

Italy

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SAVING TELEGRAM

BY BAG  
FROM ROME  
TO: FCO  
SAVING NO.19  
21 APRIL 1980  
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Read in full.

TO FCO SAVING TELEGRAM NO 19 OF 21 APRIL 1980  
AND INFORMATION SAVING TO EC POSTS, UKREP BRUSSELS, UKDEL NATO  
WASHINGTON, MILAN

MY TEL NO 277: ITALIAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. Signor Cossiga's new three party coalition obtained a vote of confidence in the Senate on 17 April and in the Chamber of Deputies on 21 April. The new government which was sworn in on 4 April has thus now received the formal seal of Parliamentary approval.
2. Those who voted for the government were the Christian Democrats, the Socialists and the Republicans - ie the three parties making up the coalition. All other parties voted against but the government, as expected, was able to muster a satisfactory majority without outside support. The voting figures were, in the Senate, 178 in favour and 127 against, and, in the Chamber, 335 in favour and 271 against.
3. Signor Cossiga had hoped to secure the benevolent abstention of the Liberals (who although numerically small would have given the government a broader political appeal) and possibly also the Radicals (who are in a position to block, by filibustering tactics, the legislative programme of any government of which they disapprove). The Liberals refused to back a government including the Socialists; and the Radicals would not accept that Signor Cossiga had gone far enough to meet their demands for increased government expenditure on the relief of world hunger and on the budget of the Ministry of Justice. The Government will therefore have to continue to contend (as the first Cossiga government did) with the obstructionism of the Radicals. This is already,

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threatening to block the passage of the Finance Bill, which is required to be passed by the end of April.

4. The Communists made clear during the confidence debate that they too would take a tough line in opposition. They gave point to this threat by causing the government two minor defeats (on an amendment to the Finance Bill and an election to the chairmanship of a Parliamentary Committee) while the confidence debate was going on.

5. All this suggests that the new government will not find it easy to legislate, even though it does at least have a built-in majority in Parliament. The first major test will come with the Administrative Elections on 8 June, the campaign for which is already effectively under way.

ARCULUS

FCO/WHITEHALL  
WED

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]