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1. cc: Mr. Crowley (Cabinet Office) ⁽²⁰⁾
Mrs. Cowin (Research Dept)
2. Enter it to me with ref. tel. *Play*

P G Harborne Esq
Western European Department
FCO

Your reference

Our reference

Date

15 March 1979

ij/iii

URS CIA/2.	
19 MAR 1979	
PA	Agenda Table

Dear Peter,

ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

(19)

1. In the last sentence of paragraph 3 of our telegram No 126 we said that a three-party Christian Democrat (DC)/Republican(PRI)/Social Democrat (PSDI) government might in theory obtain a majority in Parliament even with the Socialists (PSI) in opposition. To help explain the Parliamentary arithmetic, it might be useful to you to have the enclosed two tables from today's Corriere della Sera. These show how the majorities might theoretically be made up in the two Chambers. You will see that in both cases the majority depends on the National Democrats (D.Naz.), the group which broke away two years ago from the Neofascist MSI and has 9 seats in the Senate and 17 in the Chamber of Deputies. Since the National Democrats tend to be virtually eliminated in an election they are keen to do anything to keep the present Parliament in being.

2. It is as well to stress the word "theoretically" about these tables. Italian party discipline is notoriously bad, and there are always many more rebels against the party line than there would be in, say, a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. However, assuming that the PSI has at least its fair share of rebels (a safe assumption!), who would presumably abstain rather than vote in favour or against, this would if anything tend to increase the size of the majority.

Yours ever,

Mark Pellew

Yes - the parliamentary numbers game is what he is describing in these circs.

Pr. 19/3

M E Pellew

Mr. Verker: *To see. It reveals a further (to me, as a newcomer) amusing facet of Italian political life — that although the D.Naz. have more seats than either the PRI or PSDI, no-one takes them seriously other than as a possibly means of enabling the other two to be in*

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Mr. ...
Mrs. ...
2. ...
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P. O. ...
Western European Department
FOO

Stamp: 12 MAR 1971
Stamp: 12 MAR 1971

Dear ...

ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. In the last sentence of paragraph 3 of our telegram to ... we said that a three-party Christian Democrat (DC) / Republican (RI) / Social Democrat (PSDI) government might in theory obtain a majority in Parliament even with the Socialists (PSI) in opposition. To help explain the theoretical basis, it might be useful to you to have the enclosed two tables. Today's Corriere della Sera. These show how the majority might theoretically be made up in the two Chambers. You will see that in both cases the majority depends on the National Democrats (D.N.), the group which broke away two years ago from the Christian Democrats (C.D.) and has 9 seats in the Senate and 11 in the Chamber of Deputies. Since the National Democrats stand to be virtually eliminated in an election they are seen to do anything to keep the present Parliament in being.

2. It is as well to stress the word "theoretically" about these tables. Italian party discipline is notoriously bad, and there are always many votes against the party line than there would be in, say, a vote of confidence in the House of Commons. However, assuming that the PSI can at least 1/3 its share of votes (a safe assumption) who would presumably obtain rather than vote in favour or against, this would in anything tend to increase the size of the majority.

Mark ...
Lower ...

Handwritten notes in Italian: ...

Government; least of all are their 17 seats apparently seen as meriting direct participation.

Handwritten signature: ...

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Il tripartito DC-PRI-PSDI potrebbe avere la maggioranza

Un eventuale governo tripartito (DC, PSDI e PRI) potrebbe avere una maggioranza sia pure esigua: democristiani, socialdemocratici e repubblicani infatti, dovrebbero poter contare su 167 voti al Senato e su 317 alla Camera. Considerato che il «quorum» è rispettivamente di 161 e 315 voti, al Senato il governo avrebbe un margine di 13 voti e di 5 alla Camera, così come risulta nella tabella con i probabili schieramenti al momento del voto:

SENATO

Totale senatori 321, maggioranza 161 (il presidente Fanfani non è calcolato perché non vota)

	A favore		Contro
DC	135	PCI	99
PRI	7	PSI	31
PSDI	8	Ind. sin.	18
D. Naz.	9	MSI	6
Misto *	8		
	<u>167</u>		<u>154</u>

CAMERA

Totale deputati 629, maggioranza 315 (il presidente Ingrao non è calcolato perché non vota)

	A favore		Contro
DC	263	PCI	218
PRI	14	PSI	57
PSDI	15	MSI	17
D. Naz.	17	DP	6
PLI	5	PR	4
SVP	3	Misto	9
	<u>317</u>		<u>312</u>

Majority required : 161

Majority required : 315

- * In the Senate the "Gruppo Misto" (Mixed Group) includes 3 Life Senators, two South Tyrol Party (SVP), one Val d'Aosta Party (UV) and an independent, who would all vote in favour. In the Chamber of Deputies however the "Gruppo Misto" consists mainly of Independent Left members elected on the PCI list, who would vote against.