

WF G NR 049/24

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PP FCO

GR 750

CONFIDENTIAL

FM ROME 240700Z JUN 81

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 239 OF 23 JUNE

INFO SAVING HOLY SEE, MILAN, NAPLES, FLORENCE, GENOA (ACTIONED)

INFO SAVING EC POSTS, WASHINGTON AND UKDEL NATO.

MY TELNO 236: ITALIAN INTERNAL SITUATION

1. ADMINISTRATIVE (LOCAL) ELECTIONS WERE HELD ON 21 AND 22 JUNE. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WERE THOSE IN FIVE URBAN CENTRES, INCLUDING ROME AND GENOA AND THEIR SURROUNDING COMMUNES, WHILE REGIONAL ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN SICILY.

2. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SUMMARISE THE RESULTS WHICH WERE PUBLISHED ON THE EVENING OF 22 JUNE, AND SOMEWHAT MISLEADING TO CONSOLIDATE THE VOTES CAST INTO A TOTAL PERCENTAGE FOR EACH PARTY AS AT A GENERAL ELECTION. CERTAIN BROAD CONCLUSIONS ARE, HOWEVER, CLEAR WHEN COMPARISONS ARE MADE WITH THE PRECEDING LOCAL ELECTIONS IN 1976:

(A) THE SOCIALISTS (PSI), UNDER CRAXI'S LEADERSHIP, HAVE DONE WELL EVERYWHERE, INCREASING THEIR PERCENTAGE FROM 10% TO 14% OVERALL. IN BARI, PARTLY FOR LOCAL REASONS, THEY ALMOST DOUBLED THEIR VOTE TO OVER 23%, PROVOKING COMPARISONS WITH MITTERRAND'S SUCCESSES. ELSEWHERE, THEIR VOTE WAS 16% IN GENOA AND 14% IN SICILY BUT ONLY 10% (PREVIOUSLY 8%) IN ROME.

(B) THE SOCIALIST ADVANCE HAS BEEN PARTLY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMUNISTS (PCI), WHOSE OVERALL SHARE OF THE VOTE FELL FROM 34.5% TO 32.8%. THE PCI WILL BE WELL SATISFIED TO HAVE GOT 35.9% IN ROME (35.5%) AND 39.6% IN GENOA (41.5%) CONSOLIDATING THEIR POWER BASE THERE. BUT IN BARI THEY WERE ECLIPSED BY THE PSI, FALLING FROM 24.8% TO 15.9%. IN SICILY THEIR VOTE FELL FROM 26.8% TO 20.7%.

*24/6*  
**ADVANCE COPY**

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| WRJ 014/2 |             | Hd           |
| RECEIVED  | 75 JUN 1981 | [Hd] ECD (I) |
| DR        | IC          | MAILED       |
| IND       | PA          | Taken        |

*learned to all EC posts, ukdel nato washington*

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(C) THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) DID WELL IN SICILY (41.4% COMPARED WITH 40.8%) BUT GENERALLY NOT ELSEWHERE., THEY LOST GROUND IN ROME (33.1% TO 29.6%) AND GENOA (28.5% TO 22.5%).

(D) CHANGES IN THE MINOR PARTIES' POSITIONS ARE INCONSISTENT REGIONALLY. THE REPUBLICANS (PRI) HAVE GAINED VERY LITTLE, EVEN THOUGH THEIR SECRETARY GENERAL IS PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) HAVE DONE MUCH BETTER, DESPITE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THEIR LEADER LONGO IN THE 'P2' SCANDAL.

(E) THERE WERE MORE ABSTENTIONS AND SPOILT VOTES THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS POST-WAR ELECTION, AND THIS IS INTERPRETED AS A SIGN OF DISILLUSION AMONG THE ELECTORATE. BUT THE TURNOUT AT OVER 80% REMAINS VERY HIGH BY STANDARDS ELSEWHERE.

3. EARLY PRESS AND OTHER COMMENT EMPHASISES THE SOCIALIST GAINS AND THERE IS SOME DISPOSITION TO SUGGEST THAT FRENCH DEVELOPMENTS MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED SUPPORT FOR A SOCIALIST, NON-COMMUNIST, ALTERNATIVE TO DC RULE. BUT THE PSI HAVE A VERY LONG WAY TO GO.

4. IT HAS BEEN WIDELY BELIEVED THAT CRAXI WAS WAITING FOR THESE ELECTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND IN BARGAINING FOR MINISTERIAL JOBS AND PSI INFLUENCE ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT (MYTEL UR). HE WILL NOW PRESS HIS CASE, PERHAPS LOOKING TO A GENERAL ELECTION IN A FEW MONTHS' TIME TO CONSOLIDATE HIS GAINS AND MAKE HIM PRIME MINISTER. THE DC ARE DISAPPOINTED AND THIS MAY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO CONCEDE MINISTRIES AND PATRONAGE TO OTHER PARTIES. FOR THE PCI, BERLINGUER'S PROBLEM REMAINS THAT OF HOLDING THE LOYALTY AND DISCIPLINE OF THE PARTY BASE WITHOUT HAVING ANY RESULTS TO SHOW FOR HIS CALCULATED MODERATION. SPADOLINI'S TASK IN PUTTING A GOVERNMENT TOGETHER IS PERHAPS A BIT EASIER THAN BEFORE SEMICOLON THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT HE WILL NOW SUCCEED BUT THAT IT WILL NOT LAST LONG.

5. DETAILED ELECTION RESULTS FOLLOW BY BAG TO THE DEPARTMENT.

6. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO EC POSTS, WASHINGTON AND UKDEL NATO.

ARCULUS

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