

RESTRICTED

TOP SECRET  
21 MAR 1980  
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RESTRICTED  
FM ROME 201535Z MAR  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 222 OF 20 MARCH 1980

INFO ROUTINE UKREP BRUSSELS

INFO SAVING TO OTHER E C POSTS, UKDEL NATO AND WASHINGTON

① MY TELNO 220: ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. SIGNOR COSSIGA HANDED IN HIS RESIGNATION ON 19 MARCH. HE DID NOT WAIT TO BE DEFEATED IN A FORMAL VOTE, BUT DREW THE CONSEQUENCES FROM A CONFIDENCE DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT WHEN THE SOCIALISTS AND REPUBLICANS MADE CLEAR THAT THEY WERE WITHDRAWING THEIR ABSTENTIONS, THIS MAKING DEFEAT INEVITABLE. PRESIDENT PERTINI WILL START HIS CONSULTATIONS TODAY ABOUT THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. HE MAY GIVE THE FIRST MANDATE AGAIN TO SIGNOR COSSIGA AS EARLY AS THIS WEEKEND. MEANWHILE, SIGNOR COSSIGA AND HIS MINISTERS WILL CONTINUE IN OFFICE UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT IS FORMED.

2. WHILE THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE WAS IN PROGRESS NEWS CAME IN THAT ANOTHER MAGISTRATE HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED. THIS WAS THE THIRD IN FOUR DAYS. ALTHOUGH THIS LATEST WAVE OF VIOLENCE IS NOT THE CAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FALL, THE STEPPING UP OF THE TERRORIST CAMPAIGN MAY BE RELATED TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS. SIGNOR COSSIGA CALLED IN HIS SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY OF STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY FORCES AND FOR PUBLIC SOLIDARITY AGAINST THE TERRORISTS. THIS WILL CLEARLY BE A PRIORITY ISSUE FACING ANY INCOMING GOVERNMENT.

FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING ADDEES.

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED

ARCULUS

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

FCO WHITEHALL DIST:  
WED

*file notes 26/3*

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