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FM BONN

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 511

OF 160830Z JUNE 86

INFO PRIORITY EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POSTS, WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO

INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, BMG BERLIN, EAST BERLIN

INFO SAVING CONSULATES-GENERAL IN FRG

[COLLAR]MY TELNO 499: LAND ELECTIONS IN LOWER SAXONY, 15 JUNE

SUMMARY

1. A NARROW WIN FOR THE CDU/FDP HAS COME AS A RELIEF FOR THE COALITION IN BONN.

DETAIL

2. PROVISIONAL RESULTS OF THE LANDTAG (REGIONAL PARLIAMENT) ELECTIONS IN LOWER SAXONY ARE AS FOLLOWS (1982 RESULTS IN BRACKETS). FINAL RESULTS WILL NOT BE DECLARED UNTIL 18 JUNE.

	PERCENTAGE	SEATS
CDU	<u>44.3</u> (50.7)	69 (87)
SPD	42.1 (36.5)	66 (63)
FDP	6.0 (5.9)	9 (10) -
GREENS	<u>7.1</u> (6.5)	11 (11)
OTHERS	<u>0.5</u> (0.4)	NIL (NIL)
	- TOTAL	155 (171)

WHEREAS THE CDU PREVIOUSLY HAD A MAJORITY OF 3 OVER THE OTHER 3 PARTIES COMBINED, THE CDU AND FDP TOGETHER WILL NOW HAVE A MAJORITY OF 1 OVER THE SPD/GREENS.

3. THE 1982 RESULT, COMING AS IT DID IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE SCHMIDT CHANCELLORSHIP, WAS ATYPICAL. IT WAS ALWAYS TO BE EXPECTED THAT IN 1986 THE SPD WOULD WIN BACK SEVERAL OF THE PERCENTAGE POINTS THEY LOST THEN. THAT THEY DID NOT DO ENOUGH TO TOPPLE ALBRECHT (WITH GREEN HELP) CAN BE ASCRIBED TO SEVERAL FACTORS:

- (A) AS SO OFTEN, THE FDP DID BETTER ON THE DAY THAN THE POLLS PREDICTED, AND CLEARED THE 5 PER CENT HURDLE WITHOUT DIFFICULTY:
- (B) THE CHERNOBYL FACTOR PROVED TO BE A WANING ASSET FOR THE GREENS. OPINION POLLS TAKEN 3 WEEKS AND 1 WEEK BEFORE THE POLLS SHOWED A SUBSTANTIAL DROP IN THE NUMBER OF VOTERS WORRIED ABOUT DAMAGE TO THEIR HEALTH FROM CHERNOBYL OR WANTING NUCLEAR POWER PHASED OUT:
- (C) ALTHOUGH THE CDU DID WORSE IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS (DOWN 6.8 PER CENT) THAN IN TOWNS (DOWN 5.4 PER CENT), THERE WERE NOT AS MANY ABSTENTIONS FROM FARMERS AS THEY MAY EARLIER HAVE FEARED:

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(D) ALBRECHT PROVED PERSONALLY MORE POPULAR THAN HIS SPD OPPONENT, SCHROEDER. WHEREAS ALBRECHT WAS FAR AHEAD OF KOHL IN LOCAL VOTERS' PREFERENCES, SCHROEDER LAGGED BEHIND HIS OWN NATIONAL LEADER, RAU:

(E) THOUGH FOUR-FIFTHS OF CDU AND FDP VOTERS WERE HAPPY WITH THE IDEA OF A CDU/FDP COALITION (AND NEARLY 90 PER CENT OF GREENS FAVOURED A COALITION WITH THE SPD), LESS THAN HALF THE SPD VOTERS WANTED A COALITION WITH THE GREENS. THE MORE THEY LOOKED LIKE WINNING, THE MORE THIS WILL HAVE LOST THEM SUPPORT ON THE DAY.

4. ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THE RESULT WILL HAVE COME AS A GREAT RELIEF FOR KOHL. LOSS OF LOWER SAXONY WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE BEEN A PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW, BUT WOULD HAVE COST HIM CONTROL OF THE BUNDES RAT (WHOSE LAND REPRESENTATIVES ARE APPOINTED ON A "WINNER TAKE ALL" BASIS). HE WILL BE THANKFUL NOT TO HAVE THIS COMPLICATION IN THE RUN-UP TO THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS IN JANUARY 1987.

BULLARD

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