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OVER THE HORIZON

Italy: Early Polls Show Left Leading in March Elections

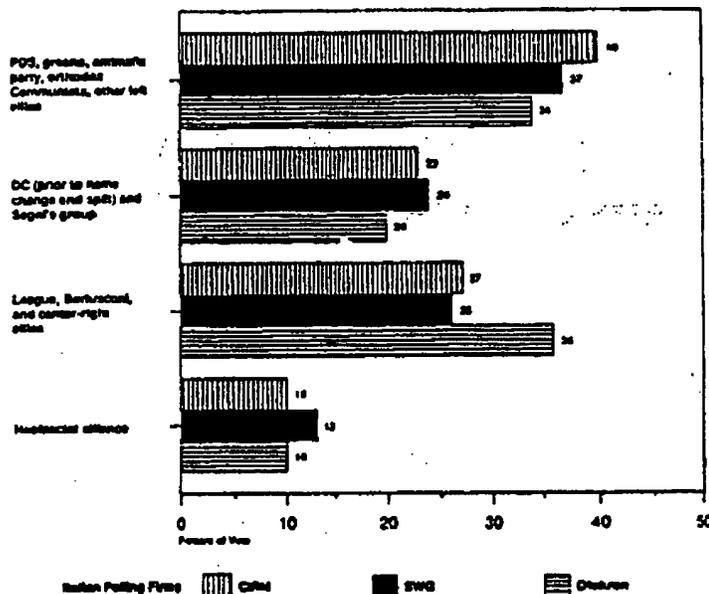
With campaigning in full swing for Italian parliamentary elections on 27-28 March, polls show the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS, the former Communists) has 16 to 23 percent of voter support. The PDS hopes the unveiling of a joint program in mid-February for its "Progressive Alliance" will cement its support from other leftist parties, with whom the PDS claims 34 to 40 percent of the electorate, according to the polls.

Determining true party strength is proving difficult, however; many voters remain undecided because center parties—including the former Christian Democrats (DC)—have not fully regrouped from the effects of corruption scandals and steep electoral losses. Interparty "alliances" are being struck almost daily, but most are unlikely to survive until voting day; small

parties are attaching heavy conditions to their cooperation, and larger parties—including the PDS—are papering over internal divisions. The entry this week of media magnate Silvio Berlusconi into the political fray on the center-right will also pose an unwelcome challenge to the populist Northern League, Mario Segni's reformist group, and the two DC successor parties—and further delay the center's efforts to organize against the left. Races will sharpen, however, after the mid-February deadline for party registration of candidates for newly created single-member districts, when voters can finally determine their choices.

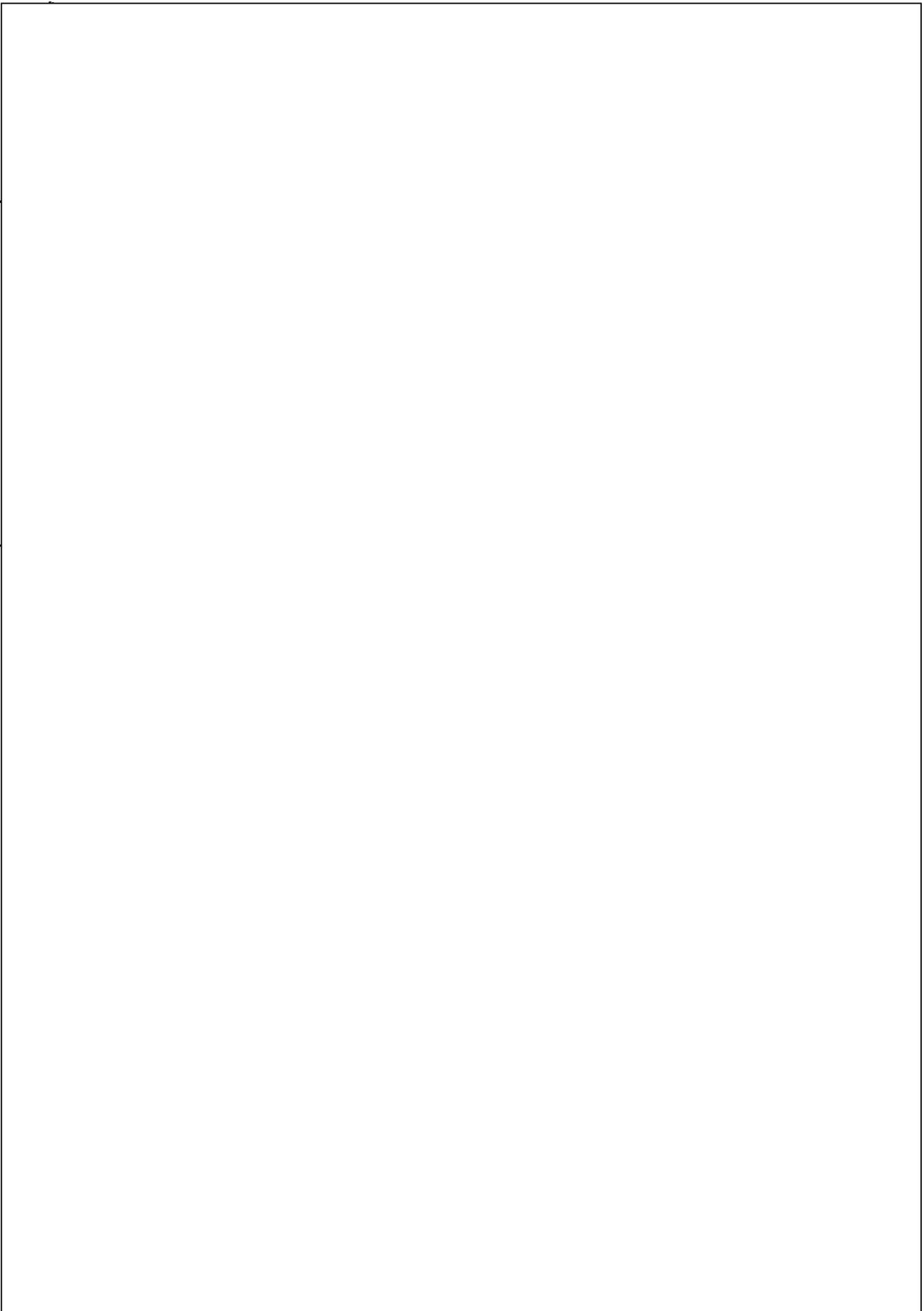
Initial Polls Looking Ahead to Italy's March Elections\*

Groupings indicate potential electoral alliances

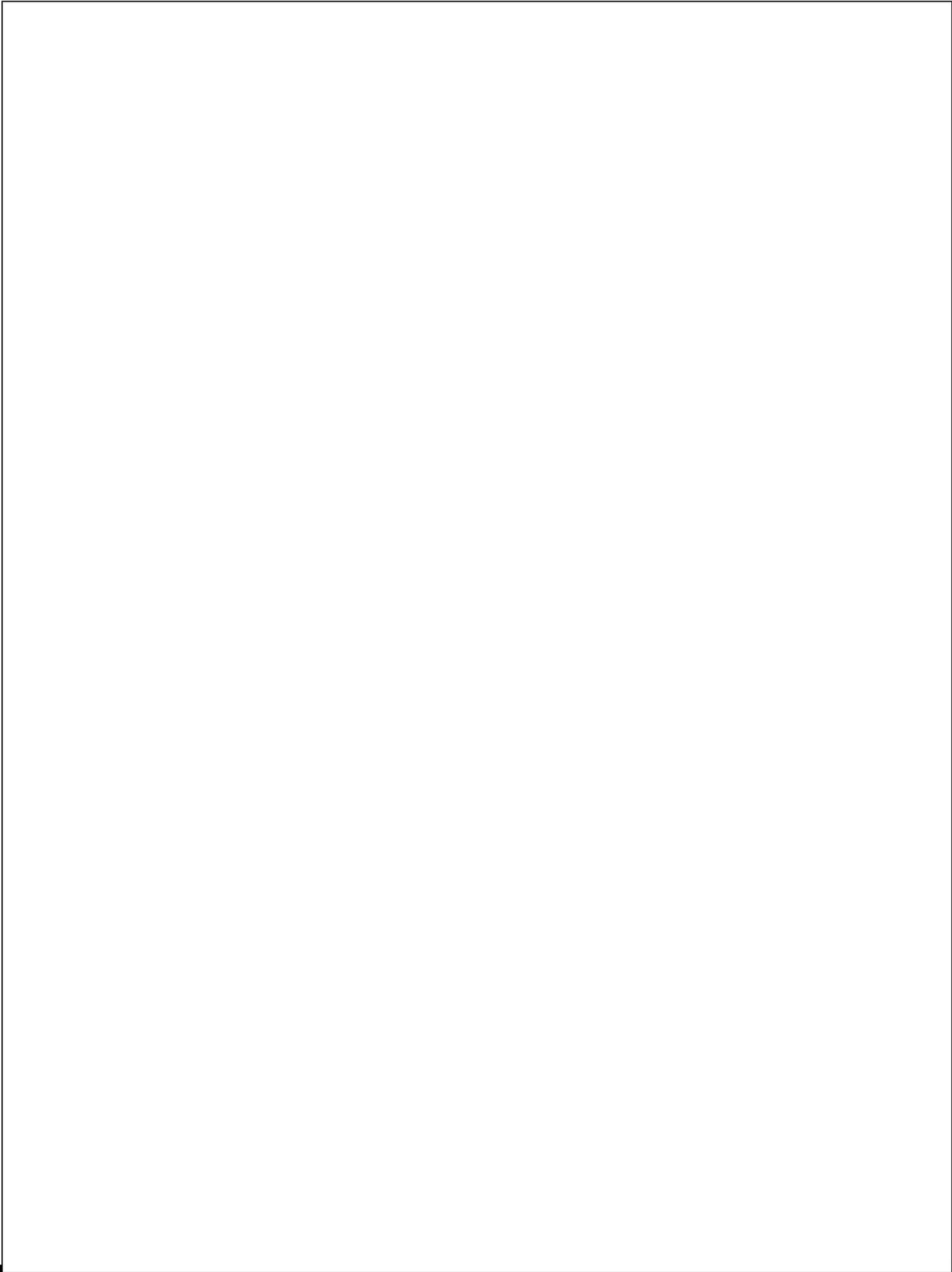


\*Italian Polling Firm Cifra  
Source: Libération, 9 January 1993

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