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FM TALLINN  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELNO 166  
OF 020740Z SEPTEMBER 92  
AND TO PRIORITY CABINET OFFICE  
INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, RIGA, VILNIUS

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MY TELNO 163: ESTONIAN ELECTIONS

1. A FURTHER POLL HAS SHOWN RUUTEL EDGING MERI BY 30 PER CENT TO 29 PER CENT. TAAGEPERA HAD 10 PER CENT AND MS PAREK 7 PER CENT. THERE WERE 23 PER CENT QUOTE DON'T KNOWS UNQUOTE.

2. MERI'S FATHERLAND FRONT STILL LEADS WITH 18 PER CENT SUPPORT FOLLOWED BY THE POPULAR FRONT OR PEOPLE'S CENTRE PARTY (TAAGEPERA) WITH 14 PER CENT, SAFE HOME (RUUTEL) AND THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY (PAREK) WITH 9 PER CENT EACH AND THE MODERATES (MAINLY SOCIAL DEMOCRATS) WITH 7 PER CENT.

3. AS FORESHADOWED IN MY TUR RUUTEL IS NOW CAMPAIGNING IN EARNEST AND ENJOYING SUBSTANTIAL MEDIA COVERAGE. BUT HIS LEVEL OF SUPPORT STILL FALLS FAR SHORT OF AN OVERALL MAJORITY.

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Digest of 2 September 1992 report from Tallinn to FCO London titled "ESTONIA: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS"

ELECTIONS

2. CAMPAIGNING FOR THE 20 SEPTEMBER PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IS IN FULL SWING. EARLY POLLS PUT THE RIGHT-WING NATIONALIST FATHERLAND COALITION IN THE LEAD FOLLOWED BY SAVISAAR'S POPULAR FRONT WITH RUUTEL'S SAFE HOME COALITION IN THIRD PLACE. BUT RUUTEL LEADS MERI, THE FATHERLAND CANDIDATE, BY A WHISKER IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. HOWEVER HE NEEDS AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY ON 20 SEPTEMBER LACKING WHICH THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WILL CHOOSE THE PRESIDENT BY BALLOT. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO PICK MERI THAN RUUTEL.

\*end\*

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TELNO 174  
OF 090640Z SEPTEMBER 92  
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MY TELNO 166: ESTONIAN ELECTIONS

1. ANOTHER POLL OF 2260 VOTERS COUNTRYWIDE TAKEN BETWEEN 25 AUGUST AND 1 SEPTEMBER GIVES RUUTEL 46 PER CENT OF THE VOTE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE AGAINST 29 PER CENT FOR MERI AND 18 PER CENT FOR TAAGEPERA. MS PAREK LANGUISHES ON 5 PER CENT.

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2. IT APPEARS THAT MOST OF THE QUOTE DON'T KNOWS UNQUOTE HAVE PLUMPED FOR RUUTEL AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, TAAGEPERA, LEAVING MERI WHERE HE WAS AT THE TIME OF MY TUR. WHILE IT IS EARLY DAYS, THIS POLL, IF REFLECTING ACCURATELY WHAT HAPPENS ON 20 SEPTEMBER, WOULD LEAVE RUUTEL SHORT OF AN OVERALL MAJORITY ON THE DAY. GIVEN THAT MERI'S AND TAAGEPERA'S PARTIES ARE WELL AHEAD OF RUUTEL'S IN THE POLLS, AND THAT THE MODERATES HAVE JUST DECLARED FOR MERI, THIS WOULD INDICATE A WIN BY PARLIAMENTARY BALLOT FOR THE LATTER WITH A RESULTANT CENTRE-RIGHT GOVERNMENT. BUT IT COULD YET BE A VERY CLOSE CALL.

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Digest of 16 September 1992 report from Tallinn to FCO London titled "ESTONIA: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS"

#### ELECTIONS

4. THE FIRST OF THREE TELEVISED DEBATES BETWEEN THE FOUR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TOOK PLACE ON 15 SEPTEMBER. IT WAS A LACK LUSTRE AFFAIR WITH TAAGEPERA (POPULAR FRONT) MAKING THE BEST IMPRESSION. RUUTEL (SAFE HOME) ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE FLUSTERED BY QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS COMMUNIST PAST, MS PAREK (NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY) WAS OUT OF HER DEPTH AND MERI (FATHERLAND) CLOWNED. ACCORDING TO A FATHERLAND POLL, MERI NOW LEADS RUUTEL BY 35 PER CENT TO 33 PER CENT. THOSE FIGURES MUST BE SUSPECT BUT RUUTEL HAS LOST SUPPORT FOLLOWING AN ATTEMPT PROBABLY INSTIGATED BY HIS PARTY, TO SMEAR MERI BY ALLEGING HIS FATHER WAS A KGB AGENT. THIS HAS BACKFIRED RESULTING IN A SURGE OF SYMPATHY FOR MERI WHILE DRAWING OUT EVEN MORE THE UNDOUBTED FACT OF RUUTEL'S COMMUNIST PAST.

5. FATHERLAND STILL LEAD THE POLLS AND HOPE FOR 30-35 SEATS IN 101 SEAT PARLIAMENT. IF THEIR ALLIES, THE MODERATES, DO AS EXPECTED AND OBTAIN 10 OR SO SEATS, THIS ALLIANCE WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. ASSUMING MERI WINS THE PRESIDENCY (IT STILL SEEMS VERY CLOSE BETWEEN HIM AND RUUTEL), THE FRONT RUNNER FOR PRIME MINISTER IS NOW NOT / (NOT) SAVISAAR (POPULAR FRONT) BUT MART LAAR, A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT MEMBER OF FATHERLAND IN HIS EARLY THIRTIES. THE RECEIVED WISDOM IS THAT THE AUTHORITARIAN SAVISAAR, THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN GETTING PEOPLE TO SERVE IN HIS CABINET AND, IF THE FATHERLAND - MODERATE ALLIANCE DO WELL IN THE ELECTIONS, THEY CAN GO IT ALONE WITHOUT THE POPULAR FRONT.

6. A RECENT POLL SHOWED 85 PER CENT OF THOSE POLLED INTENDED TO VOTE. THIS SEEMS ON THE HIGH SIDE: THERE IS NOTHING REMOTELY LIKE ELECTION FEVER IN THE AIR. ONE POSSIBILITY, FEARED BY FATHERLAND, IS THAT VOTERS WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST AND CAST THEIR PARLIAMENTARY VOTES WILLY-NILLY WITHOUT WEIGHING THE ISSUES.

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MYTEL 174: ESTONIAN ELECTIONS: RESULTS

SUMMARY

1. NO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HAS THE NECESSARY MAJORITY SO THE NEW PARLIAMENT WILL ELECT THE PRESIDENT AT THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER. THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT FATHERLAND, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND THE MODERATES WILL FORM THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

DETAIL

2. THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| ARNOLD RUUTEL (SAFE HOME)                 | 42.67 PER CENT |
| LENNART MERI (FATHERLAND AND MODERATES)   | 28.87 PER CENT |
| LAGLE PAREK (NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY) | 3.85 PER CENT  |
| REIN TAAGEPERA (POPULAR FRONT)            | 23.83 PER CENT |

SPOILT BALLOTS MAKE UP THE REMAINDER. THIS MEANS THAT THE NEW PARLIAMENT WILL HAVE TO ELECT THE PRESIDENT SINCE NONE OF THE CANDIDATES ACHIEVED THE NECESSARY MAJORITY OF 50 PER CENT PLUS ONE. THE NEW PARLIAMENT WILL ELECT THE PRESIDENT AT THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER.

3. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ESTONIAN CONSTITUTION, THE NEW PARLIAMENT WILL HAVE TO NAME THE NEW GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH AND A HALF. IF NOT THE PRESIDENT WILL CALL NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

4. THE SECOND PRELIMINARY RESULTS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE 101 SEAT PARLIAMENT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| FATHERLAND | 28 SEATS |
| SAFE HOME  | 18 SEATS |

|                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| POPULAR FRONT                        | 15 SEATS |
| MODERATES                            | 13 SEATS |
| ESTONIAN NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY | 10 SEATS |
| INDEPENDENT ROYALISTS                | 8 SEATS  |
| ESTONIAN CITIZEN                     | 8 SEATS  |
| ESTONIAN ENTREPRENEURS' UNION        | 1 SEAT   |

THE FINAL RESULTS WILL BE AVAILABLE EITHER ON THE EVENING OF 21 OR MORNING OF 22 SEPTEMBER. THERE WERE 628 CANDIDATES FOR THE 101 SEATS.

5. APPROXIMATELY 67.5 PER CENT OF THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE (677,930) DID (SOME 457,319).

COMMENT

6. THE ESTONIAN PEOPLE WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE MISSED OUT ON THEIR ONE AND ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT THEIR PRESIDENT DIRECTLY. MERI APPEARS TO BE FAVOURITE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY BALLOT, WHILE THE FATHERLAND, MODERATES AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY WILL ALLY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT.

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*I. P. M. repeat  
to UN in New York*

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MY TELNO 179: ESTONIAN ELECTIONS

SUMMARY

1. PROBABLE FINAL RESULTS NOW TO HAND. PROSPECT OF PARLIAMENTARY COALITION LEADING TO A RIGHT OF CENTRE GOVERNMENT WITH MERI AS PRESIDENT. FIRST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION LIKELY ON 5 OCTOBER TO ELECT SPEAKER, TWO DEPUTY SPEAKERS AND PRESIDENT. POSSIBILITY OF SOFTER STANCE ON CITIZENSHIP NOW THAT ELECTIONS OVER.

DETAIL

2. ALTHOUGH NOT FINALLY DECLARED THE PROBABLE RESULTS LOOK AS FOLLOWS:

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| FATHERLAND FRONT            | 29 SEATS |
| SAFE HOME                   | 17 SEATS |
| POPULAR FRONT               | 15 SEATS |
| MODERATES                   | 12 SEATS |
| NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY | 10 SEATS |
| ROYALISTS                   | 8 SEATS  |
| ESTONIAN CITIZEN            | 8 SEATS  |
| GREENS                      | 1 SEAT   |
| ENTREPRENEURS' UNION        | 1 SEAT   |

3. DESPITE RUUTEL'S 41.8 PER CENT AGAINST MERI'S 29.5 IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THE LATTER IS LIKELY TO PREVAIL WHEN PARLIAMENT ELECTS A PRESIDENT, PROBABLY ON 5 OCTOBER, TOGETHER WITH A SPEAKER AND TWO DEPUTY SPEAKERS. SO FAR (APART FROM THE FATHERLAND FRONT) THE POPULAR FRONT, MODERATES AND ROYALISTS HAVE DECLARED THEIR SUPPORT FOR MERI WHICH WOULD GIVE THE LATTER A COMFORTABLE 64 VOTES. THESE, TOGETHER WITH THE LIKELY SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY, SHOULD MEAN A CRUSHING VICTORY FOR MERI.

4. WHATEVER UNEASY ALLIANCES ARE FORMED TO ENSURE RUUTEL'S

DOWNFALL, THERE WILL BE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT BALANCE OF FORCES IN PARLIAMENT. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, VELLISTE, A LEADING LIGHT IN FATHERLAND FRONT, TOLD ME ON 23 SEPTEMBER THAT HIS PARTY COULD COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE MODERATES AND THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE PARTY IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT AND PROMOTING ITS POLICIES IN PARLIAMENT. THIS IS A BARE MAJORITY, 51 OUT OF 101, ALTHOUGH THEY COULD PICK UP SOME SUPPORT FROM THE ROYALISTS AND EVEN THE POPULAR FRONT. MART LAAR, THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, IS STILL THE LIKELY PRIME MINISTER.

COMMENT

5. IN MY VIEW, THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO FOLLOW THE SAME STERN BUT NECESSARY ECONOMIC POLICIES OF ITS PREDECESSOR: NO (NO) ESTONIAN GOVERNMENT WILL ATTEMPT TO CHANGE COURSE AND ERODE IMF AND IBRD SUPPORT. THERE ARE ALSO WELCOME THOUGH MUTED INDICATIONS THAT THE NATIONALISTS WILL CLIMB OFF THEIR ELECTORAL BANDWAGON AND SEEK GENUINELY TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE RUSSIAN COMMUNITY AND RELAX CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS.

6. THE ELECTION HAS BEEN HAILED BY SUCH AS THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELECTORAL REFORM SOCIETY AS FREE AND FAIR. IT TOOK PLACE IN A CALM AND PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE. THERE WERE NO MINORITY DEMONSTRATIONS: INDEED A RUSSIAN CHEERFULLY DIRECTED ME TO A POLLING STATION IN A VILLAGE OUTSIDE TALLINN. ESTONIAN DEMOCRACY MAY NOT HAVE COME OF AGE, BUT IT HAS SUCCESSFULLY TAKEN ITS FIRST TENTATIVE STEPS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IT WILL PROVE SUFFICIENTLY MATURE AND FEEL SECURE ENOUGH TO DEAL FAIRLY WITH ITS NON-ESTONIAN COMMUNITY.

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