

U.S. Paid \$800,000 To Italian General; C.I.A. Fought Move

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By ALVIN SHUSTER
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ROME, Jan. 29—Over the strong objections of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1972, Graham A. Martin, then the United States Ambassador to Italy, won approval to pay \$800,000 to a prominent rightist general who headed Italy's military intelligence agency.

Gen. Vito Miceli, the Italian who received the money, is now facing trial on charges of involvement in plots in 1970 to overthrow the Italian Government.

The general's alleged involvement in the plots became publicly known in 1974, when he was charged. He has denied the charges, and yesterday he called for an early trial so that he could prove his loyalty.

Payments Stopped

The American payments to General Miceli, which were made without conditions as to their use, stopped after Ambassador Martin was replaced in 1973 by the present Ambassador, John A. Volpe.

The story of the conflict between Mr. Martin and the chief of the C.I.A. in Italy is told in a report by the House Select Committee on Intelligence. The report does not refer by name to Mr. Martin or General Miceli, who is described only as a "very high figure of the Defense Information Service," the military intelligence agency

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that the general headed until 1974.

The Turin newspaper *La Stampa*, however, published excerpts from the report, mentioning names and dates not made available in the United States. Although the American Embassy here refused to comment, the details of the report left no doubt that the payments were made to General Miceli, who was arrested in October 1974 and is now free awaiting trial.

Mr. Martin, who became Ambassador to Saigon after his nearly four years in Rome, engaged in a running struggle with the C.I.A.'s chief of station over the payments. At one point, according to documents submitted to the House committee, Mr. Martin accused the chief of stalling, and he threat-

ened to "give instructions to block his entrance to the embassy and perhaps even publicly put him on a plane to Washington."

The chief of station, who has since left Rome, had raised serious doubts about the payments, noting that it would aid only the extreme right in Italy and not the forces of the political center, which the United States hoped to strengthen. He said that the general was tied to "antidemocratic elements" of the extreme right and added, according to the documents, that there was no way of knowing whether "our money would be completely wasted."

Mr. Martin, however, insisted on going ahead with the project, which was designed as a "propaganda operation." The chief of station argued that General Miceli lacked experience in political propaganda and that the general's staff did not seem "to us best prepared in this field."

According to the documents, the station chief cabled his headquarters in Washington saying that Mr. Martin was insisting on paying the money because, as the ambassador was quoted as having said, "the important thing is to demonstrate to these people our solidarity about what they're doing." The C.I.A. man, in another cablegram, stressed that the money would be handed over to the general without conditions.

The Ambassador has made clear his intention of not asking for too many details from the recipient of the money and not to impose any condition on the use of the money," the station chief told his headquarters.

The House committee's report makes it clear that there was no accounting of how the \$800,000 was spent.

According to the documents, Mr. Martin obtained approval for the exercise in dealings with Henry A. Kissinger, who was then the director of the National Security Council and chairman of the 40 Committee, the arm of the council that approves covert intelligence operations. The C.I.A. said in one document that "no one has doubted that the Ambassador received his authority from the Committee of 40."

The documents suggested that Mr. Martin often reminded the chief of station that Mr. Kissinger, who was not yet Secretary of State, and President Nixon were both aware of the plan. The money was finally given to General Miceli.

The House report reveals no further covert operations in Italy after Mr. Martin's departure. The reported plans to pay \$6 million to individual politicians here—as revealed last month—were said by some officials in Washington to have been dropped after the publicity.

The House Select Committee

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found, however, that the United States supplied \$75 million to Italian political parties and candidates since the C.I.A. was established in 1947. The figure includes \$10 million supplied to non-Communist groups in Italy, principally the Christian Democratic Party, in an effort initiated by Mr. Martin, who served here from October 1969 until 1973.

Today General Miceli said that his lawyers did not want him to make any statements. "I'm fed up," he said.

The pending case against General Miceli involves an alleged rightist plot led by Prince Junio Valerio Borghese, known as the "Black Prince," who died in Spain in August 1974. The coup attempt, planned for the night of Dec. 7, 1970, was called off at the last minute for unknown reasons.

According to authorities here, the coup leaders planned to march on Rome from the mountains near Rieti, about 50 miles northeast of the capital. The investigators charged that General Miceli had known of the plot but had failed to inform the Interior Minister or the President.

The charges focus on a rightist group called "Compass Rose." When investigators in 1974 turned up alleged links between the general and the

group, he was dismissed as the intelligence chief, and he was arrested three months later on charges of subversion.

Before then General Miceli had been scheduled to become commander of the Third Army Corps, which makes up about one-third of the Italian Army.

Effort to Reach Martin

Efforts late yesterday to reach Mr. Martin for comment were unsuccessful. Mr. Martin is now on assignment in the State Department in Washington.