

Report from Rome by Liliana Celani

Government crisis tied to Irangate

The only hope for an enduring solution will be to keep Craxi, Andreotti, and Spadolini as far away from power as possible.

The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* are trying to portray the Italian government crisis, which is by no means over with the formation of the Fanfani caretaker government taking Italy to early elections in June, as "too complex" for Americans to understand. Looked at from above, as *EIR* readers are used to looking at all events, the Italian crisis should be better understood in the United States than in any other country, because of its many similarities to the political turmoil initiated by Irangate.

The facts of the crisis are the following: On March 3, Bettino Craxi, the Socialist who had been premier for two years, handed in his resignation to the Senate, officially opening the government crisis over conflicts with Christian Democrats Ciriaco De Mita and Giulio Andreotti, who claimed it was their turn to resume the premiership.

Andreotti, foreign minister in the outgoing Craxi cabinet, was the first to try to form a new government, and failed. At that point the President of the Republic Francesco Cossiga, the former head of Aspen Institute-Italy and cousin of the late Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer, gave Communist Nilde Iotti, who chairs the Chamber of Deputies, the "exploratory assignment" of checking out whether a different majority might be reached. Iotti also failed, and exactly one month after the opening of the crisis, Craxi went back to the Senate to launch a very dangerous proposal, which had also been backed by Com-

munist Party head Alessandro Natta: the idea of a "referendum majority," a government supported by Communists, Radicals, and leftists which would support the referendum against nuclear energy called for by the Radical Party.

During the Senate debate, Giulio Andreotti sent signals to Craxi that he favored such a "referendum majority," provoking a revolt inside his own Christian Democratic Party, particularly from a group of senators around Senators Mancino and Carollo. They decided to withdraw all Christian Democratic ministers from Craxi's government, finishing it off.

Interior Minister Oscar Luigi Scalfaro tried forming a one-party government with only Christian Democrats, and, failing to do so, passed the buck to the aged Amintore Fanfani, the Christian Democratic president of the Senate, who was seen as the "last chance" to form a minority government that will only last until early elections in June. Fanfani's government, composed of Christian Democratic ministers and so-called "experts" (since the other four parties forming the previous *pentapartito*, or five-party coalition, refused to join it) will be voted out on the Tuesday after Easter, after a parliamentary debate marked by the "obstructionism" of the Radicals, and will stay on in a caretaker capacity until early elections.

Behind the facts of the crisis is the clash between Catholic forces who defend basic values such as the family and the idea that there is a connection

between economics and morality; and the political "lay" forces represented by Communists, Socialists, and Radicals, who have been promoting referendums on divorce and abortion since 1968. These are the same forces now pushing for the nuclear energy referendum, aiming at an institutional and constitutional reform of Italian politics.

As in the United States, the turmoil opened by the crisis punctured the myth of Craxi's "economic recovery" in Italy. Economic experts have begun to openly admit that "Italy cannot enter the post-industrial era if it never completed the industrial one." Another rapidly vanishing myth is that of Giulio Andreotti's "successful foreign policy," pivoted on pro-Soviet and pro-Libyan actions, as Italian military experts have followed their French and British counterparts in issuing statements against the zero option for dismantling the nuclear component of NATO in Europe.

As for Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini, who backed the zero option, his position was badly eroded by the recent revelations on the Talamona harbor in Tuscany, from which Italian weapons were sent to Iran. Craxi, Andreotti, and Spadolini are, not surprisingly, the closest friends of Michael Ledeen, the key U.S. figure linking Italians to Irangate.

As Fiorella Operto, president of the Schiller Institute in Italy, said in a recent statement: "Craxi, Andreotti, Spadolini will be off the stage very soon, and this not because of the political fights around the government crisis, but because of the gigantic political earthquake shaking the United States. If we may give advice in Italy for the formation of an enduring future government after early elections, these three characters should stay far away from any important assignment."