

## Eye on Washington by William Jones

### Italian ambassador sounds the alarm

*Ambassador Biancheri underlined the gravity of Italy's current crisis, but dodged some "touchy" questions.*

**T**he Italian government crisis has received very little attention in the U.S. media and political debate, in spite of the fact that the situation, especially in the aftermath of the mayoral elections on June 6, constitutes a grave threat to the Italian nation.

This point was made very clearly by Italy's ambassador to the United States, Boris Biancheri, speaking at a luncheon meeting of the Italy-U.S. Business Conference here on June 7. "The situation in Italy is changing dramatically," said Biancheri, "in a perhaps pathological way."

The day before, in the local elections in Italy, all the government parties collapsed in northern Italy, while maintaining a foothold in the South (see *International Intelligence*). In Milan, the separatist Northern League won a whopping 40% of the votes, while the Christian Democracy plummeted from 20% to 10%, and the Socialist Party went from 19% to 2.2%.

"The situation is characterized by a general sense of unhappiness and dissatisfaction," said Biancheri. Although there have been 52 governments in Italy since the war, he explained, the focus of stability and national unity lay in the process of perpetual negotiation (and distribution of power) among the center parties, which prevented the extreme right or the extreme left from gaining any significant influence.

The Communists, with their (sometimes stormy) relationship with the Soviet Union, were considered a clear threat to Italian NATO membership. "After the East-West confrontation," said Ambassador Biancheri, "there was no reason to keep the other

party out of power."

In addition, he said, due to the peculiarities of Italian law, "parliamentarians were not directly dependent on the electors." Therefore, "the parties became the real movers," and the relationships within a party and among the parties, he implied, were based on backroom deals, from which arose corruption.

It is precisely this negotiation process among the center parties "which is threatened by the present political crisis." Whatever happens, the ambassador said, "the situation will never again be the same. The Republicans, Socialists, and Social Democrats have been wiped out," and the traditional leadership threatened with extinction.

And the cause of this unprecedented crisis? Ambassador Biancheri wished to attribute it solely to internal factors. In the Italian press, however, and most recently, in the Italian Parliament, frequent reference has been made to the report, disseminated widely in Italy by this news service, of a meeting held on June 2, 1992 aboard the British royal yacht *Britannia*, which had anchored off Italian shores, and where the destabilization of Italy through privatization of state-run industries had been a topic of discussion by illustrious names of the British financial and banking world, and their Italian counterparts. In drawing attention to this meeting in a discussion in the Italian Parliament on May 11, Sen. Edda Fagni of the Communist Refoundation had mentioned Lyndon LaRouche and organizations associated with him as the source of the story.

During the question period, when

I asked Ambassador Biancheri about the possibility of external manipulation of Italy's crisis, which, I noted, seemed to be a clear attack on the very foundations of the Italian nation, he commented that I had hit upon a "touchy subject." He admitted that there had been much speculation in the press concerning foreign involvement, but he felt that there was enough cause for unhappiness in Italy itself to account for the crisis.

And yet, in light of the new wave of terrorism in Rome and Florence, he felt that there could be cause for suspicion of outside involvement. On May 26, a bomb exploded in Florence, killing 5 persons and wounding 30. It destroyed part of the Uffizi Palace, one of the greatest art museums in the world. The 100-kilogram car bomb missed, by only a few meters, the gallery containing the most precious works of the Italian Renaissance. Had these not been housed in a room without windows, thereby damping the shock wave from the bomb, these priceless treasures would have been lost to mankind. Some irreplaceable works of art were destroyed, causing one museum official to characterize the bombing as an "attack on memory."

"I just don't know who could do this," said Biancheri. "It would anyhow be difficult to detect who is behind it."

Although perhaps, as Italian Interior Minister Nicola Mancino said, an investigation should begin with those who have connections to "underground powers like the P-2," the illegal freemasonic lodge with connections to Washington and London. But at that point, the investigation of the Italian crisis would cease being merely an "internal" affair and take on a rather Anglo-American contour—a possibility which the ambassador apparently did not wish to discuss.