I just don't like the fact that IDL always seems to be shouting at me. =P

The thing that was disconcerting here is that the routine failed to work even when the case was specified exactly - it is in fact the result of operations using the FILE_SEARCH and FILE_BASENAME routines. So IDL is fine with mixed case in that usage, and doesn't mind it in .COMPILE or .RUN statements, but suddenly gets all uppity when you try RESOLVE_ROUTINE. Internally inconsistent, IMO, but then I guess I should have known better, eh?