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British Embassy
Via XX Settembre 80A 00187 Rome

Telex 61049 Telephone 4755.441

Mr. [unclear] 18/6 *Recd 18/6/81*
Mr. [unclear] W of
18/6
and a 'sciopero bianco' is a go show!

2/6
Research Dept

18/6

R P Osborne Esq
WED
FCO

Your reference

Our reference

WRJ 014/2	Date
22 JUN 1981	11 June 1981
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18 JUN 1981	
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<i>18/6</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>

11 June 1981

Dear Roy,

GOVERNMENT CRISIS

1. We have found ourselves embarrassed in correspondence by constant need to refer to "the crisis". I therefore thought it worthwhile to take this opportunity to remind you (and you may care to draw it to the attention of those of your colleagues who are less familiar with the Italian scene) that "crisis" does not mean what it says.
2. My little dictionary of political and parliamentary usage makes it clear that a crisi di governo is simply the technical term for the fall of a Government by whatever means it takes place. It is a parliamentary crisis or an extra parliamentary crisis according to whether it has its origin within or without Parliament. It is a "crisi bianca" if the Government's fall is the result of a gentlemen's agreement among the parties. It can be a "guided crisis" if the party managers have got together and decided what the outcome should be in advance; there are those who say that this was what Piccoli wanted this time. The crisis then continues until a new Government is effectively in power. The average life of Government is around 8 to 10 months; the average span of each "crisis" is about a month. While therefore "crisis" sounds to the Anglo/Saxon ear somewhat alarming, in Italian political terminology it is more or less the technical term for the period following the resignation of a Prime Minister and lasting until his successor has taken over.
3. We will continue to refer to "the crisis" but hope that readers will not be too alarmed. There have, after all, been more than 40 such since the war.

Yours ever,
Roger.

W R TOMKYS

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