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NSC BRIEFING

18 March 1954

PROSPECTS FOR A STABLE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

I. Scelba coalition government precarious:

- A. Narrow Chamber majority (300-283) rests on support of 3 minor democratic parties.
- B. Cabinet weakened by Montesi scandal.

II. But minor parties want to keep Scelba in office:

- A. His cabinet first since June 1953 elections to counter popular appeal of Communists-Nenni Socialists.
- B. Government parties fear new elections now.

III. Possibilities of alternative coalition including Monarchists:

- A. Monarchists can contribute 40 seats.

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- B. But such a move would also mean
1. Withdrawal of Social Democrats (19 seats)
 2. Withdrawal of Republicans (5 seats)
 3. Probable split of Christian Democrats leaving new coalition without majority.
 - a. Left wing Christian Democrats, who gained in June 1953 elections, are anti-Monarchist.
 - b. Pella Christian Democratic government fell in December largely because of ties with Monarchists.
 4. Social Democrats and some left wing Christian Democrats would tend to cooperate with Nenni Socialists.

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C. Monarchists generally cool to American policy objectives.

1. Insist EDC be made conditional on satisfactory Trieste solution.
2. Want greater policy-making role for Italy in NATO.
3. Many want expanded Italian trade with Orbit.

D. Monarchists oppose reforms designed to lessen Communist electoral appeal.

E. Monarchists' desire for institutional change increases polarization of Italian politics between extreme right and extreme left.

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