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M/S 2/4

R P Osborne Esq
WED
FCO

Date 16 March 1981

State
of Miss G.W.
9/5 MD

Dear Roy,

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN ITALY

1. Last June elections were held in the 15 'ordinary' regions of Italy (see our telno 383, not to all) but it took more than six months for agreement to be reached on the composition of all the new juntas, which constitute for general purposes the government of the regions, with a President and Assessors responsible for specific sectors. I enclose a note on the new regional administrations, with brief explanations where necessary: with the help of Consular posts in Italy, to whom this letter is copied, I shall try to let you know of significant changes as they occur.
2. Apart from the 5 special statute regions, where the presence of linguistic minorities or separatist movements made some measure of devolution an urgent necessity at the beginning of the Republic, the move towards regionalisation in Italy has been slow: you may find it useful to look out Anthony Layden's paper of December 1976 which gives the background. Little has changed since that paper was written, and even now the effective powers of the regions are limited. Central Government remains apprehensive about giving them too much authority or financial control; last year, for example, a circular was issued which sought to ensure that they could take no independent initiatives in foreign affairs. The presence of a Central Government 'watchdog' in each region (Articles 124 and 127 of the Constitution) ensures that the state can keep a close eye on all regional activities. The administrative structure is weak; their control of funding is limited; and key sectors remain controlled by the central authority. The result is that in Liguria, for example, the President of the Junta told us that the Assessorate of Tourism was the most important post. Nevertheless the regions are beginning to make their presence felt. Their opposition, for example, is one of the factors delaying Italy's construction of nuclear power stations, and in choosing TNF sites the Government had to take care to find a region which could easily give the necessary agreement.

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3. Last month the Presidents of the 15 regions came to Rome for meetings with Forlani and the Minister for the Regions to discuss regional powers and budgets; press speculation that they will set up a new organisation to continue the dialogue with Central Government is premature, but this initiative may nevertheless show a new determination to make the regions function more as originally envisaged in the Constitution. Whether vested interests will allow it to succeed is another matter. Meanwhile, as seen from Rome at least, there is no great public enthusiasm for regional government as preferable to the defective central apparatus of the state: in fact the long delays in forming these new administrations, and the subordination in many cases of local to national interests, have led to a good deal of cynicism about the value and efficiency of the regions. Another argument often heard is that devolution is only possible when the state itself is strong: in Italy it is weak, unity is recent, and there is a consequent risk of gradual disintegration if the regions are allowed to become increasingly independent of Rome.

4. One lesson to be learned from the protracted negotiations to form new juntas is that apart from the PCI, the various party headquarters in Rome cannot always control their local representatives as tightly as they would wish. In both Calabria and Sardinia (see paragraph 6 below), the local Christian Democrats had ideas of bringing in the PCI, only dropped when Piccoli, the Party Secretary, brought pressure to bear from Rome. The relative strength of factions within a party may be quite different in a region from what it is at national level, with obvious consequences for the choice of coalition partners. This applies especially to the PSI, who often hold the balance between DC and PCI; in Piedmont, for example, they preferred an alliance with the PCI to the 'centre left' coalition which would have been numerically possible. In Liguria, the PSI had to take a different line but wished to retain PCI support for other local posts, so did not favour an alliance with the DC. The result is a weak coalition of lay parties with neither the PCI nor the DC included, although the latter give support from outside; this arrangement is not expected to last much beyond the administrative elections (including Genoa) in June. The PRI President of the junta, Persico, only took the job after his Party Secretary, Spadolini told him to, having reached an agreement in Rome with Craxi and Zanone. It is not surprising that the model provided by the Central Government coalition of the day often proves unworkable in the regions, even if the arithmetic of seats would allow it - to the annoyance of the DC. Particularly galling to them was Lazio, where they tried hard but in vain to create a quadripartite or pentapartite coalition to deprive the PCI of control of the region.

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5. The regional structure brings benefits as well as frustrations to the parties. Apart from the increased possibilities of patronage at local level which these administrations provide, they can also be useful as a training ground for those destined for national politics (or in some cases as a dumping ground for senior colleagues who have been discredited at the top level). The PCI are well aware of this and now support regionalisation as fervently as any party: they are also trying to put more emphasis within their own party structure on the regional committees rather than the better established federations (based on provinces), but with little success as yet. Regional government gives the PCI a chance to demonstrate efficiency and 'responsibility' and can therefore be seen by them as a stepping stone towards active participation in central government: when they were aiming at the 'historic compromise' with the DC it would have been a great achievement to implement it in a region (in the early 1960's the centre/left formula was first tried in a region and then became national policy). For the DC, on the other hand, it is another way of extending their control from the centre. The smaller parties look for gains where they can, making the maximum possible use of local issues and attitudes.

6. Sardinia did not have regional elections last year but it was known that Ghinami's PSDI/DC/PSI junta would not last long after the administrative elections of June 1980. He resigned in September and the PCI, playing on autonomist sentiments within the island, proposed a junta uniting all the parties so as to promote Sardinian interests better. They were helped by the fact that the local DC and PSI are both more open to alliance with the communists than their party leaderships in Rome. Once Piccoli had ruled this out, it was hard to find a solution to the impasse, since the local PSI were not prepared to form a quadripartite coalition with the DC. Eventually in December a left wing junta was formed with Franco Rais (PSI) as its President; Armando Corona (PRI) remains President of the Assembly. The junta is PCI/PSI/PSDI/PSDAZ (Sardinian Action Party), with Radical and PRI support from outside by favourable vote or abstention. This is the first time that the DC have ever been excluded from the Sardinian regional junta, and represents a significant PCI success (balancing their loss of Liguria to leave them in control of 6 regions).

7. Sicily is the only region to have elections this year (probably on 21 June). Despite such local factors as the pervasive influence of the Mafia, the strength of the Neo-Fascist MSI, and the prominent role of the church, Sicily has in the past often been a good pointer to national trends: already there is considerable interest here in the outcome (and the PSI choice of Palermo for their April Congress is no accident). I give below the results of the 1976 regional elections:

/Percentage

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	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Seats</u>
DC	40.8	39
PCI	26.8	24
PSI	10.3	10
PSDI	3.4	2
PRI	3.3	4
PLI	2.1	2
MSI	10.9	9
DP	0.5	
PR	0.6	
Others	1.3	
		<hr/>
	Total	90
		<hr/>

This was a good result for the DC (7% better than 1971) but the PCI also gained (4%). The junta which emerged was DC/PSI/PRI/PSDI with PLI support from outside, and in October 1976 all the parties (except the untouchable MSI) voted for the regional government's programme. This was in line with developments at national level at the time, as was the inclusion of the PCI in the regional majority (not junta) in 1978. Mattarella (DC) was by now President of the junta. When the PCI changed tack away from 'national solidarity' in early 1979, they withdrew their support from the Sicilian junta, but there was no crisis in Sicily until December 1979 when the PSI also backed out. In January, 1980, Mattarella was killed by the Mafia, the most senior victim of Mafia or terrorist violence since Moro (because of Sicily's unique status, the Regional President may attend and vote at Council of Ministers' meetings). This seems to have been part of a successful offensive by the Mafia to strengthen their control of the island. Since then the DC/PSDI/PRI coalition has limped along, with Mario D'Acquisto (DC) as President: all attempts to persuade the local PSI to rejoin have failed.

8. The general expectation, shared by John Campbell who was recently in Palermo on Consular business, is that in June the DC - despite local splits which reflect more than just political differences of view - will retain about 40% of the vote. The

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PSI hope to gain about 2% (consistent with their overall increase in last year's local elections) probably from the PCI. If so, they might then be tempted back into the junta by being offered the Council Presidency and some Assessor posts. The outcome of their Congress will be an important factor, as could also be the impression made by Capria, the PSI Minister for the South who is Sicilian. Craxi will certainly want to use any electoral gain both as a propaganda tool and as a lever on the other parties, not just in Sicily but also at national level. The PCI will denounce DC corruption but know that they can make little headway against the entrenched interests of the Sicilian establishment; their main aim is rather to discredit the DC as a whole for tolerating such local bosses. Thus, although everyday life in Sicily will not be changed much by these or any other elections, they are of broader political interest. We shall report any significant developments.

Yours ever,

Robert Curman

R N Culshaw

cc: Mrs K Colvin, Research Department (with enc)
Consuls in Italy (except Cagliari) (with enc)
Chanceries: Paris
Bonn
UKREP Brussels
Washington
UKDEL NATO

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THE NEW REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

For each region where elections were held in 1980, the list below gives the seats held by each party: the previous junta: the new junta: the name of the President of the Regional Council (PRC), equivalent to Speaker, and the President of the Junta (PRJ) who is the Head of each Regional Government: and any special notes.

PIEDMONT

Seats: DC 20, PCI 20, PSI 9, PSDI 3, PRI, 2, PLI 3, MSI 2, PDUP 1 = 60

Previous Junta: PCI/PSI

New Junta: PCI/PSI (with PSDI outside support)

PRC: Germano Benzi (PSDI)

PRJ: Ezio Enrietti (PSI)

Notes: The PSDI have declined to join the coalition.

LOMBARDY

Seats: DC 34, PCI 23, PSI 11, PSDI 3, PRI 2, PLI 2, PDUP 1, DP 1, MSI 3 = 80

Previous Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

PRC: Sergio Marvelli (PSI)

PRJ: Giuseppe Guzzetti (DC)

Notes: The previous President of the Regional Council had been PCI - Smuraglia.

VENETO

Seats: DC 32, PCI 13, PSI 7, PSDI 3, PRI 1, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 2 = 60

Previous Junta: DC

New Junta: DC

PRC: Bruno Marchetti (PSI)

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PRJ: Carlo Bernini (DC)
Notes: One of only 2 regions where the DC have an absolute majority: the other is Molise.

LIGURIA

Seats: DC 13, PCI 15, PSI 5, PSDI 2, PRI 1, PLI 2, MSI 2 = 40
Previous Junta: PCI/PSI
New Junta: PSI/PSDI/PRI/PLI (with DC outside support)
PRC: Armando Magliotto (PCI)
PRJ: Gianni Persico (PRI)
Notes: The PSI held the balance; a PCI/PSI junta was not possible without outside support.

EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Seats: DC 13, PCI 26, PSI 4, PSDI 2, PRI 2, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 1 = 50
Previous Junta: PCI/PSI
New Junta: PCI
PRC: Ottorino Bartolini (PSI)
PRJ: Ianfranco Turci (PCI)
Notes: The only Region where the PCI have an absolute majority (as they do also in the regional capital, Bologna). The PSI agreed to abstain after refusing to join the majority. Their support is not essential: nor was it before the elections of June 1980, when the seats were the same but the PSI were in the junta.

TOSCANA

Seats: DC 15, PCI 25, PSI 5, PSDI 1, PRI 1, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 1 = 50
Previous Junta: PCI/PSI/PDUP
New Junta: PCI/PSI
PRC: Loretta Montemaggi (PCI)

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PRJ: Mario Leone (PSI)
Notes: Before the June 1980 Elections the PCI/PSI combined were 1 seat short of a majority, so needed PDUP support.

UMBRIA

Seats: DC 9, PCI 14, PSI 4, PSDI 1, PRI 1, MSI 1 = 30
Previous Junta: PCI/PSI
New Junta: PCI/PSI
PRC: Enzo Paolo Tiberi (PRI)
PRJ: Germano Marri (PCI)

MARCHE

Seats: DC 16, PCI 15, PSI 4, PSDI 1, PRI 1, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 1 = 40
Previous Junta: PSI/PSDI/PRI (with DC external support)
New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI
PRC: Rodolfo Giampaoli (DC)
PRJ: Emidio Massi (PSI)
Notes: The DC wanted this centro-sinistra all along, but the PSDI were awkward and only agreed when Longo put pressure on the Regional Branch of his party.

LAZIO

Seats: DC 22, PCI 19, PSI 6, PSDI 3, PRI 2, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 6 = 60
Previous Junta: PCI/PSI/PSDI (with PRI external support)
New Junta: PCI/PSI/PSDI/PDUP (with PRI external support)
PRC: Mario di Bartolomei (PRI)
PRJ: Giulio Santarelli (PSI)
Notes: One of the few significant changes in voting pattern, compared with 1975. The DC gained 3% and the PCI lost 3%: in 1975 the PCI had 21 seats, one more than the DC. The DC unsuccessfully proposed a return to centro-sinistra.

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ABRUZZO

Seats: DC 20, PCI 12, PSI 4, PSDI 1, PRI 1, MSI 2 = 40

Previous Junta: DC/PSDI/PRI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

PRC: Egidio Marinaro (PSI)

PRJ: Romeo Ricciuti (DC)

Notes: The DC increased their lead over the PCI by 6%.

MOLISE

Seats: DC 17, PCI 5, PSI 3, PSDI 2, PRI 1, PLI 1, MSI 1 = 30

Previous Junta: DC/PSDI

New Junta: DC/PSDI

PRC: Gabriele Veneziale (PSI)

PRJ: Florindo D'Aimmo (DC)

Notes: This was one of the DC's best results: a 5% increase over 1975. The PSI sought in vain for exclusive alliance with the DC. They got the Presidency of the Council because the DC could not agree on a candidate. (cf also the note on Veneto).

CAMPANIA

Seats: DC 25, PCI 15, PSI 7, PSDI 3, PRI 1, PLI 1, DP 1, MSI 7 = 60

Previous Junta: DC/PSDI/PRI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

PRC: Mario del Vecchio (PRI)

PRJ: Emilio de Feo (DC)

Notes: This was the PSI's best result: an increase of 2.4% over 1975, at the expense mostly of the PCI.

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PUGLIA

Seats: DC 22, PCI 13, PSI 6, PSDI 2, PRI 1, PLI 1, PDUP 1, MSI 4 = 50

Previous Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI

PRC: Luigi Tarricone (PSI)

PRJ: Nicola Quarta (DC)

Notes: The DC lead over the PCI increased by 7% compared with 1975. A dispute between DC and PSI over the allocation of jobs delayed the return to the former centro-sinistra arrangement.

BASILICATA

Seats: DC 14, PCI 8, PSI 4, PSDI 2, MSI 2 = 30

Previous Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI

PRC: Giuseppe Guarino (DC)

PRJ: Vincenzo Verrastro (DC)

CALABRIA

Seats: DC 18, PCI 10, PSI 7, PSDI 2, PRI 1, MSI 2 = 40

Previous Junta: DC/PSDI/PRI

New Junta: DC/PSI/PSDI/PRI *Now DC/PRI/MSI Socialists and Communists unhappy*

PRC: Rosario Chiriano (DC)

PRJ: Bruno Dominijanni (PSI)

Notes: Formation of this junta was bedevilled by a row over jobs and became much more difficult than the arithmetic of seats would suggest. The local DC leaders at one stage contemplated enlisting PCI support, but Piccoli ruled this out as inconsistent with present party policy.

SARDEGNA

Junta resigned 25 April 6.