

Prodi faces crisis of confidence

by UPI

ROME - Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi staked his government Tuesday on a parliamentary vote of confidence after an ally abandoned him. The lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, is set to vote Wednesday and the Senate Thursday, The New York Times reported. Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said he expects the government to fall. Prodi, leader of the center-left coalition, won a narrow victory over Berlusconi's center-right group in April 2006. "I still expect him to try to wiggle out of it," said Berlusconi. "But I hope that won't happen and that we can go straight to elections." President Giorgio Napolitano did not say Tuesday what course he favors in the political impasse. On Monday, Clemente Mastella, who is under investigation for corruption and resigned last week as justice minister, said he would no longer support Prodi. That left the coalition without a majority in the Senate. Italy has had more than 60 governments since World War II ended, giving Prodi a more than average run.

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