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8/1/80 Mr. Fall (EESS)
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WRJ 026/6
Your reference
INDUSTRY NO. 13
- 9 DEC 1980
Our reference
DATE PA4 December 1980

D A S Gladstone Esq

WED

FCO

Mr. Vericker
Mr. Colombo 8/12

Water under the bridge & 1/4
not true has much it matters anyway ✓

Dear David,

8/12

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ITALY

1. Thank you for sending us a copy of the record of the conversation between the Prime Minister and Signor Forlani on 23 November.
2. While the Prime Minister's party were here we were told that the conversation on East/West affairs and Poland had been somewhat disappointing and lacking in content. Michael Alexander's record tends to bear this out.
3. In this context it may just be of interest that when I was pressed for de-briefing on the subject by the Danish Ambassador here he told me of a conversation he had with the Secretary-General at the MFA, Malfatti, on the subject. Malfatti, who had, I think, been with Colombo, said that Gromyko had said that the margin that lay between the present situation in Poland and Soviet intervention was very clear and very narrow. The Dane said that this was a line which he knew the Russians (possibly Pravda) to have taken on another occasion.
4. If it is true that Gromyko spoke on these lines the question arises why Colombo should not have been more forthcoming (less so in fact than his officials, who appeared during the PUS' parallel conversation with Malfatti to be divided over how to interpret whatever Gromyko had really said and meant). There is a conspiracy theory which might account for it based upon the belief that Colombo has been too close to the Socialists (PSI), eg over Malta, for the taste of most of his DC colleagues. It is argued that Colombo's Moscow and Warsaw visits were not well regarded by the DC and that Colombo, while going through the motions of debriefing himself with his colleagues, has been

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careful not to make too much of it. Like most conspiracy theories it is far from certainly true, but it could just explain why Colombo so signally failed to take an easy trick and show himself a world statesman with revealing insights into Soviet/Polish thinking.

5. May I leave it to you to copy this letter elsewhere only if you or EESD find it plausible or interesting.

*Yours we,
Rogge.*

W R Tomkys