

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 390

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FROM BONN 131600Z JUN 84

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 578 OF 13 JUNE

INFO ROUTINE ATHENS, UKREP BRUSSELS, EMBASSY BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, DUBLIN, LUXEMBOURG, PARIS, ROME, THE HAGUE, UKDEL STRASBOURG, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, EAST BERLIN  
INFO SAVING BMG BERLIN, CGS IN FRG, CICC(G)

MY TELNO 16 SAVING: THE EUROPEAN ELECTION IN THE FRG

SUMMARY

1. STILL LIMITED INTEREST IN THE ELECTION. DOMESTIC ISSUES REMAIN THE MOST ACTIVE. SLIGHT WEAKENING IN CDU/CSU SUPPORT IN PAST 2 WEEKS. BUT THEY ARE STILL EXPECTED TO POLL BETTER THAN THE SPD. GREENS SHOULD JUST SECURE REPRESENTATION. THE FDP MAY JUST FAIL, THUS AGGRAVATING THEIR INTERNAL CRISIS.

DETAIL

2. WITH FOUR DAYS TO POLLING DAY (17 JUNE), THE CAMPAIGN REMAINS LOW-KEY. PARTY RALLIES ARE POORLY ATTENDED. THERE IS MORE INTEREST IN THE EUROPEAN CUP THAN IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTION. LATEST POLLS SHOW THAT LESS THAN 60 PER CENT INTEND TO VOTE. THIS WOULD BE VERY LOW BY GERMAN STANDARDS.

3. THE MAIN ISSUE IS THE STRIKE IN THE ENGINEERING AND PRINTING INDUSTRIES OVER UNION DEMANDS, BACKED BY THE SPD, FOR THE 35 HOUR WEEK. THE CDU/CSU ARE MAKING SOME MILEAGE WITH THEIR CLAIM THAT THE STRIKE IS IRRESPONSIBLE AND IS DAMAGING ECONOMIC RECOVERY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT DECISION UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE FARMERS, TO INCREASE VAT REBATES TO DAIRY FARMERS (MY TEL 546) HAS PROVED HIGHLY UNPOPULAR WITH OTHER SECTORS OF THE ELECTORATE AND HAS BY NO MEANS SATISFIED THE FARMING COMMUNITY. IT COULD LEAD TO WIDESPREAD ABSTENTIONS BY CDU/CSU SUPPORTERS.

4. LATEST POLLS SHOW A SLIGHT DROP IN CDU/CSU SUPPORT RECENTLY TO 44 PER CENT. BUT CDU HEADQUARTERS ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE PARTY WILL IN FACT POLL CLOSER TO 47 PER CENT. THIS WOULD BE A FAIR RESULT. (THEY GOT 49.2 PER CENT IN 1979). ANYTHING MUCH LESS WOULD BE SEEN AS A SERIOUS SETBACK.

5. THE SPD SHOULD POLL OVER 40 PER CENT. SOME POLLS GIVE THEM AS HIGH AS 42 PER CENT. BUT WHEN I SAW VOGEL (THE SPD PARLIAMENTARY LEADER) TODAY HE DISCOUNTED THESE HIGHER FIGURES. HE WAS CLEARLY WORRIED THAT THE SPD VOTE COULD BE DISPROPORTIONATELY HIT BY THE LOW TURNOUT. NEVERTHELESS, ANYTHING OVER 40 PER CENT WOULD BE A BOOST TO THE SPD'S MORALE AFTER THEIR POOR SHOWING (38 PER CENT) IN THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS LAST YEAR.

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6. THE GREENS SHOULD JUST CLEAR THE 5 PER CENT HURDLE NECESSARY FOR REPRESENTATION AT STRASBOURG. THIS WOULD BE ADDED CONFIRMATION THAT THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AS A FACTOR ON THE WEST GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE.

7. BY FAR THE GREATEST INTEREST REMAINS FOCUSED ON THE FDP. POLLS GIVE THEM 4-6 PER CENT. WITH A 2 PER CENT MARGIN OF ERROR, PREDICTION ABOUT THEIR CHANCES OF REPRESENTATION IS GUESS WORK. IN PRIVATE, FDP HEADQUARTERS ARE HOPEFUL THAT THE PARTY WILL JUST CLEAR THE 5 PER CENT HURDLE. BUT THEY ADMIT THAT THEIR VOTE COULD BE AS LOW AS 3 PER CENT. AN FDP FAILURE WOULD FURTHER AGGRAVATE THE CRISIS IN WHICH THE PARTY ALREADY FINDS THEMSELVES (MY TEL 551), ALTHOUGH IT WOULD NOT POSE ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE FEDERAL COALITION.

BONN WILL PASS SAVINGS TO BMG BERLIN, CGS IN THE FRG, CICC(G)

TAYLOR

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