

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM ROME 140700Z AUG 79

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 326 OF 14 AUGUST

RECEIVED IN REGS OF DESK 3	
14 AUG 1979	
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INFO SAVING WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, UKREP BRUSSELS, ALL OTHER EEC POSTS.

(82)

MY TELNO 313: ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION.

1. SIGNOR COSSIGA DULY PRESENTED HIS GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME TO PARLIAMENT ON 9 AUGUST AND RECEIVED THE EXPECTED VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND THE SENATE ON 11 AND 12 AUGUST RESPECTIVELY. ITALY THUS NOW HAS A GOVERNMENT WITH A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE RESIGNATION OF ANDREOTTI'S FOURTH GOVERNMENT AT THE END OF JANUARY.

2. THE VOTING FIGURES IN THE CHAMBER WERE 287 IN FAVOUR (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS - IE THE 3 PARTIES MAKING UP THE GOVERNMENT), 242 AGAINST (COMMUNISTS, INDEPENDENT LEFT, RADICALS AND NEO-FASCISTS) WITH 65 ABSTENTIONS (SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS). IN THE SENATE THE FIGURES WERE 153 IN FAVOUR, 118 AGAINST, WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS NOT VOTING (WHICH IS THE NORMAL WAY OF EXPRESSING ABSTENTION IN THE SENATE).

3. THE DEBATES TOOK PLACE IN A LOW-KEY ATMOSPHERE SINCE THE OUTCOME WAS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION, FOLLOWING THE SOCIALISTS' ADVANCE PROMISE OF ABSTENTION WHICH HAD ALLOWED THE GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED. THE GOVERNMENT'S MAJORITY WOULD HAVE BEEN LARGER IF THE REPUBLICANS (WHO HAVE 16 DEPUTIES IN THE CHAMBER) HAD BEEN PREPARED TO VOTE IN ITS FAVOUR. BUT IN THE EVENT THE REPUBLICANS REFUSED TO SUPPORT WHAT THEY DESCRIBED AS A "COLOURLESS AND WEAK" GOVERNMENT AND THEY JOINED THE SOCIALISTS IN ABSTAINING.

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4. THE PROGRAMME WHICH COSSIGA PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT CONTAINED NO SURPRISES APART FROM ITS LENGTH. RATHER THAN CONFINING HIMSELF TO CERTAIN LIMITED AREAS OF ACTION (AS MANY HAD EXPECTED) HE CHOSE TO PUT FORWARD A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF 60 PAGES COVERING ALL AREAS OF GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY. THE MAIN EMPHASIS WAS ON THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND ON ACTION TO HELP THE ECONOMY. AMONG THE DETAILED POINTS WERE:

(A) TERRORISM.

COSSIGA REFERRED TO THE ENCOURAGING RESULTS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED IN THE ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN AND PROMISED THAT THE CAMPAIGN WOULD BE VIGOROUSLY PURSUED. THIS WOULD BE DONE BY THE APPLICATION OF EXISTING LAWS, NOT BY INTRODUCING NEW ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURES. PRIORITY WOULD BE GIVEN TO RE-EQUIPMENT AND REFORM OF THE POLICE.

(B) THE ECONOMY.

THE MAIN THEMES (DETAILS TO FOLLOW BY BAG) WERE ENERGY (AN APPEAL TO THE PARTIES FOR SOLIDARITY IN TACKLING THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE ENERGY DEFICIT), THE BATTLE AGAINST INFLATION, AND INCREASED PENALTIES FOR FISCAL EVASION.

(C) THE ARMED FORCES.

THE SPECIAL FUNDING LAWS FOR RE-EQUIPMENT OF ALL THREE SERVICES WILL BE FULLY ACTUATED IN ORDER TO ENSURE "AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IN NATO DEFENCE PROGRAMMES".

(D) FOREIGN POLICY.

CONTINUING ACTION FOR PEACE AND SECURITY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. DISARMAMENT INITIATIVES TO BE PURSUED. (PASSAGES ON EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POLICY ARE BEING SENT SEPARATELY BY BAG TO CERTAIN ADDRESSEES).

5. COSSIGA'S PROGRAMME WAS RECEIVED WITHOUT MUCH ENTHUSIASM, EVEN FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORTERS. THE SOCIALISTS DESCRIBED IT AS "ROUTINE", AND MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE ONLY GRUDGINGLY GIVING THEIR ABSTENTION. OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OPPONENTS, THE COMMUNISTS DESCRIBED THE PROGRAMME AS "WEAK AND INADEQUATE" BUT PROMISED THAT THEIR OPPOSITION WOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE. THE RADICAL PARTY WERE MORE OPENLY HOSTILE AND ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE THROUGH FILIBUSTERING BY THEIR 18 DEPUTIES. ALTHOUGH THE ATTEMPT FAILED, THE RADICALS HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY ARE NOW NUMEROUS ENOUGH TO CAUSE THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUS TROUBLE WITH ITS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME.

6. DESPITE THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, THE FEELING HERE IS STILL THAT SIGNOR COSSIGA'S GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY BE NO MORE THAN A STOP-GAP UNTIL THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT CONGRESS AROUND THE END OF THE YEAR (PARA 6 OF MY TUR). FOR THE TIME BEING THE SOCIALISTS HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO KEEP IT IN BEING, AND THE ITALIANS CAN NOW AT LEAST GO AWAY FOR THEIR AUGUST SUMMER BREAK LEAVING A PROPERLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT IN CHARGE. BUT THE GRUDGING WAY IN WHICH THE SOCIALIST ABSTENTION WAS GRANTED DEMONSTRATES THE TEMPORARY CHARACTER OF THIS ARRANGEMENT. COSSIGA HAS MADE CLEAR THAT HE IS GOING TO SUBMIT ALL IMPORTANT ISSUES TO PARLIAMENT, AND IF THE SOCIALISTS SENSE THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE MOVING TOWARDS A DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM THEY WILL HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES OF BRINGING THE GOVERNMENT DOWN. MOREOVER, THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM OF SECURING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE SOCIALISTS, ON WHICH A STABLE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE BASED, IS UNSOLVED. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT CONGRESS WILL SUCCESSFULLY GRASP THE NETTLE.

7. FCO PLEASE PASS TO ALL SAVING ADDRESSEES.

GOODISON [REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

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F C O 131000Z AUG 79  
TO PRIORITY ROME  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 141 OF 13 AUGUST 1979.

WRJ 014/2  
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY NO. 3  
14 AUG 1979

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YOUR TELNO 913 : NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT  
MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION

1. SUBJECT TO A FAVOURABLE OUTCOME OF THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON 11 AUGUST PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES.

- (A) FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO SIGNOR COSSIGA:  
QUOTE. I SEND YOU MY WARM CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR APPOINTMENT AS PRIME MINISTER AND MY BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE SUCCESS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT. I GREATLY LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN STILL FURTHER THE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS THAT ALREADY EXIST BETWEEN US. UNQUOTE.
- (B) FROM MYSELF TO SIGNOR MALFATTI:  
QUOTE. PLEASE ACCEPT MY WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES ON YOUR APPOINTMENT AS FOREIGN MINISTER.

YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE EEC COMMISSION WILL BE OF GREAT VALUE TO ALL YOUR COLLEAGUES IN THE COMMUNITY WHEN YOUR COUNTRY ASSUMES THE PRESIDENCY NEXT YEAR. UNQUOTE.

CARRINGTON

FILES  
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PS/PUS  
SIR A DUFF  
MR GULLARD  
MR FERGUSSON

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
London, SW1A 2AH

WES  
(86)

13 August 1979

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Mr. Nash

John 14/8

Dear Bryan,

NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT: MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION

The Embassy at Rome have reported on the new Italian Government formed on 4 August by the new Christian Democrat Prime Minister Signor Francesco Cossiga and have recommended that the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary should each send a message of congratulation to their counterparts.

--- I enclose a copy of a draft telegram to Rome conveying messages both from Mrs Thatcher to Signor Cossiga and from Lord Carrington to Signor Malfatti and containing instructions that they be delivered subject to the result of the vote of confidence on Sunday 11 August. If you agree I shall arrange for its transmission.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)

B G Cartledge Esq  
10 Downing Street

10/3 0142

RECEIVED  
4 AUG 1979

Mr Bullard

DESK OFFICER

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Secretary of State

NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT: MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION

A, B

1. Rome telegrams Nos <sup>82</sup>313 and <sup>83</sup>314 report that a new Italian Government was formed on 5 August, comprising a three-party coalition of Christian Democrats (DC), Social Democrats (PSDI) and Liberals (PLI) and led by Sr. Francesco Cossiga (DC).

2. The Embassy assess that the Confidence Debate due to begin on Thursday 9 August will almost certainly result in a majority for the new Government. They recommend that messages of congratulation be sent from the Prime Minister to Sr. Cossiga, and from the Secretary of State to the new Foreign Minister Sr. Franco Malfatti, without awaiting the outcome of the vote of confidence on Sunday, 11 August.

3. I agree that messages of congratulation should be prepared but recommend that See 87

- (a) they should be sent to Rome in a single telegram and
- (b) the Embassy should deliver them only after the result of the vote of confidence is known.

I have told the Embassy that I would be recommending ~~at~~ (b) and they are content. On balance, and contrary to Embassy advice in their telegram No 313, I believe that the message to Sr. Cossiga should make no reference to his cooperation as Minister of Interior with the previous British Government. This would add little of substance to the message but would complicate its handling.

4. I accordingly submit a draft letter from the Private Secretary to the Private Secretary (No 10) and two copies of a draft telegram.

*D A S Gladstone*

D A S Gladstone  
Western European Department

9 August 1979

*JBukend 9/8*