

Metaphoric Systems in Japanese and English News Articles

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In this paper I will look at metaphoric use in Japanese and English news articles. Although the metaphor is commonly associated with literature, one or two examples should suffice to demonstrate that factual reporting relies heavily on metaphors as well. In Washington, D.C., 'politics' is often characterized as 'war'. The 'battlelines are drawn' between President and Congress, and if the president 'wields' his veto the Congress will 'counterattack' by trying to override it. This is no literary flourish but the stuff of everyday news articles.

Metaphoric use is often not limited to a single occurrence; there are numerous examples systematically based on an equation of the 'topic' to the 'vehicle', 'politics' being the topic in the forementioned example and 'war' being the vehicle. Is metaphoric use as pervasive in Japanese as in English news writing, and how can teachers help the non-native speakers in their attempts to decode the intended message?

I will analyze an English and a Japanese article and show that complex but different metaphoric systems exist in both languages. These can be the cause of comprehension problems if non-native speakers remain unaware that news articles and analyses are rich in figurative language. Even at the simplest of levels, I have found that students misunderstand the word 'fight'. They do not realize that this word is commonly used to mean a heated verbal disagreement and so suppose that I am physically aggressive when I tell them that I had a fight with someone in my family.

This analysis is based on a small body of text, one English article and one Japanese one, and as such I can only hope to provide an introduction to metaphoric use in the two languages. The Japanese article (Appendix One) comes from the Japanese news magazine "Aera", and the English article (Appendix Two) is taken from "Time", a major American news magazine. Although the reports concern different countries, these articles both deal with government corruption. The English article concerns the beleaguered Prime Minister of Italy in 1994, while the Japanese article reports on corruption among the cadres in China in 1995.

The Japanese Article

'One Punishment Serves as a Warning to Others: Crushing the Peking Faction' is a translation of the title of the first article from the weekly Japanese news magazine, 'Aera.' The article deals with how the Communist Party in China is trying to do away with pervasive corruption within its echelons. The title, literally '1 punishment, 100 warnings', appears to be a kind of slogan rather than a metaphor. Although the subtitle indicates that the main focus is on political rivalry rather than corruption itself, it is the latter that is treated metaphorically.

Corruption as 'Disease'

The most comprehensive metaphoric structure found in this article is 'corruption is a disease'. In the subtitle there is reference to the reasons for the *eradication* (taiji 退治) of corruption. The spread of corruption in China is *spreading* (manen 蔓延) like an epidemic, but if the *scalpel* (mesu メス) cuts too deeply when inserted, this might lead to a loss of the Communist Party's authority. This problem is causing *agony* (kuno 苦悩, 'suffering from pain') in the Party. The government has begun an *eradication campaign* (bokumetsu 撲滅). Corruption has *worsened* (hidoku natta ひどくなった, a common collocate of 'disease'), and if untreated it may threaten the continued existence of the Party itself. Corruption is *spreading* (hirogatte iru 広がっている) like a disease among some of the local leaders as well. This *spread* (manen 蔓延) of corruption is rousing anger in citizens. But the effects of the anticorruption campaign (han-oshoku kodo no koka 反汚職行動の効果) has been limited. Without public scrutiny, its *efficacy* (koka 効果) is greatly discounted. Unless this problem of corruption is dealt with seriously, completely and fairly and the campaign continues, it can never be completely cured (*konji dekinai* 根治できない).

How the Vehicle is Exploited

Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 9) state that '(Some) metaphorical concepts ... form a single system based on subcategorization. ...' In the structure 'corruption is a disease' there are at least two subcategories: 'disease is an epidemic' and 'disease is a cancer'. Each of these allows the author to treat a different aspect of corruption. It is treated both as a cancer growing within the patient and as an epidemic spreading through the Party. Sometimes the only effective treatment of a medical problem is an operation (hence 'scalpel'), especially when the cancer is 'spreading'. The operation needs to be thorough, but if too much is cut away, it might lead to death. Herein lies the 'agony' of the patient.

Corruption is also treated as an epidemic that 'is spreading' and should be 'eradicated' (e.g., oshoku bokumetsu kyanpen) in a campaign. I'd like to note here that 'kyanpen', originally a military word in English which is now used to 'conquer' markets or in this case diseases, has passed into Japanese without its military connotations. Metaphoric images, based on cultural knowledge, disappear when the word is absorbed into another language.

Secondary Systems: 'Assets are Liquids'

There is a second possible metaphorical structure, 'assets are liquids'. The author discusses the large drain (ryushutsu 流出) on the Party economic interests and the consequent flow (nagare 流れ) of these assets abroad. This is picked up again in the following paragraph when the author states that the Party has had to make a start on the eradication of corruption in order to prevent the drain (ryushutsu wo boshi 流出を防止) on national property.

How the Vehicle is Exploited

Although the terms for 'economic interests' and 'national property' are outside the metaphoric system, the description of their disappearance leaves no doubt that they are considered liquids. One point that should be noted about 'ryushutsu' and 'nagare' is that both share a character (流). In the above example, however, it is difficult to know whether the author consciously uses same-character words or whether these are words that tend to collocate naturally.

Secondary Systems: 'Money is Food'

There is a third metaphorical structure, 'money is food'. Officials at all levels and the children of higher-ups used their exclusive privileges and were greedy for (*musabotte kita* むさぼってきた, a collocate of 'kuu 食う', 'eat' as in 'eat greedily') individual profit. Because the central government took back its powers of taxation, local governments are gradually losing the flavor (*umami* うまみ, meaning 'lucrative advantages') they enjoyed in the past. For example, under the recent tax reform the central government is guaranteed a steady income, while, conversely, the local governments must pass an increasing number of tax items on to the central government. The central government is using the anti-corruption campaign to prevent the local governments from 'fattening their bellies' (*shifuku wo koyasu* 私腹を肥やす), translated by the English metaphor 'lining their pockets'.

How the Vehicle is Exploited

'Money as food' is an uncommon metaphor in English, but in the Japanese article it is delicious, tempting, and fattening. It is not a necessity here, but an object of desire. Of the three examples above, only 'greedy' is regularly employed in English for both food and money. 'umami' and 'shifuku wo koyasu' would be unintelligible if non-Japanese readers subjected them to a word-for-word translation.

The English Article

The second article from 'Time Magazine', entitled 'Il Cavaliere At Bay: Amid austerity protests, Berlusconi's war with the magistrates heats up,' describes the difficulties that Prime Minister Berlusconi found himself in due to unpopular austerity measures and an independent anticorruption campaign targeting him.

'Politics is War'

We can find the main metaphoric structure spelled out in the subtitle: 'Berlusconi's war with the magistrates heats up' (my italics). The author first introduces the unrest accompanying the Berlusconi government's unpopular austerity measures as noisy armies taking over the streets of 2 major cities. 'In Milan a cortege 150,000 strong....' 'In Rome two horse-drawn carriages led 50,000 chanting marchers....' 'A banner in Milan captured the general mood....' In contrast to the martial description in the 'Time' article, the Prime Minister dubs a planned strike an adolescent 'rite by which the unions want to affirm their identity'.

How the Vehicle is Exploited

The picture of a country at war with its government serves as the background to a more important battle that is taking place on a different front. The war metaphor is doubly economical; it can be used for both anti-government demonstrations and the anti-corruption campaign. Berlusconi himself uses metaphor to place himself above the fray and belittle the unions by invoking 'rite' and 'identity', words associated with adolescent behavior.

'Politics is War': the Second Front

The article reports on a second front in paragraph 3: 'The 2 1/2-year-old ... anticorruption campaign by independent magistrates, which *decimated* the political establishment and helped to bring (Berlusconi) to power ... was moving uncomfortably close to the heart of Berlusconi's ...

business empire. . . . ' Now investigators *were moving in on* the . . . pay-TV network. . . . ' In the next paragraph, 'Berlusconi's *tussle* with the magistrates went to *open warfare*. . . . ' 'Milan prosecutor. . . . Borrelli . . . (said that) . . . the probe *was closing in on* 'very high' levels of government; that unleashed speculation that the Prime Minister would soon *be targeted*.' 'Though Borrelli later denied that Berlusconi was *in his sights*. . . . Berlusconi personally *assailed* Borrelli. . . . ' 'Berlusconi also sought to *defuse* criticism focused on his already considerable potential conflict of interest. . . . ' 'Berlusconi's showdown with Borrelli was the culmination of a *struggle*. . . . ' 'The magistrates had *fired the first shot*. . . . ' 'Berlusconi *struck back*. . . . ' 'He *rammed through* a decree that would have curtailed the judges' power. . . . ' ' . . . the decree was generally seen as an attempt to *quash* (the anticorruption campaign) in order to protect Berlusconi and his business *allies*. . . . ' 'The Prime Minister *backed down*.' 'The *about-face* was *hailed as a victory* for the magistrates'.

How the Vehicle is Exploited

Because his conflict with the magistrates is a more personal war than that of the general population, the metaphoric system depicts the struggle as follows: The magistrates behind the anti-corruption campaign are a small band of warriors seeking out the enemy; they decimated the previous political establishment and are looking for their next chance to attack corruption. The feeling of imminent attack is maintained in the following paragraph with 'closing in on', 'soon be targeted', and 'in his sights. . . . ' The metaphoric system continues more as a duel between two men than as a war in the fifth and seventh paragraphs: 'Berlusconi *personally assailed* Borrelli. . . . ' 'Berlusconi's *showdown* with Borrelli was the culmination of a *struggle*. . . . ' 'The magistrates *had fired the first shot*. . . . last March. . . . ' 'Berlusconi *struck back*'.

'Berlusconi and Fini are Jockeys'

In the last paragraph Berlusconi and Fini are in a race. The 4-party coalition government is in danger of breaking up and the author is reviewing possible outcomes of a split. 'The National Alliance . . . could *emerge as the big winner* if Berlusconi *stumbles*. . . . ' 'Recent polls show Fini (the neo-Fascist leader) has *pulled ahead* of the Prime Minister. . . . ' 'The very idea that a neo-Fascist might succeed Berlusconi . . . should be sobering enough to persuade some of his opponents to let (Berlusconi) *stay in the saddle*.'

How the Vehicle is Exploited

The metaphoric system puts the heads of two political parties in a race. Berlusconi is treated as a competitor in a race and as being in command of the horse. Because he won't be able to remain the prime minister without the help of other political parties, the image of him as a mere jockey whose fate is dependent upon others allowing him to 'stay in the race' is apt here.

Comparison of Metaphoric Systems

Differences in the metaphoric systems between these 2 articles can be accounted for by the fact that, 1. the articles dealt with different countries and dissimilar systems of government, 2. the corruption was at the individual level in Italy whereas it was systematic in China, and 3. exposing corruption in the case of China meant bringing into question an entire system of government whereas in the case of Italy it would only affect a small number of individuals.

In the article on China, systematic corruption was a disease to be 'eradicated' at the beginning

and 'completely cured' at the end of the article. The metaphor of 'money as food' reminds the reader of the growing numbers of 'fat' privileged people who enjoy the luxuries of life at the expense of the government budget. This capitalist 'disease' is spreading as the economy booms. The Chinese Communist Party is behind the anticorruption campaign, but it finds itself the target of the campaign at the same time. In this double role it is in a quandary: it feels a need to convince the populace that it is serious about eradicating corruption and to prevent a drain on national assets while maintaining control over local authorities. At the same time it feels that its authority will be threatened if any of the top-level party members are exposed. This militates towards secrecy and political rather than legal sanctions, limited measures that the article's author sees as defeating the efficacy of the anticorruption campaign. The 'corruption as a cancer' metaphor is apt because the doctor is suffering from a potentially fatal condition, but because of his reluctance to deal decisively with the cancer, he may not survive.

The article on Italy portrays a populace rising up against their government and the Prime Minister of Italy at war with the magistrates. This is in sharp contrast with the quiet dissatisfaction of the Chinese. The struggle in Italy is not so much among party leaders as between anticorruption forces and the government, recently voted in because of a previous anticorruption campaign that had destroyed the hitherto powerful Christian Democrats and the Socialists. The Prime Minister, however, is now compromised by one scandal involving his brother and by another involving his numerous media holdings. The war metaphor, modified to fit the personal struggle between the prime minister on the one hand and the independent magistrates personified by Borrelli on the other, provides a rich lexical source for the author. The second metaphoric system, 'Berlusconi and Fini are competing in a race', is conventional, but it serves to remind us of the realities of politics.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Comparing the two articles, we can see a much richer use of metaphor in the English text. A quick count reveals 11 examples of 'corruption as a disease' in the Japanese article whereas there are double the number of instances of 'politics as war' in the 'Time' magazine article. This could be due to several factors: 1. less use of metaphor in the Japanese language in general, 2. a more restrained writing style with fewer value judgments adopted by Japanese news writers (metaphor often being a way to express values, as can be seen above in Berlusconi's comment on the unions), or 3. an inability on my part to detect all the metaphoric uses in the Japanese text. If it is true that English tends towards a greater use of metaphor, then the Japanese learners will have two major hurdles: first, they will have to learn to distinguish between literal and metaphoric meanings, and secondly, they will need to familiarize themselves with metaphoric systems in English that may carry different meanings from the ones in their culture.

Low (1988), discussing how metaphor can be treated in the classroom, makes the point that getting students to learn conventional metaphors one by one is not a very economical use of their learning time. Making students aware of the prevalent metaphoric structure and its systematicity in chosen English texts would be a more valuable approach. As a consciousness-raising task, students could be asked first to brainstorm war vocabulary, then be given the Berlusconi text and told to underline all the vocabulary of war and fighting as homework. In this way, reading the news may

become less like a test of endurance in dictionary use, and systematic metaphors can be used as a more satisfactory way for students to categorize the new vocabulary that they find. Once students become familiar with the concept of metaphoric systems in English texts, they can take greater control of their own learning by looking for examples on their own.

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APPENDIX ONE

江沢民「汚職退治」の裏側

一罰百戒の「北京閥」つぶし

中国は急速な経済成長の陰で、汚職の蔓延が深刻化している。だが、摘発のメスが厳しすぎれば、党の権威失墜につながる。そこに当局の苦悩がある。「汚職退治」の裏側を探ると — 時事評論家 劉鋭紹

中国共産党が、汚職撲滅キャンペーンを展開している。

これまで、汚職問題での追及は小役人クラスにとどまっていたが、党政治局員で事実上の北京市ナンハーワンだった同市党委員会の陳希同書記（辞任）すら汚職疑惑で調べられた。党が政権を担って以来、純政治闘争を除けば、初めて最高レベルの高官にまで追及の手が伸びたことになる。罪を恐れて自殺した北京市の王宝森副市長には、党籍剥奪という重い処分を下した。

共産党の今回の反汚職行動は、「本気」だとの思いを人々に抱かせた。

地方のボスへの警告も

この背景には、主として三つの要因がある。第一に、中国の汚職状況が何らかの手を打たざるを得ないほどひどくなった。処理しなければ、共産党政権の存続自体にも影響が及びかねない。

周知の通り、一九八九年の民主化運動を引き起こした原因の一つは、当時の「官僚ブローカー行為」（特権による製品横流し）をはじめとした汚職が横行していたことにあった。

しかしながら、この民主化運動を鎮圧した天安門事件の後、汚職状況は改善されないどころか、ますますひどくなっている。各レベルの役人、高級幹部の子弟らが特権を利用しきって、個人的な利益をむさぼってきたのである。

国家資産管理委員会の推定によると、ここ数年の国有資産の損失は驚くべき額にのぼっている。最も低い推計でも、毎年五百億—千億人民元（一元は約十円）に達する。一日当たり一億元から三億元もの国有資産が損失していることになる。

汚職現象は一部の地方ボスの間にも広がっている。共産党の経済権益は大量に流出し、はては海外にま

で流れ、その一部が着服されているのが実態だ。

共産党は、汚職退治に乗り出さざるを得なくなった。一方で、国有資産の流出を防止し、もう一方では、汚職の蔓延が呼び起こす民の怨みをそらして、八九年の事態の二の舞いを避けるためだ。

第二の背景には、江沢民総書記ら中央の指導者が反汚職行動に名を借りて、意にそわない地方ボスたちに警告を発する目的がある。一罰百戒の効果を狙ったものだ。このところ、党中央と地方政府の利益配分には矛盾が生じていた。中央は権力を奪い返し、片や地方政府は過去に味わったクマミクがしだいになくなりだした。例えば、最近導入された税制改革下で中央政府の収入は保障されたが、逆に地方にとっては中央へ上納する項目が増えたことを意味する。こうして中央と地方の関係は緊張が増していった。

このため、ある地方政府は重要でない問題では中央政府の政策の抜け穴につけ込んだり、ひどい例では財政状態を偽って低く報告するケースまで出てきた。

北京市や沿岸部の広東省など経済力をつけた地方政府などは、中央の指令通りに動こうとしない。

地方政府が私腹を肥やすこうした流れを制止するためにも、中央政府は反汚職行動にかこつけて地方ボスの専横を抑えつける借置に出たのだ。

今回の反汚職行動の開始後まもなく、中央は羅幹國務院秘書長ら二百人余を広東省の深洲に派遣した。汚職状況を調査し、広東省が中央に上げた収支項目を全面的に調べ上げるためだ。

背景に派閥闘争の色彩

背景の第三点は、江沢民総書記がやはり反汚職行動に名を借りて、「北京閥」を整理しようとしたことだ。江沢民氏は八九年に上海市党委員会書記から北京に異動し、総書記に就任したが、北京市の幹部役人たちは敬服せず、何かと協調を拒んできた。

江沢民総書記と「北京閥」がもっとも激しくぶつかったのは、九二年に鄧小平氏が中国南部を視察したあとだ。陳希同氏は七つの省の党委員会責任者と連名で鄧氏に手紙を送り、江沢民氏が「上海閥」を形成しようとしていると訴えた。

これに江沢民氏は激怒したはずだ。「北京閥」を整理せずにはおかないと、氏に決意させる伏線になったとみられる。

その後も、陳希同氏は多くの問題で江沢民氏ら「上海閥」とそりが合わなかった。例えば、北京市人民代表大会（首都議会に相当）は、独自に法令を通過させた。他の省から北京に派遣されてきた中央の職員にも同市に一種の人頭税に当たる「収容費」を納めることを要求し、納めなければ北京市の戸籍を与えなかった。

こうしたことが、今回の反汚職行動に、派閥闘争の色合いを添えている。

もっとも、共産党は反汚職行動を強力に推し進めたいのは事実である。しかし、半面では反汚職行動が党のイメージを損なってしまうことも懸念している。

このためだろう、党中央は汚職犯罪の摘発は適度にとどめ、「党の威信を低下させてはならない」との指示も当初から出している。例えば、検察機関は、内部に次のような通達を何回も繰り返して申し渡している。

「汚職案件の摘発に当たっては、報道の規律を厳格に守らなければならない」

「局長以上の幹部にかかわるすべての案件については、公表する際には、上級の党委員会の検討と許可を得なくてはいけない」

許可が出なければ、内部の党紀違反として処理するのがせいぜいで、刑事罰や行政罰は問わないというわけだ。

まだ隠されている実態

これによって、今回のいわゆる「反汚職行動」の効果は結局は限定されてしまった。世論の監視がない反汚職キャンペーンは、その効果が大幅に割り引かれてしまうものである。

最高人民検察院の張思卿検察長は、

「今回の反汚職行動は徹底的にやる。大小の別なく調べ上げる」と表明した。だが、実際には処理でき

ないか、公開処理できない案件もある。

一部高級幹部の秘書らの汚職疑惑は、公開処理できないとの内部情報がある。

鄒家華副首相の前秘書・劉渡氏には、工業用石油を災害救援に振り向ける許可にからむ汚職嫌疑があるが、公開されていない。

また、北京市のもう一人の副市長、張百発氏にかかわる汚職疑惑の調査も行われているとされるが、進展状況が外に漏れてこない。

張百発氏には、香港の企業家との合弁による北京市内の「東方広場」の建設事業や九二年に北京で開催されたアジア大会の選手村建設などで甘い汁を吸ったとの疑いがあるとされる。さらに、陳希同氏には、二〇〇二年の北京でのオリンピック開催に向けた申請経費をめぐる汚職疑惑が隠されているが、この件もまだ調査結果が公表されていない。

陳希同氏に対する処分は、罪を認める態度に応じて決めるとの情報がある。

だがこれでは、当局の汚職案件処理が法律を順守して行われるものなのか、上層部の政治判断に基づくものなのか不明確だ。

情報では、陳希同氏の問題は九月か十月に開く第五回党中央委員会全体会議で結論が出るという。

いずれにしても、真剣に、全面的に、公平に汚職問題に対処し、そしてその姿勢をずっと維持する以外に、問題は根治できまい。

APPENDIX TWO

Il Cavaliere At Bay ITALY

"Amid austerity protests, Berlusconi's war with the magistrates heats up"

By THOMAS SANCTON

In Florence, more than 200,000 demonstrators blew whistles and rang bells. In Milan a cortege 150,000 strong stretched from the suburbs to the central Piazza del Duomo. In Rome two horsedrawn carriages led 50,000 chanting marchers through the center of the capital. A banner in Milan captured the general mood: I ASK FOR FORGIVENESS: I VOTED FOR BERLUSCONI!

Across the country last week more than 1 million protesters jammed streets and piazzas during a four-hour general strike as Italy experienced some of its worst labor unrest since the 1970s. At issue: a government plan to slash \$18 billion in public spending, including deep cuts in the pension system. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was not around to witness the upwelling of discontent. The day before the strike began, he had taken off on a three-day trip to Russia to drum up business for Italian firms. Before leaving he dismissed the strike as "a rite by which the unions want to affirm their identity" and predicted it would be "anything but general."

In fact, Berlusconi's deepest worries lay elsewhere. The 2-1/2-year-old *mani pulite* (clean hands) anticorruption campaign by independent magistrates, which decimated the political establishment and helped bring the crooner turned communications tycoon to power last May, was moving uncomfortably close to the heart of Berlusconi's \$7 billion Fininvest business empire. Last summer several Fininvest officials, including Berlusconi's brother Paolo, were charged with having bribed tax officials in return for favorable audits. Now investigators were moving in on the Telepiu pay-TV network to determine whether Fininvest secretly-and illegally-held more than the 10% share allowed under Italian antitrust laws. Since Fininvest already owns three major TV networks, a substantial stake in Telepiu would give Berlusconi a quasi monopoly over the private airwaves-and a major conflict of interest.

Berlusconi's tussle with the magistrates went to open warfare two weeks ago. Milan prosecutor Francesco Saverio Borrelli, who heads the city's elite anticorruption investigators, told the daily *Corriere della Sera* that the probe was closing in on "very high" levels of government; that unleashed speculation that the Prime Minister would soon be targeted. Though Borrelli later denied that Berlusconi was in his sights, the rumors sent stock prices tumbling and depressed the value of the lira. The government responded with a formal complaint to President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro against Borrelli. Said spokesman Giuliano Ferrara: "The delirium of omnipotence of the Milan prosecutor must be stopped."

Berlusconi personally assailed Borrelli during a Senate session last week, accusing him of "serious intimidation directed at the government." Even if he were formally charged in connection with the *Telepiu* case, said Berlusconi, he would not consider resigning. "This government and the man who has the honor of presiding over it have nothing to fear from the criminal justice system," he intoned. Berlusconi also sought to defuse criticism focused on his already considerable potential conflict of interest as head of government and owner of Italy's largest media company. He told the Senators he had decided to set up a blind trust along the lines proposed by a three-man panel he had appointed last May. In their report, issued two weeks ago, the three jurists had in fact recommended that Berlusconi sell all his business interests, but proposed the blind trust as an alternative because it would be "unconstitutional" to force the Prime Minister to divest. Berlusconi concurred.

Berlusconi's showdown with Borrelli was the culmination of a struggle with the investigators that started at the beginning of the year. The magistrates had fired the first shot during the run-up to Berlusconi's election last March by probing several of his 200 companies during the campaign. At the time, critics accused the investigators of leftist bias, saying they sought to discredit the only candidate who could prevent the former Communist Party from coming to power.

Berlusconi struck back two months after taking office. He rammed through a decree that would have curtailed the judges' power to order preventive detention, which investigators see as a key tool for obtaining confessions and ensuring against the destruction of evidence. A clamor arose: the decree was generally seen as an attempt to quash *mani pulite* in order to protect Berlusconi and his business allies. Milan prosecutor Antonio di Pietro, a burly former policeman who is the country's most popular magistrate, went on television to say he and his fellow investigators would resign unless the decree was withdrawn. Opposition mounted even within the ranks of Berlusconi's four-party conservative coalition. The Prime Minister backed down.

The about-face was hailed as a victory for the magistrates, whose "Tangentopoli" or "bribe city," crusade still enjoys strong public support. But there was also a growing sense that the investigators may have overstepped their bounds, blurring the lines between the judicial and executive branches of government. "We've got institutional confusion," said Pier Ferdinando Casini of the Christian Democratic Center Party. "The *mani pulite* group should not be a parallel power to either Parliament or the government."

Unfortunately for Berlusconi, his condemnation of Borrelli did not quell rumors of a forthcoming indictment. Last week rumor swept through the London Stock Exchange that Berlusconi had been served with a warrant and even arrested, causing a sell-off of Italian stocks and currency. The panic moved the conservative daily *La Voce* to note that "having a Prime Minister who is, voluntarily or involuntarily, the cause of this mortgage on Italy is intolerable."

While Berlusconi insists he intends to wait out the crisis — "I am the Prime Minister, and I intend to continue as Prime Minister," he told a group of foreign journalists last week — he may not be the master of his own fate. Everything depends on the support of his coalition partners, the federalist Northern League, the neo-fascist National Alliance and the tiny Christian Democratic Center; without them his government collapses. Northern League leader Umberto Bossi, a prickly ally in the best of times, says his continuing support would depend on the "weight" of any eventual charges against Berlusconi. Gianfranco Fini, 42, the

technocratic neo-Fascist leader, has so far refrained from threatening to pull out of the coalition. The National Alliance, which has never held power in the postwar era, is thus unscathed by Tangentopoli and could emerge as the big winner if Berlusconi stumbles. Recent polls show Fini has pulled ahead of the Prime Minister in popularity ratings. The very idea that a neo-Fascist might succeed Berlusconi in the Palazzo Chigi should be sobering enough to persuade some of his opponents to let Il Cavaliere stay in the saddle.

— reported by Greg Burke/Rome