



USITF Newsletter #5, Week of February 29th – March 6th 2016

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Welcome to another edition of the weekly USITF newsletter, “**Italian Politics This Week**,” a snapshot on past week’s major events, complete with news and analyses from national and international sources.

Italian intervention in Libya: The prospects of an Italian intervention in Libya has gone up and down this week. On Monday, US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter stated that Italy had “offered to take the lead,” but a possible international coalition would start operating in the North African country only after the creation of a Libyan national unity [government](#). The next day, Italy Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni seemed to be on the [same page](#) as Carter, despite former Prime Minister Romano Prodi declaring that [conditions](#) for an intervention are not there yet. On Thursday, Corriere della Sera and Il Sole 24 Ore reported that the Italian external secret service agency (AISE) will direct operations in Libya, and three 12-man teams are reportedly already on the ground. Special forces from the Italian Ministry of Defense will [follow](#). [Reuters](#) later confirmed the news. US Ambassador to Italy John R. Philipps declared to il Corriere della Sera that Italy could deploy up to 5,000 soldiers to [Libya](#). While the president of the parliamentary intelligence oversight committee (COPASIR), Giacomo Stucchi, argued on [Friday](#) that inaction was dangerous for Italy, Renzi played down the possibility of sending Italian troops on the ground the next [day](#).

Two Italians killed in Libya: Two Italians workers were killed in Libya this week under unclear circumstances. Fausto Piano and Salvatore Failla had been abducted in July 2015 while working for the Italian company Bonatti; near a compound owned by the oil and gas group [Eni](#). Two other workers, who had been held captive with Piano and Failla, were freed on [Friday](#). The Head of the Sabratha Municipal Council Hussein al-Zawadi argued that the two hostages were killed during intense clashes between ISIS militants and troops loyal to [Tripoli](#).

Egypt is not fully collaborating in Regeni’s murder: The House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Fabrizio Cicchitto stated on Monday that Egypt should do more to help Italy find out who tortured Giulio Regeni, the Cambridge student found dead in Cairo on 3 [February](#). [Pier Ferdinando Casini](#), the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chair, echoed Cicchitto’s sentiments. According to Reuters, who reported two Egyptian police sources citing Cairo coroner Hisham Abdel Hamid, the Italian student had been tortured for seven days before being killed. The Egyptian Justice Ministry strongly denied the [report](#). In the meantime, Italy is considering whether to recall the legal team sent to Cairo, given Egyptian authorities’ lack of [cooperation](#). Even the Head of the National Intelligence and Security Department (DIS) Giampero Massolo said that the case "is not marked by full, satisfactory collaboration with [Egypt](#)." A first batch of documents concerning the case was made available from Egypt on [Wednesday](#).

Week of reports in Italy: This week, two relevant government reports were released in Italy. In the first, the Italian secret service suggests Italy is increasingly exposed to terror threats, adding that another “Paris attack” is possible, not only in Italy, but also in the rest of Europe. The greatest threats were linked to Catholic Church’s Jubilee of Mercy and a new generation of jihadis inspired by ISIS. The report also suggests the possibility of Islamist terrorists infiltrating in the flow of asylum seekers via the [Balkans](#). In the second report, the National Anti-Mafia directorate states that the migrant problem should be solved at the European level, stabilizing Syria and pacifying [Libya](#). Moreover, the report also suggests that Mafia and ISIS are totally intertwined. ISIS is described as a “mafia state,” earning 3 million dollars per year via illicit [activities](#).

Italy’s GDP growth: While the EC will probably say Italy needs monitoring due to its macroeconomic [imbalances on Tuesday](#), Prime Minister Renzi declared “Italy is back,” after Istat confirmed that the country returned to positive GDP growth (0.8%) in 2015, following three years of [recession](#). The increase is however lower than the rate of 0.9% originally foreseen by the government last September. On Friday, sources within the Ministry of Economics and Finance stated that a GDP growth of 1.6% in 2016 was not [unrealistic](#).

That’s all for this week, see you next Monday!