

Charges of CIA Ties

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ROME, Jan. 30 — A series of revelations alleging past ties between the CIA and major Italian political, military and religious leaders has intensified the climate of uncertainty surrounding Italy's latest political crisis, now entering its fourth week.

A confusing series of stories in the Italian press, mostly drawing on apparent leaks from U.S. congressional investigations, has detailed alleged payments in the millions of dollars from as early as 1947 to as late as this past December.

The result has been to leave the Italian public baffled as to who got money when and Italian politicians groping for "official" reports from Washington which they hope will remove the clouds that hang over many of their heads.

Most of the revelations have come from the Turin Daily, La Stampa, owned by the giant auto manufacturer Fiat.

Earlier this week, La Stampa wrote that top politicians were among the recipients of the \$75 million

the CIA is reported to have spent in Italy since 1947. Subsequent reports revealed close contacts and the exchange of \$800,000 between former U.S. Ambassador to Italy, Graham Martin and Italy's former intelligence chief, Vito Miceli.

Meanwhile, excerpts from a soon-to-be-released book by two Italians dealing with relations between American intelligence organizations and Italians during the 1940s.

According to parts of the book already published, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, now Pope Paul, worked closely with the Office of Strategic Services and the CIA between 1942 and 1950. These reports have been described by Vatican spokesmen as "pure fiction" and as "not worth wasting time talking about."

Active speculation over CIA activities in Italy began early this month when reports appeared in the United States of a new series of payments totalling \$46 million said to have been made to anti-Communist parties and politicians here last month. It is now believed here that those

reports referred to a new plan for CIA payments still under consideration to counter Communist gains in last June's local elections.

About the time the reports surfaced in Washington, former CIA employee Philip Agee and former Ramparts editor Steve Weissman released the names of reported CIA agents now working in Italy. Many of these names, with addresses and telephone numbers, were published by the Italian press. Some names of alleged Soviet agents also have been published.

Things came to a head this week with the publication by La Stampa of the names of top Italian politicians alleged to have received money in December.

Named in the report were former Christian Democrat Premier Giulio Andreotti; Minister of Industry Carlo Donat Cattin, also a Christian Democrat; labor leader Vito Scalia, and former President Giuseppe Saragat, a Social Democrat.

Earlier reports had implicated other leading political figures.

Muddy Italian Politics

Since many of the reports from Washington have centered on payments made during the 1972 general elections to counter Communist influence, many Italians have become convinced that the payments mentioned by La Stampa referred to an earlier period.

This view appears to have been buttressed by the Turin newspaper's latest excerpts from the report of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, according to which Ambassador Martin had close contacts with intelligence chief Miceli. Miceli, the reports say, was unable to maintain those contacts with

the present U.S. ambassador, John Volpe.

According to the La Stampa reports, Martin, who became ambassador to Italy in 1969 and later served in South Vietnam, made the payments to Gen. Miceli in 1972, when Miceli was head of the Service for Defense Intelligence (SID). The general, who is now awaiting trial on charges relating to the 1970 right-wing coup attempt, has denied receiving the money. Like the other politicians implicated by the Turin newspaper he has threatened to sue.

One of the most interesting elements to emerge from the material published here is the reported opposition of the then

CIA station chief to Martin's plans for Gen. Miceli, which were approved by the National Security Council's intelligence arm, the 40 Committee, then headed by Henry Kissinger.

Ironically, the reports could somewhat alter the image that Italians have of the CIA as an evil meddler.

If the House reports, as expected, show no evidence of any covert operations in Italy after the departure of Ambassador Martin, this would take some of the pressure off Ambassador Volpe, who has come under repeated attack by the Italian press for his anti-Communist views since his arrival here in mid-1973.