

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*AW*



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

8 JUL 1976

In reply refer to:  
t-7191/76

INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Communist Advances in Italy -- INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

16 JUL 1976

(U) Although consultations on the formation of a new Italian government are only beginning, the Communists have already registered a major political victory as a result of their increased legislative strength.

(U) Over the weekend they participated for the first time since 1945 in a formal organizational meeting with the center parties. Among the results of the meeting was an agreed allocation of parliamentary offices: The Christian Democrats get the Presidency of the Senate (Fanfani); the Communists get the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies (Ingrao); and the Socialists get the number two positions in both houses. The left is exploiting this agreement as the beginning of the end to "a priori prejudices" against the Communists.

*I Italy*  
*AW*

~~(C)~~ The Presidency of the Chamber is the highest public office that the Communists have held in thirty years. This will enhance the "legitimacy" of the Communists as part of the Italian domestic political system, and help their prospects in the next election. We do not expect these arrangements by themselves will lead to any direct change in Italy's basic foreign and defense policies.

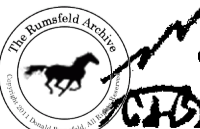
(U) In forthcoming weeks, the Christian Democrats will pursue the thankless and possibly fruitless effort to form a majority coalition government. The Socialists are still insisting on some sort of Communist role, and the Christian Democrats cannot make up a viable non-Communist majority without the Socialists. The Communists are reportedly flexible on their demand for a grand coalition government (all but the fascist right). The most likely short-term outcome is a Christian Democrat minority government.

*8 July 76*

~~(C)~~ Whether the Communists' role in developing new Government Programs is tacit or explicit, it is clear that the government (even with Socialist participation) can only function effectively with their support. Indeed, no major legislative programs are likely to succeed in the country without this support.

classified by Director, European Region  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED  
AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED ON- 12/31/82

*Eugene V. McAuliffe*  
Eugene V. McAuliffe  
Assistant Secretary of Defense



Sec Def Cont Nr. X- 2081

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*2/15/81*