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GRS700

(AMENDED DISTRIBUTION 6 JUNE 1979)

R & R.

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DESKBY 060900Z

M ROME 060630Z JUN 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 190 OF 5 JUNE

INFO SAVING TO WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, UKREP EEC BRUSSELS,
ALL OTHER EEC POSTS.

WR 014/2
REC'D
14 JUN 1979
TOP COPY

MY TELNO 179: ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTION: 3/4 JUNE

1. THE ITALIAN ELECTORATE HAS NOT GIVEN THE POLITICIANS ANY GREAT SHOCKS, BUT IT HAS GIVEN NO-ONE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE TURNOUT WAS LOW. PREDICTIONS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WOULD INCREASE THEIR SHARE OF THE VOTE WERE NOT FULFILLED, WHILE THE COMMUNIST TIDE TURNED. THE SOCIALISTS HELD THEIR POSITION. THE ELECTORS MOVED TOWARDS THE SMALLER PARTIES. THE FORMATION OF A DURABLE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DEPEND ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOCIALISTS.

2. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE RESULTS (DETAILS IN MIFT) WERE AS FOLLOWS:-

A) THE COMMUNISTS FELL BACK A FEW POINTS AS EXPECTED - THE FIRST TIME THEY HAVE LOST GROUND IN A GENERAL ELECTION SINCE THE WAR. THE MYTH OF THEIR INEXORABLE ADVANCE HAS THUS BEEN BROKEN. BUT THEY STILL REMAIN ABOVE THE PSYCHOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT THRESHOLD OF 30%.

B) THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HELD UP WELL EVEN THOUGH THEY DID NOT REALISE THEIR EXPECTED GAINS. BUT THEIR SHARE OF THE VOTE DROPPED ONLY VERY SLIGHTLY (BY ABOUT HALF A PERCENT) AND THEY GAINED 3 SEATS IN THE SENATE AND LOST ONLY ONE IN THE CHAMBER.

C) THE SOCIALISTS GAINED SEVERAL SEATS BUT DID NOT SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVE THEIR PERCENTAGE.

D) THE MOST SIGNIFICANT GAINS WERE REGISTERED BY THE SMALLER PARTIES. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS AND LIBERALS ALL IMPROVED THEIR POSITIONS. THE RADICAL PARTY, AS PREDICTED, WON ABOUT 3% OF THE VOTE AND WILL NOW HAVE 18 REPRESENTATIVES IN THE CHAMBER (4 IN 1976) AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME, 2 IN THE SENATE.

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/ E) THE NEO-FASCIST

E) THE NEO-FASCIST MSI LOST GROUND AS EXPECTED, BUT WAS LESS THAN 1% DOWN ON 1976.

F) THE TURNOUT, AT 89.9% WAS THE LOWEST EVER RECORDED IN A POST-WAR ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTION.

3. THE RESULTS DO NOT APPEAR AT FIRST SIGHT TO HAVE PRODUCED ANY DECISIVE SHIFT IN THE BALANCE OF THE PARTIES. IT NORMALLY TAKES AT LEAST 4 - 6 WEEKS FOR A NEW GOVERNMENT TO EMERGE AFTER AN ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTION, AND IT IS TOO SOON, YET, PARTICULARLY IN ADVANCE OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS ON 10 JUNE, TO MAKE ANY FIRM PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE SHAPE OF SUCH A GOVERNMENT. BUT THE GOOD SHOWING OF THE SMALLER CENTRE PARTIES, TOGETHER WITH THE DECLINE IN THE COMMUNIST VOTE, SHOULD MAKE IT marginally EASIER TO FORM A STABLE COALITION OF THE CENTRE LEAVING THE COMMUNISTS IN OPPOSITION. SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD LACK A RESPECTABLE MAJORITY WITHOUT SOCIALIST SUPPORT BUT WHETHER THE SOCIALISTS WOULD BE PREPARED TO JOIN OR SUPPORT SUCH A COALITION IS STILL NOT CLEAR. THEIR FAILURE TO REGISTER ANY SUBSTANTIAL GAINS WOULD SEEM TO MAKE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT - SOCIALIST COALITION LESS LIKELY, IF ANYTHING, THAN IT APPEARED BEFORE THE ELECTION, THOUGH THE IMPACT OF THE ELECTION RESULTS ON THE PERSONAL POSITION OF THE SOCIALIST LEADER CRAXI HAS YET TO BE ASSESSED.

4. SIGNOR ANDREOTTI IS STILL EXPECTED TO BE THE FIRST TO BE INVITED, IN DUE COURSE, TO FORM A SUBSTANTIVE NEW GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE HE WILL CONTINUE IN CHARGE FOR THE TIME BEING ON A CARETAKER BASIS, AND, AS FORECAST IN PARA 5 OF MY TUR, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO HEAD THE ITALIAN TEAM AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND AT THE SUBSEQUENT TOKYO ECONOMIC SUMMIT.

5. SEE MIFT.

6. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDRESSEES.

CAMPBELL

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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MIPT: ITALIAN GENERAL ELECTION: 3/4 JUNE.

1. FOLLOWING ARE DETAILED RESULTS (1976 IN BRACKETS)

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

	PERCENTAGES	SEATS	GAIN/LOSS
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC)	38.3 (38.7)	262 (263)	-1
COMMUNISTS (PCI)	30.4 (34.4)	201 (228)	-27
SOCIALISTS (PSI)	9.8 (9.6)	62 (57)	+5
NEO-FASCISTS (MSI)	5.3 (6.1)	30 (35)	-5
NATIONAL DEMOCRATS (DN)	0.6 (-)	- (-)	-
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI)	3.8 (3.4)	20 (15)	+5
REPUBLICANS (PRI)	3.0 (3.1)	16 (14)	+2
LIBERALS (PLI)	1.9 (1.3)	9 (5)	+4
ULTRA-LEFT (PDUP)	1.4 (1.5)	6 (6)	-
RADICALS (PR)	3.4 (1.1)	18 (4)	+14
S. TYROL PARTIES	0.6 (0.5)	4 (3)	+1

/ VAL D'AOSTA PARTY

VAL D'AOSTA PARTY	0.1 (0.1)	1 (-)	+1
OTHERS	1.4 (0.2)	1 (-)	+1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	100	630	

SENATE

	PERCENTAGES	SEATS	GAIN/LOSS
DC	38.3 (38.9)	138 (135)	+3
PCI			
KX	31.5 (33.8)	109 (116)	-7
PSI	10.4 (10.2)	32 (29)	+3
MSI	5.7 (6.6)	13 (15)	-2
DN	0.6 (-)	- (-)	-
PSDI	4.2 (3.1)	9 (6)	+3
PRI	3.4 (2.7)	6 (6)	-
PLI	2.2 (1.4)	2 (2)	-
RADICALS	1.3 (0.8)	2 (-)	+2
NEW UNITED LEFT	0.1 (0.2)	- (-)	-

S. SYROL PARTIES	0.5 (0.5)	3 (2)	+1
VAL D'AOSTA	0.1 (0.1)	1 (1)	-
OTHERS	1.7 (1.7)		
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	
	100	315	

(FIGURES FOR SEATS ALLOCATED MAY STILL BE SUBJECT TO MINOR ALTERATIONS)

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