

GRS 475

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FM BONN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 390

OF 181040Z MAY 87

INFO SAVING BMG BERLIN, CONSULATES-GENERAL IN FRG

RHINELAND-PALATINATE LAND ELECTIONS: 17 MAY

SUMMARY

1. CDU LOSE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY AND WILL HAVE TO FORM A COALITION WITH THE FDP.

DETAIL

2. LAND ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN THE RHINELAND-PALATINATE ON 17 MAY. PROVISIONAL FINAL RESULTS (1983 RESULTS IN BRACKETS) ARE:

CDU	PERCENT	45.1(51.9)	SEATS	48(57)
SPD		38.8(39.6)		40(43)
FDP		7.3( 3.5)		7(- )
GREENS		5.9( 4.5)		5(- )
OTHERS		2.9( 0.5)		

TURNOUT: 77.1 PERCENT (90.4 PERCENT IN 1983, WHEN ELECTION WAS HELD SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS).

3. THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE IS THE SIZE OF THE SLUMP IN THE CDU'S VOTE. IN SOME RURAL AREAS THIS WAS OVER 10 PERCENT. IT HAD BEEN WIDELY EXPECTED THAT THE CDU WOULD LOSE ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, BUT LOSSES ON THIS SCALE ARE A NASTY SHOCK FOR THEM. ON TV LAST NIGHT KOHL MADE NO SECRET OF HIS DISAPPOINTMENT. HE CITED AS THREE OBVIOUS REASONS THE LOW TURN-OUT, DISCONTENT AMONG THE FARMERS AND WINE-GROWERS, AND THE INF DEBATE WITHIN THE COALITION. WHEN I SAW HIM THIS MORNING, COUNT LAMBSDORFF (FDP) OFFERED AS A FOURTH FACTOR THE INEVITABLE WEAR AND TEAR AFFECTING MINISTER-PRESIDENT BERNHARD VOGEL (CDU) AFTER MORE THAN TEN YEARS IN OFFICE.

4. THE FDP DID BETTER THAN EXPECTED, MORE THAN DOUBLING THEIR VOTE. THEY MADE THE MOST OF THEIR SUPPORT FOR INF DOUBLE ZERO IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND IT CLEARLY PAID OFF. THIS AND THEIR SUCCESS IN THE HAMBURG ELECTIONS THE SAME DAY (ON WHICH SEE HAMBURG TELNO 009, NOT TO ALL) GIVE THEM TWO MORE FEATHERS IN THEIR CAP, FOLLOWING THEIR SUCCESSES IN THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS IN JANUARY AND IN HESSEN LAST MONTH. TALKS WITH THE CDU ON FORMING A COALITION IN MAINZ BEGIN TODAY.

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5. THE SPD'S RESULT IS SATISFACTORY FOR THEM, GIVEN THAT THEY NEVER EXPECTED TO WIN. (LAFONTAINE TOLD NATO AMBASSADORS ON 15 MAY THAT HE DID NOT THINK AN SPD RECOVERY COULD BEGIN BEFORE THE AUTUMN.) THEY MORE OR LESS HELD THEIR GROUND VIS-A-VIS THE GREENS, WHO IN ANY CASE DID NOT PRESENT AS SERIOUS A THREAT AS THEY DO IN SOME OTHER LAENDER. THE GREENS THEMSELVES CLEARED THE 5 PERCENT HURDLE, AS THEY WERE EXPECTED TO DO, BUT NOT BY A GREAT MARGIN. THE LOOSE ASSOCIATION OF PRIMARILY RIGHT-WING 'FREE VOTERS' GROUPS', WHO LOOKED DURING THE CAMPAIGN AS IF THEY MIGHT TAKE VALUABLE VOTES AWAY FROM THE CDU AND FDP, COULD IN THE END MANAGE ONLY 1.5 PERCENT, AND FINISHED AMONG THE ALSO-RANS.

6. OVERALL THIS RESULT SEEMS TO CONFIRM THE TREND AWAY FROM THE LARGER PARTIES AND TOWARDS THE SMALLER ONES WHICH WE HAVE NOTED IN OTHER RECENT ELECTIONS, INCLUDING THOSE TO THE BUNDESTAG IN JANUARY. GIVEN THE GREENS' ERRATIC AND DIVIDED ATTITUDE TO POWER-SHARING WHETHER IN PRINCIPLE OR IN PRACTICE, THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARY OF THIS MOVEMENT EVERYWHERE IS THE FDP.

7. FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THIS AND THE HAMBURG ELECTIONS FOLLOWS BY LETTER. HMCg FRANKFURT (AWAY TODAY) WILL ALSO WISH TO COMMENT ON HIS RETURN.

BULLARD

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BONN WILL PASS TO BMG AND CGS IN THE FRG

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