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Executive Registry

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Alleged CIA Involvement in Italian Politics

1. The current political turmoil in Rome has been marked by frequent allegations from the left of US interference in Italian domestic affairs. Leftist accusations have not been directed exclusively at CIA, but the Agency has taken its share of knocks.

2. Press exposes of the Agency role in Chile provided the catalyst for the anti-US campaign. Allende was a hero to the Italian left--including its more moderate elements. Secretary Kissinger is unfailingly portrayed by the left as the prime mover in the affair. Since the Chilean revelations, even the Secretary's most casual remark on Italy is given front page treatment in leftist publications, and it is always implied that he is about to "unleash" the Agency to work his will in Italy.

3. The remark that has drawn the most fire--in the moderate and leftist press--is the Secretary's alleged comment during congressional testimony that the CIA would be "blamed" if Italy went communist.

4. Official Communist Party statements have not pointed the finger explicitly at CIA but, during the current search for a government, the PCI has frequently demanded an administration free of "foreign interference." This was the theme of the massive PCI-sponsored demonstration in Rome during Secretary Kissinger's visit this week.

5. Recent allegations which specifically mention CIA include the following:

--Paese Sera, Rome's Communist-financed evening daily, alleged that the Rome Daily American was controlled by the Agency during the 1950s. The Daily commented editorially on October 26 that it "receives no subsidy...either direct or indirect from any source...this newspaper has never been a CIA mouthpiece."

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--La Stampa, Turin's moderately left-of-center daily (owned by Fiat) published an article by Vittorio Gorresio on October 15 suggesting that if the government crisis dragged on until spring, the US would grow impatient and "one fine day, the CIA will give the order...for the putsch." The author argued that the US would be more likely to take such a step if detente with the USSR faltered, since the US would no longer fear "provoking the Soviets" in Italy.

--Panorama--a widely read, left-leaning news weekly--carried an article on September 19 commenting on a visit to Rome by Irving Brown, AFL-CIO representative in Paris and Howard Molisani, Vice-President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. Panorama claimed that Brown works for CIA and implied the same about Molisani. The alleged purpose of their visit was to encourage anti-communist elements in the Italian labor movement to form a separate organization.

CIA has not been accused so far of involvement in the SID/Miceli affair. An October 31 article in the left-wing intellectual weekly L'Espresso, however, alleges that former Ambassador Martin and Assistant Military Attache James Clavio were involved with Miceli in preparations for the abortive 1970 coup attempt.

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