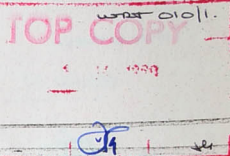


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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 47 OF 15 JANUARY  
 INFO IMMEDIATE UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO  
 INFO PRIORITY ALL OTHER EEC POSTS.  
 MY TELNO 41. ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER



1. THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, ATTILIO RUFFINI, HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF EEC AFFAIRS BUT HAS ESTABLISHED A GOOD REPUTATION FOR HIMSELF AS AN ACTIVE AND CAPABLE MINISTER OF DEFENCE SINCE SEPTEMBER 1977. HIS NATO MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES FOUND HIM EASY TO DEAL WITH AND STAUNCHLY PRO-NATO IN HIS ATTITUDES. HE IS ALSO LESS VERBOSE AT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS THAN MANY ITALIANS. ONCE HE HAS SETTLED INTO THE WAYS OF THE EEC HE SHOULD BE AT LEAST AN ADEQUATE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THOUGH HIS PERSONALITY IS PLEASANT RATHER THAN FORCEFUL. HE IS VERY WELL-DISPOSED TOWARDS BRITAIN (HE TOLD ME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE THOUGHT BRITAIN HAD AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN NATO AS A COUNTER-WEIGHT TO THE GERMAN INFLUENCE WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE BE OVERPOWERING). IN DOMESTIC POLITICS HE IS MORE STRONGLY ANTI-COMMUNIST THAN MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE CENTRE-RIGHT FACTION OF THE DC PARTY. ALTHOUGH BORN IN MANTUA, HE HAS CLOSE LINKS WITH SICILY (HIS WIFE COMES FROM AN INFLUENTIAL SICILIAN FAMILY AND HIS UNCLE WAS ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO, WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT SINCE 1963). THOUGH STILL SOMEWHAT UNTRIED INTERNATIONALLY, HE MAY TURN OUT TO BE QUITE A GOOD CHOICE.

2. HIS SUCCESSOR AS MINISTER OF DEFENCE, ADOLFO SARTI, WAS A PROTEGE OF RUMOR UNDER WHOM HE SERVED IN THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE IN THE EARLY 70S. HE WAS OUT OF OFFICE (FOLLOWING RUMOR'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE LOCKHEED BRIBES SCANDAL) UNTIL BECOMING MINISTER FOR RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENT UNDER COSSIGA LAST AUGUST. BUT HE IS REGARDED AS A CAPABLE POLITICIAN WITH A MORE INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK THAN MOST ITALIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (HE WAS AT ONE TIME HEAD OF THE PARTY'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE). AT 51, HE IS STILL RELATIVELY YOUNG FOR MAJOR MINISTERIAL OFFICE. ALTHOUGH HE HAS LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF DEFENCE MATTERS, HE IS SAID TO HAVE MADE A GOOD IMPRESSION WHEN HE SUBSTITUTED FOR FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER MALFATTI AT THE NAC AND SPECIAL TNF MEETINGS LAST MONTH. HE IS A LARGE, EXPANSIVE PERSONALITY WHO IS WELL LIKED BY HIS COLLEAGUES.

ARCULUS

F I L E S

WED PS

MR BULLARD

MR HANNAY

EID PS/LPS

MR FERGUSSON

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