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FM BONN 161540Z DEC 82

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1079 OF 16 DECEMBER

INFO SAVING CGS IN THE FRG CICC(G) BMG BERLIN UKDEL NATO ATHENS
BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN DUBLIN THE HAGUE LUXEMBOURG PARIS ROME
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HAMBURG LAND ELECTION: 19 DECEMBER

SUMMARY

1. THE LAND ELECTIONS IN HAMBURG ON SUNDAY 19 DECEMBER ARE UNLIKELY TO RESOLVE THE POLITICAL DEADLOCK IN THE CITY, BUT WILL PROVIDE AN INTERESTING TEST OF PUBLIC OPINION IN THE RUN-UP TO THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS ON 6 MARCH.

DETAIL

2. IN THE HAMBURG ELECTIONS IN JUNE (MY TELNO 526), THE CDU BECAME THE LARGEST PARTY IN THE LAND PARLIAMENT BUT HAD NO ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. THE FDP FAILED TO SECURE REPRESENTATION AND THE GREENS HELD THE BALANCE. SPD GOVERNING MAYOR DOHNANYI REMAINED IN OFFICE AT THE HEAD OF A MINORITY ADMINISTRATION. HIS SUBSEQUENT REFUSAL TO FORM A COALITION WITH THE CDU AND FAILURE TO ARRIVE AT A SECURE MODUS VIVENDI WITH THE GREENS LED TO THE DECISION TO HOLD NEW ELECTIONS NOW.

3. THE ELECTIONS ARE, HOWEVER, UNLIKELY TO RESOLVE THE POLITICAL DEADLOCK. THE CDU AND SPD ARE CURRENTLY RUNNING NECK AND NECK IN OPINION POLLS WITH SOME 42 PER CENT EACH. BUT HAMBURG IS A TRADITIONAL SPD STRONGHOLD AND THE CDU'S RESULT IN JUNE WAS EXCEPTIONAL. REGIONAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES HAVE FEATURED MOST IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND THE POSITIVE START MADE BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN BONN IS NOT EXPECTED TO DO MUCH FOR THE CDU. SO THE SPD MAY AGAIN BECOME THE LARGEST PARTY. BUT THEY ARE NOT EXPECTED TO SECURE AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, SO THAT THE GREENS WOULD STILL HOLD THE PARLIAMENTARY BALANCE. THE FDP ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO FAIL AGAIN TO SECURE REPRESENTATION.

4. IF THERE IS ANOTHER HUNG PARLIAMENT, DOHNANYI HAS SAID THAT HE WILL NOT FORM A COALITION WITH EITHER THE CDU OR THE GREENS. ALTHOUGH HE HAS ADDED VARIOUS RIDERS WHICH COULD PROVIDE A LOOP HOLE, A FORMAL COALITION BETWEEN THE SPD AND EITHER THE CDU OR THE GREENS CAN PROBABLY BE RULED OUT. DOHNANYI WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE AS MINORITY GOVERNING MAYOR AND LOOK FOR CDU OR GREEN SUPPORT ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. A FURTHER LAND ELECTION NEXT YEAR CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.

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5. WITH CHANCELLOR KOHL DUE DELIBERATELY TO LOSE A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE BUNDESTAG ON 17 DECEMBER TO PAVE THE WAY FOR FEDERAL ELECTIONS, THE HAMBURG RESULT WILL INEVITABLY BE PLAYED UP BY WHICHEVER SIDE DOES BEST AS AN INDICATION OF HOW THINGS WILL GO IN MARCH. IF THE SPD REGAIN THEIR POSITION AS LARGEST PARTY IN HAMBURG, THIS WILL PROVIDE THE PARTY'S RANK AND FILE WITH A MUCH NEEDED BOOST TO MORALE. BUT THE CHANCES OF PREVENTING A CDU/CSU MAJORITY IN THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS LOOK SLIGHT. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING TO ALL EXCEPT CGS IN THE FRG CICC(G) AND BMG BERLIN

TAYLOR

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