



The Shadow of Russian Intelligence in Italy

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A recent investigation by *Il Riformista* has unveiled a network of Russian intelligence activities operating from the embassy on via Gaeta in Rome, concealed under diplomatic assignments. This presence is not limited to traditional espionage activities, but permeates various layers of Italian society, affecting military apparatus, politics, economy, journalism, and even religious circles linked to the Holy See.

The main actors and the case of expelled diplomats

The starting point of the investigation are the figures of Ivan Petrovich Gorbachev and Mikhail Vasilyevich Astakhov, respectively naval attaché and deputy naval attaché at the embassy, believed to be linked to the GRU (Russian military intelligence service). Both were expelled from Italy on July 9 following an investigation by the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office into an alleged transfer of classified information

Analysis of vulnerabilities and hybrid warfare

Russian espionage activity appears aimed at analyzing vulnerabilities in Italian infrastructure, with particular attention to military systems, NATO-related technologies, and critical digital infrastructure.

Officials such as Igor Alexeyevich Anikeyev and Igor Albertovich Ovechkin, traceable to Russian internal security services (FSB), would work to map such vulnerabilities, acquiring expertise on how the Italian system functions. The purpose of this information gathering is not merely informational: mapping technological dependencies and infrastructure could be preparatory to potential cyberattacks or sabotage actions in case of escalation.

Extended interests: from civil society to the Holy See

The investigation highlights how other officials, including Anton Andreyevich Demin and Dmitry Yuryevich Morozenkov, operate in the field of relations with cultural associations, entrepreneurs, and other influential interlocutors to extend Russian influence. Finally, the role of Konstantin Alexeyevich Nemudrov emerges, attaché to the Holy See, whose position appears sensitive given the Vatican's role as a key interlocutor in the Ukrainian dossier.

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