

MEMORIE E STUDI DIPLOMATICI

COLLANA DIRETTA DA STEFANO BALDI

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A SHORT HISTORY OF ITALIAN DIPLOMACY

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Memorie e studi diplomatici

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this volume is to provide both Italian and international readers with an introductory tool for understanding the history and functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Italian Republic. It is the first handbook on the history of Italian diplomacy published in English, offering a comprehensive narrative from the unification of the country to the present day. The project is the result of a unique collaboration between Stefano Baldi, a career diplomat, and Luciano Monzali, a distinguished academic, allowing the text to blend rigorous historical analysis with a practical understanding of how diplomatic institutions function from the inside. This reconstruction follows three analytical paths: the history of the ministerial administration, the evolution of Italian diplomatic culture, and the presentation of the biographical profiles of some of the most influential Italian diplomats.

The core idea behind this work is to present Italian diplomacy not as a static bureaucracy but as an evolving entity deeply rooted in a centuries-old tradition. Although many view it as a modern creation, knowledge of its history remains limited despite an institutional continuity dating back to the 15th century, when the diplomacy of the Dukes of Savoy first emerged as the foundational nucleus of modern Italian practice. This Savoyard legacy provided the administrative and military foundations for what would eventually become the Italian diplomatic apparatus. For a political entity as vulnerable as the Savoy state, diplomatic action was essential for survival, leading to a practice based on the use of aristocrats, jurists, and military officers for international negotiation. In the 18th century, figures like Ignazio Solaro di Moretta, Marquis del Borgo, the first Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Marquis of Ormea established a culture characterized by pragmatism, clarity, and discipline.

The transition to a unified national diplomacy was a masterpiece of skill centered on the figure of Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour. Cavour successfully linked the specific interests of the Piedmontese state with the universal ideals of national liberalism, placing the Ital-

ian question at the heart of European politics. Alongside him, collaborators like Isacco Artom and Costantino Nigra played pivotal roles. Nigra, in particular, represented the modern professional diplomat, serving as a secret intermediary with Napoleon III and later representing Italy in major capitals for over five decades. Following unification, the ministry saw a progressive nationalization of its staff, moving away from exclusive Piedmontese dominance through the inclusion of figures like Raffaele Ulisse Barbolani, the first Secretary General from outside the Sardinian corps.

This book offers a unique opportunity to follow the institutional development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its structure. This evolution began with the reforms of Massimo d’Azeglio, who introduced rigorous recruitment procedures and competitive examinations to create a refined and cultured diplomatic class. The 1881 Mancini Act further rationalized the ministry into specialized divisions to handle political, commercial, and administrative affairs. A recurring theme in this history is the role of the Secretary General, often viewed as the guardian of administrative continuity. Figures like Giacomo Malvano became symbols of this stability, even when the position was periodically abolished by political leaders like Francesco Crispi and later Benito Mussolini to centralize power.

The text provides a detailed account of the diplomatic corps during the crisis of the liberal state and the subsequent Fascist era, illustrating the tension between professional duty and political pressure. While Salvatore Contarini and Carlo Sforza attempted to modernize liberal diplomatic culture in the early 1920s, the regime eventually settled for a soft Fascistization of the institution. Many professional diplomats like Raffaele Guariglia and Augusto Rosso maintained a realist, non-ideological outlook. Guariglia, an expert in African and Mediterranean affairs, and Rosso, who served in Washington and Moscow, represented an old guard that often sought to preserve ties with Western powers even as Mussolini’s policy became increasingly radical.

The rebirth of Italian diplomacy after the collapse of the regime in 1943 is a central chapter in this narrative. Under the guidance of Renato Prunas, who gathered a new generation of diplomats in Brindisi and Salerno, the foundations for a democratic and pro-European foreign policy were laid. Postwar leaders like Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi and Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza successfully reintegrated Italy

into the international community through the Atlantic Alliance and the nascent European community. This period saw the rise of the intellectual-diplomat, embodied by Pietro Quaroni, whose realistic and candid reports from Moscow and Paris helped the Italian ruling class navigate the onset of the Cold War. Similarly, Egidio Ortona emerged as a master of pragmatic Atlanticism, building a stable network of relations with the United States that ensured Italy's role as a reliable ally.

The book also highlights how the structure of the ministry was fundamentally reshaped in the postwar to meet the demands of a multilateral world. The 1967 reform, largely drafted by Roberto Gaja, remains the backbone of the current administration. Gaja, a brilliant theorist on nuclear strategy, served as Director of Political Affairs and as Secretary General and oversaw the unification of specialized career tracks into a single diplomatic role. Another key figure, Roberto Ducci, was instrumental in the negotiations for the Treaties of Rome and the development of a pan-European perspective.

As the narrative moves into the late 20th century, it explores how Italy navigated the end of the Cold War and the challenges of globalization. Renato Ruggiero, who served as Secretary General and later as Minister of Foreign Trade, brought a method based on negotiation rigor and interministerial coordination, viewing European integration as the primary instrument for enhancing Italian influence. In the multilateral arena, Francesco Paolo Fulci led a reformist activism at the United Nations, building coalitions of medium powers to increase Italy's international profile. The book details how the ministry's structure continued to adapt through major reorganizations, such as the 1999 Vattani reform, which significantly increased the number of general directorates, and the 2010 Massolo reform, which streamlined the administration into thematic macro-areas, such as Political Affairs, Global issues, and Country Promotion.

The final sections of the book cover recent transformations that reflect the shifting priorities of Italian foreign policy. These include the transfer of foreign trade competences to the ministry in 2020, effectively creating the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (so named since 2014), giving it the form known today. The text also discusses the 2026 reform, which introduces a dual-pillar system, one political and one economic, designed to place economic growth at the core of the nation's international strategy. A significant

cultural change noted is the increasing presence of women in leadership roles, already a long-standing trend in other Western democracies, a process that reached a symbolic turning point with the appointment of Elisabetta Belloni as the first female Secretary General.

The language of the book is intended to be simple and easy to understand, making the complex history of institutions and international negotiations accessible to a broad audience. By focusing on both the institutional framework and the remarkable personalities who inhabited it, the project illustrates how Italian diplomacy has consistently sought to balance its historical traditions with the need for innovation. Understanding the experiences of past diplomats, and the contexts in which they operated, allows for a deeper comprehension of how the profession has evolved within a national tradition. This comprehensive approach ensures that readers gain a deep understanding of how the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has transformed from a small royal secretariat into the sophisticated and multifaceted institution that operates from the Farnesina today.

We wish to thank Prof. G. R. Berridge, who kindly revised the manuscript and offered exceptionally useful suggestions for improving the text and its readability; this volume has benefited enormously from his expertise. While we remain solely responsible for its contents, his contribution has been invaluable.

PROLOGUE

Modern permanent diplomacy is an Italian invention. It was born in the Renaissance, between the late 14th and the mid-15th century, alongside the rise of humanism, the new arts and the new political institutions of the peninsula, and it spread from there to the rest of Europe in the centuries that followed. Its birthplace was not chosen by accident: it was the consequence of a particular political configuration that did not exist elsewhere in Europe at the time.

By the end of the 14th century, Italy had become a fragmented yet extraordinarily dynamic political space. The decline of the older medieval authorities, the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy, weakened by the Avignon captivity and the Great Schism, had left a vacuum that Italian cities filled by inventing new forms of government. Florence, Milan, Venice, Siena, Verona and many smaller centres competed continuously for power, territory and survival, in a landscape compact enough that any move by one ruler could affect every other. Their governments, whether tyrants, oligarchies or republican factions, lacked traditional sources of legitimacy and had to maintain power through force, alliances, propaganda and the cultivation of public loyalty. Internal enemies, exiles and rival cities threatened them constantly, making them politically self-conscious and exceptionally alert to information. War, which strengthened loyalty and could expand power, was at the same time extremely dangerous: defeat could mean exile or subjugation, while victory could allow a successful *condottiero* to seize the state.

In this setting, diplomacy became indispensable. Unlike the great monarchies north of the Alps, still too vast and loosely organized to sustain a continuous foreign policy, the Italian states formed a compact and highly interactive system in which permanent observation, negotiation, alliance-building and intelligence-gathering could no longer be left to occasional embassies. The culture of the Renaissance reinforced the development: merchants, lawyers, notaries and humanists believed in the power of words, persuasion and written argument, and diplomats were valued not only as negotiators but as orators and

writers capable of defending the interests of the state with the tools of the new humanist culture. Modern diplomacy was born, in short, as a practical instrument for the preservation and expansion of the state.

Its most important institutional innovation was the resident ambassador. As Garrett Mattingly observed in his classic study, the appearance of a regularly accredited envoy who remained at a foreign court until recalled – observing, reporting and representing his ruler continuously rather than performing a single mission and returning home – represented a decisive step in the formation of modern Western diplomatic practice. Earlier figures had performed some of these functions: papal legates and the consuls of Italian merchant colonies in the Levant, the agents of the great banking houses, the legal procurators retained by sovereigns at foreign courts. They supplied useful techniques and habits of communication, but none was a resident ambassador in the later sense. The decisive institutional development took place within the political system of Renaissance Italy.

Three states were central to this process. Milan was perhaps the earliest. Under Gian Galeazzo Visconti and later Filippo Maria Visconti, the duchy combined a centralized administration with aggressive territorial ambitions, and its chancery began to perform functions resembling those of a modern foreign office. Visconti diplomacy was inseparable from Visconti expansion: agents, informants and semi-resident envoys were used to divide enemies, cultivate temporary allies and destabilize rival governments. Particularly significant was the exchange of resident ambassadors between Milan and Emperor Sigismund from approximately 1425 to 1432, organized to coordinate policy against Venice and probably the earliest clearly documented case of reciprocal resident embassies. The episode is revealing: the resident embassy emerged not as a neutral instrument of peaceful communication, but as a weapon of alliance politics, and when the alliance lost its purpose the embassies disappeared.

Venice contributed in a different register. As a commercial republic with a long experience of overseas representation – its consuls in the Levant, and above all the *bailo* at Constantinople, were among the closest institutional precursors of the resident ambassador – the Serenissima already possessed the habits of regular reporting and permanent presence abroad. Its expansion onto the Italian mainland in the early 15th century, with the acquisition of Verona, Vicenza, Padua,

Feltre, Udine and Friuli, drew it into the politics of the peninsula and into a long rivalry with Milan that became one of the major engines of the spread of resident diplomacy. The republican constitution of Venice gave the institution a clearer legal character than the Duke of Milan's ambiguous private agents could possess: Venetian envoys had to be officially authorized, publicly funded and formally accredited. The appointment of Zaccaria Bembo as orator resident at the Holy See before April 1435 is especially important. Bembo was not a procurator dealing with legal matters, nor a cardinal protecting Venetian ecclesiastical interests, but a diplomatic representative charged with continuous political communication with Pope Eugenius IV – and may plausibly be considered the founder of the first lasting resident embassy at the papal court.

The Holy See itself did not invent the resident ambassador, but it became one of the first major theatres in which the new institution took stable form. Once the papacy began to recover its political role after the end of the Great Schism – the return of Martin V to Rome in 1420 marking the beginning of a gradual restoration completed under Eugenius IV – Rome was reintegrated into the political-diplomatic system of the peninsula. The pope was not merely the head of the Church but also a territorial ruler with claims over much of central Italy, and the papal court rapidly became too important to be left without continuous representation.

The Peace of Lodi of 1454, which inaugurated four decades of relative equilibrium among Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples and the Papacy, sealed this configuration. None of the five major powers was strong enough to dominate the whole peninsula, no alliance of two was automatically superior to any other, and smaller states (Mantua, Savoy, Montferrat) survived in the spaces between them by exploiting their rivalries. The need for continuous information about allies, enemies and neutrals was permanent, and the resident ambassador was the empirical solution to it. Italy had become, in miniature, what Europe would later become: a system of multiple competing states, none able to dominate the whole, all forced to negotiate, observe, threaten, ally and counterbalance.

In the centuries that followed, the various Italian states developed their own diplomatic corps and their own autochthonous traditions. Among the most significant, in addition to Milan, Venice and the

Holy See, were Mantua, the Este state, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Republic of Genoa, the Kingdom of Naples and the Duchy of Savoy. With the exception of the Holy See and the Savoyard state, all the others were eventually conquered by foreign dynasties, and their diplomatic structures and traditions disappeared with them. The Holy See preserved its own distinct tradition. It is from the Savoyard tradition, however, that Italian diplomacy in its modern, national form developed and originated, and it is to that tradition that the chapter which follows is devoted.

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE SAVOYARD TRADITION TO ITALIAN DIPLOMACY

The Savoy state has its roots in the Middle Ages, when the dynasty of the Counts of Savoy, originally a Franco-Burgundian political-military entity, began to dominate the political landscape of the Western Alps. Thanks to their strategic control of Alpine routes and passes (such as Moncenisio, Gran San Bernardo and Piccolo San Bernardo) the Savoy began to develop as central players in communications between Italy and the rest of Europe. The court, which was initially based in Chambéry and Ripaglia on Lake Geneva, soon found itself having to deal with the dynamics of a territory characterized by heterogeneous populations and a feudal structure, without easily defensible borders.

The transition from a feudal configuration to a more centralized form of state was marked by a growing awareness of the need to control the restless local nobility and strengthen central authority. These dynamics would have a decisive impact on the subsequent evolution of Savoy diplomacy, which would have to deal not only with internal challenges but also with the complex European political landscape. Since the time of Amedeo VIII, who consolidated the state by regaining control of the principality of Turin and obtaining the title of duke, the Savoy developed a practice of diplomatic action based on the use of aristocrats, clergy, jurists, courtiers, and magistrates on temporary missions in the service of the duke: they represented the sovereign abroad, maintained relations with foreign courts and managed international negotiations.

The Rise of the Savoy State and the first diplomatic reforms

A fundamental turning point came in the second half of the 16th century with the reformist actions of Emanuele Filiberto. Son of Duke Carlo (Carlo III of Savoy), Emanuele Filiberto distinguished himself by his mil-

itary and political skills and commitment to strengthening the dynastic state. He conceived the reconstruction of the state as a military machine, capable of absorbing tensions and unifying the subjugated populations.



Fig. 1 - Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia

This vision, strongly influenced by the idea of security and control, led to the definitive transfer of the capital from Chambéry to Turin, marking the beginning of a new era for Savoy power. A permanent Savoy diplomatic presence abroad was only established during the 16th century, particularly after the re-establishment of the Savoy state by Emanuele Filiberto, who set up the Secretariat of State, an administrative structure serving the duke that managed the internal and external affairs of the duchy and to which the ambassadors reported. There began to be permanent Savoy representatives at some foreign and Italian courts, but there was still no sophisticated and specific organization of the diplo-

matic structure with an autonomous Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Savoy diplomats came mainly from aristocratic families who closely identified their interests with those of the dynastic state. It was a heterogeneous nobility, in which, alongside ancient aristocratic bloodlines, new families emerged from the legal professions and the agricultural and commercial bourgeoisie, whom the Savoy sovereigns often bound to themselves via ennoblement. This ruling class, composed of nobility by blood and service, proved to be one of the strengths of the Savoy state, providing the Savoy family with political minds, statesmen and military leaders; a ruling elite that would later produce the leaders who would transform the Kingdom of Sardinia into the Kingdom of Italy (Massimo Taparelli d'Azeglio, Cesare Balbo, Camillo Benso di Cavour).

Alongside military reforms, Savoy foreign policy was structured around *bascule*, a strategy of oscillating between the great European powers, which allowed the Duchy to exploit international crises and conflicts to its advantage. During the reign of Carlo Emanuele I, for example, attempts at territorial expansion were accompanied by an ambitious diplomatic policy, albeit one characterized by errors of judgement. The “game” of alliances, which saw the duchy alternate between those

with Spain and France, highlights the complexity of a foreign policy that aimed to acquire territories and strengthen the state.

The difficulty, however, lay in the fragmented and weak nature of the Savoy state, which was not always able to gather the resources necessary to support major military and diplomatic undertakings. It was in this context that Vittorio Amedeo II emerged as the catalyst for radical change. By breaking ties of dependence on Louis XIV of France in 1690 and signing important treaties such as those of Pinerolo and Turin, he demonstrated how diplomacy could be used advantageously to expand and reorganize the political and territorial structure of the Savoy State.

The Consolidation of Savoy Diplomacy in the 18th century

With the advent of the 18th century, Savoy diplomacy began to take on an increasingly structured form. The growing importance of the Duchy on the European stage, reinforced by military successes and territorial expansion, was confirmed by its transformation first into the Kingdom of Sicily and then into the Kingdom of Sardinia, requiring the adoption of more modern administrative tools and the creation of an efficient diplomatic network. In 1717, for example, Vittorio Amedeo II carried out an internal restructuring of the office of the Secretary of State, clearly distinguishing between internal and foreign affairs. It was during this period that the Savoy Ministry of Foreign Affairs, known as the Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs, was formally established, with the Secretariat located in a building adjacent to the Royal Palace in Turin.

The first Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Ignazio Solaro di Moretta, Marquis del Borgo, thus became the point of reference for the management of international relations. The new structure complemented the traditional one, but introduced innovative elements such as specialization of functions and centralized coordination. At the same time, the Savoy diplomatic network expanded: legations were opened in important new European capitals such as London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, The Hague and even in smaller capitals, demonstrating the Savoy state's ambition to play an active role in the continental balance of power.

Another significant aspect of this period was the strong military influence on diplomatic culture. The appointment of military personnel to diplomatic posts was not accidental, but reflected the fact that the

armed forces were an important part of the Savoy elite and the belief that military strength and discipline should be integrated into the bureaucratic fabric of the state. This choice contributed to imprinting a style of clarity, pragmatism and a certain rigidity on Savoy diplomacy, qualities that would later influence the diplomacy of unified Italy.

In addition to the military sphere, the 18th century saw the further opening of high-ranking bureaucratic positions to the bourgeois class. This policy of “ennoblement through service” facilitated the entry of officials from the minor nobility and the commercial world into the diplomatic career, creating a new elite capable of combining technical skills and political vision. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, figures such as Carlo Vincenzo Ferrero di Roasio Marquis d’Ormea, Filippo Antonio Asinari di San Marzano and Cesare Ambrogio San Martino Count d’Agliè established themselves in this context, giving rise to what many historians would call the “Savoy tradition” of Italian diplomacy.

The contribution of these figures was not limited to the mere organization of offices; they profoundly influenced foreign policy, based on principles such as preventing French or Austrian dominance in Italy, the need to place the Italian question within a broader European framework, and the importance of always maintaining the capacity to intervene and negotiate in international affairs. These principles, although evolving over time, formed the basis of a diplomatic model that would continue to characterize Italy even after unification.

Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour



Fig. 2 - Camillo Benso,
Conte di Cavour

Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia from November 1852 and first Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Italy, proclaimed on 17 March 1861, perfectly embodied the fusion between the tradition of the Savoy ruling class and new Italian liberal and national values. Born in Turin in 1810 into an ancient Piedmontese aristocratic family, he was a proud member of the Savoy elite, deeply attached to Turin, speaking mainly the dialect of his city and French. But a non-con-

formist at heart, he fully embraced the new values of individual and national freedom. In his view, freedom was an essential condition for the progress of a nation. The solution to the Italian national problem presupposed the satisfaction of the demands for freedom. The Kingdom of Sardinia could not therefore implement an Italian national policy without being liberal and reformist internally. His conceptions of international politics admirably fused the Savoy diplomatic tradition with the new liberal and national ideals.

The agreements that Cavour negotiated with the French emperor Napoleon III in 1858 (the so-called Plombières agreements) were the perfect manifestation of how the Piedmontese politician combined Savoy tradition and new national-liberal ideas in his diplomatic action. Cavour and Napoleon III agreed that the aim of a possible war with Austria was the complete expulsion of the Austrians from Italy, without “leaving them an inch of land on this side of the Alps and the Isonzo”. As for the political organization of the peninsula after the elimination of the Austrian presence, it was decided to create four Italian states:

1. A Kingdom of Upper Italy (Po Valley, Romagna and Papal Legations) under the House of Savoy;
2. A Kingdom of Central Italy (Tuscany, Marche and Umbria), whose choice of sovereign was left pending for the time being, but which was to guarantee a pro-French orientation for the new state;
3. The Papal States reduced to Lazio alone, a reduction justified by the Pope’s stubborn refusal to accept any reform;
4. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which would be maintained within its existing borders and entrusted to Joachim Murat’s son. However, it was decided not to proceed immediately with the elimination of the Bourbons from Naples, so as not to offend Russia, protector of the southern kingdom, which hoped to transform it into a base for possible action in the Mediterranean. In return, Napoleon III demanded the cession of Nice and Savoy, which would have allowed the emperor to reach the natural Alpine borders of France and justify a war against Austria in the eyes of his own public opinion. Finally, the four Italian states would form “an Italian confederation similar to the German confederation”, with the presidency given to the Pope “to console him for the loss of the best part of his states”.

The Kingdom of Upper Italy was the realization of the ancient Savoy dream of supremacy in the Po Valley. Faithful to the Savoy tradition of

using compensation and territorial exchanges, Cavour showed himself willing to meet the emperor's territorial demands on Nice and Savoy. But Cavour, unlike Napoleon III and other statesmen and diplomats of the time, was a man who was involved in and attentive to the liberal and national dynamics at play in Europe. The implementation of the Plombières agreements would only apparently have meant the establishment of French hegemony in Italy: the states that Napoleon III thought he could control and dominate were weak and fragile entities, which would have had to contend with the growing strength of the Italian liberal national movement. In reality, the Plombières agreements created a very advantageous situation for the Savoy government because they would have made the Kingdom of Sardinia the strongest Italian state, capable in the medium to long term of dominating the peninsula and attracting the other Italian states to itself thanks to its alliance with the Risorgimento liberals, who were increasingly favourable to the project of Italian unification.

It should be emphasized that Cavour was able to link Piedmontese particularism and the Savoyard *raison d'état* with a universal idea such as national liberalism. The Turin leader did not merely take up and follow the traditional guidelines of Savoyard foreign policy; he enriched and revolutionized them by connecting them with the new liberal and national ideas. As Franco Valsecchi observed, Cavour viewed Piedmontese policy within a liberal and national framework: a Piedmont anchored exclusively to Savoyard tradition was only a second-rank state, a small Italian state; a Piedmont at the forefront of the liberal movement, on the other hand, stood as a counterweight to Austria, embodied the national idea in opposition to the reactionary policy of the Habsburgs, and became one of the driving powers of Italian and European politics because it acquired the strength of an idea shared by millions of people.

From the Ancient Kingdom of Savoy to the newly formed Italian State

The transition from the Kingdom of Sardinia to the Kingdom of Italy represented a moment of continuity and, at the same time, of transformation for Savoy diplomacy. In 1861, when Italian unification and the Kingdom of Italy were proclaimed, the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs retained the structure and staff inherited from the Savoy state.



Fig. 3 - Domenico Carutti di Cantogno

Domenico Carutti di Cantogno, the last Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sardinia, became the first of the new Italian institution, symbolizing the continuity between the old Savoy diplomacy and that of a modern Italy. Evidence of this is also the fact that the bilingual tradition of the state, the use of Italian and French, persisted in official correspondence for some decades, a legacy of the long cultural and administrative heritage of the House of Savoy. However, the unification of Italy also led to a gradual opening up

and nationalization of the diplomatic bureaucracy. New diplomats from other abolished Italian states were hired, and although the original structure remained largely unchanged, there was a numerical expansion and a gradual transformation of duties.

The first Secretary General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who did not come from the Sardinian diplomatic corps was Raffaele Ulisse Barbolani from Abruzzo, a former Bourbon diplomat, appointed by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Luigi Federico Menabrea in 1867. As Ruggero Moscati noted, Barbolani's appointment, following the transfer of the capital of the Kingdom from Turin to Florence, was a sign that a new and different atmosphere was beginning to circulate within Italian diplomacy and that a progressive nationalization of the diplomatic bureaucracy was taking place.

It is important to emphasize that, despite the arrival of new personalities, for many years the leadership of Italian diplomacy remained predominantly in the hands of officials who were direct heirs of the Savoy tradition. Names such as Costantino Nigra, Giuseppe Tornielli Brusati di Vergano, Alberto Blanc and Edoardo de Launay continued to represent the excellence of diplomacy until the beginning of the 20th century. It was only in 1907, with the end of Giacomo Malvano's tenure as Secretary General and the death of Costantino Nigra, that the era of the old Piedmontese-Savoyard guard symbolically came to an end.

The Transformations of the 19th century: from conservatism to liberalism

In the period prior to the unification of Italy, between 1815 and 1860, the Savoy diplomatic corps was marked by a sharp contrast between a diplomatic tradition based on conservative and regionalist values and the emergence of new liberal and nationalist currents. During the first part of the reign of Carlo Alberto, for example, Savoy foreign policy was characterized by a clear legitimist and anti-revolutionary stance. Clemente Solaro della Margarita, a career diplomat and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1835 and 1847, was the executor of the king's directives, which were based on a counter-revolutionary ideology and an expansionist drive aimed at recovering former Savoy possessions in Switzerland and conquering Lombardy.

Under pressure from the new national liberal movement, in October 1847 Carlo Alberto dismissed Foreign Minister Solaro della Margarita and enacted a series of administrative reforms, also granting limited freedom of the press. On 8 February 1848, Carlo Alberto decided to promise a constitution, which was promulgated on 4 March and would enjoy a long life: with the success of the Italian Risorgimento and the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, this constitutional charter (known as the Albertine Statute) was extended from the Piedmontese state to the whole of Italy, remaining in force until 1948. The Albertine Statute, while preserving the sovereign's strong influence on foreign policy in Article V, laid the foundations for the progressive development of a constitutional government that, in order to operate, needed not only the support of the King but also that of the majority of the deputies of the elected Chamber. From the 1850s onwards, the Prime Minister also assumed a role in foreign policy that was distinct from that of the sovereign: no longer a mere executor, he was an autonomous figure who effectively directed the state's international policy. From that moment onwards, a dialectic arose between the Prime Minister, the Head of State and the Foreign Minister, which is still today a fundamental process and a fact of great importance in the development of Italy's foreign policy.

However, with the establishment of constitutional reforms and the adoption of new liberal and national political ideas, a phase of renewal began within Savoy diplomacy. After 1848, contact with national liberalism, represented by figures such as Cesare Balbo, Massimo d'Azeglio, Vincen-

zo Gioberti and Camillo Benso di Cavour, led to the formation of a new generation of diplomats. These young officials, imbued with liberal and national Italian convictions, were tasked with integrating and transforming the Savoy tradition, making it more open and suited to a new Italy.

Among the leading figures of this renewal were Isacco Artom, a close collaborator of Cavour, and Costantino Nigra, who later became a key figure in Italian diplomacy. Other important names, such as Giacomo Malvano, Giuseppe Tornielli Brusati di Vergano and Alberto Blanc, made their mark on the international scene, helping to give Italian diplomacy a modern dimension and a focus on the Europe of the time. Thus, while maintaining the distinctive features of the Savoy tradition, Italian diplomacy gradually transformed itself in response to the new political and economic challenges of the 19th century.

The Role of Diplomats: protagonists and innovators

A central element in the story of Italy's diplomatic transformation is represented by individuals who were able to impose their own vision and adapt traditional structures to the needs of a changing era.

Emanuele Filiberto, with his military approach and desire to reorganize the state, laid the foundations for a functional and centralized diplomacy. Carlo Emanuele I, despite his expansionist aspirations, highlighted how the policy of *bascule* (oscillating between alliances) could be a double-edged sword if not accompanied by a coherent strategic vision.

Vittorio Amedeo II distinguished himself for his ability to negotiate important treaties that not only changed borders but also strengthened the position of the Savoy state in the European arena. These agreements (Pinerolo, Turin, Utrecht) were the result of a careful diplomatic strategy that took into account both military forces and constantly evolving political alliances.

The Savoy ministers in the service of Vittorio Amedeo II and Carlo Emanuele III, Carlo Vincenzo Ferrero, Marquis d'Ormea, and Giovanni Battista Lorenzo Bogino, embodied the excellence of the Savoy bureaucracy, introducing an organizational model that provided for the specialization of functions and a clear distinction between internal and external affairs. Their actions and style, characterized by simplicity, clarity and a cold assessment of interests, became fundamental elements of Italian diplomacy.



Fig. 4 - Giuseppe Antonio Osorio

Giuseppe Antonio Osorio (Ossorio Alarçon) was another prominent figure. Originally from Sicily and later moving to Piedmont, his career – from representation at the United Provinces to the Legation in England and finally to the position of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs – testifies to the ability of Savoy diplomacy to reinvent itself and broaden its horizons.

With the advent of the Unification of Italy, figures such as Domenico Carutti di Cantogno, Costantino Nigra, Giuseppe Tornielli Brusati di Vergano and Alberto Blanc represented the continuity and evolution of that tradition. While bringing the legacy of a centuries-old bureaucracy to the new Italian national context, they found themselves having to deal with new demands and growing internationalization, which required greater adaptability and innovation.

Costantino Nigra: architect of post-unification diplomacy

Costantino Nigra (1828-1907) was one of the leading figures in Italian diplomacy during the Risorgimento and post-unification period. He was born in Villa Castelnuovo (today Castelnuovo Nigra, in the province of Turin) on 11 June 1828, the firstborn of Ludovico, a surgeon, and Anna Caterina Revello. After graduating, he entered the diplomatic service of the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1851. On 5 May 1856, he was promoted to First-Class Vice Consul and assigned to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cavour, as head of the private cabinet. In March 1858, amid the highly delicate situation created by Felice Orsini's attack on Napoleon III, he was appointed attaché to the Sardinian legation in Paris. He was entrusted with the role of secret intermediary and, enjoying Cavour's full confidence was charged with defending the Franco-Piedmontese understanding in view of war against Austria; the understanding was sealed with the meeting between the count and the emperor at Plombières on 21 July 1858. Between 1858 and 1859, he undertook several secret diplomatic missions to Paris to discuss with

the emperor and his cousin, Prince Jérôme Napoléon Bonaparte, the steps toward war and the different aspects of the alliance. He played a decisive role in establishing the alliance between the Kingdom of Sardinia and France, secretly mediating in the complex negotiations that led to the French-Sardinian alliance and to the war against Austria. Distinguished by his political intelligence, intuition and interpersonal skills, Nigra contributed both to the management of annexations and to consolidating the international position of the new state.



Fig. 5 - Costantino Nigra

Nigra returned to Paris in December 1859, after the conclusion of the Second War of Independence, this time in the official capacity of chargé d'affaires, and four months later as resident minister. In this role, he negotiated the cession of Nice and Savoy. On 1 January 1861, he received a further promotion to Extraordinary Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary. He served as the Kingdom of Italy's ambassador to France for the next fifteen years. During the first decade of national unity, Nigra, the finest diplomatic mind Italy had, was the true driving force behind Italy's international action. This was also due to the fact that the Austrian military threat effectively forced the Italian government to consider its political alignment with the French Empire, whose protection it needed, as an unquestionable axiom. Such was the importance of the relationship with Napoleon III that Nigra's political influence, both at home and abroad, founded on his undeniable political abilities and on his close personal friendship with the Emperor of the French, was often greater than that of the various figures who succeeded one another at the head of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1861 to 1870.

Nigra remained in Paris until 5 May 1876, when the new Italian government led by Depretis, representing the Liberal Left, transferred him to St. Petersburg as ambassador. He stayed there until 1882, subsequently moving to London from 1883 to 1885. His final and longest mission abroad was as Italian ambassador in Vienna to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a post he held from November 1885 until January 1904. He retired to Italy and died in Rapallo during the night of 1 July 1907.

Nigra embodied the modern figure of the diplomat: loyal to the institution, a brilliant negotiator and promoter of innovation. As ambassador to major international courts, his actions were decisive in resolving crises and building solid bilateral relations. Alongside his diplomatic skills, he cultivated cultural and literary interests that earned him recognition in the academic field. His example of dedication and ability is now considered a model for all Italian diplomacy.

Alberto Blanc: a pragmatic diplomat in the new unified state



Fig. 6 - Alberto Blanc

Alberto Blanc (1835-1904) was one of the most influential figures in Italian diplomacy in the second half of the 19th century. Alberto Blanc was born in Chambéry on 10 November 1835 to Louis François and Mariette Cartannas. After completing his early studies in his hometown and earning a law degree from the University of Turin on 8 July 1857, he distinguished himself as a liberal, anti-Austrian publicist and entered the circle of Cavour's collaborators, whose support facilitated his entry into the diplomatic career. When Savoy was ceded to France in April 1860, Blanc, like a significant portion of the Savoyard ruling class, for instance the future Italian prime ministers Luigi Federico Menabrea and Luigi Pelloux, opted for the Kingdom of Sardinia. On 28 July 1863, the diplomat from Chambéry became private secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emilio Visconti Venosta, and in October 1864 General Alfonso La Marmora, President of the Council and Foreign Minister, appointed him head of the Foreign Ministry's cabinet, enabling him to take part in concluding the alliance with Prussia. On 11 April 1869, Blanc was appointed Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a position he held until October 1870, when he was sent as Minister Plenipotentiary to Madrid, and subsequently to Brussels. Transferred to Washington on 17 July 1875, he remained there as ambassador until June 1881, when the new Foreign Minister, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, chose him again as Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As Renato Mori has noted, in Blanc “the old resentment toward France for the annexation of Savoy was then rekindled by the occupation of Tunisia, while he was developing the conviction that rapprochement with the Central Empires would be useful in providing Italy with reliable support in the event of conflict with the neighbouring republic and in preventing the Central Empires from reopening the Roman Question.” He was therefore one of the architects and negotiators of the treaty between Italy, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, the so-called Triple Alliance, signed on 20 May 1882, which remained the cornerstone of Italian foreign policy until the outbreak of the First World War.

In January 1883, he left the Secretariat General of the Consulta to assume the post of Italian ambassador to Madrid and later, starting in March 1887, to Constantinople. After entering into conflict with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio di Rudinì, the latter abruptly and discourteously forced him into retirement in the autumn of 1891. As partial compensation, the subsequent Giolitti government appointed Blanc a Senator of the Kingdom in November 1892. Respected by King Umberto I, by Francesco Crispi, and by Sidney Sonnino, Blanc was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in December 1893 in Crispi’s second cabinet. As minister, the Savoyard diplomat sought to revitalize the alliance with Germany and cooperation with Great Britain, attempting – unsuccessfully – to restrain Prime Minister Crispi’s expansionist ambitions in East Africa. The military defeat at Adwa at the hands of the Abyssinian armies in March 1896 brought down both Crispi’s government and Blanc himself, who retired to private life and later died in Turin on 31 May 1904.

Alberto Blanc developed professionally during a period of profound transformation. On the one hand, he embodied the transition from the old Sardinian diplomatic tradition to the new Italian national diplomacy, demonstrating a remarkable ability to adapt to change while remaining faithful to the culture of the Savoyard State. On the other, he made a significant contribution to shaping a more autonomous Italian foreign policy. As a diplomat, he played a crucial role in several key moments in Italy’s international relations, distinguishing himself through his strong personality, his ability to influence and advise the nation’s leaders, and his skill in mediating complex international negotiations.

Conclusions: the legacy of the Savoy tradition in Italian diplomacy

The historical journey that begins in the Middle Ages and spans the formation of the Savoy state to the birth and development of modern Italian diplomacy is an example of how tradition and innovation can coexist and feed off each other. While the administrative and military culture of the Savoy state left an indelible mark, visible in the structure, operating methods and even the diplomatic language, the encounter with the new ideas of national liberalism and the political and cultural traditions of other Italian states and regions brought about a transformation that enabled Italian diplomacy to respond to the challenges of a constantly evolving Europe.

The value of the Savoy tradition lies not only in treaties or the reorganization of offices, but above all in the individuals who, with their ingenuity, courage and negotiating skills, were able to transform an ancient bureaucracy into a modern instrument of foreign policy. The continuity of this tradition, which dates back to the 15th century, while recognizing the importance of post-unification reforms and nationalization, still represents the foundation on which the Italian diplomatic “career” rests today.

In short, understanding the evolution of Italian diplomacy means not only analyzing a series of events and reforms, but also recognizing the fundamental role of the protagonists who, with their vision and skill, have charted the course from the Savoy tradition to a modern apparatus of international relations: beyond institutional transformations, adaptability and cultural continuity have been key elements in ensuring Italy’s prominent role on the European stage.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROOTS OF ITALIAN DIPLOMACY (1848-1896)

Starting in 1848, with the granting of the Statute and the birth of a new institutional structure of the Kingdom of Sardinia, a process of modernization of the governing bodies began. The central administration, originally called the Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs, underwent a series of transformations aimed at making it more functional and better suited to managing complex diplomatic and administrative relations. As early as 1816, the Secretariat had been organized into several divisions: two for diplomatic affairs, one for internal affairs, one for consulates and accounting, and one for archives. But the provisions, which were fragmented and subject to constant change, did not allow for a true rationalization of tasks.

Massimo d'Azeglio's Reforms and the Decree of 1850



Fig. 7 - Massimo d'Azeglio

The first significant impetus for a reorganization of the ministerial apparatus came from Massimo d'Azeglio, who in 1849 became Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia and also took on the Foreign Affairs portfolio.

Massimo d'Azeglio, who was keen to see the formation of a refined and cultured diplomatic class that truly responded to the needs of modern life, also introduced an important reform of the recruitment procedures for the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This took the form of Regulations for the admission of candidates to the career of the Royal Secretariat of

State for Foreign Affairs, approved by Royal Decree on 23 October 1849.

With this regulation, which introduced the division between “conceptual” (the higher-ranking track) and administrative careers, unknown un-

til then, the Piedmontese Ministry of Foreign Affairs abandoned the old empirical systems of recruiting diplomatic personnel. Instead, inspired by the models of Napoleonic France, it introduced regular competitive examinations for entry into the career. Noble birth, the protection of the Court, and acquaintance with the minister or senior officials of the Secretariat had until then been the only levers that needed to be pulled in the Sardinian state to gain access to a career in the civil service; it was time for an update. The regulations for the examinations, drawn up by d'Azeglio and Luigi Federico Menabrea, who availed themselves of the advice of Cristoforo Negri, are a model of this kind.

There were two different classes of employment, one "conceptual" and the other administrative. The qualification required for admission to either category was a teacher training diploma (*Magistero*). The examinations for applicants for second-class voluntary service focused solely on Italian and French language, calligraphy and arithmetic, while the relevant aptitude tests for permanent employment included, in addition to the subjects already mentioned, accounting and the regulations governing the services dependent on the Royal Secretariat. The examinations for applicants for first-class voluntary service, which led to the three senior careers in the Ministry (internal, diplomatic and consular), were much more complex and difficult. The examination subjects were: Italian and French language, general principles of Roman and canon law, the main provisions of the Civil, Criminal and Commercial Codes, universal and national history, physical and political geography, one or more foreign languages, and calligraphy. The winners of the competition had to serve as volunteers without pay for a period of four years, which could be reduced by half if the winner had a degree or the rank of lieutenant in a more intellectually demanding branch of the armed forces (Artillery, Engineers, General Staff or Navy) and further shortened for those with extensive knowledge of foreign languages.

In any case, first-class voluntary service could not last less than one year, but at the end of it, in order to definitively enter the career, it was necessary to undergo new, particularly demanding aptitude tests: in addition to foreign languages, they covered international law, constitutional law, statistics and political economy, the history of the main treaties, particularly those concerning the Savoy State, the administrative system of the Kingdom, diplomatic style and customs, and the regulations of the various services dependent on the ministry. Once they had passed the

examinations, the successful candidates were assigned, without the right to a salary, for another two years, as supernumeraries, depending on the needs of the service and particular trends, to one of three careers: consular, diplomatic or the ministry at home.

A few years later, with the General Giuseppe Dabormida as Foreign Minister and Cavour as Prime Minister, the distinction between first and second class volunteers disappeared and the examination program for the single category of civil servants was significantly reduced by the 1856 regulation. The system of regular competitions for admission to the career introduced by d'Azeglio bore fruit. New men were allowed to enter the administration, and they proved to be highly effective collaborators of Cavour in the final period of the birth of the Unitary State and later continued his work.

In 1850, the Royal Decree of 12 July established a system which, although differing in some respects from the previous one, laid the foundations for a symmetrical and harmonious structure. This measure divided the Ministry into four divisions: the two diplomatic divisions (one dedicated to foreign affairs and the other to internal affairs, including the Holy See and correspondence with Sardinia); the division that managed archives, statistics and registration; and finally the division dedicated to consulates and trade. At the same time, the Regulation of 21 December 1850 defined the powers of the various ministries, clearly establishing the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while retaining certain ancillary functions that would later be assigned to other ministries, such as the management of the postal service.

The Establishment of the Positions of Secretary General and Private Secretary

A key moment in the reform process came with the Regulation of 23 October 1853, which formally introduced the rank of Secretary General. The occupant of this position, which originally corresponded to the "First Officer", took on the task of coordinating and regulating the activities of all the Ministry's departments, theoretically guaranteeing their operational independence even in the face of the Minister's political actions. At the same time, the position of Private Secretary was introduced, responsible for managing the most confidential affairs and correspondence.

Although initially criticized (some saw it as an unnecessary duplication of the Secretary General) the distinction between the two functions proved to be essential: the Private Secretary dealt with special and immediate tasks, while the Secretary General oversaw the entire administration, even assuming the functions of the Minister in certain circumstances.

Internal Organization and the 1855 Report

The internal report entitled 'Report on the work and personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' drawn up in 1855 provides a detailed insight into the functioning of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sardinia in those years. The apparatus consisted of a Special Cabinet, headed by the Secretary General, and several operational divisions. The Political Division, comprising three sections, was responsible for confidential correspondence and diplomatic affairs. The Consular and Commercial Division, split into two sections, handled consular activities – including the protection of citizens abroad – alongside economic and commercial affairs. Alongside these structures, the Internal Central Administration grouped together isolated offices, such as those dedicated to mail, passports and court correspondence, while accounting was managed in an office which, due to limited resources, was particularly burdensome for the entire organization.

This complex subdivision highlights how, from the early years of the new system, there was an awareness of the need to clearly separate political and administrative functions, while ensuring operational continuity through coordination entrusted to the Secretary General.

Changes following the Unification of Italy and the 1865 Reform

With the advent of the Kingdom of Italy, the structure of the central administration was further revised. As early as 1865, a subdivision was observed which, in addition to the Secretary General and the Private Cabinet, provided for the establishment of three main divisions:

- A Legations Division, which dealt with correspondence and relations with various Italian and foreign representatives, subdivided into geographical sections – for example, one for Belgium, France,

Great Britain and Spain, one for Russia, Austria, Bavaria and others, and a third for other states such as the United States and Denmark;

- A Consular Division, which was subdivided into a section dedicated to consular affairs and one dedicated to commercial affairs;
- An Administrative Division, divided into sections that managed archives, protocol, accounting and internal organizational aspects.

This structure, while reminiscent of previous models, was adapted to the growing needs of an expanding country and an increasingly complex diplomacy, both in terms of economic interests and the need to respond to new political challenges.

The Reorganization phase of 1866-1867: the Visconti Venosta System and subsequent changes

The period between 1866 and 1867, following the war against Austria and the annexation of Veneto and Friuli, represented a further attempt to reorganize and simplify the ministerial apparatus, in a context in which the administrative unification of the Italian states was a central concern. With the Lieutenant's Decree of 24 October 1866 and, subsequently, with the Royal Decree of 23 December 1866, signed by Foreign Minister Emilio Visconti Venosta, the Ministry was divided into three main departments:

1. Political Affairs
2. Commercial Affairs
3. Private Affairs and Litigation, accompanied by a Division of Accounting, Economy and Passports.

This arrangement, although lasting little more than eight months, introduced the concept of central coordination entrusted to the Secretary General, who was responsible for managing particularly important matters entrusted by the Minister, sending and receiving diplomatic correspondence and directing accounting activities.

However, the short duration of the Visconti Venosta system soon led to further changes. With the Royal Decree of 8 September 1867, Foreign Minister Pompeo di Campello initiated a further reorganization, which divided the Ministry into:

- The Cabinet
- The Senior Directorate of Legations

- The Senior Directorate of Consulates
- The Accounting and Archives Division.

These changes reflected the desire to centralize the operational management of the apparatus, while leaving the Minister with sole responsibility for political affairs.

The Mancini Act of 1881 and organizational developments

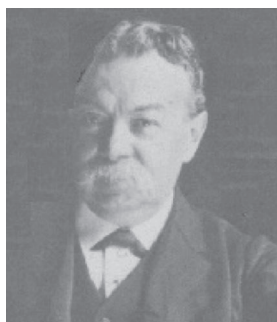


Fig. 8 - Giacomo Malvano

In 1881, with Royal Decree 581 ter of 20 November, the organization of the Ministry underwent another major overhaul. The regulations promulgated by the Foreign Minister of the Depretis government, the Campanian Member of the Parliament and jurist Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, aimed to define internal competences more precisely, making a clear distinction between:

- Political Affairs, which included the management of correspondence with legations and diplomatic activity in the strict sense;
- Consular and Commercial Affairs, which dealt not only with consular relations and the protection of citizens abroad, but also with the negotiation of trade treaties;
- Administrative Affairs, dedicated to the management of archives, protocol and accounting.

This system not only consolidated the existing divisions, but also introduced control and coordination tools, such as the Ministry Council and the Litigation Council, which aimed to ensure greater effectiveness and transparency in the ministry's actions. This reform was part of an evolutionary process which, while maintaining some principles inherited from previous provisions, responded to the needs of an increasingly complex diplomacy and the need for an administrative apparatus capable of supporting Italy's growing international activity.

Between 1887 and 1896, Francesco Crispi, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister between 1887 and 1891 and again Prime Minister from 1893 to 1896, intervened several times in the organization of the Foreign Ministry, with particular attention to the position of Secretary General.

Crispi was distrustful of most of the Italian diplomatic corps and had favoured informal, personal and secret diplomacy. Accordingly, in 1888 he implemented a radical restructuring of the Foreign Ministry: he eliminated the General Secretariat and reorganized the administration into five divisions, one of which was responsible for managing the colonies, emigration and Italian schools abroad.

The abolition of the position of Secretary General was motivated by the desire to reduce the influence of Giacomo Malvano, a leading figure on the Right and symbol of a diplomatic bureaucracy that Crispi considered hostile, and to centralize power in his own Cabinet, limiting the role of an independent official as much as possible and ensuring direct control over foreign affairs for himself. This reform increased the importance of the minister's Cabinet, which, by managing the Foreign Minister's relations with the Italian diplomatic service and foreign diplomatic corps, the press and Parliament, centralized the management and conduct of international policy.



Fig. 9 - Carlo Alberto Pisani Dossi

To ensure complete control of the Ministry, Crispi appointed several of his trusted associates from the worlds of politics and journalism to senior positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The former editor of "La Riforma", Primo Levi, was appointed cabinet secretary, with particular responsibility for colonial affairs; the journalist Edmondo Mayor des Planches served as the minister's personal secretary; Carlo Alberto Pisani Dossi, writer and journalist, whom Crispi made his chief of staff; and his old friend and follower Abele Damiani, appointed under-secretary for Foreign Affairs.

On the other hand, with the rise of Antonio di Rudinì to Prime Minister, the position of Secretary General was reinstated in 1891 to restore administrative continuity and promote an impartial official. However, when Crispi returned to government in 1893, he reiterated the abolition of the Secretary General, only to witness a further change of course in 1896 when Rudinì reintroduced the abolished position. This episode illustrates the intense political and personal clash between Crispi and Malvano, as well as the former's strongly centralized approach, which was opposed to granting excessive autonomy to the ministerial machine.

Conclusions

Until the end of the 19th century, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was characterized by continuous evolution, driven by the need to rationalize and modernize an apparatus that, starting from the fragmented structures of the pre-statute period, gradually became a fundamental tool for the management of international relations.

The reforms implemented, starting with the Decree of 1850 and subsequent regulations, in particular those of 1853, the report of 1855 and subsequent amendments in the 1860s and 1880s, marked decisive steps in the process of defining an internal organization based on a clear distinction between political and administrative functions, entrusting the Secretary General with an essential coordinating role.

With the Mancini reform of 1881 and the reorganization that preceded and followed it, the Ministry equipped itself with increasingly specialized structures capable of responding to the challenges posed by the country's diplomatic and commercial expansion. This evolution, which laid the foundations for subsequent transformations in the 20th century, represents a fundamental step in the consolidation of the Italian state and in defining the role of national diplomacy in the international context.

CHAPTER 3

FROM LIBERAL DIPLOMACY TO THE FASCIST ERA (1861-1943)

The history of Italian diplomacy between the liberal era and the advent of the Fascist regime can be seen as a long process of formation, consolidation and then transformation of a political culture that had its roots in pre-unification experiences and the fervour of the *Risorgimento*. Understanding these events means not only reconstructing Italy's foreign policy from its unification to the Second World War, but also reflecting on the ideological tensions, strategic visions and geopolitical influences that accompanied Italian diplomats at crucial moments in the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

The birth of a national diplomacy (1861-1876)

With the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, the new ruling class found itself having to organize a Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was equal to the ambitions and needs of a newly born state eager to be recognized as a European power. Initially, the administrative framework and regulatory framework were inherited from the Kingdom of Sardinia. This meant not only maintaining a bureaucratic structure and tried and tested rules and procedures, but also the immediate need to integrate officials from the pre-unification Italian states, in particular the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

However, expanding the diplomatic staff was only the first step. More complex was the attempt to create a unified cultural identity among diplomats from different regions and traditions. The process of fusion was gradual and was strengthened with the advent of the liberal Left to power in 1876. This phase also marked the entry into diplomacy of representatives from Rome, the south, and the bourgeoisie, reducing the dominance of the northern aristocracy. Left-wing figures such as Agostino Depretis, Crispi, and Mancini promoted a more active foreign policy, paying greater attention to the eastern Medi-

terranean, the Balkans, and Africa, areas that had previously been neglected. From the beginning of the 20th century, the process of nationalization of the diplomatic corps and the overcoming of Piedmontese-Savoyard dominance can be considered complete. The entry into diplomacy of young people belonging to the Roman aristocracy traditionally linked to and in the service of the Popes and the Roman Curia (e.g., Francesco Maria Taliani de Marchio and Luca Pietromarchi) and the appointment as secretaries general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Giacomo De Martino from Campania (1913-1919) and Salvatore Contarini from Sicily (1919-1926) were clear confirmation of this.

At the same time, a diplomatic culture emerged that combined two components:

- The tradition of *raison d'état* of the ancient Italian states, i.e., the idea that diplomacy was primarily an art of government, aimed at preserving or increasing the power of the state.
- The liberal-national ideology of the Risorgimento, according to which individual freedom was inseparable from the creation of a solid nation state.

This combination of state realism and liberal and national idealism became a distinctive feature of Italian diplomacy: while on the one hand the interests of the state prevailed over revolutionary and universalistic impulses (such as those of the national and democratic movement of Giuseppe Mazzini), on the other hand a certain sympathy remained alive for oppressed peoples and national or religious minorities (Vlachs, Jews, Armenians, etc.).

The consolidation of liberal foreign policy: the annexation of Veneto and Rome, the Triple Alliance (1882)

The Kingdom of Italy, founded in March 1861, was a large state but one afflicted by profound structural weaknesses. Economically, it was a backward agricultural country with insufficient natural resources and widespread poverty. Institutionally, administrative and legal unification under the Piedmontese model proved complex and problematic.

A serious factor of instability was the conflict with the Catholic Church. The hostility of Pope Pius IX, who refused to recognize the new state, undermined the legitimacy of the Kingdom in the eyes of a deeply Catholic population and created diplomatic tensions, aggravated by Italian claims on Rome.

Stability was further undermined by “brigandage” in the South, a widespread phenomenon of anti-unification revolts in which social struggle and Bourbon loyalism were intertwined. These rebellions, which projected an image of fragility abroad, forced the ruling class into harsh and prolonged military repression.

Finally, the Kingdom was geopolitically vulnerable. The presence of the Austrian Empire in Veneto made the borders insecure, close to the economic heart of the country. Vienna did not recognize the Italian state, and its military and political elites hoped for its collapse in order to restore Habsburg hegemony over the peninsula, thus maintaining a precarious and armed peace that unsettled the Italian leadership.

To overcome its weakness, the Italian liberal ruling class maintained a close alliance with Napoleon III's France. This relationship, almost a guardianship, although often intrusive, guaranteed the stability of the new state in the face of the Austrian threat. Italian foreign policy was effectively guided by Paris. Paradoxically, strategic vulnerability pushed Italy, despite its need for peace, towards an expansionist foreign policy to conquer Rome and obtain more secure borders, exploiting the rivalries between the great powers in line with the Savoy diplomatic tradition.

In 1866, Italy allied itself with Prussia against Austria. The war led to the annexation of Veneto, but Vienna opposed any border adjustments in Italian Tyrol, refusing to cede Trentino in order to keep the Kingdom in a position of strategic weakness. The opportunity to take Rome came with the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. The French defeat at Sedan left the Papacy without a protector, and on September 20, Italian troops entered the city. A plebiscite ratified the annexation and, in 1871, after the approval of the “Law of Guarantees,” Rome became the capital. Pope Pius IX, however, rejected the law, declared himself a prisoner, and forbade Catholics from participating in political life, leaving the “Roman question” unresolved.

After 1870, Italy experienced a period of sterile diplomatic isolation, culminating in the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881, which

ignored Italian interests. Feeling threatened by France, Italy sought an alliance with Germany. The German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck made an agreement with Austria-Hungary a condition, forcing Italy to renounce its claims on Trento and Trieste.

Encouraged by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alberto Blanc, and the Foreign Minister, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Italy emerged from isolation and negotiated the Triple Alliance in Vienna on 20 May 1882. This secret defensive treaty guaranteed Italy protection from a French attack. Mancini made it clear that the alliance was not anti-British, as a good relationship with London was essential for Mediterranean policy and early colonial ambitions. This allowed the creation of Italian colonial settlements in Eritrea and Somalia with British support.

The Triple Alliance of 1882 was a clear synthesis of political realism and moderate nationalism. Interestingly, this defensive pact was a concept firmly supported by Italian diplomacy itself for reasons of geopolitical balance and internal and international security. The agreement aimed to protect Italy from potential isolation and internal destabilization attempts fueled by the Papacy, as well as potential secessionist and centrifugal tendencies. It also aimed to create the conditions for a peaceful resolution of the 'question of the Italians in Austria' (Trentino, Venezia Giulia and Istria) through territorial compensation to Italy in the event of Habsburg expansion in the Balkans.

While Italian diplomacy was traditionally hostile towards the Habsburg Empire, considered the historic enemy of the Risorgimento, it did not seek its destruction. Indeed, several diplomats and politicians (Nigra, Crispi, Carlo Felice Nicolis di Robilant and Mancini) viewed the Habsburg Empire as a barrier to Russian expansionism and German hegemony in Europe as well as a potential partner for territorial concessions in exchange for expansion into the Balkans. This line of ideological flexibility and pragmatism was also reflected in the search for cordial relations with the Tsarist Empire, which oppressed various peoples (Poles, Baltic Nations, etc.), but was nevertheless useful for counterbalancing Vienna and Berlin, and for maintaining the balance of power in Europe.

However, Italian diplomatic culture also had its limitations. It was elitist, focusing on major European chancelleries and high-profile issues while often neglecting economic and social issues and public opinion. For instance, there was a substantial lack of interest in the large-

scale emigration of Italians, except when cases of mistreatment abroad emerged that undermined the nation's "prestige". Similarly, colonial expansion in Africa (Eritrea and Somalia) was conducted without an adequate understanding of local realities, resulting in defeat at the hands of Ethiopia (1895-1896). The vision remained limited even towards the Americas and Asia: being assigned to these continents was sometimes perceived by a diplomat as a form of punishment.

The First World War and the Crisis of the Liberal State (1914-1918)

The outbreak of the Great War challenged the entire structure of Italian foreign policy. Despite being part of the Triple Alliance, Italy was not consulted by Austria-Hungary or Germany when Vienna decided to attack Serbia in July 1914. This damaged the relationship of trust, as the government in Rome was denied the "compensation" provided for by Article VII of the treaty in the event of Habsburg expansion in the Balkans.

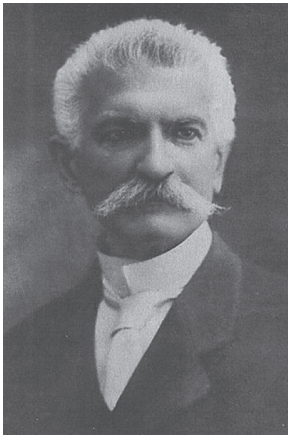


Fig. 10 - Sidney Sonnino

Initial neutrality in August 1914 was partly due to the need to avoid direct conflict with Great Britain, the dominant naval power, which would have endangered Italian colonial territories and coastal cities. At the same time, neutrality enjoyed a certain internal consensus among Catholics, socialists and some conservatives, while much of the liberal-national elite saw the war as an opportunity to secure border adjustments with Austria, achieving national unity, and ensuring strategic and military security in the Alps and the Adriatic.

However, faced with Vienna's refusal to grant the desired compensation (Trentino, Trieste and other strategic areas), negotiations with the Austro-Hungarians and Germans dragged on without result. Meanwhile, Great Britain, France and Russia pressured Italy increasingly to abandon neutrality, offering extensive territorial concessions in exchange. This culminated in the signing of the Treaty of London on 26 April 1915, through which Italy secured the

annexation of Austro-Hungarian territories (Trentino, Alto Adige, Trieste, Istria and parts of Dalmatia), as well as potential colonial compensation in Albania, Anatolia and Africa in the event of a victory.

Italy's decision to intervene in the war in May 1915 was therefore the result of a strategic and geopolitical calculation: war was seen as a "necessary evil" to secure the vital Alpine borders and ensure national security and dominance in the Adriatic. Although Italian diplomats were reluctant to resort to war, they found themselves justifying and supporting this decision. During the conflict, figures such as Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino acted with pragmatism, primarily to safeguard Italian territorial interests. However, the outcome of the war profoundly shocked Europe: the fall of the Tsarist, German and Habsburg empires, and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire opened up new scenarios.

At the Paris Peace Conference (1919), Italy presented itself as a nation intent on enforcing the terms of the Treaty of London. However, it underestimated the epochal change represented by US President Woodrow Wilson and the new principles of national self-determination supported by the Washington government. Italian territorial ambitions in Dalmatia and Anatolia conflicted with the aspirations of other nationalities and the hegemonic projects of France and the United Kingdom.



Fig. 11 - 1919, Paris - The heads of delegation of the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and the United States at the Paris Peace Conference (from left to right: David Lloyd George, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, Georges Clemenceau, Woodrow Wilson)

In any case, the peace treaties of 1919 saw Italy obtain Trentino and South Tyrol/Alto Adige up to the Brenner Pass. Meanwhile, the Rapallo Agreement, signed by the Italian and Yugoslav governments on 12 November 1920, saw Italy gain control of the entire Venezia Giulia region up to Monte Maggiore and Nevoso, annex Zara, and gain recognition of certain cultural rights for Italians remaining in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It also saw Italy gain dominion over the islands of Cherso, Lussino, Lagosta and Pelagosa. The granting to Italy of a permanent seat on the Council of the League of Nations, established in 1919, cemented the country's role as a great power. Unfulfilled, however, remained Italy's aspirations for colonial expansion in Africa and Anatolia, faced with the significant British and French extra-European conquests that threatened to shift the balance of power in the Mediterranean and the Near East to Italy's disadvantage. Nourished by nationalists and Fascists, the myth of the "mutilated victory" arose.

From the Postwar Period to Fascism: Continuity and Transformation



Fig. 12 - Salvatore Contarini

The war had shaken Italian society to its core. The fragile hegemonic framework of the liberals, already marked by deep social and political divisions, collapsed in the face of new popular forces.

The crisis of the liberal state and diplomacy, which had manifested itself during and after the war, and the need for their renewal, were perceived by some diplomats. In the aftermath of the Peace Conference, the new Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Salvatore Contarini, began to play an increasingly significant political role.

The Sicilian diplomat had long served in the Colonial Office of the ministry headed by Giacomo Agnesa, and later as chief of staff to the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Pietro Lanza di Scalea, also Sicilian and gradually gained greater power within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs starting from the years of the First World War. He did so by

serving as head of the Personnel Office, thanks to his skill in cultivating relationships with Italian and international political and journalistic circles and in using his position to build an extensive network of connections within the diplomatic corps.

At the very end of 1919, Contarini became Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, starting in 1922, would move its headquarters to Palazzo Chigi, formerly the seat of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in Rome.

Contarini strongly supported the efforts of Carlo Sforza, a career diplomat who served as Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs between 1919 and 1920 and as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Giolitti's government from 1920 to 1921, to promote the modernization of liberal diplomatic culture and the institutions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the immediate postwar period. This attempt was, in essence, part of his ambitious technocratic project, which envisioned an increasingly political role for diplomacy, as both the bearer and embodiment of the nation's values, to help overcome the political crisis that had opened with the decline of the liberal ruling class.



Fig. 13 - Carlo Sforza

Sforza was an experienced diplomat who had worked in Central Europe and the Far East, and who was not immune to the nationalist tendencies that had developed in Italy in the early 20th century. His goal was to modernize diplomacy by reconciling his conservative and realist culture with the new national spirit and the politics of mass participation that were increasingly spreading across European societies.

Among the modernizing initiatives promoted by Sforza and Contarini was the creation of a truly modern press office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, designed to influence and guide Italian and foreign public opinion. Also significant was the reform of the Ministry's administrative structure, with the internal services reorganized according to geographic criteria and the consolidation of various economic, commercial, and political competences. It was a modern reform in its intent to overcome outdated Eurocentrism and in its awareness of the growing interconnection between economic and political issues.

Sforza also supported the creation of the Institute for the Orient and the Institute for Eastern Europe in 1921, motivated by the need

to deprovincialize Italian culture and to provide Italian diplomacy with more sophisticated cultural tools.

The crisis of liberal hegemony paved the way for the Fascist movement's seizure of power, and its leader, Benito Mussolini, was appointed Prime Minister at the head of a coalition government in October 1922. Mussolini decided to create a dictatorial system in 1925, giving rise to an authoritarian regime based on the coexistence of Fascism and the House of Savoy monarchy.

Fascism was able to capture the discontent of war veterans, impoverished middle classes, and agrarian and industrial elites seeking stability.

At first, diplomacy, an elite corps, often aristocratic or upper-middle class in origin and liberal in outlook, seemed largely incompatible with Fascist ideology, steeped as it was in revolutionary rhetoric, the cult of action, and contempt for parliamentarianism.



Fig. 14 - Giacomo Barone Paulucci di Calboli

In the early 1920s, the Fascists regarded diplomats as a branch of the state alien and hostile to their movement: diplomacy was seen as part of the liberal ruling class that had failed to defend Italy's national and colonial claims after the First World War. Mussolini himself disliked diplomats as a socially closed and backward group, but he soon came to understand the usefulness they could have for his political designs. Diplomats possessed rare and specialized professional skills that were not easily replaceable; Fascism did not have personnel with the necessary expertise to supplant the career diplomat. Hence, there arose the need to make use of the existing diplomatic corps and to cooperate with it.

In this sense, the collaboration that Mussolini developed with Contarini and most of the Italian diplomatic service after 1922 was almost an inevitable choice for the Fascist leader.

Contarini and his associates, for their part, with the notable exception of Carlo Sforza, who, after some hesitation, made a clear choice of open anti-Fascism, had few qualms about establishing a cooperative relationship with Mussolini and the Fascist regime in power. They regarded it as a movement capable of renewing and modernizing the state and revitalizing Italian foreign policy. Contarini remained Secretary General

and persuaded Mussolini to appoint as his Chief of Staff a trusted associate of his, Giacomo Barone Paulucci di Calboli.

The vast majority of Italian diplomats, while feeling politically and culturally alien to Fascism, welcomed Mussolini's rise to power with benevolence, regarding him as an energetic and capable leader who could ensure the internal political stability necessary to strengthen Italy's position on the international stage. In fact, the foreign policy directives of Mussolini's government up until the Ethiopian War would not differ greatly from those pursued by the last liberal governments: the strengthening of Italy's political and economic influence in the Balkans and the Mediterranean; the pursuit of opportunities for colonial expansion in Africa; and the attempt to increase Italy's international weight in Europe by acting as a balancing force between France, Great Britain, and the re-emerging Germany.

Meanwhile, however, Contarini's position within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Fascist regime became increasingly precarious. Having by then trained himself in the rudiments of international politics, Mussolini no longer needed such a prominent figure as the Secretary General, who treated him as an equal and insisted on continuing to dictate the main lines of Italian foreign policy. A serious threat to Contarini's power came with the rise within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolognese politician Dino Grandi, appointed Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs in May 1925. Grandi entered the Ministry to carry out the Duce's will to begin a partial Fascistization and proved highly skilled at building an alternative power base to that of the Secretary General. He presented himself as the man who could safeguard a degree of autonomy and the privileges of the diplomatic career in the face of a Fascist regime that often adopted a threatening tone toward the Italian diplomatic corps, accusing it of being the heir of Giolitti, Nitti, and Sforza.

The rift between Contarini and Mussolini, brought about by the steady erosion of Contarini's standing within the Ministry relative to Grandi's and by their disagreements over Balkan policy, together with Contarini's subsequent resignation as Secretary General in 1926, gave Grandi the opening he needed to consolidate his own power. This was further facilitated by the abolition of the position of Secretary General left vacant from 1927 (and formally abolished in 1932), following the brief tenure of Antonio Chiamonte Bordonaro.

Grandi consolidated his influence within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by presenting himself as the Fascist politician attentive to the de-

fense of the diplomats' prerogatives and professional interests, while at the same time guaranteeing a "soft Fascistization" of the Ministry. The Bolognese politician's skill would become evident in the way he managed the entry of many Fascist politicians into the diplomatic career – the so-called *ventottisti* – a move loudly demanded by the Party and decided by Mussolini in 1928. Grandi portrayed himself as the sponsor of the *ventottisti*'s admission, yet also worked to exclude the newcomers from holding significant positions within the diplomatic hierarchy.

The recruitment of many Fascists into diplomacy primarily responded to the need to provide a stable and respectable placement for certain Fascist and nationalist politicians who had been excluded from electoral lists or government posts. In reality, the *ventottisti* exerted little influence on Italian foreign policy until 1936, gaining greater weight only with Galeazzo Ciano's appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Grandi crowned his rise at Palazzo Chigi by becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs in September 1929, a position he would hold until the summer of 1932. Between 1926 and 1932, the Bolognese politician surrounded himself with, and promoted, the best talents of the Italian diplomatic service of the time, notably choosing as his main collaborators Raffaele Guariglia and Augusto Rosso, both non-Fascists.

Raffaele Guariglia became Grandi's trusted man within the ministry, and in December 1926 he was appointed Director General for Political, Commercial, and Private Affairs of Europe and the Levant, a position he held until the summer of 1932. Augusto Rosso, from Piedmont – formerly counsellor at the London Embassy and an expert on English-speaking countries – was appointed head of Office and then Director General for League Affairs, responsible for issues concerning the League of Nations and relations with the Anglo-Saxon powers. Pellegrino Ghigi became Chief of Staff to the Bolognese politician.

The foreign policy of the Grandi period was marked by the attempt to preserve good relations with the Western Powers and to make full use of the opportunities for influence that multilateral diplomacy offered Italy. However, this strategy yielded few concrete results.

In the summer of 1932, Mussolini reassumed direct control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and dismissed Grandi, who was then sent to London as ambassador. Mussolini's close collaborators at the Foreign Ministry became Fulvio Suvich and Pompeo Aloisi. Suvich, a Triestine and former irredentist with a national-liberal background

(lawyer, Fascist deputy, and expert in economic and financial matters, well-versed in Central European affairs) was appointed Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs. Aloisi, a former naval officer who had led an adventurous life alternating between intelligence and diplomacy, serving as Italy's representative in Albania, Japan, and Turkey, was chosen as the minister's Chief of Staff.

During the first phase of the regime (1922-1935), a sort of compromise took shape: diplomats retained their positions and their fundamental political culture, merely professing loyalty to Fascism. Many of them welcomed Mussolini's rise, seeing in him a leader capable of restoring internal order and enhancing Italy's international prestige. The so-called "Fascistization" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was slow and, in part, more formal than substantive: it had only a modest impact on the direction of foreign policy.

The Fascist diplomacy of the 1920s and early 1930s, often led by figures trained during the liberal era, continued to pursue traditional objectives: strengthening Italian influence in the Balkans and in Africa and attempting to position Italy as a balancing power between France, Great Britain, and Germany. A symbol of this policy was the "Four-Power Pact" (1933), Mussolini's attempt to manage European affairs in concert with the major Western powers, following the old logic of balance and great-power diplomacy.

The Imperialist Turn and the Alliance with Nazi Germany

A decisive transformation came with the Ethiopian War (1935-1936), which Mussolini saw as the opportunity to give Fascism an imperial aura. The violent military campaign to conquer the Abyssinian Empire, condemned by the League of Nations, drove Italy into open conflict with Great Britain and France, shattering the diplomatic balance that had been carefully maintained until then. After the Ethiopian War the Fascist regime introduced an increasingly pronounced ideological element into foreign policy. The idea of Fascism as a universal ideology, the struggle against international communism, and the project of a global bloc of authoritarian states became central components of Italy's international action.

The occupation of Ethiopia marked the culmination of expansionist policy, but also the beginning of a dangerous drift: Mussolini's

decision to draw ever closer to Adolf Hitler's Germany, the proclamation of the *Axis policy* in 1936, the signing of the *Anti-Comintern Pact* with Germany and Japan in 1937, and the *Pact of Steel* in 1939, and the gradual rupture with the Western powers.

On the domestic front, Galeazzo Ciano, a career diplomat, Mussolini's son-in-law, and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1936, became the spokesman for a more radical and pro-German line. Many old-guard diplomats such as Vittorio Cerruti, Carlo Galli, and Giuliano Cora, tied to the liberal conservative tradition and convinced of the need for cordial, non-antagonistic relations with London and Paris, were marginalized, forced into early retirement, or assigned to posts of secondary importance. In their place rose a younger generation, trained during the Fascist years or coming from Party ranks, eager to translate into diplomatic language the slogans of the "Italian Empire" and the struggle against Bolshevism and the Western democracies.

The conclusion of an offensive and ideological alliance between Italy and Germany in Berlin on 22 May 1939, the so-called *Pact of Steel*, was a symbolic act of the crisis and degeneration of Fascist foreign policy. The risk of an Italo-French war pushed Mussolini to accept Hitler's offers of alliance. The pact stipulated that if either party became involved in military conflict, the other would side with it using all its land, air, and naval forces. It was an extraordinary and unbalanced alliance, since most alliances set certain limits, whereas this one granted Germany complete freedom of action.

With the deepening of collaboration with National Socialist Germany, elements of Fascist ideology and of racist and militarist rhetoric began to take hold, or at least be publicly expressed, within Italian diplomatic culture. Italy was portrayed as a world power, now on par with the great nations, ready to impose its hegemony over the Mediterranean and beyond. Yet these ambitions were largely illusory: despite its growth, Italy's industry and armed forces could not compete with the economic and military potential of Germany, Great Britain, the United States, or the Soviet Union.

Contarini's Disciple: Raffaele Guariglia and the Foreign Policy of Mussolini's Italy



Fig. 15 - Raffaele Guariglia

Raffaele Guariglia was born in Naples on 19 February 1889. He came from a family with deep mercantile roots between Cilento and the Amalfi Coast, whose fortunes declined with the end of sail and the rise of steam. A law graduate, he won the 1909 competition for the consular service and, in 1913 was transferred to the diplomatic service. Early postings – Paris (1910-1912, under Tommaso Tittoni), London (with Guglielmo Imperiali), a brief assignment in Russia – and a recall to Rome in 1915 to the Personnel Of-

fice directed by Salvatore Contarini gave him early familiarity with both great-power chancelleries and the Ministry's internal mechanics. During the First World War he served at the Embassy in Paris; at the war's end he was sent to Brussels to rebuild the Italian mission in a Belgium restored to independence.

Back at the Foreign Ministry in 1919, he resumed his collaboration with Contarini, who in 1920 became Secretary General and the Ministry's fulcrum amid frequent ministerial absences and the weakness of liberal cabinets. Under Mario Lago (Director of Political Affairs), Guariglia took over the Near Eastern, Mediterranean, and colonial portfolios, swiftly becoming one of the service's leading specialists on African and imperial questions. With Contarini he shared a realist, non-ideological outlook: reopening relations with Soviet Russia; recognizing Turkish nationalism as a stabilizing force in the Aegean and Levant counterbalancing France and Britain; opposing Balkan adventures and viewing a united Yugoslavia as a useful, if inherently fragile, neighbor.

As already noted above, after Mussolini's rise in 1922, Contarini remained Secretary General and the Ministry shifted to Palazzo Chigi; Guariglia's responsibilities grew, and in 1924 he became a section head in Political Affairs. Contarini's break with Mussolini and resignation in 1926 opened further space: Guariglia was placed in charge of the Directorate-General for Political, Commercial, and Private Affairs of Europe and the Levant (1926 - summer 1932). With no Secretary General after

1927, and backed by Mussolini and Dino Grandi, the political director effectively became the regime's principal diplomatic architect and executor. In February 1927 he was promoted Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (second class).

In 1932 Mussolini reasserted direct control of the Ministry, removed Grandi (sending him to London), and Guariglia's power diminished; he was appointed ambassador to Spain. He served there until 1935, when family bereavements and the Ethiopian crisis brought him back to Rome. Drawing on his colonial expertise, he proposed an "Abyssinia and Red Sea Office" in the Minister's Cabinet; Mussolini rejected the idea, but from 1 March 1935 Aloisi and Suvich named him consultant on Ethiopian affairs, tasking him with coordinating diplomatic action at Palazzo Chigi. Guariglia supported the Italo-Ethiopian War, convinced that a major African empire was essential to Italy's international standing.

With Galeazzo Ciano's appointment as Foreign Minister in 1936 and the mounting Fascistization of the Ministry, Guariglia – seen by Ciano and many Fascist officials as a "pre-Fascist," bourgeois professional too inclined toward good relations with Western powers – was sent to Buenos Aires, a posting he considered punitive. He disagreed with Mussolini's project to recast Italy as a global power at the price of subordination to Germany. After Ethiopia, he believed, Italy should have consolidated, pacified, and developed, not plunged into open-ended imperialist revisionism.

Ironically, his reputation as a loyal yet traditionally minded diplomat, favourable to an understanding with France, eased his return to Europe at the end of 1938, amid acute Italo-French tensions over Tunisia, Djibouti, and Corsica: he was appointed ambassador to France. While applying Ciano's hard-line instructions, his dissent toward Axis policies became clear: he judged German conduct selfish and unsupportive of Italy, reported Britain's growing intransigence and its influence on French policy, and worked for an Italo-French rapprochement, keeping channels open with the government and political elite in Paris. After Germany occupied Bohemia and dissolved Czechoslovakia (1939), he warned of the rising risk of European war, promoted economic ties to soften hostility, and welcomed Italy's non-belligerency in September 1939. In spring 1940, as France collapsed under German assault, he relayed last-minute French offers

to avert an Italo-French war, without success. With Italy's entry into the conflict in June 1940, he returned to Rome, largely sidelined; his criticism of Fascist foreign policy sharpened.

After the sudden death of Bernardo Attolico (9 February 1942), Guariglia was posted to the Holy See; in spring 1943 he went to Ankara. As Italy's military crisis deepened, his name – alongside Augusto Rosso, Alberto Pirelli, and Dino Grandi – circulated for the Foreign Ministry in a prospective post-Fascist government to disengage Italy from the war. Following the Grand Council session of 25 July 1943, Mussolini's arrest, and the formation of the Badoglio government, Guariglia was appointed Foreign Minister (26 July). He reorganized the Ministry, restoring the office of Secretary General and assigning it to Augusto Rosso; Giuliano Capranica del Grillo became his Chief of Staff.

The central problems were relations with Germany and negotiations with the Allies. Guariglia attempted a strategy of "chloroforming" Berlin to gain time for an orderly exit, but the armistice process was largely removed from the Foreign Ministry and conducted by the military. Briefed in late August on Allied terms, he opposed an immediate armistice coupled with war against Germany: Italy, in his view, lacked the strength to resist German forces and would suffer devastating occupation. After the 8 September announcement, as the King, Badoglio, and the top brass fled south, Guariglia remained in Rome, going into hiding with his wife at the Spanish Embassy to the Holy See. Rosso stayed to represent and lead the diplomatic service in German-occupied Rome; other diplomats joined the Brindisi government, where Renato Prunas became Secretary General (end of October 1943).

In the postwar years, after the 1946 institutional referendum that established the Republic and sent the House of Savoy into exile, Guariglia resigned from the service out of loyalty to the monarchy. He became active in the National Monarchist Party with other former diplomats (Ugo Sola, Guido Rocco, Roberto Cantalupo, Emanuele Grazzi, Giacomo Barone Paulucci di Calboli, Armando Koch), serving as the party's principal foreign-policy voice and as a senator (1954-1958). He died in Rome in 1970.

Augusto Rosso: a Piedmontese career diplomat serving the Italian Fascist state



Fig. 16 - Augusto Rosso

Augusto Rosso was born in Tronzano, in the Province of Vercelli, the son of Pietro and Emilia Bonchet. He came from a family of landowners and agricultural entrepreneurs. A law graduate of the University of Turin (1908), he entered the diplomatic service by competitive examination in 1910. Early foreign postings to Washington, St. Petersburg, and Berlin were followed in 1913 by service in Rome as aide in the Minister's Secretariat. In 1915 he was sent to Kristiania (Oslo), where he remained through the end of 1919, then briefly to Athens. At the end of 1922 he returned to Washington and, in 1925, moved to London. These years consolidated his reputation as one of the leading experts on the Anglo-American world within Italian diplomacy, appreciated for analytical clarity and organizational skill.

Noticed by Undersecretary Dino Grandi, Rosso was recalled to Rome in 1927 as head of the League of Nations Office and additional delegate to the League Council. In June 1930 he became Director General for League Affairs. Between 1927 and 1932 he was a central figure of Italy's work at Geneva, at a time when Rome sought to participate constructively in the League as a great power and permanent Council member. In 1932, when Grandi fell from favour and was replaced as Foreign Minister, Rosso was appointed ambassador to Washington (1932 - summer 1936). He worked vigorously to strengthen relations with the United States, even attempting – unsuccessfully – to arrange a Roosevelt-Mussolini meeting. Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and the regime's alignment with Hitler's Germany soon undermined these efforts.

Against his wishes, in June 1936 Rosso was sent to Moscow, where he served until the German-Soviet war (summer 1941). It was a difficult post: Fascist Italy leaned on anti-Bolshevik propaganda and, in November 1937, adhered to the Anti-Comintern Pact. Rosso nonetheless sought to keep channels with the USSR open. His reports, perceptive on the evolution of Stalin's foreign policy, were read with interest by

Mussolini, but he was often left without instructions and excluded from real policy-making, dominated by the direct axis between Palazzo Chigi and the Embassy in Berlin. During the Washington and Moscow years he emerged as one of the most gifted diplomats of his generation and a mentor to younger officials (among them Bartolomeo Migone, Alberto Rossi Longhi, Enrico Guastone Belcredi, and Andrea Ferrero). As Mario Toscano later noted, Rosso combined integrity and a deep sense of state service with keen situational judgment.

Uninformed of Mussolini's decision to join the aggression against the USSR, Rosso was taken by surprise by Italy's declaration of war and made his way home through a hazardous journey. After Mussolini's fall on 25 July 1943, known for his dissent from Fascist foreign-policy directives, he was appointed Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry by the new minister, Raffaele Guariglia. He set about reorganizing the administration and facing the immediate emergencies, but the armistice talks were handled by the military, sidelining Palazzo Chigi. After 8 September he found himself managing the complex situation of German-occupied Rome.

Refusing any role in Mussolini's Italian Social Republic, Rosso declined to serve as its Foreign Minister or to adhere to the new entity. Concerned for the fate of the Ministry and its staff, he nevertheless arranged an orderly handover with the RSI's Secretary General, Serafino Mazzolini – a career diplomat who then undertook the ambiguous task of running the Foreign Ministry for the RSI while shielding many non-Fascist diplomats from persecution. In late September 1943, Rosso formally invited personnel to cooperate with Mazzolini to avoid chaos, but privately advised those who remained at Palazzo Chigi that continued work there amounted to adhering to the RSI and recommended they make themselves unavailable while the German occupation lasted. On 6 October he himself went into hiding.

After the war, this pragmatic conduct during the handover drew censure. The Central Purge Commission dismissed him from the diplomatic service in August 1945. Rosso appealed to the Council of State, was reinstated in the early 1950s, and retired in December 1952. He then withdrew from public life, dividing his time between Florence, his adopted city, and Washington, the hometown of his American wife, Frances Ashworth Wilkinson Bunker (whom he had married in January 1937). He died in Florence in 1964.

Continuity and Contradictions

Despite the rhetoric and the rise of new Fascist figures within the diplomatic ranks, elements of continuity with the monarchical and liberal tradition persisted:

- An underlying realism, which in some ambassadors and ministers took the form of caution and criticism toward Mussolini's bellicose foreign policy and military adventures.
- The perception that Italy needed cooperative relations with all the major world powers, avoiding isolation.
- An enduring interest in the protection (or political use) of national and religious minorities, a concern rooted in the Risorgimento tradition.

Emblematic of this continuity is the case of diplomats such as Carlo Sforza (Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1920-1921), who sought to renew and modernize diplomacy by emphasizing greater transparency, attention to the role of public opinion, and the creation of cultural institutes specializing in extra-European areas, such as the Institute for the Orient. With the advent of Fascism, Sforza left the country, embodying a "liberal-national" current that did not disappear entirely but remained in the shadows until the fall of the regime.

Many diplomats, though professing loyalty to Fascism, privately maintained a more traditional outlook, skeptical of the regime's promises of rapid geopolitical transformation. By the late 1930s, as Italy became increasingly bound to German decisions, the tension between Fascist propaganda and traditional pragmatism emerged with growing force.

Conclusions: The Balance of a Complex Journey

Italian diplomacy, born from the Savoyard tradition and from a national-liberal political culture, underwent profound transformations between the late 19th and mid-20th centuries. Originally shaped by the fusion of the *raison d'état* of the pre-unification states and the liberal-national idealism of the Risorgimento, it gradually acquired more complex and contradictory features.

- Liberal Era (1861-1914): characterized by realism tempered by a sense of solidarity toward oppressed minorities; a search for an in-

ternational balance that would favour Italy's growth; and the construction of a diplomatic identity aimed at completing territorial unity without overturning the European order.

- The Great War (1914-1918): diplomacy was shaken by the explosion of a global conflict, with the government forced to choose intervention in order to secure safer borders and recognition as a great power. Diplomatic successes such as the *Treaty of London* were followed by postwar disappointments and resentments, the so-called "mutilated victory", which weakened the liberal state.
- Postwar and the Rise of Fascism (1919-1922): the diplomatic corps, drawn largely from the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, initially regarded the Fascist movement with suspicion, but Mussolini's need for expertise and stability led to a compromise with the career diplomats.
- Moderate Fascist Foreign Policy (1922-1936): during this phase, the main goals remained similar to those of the monarchical and liberal tradition, colonial expansion and the maintenance of European balance, though gradually infused with Fascist rhetoric and symbols.
- Radical Imperialist Fascist Foreign Policy (1936-1943): the conquest of Ethiopia, the break with the Western powers, and the alliance with Nazi Germany led to a reshuffling of the Foreign Ministry's leadership. Imperialist and racist rhetoric grew stronger, alongside the illusion of Italy as an equal to the world's great powers. Many old-guard diplomats were marginalized and replaced by figures closer to Ciano and Mussolini.

The result of this long process was a hybrid diplomatic body, in which elements of the conservative monarchical tradition and the pre-1914 liberal culture coexisted with Fascist influences of varying depth. Despite its propaganda and apparent radicalism, Mussolini's regime failed to eradicate the realist and moderate tradition. Yet, the suppression of all critical voices encouraged reckless decisions, particularly after 1936.

On the eve of the Second World War, Italian diplomacy found itself largely aligned with Mussolini's project of a "short and victorious war", which would prove disastrous. The illusion of an easy triumph – fueled by propaganda and the desire for a leading international role – gravely underestimated the real global balance of power. In this sense, the Fascist experience illustrates how diplomatic action, when con-

ditioned by a totalitarian ideology and a personalized authoritarian system of power, can drift away from the realism necessary to grasp a state's true interests and the complexity of world affairs.

With the collapse of the regime in 1943 and the end of the war, many diplomats who had served under Mussolini sought to reconnect with earlier traditions, contributing, at least in part, to the reconstruction of Italian foreign policy on republican and democratic foundations. It was a return, albeit in a changed context, to a more pragmatic and less ideological vision, resuming the thread of monarchical and liberal experience that had been interrupted.

Ultimately, the study of Italian diplomacy from liberalism to Fascism reveals a web of continuities and ruptures: on one hand, a strong link to the principle of nationality and the realist calculation of state interests; on the other, an increasing entanglement with a totalitarian ideology that amplified the role of propaganda and violence in international relations. It is an emblematic case of how state institutions can adapt to different regimes, sometimes undergoing profound transformations, yet never entirely erasing their cultural background and historical origins.

CHAPTER 4

FROM CRISIS TO MODERNITY (1896-1943)

From a Period of Crisis to an Attempt at Stabilization: The Caetani Ordinance

In 1896, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent a profound reform that marked Italy's entry into a path of institutional modernization. With Royal Decree 73 of 15 March 1896, the Caetani Ordinance repealed previous decrees and reorganized the Ministry's services into five divisions, each with clearly defined tasks.

Division I, dedicated to Political Affairs, was subdivided into two sections: one for European states and their colonies, including Africa, Asia, and Oceania, and one for the Americas, integrating the Colonial Office in a semi-autonomous form. Division II managed Commercial Affairs, Emigration, and Schools, organized to promote international trade, oversee migration, and support Italian schools abroad. Division III handled Private Affairs, while Division IV oversaw Personnel and Protocol, including a section for Legalizations. Finally, Division V administered Accounting, supported by independent offices such as the Archive and the Library.

A fundamental innovation was the restoration of the position of Secretary General, entrusted to Giacomo Malvano, a key figure for administrative continuity. The decisions of Head of Government Antonio di Rudinì and Foreign Minister Onorato Caetani shaped a modern Ministry, organized to support Italy's aspiration to be recognized as a great power on the international stage.

The Prinetti Reform: Innovation and Specialization

A more circumscribed reorganization of duties took place under Minister Giulio Prinetti, who, with Royal Decree no. 2 of 2 January 1902, redefined the distribution of business among the offices of the Central Administration. Prinetti's reform consolidat-

ed the position of a series of autonomous offices, and the division into specialized departments for commercial, private, accounting, and other affairs.



Fig. 17 - Giulio Prinetti

This new structure was characterized by greater specificity in the responsibilities of the various offices, although the allocation of duties was not entirely free from problems. The decree contained the first official mention of the newly instituted Historical Archive of the Ministry, whose precise sphere of competence was defined only in 1908. Prinetti's reform reflected the need to adapt the Ministry's organization to new international challenges and the growing importance of communications and diplomatic relations.

The Tittoni System and the First Proposals for Internal Reform

The arrival of the Tittoni system in April 1908 brought further organizational innovations to the Ministry. Its architect, Foreign



Fig. 18 - Tommaso Tittoni

Minister Tommaso Tittoni, had led Italian diplomacy almost without interruption from 1903 to 1909, with only a brief break between 1905 and 1906. During this period, there emerged a tendency toward the specialization of various offices, which remained directly under the authority of the Secretary General, while administrative and support functions were assigned to dedicated structures.

According to the 1908 regulations, the Ministry was organized into three autonomous offices and four General Directorates, in addition to the Cabinet. For the first time, the Minister's Cabinet was formally distinguished from that of the Undersecretary.

The autonomous offices (including Cipher, Press and Translations, as well as Correspondence Opening, Distribution, Registration, and Dispatch) were placed directly under the Secretary General.

Among the General Directorates, the Directorate of General Affairs was divided into two Divisions.

Division I comprised two sections, one for Personnel and one for Protocol.



Fig. 19 - Gaetano
Manzoni

Division II was subdivided into four sections dedicated to the Ministry's administrative affairs. The fourth section of this Division was responsible, in addition to the Treasury and Cash Office, for the management of the historical archive, the library and the printing office.

The Directorate General of Political Affairs included two Divisions, assisted by the Office of Litigation and Legislation.

Division III was responsible for political affairs in the strict sense, divided into three sections based on geography (Europe, the Levant and Africa, the Far East and America).

Division IV consisted of two sections: the first dealt with complaints from Italian subjects against foreign governments, and vice versa, while the second handled issues of International Police and foreign ecclesiastical institutions present in the Kingdom.

One of the most innovative aspects introduced concerned the geographic division of political affairs. This choice stemmed from the need to provide a more complete and integrated view of foreign policy, considering that the political and economic movements of a state could not be fully understood except in relation to its geographic context.

Within this framework, several proposals emerged during internal discussions. Count Gaetano Manzoni, for example, suggested a division of affairs into "groupings of states" that would allow a unified view of all diplomatic and economic aspects related to a given territory. At the same time, figures such as Gabriele Voltattorni and Primo Levi proposed reviewing personnel tenure and promotion to ensure operational continuity and greater efficiency in implementing foreign policy.

The Italian conquest of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica (Italy's new colonial African possession called Libya) in 1911-1912 prompted the Roman government to take the initiative to create the Ministry of Colonies in 1912, headed by Minister Pietro Bertolini. Until that point, Italy's colonial policy had been managed by the Ministry of Foreign



Fig. 20 - Antonino di
San Giuliano

al actions in Africa and the Middle East.

Affairs through the Colonial Office. It was therefore no coincidence that the new Ministry essentially evolved from the Colonial Office of the Consulta and was guided by diplomat Giacomo Agnesa, who had already headed the Colonial Office and, in 1913, was appointed Director General of Political Affairs of the newly established Ministry of Colonies. From that moment, a new actor appeared in Italian foreign policy, as the Ministry of Colonies became an essential interlocutor for Italy's international

The Commission for Reorganization and the 1914 Questionnaire

On the eve of the First World War, the Ministry faced the imperative of further reorganization. In 1913, on the initiative of Foreign Minister Antonino di San Giuliano, in office from 1910 to 1914, a Commission was established to examine the current organization of the Central Administration and propose the necessary modifications. Although documentary evidence is scarce, the work of the Commission is partially reflected in a questionnaire distributed to the Ministry's offices in 1914.

The questions aimed to assess whether the organizational structure met real operational needs and to gather proposals for improving the allocation of responsibilities and personnel assignment. The responses, collected in a fragmented manner, reveal a shared concern: the excessive mobility of officials and the need to recognize the value of field experience, including through financial incentives and honorary recognition. In this context, diplomats themselves, including the Director General of Commercial Affairs, Primo Levi, expressed the need for greater stability and a reorientation of the Ministry's internal policies.

Post-World War I Reforms: Toward a Geographic Organization

The postwar period brought a new impetus for reform, driven by the need to adapt the Ministry's organization to Italy's expanding international position after the victory in the Great War. With the decree of 19 September 1920, a radical transformation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place.

This reorganization, known as the Sforza system (named after its creator, career diplomat Carlo Sforza, Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1920 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Giolitti government from 1920 to 1921), represented the last major attempt at a formal, comprehensive reorganization.

The new structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was part of the modernization effort undertaken by the Tuscan diplomat and the Secretary General Salvatore Contarini at the beginning of the 1920s. It introduced a structure divided into general directorates and offices, organized according to geographic rather than purely thematic criteria. In this way, diplomatic and administrative activity was segmented into two major blocks: one devoted to affairs related to Europe and the Levant, and the other to affairs concerning Africa, America, Asia, and Australia.

The adoption of a geographic criterion offered numerous advantages: it allowed a more integrated management of political, commercial, and private matters related to specific national or regional contexts, promoting greater coherence and specialization in diplomatic responses. Within this framework, the Secretary General maintained direct control over certain offices, while the General Directorates assumed a coordinating and strategic guidance function.

The Sforza system stood out for clarity in the distribution of responsibilities and for efficiency in service organization. It is true that difficulties were encountered in implementation, and were highlighted, for example, by the General Accounting Office's objections regarding the role of the Deputy Director General. Nevertheless, the new administrative structure proved capable of absorbing the growing demands of foreign affairs, maintaining a stable and functional framework for over a decade.

Critical Issues and Outcomes of Organizational Evolution

One of the main challenges, evident from the earliest reform attempts, concerned personnel management and their assignment to different functions. The frequent movement of officials between foreign posts and the Central Administration was seen as an obstacle to operational continuity and the full realization of diplomatic potential. The proposal to recognize experience gained in Rome, through higher allowances or honors, appeared as an attempt to stabilize the service and value the contribution of diplomats.

At the same time, internal debate highlighted the need to clearly distinguish between strategic guidance functions and executive functions, aiming to avoid an excessive concentration of power in the hands of the Secretary General alone. The response to this need was the progressive introduction of intermediate positions, such as General Directors, capable of coordinating operational activities while ensuring centralized control without overloading the decision-making structure.

Another significant theme concerned institutional communication. The establishment of the Press Office and the definition of its responsibilities represented a major change from the past, reflecting awareness that the Ministry's image, and by extension Italy's, needed to be managed professionally and promptly. The role of the Head of the Press Office was to be given to a trusted and experienced official capable of accurately interpreting and disseminating information in line with government directives.

Finally, the decision to adopt a geographic division of offices, as established by the 1920 Sforza system, proved particularly innovative. Although this choice posed certain implementation challenges, it allowed for a more integrated and targeted approach to issues related to different international contexts. The division into geographic blocks, one for Europe and the Levant, the other for Africa, America, Asia, and Australia, enabled focus on specific needs and challenges, ensuring a more timely and coordinated response to international events.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Fascist era: The Evolution of the Administrative Organization (1922-1943)

Following Benito Mussolini's rise to power in 1922, as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, a new phase in Italian political and administrative life began. In the Fascist period the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent a gradual yet radical transformation in line with the principles of centralization and authoritarianism that characterized the new regime.

The Abolition of the Secretary General Position

One of the most significant interventions in the early years of the Fascist government was the substantial elimination of the position of Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On 6 April 1926, Ambassador Salvatore Contarini left the office he had held continuously since 1920.

He was briefly succeeded by Minister Plenipotentiary Antonio Chiamonte Bordonaro, who left the office on 6 February 1927 to take up the post of Ambassador in London.

The position then remained vacant until it was formally abolished by Royal Decree on 25 August 1932.

Luigi Vittorio Ferraris observed that the abolition of the Secretary General position was based on the idea that the existence of such a high-ranking, authoritative official who was independent of changes in the Ministry's political leadership could reduce the Minister's ability to control the Department directly and effectively. In other words, the Secretary General's bureaucratic influence could impact the implementation of directives issued by the State's more strictly political organs. The centralizing tendencies of the three Fascist Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Mussolini, Grandi and Ciano) made it intolerable for the handling of the most important or confidential affairs, as well as the control and coordination of all the Ministry's political and administrative activities, to be influenced by anyone other than the Minister. Consequently, there was a need to centralize control and coordination within the Minister's Cabinet. Following the abolition of the Secretary General position, the Cabinet assumed the coordination functions that had previously constituted the Secretary General's *raison d'être*.

Another significant reform came in 1927 with the decision to abolish the requirement of high private income (“rendita”) as a condition for access to the diplomatic career and to unify the consular and diplomatic tracks at the entry level. The abolition of the income requirement marked the end of discrimination based on wealth; however, as Fabio Grassi Orsini has noted, for the Fascist regime this measure, rather than opening the diplomatic career to brilliant young people without means, was intended to serve as a tool to facilitate the entry into diplomacy of former combatants and Fascist representatives of the lower middle class.

The Reorganization of 1929

In autumn 1929, the Central Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underwent profound restructuring. The Service Order of 17 October saw political and commercial responsibilities merge and be reorganized on a geographical basis into two new General Directorates.

The first was the Directorate General for Political and Commercial Affairs of Europe, the Levant and Africa (D.G.E.L.). Its responsibilities were divided among five offices. The first dealt with Western, Northern and Central Europe, as well as the USSR. The second dealt with the Danube area. The third dealt with Greece, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. A specific office (3°A) was dedicated to Albania. Finally, the fourth office managed relations with Africa and the Italian colonies.

The second was the Directorate General for Political and Commercial Affairs of America, Asia, and Australia (D.G.A.A.A.), which covered the rest of the world through two offices: one for North America, Oceania, and Asia, and another for Latin America.

A separate Private Affairs Service was also established, whose internal organization mirrored the geographic division of the two main directorates, with one office for the states under D.G.E.L. and a second for those under D.G.A.A.A.

To complete the reform, on 18 October 1929 a new directorate was created: the Directorate General for Treaties, Acts, and Affairs with the Holy See. This directorate was organized into two offices: the first responsible for Treaties and International Acts, and the second exclusively dedicated to managing Affairs with the Holy See.

Structure (first half of 1932):

- Minister's Cabinet
- Press Office
- Protocol Office
- Geographic Service, Reserved Printing Office
- Personnel Office
- Historical Archive and Library Service
- Directorate General for Political and Commercial Affairs of Europe–Levant–Africa (5 offices)
- Directorate General for Political and Commercial Affairs of America–Asia–Australia (2 offices)
- Directorate General for Affairs with the League of Nations (3 offices)
- Directorate General for Treaties, Acts, the Holy See, and Administrative Services (5 offices)
- Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Schools (3 offices)
- Directorate General for Italian Labour Abroad (3 offices + 2 Private Affairs offices)
- Economic Policy Office
- Correspondence and Archives Service (3 offices, one of which had 14 departments)
- Central Accounting Office.

Total: 6 General Directorates and 35 offices.

CHAPTER 5

BETWEEN RECONSTRUCTION AND THE COLD WAR (1943-1975)

The year 1943 marks a turning point in Italian history. With the fall of Mussolini, the signing of the armistice with the Allies, and the division of the peninsula, Italy found itself politically and diplomatically disoriented. However, it was precisely in this dramatic context that the foundations for a new era of Italian diplomacy were laid.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a marginal role in the negotiations leading to the signing of the armistice with the Anglo-American forces in September 1943, as the talks were handled by Prime Minister Badoglio and the top military leadership. Nevertheless, upon his appointment as Foreign Minister, Ambassador Raffaele Guariglia introduced significant changes. Guariglia reorganized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reintroducing the position of Secretary General. Guariglia then immediately sought to adjust and modify certain directives of Fascist foreign policy. For example, he initiated contacts with Mehdi Frashëri, one of the leaders of the Albanian nationalist party Balli Kombëtar, to establish new foundations for Italy-Albania relations: he aimed to abandon the Fascist annexationist ambitions over Albania and support the re-establishment of an independent Albanian state friendly and allied with Italy. Guariglia and Rosso also issued orders to prevent Jews present in the Balkan and Adriatic territories occupied by Italy from being released or left “without any protection in foreign hands, exposed to potential reprisals, unless they themselves preferred to be set free,” outside the Italian-occupied zone.

Shortly after the announcement of the armistice on 8 September 1943, a small group of diplomats in Brindisi, accompanying the King and the Badoglio government, began rebuilding the foundations of Italian foreign policy. The central figure in this crucial phase was Renato Prunas, a Sardinian diplomat of great vision and rigor. Succeeding Rosso as Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at

the end of October 1943, Prunas became the driving force behind the rebirth of Italian diplomacy.



Fig. 21 - Renato Prunas

Prunas immediately understood that the survival of the Italian state depended on institutional continuity and the recovery of national sovereignty. In an era of military occupation and Anglo-American dominance, he worked to prevent Italy from becoming marginalized. His actions were guided by a principle: to restore dignity and professionalism to Italian diplomacy, discredited during the Fascist years.

Around Prunas, between Brindisi and Salerno, gathered many future leaders of postwar Italian foreign policy, including Roberto Ducci, Roberto Gaja, Raimondo Manzini and Antonio Venturini, who personally participated in the reconstruction of the Italian diplomatic service.

Under Prunas's guidance, the first international contacts were reestablished. He reopened dialogue with France and the Soviet Union. The restoration of diplomatic relations with Moscow in March 1944 represented both a symbolic and concrete gesture: post-Fascist Italy intended to break with its past of aggression and return to the principles of cooperation and mutual respect. This message would later be developed in the following decades as part of Italy's so-called *Ostpolitik*.

Meanwhile, Prunas also worked to outline a new strategic vision, oriented toward overcoming isolation and building stable alliances. The United States emerged as Italy's primary political and military reference. Equally important was the beginning of a reconciliation policy with neighbouring countries, particularly France and Austria.

Italy Between East and West: Integration into the Western Bloc

After the signing of the 1947 peace treaty and with the onset of the Cold War, Italy faced a crucial strategic choice: which side to align with in the new bipolar world order?

The world had divided into the Western bloc, led by the United States, and the Eastern bloc, dominated by the Soviet Union. For Italy, defeated in the war, stripped of its colonies, and with fragile internal stability, survival and recovery necessarily depended on joining a system of alliances.

Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi and his Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza navigated this delicate phase with clarity. They convinced the country and the victorious powers that Italy, despite its recent authoritarian experience, could become a reliable ally of the Western world. Paradoxically, the Cold War proved to be an opportunity: the United States needed the cooperation of countries like Italy, Germany, and Japan to counter communist expansion.

Thus, Italy joined the Marshall Plan in 1947, receiving substantial economic aid for reconstruction, and became a founding member of the Atlantic Alliance in 1949, definitively linking itself to the Western bloc. This choice was not only dictated by circumstances but also the result of strategic reflection: for a state located at the heart of the Mediterranean, lacking nuclear weapons and a large army, an alliance with the world's principal naval and military power – the United States – was a geopolitical necessity.

As Pietro Quaroni wrote, Italy's position condemned it to always "choose the sea, and with it, whoever dominates it": "We are a maritime power. This fact shapes all our foreign policy, as it compels us to align with the nation that, at any given moment, is the leading naval power."

The choice for the Atlantic Alliance, therefore, was both ideological and pragmatic, and it paved the way for Italy's progressive reintegration into the international system on new, democratic and multi-lateral foundations.

The political and ideological renewal of Italian foreign policy in the postwar period was made possible by the close collaboration between the new anti-Fascist and anti-communist leadership led by De Gasperi and a diplomatic service largely composed of officials who had been deeply involved in the international initiatives of the Fascist regime – some in silent dissent, others in full support. Indeed, there was substantial continuity in the Italian diplomatic personnel between the Mussolini era and the post-Fascist period. Many diplomats who played a leading role in postwar Italian foreign policy had entered

the diplomatic service in the final years of liberal Italy or during the Fascist period.



Fig. 22 - Leonardo Vitetti

From the late 1940s, leading figures of Fascist foreign policy returned to top positions in Italian diplomacy: from Ciano's brother-in-law, Massimo Magistrati, to Leonardo Vitetti, to Luca Pietromarchi – once the mastermind of Mussolini's Balkan policy during World War II – who later revived relations with the Soviet Union as Italy's ambassador in Moscow in the late 1950s. One reason for this continuity of diplomatic personnel between Fascism and post-Fascism was that the new anti-Fascist leadership was inexperienced in political and administrative matters, particularly in foreign affairs. Former Fascist diplomats possessed professional expertise, technical knowledge, and invaluable know-how that the new rulers could not forgo.

Hence the considerable influence that long-serving and highly skilled officials, such as the aforementioned Renato Prunas, Vittorio Zoppi, Pietro Quaroni, and others, exerted on postwar Italian foreign policy. Moreover, the vast majority of the diplomatic service, after the bitter lessons of Mussolini's foreign policy failures, considered Fascism a closed historical and political chapter and enthusiastically collaborated with De Gasperi, Sforza, and the centrist coalition parties. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained largely immune to any nostalgia for the Fascist past and instead became one of the driving forces behind Italy's growing integration into the Western bloc and the European community.

The return of Carlo Sforza to the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1947 was highly significant. He would remain minister until July 1951. Sforza, in close harmony with Prime Minister De Gasperi, guided Italian diplomacy as a technician, more as a former diplomat than as a politician, focusing primarily on the skills and professional abilities of individuals. Sforza concentrated on major international issues (European integration, relations with the United States, relations with Yugoslavia, and the question of former African colonies), leaving the ordinary administration and management of other dossiers to the Secretary General.



Fig. 23 - Gastone Guidotti

The Tuscan minister sought to make the best use of the diplomatic personnel at his disposal, promoting individuals who had previously been undervalued or overlooked and launching several young talents, such as Mario Mondello, his chief of staff, and Raimondo Manzini. Many of his closest collaborators at the Ministry (Vittorio Zoppi, Gastone Guidotti, Vittorio Castellani Pastoris, Umberto Grazi, Gian Luigi Milesi Ferretti, Luigi Vidau) were diplomats from the Fascist era and part of the group of officials who had assisted Prunas after 1943.

Sforza maintained this group of officials at the top of the Ministry and sought to use it effectively. It was, in any case, thanks to Sforza that Gastone Guidotti achieved definitive professional success, becoming one of the most talented Italian diplomats of the postwar period; in 1948, he was appointed Director General for Political Affairs. Sforza also promoted Attilio Cattani, a man of considerable expertise in international economic relations.



Fig. 24 - Vittorio Zoppi

During Sforza's tenure, Vittorio Zoppi emerged definitively as an influential personality within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Zoppi had been Director General for Political Affairs under Prunas and, from 1948, Secretary General, a position he held until 1954. Born in Novara in 1898, the son of a general, he had served as an army officer during World War I and entered the diplomatic service in 1923. In the 1930s, Zoppi was one of the Ministry's experts on African affairs, a close collaborator of Giovanni Battista Guarnaschelli, head of the office responsible for

North and East African issues and a key figure in the diplomatic events that led to Italy's conquest of Ethiopia.

A serious and competent official, a hard worker, and a passionate advocate for Italy's presence in Africa, Zoppi earned the respect of Prunas, De Gasperi, and Sforza, becoming the true engine of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1948 and 1954. Within the Ministry, he played a role comparable to that of Salvatore Contarini in the first

half of the 1920s. Diplomatic documentation attests to Zoppi's skill in serving as a connecting and synthesizing element among political leaders, Ministry directors, and the main ambassadors abroad.

Under Zoppi's leadership as Secretary General, the Ministry returned to the old practice of liberal-era diplomacy (progressively abandoned during the Fascist period) of consulting and involving leading ambassadors abroad in the decision-making process of Italian foreign policy. The Secretary General was thus able to maximize the political intelligence and analytical acumen of the best diplomats of that era.

Diplomacy and European Integration

Alongside Italy's integration into the Western bloc, Italian diplomacy worked intensively to promote European integration. From the immediate postwar period, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed a clear vision: only a united Europe could ensure peace, development, and security.

The process was not simple. Resentments between European countries remained strong, and many states, such as France and the United Kingdom, were still tied to their colonial empires. Italy's pro-European push, therefore, was not passive adherence to external models but an autonomous choice of Italian diplomacy, motivated by the desire to overcome postwar marginalization.

In this context, Italy:

1. Joined the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951;
2. Actively participated in the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), signing the Treaties of Rome in 1957;
3. Supported the idea of a European Political Community, which ultimately failed due to the lack of agreement on a common defence project.

The Italian diplomatic vision of Europe was guided by realism and foresight. Integration was not seen as an alternative to national sovereignty but as a tool to strengthen it, making it compatible with global challenges. In this sense, Italian diplomacy played an educational role for domestic politics, often more cautious or hesitant. Quite often it was the diplomatic service, more than political parties or industrialists, that pushed Italy toward Europe.

During those years, Italian foreign policy also underwent a gradual reorientation in terms of its goals and tools. Greater value was placed on multilateral diplomacy and international organizations, while increasing emphasis was given to the commercial, financial, and cultural dimensions of global relations. At the same time, the concept of national sovereignty was rethought in order to make it compatible with European integration.

A new concept of security developed, based on the idea of shared security, which – beyond the military and territorial dimension – sought also to take into account the economic, cultural, and ideological dimensions of security. Starting from the idea of national, political, and ideological pluralisms as foundational elements of Europe's identity, the legitimacy of the different national and security interests of the States was acknowledged, and an effort was made to find forms of reconciliation.

Several factors contributed to the development of this concept:

1. Italy's military weakness compelled the state to explore new ways to ensure its own security.
2. Participation in the process of European integration led to a partial sharing of sovereignty and a transfer of certain powers and to a new idea of what was Italian national sovereignty and security.
3. The existence of complex border disputes with Austria and Yugoslavia prompted Italian diplomacy to seek innovative solutions to these conflicts, while still guaranteeing national security.

Italian policy toward Central and Eastern Europe was strongly influenced by these new notions of shared and collective security. The resolution of the South Tyrolean question and the Adriatic border issue formed part of Italy's broader diplomatic effort to rethink the European political order. This involved developing new understandings of state security that linked the definition of political borders with the protection of minorities and the peaceful settlement of national disputes. Political stabilization of frontiers, in this vision, had to be accompanied by the opening of borders, greater freedom of movement, and the strengthening of economic and cultural cooperation among neighbouring states. The Moro-Waldheim understanding on Alto Adige of 1969 and the Osimo Italian-Yugoslav Agreements of 1975 were a concrete expression of Italy's new ideas on state sovereignty and security.

On the basis of political compromises that ensured the military and territorial security of neighbouring and bordering states, it be-

came possible to achieve more effective and comprehensive protection of the rights of religious and national minorities, as well as greater individual freedom.

Pietro Quaroni, a Diplomat Between Two Worlds



Fig. 25 - Pietro Quaroni

One of the most fascinating figures in post-war Italian diplomacy is undoubtedly Pietro Quaroni. A Roman, brilliant, cultured, and independent, Quaroni embodies the evolution of an Italian diplomacy capable of looking beyond ideology, with its gaze fixed on the future and the wider world.

Born in Rome in 1898, he entered the diplomatic service in 1920. After two years in Argentina, he was sent to the Soviet Union where he remained until autumn 1928. There he married a Russian aristocrat, Larissa Cegodaeff, who, being a woman with keen political and intellectual interests, had a significant impact and role in Quaroni's career. After a successful period in Albania, in 1931 the diplomat was called to work at the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome, where he was in charge of Central European issues and participated in the most important aspects of Italian foreign policy. In 1935, nonetheless, Quaroni fell out of favour with Mussolini because of some critical remarks he passed about the Duce's foreign policy during conversations with foreign journalists and diplomats which were intercepted by the Italian secret services. As punishment, he was first sent to Thessaloniki, then assigned the role of plenipotentiary minister to Afghanistan, a sort of graveyard for the career of an ambitious Italian diplomat in the first half of the 20th century. Quaroni arrived in Kabul in November 1936 and remained there until 1944. Afghanistan was an ideal place for him to study the political developments in Asia and to broaden his political perspectives, thus overcoming traditional Italian eurocentrism. The diplomat did not agree with Italy's war against the United Kingdom in 1940 but enthusiastically took part in attempts by the Axis to destabilize the British Empire. When Italy signed the armistice with

the Anglo-Americans, Quaroni remained faithful to the King's government, led by General Badoglio.

After failed attempts to bring him back to Italy, in April 1944 Badoglio appointed Quaroni Italian representative in the Soviet Union following the establishment of diplomatic relations. His posting to Moscow was no accident. Quaroni spoke Russian, understood Soviet mentality well, and had been relatively detached from Fascist anti-Bolshevik rhetoric. Furthermore, his geographic location, still in Afghanistan, made him an almost inevitable choice, as the Italian government needed to send a representative to Moscow despite Anglo-American directives prohibiting Italy from maintaining autonomous diplomatic relations separate from the Allied Control Commission.

In Moscow, Quaroni displayed extraordinary talent. He stood out for his clarity of thought and his ability to read international contexts with depth and realism. His experience in the Soviet Union and in Afghanistan had transformed him into an intellectual-diplomat, able to combine political analysis with cultural sensitivity.

His correspondence with the Italian government, often hindered by Allied censorship, was direct, candid, and enlightening. He did not merely describe events, but sought to interpret them in historical and geopolitical terms. He was convinced that Soviet Russia was a great power destined to endure, with global ambitions and an imperial vision rooted in the Tsarist tradition.

But Quaroni was not just an observer. He was a diplomat who practiced foreign policy, suggesting strategies and advising governments. His work was guided by the belief that Italy should look beyond Europe, understand the transformations of the postcolonial world, and position itself within the new global balances.

Quaroni's transfer to the Italian Embassy in Paris, decided in November 1946, brought him into much closer and more intense contact with French and Western political and diplomatic circles, convincing him of the inevitability for Italy of choosing integration into the bloc led by the United States. His long mission in Paris, which lasted until 1958, represented the peak of Quaroni's diplomatic career. The Roman diplomat became one of the key figures in the difficult but ultimately successful process of Italo-French reconciliation after the years of the Second World War and Mussolini's aggression in 1940. Published documentation clearly shows the drive and energy Quaroni

devoted to this mission, working not only to revive formal diplomatic relations between Italy and France but also to strengthen ties in all areas of social life, particularly economic and cultural.

Thanks in part to Quaroni, in the postwar period France, together with the United States, became the principal point of reference for Italian foreign policy, playing a decisive role, for example, in facilitating Italy's entry into the Atlantic Pact and helping to overcome the resistance of Britain and the Benelux countries. There is no doubt that during the crucial years of Italy's adhesion to the Euro-Atlantic bloc dominated by the United States, Quaroni played an important and leading role in influencing and encouraging the Italian ruling class to embrace the Western and European choice.

His subsequent missions as Italian ambassador to West Germany (1958-1961) and to the United Kingdom (1961-1963) were less successful. In 1963, having reached the mandatory retirement age, Quaroni left the diplomatic service and returned permanently to Rome, devoting himself in the following years to intense writing and public commentary. He was one of the founders of the Italian Association for Foreign Policy Studies (AISPE) and of the journal "Affari Esteri", of which he was the first editor. He was also appointed president of the Italian Radio and Television Service (RAI), a position he held until 1969. After leaving RAI, Quaroni became president of the Italian Red Cross in 1970.

Suffering from vision problems that made reading increasingly difficult, Quaroni decided to undergo surgery in 1971. The operation, however, had unforeseen consequences that led to the diplomat's sudden death on 11 June 1971.

Quaroni's approach to diplomacy, always telling the government the truth, proposing ruthless analyses, and maintaining a bridge between diplomacy and public opinion, became a model for a new generation of Italian diplomats, including Roberto Gaja, Roberto Ducci, Ludovico Incisa di Camerana, and Luigi Vittorio Ferraris.

Egidio Ortona and Diplomacy with the United States

Egidio Ortona was born in Casale Monferrato on 16 September 1910 into a family with military traditions. In July 1931, he graduated in Law from the Royal University of Turin. In the spring of 1932, he



Fig. 26 - Egidio Ortona

passed the competitive examination for entry into the diplomatic-consular career, and the following year he was sent first to join the Italian delegation at the World Economic Conference convened in London, and then, as Third Secretary of Embassy, he was assigned to work at the Italian Embassy in the United Kingdom, initially under Dino Grandi and later under Giuseppe Bastianini.

In June 1940, following the declaration of war, Egidio Ortona returned to Rome. In 1941 he was posted to Zara as a close collaborator of Giuseppe Bastianini, for whom he served as head of the secretariat during the tragic years of the Governorship of Dalmatia and the Undersecretariat of Foreign Affairs. After the fall of Fascism, Ortona declared his loyalty to the Monarchy and was sent to Washington in 1944, where he remained for several years as a highly valuable aide to Ambassadors Alberto Tarchiani and Manlio Brosio.

A key figure in postwar Italian diplomacy, Egidio Ortona devoted much of his career to building and consolidating relations with the United States. As early as 1944-1945, he was part of the mission in Washington aimed at securing reconstruction aid. From 1950, he directed the Permanent Technical Delegation (DELTEC), the core of economic and military negotiations connected to the Marshall Plan and the emerging Atlantic framework. From this experience, a method emerged: technical preparation of dossiers, institutional continuity, and careful management of operational relations with U.S. administrations and Congress.

Ortona's distinguishing trait was pragmatic Atlanticism: loyalty to the Western alliance without compromising the defence of national interests. In the 1950s, he strengthened Washington's trust through a sober and straightforward style, capable of translating Italy's priorities into language understandable to American interlocutors. A notable example occurred in 1955, when he helped reassure the United States after the election of Giovanni Gronchi as President of the Italian Republic, presenting it as a normal constitutional development rather than a signal of drift from the Atlantic anchor.

In 1958, Egidio Ortona was appointed Italy's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. In May 1961, he was recalled to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director General for Economic Affairs, and in September 1966 he assumed the position of Secretary General of the Ministry. He was then appointed ambassador to Washington in 1967. He remained there until 1975, navigating crucial events (the Vietnam War, the era of détente, and the post-Watergate crisis) without undermining the privileged relationship with the United States. Leveraging the network he had built over more than a decade across the Atlantic, he played a leading role in bilateral negotiations on military cooperation and economic issues (from trade protection to management of monetary imbalances), helping to consolidate the Rome–Washington link within a framework of collective security and economic interdependence.

Egidio Ortona embodied the art of balance: a staunch supporter of the transatlantic partnership, yet always attentive to preserving Italy's decision-making autonomy and negotiating leeway. His work helped make the United States the primary reference point of Italian foreign policy while simultaneously enhancing the country's credibility and capacity for initiative.

Ostpolitik and Dialogue with the East

While firmly anchored in the Western bloc, Italian foreign policy never abandoned dialogue with Eastern Europe. Starting in the late 1950s, through a determined effort to intensify bilateral relations with the countries of the Eastern Bloc (the so-called Italian Ostpolitik), Italy worked to keep alive a pan-European perspective, emphasizing the cultural and economic unity of European nations. Particularly from the late 1950s onward, as the slow development of détente between the Soviet Union and the Western Bloc created a favourable international context, Italy, keen to be one of the leaders in the détente process, renewed its efforts to strengthen political, cultural, and economic relations with the Soviet Union and other communist European countries.

The Italian Ostpolitik proved effective and achieved tangible results. Italy, alongside West Germany, became the main Western trading partner of the communist bloc countries, and cultural relations between Italy and the communist nations also intensified.

When analyzing the characteristics of the Italian Ostpolitik, it is important to highlight the plurality of its actors and stakeholders, diplomats, entrepreneurs, and politicians, who often had multiple, differing, and even conflicting motivations and objectives.

Economic motivations (particularly the desire to sell Italian goods and products to the Soviets and communist countries, given the highly advantageous terms for Italian companies) were naturally the primary reason for the strong support from Italian business circles for improved relations with the USSR. Large state-owned and private companies (such as ENI, IRI, FIAT, etc.), led by ambitious and shrewd executives like Enrico Mattei and Vittorio Valletta, were at the forefront of efforts to intensify commercial relations with the markets of communist Europe. Their contracts and agreements often paved the way for initiatives by politicians and diplomats.

The motivations of Italian politicians were more varied. On the domestic front, good relations with the Soviet Union and the communist countries were highly useful: they undermined the anti-Western and anti-Atlantic propaganda of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) by demonstrating Italy's openness and friendship toward the communist bloc. There was also hope that such relations might weaken the close ties between the Italian Communist Party and the USSR, reducing Moscow's interest in interfering in Italian domestic politics by presenting Italy as a non-hostile power.

Moreover, figures such as Pietro Nenni, Amintore Fanfani, Giorgio La Pira, Giulio Andreotti, and Aldo Moro were driven by strong idealistic motivations, believing in international cooperation and the cultural unity of the European continent. For a large part of the Italian political elite, who viewed Europe as a Mediterranean civilization grounded in a shared Christian heritage, Russia was considered part of Europe because of its Christian identity. They believed that Russia should be helped to rediscover its true Christian tradition through closer contact with Western Europe.

Diplomacy played a leading role in formulating and implementing the Italian Ostpolitik. Ambassadors such as Luca Pietromarchi, Enrico Aillaud and Roberto Ducci were deeply committed to improving relations with the communist countries of Europe during the 1950s and 1960s. However, the motivations and foreign policy visions that underpinned the support of many diplomats for détente with the Soviet Union and the

communist European countries were diverse. Pietro Quaroni believed that the Italian Ostpolitik should aim to weaken Soviet hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe and, in particular, to encourage smaller communist states to become more autonomous and independent from Moscow.

The idea that the strengthening of European integration with the new enlargement process launched in the seventies was possible only if the great powers accepted or tolerated it was also very influential within Italian diplomacy.

According to Roberto Gaja, for Western Europe to strengthen itself, it was essential to avoid any increase in tension or friction with the Communist states. Hence the importance and necessity that every further step toward the unification of Western Europe should be matched, according to Gaja, almost for reasons of balance, by "some gesture toward the countries of the East; or, if you will, a deepening of dialogue, exchanges, and cooperation with those countries."

Gaja was strongly in favour of strengthening European cooperation, the so-called deepening of the Community. In his view, however, it was necessary to remain aware that the enlargement of the EEC was a political, institutional and economic operation of great complexity, one that required a solid and secure political foundation not only at the domestic level but also internationally.

For the European Community to grow stronger, it was crucial to have the support of the world's great powers, or at least to ensure their non-hostility.

The Italian Ostpolitik witnessed an intensification from the end of the 1960s. Aside from Italy's ambitions to play a more autonomous and decisive role in the international context, a key element in strengthening the action of Rome towards the communist European countries was the emerging diplomatic and political rapprochement between the USA and the USSR, as attested by the Non-Proliferation Treaty signed on 1 July 1968. The Nixon Administration pushed further the rapprochement with Moscow, as evidenced by the agreements signed in Moscow in May 1972. Undoubtedly, the stimulus provided by West Germany's initiatives with the agreements with the USSR and Poland in 1970 had a crucial impact on the Italian Ostpolitik, too.

The Soviet proposal for a European conference on security, presented in March 1966, had provoked sensation and concern, with the effect of spurring a wide discussion in the Western bloc, and in par-

ticular in Italy, about the opportunity to start negotiations on principles for coexistence among European States.

Italy was the Western European State that showed the most interest in the Soviet proposal.

Many held a strong conviction that the resumption of cultural and economic relations with the Soviet Union and European communist states was a valuable and essential element, serving as a preliminary phase for political rapprochement between the two blocs. Furthermore, they believed that the establishment of a set of conduct rules for states, as sanctioned afterwards in the Helsinki Final Act, could inaugurate a period of peaceful coexistence among European nations, potentially fostering reform processes within Communist Europe.

The pinnacle of Italian Ostpolitik was participation in the Conference on Security in Europe, which formally began with preliminary meetings in Helsinki (November 1972-July 1973), continued in Geneva (September 1973-July 1975), and concluded in Helsinki with the signing of the Final Act on 1 August 1975. Italian diplomacy skilfully used the negotiation process to exploit the Soviet desire to legitimize postwar territorial changes and the Brezhnev doctrine, opening and intensifying inter-European relations and supporting those opposed to the division of Europe into two blocs.

The Italian delegation in Geneva and Helsinki strongly advocated for the protection of individual human rights, with particular attention to religious freedom. Italian diplomats proposed to the Conference the principle of the mutability of borders by free consent, later included in the first of the ten principles of the Declaration on Relations among the signatory states (Part one of the Final Act).

The combination of solemn recognition of war-time borders with an equally solemn declaration of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with specific provisions in humanitarian (people-to-people contacts) and other areas (information, education, culture), was tenaciously proposed and defended by Italy.

Italy also strongly promoted the involvement of some Mediterranean countries in the second phase of the CSCE and the recognition, in a special declaration, of the connection between European security and Mediterranean security.

The Italian positions created moments of tension with the USSR, which opposed the emphasis on the dynamic character of the CSCE

and on civil and human rights as essential conditions for a détente that would genuinely transform East–West relations.

The results obtained in the “third basket” reflected Italy’s convictions: human rights stem from the dignity of the person, are not privileges granted by the state, and their respect and practical application are essential for peace. From the Italian point of view, détente was a process that could not end with a single conference or the signing of one document. It had to be based on popular consensus and was understood as a stage on the way to future developments, not as a final point.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) marked a turning point in relations between East and West. After the signing, however, there was a risk that the CSCE would remain merely a declaration of principles, without concrete instruments for its implementation.

The Italian government expressed satisfaction with the results of the Final Act. After the summit, Italian diplomacy underlined that the outcome of Helsinki was consistent with Italy’s ideas and interests. Western countries had managed to neutralize the most serious risks posed by the Soviet approach and its long-term aims. According to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it had been possible to complement the Declaration of Principles in the Final Act with a series of more specific and concrete commitments, grouped in different areas. Moreover, the Declaration of Principles did not, as some critics claimed, amount to a formal recognition or freezing of the existing territorial situation in Europe.

On the contrary, several elements of the Declaration and other parts of the Final Act offered Eastern European states a basis for greater autonomy. They could legitimately challenge the so-called Brezhnev Doctrine and limit Moscow’s ability to apply it in the future, especially in the way it had already done in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. For these reasons, Italy considered one of the main successes of Helsinki to be the strong and advanced definition of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Even so, the overall results of the CSCE were seen as only a starting point in a longer process. The real test would come in the implementation phase, which depended on the political will of all participating states, above all, the USSR and the other members of the Warsaw Pact.

Italy actively supported the idea that the CSCE process should not end with the Helsinki meeting but continue in a permanent form, so as to have a real political and diplomatic impact. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Italian political leadership regarded the CSCE as one of the main pillars of its foreign policy, alongside the Atlantic alliance and the European Economic Community. This CSCE pillar was important for promoting détente in a divided Europe and for bringing East and West closer together, in line with the approach that sought political change through closer contacts and dialogue.

From this perspective, Italy's position on the Helsinki follow-up meetings was marked by a consistent commitment to preserving the multilateral framework, even in a context marked by serious tensions and difficulties.

From the Italian point of view, there were several reasons not to let the Helsinki process derail. Italy wanted to safeguard its own *Ostpolitik* and its good relations with the USSR and the Warsaw Pact countries. It also aimed to prevent renewed tensions between the blocs from leading to war or dangerous confrontation, by maintaining a common diplomatic framework. Among Western countries, Italy was fully aware that the USSR could not realistically carry out a radical implementation of the "third basket" and many other commitments of the Final Act. Without questioning the need to preserve the Final Act as a whole, Italy therefore sought a gradual, patient, constructive and non-hostile approach.

Throughout the 1980s, Italy, together with its EEC partners, invested considerable effort in keeping this vital channel of communication open. As a strong supporter of pan-European dialogue, which also served its own economic and commercial interests in Eastern Europe, Italy's main objective was to ensure that dialogue continued.

Continuity and Renewal: The Italian Diplomatic Service between Fascism and the Republic

One of the most fascinating aspects of Italian diplomacy in the postwar period was the continuity of personnel. Many diplomats active after 1945 had entered the service under the Fascist regime or even during liberal Italy.

This continuity was not a sign of resistance to change; on the contrary, it was a source of strength. Many officials, such as Pietro Quaroni, had experienced the ideological pressures of Fascism with discomfort and welcomed the democratic turn with enthusiasm. Their expertise, language skills, and international experience were indispensable resources for the new anti-Fascist leadership.

With experience in Libya, the Free Territory of Trieste, France, and Bulgaria, Roberto Gaja (Director of Political Affairs from 1964 to 1970 and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1970 to 1975) represents the perfect fusion of “old-school” diplomacy and post-Fascist innovation: an official who maintained intellectual openness, moral rigor, and the ability to reform ministerial procedures.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus became one of the main engines of stabilization and modernization of Republican Italy. Largely thanks to diplomacy, Italy was able to re-enter the international community, play a leading role in European integration, and build a credible international profile.

As contemporary testimonies show, the Ministry was also one of the places where a distinctly Atlanticist and pro-European vision of Italian foreign policy was most deeply developed – a vision that, despite historical limitations, helped ensure stability, development, and peace during a period of great fragility.

In its new international positioning, distinctly Atlanticist in nature, Italy also committed itself to playing a significant role in a sector of traditional interest to Italian foreign policy (the Mediterranean, Africa, and the Middle East) abandoning the imperialist ambitions of the Fascist regime and fully embracing the demand for political and economic self-determination that large parts of that world were asserting vis-à-vis the West, and Europe in particular, during the long and complex phase of decolonization.

Italy sought to act as a “bridge”, to mediate with this part of the world for the benefit of the broader objectives of the Atlantic Alliance, namely the containment of the global influence of communism.

The “neo-Atlanticist phase” of Italian foreign policy in the Fifties and the Sixties represented the highest expression of this effort, even though it often conflicted with the immediate political and economic interests of Western allies, generating misunderstandings and tensions. More generally, however, “neo-Atlanticism” reflected a voca-

tion that would remain ever-present in postwar Italy: the aspiration to play an important, and even autonomous, role in an area crucial to the country's political, military, and economic security, by promoting dialogue and equal cooperation with the peoples of the southern Mediterranean and engaging with realism and understanding even with leaders and regimes that were more critical of, and alien to, Western systems and values.

Roberto Ducci: From Power Politics to European Integration



Fig. 27 - Roberto Ducci

One of the most representative figures of Italian diplomacy in the postwar period is undoubtedly Roberto Ducci (La Spezia, 8 February 1914 - Rome, 9 March 1985). Son of Admiral Gino Ducci, Tuscan, cultured, brilliant, and endowed with a strong intellectual and journalistic vocation, Ducci embodied a model of diplomat who was at once a state official, intellectual, political adviser, author, and thoughtful interpreter of the international transformations of Republican Italy.

Roberto Ducci, a precociously talented and brilliant intellectual, decided to sit the competitive exam for entry into the diplomatic service in 1937, placing first among the successful candidates. Having taken up his post on 1 July 1937, he quickly made a name for himself within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Luca Pietromarchi, one of the leading figures in Italian diplomacy at the time, and, along with Filippo Anfuso, a key administrator of the ministerial apparatus under Galeazzo Ciano, called him to work in the Ministry's Spain Office within the Minister's Cabinet. The office had been created to manage and coordinate Italy's diplomatic involvement in the ongoing Spanish Civil War.

In May 1941, Pietromarchi, then head of the Armistice and Peace Office within the Foreign Minister's Cabinet, again requested Ducci's collaboration at the Ministry, assigning him responsibility for the Croatian question. After the armistice of September 1943, Ducci made his way south, driven by the monarchical tradition in which he had been raised. Crossing the front lines on foot in Abruzzo, he reached the

King and the Badoglio government, presenting himself at the reconstituted Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brindisi on 13 October 1943.

Ducci was active from 1943 in the reconstruction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, alongside Renato Prunas. He founded and directed “*Politica Estera*”, a significant voice in the Italian debate on the country’s new international positioning. His cultural commitment went hand in hand with concrete diplomatic action: he participated in the Peace Treaty negotiations, and during a mission in Poland he developed a critical view of Soviet-style communism, formed through direct observation of repression and the suppression of national identities in Eastern Europe in the postwar period.

After a brief period in Brazil from October 1949 to April 1950, where he followed Pietromarchi as a member of an Italian trade delegation, Ducci was sent to London as part of Italy’s delegation to the North Atlantic Alliance. He was then transferred to Paris to serve with the Italian delegation to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), chaired by Attilio Cattani, from 1951 to 1955. When the liberal politician Gaetano Martino became Foreign Minister in 1954, Cattani was appointed Director General for Economic Affairs at Palazzo Chigi. A great admirer of Ducci, Cattani decided to bring him to Rome, appointing him Deputy Director General for Economic Affairs in 1955.

Thanks to his strong expertise in European matters, Ducci became a member of the Italian delegation to the Brussels Conference for the negotiation of the founding treaties of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). The delegation was chaired by former Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Ludovico Benvenuti, with Attilio Cattani as his deputy. Ducci also served as chairman of the drafting committee for the treaties that would be signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. He thus participated directly and intensively in the long negotiations leading to the creation of the EEC and Euratom. From this important experience onward, Ducci became one of the most knowledgeable Italian diplomats on issues related to European integration, particularly in economic and atomic energy matters.

For diplomats like Ducci, European integration offered Italy not only economic and commercial advantages but, above all, new political prospects. It was the means by which Italy could overcome the political subordination resulting from its defeat in the Second World War and

from the rise of continental great powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union, and thereby regain an active role in world politics. Ducci was a firm supporter of Italy's place within the Western bloc, but he believed that in the long term the predominant role of the United States should be balanced by strengthening Europe as a unified and autonomous entity, an equal partner to Washington. He strongly supported the building of an increasingly cohesive European union with not only an economic identity, but also a political and military one.

In the 1960s, he played a key role in normalizing relations with Yugoslavia and Austria. In Belgrade, he promoted a pragmatic rapprochement with Tito; in Vienna, he supported a consensual solution to the South Tyrol issue. From 1970 to 1975, he served as Director General of Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Rumor, Colombo, Andreotti, and Moro governments – a period in which he helped define the strategy of détente with the East, Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and North-South dialogue. He concluded his career as ambassador to the United Kingdom (1975-1980).

Ducci was a diplomat with a strong intellectual drive and a prolific author, influenced by Pietro Quaroni, whom he considered a model of independent thought and moral rigor. His work helped consolidate an autonomous, multilateral, pro-European Italian diplomatic identity committed to building peace.

The figure of Ducci symbolically closes the cycle of a generation that transformed Italy from a defeated power into a credible actor on the international stage.

Roberto Gaja and the Italian Nuclear Strategy



Fig. 28 - Roberto Gaja

Roberto Gaja (Turin, 27 May 1912 - Rome, 31 May 1992) was one of the leading figures in the foreign policy of Italy's First Republic. The Gaja family originated from the Monferato area but had been established in Turin for several generations. His father, Guido, a court reporter for *La Stampa* and collaborator of the FIAT plant's administrative director, and his mother, Carlotta Pia Galliani, a

housewife, belonged to a Turin bourgeoisie of medium-high economic standing.

At the beginning of the 1930s, despite having graduated in Law in Turin and showing intellectual talents and interests, Roberto Gaja decided to pursue a military career and entered the Nizza Cavalleria regiment as a reserve second lieutenant. That experience, which lasted from 1931 to 1935, was very important in shaping Gaja's personal values, founded on an exaltation of duty, loyalty, and honour. After a period in Libya as a cavalry officer, however, he decided to take the diplomatic service exam in 1937, in which he was among the successful candidates.

Gaja initially worked at the Ministry in Rome, and in 1938 he was sent to the vice-consulate in Lucerne, and in November 1941 to the vice-consulate in Hannover, where he remained until March 1943, before being transferred to Corsica. Following the armistice of September 1943, he declared his loyalty to the King's government and took part in the armed clashes between Italian and German forces in Corsica.

In March 1944 he arrived in Salerno, the temporary seat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gaja remained in service at the Ministry, first in Salerno and then in Rome, until early 1946. He then carried out missions in Vienna and Trieste, before being sent to Libya as consul and head of the Italian mission in Tripoli in 1949. Gaja stayed in the African territory until April 1952 and had to undertake a very difficult and important mission: defending and safeguarding Italy's interests and those of the Italian community in Libya at a highly delicate historical and political moment, the process leading to Libya's gradual independence, decided by the UN General Assembly on 21 November 1949 and achieved in December 1951. He was then assigned in November 1952 as First Secretary to the Italian Embassy in Paris, headed by Pietro Quaroni.

After a period of work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, the Piedmontese diplomat was sent to a marginal post (Sofia, Bulgaria) at the end of 1958. The Bulgarian period, which lasted until 1963, proved decisive in Gaja's intellectual development. Bulgaria offered an interesting vantage point for observing the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe and Soviet foreign policy. As one of his collaborators from those years, Luigi Vittorio Ferraris, recalled, during his time in Bulgaria Gaja undertook an intense effort to study and

analyze the Balkan countries and Soviet domestic and foreign policy, as well as the topic that had become his great passion: nuclear weapons in international politics. Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, Gaja published (always under the pseudonym Roberto Guidi) many writings on the atomic question. Roberto Gaja emerged as a leading Italian theorist of atomic policy. With the publication of key works such as *The Political Consequences of the Atomic Bomb* (1959) and *Foreign Policy and nuclear weapons* (1964), Gaja outlined the concept of proportional deterrence and proposed Italian participation in either a multilateral or national nuclear armament.

Having become known as an expert on nuclear issues, Foreign Minister Giuseppe Saragat chose Gaja as Director General for Political Affairs in September 1964. Thus began a period, from 1964 to 1975, during which, first as Director General for Political Affairs and then, from 1970, as Secretary General, Gaja played a central role in Italian foreign policy. It was an unusually long tenure by the standards of Italian diplomacy and politics, during which the Piedmontese diplomat worked under Foreign Ministers who differed greatly in personality, ideas, and political affiliation: from the Social Democrat Giuseppe Saragat to Christian Democrats Amintore Fanfani, Giuseppe Medici, Aldo Moro, and Mariano Rumor, and the Socialist Pietro Nenni. Gaja's personality and ideas significantly influenced Rome's government policy, particularly on several issues: the Italian-Austrian dispute over South Tyrol, the long negotiations leading to Italy's signing and later ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), relations with Libya, Italian policy in the Middle East, and the resolution of the Eastern border issue with communist Yugoslavia.

In 1975, as recognition for the services he had rendered to the state during his long years as Director of Political Affairs and Secretary General, the government appointed Gaja Italian Ambassador to Washington, where he remained beyond his formal retirement date of 1 June 1977, until March 1978. In 1978 he became the director of "Affari Esteri", a review for which he had been one of the leading contributors since its founding. He remained its director until 1992, the year of his death, and during his tenure the journal became Italy's most important and interesting publication on international politics.

Conclusion

Between 1943 and 1975, Italy managed to rise from the ruins of war and authoritarianism to reclaim a role on the world stage. This was achieved thanks to a diplomacy that, while maintaining continuity with the past, was able to renew itself in principles, methods, and objectives.

Key figures such as Renato Prunas, Pietro Quaroni, Roberto Ducci, Egidio Ortona, Roberto Gaja, Carlo Sforza and others contributed to building an international identity based on pragmatism, openness, and a European spirit.

CHAPTER 6

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM POSTWAR TO REFORM (1943-1967)

Collapse and Reconstruction (1943-1947)

The armistice of September 1943 resulted in the near annihilation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: most of its structures remained in Rome under German occupation, while a small number of officials sought refuge first in Brindisi and then in Salerno, establishing from scratch a minimal administration in the Italian territories under Anglo-American control. Only after the liberation of Rome could the Ministry resume operations at the Palazzo Chigi headquarters, but under extremely precarious organizational conditions.

To provide an initial provisional framework, the Italian Government issued, on 15 July 1944, a Ministerial Decree establishing a new structure divided into 27 offices. At the top was the General Secretariat, which oversaw:

1. a Coordination Office;
2. the Litigation Office;
3. the Liaison Office with Allied Authorities;
4. the Protocol Office;
5. the Foreign Press Office;
6. three General Directorates;
7. the General Affairs Service, the Historical Archive, and the Library.

In the following twelve months, three Ministerial Decrees (7 March, 6 April, and 19 July 1945) refined the structure by creating the Directorate General for Italians Abroad and the Internal Press Office. On 20 December 1946, the Directorate General of Emigration and the Directorate General of Cultural Relations were established, bringing the total number of central offices to 35.

With Service Order 15 of 5 July 1947, the formal division into five General Directorates was established – Political Affairs, Economic Affairs, Italians Abroad, Emigration, and Cultural Relations – in ad-

dition to the General Secretariat, the Cabinet, and ancillary services. This overarching structure remained the organizational paradigm for all subsequent reorganizations until 1967.

The founding of the Ministry's trade union (SNDMAE) in 1944

On 10 July 1944, only weeks after the liberation of Rome from German occupation, the *Associazione Sindacale Dipendenti del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (Trade Union Association of Employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) was established later renamed *Sindacato Nazionale Dipendenti Ministero Affari Esteri - SNDMAE*. Its foundation followed by one month that of the CGIL, the “unitary” confederation encompassing Catholic and Socialist components that would later give rise to CISL and UIL. The creation of a trade union within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was at once a sign of the return to normalcy in the life of Italian diplomacy and a testimony to the close connection between the staff of the Farnesina and the broader social and political currents of post-Fascist Italy.

Like all branches of the state administration, the Ministry had silently endured the removal of diplomats and employees on the basis of the racial laws, in fundamental contradiction with the principles that had guided Italian unification. It should also be recalled that several Italian diplomats courageously distinguished themselves during the war – in France, Greece, and Yugoslavia – by saving Italian and foreign Jews from Nazi deportation, with the substantial acquiescence of the Ministry's leadership.

The SNDMAE emerged with an inclusive vocation, embracing both diplomatic and non-diplomatic personnel, including employees of all grades and temporary staff. Its avowedly apolitical orientation aimed at promoting the involvement of employees in the decision-making processes concerning administrative reorganization. This stood in continuity with the reconstruction efforts undertaken by the new leadership of the Ministry, both internally and in the full restoration of the credibility of Italian diplomacy through the complex negotiations with the victorious Powers.

Emilio Stabilini, the founder and first president, clearly set out the objectives of the new association at the founding meeting. A trade union capable of carrying out a continuous defence of the rights and interests of its members would, in his view, have a beneficial effect on the morale

of employees who were alarmed by rumours of purges and bureaucratic reorganizations. The union would represent the staff before the constituted authority not for political purposes, but so that their voice could be heard whenever matters directly affecting them were under discussion. Welfare questions, such as the *Cassa Mutua* and the *Circolo*, were also included within the sphere of action of the association.

The fear of political purge and the need to defend Ministry personnel against the influx of officials from other administrations were clear motives for the creation of the SNDMAE. With regard to purges, the union fought for the removal of advantages obtained on the basis of Fascist merits and for the exclusion from service of those who had adhered to the Salò Republic. In the field of promotions, it sought to ensure rigorous criteria after the widespread arbitrariness of the Fascist period, particularly under Ciano's tenure. The union also endeavoured to uphold the rights of diplomats who had been marginalized by the regime, such as Antonio Cottafavi, who had been decorated for his activity in the Resistance yet remained excluded from promotion in favour of the so-called *ventottisti* – approximately seventy officials of Fascist allegiance who had entered the service without examination.

Equally essential was the demand for the democratization of recruitment, specifically through the prevention of external appointments above entry level and the confirmation of the definitive abolition of the property qualification previously required for admission to the diplomatic career. This requirement had already been removed by the Fascist regime in 1927, but the SNDMAE sought to ensure its permanent abolition within the new democratic framework. The association also unanimously declared itself in favour of admitting women to the diplomatic career, while acknowledging that a concrete decision would probably only follow once other state administrations, in particular the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, had admitted women to careers in the A grade. Many years would still pass before the first woman succeeded in the diplomatic entrance examination.

Transformation in the Early 1950s: Service Order 9/1950

Amid the Cold War and with Italy now playing a role in newly established international organizations, the need emerged to stream-

line the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Service Order 9 of 7 April 1950 carried out a reorganization without a comprehensive preliminary plan, but through a series of linked measures. The key points were:

1. Abolition of the Directorate General of Emigration, with the redistribution of its functions between the reestablished Directorate General for Italians Abroad and the Private Affairs Service.
2. Incorporation of the Economic Service for the Peace Treaty between Italy and the Allied Nations (SET) into the Directorate General of Economic Affairs, which returned to being divided into four offices.
3. Reassignment of the competencies of the abolished Directorate General of Cultural Relations to the Directorate General of Political Affairs, renamed "Political Affairs and Cultural Relations."
4. Dismantling of the General Affairs Service, with the fragmentation of its duties among various offices and General Directorates.

The result was a central administration reduced to five General Directorates (Political Affairs and Cultural Relations; Economic Affairs; Italians Abroad; Personnel and General Affairs; Private Affairs) and six offices under the Secretary General (Protocol, Ceremonial, Treaties and Acts, UN, Studies and Documentation, International Organization). Although more streamlined, the model proved provisional and underwent continuous minor adjustments over the following five years.

Towards a Comprehensive Reform: 1954-1963

The lack of an overall vision and the changing geopolitical needs prompted the initiation of reform studies. In December 1954, Presidential Decree 1251 established a first organic framework, which soon proved incomplete. Meanwhile, between 1951 and 1964, a series of legislative and regulatory measures were adopted concerning:

1. The economic treatment of personnel abroad (Law 13/1951);
2. The merger of diplomatic and consular careers (Law 106/1952);
3. The transfer of personnel from the abolished Ministry of Italian Africa (established in 1912 by transforming the Central Directorate of Colonial Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into the Ministry of Colonies, renamed Ministry of Italian Africa in 1937)

to other state administrations, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which incorporated around one hundred officials (Presidential Decree 1496/1954);

4. Regulations for access to and advancement within special careers (Presidential Decree 1124/1957, 1341/1957);
5. Adjustment of roles (Law 524/1962) and increase of contracted personnel (Laws 1097/1962, 346/1964).

Despite these partial measures, the structure remained fragmented. Special careers (Emigration, Commercial, Press, Far East, Administrative Direction) coexisted in a disorganized manner with the diplomatic-consular career, causing overlaps of functions and resource waste. Political and technical consensus grew on the need for an “organic law” that would unify the entire Ministry’s organization under a single legal framework.

Debate and Delegation of 1963

On 14 October 1963, the Council of Ministers approved the Bill for the Organization of Foreign Affairs, granting the Government the power to issue, within one year, one or more legislative decrees aimed at:

1. Reorganizing the Ministry, simplifying procedures and controls;
2. Restructuring careers and defining promotion criteria;
3. Regulating postings, transfers, difficult residences, and retirements;
4. Regulating the hiring of contracted personnel and strengthening the diplomatic-consular network;
5. Updating consular regulations according to international law and the Constitution.

During the parliamentary debate that year, strong criticism emerged regarding the “fragmentation and disorder” of existing regulations. The cases of the UK and Germany were cited to show how major powers had already unified and modernized their Ministries. The exponential increase in multilateral relations, the emergence of new states, and the centrality of economic and social issues in international relations were emphasized. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with 94 embassies, 7 permanent representations, and 135 consulates, needed an organic framework to ensure efficiency and coordination.

The Reform of 5 January 1967: DPR 18/1967

On 5 January 1967, two Presidential Decrees entered into force:

1. DPR 18/1967 (“Regulations on the Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”), comprising 279 articles and 35 tables;
2. DPR 200/1967 (“Provisions on Consular Functions and Powers”).

The reform, implemented by Foreign Minister Amintore Fanfani and in the drafting of which the Director General for Political Affairs Roberto Gaja played a decisive role, represented an organic framework divided into four parts. It still forms the backbone of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ administration, which, starting in 1959, transferred its offices from Palazzo Chigi to the large Farnesina Palace. Its main innovative elements were:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Main innovations of the 1967 reform</i>
Careers	Unification of the five specialized career tracks into a single diplomatic-consular role with possibilities for specialization; reaffirmation of diplomatic “specialty.”
Central organization	Reorganization of the 5 Directorates General (DG of Political Affairs; DG of Economic Affairs; DG of Emigration and Social Affairs; DG of Personnel and Administration; DG of Cultural Relations); definition of subject-matter responsibilities; strengthening of the “Research, Studies, and Planning” offices within each DG; coordination role of the Secretary General.
Collegial bodies and coordination	Establishment of the Diplomatic Dispute Council and Joint Coordination Committees; annual meeting of the Minister with Heads of Mission; authority to create committees for geographic areas, international organizations, or specific topics.
Training and advisory	Creation of the Diplomatic Institute for personnel selection, updating, and retraining; establishment of the Advisory Committee for Italians Abroad (later CGIES) to provide recommendations on policies toward Italian communities worldwide.
Staff conditions	Clarity in correspondence between ranks and functions at headquarters and abroad; revision of economic treatment considering hardships, risks, and representation parameters.

At the central headquarters, a staff of 1,092 positions was assigned to the diplomatic career. The General Directorates were equipped with specialized offices for planning, statistics, and foreign policy studies.

The roles were streamlined, allowing for faster career progression and internal mobility.

The unification of the careers reduced the proliferation of parallel roles (Emigration, Commercial, Press, Eastern Affairs, Administrative), which had caused inconsistencies and duplication in the post-war period. The reform introduced standardized training programs at the Diplomatic Institute and objective selection criteria for managerial positions.

The strengthening of collegial bodies and the scheduling of regular meetings addressed the need for coordination between the Ministry, overseas missions, and other administrations involved in international policy. For the first time, the Farnesina adopted a systemic approach to internal governance, overcoming the previous practice of “piece-meal” reforms that had characterized the preceding twenty years.

Recurring Key Concepts

A review of the legislative texts reveals several constant references upon which the entire organizational evolution rests:

1. **Temporariness vs. Structural Coherence:** emergency reforms (1944, 1950) were repeatedly defined as “temporary” pending a comprehensive reorganization.
2. **Secretary General:** an increasingly central coordinating figure, restored in 1943 and in charge of key offices (Protocol, Ceremonial, Studies).
3. **General Directorates by Subject:** from the informal establishment of DGs during the war to codification into five DGs (1947), culminating in the 1967 reorganization based on functional criteria.
4. **Career Unification:** a response to the fragmentation created between the two World Wars and exacerbated by Fascism; completed in 1967 with a single diplomatic-consular role.
5. **Coordination and Oversight:** growing reliance on collegial bodies (Dispute Council, Joint Committees) to ensure consistency in political and administrative decisions.

Among these recurring themes, career unification represents the single most important institutional achievement of the period, bring-

ing to a close a long-standing anomaly that had compromised the efficiency and cohesion of the diplomatic-consular corps since the interwar years.

Conclusions

The organizational evolution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1943 and 1967 shows a progressive shift from emergency, fragmented, and overlapping schemes to a coherent and functional model capable of responding to the challenges of the Cold War, European integration, the emergence of many new independent African and Asian states, and the development of multilateral diplomacy.

The 1967 Reform (Presidential Decree 18/1967) represented the crystallization of decades of adjustments: it streamlined careers, rationalized central structures, introduced systematic coordination mechanisms, and laid the foundations for the modern administration of the Farnesina.

This trajectory highlights how legal and regulatory adaptation was essential to ensure efficiency, specialization, and international projection capacity for postwar Italy, establishing a model that, with various updates, continues to this day.

CHAPTER 7

FROM CRISIS TO REVIVAL (1975-2000)

Introduction: A Country under Scrutiny

The mid-1970s represented a crossroads of profound crises and complex opportunities for Italy. Domestically, the country was shaken by severe economic instability, runaway inflation, and the threat of political terrorism. Politically, the strategy of the “historic compromise” between the center-left parties and the Italian Communist Party (PCI), proposed by Enrico Berlinguer and supported by the Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro, aimed at a governing collaboration between the PCI, progressive secular parties, and the Christian Democrats (DC). This caused alarm in Western capitals. In a Europe still divided by the Iron Curtain, the notion that the largest Western communist party could enter the government of a founding member of both the Atlantic Alliance and the European Economic Community raised major concerns for the United States and European partners.

In this context, Italian diplomacy and the political class, led by figures such as Foreign Ministers Emilio Colombo, Arnaldo Forlani, and Giulio Andreotti, had to navigate a delicate balancing act. The goal was twofold: to reassure allies of Italy’s Atlantic commitment and to manage internal turbulence without suffering a loss of international standing. Alongside the institutional channels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, new actors began to emerge, including research institutes and think tanks (such as the Italian Institute for International Political Studies, ISPI, the Institute for International Affairs, IAI, and the Institute for Relations between Italy and Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, IPALMO), which involved diplomats, academics, and politicians in a debate aimed at strengthening Italy’s international projection.

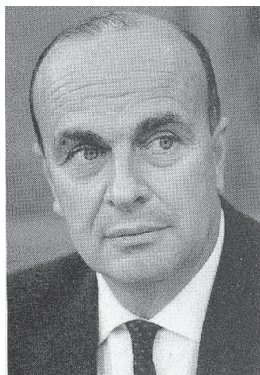
Italy at the Table of the Great Powers (1975-1979)

Fig. 29 - Raimondo
Manzini

Western distrust of Italy became evident in 1975, when there were attempts to exclude the Rome government from the first Rambouillet summit, which would give rise to the G6 (later G7). Concern over Italy's political and economic stability, as well as the so-called "Eurocommunism", the PCI's attempt to present itself as independent of Moscow, led France, Germany, the USA, the UK, and Japan to withhold an invitation. Intense diplomatic efforts, led by Prime Minister Aldo Moro, Ambassador to Washington Roberto Gaja, and Secretary General Raimondo Manzini, were neces-

sary to secure Italy's participation in the "concert" of major industrial powers at the first summit.



Fig. 30 - Umberto
La Rocca

Italy's entry into the G7, albeit as a closely watched participant, was a crucial political victory. It confirmed the country's ability to participate in forums determining global economic balances and provided leverage to address domestic crises. The "national solidarity" governments led by Giulio Andreotti (1976-1979), relying on PCI abstention, allowed for the implementation of strict austerity measures with broad parliamentary support, without formally including communists in the executive. This solution, skilfully managed by Andreotti and his diplomatic adviser Umberto La Rocca, reassured international partners and un-

locked vital IMF loans.

The end of this political experiment was brought about by changes in the international system and by tragic domestic events, most notably the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro in 1978. Political collaboration between center-left parties and the PCI had been feasible in a context of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, from 1975 onwards, relations between Western powers and the Soviets began to deteriorate. The resurgence of great

power rivalry in Africa and Asia, the Soviet decision to deploy new medium-range SS-20 missiles aimed at Western Europe, the Western response, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and the Polish military crackdown on the Solidarity movement led to the collapse of détente and the re-emergence of intense East-West conflict.

Moro's assassination by the Red Brigades destabilized Italy's political landscape. The revival of the Cold War and the loss of the main proponent of collaboration with the PCI gradually ended the "historic compromise" and pushed Italy toward a decisive realignment with the West, marked by two strategic decisions: joining the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1978 (operative from March 1979) and accepting the deployment of Euro-missiles in 1979. Both choices were made despite strong opposition from the PCI and segments of public opinion, but were seen by the center-left leadership, particularly Francesco Cossiga and the new Socialist leader Bettino Craxi, as an essential "external constraint" to tie Italy to the European core and reaffirm its Atlantic credibility.

Cossiga, Prime Minister from August 1979 to October 1980, sought to build a new political equilibrium in Italy, moving away from national solidarity and PCI collaboration, of which he had been a staunch supporter as a protégé of Aldo Moro, toward a new center-left coalition based on a restored political centrality of the Christian Democrats and prepared to adopt antagonistic stances toward Berlinguer's party. Key foreign policy decisions, from EMS membership to the willingness to host U.S. Cruise and Pershing-2 missiles on Italian soil (formally approved by the Atlantic Council on 12 December 1979), epitomized this political transformation led by Cossiga and Craxi. This provoked strong opposition not only from the PCI but also from DC figures such as Andreotti and from within the PSI.

The Afghan crisis, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan at the end of 1979, appeared to validate this choice, reaffirming Italy's alignment with the Western bloc after the isolation of 1974-1978 due to PCI collaboration. It further legitimized the deployment of Euro-missiles as a deterrent to defend European stability against Soviet expansionism. Italian public opinion and political parties unanimously condemned the Soviet intervention, which violated the principle of independence and self-determination cherished by Italians. The Italian government issued a firm condemnation, cooperating with the Carter administration and European partners in political and diplomatic opposition to

Moscow's actions, which disrupted Afghanistan's traditional role as a buffer state between great powers and altered Central Asian political dynamics. Nevertheless, Italian concerns about the Soviet initiative's impact on détente remained strong.

The 1980s: Mediterranean Leadership and Pentapartito Stability

During the early 1980s, relations between the Western bloc and the Soviet Union further deteriorated. Europe became increasingly tense following the military coup in Poland under Soviet guidance in December 1981. The presence of a Pole, Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, as head of the Holy See intensified the domestic political repercussions in Italy. The Italian government, led by Republican Giovanni Spadolini, strongly condemned Soviet interference in Poland and joined the EEC decision to impose economic sanctions.

With the Cold War reignited, Italy regained importance for European and Mediterranean stability as a frontier country between the two blocs. The end of the "historic compromise" and Italy's renewed anti-Soviet commitment within the Atlantic Alliance, manifested by hosting Euro-missiles (Pershing-2 and Cruise) aimed at the USSR, increased the international influence of Italian foreign policy. From the late 1970s, the Italian government sought to maintain a favourable political and economic status quo in the Balkans. The concern was that after Tito's death in 1980, pro-Soviet currents within Yugoslav communism might prevail, and the USSR might control the eastern Adriatic coast with military and naval bases. The non-alignment of Yugoslavia and Albania became advantageous for the Atlantic Alliance, serving as buffer states. Bilaterally, Italy worked to strengthen economic and cultural relations with Belgrade and cross-border cooperation with Italian-Yugoslav border regions, centered on the Alpe-Adria Community. Italy positioned itself as a privileged partner to Yugoslavia, facilitating its integration into the European Economic Community and a smooth transition from communist authoritarianism to liberal democracy. From the early 1980s, Rome also sought to reestablish political and economic relations with Albania, whose increasingly isolated communist regime sought new international interlocutors following the breakdown with China and deteriorating relations with Belgrade amid the Kosovo crisis.

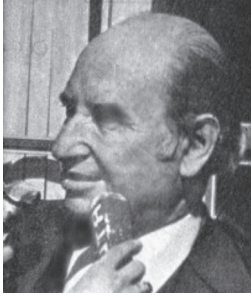


Fig. 31 - Francesco Malfatti di Montetretto

Domestically, the early 1980s saw renewed optimism. The economy showed strong recovery, “Made in Italy” became a global brand, and discussions arose about Italy surpassing the UK in GDP. This “rebirth” was accompanied by political stability, embodied by the “Pentapartito” (five parties) governments (DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI, PLI) and, in particular, by governments led by Republican Giovanni Spadolini (1981-1982) and Socialist Bettino Craxi (1983-1987).

The Foreign Ministry in the 1980s was led by two highly competent Christian Democrat figures. Emilio Colombo served as Foreign Minister from 1980 to 1983, followed, from 1983 until July 1989, by Giulio Andreotti, who took office in Craxi’s government and retained the portfolio through the Fanfani, Gorla and De Mita administrations. Both were highly regarded by diplomats for their seriousness and mastery of policy.

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early 1980s was Francesco Malfatti di Montetretto, an atypical figure in Italian diplomacy: a Trentino noble, anti-Fascist socialist, former diplomatic adviser to President Saragat, ambassador to Paris, and appointed Secretary General in 1977, succeeding Manzini.

At the end of 1984, Andreotti appointed Renato Ruggiero as Secretary General (effective from 1 February 1985), who then became Minister of Foreign Trade in 1987 (Gorla government). Bruno Bottai succeeded him as Secretary General, serving until 1994.

Italian foreign policy of this period was characterized by unprecedented activism, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Italy positioned itself as a bridge between Europe and the Arab world, supporting the Palestinian cause (Venice Declaration, 1980) and advocating for the creation of two national states – Israeli and Arab-Palestinian – as a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and for regional stability. Italian activism also included participation in risky peacekeeping missions such as that in Lebanon.

Renato Ruggiero and Italy's European Priority

Fig. 32 - Renato Ruggiero

Renato Ruggiero embodies the operational pro-European approach of Italian diplomacy between the 1970s and 2000s. Renato Ruggiero (Naples 1930 - Milan 2013) entered the diplomatic service in 1955. He served as an officer at the Italian consulate in São Paulo, Brazil (1955-1959), at the Italian Embassy in Moscow (1959-1961), at the Italian Embassy in Washington (1962-1964), and at the one in Belgrade (1966-1968). In 1969, he became a member of the Italian permanent delegation to the European Economic Community.

In 1970, his career at the European Commission began, where he served as head of cabinet to President Franco Maria Malfatti (1970-1972). He later held the position of political adviser to President Sicco Mansholt (1972). From 1973 to 1977, he served as Director General for Regional Policy of the EEC. He then became spokesman for President Roy Jenkins (1977-1978).

Upon returning to Italy, he was appointed coordinator for Community policies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1978) and subsequently, between 1978 and 1980, served as diplomatic adviser to Prime Minister Andreotti and chief of staff to Foreign Ministers Arnaldo Forlani and Franco Maria Malfatti. From 1980 to 1984, he held the post of Permanent Representative of Italy to the European Economic Community in Brussels.

Active in Brussels for many years, he gained considerable personal prestige due to his in-depth knowledge of European dossiers and his extensive network of international contacts. This was one of the reasons for his appointment as Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a decision made by the Craxi-Andreotti government at the end of 1984 and effective from 1 February 1985.

As Secretary General Ruggiero brought to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a method based on negotiation rigor, interministerial coordination, and a stable network with Brussels. His departure in 1987 to become Minister for Foreign Trade (Goria government) confirmed the economic focus of his work.

The “Ruggiero school” viewed the strengthening of European integration as the primary objective of Italian foreign policy and considered it the most effective instrument for enhancing Italy’s influence in international affairs; he regarded German reunification and the end of bipolarity as an opportunity for European cohesion, strengthening Italy’s position on the eve of Maastricht. On a global scale, as Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO, 1995-1999), he completed liberalization packages in financial services, telecommunications, and information technology, reflecting an approach that combined rules, market openness, and predictability.

Upon his return, he assumed top positions (including chairman of ENI in 1999) and, from September 1999, served as International Vice President and Chairman for Italy of Schroder Salomon Smith Barney. He finally returned to the Foreign Ministry as Minister of Foreign Affairs (11 June 2001), resigning after a few months in 2002 due to disagreements with the Lega Nord’s line. He left a legacy of method and vision: European integration, negotiation credibility, and transatlantic-European coherence as leverage for influence for a middle-power country.

The End of the Cold War and the Challenges of the 1990s

The internal crisis of the Soviet Union, leading to the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev’s reformist leadership in 1985, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, German reunification (1990), the collapse of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the USSR (1991) marked an epochal transition with mixed effects for Italy.

On one hand, as Ludovico Incisa di Camerana noted, Italy was among the winners of the Cold War, being a consistent supporter of breaking down the barriers that divided Europe. The end of the Soviet bloc allowed Italy to regain an economic and commercial role in Central and Eastern Europe and to reactivate old cultural ties with the peoples of that area. On the other hand, the end of the East-West confrontation removed the ideological glue that had held together the political system of the “First Republic,” soon to be shaken by the *Tangentopoli* scandal (1992). In this vacuum, foreign policy returned as a stabilizing factor and compass for the nation, with constant attention to preventing renewed instability in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

In July 1989, Giulio Andreotti formed a new government, the sixth under his premiership, followed by the seventh until June 1992: the last governments of the so-called First Republic and the final manifestation of the *Pentapartito*. Under Andreotti as Prime Minister, the Foreign Ministry was led by Gianni De Michelis. Cohabitation was complex but functional: the Prime Minister retained a central role, while the Foreign Minister sought visibility and influence. Continuity in the Ministry's actions was ensured by Secretary General Bruno Bottai, valued for his method and institutional solidity. Another influential diplomat within the Andreotti government was Ambassador Luigi Guidobono Cavalchini Garofoli, Secretary General of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The first test was the German question. The fall of the Berlin Wall and freedom of movement in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) paved the way for rapid reunification; Helmut Kohl's ten-point plan, announced without prior notice to allies, caused widespread concern. Italy, like France, the UK, and the Netherlands, expressed caution: reunification that was too fast could upset European balances, challenge détente, and weaken Gorbachev's reformist profile. There was also concern about the possible domino effect of the principle of self-determination on the Balkans. However, U.S. support for Bonn's plans and popular support in the GDR made the process unstoppable. At that point, Rome adopted a pragmatic approach: not to block reunification, but to anchor it to further European integration. If Italy remained outside the negotiating table regulating German reunification, it could still gain a role in the process leading to a European economic and political union.

Meanwhile, from the late 1980s, the Balkan issue became a strategic axis of Italian foreign policy. Andreotti and most of the political class and diplomatic corps considered the survival of a unitary Yugoslavia essential for Adriatic peace. Italy therefore supported the federal government and invested in regional cooperation frameworks: the 1989 treaty with Belgrade inaugurated the Adriatic Initiative, followed by the Central and Lower Adriatic Working Community (1990) and, on Hungarian initiative, the Quadrangular (later Pentagonal and Hexagonal) in Central Europe. These instruments, supported by diplomats including Sergio Vento, Italian Ambassador in Belgrade, aimed to stabilize friction areas by leveraging economic, environmental, and cross-border interdependencies.

As nationalist movements rose and conflicts escalated, the Yugoslav State disintegrated. In 1991, Italy abandoned hostility toward dissolution and aligned with Germany for the rapid recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent States; on 15 January 1992, the EEC sanctioned the new framework. For Rome, this implied a legal and strategic choice: confirming the validity of the 1975 Osimo agreements even without a federal Yugoslav state, recognizing Slovenia and Croatia as successors in obligations, a decision aimed at border stability and support for new Adriatic states.

Meanwhile, the USSR crisis deepened in 1991: production collapsed, republics broke away, and conflicts between reformists and conservatives intensified. Western concern focused on security and nuclear arsenals. Boris Yeltsin's rise divided capitals and chancelleries, and the August coup irreversibly weakened Gorbachev. Within months, the Baltic republics and others obtained recognition; Yeltsin accepted secession, and the Union dissolved. On 25 December 1991, Gorbachev resigned: fifteen post-Soviet independent republics emerged. Rome adopted a realist stance: rapid recognition of new independences and integrating Russia into a cooperative European order. Italy supported the transformation of the CSCE into a durable framework: Paris Charter (1990), Budapest decision (1994) for the OSCE, full institutionalization in Vienna (1995).

Internally, the 5-6 April 1992 elections confirmed the political system's crisis: Lega Nord's rise and DC's decline delegitimized the previous coalition model. Andreotti's government handled ordinary business until June, when Giuliano Amato took over. Andreotti and De Michelis achieved symbolic and practical success: resolving the dispute with Austria regarding the De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement (1946) and the German-speaking population in South Tyrol. Italy and Austria notified the UN and Council of Europe on 11 June 1992, marking the closure of the dispute. The new Austrian-Italian cooperation soon became a European model for minority protection. This coincided with Austria's EU accession process, reflecting Italy's consistent support for an open Europe.

The 1990s saw Italy engaged on new and dramatic fronts. The Yugoslav dissolution directly threatened eastern borders; political transition, with historic parties collapsing and new opposing coalitions emerging, increased the weight of the diplomatic corps. Leadership

alternated at the Secretary General level: Ferdinando Salleo (1994-1995), Boris Biancheri Chiappori (1995-1997), Umberto Vattani (1997-2001), Giuseppe Baldocci (2001-2003). Professionalism and continuity provided institutional stability: Bottai's networks, Ruggiero's European experience, Fulci's and Vento's multilateral expertise, Vattani's economic perspective, Salleo's transatlantic-European vision, and the methodological heritage of Gaja and Manzini contributed to consistent foreign action. Sergio Romano, former ambassador to Moscow, also stood out for his diplomatic experience and public influence as a writer and commentator.

Operationally, Italy combined diplomatic initiative with growing peacekeeping efforts: supporting Dayton Accords (1995), leading Operation Pellicano (1991-1993) in Albania, and commanding Operation Alba (1997), a UN-mandated multinational mission. Italy also participated in Bosnia and Kosovo (1999), blending military presence and diplomacy for collective security. In the Middle East, after the Gulf War, Italy supported the Oslo process (1993) while maintaining channels with Syria, Iran, and Libya, a choice consistent with Italy's Euro-Mediterranean bridging role.

Anchoring to Europe remained central. Despite the 1992 currency crisis and lira's exit from the ERM, technical and political governments (those led by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Lamberto Dini, Romano Prodi) restored stability, allowing Italy to join the first wave of euro adoption (1 January 1999). Multilaterally, Francesco Paolo Fulci (1993-1999) led Italy's UN representation, marking a reformist activism.

By decade's end, Italy turned potentially destabilizing conditions into opportunities for European and Mediterranean relaunch. This was made possible by the professional diplomatic corps and the methodological legacy of the Foreign Ministry. In a post-bipolar Europe, all this allowed Italy to remain reliable for allies and recognizable for partners, while opening the era of the euro and more demanding security cooperation.

Francesco Paolo Fulci and Italian Multilateralism at the UN (1993-1999)

Francesco Paolo Fulci (Messina 1931 - Rome 2022) was the son of Sebastiano, an engineer and member of parliament for the Italian Lib-

eral Party. After earning a degree in Law from the university of his native city, he entered the diplomatic service in 1956. He began



Fig. 33 - Francesco
Paolo Fulci

his international career as First Vice-Consul in New York on 5 September 1958. On 1 March 1961, he was assigned to Moscow as Second Secretary. He returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 July 1963, serving in the Directorate General for Political Affairs, Office IV, before joining the Minister's Cabinet on 5 March 1965. He was posted to Paris as Counsellor of Legation on 19 June 1968. Later, on 10 June 1974, he was appointed Minister-Counsellor in Tokyo. On 1 November 1976, he was seconded to the Senate of the Republic, where he served as Chief of Staff to the President of the Senate Amintore Fanfani.

Fulci began to distinguish himself within Italian diplomacy in the 1980s, first as the Italian representative in Canada and then as the permanent representative of the Rome government to NATO in Brussels from 1985 to 1991.

A career diplomat and skilled multilateral negotiator, Fulci led Italy's Permanent Mission to the UN from 1993 to 1999. Italy relaunched its UN profile by combining operational credibility (peacekeeping in the Balkans and Albania) with a reformist vision. Fulci worked on Security Council reform for greater representativeness and functionality, relying on coalitions of medium powers and careful procedural use to build consensus and contain regional block rigidity. This Italian "school" of multilateralism, based on technical preparation, consistent engagement, and networking, consolidated Italy's reputation as reliable and integrated European and Mediterranean action with coherent UN activism.

CHAPTER 8

THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FROM THE 1967 REFORM TO TODAY

The First Steps Toward Modernization

In the 1970s and 1980s, although the basic structure had been established by DPR 18/1967, there was an initial wave of measures aimed at simplifying internal procedures, standardizing career paths, and strengthening coordination between General Directorates. These interventions laid the groundwork for broader reforms in the 1990s. Among the provisions were some concerning a review of staffing (DPR 775 of 5 June 1972) and the diplomatic competition (DPR 1252 of 30 December 1971). There were also ad hoc measures, such as Law 285 of 4 August 1989, known as the “little law,” which was approved to address career progression issues by providing, for a period of three years, a series of promotions for the ranks of Second-Class Minister and Embassy Counselor. Structurally, the Department for Development Cooperation was established (Ministerial Decree 1083 of 26 March 1979), as well as the Center for Information Technology (Ministerial Decree 5301/bis of 28 December 1985), and the Public Relations Office. These reforms were stimulated by ongoing changes at the European and global level. The strengthening of the European integration process following the Maastricht agreements, with the increasing transfer of powers to the Community institutions in Brussels, increased the commitment of Italian diplomacy to European cooperation. The end of the Soviet bloc, with the progressively stronger integration of the European continent, and the intensification of globalization, with the growing importance of trade and economic issues in Italian foreign policy, encouraged the Farnesina to reorganize to face new challenges.

The season of international terrorism also left a lasting institutional legacy. In 1986, drawing on the experience of the ad hoc task force assembled during the Achille Lauro hijacking of the previous October, the Crisis Unit (Unità di Crisi) was constituted within the Ministry to assist Italian citizens and protect national interests abroad in situations of

emergency, from political upheavals to natural disasters and health crises. Initially a small and flexible structure, it would develop over the following decades into a permanently active operational centre, working around the clock under the direct authority of the Secretary General, and into one of the most highly regarded of its kind among European foreign ministries.

The “Vattani” Reform (1999)

In 1999, under the impetus of then Minister of Foreign Affairs Lamberto Dini and Secretary General Umberto Vattani, the Government approved – through DPR 267 of 11 May 1999 and the parallel Legislative Decree 300 of 30 July 1999 (“Bassanini reform”) – a comprehensive reorganization of the Ministry aimed at streamlining bureaucracy and improving the performance of Italian diplomacy, which came into force on 1 January 2000.



Fig. 34 - Umberto Vattani

The main innovation was the considerable increase in General Directorates: from six (the original five of DPR 18/1967, plus Development Cooperation) to twelve, with new competences and a substantial redesign of sectors, in addition to the Diplomatic Protocol of the Republic and the General Inspectorate of the Ministry and offices abroad.

The General Directorates were as follows:

- 1) Directorate General for European Countries;
- 2) Directorate General for the Countries of the Americas;
- 3) Directorate General for Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Countries;
- 4) Directorate General for Sub-Saharan African Countries;
- 5) Directorate General for Asian, Oceanian, Pacific, and Antarctic Countries;
- 6) Directorate General for European Integration;
- 7) Directorate General for Multilateral Political Affairs and Human Rights;
- 8) Directorate General for Multilateral Economic and Financial Cooperation;

- 9) Directorate General for Cultural Promotion and Cooperation;
- 10) Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies;
- 11) Directorate General for Personnel;
- 12) Directorate General for Administrative, Budgetary, and Asset Affairs.

In addition to the Directorates, the following structures were provided: the Press and Information Service, the Diplomatic Litigation and Treaties Service, the Historical Archives and Documentation Service, the IT and Cipher Service, and the Diplomatic Institute.

In particular, the Directorate General for European Integration was created to strengthen the coordination of EU policies within the Ministry. Another feature of the reform was greater political-economic integration: centralization of economic and political cooperation functions under a single management.

The redesign of the Directorates formed only the first of four pillars on which the reform rested. The second overhauled the management of human resources, revising the criteria for recruitment, selection, and advancement across all categories of personnel and placing new emphasis on professional qualification, with particular attention to the diplomatic career. The third reshaped working methods, requiring each unit to make its objectives explicit and account for its results, to coordinate horizontally rather than defer every decision to the top, to draw fully on information technology, and to engage external interlocutors (citizens, other administrations, regions and local bodies, businesses, and the worlds of culture, science, and the non-governmental sector) on a more regular and systematic basis. The fourth addressed communication and transparency, through two White Papers, a redesigned ministerial website, and a rewritten Charter for Italian citizens abroad. It was in this climate of renewal that the Ministry launched its Statistical Yearbook (*Annuario Statistico*).

This reform marked a shift from a purely hierarchical logic to a more flexible, results-oriented model. However, concerns arose about the centralized power of the Secretary General and the risk of overlap between central offices and diplomatic networks abroad, leading to extensive debate and subsequent adjustments to the Vattani reform.

By the end of 2003 the network, among the most extensive of any industrialized country, comprised 123 embassies, 11 permanent representations, 116 consular offices, and 3 special diplomatic delegations.

The “Massolo” Reform (2010)

By the end of the decade, a sharp contraction of financial resources forced the Farnesina to “do more with less,” widening the gap between the breadth of its tasks and the means at its disposal. Under Secretary General Giampiero Massolo, the Ministry from 2008 made accountability and benchmarking explicit goals, developing performance indicators and progressively rationalizing the diplomatic and consular network in response to a shifting geopolitical landscape.



Fig. 35 - Giampiero
Massolo

Italy thinned its presence in more traditional areas, where new technologies could compensate, in order to reinforce it at more distant outposts deemed crucial for security, and it began, on an experimental basis, to grant offices abroad financial and management autonomy, an arrangement the 2010 reform would then place on a formal footing.

With DPR 95 of 19 May 2010, in force from 16 December 2010, the second comprehensive structural reform since 2000, the “Massolo reform” was implemented under Minister of Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini and Secretary General Giampiero Massolo, following which the Ministry abandoned the geographical division of competences in favour of a thematic and cross-cutting logic.

The General Directorates were reduced to eight, grouped into four macro-areas:

1. Political Affairs and Security;
2. Globalization and Global Issues;
3. European Union;
4. Promotion of the Country System.

The General Directorates were:

1. Directorate General for Political and Security Affairs;
2. Directorate General for Globalization and Global Issues;
3. Directorate General for the European Union;
4. Directorate General for Promotion of the Country System;
5. Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies;
6. Directorate General for Development Cooperation;

7. Directorate General for Resources and Innovation;
 8. Directorate General for Administration, IT, and Communications.
- In addition, the following first-level structures were foreseen:
1. General Secretariat;
 2. The Diplomatic Protocol of the Republic;
 3. General Inspectorate of the Ministry and offices abroad;
 4. Press and Institutional Communication Service;
 5. Service for Legal Affairs, Diplomatic Litigation, and Treaties.

This framework allowed Italian diplomatic priorities (climate change, cybersecurity, cultural and commercial promotion) to be more effectively aligned with internal Ministry structures.

The reorganization of 2013-2014 carried a strong symbolic charge: with Law 125 of 11 August 2014 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the official name of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), signaling the centrality that development cooperation had acquired in Italy's diplomatic action. The same period saw economic diplomacy emerge as an autonomous function, distinct from the earlier rubric of "support to enterprises."

Functional and Operational Innovations

To generate cost savings, DPR 258 of 2007 reorganized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, restructuring the diplomatic, consular, and cultural network. This included merging diplomatic missions, reorganizing consular offices, and the possibility of integrating cultural institutes within diplomatic or consular representations.

Unfortunately, in 2014 the "Mario Toscano" Diplomatic Institute, the Ministry's training school founded in 1967, was abolished following Decree-Law 90/2014 (Madia Reform), with its functions absorbed by the National School of Administration (SNA). Today, the Farnesina operates a Training Unit that, in coordination with the SNA, maintains specialized training for future diplomats and Ministry staff.

One of the most significant recent transformations was implemented by Minister Luigi Di Maio through Decree-Law 104 of 21 September 2019, converted into Law 132/2019. This measure transferred to MAECI the functions previously exercised by the Ministry of Economic Development (MiSE) regarding the definition of foreign

trade and promotional strategies and the development of the internationalization of the Country System. The transfer was operational from 1 January 2020 and assigned to the Farnesina key competences such as managing international trade, promoting Made in Italy, overseeing the ICE Agency. The Directorate General for International Trade of MiSE was correspondingly abolished.

The Ministry soon gave this expanded mandate operational form through the Export Pact (*Patto per l'Export*), a coordinating instrument linking the Farnesina, the productive system, and the financial institutions, which in its first full year mobilized some 4.2 billion euros.

In terms of organizational flexibility: Decree-Law 173 of 11 November 2022 introduced accelerated procedures for adopting new internal regulations, enhancing MAECI's adaptability to contemporary challenges.

Gender Issues and the Evolution of Diplomatic Careers

A transversal principle characterizing the evolution of diplomatic personnel since the 1967 reform is the growing presence of women in the career. Although the Republican Constitution had already established equal access to public office, it was only with the 1967 diplomatic competition reform that the Farnesina's doors truly opened to women, overcoming previous barriers.



Fig. 36 - Elisabetta Belloni

Since then, there has been a slow but steady increase in female presence within the Ministry. This process has not been merely quantitative but increasingly qualitative. Alongside the rise in the number of female diplomats, leadership positions and responsibilities entrusted to them, both abroad and at the Central Administration, have grown exponentially.

Today, female presence at the top of Italian diplomacy is well-established and highly significant. Many female ambassadors lead key missions worldwide, and female diplomats occupy top roles within the Ministry's General Directorates. A symbolic and substantive turning point was reached with the appointment of Ambassador Elis-

abetta Belloni as Secretary General of the Farnesina (2016-2021), the first and, so far, only woman to hold the highest office in Italian diplomacy. This trajectory reflects a profound change in the Ministry's organizational culture, increasingly oriented toward valuing merit and talent regardless of gender.

The 2021 Reorganization

The 2021 reorganization, in force from 1 January 2022, created a new Directorate General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy, charged with the integrated promotion of Italy abroad, from culture to relations between civil societies, in a deliberate effort to consolidate the country's soft power, an ambition reflected in Italy's stable place among the ten leading nations of the Global Soft Power Index. The same years saw Italy establish a Permanent Representation to UNESCO and open new Italian Cultural Institutes in Almaty and Miami.

The central structure was organized into nine General Directorates, corresponding to priority thematic macro-areas:

1. Political and Security Affairs
2. Globalization and Global Issues
3. Promotion of the Country System
4. European Union and International Trade Policy
5. Development Cooperation
6. Italians Abroad and Migration Policies
7. Resources and Innovation
8. Administration, IT, and Communications
9. Public and Cultural Diplomacy.

These were complemented by first-level structures: The Diplomatic Protocol of the Republic, the General Inspectorate of the Ministry and offices abroad, and the Service for Legal Affairs, Diplomatic Litigation, and Treaties.

The organization into units and offices was defined by Ministerial Decree 1202/3361 of 7 December 2023, leading to the creation in 2024 of the Unit for Technological Innovation and Cybersecurity.

There is a total of 110 second-level structures, in addition to offices of direct collaboration pursuant to DPR 233/2001.

The responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation are governed by Legislative Decree 300 of 30 July 1999 and concern:

- Political, economic, social, and cultural relations abroad
- Representation and protection of Italian interests internationally
- Planning and direction of development cooperation (now implemented by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, L. 125/2014)
- Negotiation processes and representation in EU policies
- Relations with Italian communities abroad and citizen protection
- Migration policies
- Internationalization and commercial promotion strategies of the Country System, in collaboration with MEF, MiSE, and Regions.

Growth, the Mattei Plan, and the G7 Presidency (2023-2024)

After years of austerity, the mid-2020s brought the most significant expansion of the Ministry's establishment in recent memory: in 2023 MAECI personnel grew by roughly 15 per cent, a structural reinforcement of operational capacity, while the overseas network reached 309 offices staffed by some 7,000 people of every category. Strategically, the Mattei Plan for Africa, conceived as a structured framework for a new generation of partnerships with African countries, became a defining priority, accompanied by the opening of an Embassy in Nouakchott, new development-cooperation and trade-promotion offices in Niamey, Lagos, and Dakar, and the elevation in rank of numerous consulates. In 2024 Italy's Presidency of the G7 placed the Farnesina at the center of coordination on the most pressing questions of the day (Ukraine, the Middle East, Africa, the Indo-Pacific, and the ethics of artificial intelligence), the last of which the Ministry increasingly recognized as a cross-cutting challenge for contemporary diplomacy.

The 2026 Reform

Effective 1 January 2026, the Ministry implemented a significant structural transformation through the Decree of 18 November 2025, a reform driven by the direct political will of Minister Antonio Tajani,

who made the modernization of Italian diplomatic machinery a cornerstone of his tenure.

This reform was designed to be cost-neutral while modernizing the administration to better serve citizens and businesses, placing economic growth at the core of Italy's foreign policy.

The defining innovation of the 2026 reform is the transition to a “dual-pillar” system, one political and one economic, led by two Deputy Secretaries General under the supervision of the Secretary General.

The Ministry maintains 13 Centers of Responsibility, with the first-level administration organized into the following structures:

General Directorates:

1. Directorate General for Political Affairs and International Security (DGAP): led by the Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, it coordinates strategic global issues, including G7/G20 processes, and now incorporates the Unit for Analysis, Programming, and Historical Documentation.

2. Directorate General for Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania (DGAAAO): focuses on relations with high-growth extra-European regions.

3. Directorate General for Europe and International Trade Policy (DGUE): manages EU decision-making processes and external trade relations.

4. Directorate General for Growth and Export Promotion (DGCE): replacing the former DGSP, this directorate integrates the promotion of the “Country System” including culture, science, space, and sports, as drivers for economic expansion.

5. Directorate General for Services to Citizens Abroad and Migration Policies (DGIT): focused on modernizing the consular network and managing the Italian educational system abroad.

6. Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS): manages humanitarian aid and public development funds.

7. Directorate General for Cyber Issues, IT, and Technological Innovation (DGCT): a new entity combining technical and political components to handle cybersecurity, AI, and digital diplomacy.

8. Directorate General for Resources and Training (DGRI): focuses on human resources and the reform of the diplomatic career entrance exam, which is now open to all master's degree graduates.

9. Directorate General for Heritage and Administration (DGPA):

manages the Ministry's global real estate assets and financial administration.

Additional First-Level Structures:

1. General Secretariat: with a Unit for Simplification and Coordination to streamline administrative burdens for businesses and citizens. Furthermore, it incorporates the Unit for Communication, which is responsible for coordinating the Ministry's communication activities.
2. Diplomatic Protocol of the Republic (CERI).
3. General Inspectorate of the Ministry and Offices Abroad (ISPE).
4. Service for Legal Affairs, Diplomatic Litigation, and Treaties (SGCT).

Recurring Principles

In the reforms and reorganizations of the Ministry adopted after 1967, the following emerge:

1. Centrality of the Secretary General as the hub of political-administrative coordination
2. Balance between central and peripheral competences, with processes of simplification and performance evaluation
3. Integration between foreign policy, cooperation, and economic promotion
4. Openness to technological innovations (digitalization of processes, advanced communication systems).

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APPENDIX I

INITIATIVES TO DOCUMENT AND PRESERVE ITALIAN DIPLOMATIC HERITAGE AND TRADITION

This book is part of a comprehensive, multi-faceted initiative that aims to systematically document, preserve, and disseminate the history and heritage of Italian diplomacy. This broad effort includes several projects that operate through three primary channels: an exhaustive study of written works by and about Italian diplomats (Writings), the curation of a historical photographic archive (Images), and the collection of firsthand testimonies through a dedicated podcast (Voices). The research into writings, known as *La penna del diplomatico*, has catalogued over 1,500 books by Italian diplomats, leading to the creation of a digital library of free-to-download publications and a formal academic book series. The *Immaginario Diplomatico* project has collected and digitized over 750 historical photographs from 1861 to 1961, making them accessible online and through traveling exhibitions to prevent the loss of this vital visual record. Finally, the *Storia orale della diplomazia italiana* podcast captures the personal experiences of retired ambassadors in their own words, creating an invaluable resource for historical research and training of newly appointed junior diplomats. Together, these pillars constitute a landmark effort to build a living, accessible archive of Italy's diplomatic tradition.

The Diplomat's Pen

The foundation of this heritage initiative is a deep examination of the literary and academic output of diplomats. The cornerstone is a long-term research project called *La penna del diplomatico* (The Diplomat's Pen), which began in the late 1990s as a collaboration between Stefano Baldi and Pasquale Baldocci. The project's primary goal is to highlight the publishing activities of Italian diplomats, a lesser-known aspect of their professional lives. The research presents and analyzes books published by Italian diplomats since the postwar era, with the catalog growing from an initial examination of over five hundred titles to more than 1,500 books by over 350 authors as of February 2025. This extensive survey revealed a surprisingly diverse range of genres beyond typical memoirs and historical essays, including novels and poetry, which highlights the broad and diversified interests that distinguish those who carry out this profession. The research culminated in a book published in Italian (*La penna del diplomatico*) and in English version titled *Through the Diplomatic Looking Glass*, which is available for free download online.

A significant extension of this work is the *Digital Library of Books by Italian Diplomats*. This is not an exhaustive catalog but a curated, indicative list of publications that are freely downloadable in PDF format. Directed by Stefano Baldi, this open-access library ensures the wide dissemination of these works. The library is organized into several distinct categories: books authored by diplomats, illustrated books on Italian Embassies, books published by Italian Embassies, books about diplomats written by scholars, and a collection of official diplomatic documents, *Collana di Testi Diplomatici* (*Collection of Diplomatic Texts*) published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1973 and 1991. This collection also notes a special category of photographic books dedicated to Italian embassies and residences, which provide rare visual access to otherwise inaccessible diplomatic residences.

To further institutionalize this research, a formal book series titled *Memorie e studi diplomatici* (Memories and Diplomatic Studies) was established with the publisher “Editoriale Scientifica” of Naples. Directed by Stefano Baldi, the series is dedicated to enhancing the value of Italian diplomatic figures and activities through scholarly research and personal testimonies. While print versions are sold commercially, all digital editions are made available in open access. A complementary series of shorter, digital-only *Quaderni* (Notebooks) offers a platform for more specific or concise studies on diplomatic history, also available for free.

The Diplomatic Imagery

To counter the risk of losing important visual history, the *Immaginario diplomatico* (Diplomatic Images) project was created. Conceived and coordinated by Stefano Baldi, its stated primary goal is to avoid the dispersal or loss of important photographic testimonies concerning the history of Italian diplomats. This project gathers and preserves historical photographs of Italian career diplomats from a century-long period spanning from 1861 to 1961. The collection, which comprises 754 photos, is made publicly accessible through a dedicated website, a Flickr account, and an Instagram profile. The materials are sourced from family archives, historical magazines, and other open sources, with all images licensed under Creative Commons for non-commercial use with attribution.

This visual archive is not static. The collected material forms a traveling exhibition of 20 colour panels. The exhibition, which is available in both Italian and English, was first presented during an official visit to Bulgaria in July 2020 and has since been displayed in seven countries. A companion bilingual book titled *Immaginario Diplomatico - Diplomatic Images* has also been produced and is freely available as a digital download.

The Oral History of Italian Diplomacy

The most recent pillar of this comprehensive heritage project is the *Storia orale della diplomazia italiana* (Oral History of Italian Diplomacy). This initiative takes the form of a podcast series that features in-depth interviews, structured as conversations, with retired Italian diplomats. Its purpose is to transmit historical memory from one generation to the next, providing a valuable historical resource and a unique training tool for those embarking on a diplomatic career. The project transmits the historical memory of Italian diplomats through the voices of the protagonists.

The project is coordinated by Stefano Baldi and produced by the Training Unit (DGRI) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. A key feature of its methodology is the direct involvement of junior diplomats in preparing and conducting the interviews, which facilitates an intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

The podcast collects firsthand accounts of the professional lives of ambassadors, offering original and valuable insights into the concrete activities carried out by diplomats both at the Ministry and in missions abroad. Conversations are published on the Ministry's official *Voci dalla Farnesina* podcast channel and are distributed across major podcast platforms, including Spreaker, Spotify, Audible, and Apple Podcasts, to ensure broad accessibility. The series has already featured interviews with over twenty distinguished diplomats, with the interviews conducted since 2023 by junior diplomats during their training period.

The Embassies and Residences of Italy

The book series on Italian Embassies and Residences abroad, which Ambassador Gaetano Cortese founded in 1999 and has directed ever since, documents the architectural and artistic patrimony of Italian diplomatic missions worldwide. Spanning Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia, the volumes cover seats in Belgium, the Netherlands, the United States, Austria, Germany, Turkey, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Romania, and Finland, from Brussels, The Hague, Washington, Vienna, and Berlin to more recent additions on Helsinki and Bucharest. Each book operates as a kind of “inhabited archive”: beyond palaces, villas, and art collections, the volumes record the state visits, political turning points, and international friendships these spaces have hosted.

The result is far more than a collection of photographic books: it is a map of the Italian presence in the world, transforming Embassies and Residences from mere representational seats into living pages of national and international history. All volumes appear in digital format on the dedicated website for photographic books on Italian Diplomatic Representations abroad.

The Italian Diplomatic Documents and Public Access to the Historical Archive

Complementing the grassroots heritage initiatives described above is the institutional publication program of the Archivio Storico Diplomatico (Historical Diplomatic Archive) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, which systematically makes the Ministry's documentary patrimony available to scholars and the public. The cornerstone of this effort is the *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (DDI - Italian Diplomatic Documents), an official publication series initiated in 1952 that reproduces diplomatic correspondence, memoranda, and documents of state regarding Italy's foreign relations from 1861 onward.

The DDI project comprises eleven chronological series spanning from Italy's unification through 1953, with over 120 volumes published to date. All volumes are freely available online at www.farnesina.ipzs.it, the Ministry's dedicated digital portal, which offers full-text search functionality enabling researchers worldwide to explore Italian diplomatic activity across this formative 92-year period without geographical or financial barriers to access. A complementary thematic series, *Documenti sulla Politica Internazionale dell'Italia* (DPPI - Italian International Policy Documents), organized by geographical region and policy domain rather than chronology, provides alternative entry points for research on specific bilateral relationships or regional issues.

The *Annuari Diplomatici* (Diplomatic Yearbooks), which have appeared with variable periodicity since 1865, provide a further indispensable official reference, particularly for the biographical study of Italian diplomats. While the specific information they contain has evolved somewhat over time, these volumes have consistently included the *Stati di Servizio* (Service Records) of diplomatic officers as well as the names of the Heads of Mission posted across the various diplomatic seats abroad, thereby constituting an essential biographical resource for any historical research on Italian diplomacy.

The Historical Archive itself welcomes researchers for direct consultation of original materials according to established access procedures. Documents predating the fifty-year threshold are generally accessible to authorized researchers, while those between thirty and fifty years old require favourable opinion from the originating office. Users wishing to publish quotations or reproductions from archival materials must submit formal requests to ensure proper attribution and compliance with institutional protocols.

This combination of published documentary series and direct archive access ensures that the institutional memory of Italian diplomacy remains accessible to the international scholarly community while preserving appropriate confidentiality for materials whose sensitivity has not fully diminished with time.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF SECRETARIES GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Domenico Carutti di Cantogno (17 March 1861 - 13 March 1862)
Luigi Amedeo Melegari (acting) (13 March 1862 - 11 December 1862)
Emilio Visconti Venosta (11 December 1862 - 24 March 1863)
Marcello Cerruti (26 March 1863 - 30 December 1866)
Anselmo Guerrieri Gonzaga (30 December 1866 - 17 April 1867)
Luigi Amedeo Melegari (acting) (25 April 1867 - 29 October 1867)
Raffaele Ulisse Barbolani (acting) (29 October 1867 - 11 April 1869)
Alberto Blanc (11 April 1869 - 27 October 1870)
Isacco Artom (27 November 1870 - 24 March 1876)
Giuseppe Tornielli Brusati di Vergano (2 April 1876 - 3 June 1878)
Carlo Alberto Ferdinando Maffei di Boglio (3 June 1878 - 19 December 1878)
Giuseppe Tornielli Brusati di Vergano (19 December 1878 - 6 July 1879)
Carlo Alberto Ferdinando Maffei di Boglio (28 July 1879 - 29 May 1881)
Alberto Blanc (2 June 1881 - 4 January 1883)
Giacomo Malvano (2 July 1885 - 18 October 1885)
Raffaele Cappelli (18 October 1885 - 7 April 1887)
Abele Damiani (acting) (2 January 1888 - 4 March 1888)
office abolished (4 March 1888 - 9 February 1891)
Giacomo Malvano (10 February 1891 - 20 December 1893)
office abolished (21 December 1893 - 11 March 1896)
Giacomo Malvano (12 March 1896 - 8 September 1907)
Riccardo Bollati (8 September 1907 - 20 November 1912)
Giacomo De Martino (1 January 1913 - 31 December 1919)
Salvatore Contarini (31 December 1919 - 6 April 1926)

Antonio Chiaramonte Bordonaro (6 April 1926 - 6 February 1927)
office vacant then abolished (7 February 1927 - 31 July 1943)
Augusto Rosso (1 August 1943 - 12 September 1943)
Renato Prunas (28 October 1943 - 25 November 1946)
Francesco Fransoni (25 November 1946 - 31 May 1948)
Vittorio Zoppi (1 June 1948 - 6 December 1954)
Alberto Rossi Longhi (6 December 1954 - 17 February 1958)
Adolfo Alessandrini (17 February 1958 - 8 November 1958)
Carlo de Ferrariis Salzano (10 November 1958 - 25 May 1959)
Umberto Grazzi (25 May 1959 - 27 May 1961)
Attilio Cattani (27 May 1961 - 1 May 1965)
Felice Catalano di Melilli (acting) (1 May 1965 - 15 September 1966)
Egidio Ortona (15 September 1966 - 10 June 1967)
Casto Caruso (17 June 1967 - 1 November 1969)
Roberto Gaja (ad interim) (1 November 1969 - 19 January 1970)
Roberto Gaja (19 January 1970 - 30 June 1975)
Raimondo Manzini (1 July 1975 - 10 October 1977)
Francesco Malfatti di Montetretto (24 October 1977 - 31 January 1985)
Renato Ruggiero (1 February 1985 - 28 July 1987)
Bruno Bottai (9 October 1987 - 7 January 1994)
Ferdinando Salleo (8 January 1994 - 2 November 1995)
Boris Biancheri Chiappori (2 November 1995 - 31 August 1997)
Umberto Vattani (1 September 1997 - 24 September 2001)
Giuseppe Baldocci (24 September 2001 - 30 December 2003)
Umberto Vattani (1 March 2004 - 16 July 2005)
Paolo Pucci di Benisichi (18 July 2005 - 11 September 2007)
Giampiero Massolo (12 September 2007 - 28 May 2012)
Michele Valensise (29 May 2012 - 4 March 2016)
Elisabetta Belloni (5 May 2016 - 21 May 2021)
Ettore Francesco Sequi (27 May 2021 - 5 March 2023)
Riccardo Guariglia (6 March 2023 - in office)

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Stefano Baldi is an Italian diplomat, formerly Ambassador of Italy to Sofia and Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE in Vienna. He is currently responsible for continuous learning for the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

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