

Operation Gladio and the European revolt

by Umberto Pascali

There is a supersecret paramilitary structure operating under the cover of NATO that includes, in Italy, 1,000 agents and an unspecified number of sub-agents. The "parallel" structure codenamed "Operation Gladio," in the immediate postwar period, was supposed to prepare for guerrilla warfare in case of Soviet invasion. But according to allegations made by several Italian parliamentarians, it turned into the center for destabilizing operations against the host countries. While the "soldiers" of the structure were trained by the United States, often on U.S. territory, the "elite" was trained by *British* intelligence, reportedly by special Royal Air Forces units.

The "parallel" structure—reportedly operating in several European NATO countries—is still protected by state secret (like the "national security" cover in the U.S.). It was unknown not only to the public, but also to the Italian government except the prime minister, the President, and a few high-level officials. Since Oct. 18, the secret has been broken, dramatically, by a 12-page dossier delivered by Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti to the parliamentary committee investigating the many unsolved terrorist massacres that have taken place in Italy since 1970. The panel (commonly known as Comitato Stragi—Massacres Committee) was set up because attorneys and magistrates working on the bloodiest cases were forced, as matter of routine, to abandon their researches following the regular imposition of the "state secret."

The fear of the Anglo-American Gulf war

"Why these revelations now?" asked a U.S. source familiar with the story. "Well, one could certainly say that this was and is a *segreto di stato* and its exposure could be disruptive, but I think that many Europeans are genuinely terrified of what Washington and London want to do in the Gulf, and then you get some reactions." Observers in Rome have stated that the present U.S. and British leadership is ready to do everything to keep continental European countries from launching an organized resistance to the war. Thus, one can expect an effort to shake whatever power center exists in these countries, with the potential to act independently from the Anglo-Americans.

Indeed, the weeks before the publication of the dossier were among the most dramatic in Italy's always drama-packed political life. On Oct. 9 in Milan, a construction worker chanced upon a secret room in an apartment in Milan,

containing photocopies of statements made by Aldo Moro during his captivity at the hands of the terrorist Red Brigades. Moro, then chairman of the ruling Christian Democratic party and Italy's top political leader, was kidnaped and killed in 1978 after having been warned by Henry Kissinger personally, not to try to form a more solid ruling coalition.

The photocopies add nothing new to Moro's still-unsolved torture and death, but the media were filled with rumors of Moro's harsh personal remarks against the political leadership now in power, from Premier Andreotti to President Francesco Cossiga. Whatever his role in the past, Cossiga has become a target for the Anglo-Americans since July, when he officially asked the government to probe allegations made by former CIA agent Richard Brenneke, that the CIA had financed secretive arms trafficking and political destabilizations for years. With the new revelations about the "parallel" NATO, the role of the illegal P-2 Freemasonic lodge will be further clarified as an integral part of that structure. In particular, Cossiga asked that the allegations involving former CIA director George Bush be taken seriously.

Following the publications of the "Moro's letters," many newspapers expected the Andreotti government to fall.

Qaddafi financed Bush?

Meanwhile the government was being pressed by the American embassy to fire the director of military intelligence (SISMI), Adm. Fulvio Martini. The diktat was even reported as fact in the Italian press. The weekly *Panorama* wrote that Martini had no chance because he had displeased Bush personally. Martini's latest "crime" was a statement he gave to the Massacres Committee June 28 on one of the unsolved massacres, the blowup of the Itavia DC-9 over the Tyrrhenian Sea exactly 10 years before, on June 27, 1980. During that deposition, still officially unpublished, Martini said in passing that Muammar Qaddafi "financed the electoral campaign of George Bush through the royalties that he continued to pay even in the moment of utmost tension to Texas oil companies."

After that cryptic warning on an unthinkable Bush-Qaddafi connection, the U.S. administration decided that Martini was out, to be replaced by Gen. Giuseppe Alessandro D'Ambrosio, according to printed rumors in Rome. On Oct. 24, Andreotti announced to Parliament that Martini would be "flanked" immediately by General D'Ambrosio. It is not clear whether D'Ambrosio was Andreotti's man or just a choice he couldn't reject. But right after the announcement, his governmental partners, the Socialist Party, reacted in rage, accusing Andreotti of having made the nomination illegally.

The former chief of counterintelligence of SISMI, Ambrogio Viviani, now a Radical Party parliamentarian, revealed that D'Ambrosio had been in 1980-81 the right hand of General Santovito, the former director of SISMI, and totally controlled by the P-2 gang, above all through the

Irangate figure Michael Ledeen. D'Ambrosio had been military attaché at the Italian embassy in Washington, and his brother is a general in the U.S. Air Force. Finally it was leaked to the press that he had been involved in the failed coup d'état led by Junio Valerio Borghese in the 1970s, a plot which involved not only P-2 but that "parallel" NATO that has become the focus of political attention. "Maybe the idea is to create such an uproar around this nomination that it will become impractical," said a knowledgeable source in Rome.

Two 'original' documents

The dossier was delivered by Andreotti to the parliamentary committee on Oct. 18, but the members of that committee were not able to see it. The chairman, Sen. Libero Gualtieri of the Liberal Party, felt suddenly ill when he saw it and took it home for the weekend! After an uproar, five days later, Andreotti let it be known that he had called it back but would send it again to the committee. What came back was a slightly different dossier—starting with the title. The first was titled, "The So-called Parallel SID—Operation Gladio," the second, only "Gladio." "Parallel SID" is a journalistic expression used also by investigative magistrates to indicate the involvement of the P-2-controlled secret services, called SID from 1966 to 1977, in a series of terrorist acts and coup attempts.

The first dossier explained that Operation Gladio was organized by the CIA; in version 2, the CIA vanished. The first version explained the crucial role of British intelligence in training the officers of the paramilitary group. Finally, the first document described facts as taking place in the present; the second gave the impression of talking about history. Yet on Oct. 24, Andreotti told Parliament, "The structure did exist and does exist."

An American expert commented: "From a strategic standpoint a guerrilla structure like the 'Stay Behind' is totally useless, at least after the first postwar years. But from a political standpoint imagine the kind of power of control, subversion, blackmail, and manipulation it can give to its controllers, the whole thing protected by secrecy and employing people who, because of their psychological profile, are ready to obey any order."

Documentation

Excerpts from the "Operation Gladio" dossier delivered by Giulio Andreotti to the parliamentary committee investigating major terrorist acts. It is dated Oct. 17, but is the second version:

1) The secret networks inside NATO

Immediately after World War II, the fear of Soviet expansionism and the inferiority of the NATO forces vis-à-vis those of the Cominform induced the Western nations to hypothesize new and non-conventional forms of defense, by creating in their territory a "secret network of resistance aimed at acting, in case of enemy occupation, through the collection of information, sabotage, propaganda, and guerrilla warfare. Resistance networks were organized in France, Belgium, Holland, and extended, then, to Denmark and Norway. Also in the German and Austrian territories under Allied control similar structures were created. Our country, like the other NATO countries, began to study in 1951 the implementation of a "clandestine" resistance organization.

. . .

2) The "Stay Behind" agreement and Italian participation

While the resistance structure in Italy was being completed, on Nov. 26 1956, the [Italian intelligence service] SIFAR and the corresponding U.S. service [CIA] concluded an agreement concerning the organization and the activities of the "post-occupation secret network," . . . called "Stay Behind." In this way the basis were laid for the operation code-named "Gladio" . . .

3) Operation Gladio

In order to implement the agreement concluded within NATO, SIFAR began building up the secret organization through the setting up of a structure which would be: made up of agents operating in the territory that, by age, sex, and job had a good chance of escaping possible deportations and arrest; easy to manage by a command structure outside the occupied territory; covered by utmost secrecy and divided "into cells."

The clandestine network was to be articulated, in case of occupation, in the following branches: information, sabotage, propaganda and general resistance, radiocommunication, codes, receiving and redeploying persons and matériel.

Each of these structures was to operate autonomously. . . .

4) Weapons depot

During the year 1959, the Center for Demolition Training received the operational matériel in order to create the deposits for the nucleus to be deployed [i.e., weapons and explosives]. . . . The matériel included: portable weapons, ammunition, explosives, hand grenades, knives, 66 mm cannon, etc.

5) The new orders

Beginning in the 1980s there were new lines of operation. The implementation of the NATO guidelines led to the training within SISMI of particularly skilled cadres able to train personnel for military clandestine operations such as: a) information and propaganda b) evasion and exfiltration c) guerrilla warfare d) sabotage and countersabotage. . . .