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SIGNOR COSSIGA'S VISIT TO LONDON: ITALIAN PRESS

1. THE VISIT HAS BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE ITALIAN PRESS OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS.
2. TODAY, MOST PAPERS SEE SIGNOR COSSIGA'S ROLE AS THAT OF A MEDIATOR BETWEEN BRITAIN ON THE ONE HAND AND FRANCE AND GERMANY ON THE OTHER, SEEKING TO PERSUADE THE PRIME MINISTER OF EUROPE'S NEED TO SPEAK WITH A COMMON VOICE, PARTICULARLY ON RECENT EVENTS IN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN AND ON THE POLICY OF DETENTE. IT IS ALSO REPORTED THAT COSSIGA HOPES TO FIND A COMPROMISE SOLUTION TO BRITAIN'S EEC BUDGET PROBLEM.
3. CORRIERE DELLA SERA (INDEPENDENT) SAYS THAT THE TALKS ACHIEVED POSITIVE RESULTS AND QUOTES MRS THATCHER AS APPRECIATING THE NEED FOR EUROPE TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE. IT STRESSES THE DEGREE OF IDENTITY OF ANGLO/ITALIAN VIEWS ON THE SOVIET THREAT AND THE VALUE OF THE DETAILED DISCUSSION ON THE BRITISH BUDGET PROBLEM.
4. A SIMILAR IMPRESSION IS GIVEN BY LA STAMPA (INDEPENDENT) WHICH MAINTAINS THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY THAT BRITAIN HAS EXPRESSED A STRONG INTEREST IN RE-ENFORCING POLITICAL CONSULTATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS: THIS IS A GOOD OMEN FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE. LA STAMPA ALSO PRAISES THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND QUOTES LONG EXTRACTS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND SIGNOR COSSIGA'S REPLIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS, ON AFGHANISTAN AND ON THE BRITISH BUDGET PROBLEM.

5. IL POPOLO (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT) SPEAKS OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS THAT EUROPE MUST FIND A COMMON PLATFORM IN RESPONDING TO SOVIET POLICY AND COMMENTS THAT THE ONLY DIFFERENCES ARE ON THE MEANS NOT THE SUBSTANCE. THIS OPINION IS SHARED BY RESTO DEL CARLINO (INDEPENDENT) WHOSE MAIN HEADLINE SPEAKS OF THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A HOT LINE BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE US IN ORDER TO FORMULATE QUICKLY A COMMON STRATEGY IN TIMES OF CRISIS.

6. IL GIORNALE (RIGHT-WING) HAS AN ARTICLE WITH THE HEADLINE: "MRS THATCHER FIRM AGAINST THE USSR: COSSIGA AGREES BUT SAYS LET'S DECIDE AMONG THE NINE". IT DESCRIBES MRS THATCHER AS APPARENTLY CONCILIATORY AND READY TO NEGOTIATE BUT FIRM IN MAINTAINING THE ENTIRETY OF HER DEMANDS ON THE BUDGET PROBLEM. THIS REPORT ADDS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESTIGE AND POPULARITY ARE INCREASING MORE AND MORE, AND NOT ONLY IN HER OWN COUNTRY.

7. BY CONTRAST, IL SOLE - 24 ORE, (FINANCIAL), REPORTS THE TALKS AS BEING A "FAILURE" AND DESCRIBES THE BRITISH POSITION TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION AS "SO RIGID, IT MAKES OTHER SEEMS SOFT, IF NOT EVEN CONCILIATORY".

8. L'UNITA (COMMUNIST), PAESE SERA (COMMUNIST) AND AVANTI (SOCIALIST) PREDICTABLY SEE THE TALKS AS A FAILURE AND ARE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER FOR ALLYING HERSELF WITH THE UNITED STATES RATHER THAN HER EEC PARTNERS AND FOR HER REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE ON THE EEC BUDGET.

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