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30 Dec 53

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Director, Current Intelligence DATE: 22 December 1953

FROM : Chief, Western Division

SUBJECT: Contested ballots in Italian 1953 elections

A. Approximately 1,300,000 ballots in the election of 7-8 June were challenged by poll watchers as invalid for any one of several reasons - writing of any kind on ballot, failure to designate party as well as candidates, handing in blank ballot, using ballot not having an official stamp, etc.

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1. Examination of ballots by Chamber special committee is not yet complete but findings to date show that between 436,000 and 590,000 were invalid and that from 700,000 to 860,000 have to be recounted.

2. Of this latter number, at least 100,000 have been recounted so far, according to a reliable source, with the trend three to one in favor of the center electoral bloc of parties.

A. [redacted] this center bloc thus had a winning of some 300,000. 25X6

B. If this is so, center parties gained more than 50 percent of the votes, and by the 29th of March 1953 electoral law are entitled to some two-thirds of the Chamber's 590 seats.

H. [redacted] late in November as to why center parties were concealing their victory, stated the Christian Democrats did not know what to do with the final results when obtained. 25X1X

A. [redacted] ILLEGIB To present them to parliament would cause a chaotic situation in that body and necessitate new elections.

B. While announcement of the victory would be a good device for dissolving Chamber, it would only be a device, and issues other than the Christian Democrats was robbed would have to be developed to make the new elections worthwhile.

New issues

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To

15 Dec  
March 1953  
election law

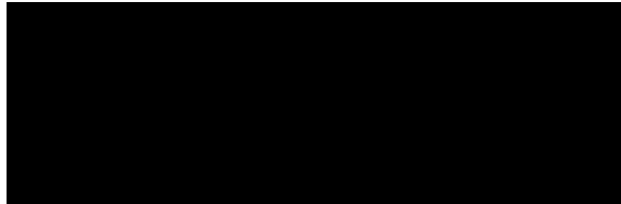
③. He pointed out it was undesirable to raise again the whole issue of the "swindling law" (i.e. the election statute of 29 March 1953), particularly in view of current efforts to repeal ~~it~~ this law.

III

It is possible that the slowness of recount may be due to general apprehension of the major parties over results and to the center parties' reluctance to bring up issue of the unpopular swindling law.

- A. Problem of reallocating seats virtually insoluble and new elections probably only solution.
- B. Parties in general do not want new elections.
  - 1. They would be expensive.
  - 2. Center fears extremes of left and right might gain.
  - 3. Fear that unseating Communist deputies might induce violence by extreme left.
- C. Recount favoring center parties might call into question legality of present parliament's legislation.
- D. Bills are now in parliament to repeal the 29 March 1953 electoral law. If this is done, the recount would have little real meaning.

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