
Book Review

Italian Journalists Probe 'Faceless War'

by Paolo Raimondi

Iraq: La guerra senza volto (Iraq: The Faceless War)

by Paolo Cucchiarelli and Vincenzo Mulè
Milan: Selene Edizioni, 2005
161 pages, paperback, 11.50 euros

In analyzing some of the most dramatic events involving Italian journalists and humanitarian activists kidnapped in Iraq, and the mobilization of Italian authorities in the attempt to free them, this book gives a detailed account of the tensions between American and Italian intelligence agencies in dealing with these cases. It focusses on the kidnapping of four Italian contractors, one of whom was killed; the kidnapping and assassination of Enzo Baldoni, a freelance journalist; the kidnapping and liberation of Simona Pari and Simona Torretta, two young women in charge of the Italian NGO "A Bridge to Baghdad," who worked with women and children in the devastated areas of Baghdad; and the kidnapping and liberation of journalist Giuliana Sgrena, during which Italian military intelligence (SISMI) official Nicolà Calipari was killed by "friendly fire" at an improvised American checkpoint on the road to the Baghdad airport.

Co-author Paolo Cucchiarelli is a journalist who covers the Italian Parliament, and is an expert on the "Strategy of Tension." This is the strategy through which, beginning in the late 1960s, Italian and NATO "parallel secret services" politically destabilized Italy through right-wing and left-wing terrorist operations, to prevent the formation of a sovereign and independent coalition for national unity.¹

Vincenzo Mulè, a researcher and investigative journalist, has written a book on the assassination of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro.

The book was presented at a May press conference at the Italian National Press Center in Rome, with the participation of political leaders, including Sen. Luigi Malabarba (see ac-

companying interview).

The report presents overwhelming evidence of an American military intelligence strategy to get all independent journalists and genuine anti-war activists from the United States and Europe out of Iraq, and concludes by saying that "the risk is that the enemy is being exaggerated for the aims of the war, and is actually an enemy at the service of those who are promoting this war against everything and everyone."

The book provides an important reading on the interventions against the war by Pope John Paul II and a few other Vatican representatives. John Paul II denounced the "faceless" conflict, in which everyone seems to have lost his own human identity. He also intervened very forcefully against the bombardment of the predominantly Sunni city of Fallujah and the Shi'ite holy city of Najaf. His independent voice for peace and justice was seen by many Islamic leaders as the only one they could trust for serious negotiations.

Speaking in October 2004, after Libya's Qaddafi was welcomed back into the international community, Cardinal Renato Martino, the president of the Vatican's Council of Justice and Peace, said: "And if I tell you that Saddam Hussein was ready to do the same thing, you should draw your own conclusions. . . . He was almost ready to allow the UN inspectors back into Iraq. It was an avoidable war."

The book suggests that journalist Enzo Baldoni was supposed to become a "mailman," to deliver messages from the city of Najaf to the Pope. Unfortunately, he was kidnapped and immediately killed, in a way totally different from what happened in all the other kidnappings.

The book also suggests the existence of a number of Islamic terrorist networks whose connections in the West have never been checked out. One case is the Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI), which claimed to have kidnapped Baldoni. As documented by an Italian researcher whose material was published in the Italian weekly *Diario*, this group's website, where a picture of Baldoni's body was published on Sept. 8, 2004, originates from a computer in Utah, which is also the point of origin for the website of Ansar al-Sunnah, a group supposedly allied with al-Qaeda. Italian intelligence has also found a connection with Yasser Tawfiq al-Sirri, an Egyptian living in London who is considered one of the spokesmen for al-Qaeda in Europe. Such leads require cross-checking and investigation, because the dividing line between truth and disinformation is very thin in these matters.

Another important contribution the book makes is the documentation of the process of progressive "privatization" of the war, the involvement of mercenary troops, and the hiring of tens of thousands of contractors for various tasks, both military and bureaucratic. The result is that the present Iraqi government is a de facto puppet that would not survive a single day on its own. The strategy of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld is to get all the independent media and observers to leave the war theater immediately, so they can bury the Constitution and human rights in Iraq.

1. See Claudio Celani's series on the Strategy of Tension, *EIR*, March 26, April 2, April 9, and April 30, 2004.