



*With the compliments of*

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S MINISTER

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ROME

Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Mr Culshaw

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cc: Miss Savill, WED, FCO

THE DONAT-CATTIN AFFAIR

1. At Mr Tomkys's party last night Consigliere Catalano, of the Foreign Minister's Private Office, told me that On. Cossiga wished to dispose of this matter as quickly as possible. Given the Parliamentary procedures involved, this might mean a debate in the last week of July: the maximum period possible was nine months, but Cossiga did not think delay was in his Government's interest.

2. On. Spaventa, of the independent pro Communist Left, agreed that an early vote would be taken and informed me that he would vote against the impeachment of the Prime Minister. Given that the Government already has a parliamentary majority, but that one or two Socialists are not to be trusted, his evidence of good sense on the independent Left is welcome, and suggests that Cossiga's government is not at risk.

3. Two dangers, however, remain: first, that Cossiga will be too conscientious to present himself for the judgement of his peers without divesting himself of the Premiership in advance. This possibility is still being aired, though my own view is that any qualms he may have will be overridden by his governmental colleagues. The other is that his own party "friends" will persuade him to go, so that they can have a turn in government. I would judge that they are ~~not~~ quite irresponsible enough for that. In any case no one wants a crisis at the beginning of August: they want to go on holiday.

*Mr. Gladstone*  
*It seems increasingly unlikely that this issue will bring the Cossiga Government down.*

A C Goodison

27 June 1980