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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
6 April 1955

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To: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Italian presidential election of 27-28 April 1955

1. Office to be filled: Presidency of the republic.
2. Parties or factions participating: All parties, inasmuch as the president is elected by the two houses of parliament meeting together. The constitution also calls for regional participation in the election, but parliament has not yet acted to set up 15 of the 19 regional councils and this requirement will probably be dispensed with.
3. Outstanding Personalities: The leading contenders are:

Luigi Einaudi	Present incumbent; a Liberal, with monarchist leanings.
Gaetano Martino	Foreign minister; a Liberal.
Paolo Rossi	President of Social Democratic group in the Chamber of Deputies.
Giuseppe Pella	A former premier, currently president of the Coal-Steel Community (CSC) Assembly; a Christian Democrat; acceptable to Christian Democrats; right wing and probably to the Monarchists.
Giovanni Gronchi	President of Chamber of Deputies; a Christian Democrat; acceptable to part of Christian Democrats' left wing and possibly to the Nenni Socialists.
Cesare Merzagora	President of the Senate; member of Christian Democratic center faction.

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CONFIDENTIAL4. Present party strengths:

	Number of Seats in parliament (Chamber and Senate combined)
<u>Left</u>	305
Communists	(199)
Nenni Socialists	(105)
Left Splinter	(1)
<u>Center</u>	428
Christian Democrats	(381)
Social Democrats	(23)
Republicans	(7)
Liberals	(17)
<u>Right</u>	94
Monarchists	(56)
Neo-Fascists	(38)
<u>Life Senators</u>	6
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Total	- 833

5. Principal issues: The only specific issue involved is the continuation of the quadripartite coalition.

6. Principal factors influencing the outcome: Conflicting interests of the center parties are the principal factors. Election of a Liberal or a Social Democrat would imply continuation of the present quadripartite coalition government, while the election of a Christian Democrat would probably revive charges that the Christian Democrats are seeking a political monopoly or embarking on a search for new alliances.

7. Background: The first presidential election was held on 10-11 May 1948. Einaudi was elected on the fourth ballot with 518 votes. His closest competitor, a Communist-supported former premier of pre-Mussolini days, polled 329 votes. On the first two ballots, the contest was between a Christian Democratic-sponsored Republican, the then foreign minister Sforza, and a Communist-sponsored Liberal candidate. Sforza dropped out of the race between the second and third ballots when the Social Democrats unexpectedly withdrew their support.

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On the third ballot, the Christian Democrats and the small center parties switched to Einaudi, with the Communists casting blank ballots.

8. Informed opinion on outcome: Prevailing opinion is that Einaudi will be re-elected on the fourth ballot, when a simple majority will suffice as compared to the two-thirds majority required on the first three ballots. This opinion based on the belief that none of the government parties wishes to upset the political equilibrium at this time. Einaudi's age, 81 years, may stand in the way of his re-election. Should a deadlock develop, a dark horse victory would be a real possibility. In any case, the victor will almost certainly be from one of the center parties.

9. Significance for US security interests: The president of Italy serves as a symbol of national unity; his political importance is limited to his personal influence and to his role in nominating potential premiers for parliamentary approval.

If Einaudi remains in office, he will undoubtedly continue to co-operate with the United States. Any other successful candidate of the center parties would probably seek to maintain good relations with the United States and to continue Italy's pro-western orientation. However, a political deal involving support from the extreme right or left might adversely affect United States security interests.

HUNTINGDON D. SHELDON
Assistant Director
Current Intelligence



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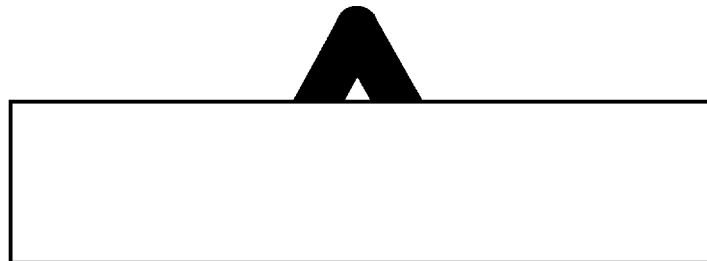


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