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News Bulletin REUTERS February 9, 1983

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‡‡AM-ATTEMPT-CIA''' (3 TAKES)‡

‡BY PAUL MINDUS‡

NEW YORK, FEB 9, REUTER -- NEW YORK SENATOR ALFONSE D'AMATO TODAY ACCUSED THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) OF DELIBERATELY OBSTRUCTING THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II.

D'AMATO TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL FROM ROME THAT THE CIA CONDUCT WAS ''VERY SUSPICIOUS'' AND THAT IT WAS OBVIOUS ''THE CIA WOULD HAVE LIKED THE INVESTIGATION DROPPED.''

ASKED IF HE WAS SUGGESTING THAT CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY MAY BE INVOLVED IN A COVER-UP, HE SAID ''YES.''

D'AMATO ACCUSED THE CIA OF ATTEMPTING TO ''CAST DOUBT ON THE COMPETENCE AND INTEGRITY OF ITALIAN AUTHORITIES.''

THE NEW YORK REPUBLICAN ALSO SAID THAT STRONG FACTS LEAD TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIET KGB WERE INVOLVED IN THE MAY 1981 PAPAL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.

HE SAID HE WAS ''SHOCKED TO LEARN FROM A HIGH CIA OFFICIAL IN ROME THAT NOT ONE AGENT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE CASE.''

HE ACCUSED CIA OFFICIALS OF SPREADING ''DISINFORMATION'' TO LEND CREDENCE TO THEORIES THAT WOULD-BE ASSASSIN MEHMET ALI AGCA WAS A MADMAN.‡

MORE 1559 PB

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‡‡AM-ATTEMPT-CIA 2 NEW YORK‡

HE TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE CIA ''CARRIED OUT A WAR OF SILENCE, OBSTRUCTION AND DISINFORMATION'' IN THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION.

D'AMATO, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN WHO HAS GENERALLY BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION, BLASTED IT FOR NOT HAVING THE CIA ACTIVELY COOPERATE WITH ITALIAN AUTHORITIES AND FOR TREATING THE INVESTIGATION INTO WHY THE POPE WAS SHOT AS ''AN INTERNAL MATTER'' FOR THE ITALIANS TO HANDLE.

''THAT'S NONSENSE. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT IMPLICATIONS THAT GO FAR BEYOND AN INTERNAL AFFAIR, TO THE BULGARIANS AND THE SOVIETS,'' HE SAID.

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HE ADDED, ''THAT IS THE MOST SHODDY, ILLOGICAL EXPLANATION I HAVE HEARD.''

EARLIER TODAY, WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY MORT ALLIN TOLD REPORTERS, ''THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FEELS VERY STRONGLY THAT THIS IS AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION BEING CARRIED ON WITH CONSIDERABLE CARE AND WE HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE IN WHAT IT IS DOING.''¥

MORE 1601 PB

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¥TAM-ATTEMPT-CIA 3 NEW YORK¥

AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON SAID THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION NO ASSISTANCE WAS REQUESTED FROM THE CIA.

''WHY SHOULD WE HAVE ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER,'' SAID PAOLO TRABALZA, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ITALIAN EMBASSY.

D'AMATO CITED THREE EXAMPLES OF CIA OBSTRUCTION OF THE INVESTIGATION.

HE SAID UNNAMED CIA SOURCES SPREAD STORIES LENDING CREDENCE TO THE THEORY THAT AGCA WAS INSANE AND THAT THE CIA SUGGESTED THAT ITALIAN AUTHORITIES HAD TAINTED AGCA'S TESTIMONY BY IMPROPERLY GIVING HIM INFORMATION.

HE ALSO ACCUSED THE CIA OF STOPPING A KEY SENATE AIDE FROM GOING WITH HIM TO ROME BY SPREADING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIDE'S INTERESTS IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. HE REFUSED TO NAME THE AIDE.

''THERE IS NO POSITIVE INFORMATION COMING FORTH FROM THE CIA, ONLY DISFORMATION INTENDED TO CAST DOUBT,'' HE SAID.

D'AMATO SPENT FIVE DAYS IN ROME, TALKING TO ITALIAN AND AMERICAN AUTHORITIES.¥

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