

## How the US infiltrated Italy's security services

# Friendly penetrations

THE LEAKED intelligence report which led to the hasty expulsion of a US agent from Italy two weeks ago has greatly embarrassed Italian and US officials. The report – a full copy of which has reached the *NEW STATESMAN* – demonstrates the remarkable extent to which the Italian security and anti-terrorist services had been penetrated by the 'friendly' US intelligence services. It also highlights the shambles into which the Italian security services have fallen, commenting profusely on the personalities of three leading Carabinieri generals in charge of operations.

One of these generals had an apparently insatiable urge to appear before television cameras during anti-terrorist hunts, while ready to condone, it is hinted, torture of prisoners or, indeed, any illegal methods. A second was characterised as unable to establish or run the newly-formed anti-terrorist agency SISDE (Servizio per le informazione e per la Sicurezza Democratica, or Intelligence and Democratic Security Service) unless previously supplied with a full instruction manual. The third would brook no course of action unless it seemed likely to lead him to the eventual post of Carabinieri commander-in-chief.

The US official who left Italy under a 24-hour expulsion order was Dominic A. Perrone, a liaison officer to Italian military and security services from US Army European Command, based in Rome. His intelligence report on the 'status of (Italian) anti-terrorist orientation' was leaked, apparently from Washington, to the Rome left-wing daily *Repubblica*. The report, written in Italy on 29 January and forwarded to Washington a day later, was compiled from information given by a 'group of contacts'. Five contacts are described in Perrone's report, each of whom had clearly been used to obtain detailed and

sensitive information on the operation of the Italian security services. The report's authenticity has not been disputed: *Repubblica* took the precaution before publication of obtaining an analysis and assessment of its contents from the former agents working for the Washington-based Covert Action Information Bulletin\* – in particular former CIA Latin American agent Philip Agee. They told the *NEW STATESMAN* that analysis indicated the report to be wholly authentic – in particular the practice of infiltrating the operations of intelligence services in friendly countries.

Perrone indicates that he is responding to specific intelligence tasks assigned to him by a CIR – probably Central Intelligence Requirement of the CIA – number G-SCP-49503. In 1978, he had filed three reports with the DIA on exactly the same subject. He grades his intelligence sources fairly highly, awarding a 'B' (meaning 'usually reliable'), and their intelligence a '2' (or 'probably true').

Perrone discovered that Italy had developed an 'entire official and unofficial intelligence and security services structure (which) was operating in violation of the reform law (on) anti-terrorism'. The Intelligence and Military Security Service, SISMI, had illegally become involved in anti-terrorist activities – and was almost unable to perform at all as a counter-espionage service, leaving Italy wide open to hostile intelligence activities, as well as 'friendly' ones. To cap off this wholesale leak Perrone's source added that a recent Parliamentary report on SISDE had been 'mishmash and pap' intended to mislead.

APART FROM THIS, the Perrone report lucidly describes the proliferating special investigations in response to the Aldo Moro murder and other incidents. A network of national and local 'special operations' offices had been set up by the Interior Ministry; the Prime Minister had appointed as Coordinator for Anti-Terrorism and Aldo Moro case Chief Investigator, Carabinieri General Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa. None of these had legal authority, which was vested in the judicial police. Unsurprisingly perhaps, 'the only agency assigned the anti-terrorist function by law was SISDE, which was probably conducting the least amount of actual activity ... the anti-terrorist operation was in chaos.'

General dalla Chiesa's penchant for personal publicity dominated many anti-terrorist activities. He was 'looming over the (effort), appearing at raids and other publicity valuable scenes, levying and tasking the other agencies

and taking credit for what the other agencies had done. As a result the operation was haphazard ... and operating at the expense of the security of the country'. Dalla Chiesa was also responsible for special prisons to hold *Brigate Rosso* terrorists; a colleague who had worked for him in the Carabinieri intelligence section told Perrone that he was 'action oriented ... and not too concerned with how results were obtained. If he received orders to eliminate the *Brigate* he would start in immediately, worrying about increasing his capability as he went along. The fine points of legality or illegality would not interest him.'

In the special prisons which he controlled the Carabinieri officer expected that he 'would use whatever means possible to obtain information.' The colleague modestly concluded that dalla Chiesa was 'inclined to be a little ruthless.'

All of Perrone's five main informants are quoted in constructing a profile of another General, Giulio Grassini, Director of SISDE. One Admiral, two Carabinieri intelligence officers, one counter-espionage chief and a CESIS source all concurred that Grassini – promoted to General since the start of the year – would be well characterised as unable to tie his shoelaces without step by step written instructions. He had wholly failed to get any of SISDE operational by the end of its first year. His appointment had laid SISDE open to the adventurism of dalla Chiesa, the proliferation of other agencies and the virtual wrecking of the SISMI counter-espionage service.

A third General, Arnaldo Ferrara, previously vice-commander of the Carabinieri Corps, had been appointed consultant to the President on Anti-Terrorism and Law and Order. He was 'a very ambitious man' who would 'probably use his present position as a stepping stone ... possibly to become Commander of the Carabinieri Corps.'

In simple terms, the Perrone report reveals unilateral espionage and penetration by the US against Italian security, extending well beyond the ambit of official contacts, NATO, or any other 'special relationship'. Small wonder that the Christian Democrats, as well as Communists, found such activities too much to stomach. Perrone, however, was simply following carefully the standard instructions to agents like himself, in whatever friendly country. Even more than Italy, we may be sure that the UK has long and effectively been similarly penetrated.

\*Covert Action Publications Inc,  
PO Box 50272, Washington DC 20004.

### SOMETHING YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT

The pressures of modern life tend to distract our attention from fundamental realities. There is a spiritual basis to life which many of us are now ignoring at the cost of our happiness and security. There are some eternal verities behind the teachings of all religions. In your own interest, learn something about these from THEOSOPHY, the Ageless Wisdom Religion.

Write for information to:

The Blavatsky Trust (B)  
P.O. Box 16, London W3 6HS