

## Italy to probe CIA ties to Palme murder

by Leonardo Servadio and Mark Burdman

Developments in Italy during the week of July 23 have raised new questions about the potential involvement of the Iran-Contra mob around Lt. Col. Oliver North, in both the assassination of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme and the ensuing coverup. What is emerging in Italy points to that side of the North crowd's misdeeds which has never been brought before an American court and investigated by any U.S. commission.

The tumult in Italy was already brewing since early June, but it became a controversy of international proportions, when the magazine *Panorama* revealed on July 23, that President Francesco Cossiga had sent a letter to Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti on July 5, after having reviewed the content of interviews conducted by Italian state television TG1 journalist Ennio Remondino with former CIA agents Richard Brenneke and Ibrahim Razin. Cossiga wrote that statements contained in the broadcasts were so serious that the government was obliged to look into them immediately, and "if the government were to think that the information had any basis, I think that it should inform the judiciary authority and the Parliamentary Commission on Massacres and, at the level of the bilateral relations, the relevant authorities in the U.S.A. and in Sweden." Otherwise, wrote Cossiga, the journalists who published the information without previously thoroughly checking its validity, should be punished in a most rigorous way.

In late June-early July, the interviews with Brenneke and Razin were broadcast in four parts by TG1. The most explosive element of what they said, was that three days before Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme was assassinated, Licio Gelli, Grand Master of the Propaganda 2 (P-2) Freemasonic lodge, had sent a telegram to Republican Party representative Philip Guarino, an intimate of George Bush, announcing that "the Swedish tree will be felled." In his

sequence, Razin claimed that the text of the telegram exists in the archives of the National Security Agency, and that the FBI has opened an investigation into this. Razin added that he knew of the existence of such a telegram from a high representative of the American mafia, and that Palme was assassinated because he knew about the illegal weapons trade in connection with the Iran-Iraq war. As Brenneke put it, Palme had become a "fly in the ointment" for those responsible for the dirty doings.

Brenneke, in one of his TV sequences, asserted that the P-2 lodge was involved in such a trade. According to Razin, the arms trade was an integral part of agreements reached at the time of the 1980 election campaign between representatives of the Republican ticket of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, and Iranian representatives: The Iranians would guarantee not to release the American hostages before the election was over, so that President Carter would not get the benefit. In exchange, the Republicans allegedly promised to send weapons to Iran after winning the elections. Brenneke said that Gelli was present at the October 1980 meeting in Paris where U.S. and Iranian representatives discussed the whole operation. He also asserted that George Bush, then candidate for the U.S. vice presidency, took part in October 1980 arms-to-Iran discussions in Paris, although not necessarily in the same discussions as Gelli.

Speaking about the CIA-Propaganda-2 contacts, Brenneke said in the interview: "We used the assistance of these people to let money and drugs go in and out of the U.S.A., and to let drugs and money go in and out of Italy. We used them to create situations favorable to the explosion of terrorism in Italy and other European countries at the beginning of the 1970s." Brenneke added that the CIA had financed P-2 to the tune of \$1-10 million a month, conducted through



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Left: Read George Bush's lips as he stands behind his Italian counterpart, Francesco Cossiga, at the White House in October 1989. Cossiga is now seeking an official inquiry into charges that implicate Bush, recently aired on Italian TV. Center: The late Swedish Premier Olof Palme, whose February 1986 assassination is now alleged to be tied to the CIA through funding of the P-2 masonic lodge. Right: Giulio Andreotti, whose government is charged with conducting the investigation.

foreign-based corporations.

If what Brenneke said is found to be true, it would prove that the CIA, the P-2, and the KGB were working together to run weapons, dope, and destabilizations internationally, given that the KGB involvement in such activities has been amply proven. It would be proven that Palme was killed by the same crowd that ran the Iran-Contra operation and that slandered Lyndon LaRouche's political associates as a cover-up for their own dirty dealings. In statements issued July 24 and 25, Virginia 10th District congressional candidate LaRouche identified that this crowd is best known as "Project Democracy," a sub-unit of the U.S. government's National Endowment for Democracy that works closely with the Anti-Defamation League, NBC News, and elements of the U.S. Department of Justice, and FBI, in the operation to have LaRouche and several associates framed up and imprisoned. This Project Democracy apparatus works with powerful forces in Israel and Great Britain.

The Brenneke and Razin statements are not by themselves what is causing tremors internationally, but rather the fact that the President of Italy has urgently demanded that the government clear up the truth of the Palme-Propaganda-2-CIA matter, of the contention that the CIA financed terrorism in Italy, and the matter of U.S. President Bush's name having been raised. Once the fact of Cossiga's letter was made public, the shock effects went way beyond Italy. Many of the newspapers that had jumped on the "LaRouche behind killing of Palme" disinformation in the March 1986 period—such as the *Wiesbadener Kurier* in West Germany and the *Times* in Britain—were now publishing prominent stories featuring in the headlines, the mooted CIA-Propaganda-2 connection to the murder of Palme. On July 24, almost all of the nationally read newspapers in West Germany, and much of the major regional press, were highlighting the story, and

it was also getting wide coverage in Sweden and other countries in Europe.

CIA officials have meanwhile furiously denied all the allegations, and have claimed that Brenneke was never in the CIA's employ. But as the Italian daily *Il Giorno* of July 24 underlined, the CIA usually refrains from taking an official position in such circumstances. If they do so now, there must be something really big afoot.

### Some signals to Washington

In Italy itself, the two Italian magistrates who are investigating the P-2 affair, Francesco Monastero and Elisabetta Cesqui, want to hear testimony from Brenneke and Razin. According to Italian press reports, the two magistrates also want to investigate corporations based in Belgium, Switzerland, and the U.S. that Brenneke said the CIA had used as a channel to finance the P-2 lodge. In the hands of the magistrates are documents which Brenneke gave to journalist Remondino, which are said to include evidence of the connections between the CIA and the lodge.

Meanwhile, P-2 Grand Master Gelli is so distraught, that he has instructed his lawyer to sue Italian state television for billions of liras.

But as seen from Italy, these investigations and legal fights are only part of a broader picture, in which many dark truths are coming to the light of day. Beyond this, they indicate a significant strategic re-thinking going on from inside Italy.

In the days in which the interviews with Razin and Brenneke were broadcast, the Italian press was full of articles concerning the proofs, which are starting to come out in the open, regarding the ties between Eastern secret services and the international terrorism that was unleashed against all the Western European countries, but in particular against Italy

and Germany, during the 1970s. It had just come out that the renowned terrorist "Carlos" was protected by East bloc secret services.

"We want to understand if the terrorists, with the help of the O07s from the East, wanted to stop the process of change in the Communist Party," said Christian Democratic Secretary Arnaldo Forlani, while in Hungary at the end of June. Forlani was referring to the assassination of his party's chairman Aldo Moro, perpetrated by the Red Brigades in June 1978, three months after he was kidnaped. Moro had been working to bring the Italian Communist Party out of Moscow's political control, and for bringing Italy out of the political control of the two superpowers. What might unite the cases of Moro and Palme is that, in different ways, they both were an obstacle to the superpowers' global power-sharing plans.

In this context, the fact that the interviews of Brenneke and Razin came out just as all the media were starting to expose the connections of terrorism with the KGB and the Eastern intelligence services, led some people, especially from Italy's Socialist and Liberal parties, to say that the interviews conducted by Remondino were a smokescreen raised by the Communists in order to divert attention from the Communist role in protecting and steering international terrorism.

In reality, if what Brenneke and Razin stated in their interviews proves true, the picture that would emerge would not necessarily contradict the information concerning the Communist connections to terrorism: rather, it might complete them and provide a wider and more precise picture, bringing to the light a dark world where Eastern and Western secret operations were run for maintaining the status quo against political forces striving for national emancipation. Were this the case, it would be quite coherent that revelations such as those of Razin and Brenneke come up at a time when the "equilibrium of Yalta" is being shaken.

President Cossiga's letter to Prime Minister Andreotti was written July 5: right after the broadcasts, and just as Andreotti was about to leave for the London NATO summit. In the days before that summit, there were some provocative signs that the Italian political elite had decided to open up a new era in its relations with the U.S. In June 27 testimony before an Italian parliamentary commission investigating the circumstances of the shooting down of an Italian airliner over Ustica 10 years ago, Adm. Fulvio Martini, the head of Italian military intelligence, was asked about Libya's role in that affair. In response, he noted that Libya's relations with many countries operated in a "gray zone." For example, he pointed out, the presidential campaign of George Bush received money from Libya indirectly, through royalties paid by Qaddafi into Texas oil companies which supported Bush. Martini's charge of a Bush-Qaddafi link made headlines at the time. He could not have said it, without agreement from senior figures in the Italian political establishment.

This was a foretaste of the issues that erupted at the Houston Group of Seven summit on July 9-11. There, it became obvious that significant tensions have emerged between continental Europe and the Anglo-American world, with talk of trade war on everyone's lips. No doubt, the whole skein of Martini's statements, the TG1 interviews, and the Cossiga letter, side by side with the exposés of East bloc sponsorship of terrorism, reflects the potential for Italy to shift into a new European orientation in the period ahead. That Italy holds the presidency of the European Community until the end of this year, makes this entire matter all the more important.

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## Documentation

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### President Cossiga's letter

*What follows is a translation of the letter sent on July 3 by Italian President Francesco Cossiga to the head of the government, Giulio Andreotti, as it appeared in all major Italian press on July 26:*

I believe that it is my duty to call your attention to the reports broadcast on TG1 June 28 and 30, and on July 1 and 2, following advance releases put out by the RAI through ANSA [news service]. In these broadcasts, produced by a TG1 journalist, a number of persons have been interviewed, including persons who asserted they had been agents of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The information broadcast in these programs requires, in my judgment, careful evaluation by the Italian government, particularly in consideration of the particular "credibility" that such information has for public opinion in our country and foreign countries, with possible involvement of the responsibility of our government, because it is not credible outside of our country, although true, that a public radio and television service can exist which is not directly responsible to the government or to the parliament. The gravity of the information put in circulation, consists above all in the statement that the terrorism of the 1970s was "ignited" in Italy by the CIA through the P-2 Masonic lodge.

Second, in the asserted participation of the P-2 Masonic lodge, and thus, of Italian citizens, in the "plot" which would have been planned by the CIA to assassinate Olof Palme, then prime minister of the Swedish kingdom. Third, also very serious, is the attribution of responsibility for these criminal actions, in which the P-2 Masonic lodge would have participated, to high level personalities of North American political and institutional life, including the then-representative of the Republican Party, and today the President of an allied and friendly country, the United States of America,

George Bush.

If the government should think that such information had any foundation, I believe that it must inform the judiciary authorities and the parliamentary commission on atrocities, and on the level of bilateral relations, the competent authorities in the U.S.A. and the Kingdom of Sweden.

If, on the other hand, the government, after careful evaluation, were to conclude that the information broadcast by the RAI-TV is false or even recklessly provocative, I think that the government should inform the judiciary authorities of possible penal law violations and undertake necessary measures to find out the managers and personnel of the national TV center responsible.

I would be grateful if you could keep me informed on the initiatives undertaken by the government.

## What Brenneke said

*Excerpts from the TG1 interview with ex-CIA agent Richard Brenneke, translated from the Italian transcript. The interviewer is Ennio Remondino.*

**Q:** Do you know the P-2 directly?

**Brenneke:** Naturally I have known the P-2 since 1969 and I had deals with the P-2 in Europe since that time and I had contact with it also recently, till the beginning of the 1980s. The U.S. government sent money to P-2. In some periods the sum was about \$10 million a month.

**Q:** For what purpose?

**Brenneke:** The CIA money for the P-2 had several aims. One of them was terrorism. Another aim was to get P-2's help to smuggle dope into the U.S.A. from other countries. We used them to create situations favorable to the explosion of terrorism in Italy and in other European countries at the beginning of the 1970s.

**Q:** Excuse me, but your statements are very serious. You say that the P-2 was a creation, the financial and organizational arm of the CIA to destabilize, to run cover operations in Europe?

**Brenneke:** There is no doubt. The P-2 since the beginning of the 1970s was used for the dope traffic, for destabilization in a covert way. It was done secretly to keep people from knowing about the involvement of the U.S. government. In many cases it was done directly through the offices of the CIA in Rome and in some other cases through CIA centers in other countries.

**Q:** In what operations was the P-2 (as an extension of the CIA) involved?

**Brenneke:** The P-2 was involved in the operation for which

I ended up in court, that is the delay in the liberation of the American hostages in Iran in 1980. Members of P-2 participated in the operation and even attended meetings in Paris and other European cities. The same people were involved in the arms smuggling into Iran which took place after these meetings while there was still an embargo against Iran. The P-2 collaborated with agencies of the American government in sending weapons to Iran after the meeting of 1980.

**Q:** Do you know Gelli personally?

**Brenneke:** I met him for the first time in 1969-70 and the subject of the discussion was the financing of his organization. I met him several times in the 1970s. I met him in Paris in October 1980 on an important occasion: There was a meeting. . . .

**Q:** "October Surprise". . .

**Brenneke:** "October surprise." The aim of the meeting was to organize the freedom of the hostages after, not before, the elections. The meeting was important because there were Mr. Casey, who later became the head of the CIA, at that time manager of the Reagan-Bush electoral campaign and Donald Gregg, who became ambassador to South Korea and at that time worked for the CIA and the National Security Council. At the meeting I attended Bush was not there, but Bush was. . . .

**Q:** President Bush?

**Brenneke:** The present President Bush was at that time a vice presidential candidate. From the information I had, I know that Bush was in Paris in the same days for meetings dealing with the freedom of the hostages and the payment of a ransom for their freedom. Gelli took part in these meetings. I do not know if he attended the same meetings with Bush but he definitely attended the same meetings I attended.

**Q:** Do you have documentation to prove these very serious accusations?

**Brenneke:** My accusations are very serious and I would not do it without evidence. . . . Some of these documents were given to the court on the occasion of the trial against me. They are still in the trial record. Some documents I gave to members of the inquiry commission of the U.S. Congress. . . .

## Razin's TV statements

*Excerpts of the interchange between Ibrahim Razin and RAI journalist Ennio Remondino, as translated from the Italian transcript:*

**Q:** Can you give us more details on the telegram from the

## Bonn official survives assassination attempt

A senior Bonn government official luckily survived a terrorist bomb attack on the morning of July 27, while on his way from the Bonn-Cologne highway to the Interior Ministry where he works. The official, Assistant Interior Minister Hans Neusel, was hit by the bomb in his car but only slightly injured.

The bomb was of the same type used in the terrorist assassination of Deutsche Bank chairman Alfred Herrhausen late last year: a laser-triggered remote-controlled shaped charge bomb made of concentrated commercial explosive.

Police say that Neusel survived the attack because he was driving the car himself (his driver being on vacation) and was therefore not hit by the full thrust of the bomb on the driver's seat. If he had sat on one of the other seats, he would most certainly have been killed instantly.

A letter pointing to Red Army Faction ("Baader-Meinhof gang") authorship behind the attack was found close to the site of detonation. Neusel has been on the terrorist target list for some time, because he is in charge of overseeing anti-terrorism activities at the ministry.

Since the overthrow of the Communist dictatorship in East Germany, massive information has come to light showing that the East German secret police, the Stasi, were steering and protecting the Baader-Meinhof terrorists for years. Herrhausen was killed last November only days after Chancellor Helmut Kohl, to whom he was a close economic adviser, announced a 10-point plan for economic reunification of the two Germans which was widely perceived as a harbinger of the end of dominion by the superpower "condominium."

P-2 announcing the assassination of the Swedish leader Olof Palme?

**Razin:** During summer 1985 I interrogated a very important leader of the American mafia, whose name I cannot mention, who told me that such a telegram was sent from Gelli to Philip Guarino, at that time one of the most outstanding members of the Republican circle around Bush.

**Q:** Do you have any precise indication about the existence

of the telegram?

**Razin:** At present the FBI has opened an inquiry on this story. The existence of the telegram is also indicated by the archives of the National Security Agency.

**Q:** From where was this telegram sent precisely and who got it?

**Razin:** It left with the signature of Licio Gelli and was addressed to Philip Guarino. It was sent from South America, from one of the southernmost regions of Brazil. According to the most reliable information it was sent by a man called Ortolani on behalf of Licio Gelli or in any case on Gelli's instructions.

**Q:** What was the exact text of the telegram?

**Razin:** The telegram said: "Tell our friend that the Swedish palm will be felled."

**Q:** Why would the Italian P-2 have been involved, interested in the assassination of Palme?

**Razin:** Sweden was one of the main protagonists of the illegal weapons traffic at the time of the Iran-Iraq war when Palme was prime minister and thus Palme was surely aware of what was happening.

**Q:** And P-2 was part of this operation?

**Razin:** Yes, P-2 was at the center, one of the main participants in the illegal arms traffic, which was connected to the drug traffic from the outset. P-2 also made a substantial contribution to the recycling of large amounts of money used for this arms and drugs traffic from one country to another.

**Q:** And what about the CIA-P-2 relations?

**Razin:** Suffice it to see how the P-2 was involved with Banco Ambrosiano and with Michele Sindona and how the CIA was involved with them in several financial manipulations. For example, in the United States the big scandal involving the S&L banks is big news. The Texas state prosecutor has found evidence of CIA involvement in the bankruptcy of many of these banks which used illegal funds for their operations. The man who knows a lot about this is Richard Brenneke, a former CIA agent from Oregon.

**Q:** Do you have more details which could help to clarify why Palme was assassinated?

**Razin:** I am sure that there are documents on this but it is a different story to see if they are going to come out into the open. I can give you some other collateral details. For example, a week before Palme's death, an agent named Michael Townley was in Stockholm. Townley was involved in the assassination of the Chilean Orlando Letelier, some years ago in Washington. Townley was a political dirty tricks specialist. . . . It is a definite fact that the weapons traffic had a lot to do [with Palme's death.]