leS to tlhte NEWS
by PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY
Box 618, Alton, Illinois 62002
Phone: 618-462-5415

RELEASE: April 28, 1978

TERRORIST KIDNAPPINGS

Italy, the cradle of Western civilization, is giving us an object lesson in what can happen to a nation when the police cannot cope with the criminals. Aldo Moro, Italy's Christian Democratic leader, is only the latest and most sensational victim of that nation's most profitable industry, unofficially dubbed "Kidnap, Inc."

Italian kidnappers earned at least 30 billion lire (about $36 million) in ransom profits last year. A kidnapping nets 20 to 30 times what a bank robbery would yield, with not nearly so much risk.

The many kidnappings of wealthy Italians have spawned a whole cluster of new industries while wiping out the profits of others. Hot-selling consumer items include guns, stylish holsters, tear-gas ejectors, pocket alarms, and guard dogs. For $30,000 a year, Lloyds of London will write you $1.5 million in kidnap insurance.

The business of private security guards is mushrooming. Ex-policemen, ex-boxers, and men trained in karate are in great demand as bodyguards. Every fashionable social event has a mini-army standing around to protect the guests. Cafes on the Via Veneto are deserted after dark.

A new profitable business has sprung up to train chauffeurs in anti-kidnap driving techniques. They are taught to screech a car into a skid, do a 180° reverse, and speed back the way they came. A new multi-million-dollar firm specializes in converting limousines into armored cars with reinforced steel doors, bullet-proof windows, and gasoline tanks and tires that cannot be shot out.

Private schools are losing students because wealthy industrialists want to send their children out of the country. English language courses are booked up months in advance to prepare the children of wealthy parents to enter safe schools in America or Britain.

(more)

The kidnapping of Aldo Moro was an out-and-out political attack by a Communist terrorist group ca11 ed the Red Brigades. They bragged, "Moro is in the hands of the proletariat. ... By trying him, we are trying the state."

Although about 95 percent of Italy's kidnappings have been financially rather than politically motivated, they have political overtones. The wealthy industrialists are seen as the symbols of capitalism which terrorist groups hope to topple. The terrorists are consumed with hatred for those who succeed in the capitalist-democratic system. That is why they often mutilate their victims. John Paul Getty's grandson was one example.

Spectacular terrorist acts have taken place in so many Western countries that many people wonder if they are part of a common pattern or joint effort. Terrorist crimes of the last few years have included the exploits of the murderous Baader Meinhof gang and of Ramirez Sanchez who kidnapped OPEC oil ministers in Vienna. The latest was the kidnapping-murder of Charles-Victor Bracht, the Belgian millionaire businessman, whose body was found in a garbage dump.

A recent book by Ovid Demaris details the links between terrorist groups and concludes, "Although there is no single terrorist conspiracy responsible for acts of terrorism on a worldwide basis, there is a loose network of relationships between the various groups." One of these "relationships" is the cash financing supplied by Libya's Muammar qaddafi, the dictator who stole the great Wheelus Air Base from u& a few years ago. He paid $10 million for the murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics of 1972.

At last Western Europe is realizing that such vicious terrorist attacks require stern measures of defense. Twenty members of the Council of Europe have signed a convention which will deprive terrorist suspects of their traditional right to political asylum. This much-needed and long-overdue agreement will go into effect as soon as one more government ratifies it.

(end)