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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 054

OF 261520Z JANUARY 87

INFO PRIORITY BMG BERLIN, EAST BERLIN, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW

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INFO PRIORITY CICC(G)

INFO SAVING CONSULATE GENERALS IN THE FRG

MY TELNO 053: FEDERAL GERMAN ELECTION, 25 JANUARY

SUMMARY

1. SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTION RESULTS FOR EACH PARTY. COALITION NEGOTIATIONS ON NEW CABINET AND STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ARE LIKELY TO BE TRICKY.

DETAIL

2. THE PARTIES ARE MEETING SEPARATELY TO ASSESS YESTERDAY'S ELECTION RESULTS. FOR THE CDU/CSU, THE MAIN THING IS THAT THEY WON, AS THEY WERE EXPECTED TO DO ALL ALONG. BUT THEY HAVE BEEN CHASTENED AT GAINING A PERCENTAGE OF VOTES WHICH WAS THEIR LOWEST SINCE 1949, ALBEIT ONLY marginally lower than in 1972 AND 1980, AND TO THIS EXTENT A CONTINUATION OF THEIR OSCILLATION UP AND DOWN AT EVERY ELECTION OVER THE LAST 30 YEARS. THIS TIME THEY WERE HIT HARD BY THE LOW TURNOUT, THE LOWEST SINCE 1949, IN THE FRG'S FIRST-EVER WINTER ELECTION. FIRST ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT SOME 900,000 CDU/CSU SUPPORTERS STAYED AT HOME. THEY ALSO POLLED BADLY IN THEIR TRADITIONALLY STRONG RURAL AREAS, WHERE MANY FARMERS EVIDENTLY VOTED FOR OTHER PARTIES OR NOT AT ALL.

3. AT CDU HQ SPOKESMEN ARE ALSO BLAMING STRAUSS FOR THE UNION'S RELATIVELY POOR SHOWING. THEY CRITICISE HIM FOR PROCLAIMING DURING THE CAMPAIGN THAT THE ELECTION WAS ALREADY WON, THEREBY ENCOURAGING UNION SUPPORTERS TO THINK THEY NEED NOT BOTHER TO VOTE, AND FOR ATTACKING GENSCHER'S CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY. MANY NEWSPAPERS AGREE THAT STRAUSS SHARES THE BLAME, THOUGH ADDING THAT IT SUITS THE CDU TO CAST HIM AS THE SCAPEGOAT, AS IT OBVIOUSLY DOES.

4. THIS DIAGNOSIS IS NOT SHARED IN MUNICH. IN A SOUR-TEMPERED APPEARANCE ON TV ON ELECTION NIGHT, STRAUSS ARGUED THAT THE UNION HAD LOST VOTES BECAUSE IT HAD NOT PRESENTED SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR AND ROBUST POLICIES (REMARKS GREETED WITH HOOTS OF DERISION BY THOSE WATCHING AT CDU HQ IN BONN). THE LOSSES, STRAUSS SAID, WERE NOT THE CSU'S FAULT: THE CSU HAD LOST LESS GROUND PROPORTIONATELY IN BAVARIA THAN THE CDU DID IN THE OTHER LAENDER.

5. THE SPD HAVE LITTLE TO BE PROUD OF. THEIR SHARE OF THE VOTE WAS THEIR LOWEST SINCE 1961, CONTINUING THE PARTY'S DOWNWARD TREND SINCE BRANDT'S VICTORY IN 1972. THEY LOST SOME 650,000 VOTES TO THE GREENS, AND IN MAJOR CITIES OUTSIDE THE RUHR WERE BETWEEN 6 AND 8

[likely to make them more difficult on CAP reform]

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PER CENT DOWN ON 1993. BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE FEARING THE WORST, THE FIRST REACTION TO THE RESULTS WAS ONE OF RELIEF. THE WARM RECEPTION ACCORDED TO RAU AT SPD HQ ON ELECTION NIGHT MADE HIM SEEM ALMOST LIKE A CONQUERING HERO. CERTAINLY HE TRIED HIS HARDEST: IN HIS NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIAN HOMETOWN HE EVEN INCREASED THE SPD'S VOTE BY 0.9 PER CENT COMPARED WITH 1993. HIS POSITION AS A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY (AND A POTENTIAL SUCCESSOR TO BRANDT IN DUE COURSE) LOOKS SECURE.

6. THE FDP ARE VERY PLEASED. THEY FOUGHT AN INTELLIGENT AND WELL-FOCUSSED CAMPAIGN. THANKS TO STRAUSS, THEY WERE ABLE TO MAKE THE MOST OF GENSCHER'S POSITION AS THE GUARDIAN OF OSTPOLITIK AND DETENTE, AND TOOK 800,000 VOTES OFF THE CDU/CSU AS A RESULT. MANY NEWSPAPERS TODAY SEE GENSCHER AS THE REAL WINNER OF THE ELECTIONS.

7. THE GREENS HAD HARBOURED HOPES OF REACHING 10 PER CENT AND OVERTAKING THE FDP. THEIR FAILURE TO DO EITHER OF THESE THINGS SHOULD NOT DISGUISE THE FACT THAT THEIR GAINS WERE PROPORTIONATELY THE LARGEST OF ANY PARTY. THEY WENT OVER 10 PER CENT IN THREE LAENDER, REACHING 14.5 PER CENT IN BREMEN. THEY WILL HAVE MORE WEIGHT TO THROW ABOUT IN THE NEXT BUNDESTAG: THEY HAVE ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL BE SEEKING MORE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES, AND THE RIGHT TO NOMINATE ONE OF THE FOUR DEPUTY SPEAKERS. THIS WOULD ENTITLE THEM TO CHAIR SOME DEBATES.

COALITION NEGOTIATIONS

8. ATTENTION NOW SWITCHES TO THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET AND ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY PROGRAMME, THE SO-CALLED 'GOVERNMENT DECLARATION'. THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE DIFFICULT TALKS FOR KOHL. THE FDP, WHO HAD THREE SEATS IN THE LAST CABINET TO THE CDU'S TEN AND THE CSU'S FIVE, MAY WELL ASK FOR ANOTHER PORTFOLIO AND IT WILL BE HARD FOR KOHL TO SAY NO. THEY WILL ALSO WISH TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC AND TAX POLICY ADJUSTED TO THEIR LIKING. ON THE CSU SIDE, STRAUSS MUST RECOGNISE THAT HIS CHANCES OF A TOP CABINET POST (INsofar AS HIS HINTS THAT HE WANTED ONE WERE EVER MORE THAN BLUFF) HAVE EVAPORATED. BUT HE WILL RESIST VIGOROUSLY THE FDP'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE THEIR SHARE OF MINISTERIAL OFFICES, AND WILL PRESS HARD FOR A TOUGHER COALITION POLICY ON, FOR INSTANCE, LAW AND ORDER. HERE TOO HE WILL CROSS SWORDS AGAIN WITH THE FDP.

9. THE NEW BUNDESTAG IS SCHEDULED TO CONVENE ON 17 FEBRUARY, WITH THE STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY (DEPENDING ON HOW LONG THE NEGOTIATIONS TAKE) TO FOLLOW IN EARLY MARCH.

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FEDERAL GERMAN ELECTION RESULTS

SUMMARY

1. CDU/CSU/FDP COALITION RETURNED TO POWER, BUT WITH REDUCED MAJORITY. GAINS FOR SMALLER PARTIES. GENSCHER UP, STRAUSS DOWN.

DETAIL

2. PROVISIONAL RESULTS OF FEDERAL ELECTIONS ON 25 JANUARY (1983 RESULTS IN BRACKETS) ARE:

| | PERCENT OF VOTE | BUNDESTAG SEATS | |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|
| CDU/CSU | 44.3 (49.8) | 223 (244) | 244 |
| SPD | 37.0 (38.2) | 186 (193) | 46 |
| FDP | 9.1 (7.0) | 46 (34) | |
| GREENS | 8.3 (5.6) | 42 (27) | 290 |
| OTHERS | 1.3 (0.4) | | |

TURN-OUT 84.4 PER CENT (89.1)

3. THIS RESULT BRINGS THE CDU/CSU/FDP COALITION BACK TO POWER WITH A REDUCED MAJORITY (41 SEATS INSTEAD OF 58). FOR THE CDU/CSU THIS IS THE WORST RESULT SINCE 1949. THEIR DROP IN SUPPORT WAS A NASTY SURPRISE FOR THEM, ASCRIBED IN INITIAL REACTIONS BY CDU LEADERS TO THE LOWER TURN-OUT AND TO UNION VOTERS SWITCHING TO THE FDP AS A REACTION TO THE CSU'S ATTACKS ON GENSCHER'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE CAMPAIGN. FOR THE SPD THE FEELING IS ONE OF RELIEF THAT THEY DID NOT DO WORSE. [BUT THEIR WORSE SINCE 1961]

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4. THE WINNERS ARE THE SMALLER PARTIES. BOTH FDP AND GREENS ARE DELIGHTED WITH THE RESULT, ALTHOUGH THE GREENS ARE ALSO DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY DID NOT OVERTAKE THE FDP AND BECOME THE THIRD PARTY IN THE BUNDESTAG.

5. FURTHER COMMENT FOLLOWS.

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