

Bush administration clears US troops in slaying of Calipari and wounding of Sgrena

By [Wayne Madsen](#)

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The Bush administration took specific legal steps that cleared a U.S. Special Forces assassination team in Iraq from any future criminal proceedings arising from their assassination of Italian SISMI intelligence number two man Nicola Calipari.

Calipari, the deputy head of SISMI and an experienced Iraqi expert, was accompanying freed hostage Giuliana Sgrena to Baghdad International Airport when their Toyota Corolla was fired on by well-trained U.S. sharpshooter assassins. Calipari was on the phone to the office of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Rome, where his wife also works, when he was shot in the head. Sgrena and the driver, a Carabinieri officer, were injured in the attack.

Pentagon officials claim the car was speeding past a checkpoint and that shots were fired only into the engine block. The Italians claim the interior light in the car was on, the car was traveling at only 30 miles per hour, and prominently displayed the Italian flag. Italian intelligence officials also believe that the Americans identified the Italian vehicle because National Security Agency systems had intercepted Calipari's cell phone signals and triangulated its specific location.

The legal protection for the American assassination team stems generally from the refusal of the Bush administration to recognize the International Criminal Court (ICC), but more recently and specifically from a new counterintelligence doctrine outlined by National Counterintelligence Executive Michelle Van Cleave, who was once a member of Ronald Reagan's National Security Council staff. That strategy, announced by Van Cleave at a March 5 speech at Texas A&M University in College Station, calls for "attacking" foreign intelligence services by using counterintelligence operations. The immunity from ICC jurisdiction, the new counterintelligence strategy, the Pentagon's approval of special assassination teams in Iraq and elsewhere, as well as approval of a CIA "Worldwide Attack Matrix," now authorizes U.S. military forces and intelligence agents to assassinate those deemed a threat to the United States.

Calipari and Sgrena, according to well-placed Italian sources, had irrefutable evidence of U.S. war crimes in the siege of Fallujah, involving the use of napalm, mustard gas, and nerve gas. Sgrena works for the Italian daily, Il Manifesto.

Calipari's intelligence collection efforts and previous hostage rescue missions in Iraq were supplemented by assistance from the Vatican's own intelligence services, which maintained close ties to Eastern Catholic members of Saddam's government, including former Foreign

Minister Tariq Aziz. Calipari's brother is a well-connected monsignor in the Vatican Secretariat.

Calipari maintained liaison with Iraqi resistance fighters, who were formerly members of Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard, to secure Sgrena's release. This did not sit well with the Bush administration.

According to Italian sources, the ex-Republican Guard members have worked with Italian intelligence to combat the alleged al Qaeda and Abu Musad Al Zarqawi "terrorists" who took Americans, Italians, and others hostage. The Bush administration and its neo-conservative architects of the Iraq war do not want it widely known that the Iraqi resistance is split between ex-Republican Guards, who have worked with the Italians, and fanatic Islamists.

The U.S. hit team wanted to kill Calipari and Sgrena because they had intimate knowledge of the Iraqi resistance and how some loyalists of the U.S.-supported Iraqi regime may have cooperated with the alleged Zarqawi forces to seize Western hostages and decapitate them on videos for propaganda purposes. Many of the beheading videos show masked men who do not appear to be extremist Muslim Iraqis or even Arabs from their build, stance, sporting of jewelry, and, in one case, speaking Russian.

According to Italian sources, the ex-Republican Guardsmen view the alleged Zarqawi and his alleged al Qaeda allies as "monsters," but also know that the ex-Republican Guard members, many of whom are secular Muslims, had nothing to do with the hostage taking and beheadings as often claimed by neoconservatives in the Bush administration.

Global Research Contributing Editor Wayne Madsen is a Washington, DC-based journalist and columnist, and the co-author of "America's Nightmare: The Presidency of George Bush II."

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