Ceremonial Guard of the RAF  
Proceed to Hotel (Claridges) accompanied by police escort.  
Arrive Hotel 1045.
- 1138 Arrival of official suite at Foreign and Commonwealth Office Quadrangle
- 1145 Guard of Honour in FCO Quadrangle found by 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards and The Corps of Drums
- 1200 Talks with Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street
- 1300-1430/45 Lunch at 10 Downing Street hosted by Prime Minister  
Return to Hotel (1500)
- 1615-1650 Visit to Tate Gallery (35 minutes)
- 1700-1745 approx Visit Italian Institute of Culture, 39 Belgrave Square, to inaugurate exhibition of drawings by Longhi and meet young English students of Italian at the Institute  
Return to Hotel
- 2030-2230 approx Dinner to commemorate Centenary of the Italian Hospital in London (Wembley Conference Centre).  
Black tie.  
(Organised by Lord Forte, Lady Thorneycroft and Viscountess Hambleden)

Thursday 23 February

1000-1020 Visit Italian Trade Centre, Piccadilly  
Exhibition of Murano Crystal

1045-1215 Tour of London: Bond Street, Piccadilly,  
Trafalgar Square, Westminster, including  
Abbey

1130 Covent Garden, pub  
Return to Hotel

1300 Lunch with Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham  
Palace  
Return to Hotel

1615 Visit "The Times"

1700-1745 Tea with the Speaker, Speaker's House (at which  
MPs from Anglo-Italian Parliamentary Group  
expected to attend)

1930 Private dinner at Italian Embassy

(2100 Arrival of official suite at Royal Academy)

2135 Attend the Genius of Venice Exhibition at the  
Royal Academy accompanied by Her Majesty The  
Queen.  
Black tie.

2230-2300 Reception in Reynolds Room, Royal Academy

Friday 24 February

0900 Visit Tower of London  
Coffee with the Governor

1000-1030 Call on Lord Mayor at Mansion House

1100 Meeting with Neil Kinnock MP, at Italian  
Embassy  
Visit Italian Embassy, meet staff

1200 Depart for private lunch at Hambleden

1530 Departure from London Heathrow, Southside.  
The Queen's Representative and Government  
Representative will bid farewell

PERTINI, ONOREVOLE ALESSANDRO

President of the Republic (Socialist).

Born Stella (Savona) 1896. Graduated in Law and Social Sciences.

A Socialist from youth, he was condemned for anti-Fascist activities in 1925 and took refuge with Turati in France in the following year. He returned clandestinely to Italy but was arrested at Pisa in 1929. Remained in prison until August 1943 when he was liberated. Captured by the Germans, he escaped from the Regina Coeli prison in Rome and joined the Resistance in which he played a very prominent part, particularly in Genoa. Subsequently, received the highest award for bravery, the Gold Medal of the Resistance. Also holds the United State Silver Staff and the Croix de Guerre.

Deputy for Genoa in every post-war legislature until he became President, and a leading figure in the PSI. He held various positions in the party, but was always something of a loner. He opposed an electoral alliance with the Communists in the late 1940s, but also opposed the Socialists' entry into government with the DC in the 1960s. Elected President (Speaker) of the Chamber of Deputies in June 1968, a post which he filled with distinction until June 1976.

He was elected President of the Republic on 8 July 1978 with (in the end) the support of all parties of the five-party majority, though the DC had initially refused to support him or any other Socialist. He is the first Socialist ever to be

/elected

CONFIDENTIAL

mixed. Exceptionally friendly to us. Awarded the GCB and Collar during the 1980 State Visit. Due to visit London and meet The Queen and Mrs Thatcher in February 1984.

CONFIDENTIAL

ANDREOTTI, ONOREVOLE GIULIO

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Christian Democrat).

Born Rome 1919, and still lives in the centre of the city. Graduated in law. Served in the army for 12 months 1940-41, and was released for health reasons. He then made his mark in Catholic University politics and student journalism. He worked for a time in the Vatican library, where he was noticed by De Gasperi and taken up as a protégé. Was one of the founders of the DC newspaper 'Il Popolo' during the clandestine period. Appointed a member of the DC National Council at the party's 1944 Congress in Naples. Member of the Constituent Assembly 1946-48 and a Deputy for Rome since 1948. Under-Secretary in the Prime Minister's office under De Gasperi and Pella, 1947-54; Minister of the Interior 1954; of Finance 1955-57; of the Treasury 1958; of Defence 1959-66; and of Industry, 1966-68. DC group leader in the Chamber 1966-72. He was asked to form a government during the political crisis of August 1970 but failed because he was thought too close to the Socialists. Prime Minister of a minority DC government February to June 1972, and of a centre-right coalition June 1972 to July 1973. Minister of Defence under Rumor March 1974 to November 1974; Minister for the Budget, Economic Planning and Mezzogiorno under Moro November 1974 to August 1976, when he formed a minority DC government without a parliamentary majority. In early 1978 the PCI were included for the first time ever in the parliamentary majority, supporting Andreotti's fourth government. In January 1979, the withdrawal of the PCI precipitated a crisis and Andreotti headed a caretaker government (his fifth) to prepare for elections. President of the Chamber's Foreign Affairs Commission from 1979 to 1983, he became Foreign Minister in the first Craxi Government (1983).

/Andreotti



Andreotti is a supreme political tactician. In 1974 Andreotti let it be known that he was one of those Christian Democrats who could envisage a working relationship with the Communists. He was thus the right man for the DC to field as their Prime Ministerial candidate when, after the General Election of June 1976, a parliamentary majority could not be found for a DC-led government. He maintained this delicate balance with the Communists, allowing them to make the step forward in March 1978 from abstention to inclusion in the parliamentary majority. He retains respect from the PCI and is widely believed to be courting their support for the next Presidential elections. Above all, he is good at getting things done; this is a major reason for the success of his career (no Italian has wider political experience). He operates an enormous and efficient patronage system. He has also proved adroit enough to resist several attempts to implicate him in scandals - so far.

Andreotti remains a potent political force with a reputation as perhaps the most adroit and possibly the least scrupulous of DC leaders, with very close links to the Vatican. He almost became President of the DC party in late 1980, of the IPU in September 1982, and Foreign Minister in Fanfani's fifth government in November 1982. He used his position on the Foreign Affairs Commission to maintain his good contacts with many foreign leaders. He has his eye on the Presidency when Pertini goes.

Although physically unimpressive, with rather a hunch back, Andreotti is a witty and effective speaker, appearing regularly on television. He masters a brief quickly, does his homework thoroughly, and pushes his staff hard. Sometimes initially chilly, he improves on longer acquaintance and is generally

/very



CONFIDENTIAL

very courteous. Friendly towards Britain. He paid an official bilateral visit to the UK in March 1962, and was in Britain for Prime Minister Craxi's working visit in September 1983. As Prime Minister, received Mr Heath on his visit to Italy in October 1972, and Mr Callaghan in September 1977; he also met Mr Pym in July 1982 in Rome. Married with three children. Speaks no English but quite good French. A devout Catholic who attends mass every morning and makes sure that his supporters know that he does. He is a prolific author, writes a weekly magazine column, and takes a keen interest in football (he is active in the management of AC Roma). He keeps a detailed diary, which is feared by his enemies and friends alike even though the published version is sanitised.







MACCANICO, ANTONIO

Secretary General of the Presidency.

Born in Avellino in 1924. He graduated in law from the University of Pisa in 1946 and became an official in the Chamber of Deputies in 1947 at the time of the Constituent Assembly. He remained there, working his way steadily up the official ladder, until 1978; in this period he was at various stages responsible for the work of the Commissions, for legal services in the Chamber, was the Vice Secretary General of the Chamber, and finally from 1976 was Secretary General. Until 1976 he was President of the Italian Association for Parliamentary Studies. He was also involved in the Brussels Ad Hoc Committee for preparing direct elections to the European Parliament. He became Secretary General of the Presidency in 1978. He is sympathetic to the Republican Party, but keeps this party affiliation carefully concealed.

Maccanico is able and hard working and usually accompanies Pertini on trips abroad. President Pertini regards him highly, not least because he is not just a yes-man and relies on him considerably at all official meetings. He speaks English.

CAGIATI, ANDREA

Ambassador in London.

Born in Rome in 1922. He graduated in Law from the University of Siena in 1944. He joined the Foreign Service in 1948 and after the usual period in the Ministry went to Paris in 1950. Vice-Consul in New York in 1953. In 1955 he returned to the Private Office of the MFA Under-Secretary. First Secretary (later Counsellor) in Athens 1957-60. Counsellor in Mexico City 1960-62. After a brief spell at the Italian Mission to the United Nations, he returned to the MFA to head the NATO Department from 1963-66. Appointed Ambassador in Bogota in 1968 but soon returned to the Ministry, working in the Diplomatic Institute (1971) and as Diplomatic Counsellor in the Prime Minister's Office (1972). Ambassador in Vienna, 1973-79. He replaced Ducci as Ambassador in London in January 1980.

As Ambassador in London he began by encouraging his staff to greater activity than some of them had shown under Ducci. He himself is always very prompt in carrying out his instructions, and if he errs it is by excess of zeal rather than the reverse. Able, sharp and ambitious, he defends Italian interests with energy. Despite social pretensions he now knows a good deal about Britain. Tall and impressive, but his haughty style is not always popular with visiting Italian Ministers. His wife is German; they make a handsome couple.

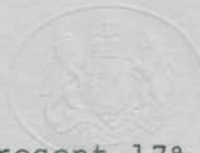
## ITALY: POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. The present Government, led by Signor Bettino Craxi (Italy's first Socialist Prime Minister since the War), took office in August 1983. The four party coalition Government of his Christian Democrat predecessor, Signor Fanfani, essentially a caretaker administration, fell when Craxi, judging the moment right, withdrew Socialist support from the coalition in April and called for elections in June 1983.

2. The elections proved a shock for the Christian Democrats (DC) whose share of the vote dropped by 5% to 32.9%. Continually in Government since the War, the DCs were probably worst affected by the electorate's apparent disillusionment with entrenched political privilege and inefficiency. Diminished fear of the Communists (PCI) whose vote also declined slightly to 29.9%, may also have contributed. The Socialists (PSI) also did less well than they hoped, increasing their share of the vote only slightly to 11.4%. The Communists constitute the main opposition party in Parliament. They are, however, strongly represented in Government at regional and local level.

3. Craxi's five party coalition Government (composed of Socialists, DCs (who predominate), Republicans, Social Democrats and Liberals), was formed on 4 August 1983. In his introductory programme statement to Parliament, Craxi indicated that the key areas would be foreign policy, 'healing' the economy to promote growth and employment, social policy, the fight against organised crime (more of a problem now than urban terrorism), and institutional reform.


4. After six months in Government Craxi, although he still enjoys a relatively secure position, is beginning to encounter domestic difficulties. In handling these he has displayed a less than sure touch. His major headache is domestic economic policy, which remains his top priority and over which there are clear differences within the Cabinet. The government has been criticised for its failure to meet its targets of reducing the



public sector deficit (at present 17% and threatening to rise to 20% of GDP in 1984 if firm corrective measures are not taken) and of reducing the inflation rate (1983 average of 15% against a 13% target). Reliance is being placed on growth in Italy's export markets to pull her out of the recession without the need for counter inflationary measures. Craxi's success in passing the budget before the end of the year (only the 4th time since 1948) was qualified by having to accept more modest cuts in public expenditure than envisaged. However, on 15 February, after an inconclusive round of pay talks with employers and unions, in which they failed to persuade the latter to accept controls on the wage indexation system (scala mobile), the Government introduced a package of anti-inflationary measures which included proposed legislation on incomes policy. This last is expected to have severe repercussions throughout Italian politics and to be opposed by the Communists in Parliament.

5. Italian foreign policy has taken on a higher profile under Craxi and Foreign Minister, Andreotti. Italy contributed a large contingent to the the Lebanese MNF, which although being scaled down after domestic pressure to withdraw (any serious incident affecting Italian troops would have created great difficulties for the government), has remained in reduced numbers after US and British redeployment, guarding the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps. The Mediterranean area to which Italy regards herself as a bridge is an important feature of Italian foreign policy, partly for geographical and historic reasons but also because of her heavy reliance on energy imports. Craxi has proved to be a firm Atlanticist demonstrating Italy's steadiness as a NATO ally by his commitment to the stationing of Cruise missiles Comiso in Sicily in 1984. The opposition never campaigned hard against deployment and the debate has proceeded without serious domestic tension.

6. Despite indications that, like its predecessors, Craxi's coalition is finding it difficult to sustain its initial unity,



particularly over economic policy, there are as yet no signs of any major change in the political scene. Craxi has been stumbling rather than leading, which may suit many of his opponents. The DC are unlikely to take an initiative until after their party congress at the end of February. Other parties are also willing to wait until after their Congresses. Thanks to the balance of forces within the legislature the leader of the Socialists still enjoys a relatively strong position in that PSI support is essential for any parliamentary majority, which excludes the Communists and neofascists.

7. Urban terrorism by the Red Brigades and to a lesser extent by the extreme right, against which the security forces have had a number of successes, exists as a continuing, if now considerably diminished, threat. Organised crime is a growing problem. The 'black economy' continues to flourish and may account for as much as 20% of GDP. Many areas of Italy remain unaffected by what is decided in Rome.

8. Craxi visited London in September 1983. The last Anglo Italian Summit was held in Rome on 26/27 January when the Prime Minister led a delegation of five Ministers. President Pertini is visiting London (22-24 February) to attend the Genius of Venice Exhibition at the Royal Academy, accompanied by Andreotti. The Prince and Princess of Wales have now cancelled their October visit to Italy.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
17 February 1984

SUMMARY

## CITIZEN PERTINI

1. President Pertini is to meet The Queen and the Prime Minister next month in London; and he will receive the Prince and Princess of Wales when they visit Italy later in the year. It may therefore be useful to review his achievement after almost six years as President (para 1). visit now  
cancelled
2. A lifelong socialist and anti-fascist, Pertini played an active part in the resistance. A dedicated parliamentarian since the war, he only achieved high office in old age. His ability to represent the feelings of the ordinary citizen has earned him the rare title 'President of all the Italians' (para 2).
3. Pertini assumed the Presidency during a period plagued by terrorism and political scandals, when the nation required a leader of integrity. He soon showed strong independence of mind. Outspoken criticism of the inadequacy of the Government's rescue services after the Campania earthquake earned him popular respect. He has taken a close interest in natural disasters (paras 3, 4, and 5).
4. Pertini's insistence on high standards of morality in public life, and his own reputation for incorruptibility, have been important reasons for his popularity. He has made many visits overseas, including a visit to the Italian contingent in Beirut at some personal risk in 1983 (paras 6 and 7).



5. Pertini's spontaneous gestures, informality and concern for youth have all inspired real popular affection. But professional politicians have criticised him for excessive intervention in day-to-day political life, and for expressing embarrassing criticism of government policy. He has been protected by his national popularity (paras 8 and 9).
6. He has committed errors of political judgment. His vision is simple; and age has prevented him grasping detailed briefs or developing new ideas. But he has a claim to be Italy's most successful President. He has restored the prestige of the office, and shown other politicians what the people want to see in their leaders (paras 10 and 11).
7. The fierce competition now underway to succeed Pertini is a tribute to his achievement in the Presidency. He has shown that honesty and clear speaking are popular. The best memorial to him would be the adoption of a new style in the Presidency and in Italian political life (para 12).

CONFIDENTIAL



BRITISH EMBASSY,  
ROME

25 January 1984

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP  
LONDON

Sir,  
CITIZEN PERTINI

President Pertini will pay his first official visit to London next month, to see the Genius of Venice exhibition at the Royal Academy. The Queen and the Prime Minister have invited him to lunch. He will receive the Prince and Princess of Wales when they visit Italy later this year. As he has now completed more than 5 1/2 years of his 7-year term as President of Italy, and because we will see a lot of him this year, it may be useful to review his achievement, which has been to change the way in which Italians regard their President.

visit  
now  
cancelled.

2. I attach a brief account of Pertini's career. It will be seen from this that Pertini is a life-long socialist and anti-fascist. He took an active part in the Italian resistance, and represented Genoa in every Parliament from the end of the war until he became President in 1982. He was the first socialist to be elected to that office: all his predecessors (except Einaudi, a Liberal, and Saragat, a Social Democrat) were Christian Democrats. His record before he became President was that of a dedicated parliamentarian and democrat, and he has only become remarkable in old age (he was elected to the Presidency at 82). His fitness and

/energy

CONFIDENTIAL





energy, particularly when travelling, are extraordinary. Contrary to the general experience, his independence of mind seems to have increased with advancing years, as has his uncanny rapport with ordinary citizens: in a country where most politicians use convoluted jargon, he speaks simply and clearly. Nor has he hesitated over difficult choices, for example when giving politicians a mandate to form a Government. As a result he has become something of a legend in his own time, and is not regarded by the country as belonging to the suspect political class: again remarkable, since he has spent the last forty-odd years as a member of it. Indeed Pertini has become known as 'the President of all the Italians'. no mean achievement in a nation dominated by party, factional and regional interests.

3. The background to his election in 1978 is relevant. His predecessor, Leone, had left in disgrace, obliged to resign because of the Lockheed scandal. There was a widely felt need for a man of undoubted integrity and popularity to restore the image of the Presidency. It was the turn of the lay parties to occupy that position (the PCI have never been considered eligible to provide a candidate for the Head of State). Historical circumstances meant that the Italian people needed reassurance: Pertini was elected in the year of ex-Prime Minister Moro's murder, when terrorism was at its worst. He therefore seemed an ideal choice, with his plain language, pipe-smoking image, reputation for incorruptibility. No political party had a strong reason to oppose him, and even within his own Socialist Party he had few enemies. His unusual relationship with the public at large, rare in Italian politicians except when acquired through patronage, has since then largely protected him from serious attack by other politicians.

/4.



4. The first key political event in his Presidency was his decision to give Craxi a mandate to form a Government after the 1979 elections. This was the first time that a non-Christian Democrat politician had received such a mandate. Craxi failed to form a Government, but the signal that Pertini would not automatically perpetuate DC occupation of Palazzo Chigi was important (I do not take seriously the claim of some cynical observers that Pertini disliked Craxi, a "Socialist in short trousers", and gave him the mandate knowing he would fail). In 1981, he enabled the Republican Party leader, Spadolini, whom he admired, to become Italy's first "lay" Prime Minister.
5. His reaction to the disastrous earthquake in Campania, in November 1980 added to his reputation. Pertini was quickly on the scene, and bitterly criticised the Government for the inadequacy of its rescue services. In an emotional television broadcast he insisted that those responsible for these deficiencies should be punished. Politicians protested; but the press noted that "for the first time the Italian people feel that their views are being represented". Since then Pertini has made a point of taking a close interest in natural disasters, usually travelling to the scene immediately; an enduring image is of him keeping vigil beside a well down which a small boy was trapped.
6. In 1981 he faced a challenge of a different kind when the P2 masonic lodge scandal broke, and it was partly Pertini's pressure behind the scenes which forced the resignation of so many of those involved (including three Ministers and innumerable military and Secret Service chiefs). Throughout his Presidency he has insisted on the need for high standards of morality in public life, and has bestowed

/his



his warmest praise on those who display this quality. There is no doubt that Pertini's own reputation for honesty, and his recognition of that quality in others, is an important reason for his popularity.

7. More recently Pertini has played a direct role in foreign affairs, where his role greatly exceeds that of a non-party figurehead. He visited the Italian MNF contingent in Beirut in November 1983, despite the personal risk involved, and has since raised a storm by calling publicly for their withdrawal. He was equally outspoken about the desaparecidos in Argentina, and the telegram of protest which he sent last year to the Argentine President caused some dismay to the Foreign Minister. But fortunately he kept his own counsel during the Falklands crisis in 1982.

8. Pertini's spontaneous gestures have endeared him to the Italian people. His first action on assuming the Presidency was to abolish much of the protocol surrounding the post. His technique is unusual, including walkabouts, broadcast New Year messages (delivered impromptu), and an unprecedented number of invitations, especially to parties of schoolchildren, to visit him at the Quirinale. All this has produced real affection for Pertini, which none of the potential rivals for his succession seem likely to inspire. He may also have been helped by the presence of a non-Italian Pope, leading many Italians to identify with him instead as a Father (or Grandfather) figure. Indeed, his name is now being considered for the Nobel Peace Prize. The absence of Signora Pertini, who hardly ever accompanies him in public, seems to matter little; and her occasional appearances, for example on the visit to China in 1980, have done Pertini more harm than good.

/9.



9. Among professional politicians, on the other hand, Pertini has made some enemies. The powers of the President include sending messages to the Houses, appointing officers of the State (including the Prime Minister), acting as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and presiding over the Supreme Defence Council, and presiding over the High Council of the Judiciary. He has taken all these roles very seriously, and has exploited many of his powers to the full. In addition he has used interviews and broadcasts to express embarrassing public criticism, often in very strong language, of policies which he thinks are wrong, appealing to the people over the head of his own government. He has therefore been much criticised for cultivating personal power, for excessive intervention in day-to-day political life, and in general for exceeding his constitutional responsibilities or at any rate past constitutional practice. There is something to this criticism, perhaps, but I do not think Pertini has done anything prohibited by the Constitution, and the national popularity of the President makes it difficult for his political critics in Rome to do much about it.

10. Pertini has certainly not been a saint. He has made his fair share of mistakes, such as the controversial decision to receive Arafat officially in 1982, or to attend a meeting of Catholic youth under the mistaken impression that it was non-political. He is given to adopting favourites: Prince Philip, the King of Spain, Mr Peter Nichols (the Times correspondent), the Pope (despite Pertini's own atheism), anyone connected with the resistance, and all things French (because of his years in exile there he speaks the language well). More seriously, Pertini's age has prevented him from grasping detailed briefs and obliged him to rely

/more



more on emotion, instinct and charm. His stock of ideas and knowledge - as opposed to his excellent intuitive grasp of people and situations - has not been replenished much since 1945. His deep-rooted pacifism (which is directed equally towards East and West) cannot be weakened by any argument about missile numbers. He also risks becoming a prisoner of his own image, and having his naïveté exploited. He sees issues in very simple terms, lacks tact and holds rigidly to his perceived ideas. He can also be distinctly mischievous at times. These are hardly the best qualifications for a man who might be called upon to take complex and painful decisions in times of crisis.

11. Nevertheless, Pertini has a good claim to be Italy's most successful President, with the possible exception of Einaudi. Throughout his Presidency he has upheld the themes of his inaugural address: pacifism, informality, Italian national potential, faith in youth, the government's duty to respond to natural disasters, integrity and the need to combat terrorism and organised crime. His numerous foreign visits have helped to enhance Italian prestige abroad and to restore the Italian people's pride in themselves. At home Pertini has seen his country through five very difficult years. He has done much to restore the prestige of the Presidency. His simple methods of communicating with the people have worked, and many politicians (especially in the DC party) would be wise to copy them.

12. It is too soon to draw conclusions about the lasting effect which Alessandro Pertini will have on Italy: he has over a year of his Presidency still to run. One effect already noticeable is to increase competition for the office to which he has added distinction, and the contest in July 1985 (both

/Houses



Houses of Parliament voting together for a single seven-year term) will certainly be interesting. I suspect that many Senators and Deputies will want a less strong-minded and a safer, quieter personality next time. And if the much-discussed ideas for constitutional reform ever reach the stage of detailed debate, the possibility of reducing the Presidential term to five years is quite likely to feature among the more serious proposals. The possibility of direct Presidential elections on the US model, which has also been discussed, is much less likely to find favour in Parliament. Pertini has unquestionably shown that honesty and clear speaking are popular, and there will be a general desire among ordinary Italians to see his example repeated: although they may not have much confidence that it will be. It will be an important test of the constitutional process here to see if the general wish can be translated into practice. No doubt there will be innumerable streets and piazzas up and down the country named after Alessandro Pertini, but the adoption of a new style in the Presidency, and in Italian political life generally, would be much the best memorial to him.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to HM Ambassadors in other EC Posts, in Washington, to the Holy See, UKRep Brussels and UKDEL NATO.

I am Sir

Yours faithfully

*Bridges*

Bridges

## THE GENIUS OF VENICE 1500-1600

1. The Exhibition, which is under the joint patronage of Her Majesty The Queen and the President of Italy, opened on 25 November 1983. It was due to close on 11 March 1984. Because of the enormous public support (more than 250,000 visitors to date) the Royal Academy of Arts hope to extend the showing by a further week to 18 March.
2. The Genius of Venice Exhibition, sponsored jointly by the Sea Containers Group and by Venice Simplon-Orient Express Limited, comprises more than 300 works of art - paintings, drawings, prints and sculptures. These include masterpieces by the greatest artists of the age - Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese.
3. Certain pictures on the exhibition have been singled out for special notice, including Titian's 'The Flaying of Marsyas' (on loan from Czechoslovakia), Veronese's 'Venus and Adonis' (from Madrid) and the Giorgionesque masterpiece, 'The Judgement of Solomon' (National Trust, Kingston Lacy, Dorset).
4. Public interest is reflected in the high average daily attendance of 3259 visitors and in the success of the new Academy education department. Collections of slides have been available for the first time and have sold well. The Adult and Children's Acoustiguide has been listened to by about 8% of all visitors to the exhibition, twice the usual percentage for exhibitions in the United Kingdom.

Catalogues, costing £7.90 each, have been bought by one in six of the visitors to the exhibition. This is an unusually high percentage.

5. The series of Exhibition conferences organised jointly by the Royal Academy and the Inner London Education Authority have been oversubscribed. By the end of the exhibition, 8 half-day and one full-day conferences will have been attended by over 7000 children from 74 educational institutions. Nearly 7000 children from 280 schools and over 4000 students from 140 colleges of higher education have visited the Exhibition.

6. Visitors to the Exhibition may also see in the Academy's Private Rooms a display of photographs and architectural drawings entitled 'The Spirit of Venetian Civilisation', organised by the Italian State Tourist Office, London, and the Regional Tourist Board of the Veneto.

7. To coincide with the Exhibition, the Royal Academy of Arts has organised six concerts of Venetian music exploring the impact of Venice on musical life during the two hundred years 1500-1700.

8. The setting for the Exhibition has been designed by Mr Alan Irvine. Foremost among scholars who have contributed towards the preparation of the Exhibition and the catalogue are: Professor John Hale of University College, London

/formerly



formerly Chairman of the Trustees of the National Gallery;  
Professor Francis Haskell, Professor of the History of  
Art at the University of Oxford; Mr Charles Hope of  
the Warburg Institute; and Professor John Steer,  
Birkbeck College, University of London.

Cultural Relations Department

14 February 1984