

PRIME MINISTER

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CONFIDENTIAL

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 313 OF 7 AUGUST 1979

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

MY TELNO 309: ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. SIGNOR COSSIGA, EX-MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR AND MEMBER OF THE LEFT-WING "BASE" FACTION OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY, SUCCEEDED IN FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT ON 4 AUGUST, TWO DAYS AFTER BEING GIVEN A MANDATE BY PRESIDENT PERTINI. THE NEW GOVERNMENT WAS SWORN IN ON 5 AUGUST, THUS FORMALLY ENDING THE PERIOD OF POLITICAL CRISIS. THE CONFIDENCE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT IS NOT DUE TO BEGIN UNTIL 9 AUGUST, BUT THE OUTCOME IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN SINCE COSSIGA HAS SUCCEEDED WHERE PANDOLFI (AND ANDREOTTI BEFORE HIM) FAILED - IE HE HAS SECURED A PROMISE OF SOCIALIST ABSTENTIONS IN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THIS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE A MAJORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT, DESPITE THE OPPOSITION OF THE COMMUNISTS AND THE EXTREME LEFT AND EXTREME RIGHT.

2. THE COSSIGA GOVERNMENT IS A THREE-PARTY COALITION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) AND LIBERALS (PLI) WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO "TECHNICIAN" MINISTERS SYMPATHETIC TO THE SOCIALISTS. APART FROM ANDREOTTI HIMSELF, THE FORMER MINISTERS WHO ARE NO LONGER IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE FORLANI (FOREIGN AFFAIRS), TINA ANSEMI (HEALTH), ANTONIOZZI (CULTURE) AND THE THREE REPUBLICANS. THOSE WHO REMAIN UNCHANGED INCLUDE SEVERAL OF IMPORTANCE TO US - NOTABLY ROGNONI (INTERIOR), PANDOLFI (TREASURY), RUFFINI (DEFENCE), MARCORA (AGRICULTURE) AND SCOTTI (LABOUR). THERE ARE TWO NEW DEPARTMENTS (RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION) AND TWO OTHERS HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO TWO (TRANSPORT/MERCHANT NAVY AND CULTURE/SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH) MAKING ALTOGETHER FOUR EXTRA CABINET POSTS.

3. COSSIGA HAS SECURED THE ABSTENTION OF THE SOCIALISTS BY INTRODUCING "TECHNICIANS" SYMPATHETIC TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY, AND BY INCLUDING THE LIBERALS. THE LIBERALS ALWAYS STOOD APART FROM THE LAST TWO ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR INCLUSION WAS THEREFORE A FURTHER SIGN TO THE SOCIALISTS OF THE DIFFERENCE OF THE COSSIGA GOVERNMENT FROM ITS PREDECESSORS. THE DECISION OF THE REPUBLICANS (WHOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN STRAINED) NOT TO JOIN MAY ALSO HAVE HELPED.

THE DIFFERENCE IS, IN FACT, MORE APPARENT THAN REAL (APART FROM THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER FEW OF THE MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS HAVE CHANGED). BUT IT WAS ENOUGH TO PERSUADE THE SOCIALISTS TO CALL A TRUCE AND ALLOW A NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED.

4. COSSIGA HIMSELF IS BY BACKGROUND A PROFESSOR OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW FROM SARDINIA. HE GAINED A REPUTATION AS A MINISTER WHO GOT THINGS DONE DURING HIS PERIOD AT THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR FROM 1976-78 (DESPITE SOME CRITICISM FOR HIS HANDLING OF THE PROBLEMS OF PUBLIC ORDER). DURING THIS PERIOD HE SHOWED HIMSELF WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS BRITAIN, AND ANGLO/ITALIAN CO-OPERATION IN THE SECURITY FIELD WAS CLOSE. HIS RESIGNATION IN MAY 1978 IMMEDIATELY AFTER MORO'S ASSASSINATION WON HIM RESPECT AS A MINISTER WHO WAS PREPARED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHORTCOMINGS OF HIS SUBORDINATES. DESPITE HIS COMPARATIVE LACK OF INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE, HE COULD PROVE TO BE A GOOD CHOICE OF PRIME MINISTER BOTH FROM ITALY'S AND THE UK'S POINT OF VIEW.

5. THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, MALFATTI, (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE MFA WHO IS ALSO CALLED MALFATTI) WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY DISTINGUISHED PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES BETWEEN 1970 AND 1972. BUT HIS EEC EXPERIENCE, TOGETHER WITH HIS DOMESTIC REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE BETTER DEPARTMENTAL MINISTERS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, SHOULD ENSURE THAT HE IS AT LEAST AS EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONALLY AS HIS PREDECESSOR AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, FORLANI.

THE PREDOMINANT FEELING HERE IS ONE OF RELIEF THAT SOME SORT OF GOVERNMENT HAS AT LAST BEEN FORMED. THE INCLUSION OF "TECHNICIANS", PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC MINISTRIES, IS GENERALLY WELCOMED. (APART FROM REVIGLIO (FINANCE), BOTH ANDREATTA (BUDGET) AND LOMBARDINI (STATE HOLDINGS) ARE RESPECTED ACADEMIC ECONOMISTS). NEVERTHELESS IT IS WIDELY ASSUMED THAT THE COSSIGA GOVERNMENT MAY PROVE TO BE NO MORE THAN A STOP-GAP UNTIL THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT CONGRESS WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR THE END OF THE YEAR. IT IS ARGUED THAT IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE THEN TO DECIDE TO MOVE TOWARDS A MORE PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOCIALISTS, SOME NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND TO REFLECT THIS CHANGE. FOR THE TIME BEING HOWEVER, THIS NO MORE THAN SPECULATION, AND SO LONG AS THE SOCIALISTS ARE PREPARED TO ABSTAIN ON VOTES OF CONFIDENCE IN PARLIAMENT, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A REASONABLE BASIS FOR SURVIVAL.

7. I RECOMMEND THAT MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION BE SENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO COSSIGA AND FROM YOU TO MALFATTI, AND THAT THESE SHOULD BE SENT SOON WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE MESSAGE TO COSSIGA COULD EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE CLOSE CO-OPERATION WHICH THE PREVIOUS BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAD WITH HIM AS MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR WILL CONTINUE WITH HIM NOW IN HIS NEW CAPACITY AS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL. (BUT SINCE THIS CO-OPERATION WAS MAINLY IN THE FIELD OF COUNTER-TERRORISM, I WOULD ADVISE ON SECURITY GROUNDS THAT ONLY THE FACT, AND NOT THE TEXT, OF THE MESSAGE BE RELEASED TO THE PRESS).

THE MESSAGE TO MALFATTI MIGHT REFER TO HIS EXPERIENCE AS PRESIDENT OF THE EEC COMMISSION. (IF MRS THATCHER'S MESSAGE IS NOT RELEASED IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE NOT TO RELEASE YOURS EITHER).

8. THE FULL LIST OF MINISTERS IN MIFT.

9. FCO PLEASE PASS ALL OTHER EEC POSTS.

10. PLEASE PASS ADVANCE COPIES TO BULLARD (DUSS), FERGUSON (AUSS) AND WED.

GOODISON

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

MIPT: ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. FOLLOWING IS LIST OF COSSIGA'S GOVERNMENT (MINISTERS IN
ANDREOTTI'S FIFTH GOVERNMENT ARE INDICATED IN BRACKETS).

ALL ARE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED:-

PRIME MINISTER	FRANCESCO COSSIGA	(GIULIO ANDREOTTI)
MINISTER FOR THE SOUTH	MICHELE DI GIESI (PSDI)	(NO CHANGE)
MINISTER FOR RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT (NEW DEPARTMENT)	ADOLFO SARTI	
MINISTER FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (NEW DEPARTMENT)	MASSIMO GIANNINI (*TECHNICIAN* SYMPATHETIC TO THE SOCIALISTS)	
FOREIGN AFFAIRS	FRANCO MARIA MALFATTI	(ARNALDO FORLANI)
INTERIOR	VIRGINIO ROGNONI	(NO CHANGE)
GRACE AND JUSTICE	TOMMASO MORLINO	(NO CHANGE)
BUDGET	NINO ANDREATTA	(BRUNO VISENTINI) (PRI)

/ FINANCE

FINANCE	FRANCO REVIGLIO	(FRANCO MARIA MALFATTI)
	("TECHNICIAN")	
	SYMPATHETIC TO	
	THE SOCIALISTS)	
TREASURY	FILIPPO MARIA PANDOLFI	(NO CHANGE)
DEFENCE	ATTILIO RUFFINI	(NO CHANGE)
EDUCATION	SALVATORE VALITUTTI	(GIOVANNI SPADOLINI)
	(PLI)	(PRI)
PUBLIC WORKS	FRANCO NICOLAZZI	(FRANCESCO COMPAGNA)
		(PRI)
AGRICULTURE	GIOVANNI MARCORA	(NO CHANGE)
TRANSPORT	LUIGI PRETI	(NO CHANGE)
	(PSDI)	
MERCHANT NAVY (FORMERLY COMBINED WITH TRANSPORT)	FRANCO EVANGELISTI	
POST AND COMMUNICATIONS	VITTORINO COLOMBO	(NO CHANGE)
INDUSTRY	ANTONIO BISAGLIA	(FRANCO NICOLAZZI)
		(PSDI)
LABOUR	VINCENZO SCOTTI	(NO CHANGE)
FOREIGN TRADE	GAETANO STAMMATI	(NO CHANGE)
STATE HOLDINGS	SIRO LOMBARDINI	(ANTONIO BISAGLIA)
HEALTH	RENATO ALTISSIMO	(TINA ANSELMI)
	(PLI)	

TOURISM AND
ENTERTAINMENT

BERNADO D'AREZZO (EGIDIO ARIOSTO)
(PSDI)

CULTURE

EGIDIO ARIOSTO (DARIO ANTONIOZZI)

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
(FORMERLY COMBINED
WITH CULTURE)

VITO SCALIA

2. PERSONALITIES NOTES ARE AVAILABLE IN EITHER THE 1978 LEADING PERSONALITIES LIST OR IN ENCLOSURES TO PELLEW'S LETTER OF 26 MARCH TO HARBORNE (WED), EXCEPT FOR GIANNINI, ANDREATTA, REVIGLIO, VALITUTTI, EVANGELISTI, LOMBARDINI, ALTISSIMO, D'AREZZO AND SCALIA, ON WHOM NOTES FOLLOW BY BAG.

3. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO OTHER ADDRESSEES.

4. PLEASE PASS ADVANCE COPIES TO BULLARD (DUSS), FERGUSSON (AUSS) AND WED.

GOODISON

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