

How the CIA tried to stop Italy payoffs

Examiner News Services.

TURIN — Secretary of State Kissinger and former Ambassador Graham Martin made the Central Intelligence Agency pay \$9 million to Italian politicians in 1972 despite opposition by the agency's station chief in Rome, Turin's newspaper La Stampa said yesterday.

Martin reportedly also ordered the CIA to pay \$800,000 in 1972 to an Italian intelligence chief who is awaiting trial on charges of plotting to overthrow the government.

Quoting secret documents, the paper said the agency paid \$74 million from 1948 to 1972, most of it to Premier Aldo Moro's Christian Democrats.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials, but under U.S. law, it is not illegal for the CIA to contribute to political parties in foreign countries.

La Stampa, owned by the huge auto maker Fiat, said its Washington correspondent came into possession of secret documents of the House Intelligence Committee headed by Otis Pike, D-N.Y. It said it would publish them today.

In Washington, a committee source said the newspaper's story appeared to be essentially correct except that it goes too far in blaming Kissinger.

The source quoted the report as saying Kissinger and the National Security Council's 40 Committee approved the concept of funding moderate Italian political parties in an effort to prevent Communist election gains.

But the source said the report did not cite any evidence that Kissinger became personally involved in the fight between Martin and the CIA station chief over how the money should be distributed.

Moro, ruling in a caretaker capacity, is laboriously trying to win support from the Socialists to give Italy a new government. The alternative would be parliamentary elections a year early, with the Communists expected to score large gains because of spreading

unemployment and industrial recession.

La Stampa said Martin, who was U.S. ambassador in Rome from 1970 to 1972, won Kissinger's approval for a "quick fix" of \$9 million to the Christian Democrats and other non-Communist parties in 1972.

Kissinger also overcame the reluctance of President Nixon, who had advised in a note, "Let's keep out of this mess," La Stampa said.

La Stampa said the CIA station chief in Rome had advised

against further subsidies for Italy's main party because it was "already full of money and any additional money would have had a marginal impact on the elections."

But Martin urged that the money was meant to "show solidarity," the paper said.

Solidarity was also the reason La Stampa cited for an earlier disclosure alleging that Martin bypassed CIA objections and

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passed on \$800,000 to an Italian intelligence chief in 1972.

La Stampa identified him as Gen. Vito Miceli, who headed the Italian military intelligence service from 1970 to 1972.

After more than a year under arrest, Miceli was released in 1974 pending investigations on charges of connivance in a right-wing plot to overthrow the government.

A Washington source said the House committee report, while not naming Martin or Miceli, says Kissinger approved the \$800,000.

Martin told the committee in December he did not know what happened to the \$800,000, which was delivered to Miceli without condition and that there was a possibility "it was a ripoff."

The report showed a long and bitter battle between Martin and the Rome station chief, who felt that Miceli was antidemocratic and a neofascist and that all the money should not be given to him unconditionally.

The dispute reached a point, the report said, where the ambassador threatened to call out the embassy Marine guard to put the CIA agent aboard a U.S.-bound plane unless the money

was delivered.

Martin has been awaiting reassignment since he left Saigon last year on one of the last evacuation planes.