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**“NATO’S SECRET ARMIES:
OPERATION GLADIO AND TERRORISM IN WESTERN EUROPE” –
BOOK PRESENTATION**

Thank you very much for this kind invitation. The topic I’m going to talk about, “NATO’s Secret Army” is not very well researched. There are not a lot of books on NATO’s secret armies. In fact, at the time when I was studying at the London School of Economics and Political Science I carried out my research as a PhD thesis, and most of my professors had never heard of it. When I asked them, “Do you know anything about NATO’s Secret Armies” they said, “No”. I remember that there were some reports in the press, but not more. Then I decided I wanted to investigate NATO’s secret armies. Initially everybody said it is impossible to investigate a secret military organization because you just cannot get access to the documents, and it’s impossible to actually research it.

Today I have my own Institute and it is called Swiss Institute for Peace and Energy Research. I’m very much convinced that everybody is strongly influenced by the country where he is born and his age. So to make this very transparent: I’m now 40 years-old and at the time when the Cold War ended I was 20, which means that during the first 20 years of my life I lived in Switzerland. Switzerland is not a NATO country and in the period when I went to school they told us, honestly speaking, that the Soviet Union is evil. That is what they told us. They said that NATO protects us and stands up for democracy and human rights. I got a very positive picture of NATO when I was at school before I could start research for myself. We knew that the Warsaw pact was a difficult area, too, that political liberties were limited, we knew that. But on the other hand, we thought that NATO countries were just a wonderful area. Now 20 years later as I obviously ask myself, “Was it Russia who bombed Libya?” The answer is no. NATO bombed Libya in 2011. Was it Russia who bombed Afghanistan in 2001? No. It was NATO who bombed Afghanistan in 2001. Then I ask myself “Was it Russia which

bombed Serbia in 1999?” No, it was NATO. That is completely contradictory to everything I was told before because it was said that NATO is not an aggressive military structure. So I’m now convinced that NATO is not a force for peace. I’m critical of NATO and I’ll try to give you my details on NATO’s secret armies.

In Italy on August 3, 1990 the prime-minister Giulio Andreotti confirmed the existence of a secret army and called it “Gladio”. Now “Gladio” means sword. It’s a short sword that Gladiators used. Maybe some of you have seen the film “Gladiator”. You know, this is the short sword the Gladiators used to fight in the old days of Rome. An important thing about this sword is that it is two-edged. It has one edge and it has another edge. This symbol stands for the fact that secret army had two functions. One function was to become active in case of a Soviet invasion in Western Europe and occupation of Western Europe as a “stay-behind” structure. And the other edge was very delicate, it was to become active in case of a “political emergency”, as they called it.

You have to be aware that it is still a topic which is very difficult to research in Western Europe. The film that you’ve just seen before [shown at conference] was made by Allan Francovich. And he is dead now. It was shown in 1992 and he died in the 90s when he was in Texas; while he went through a passport control he had a heart attack. There is no possibility to find out why he died. But the film you have seen has been made by a very courageous journalist who is not living any more.

I tried to contact NATO to talk about NATO’s secret armies, and their position today is it just never existed. But the historical documents show very clearly that the Italian prime-minister confirmed that “Gladio” existed. And we also have the general Vito Michelli, he was the director of the Italian military secret service, called SISMI, who said, “I have gone to prison because I did not want to reveal the existence of this super secret organization. And now Andreotti comes along and tells it to Parliament!” So you really have to keep in mind that in 1990 when it was first confirmed that NATO had secret armies it was quite a scandal. It’s now 20 years ago and many people have forgotten about it but at that time it was quite a scandal in Italy.

French president Mitterand at that time said, “No. We did not have a secret army, only the Italians had a secret army”. And then Andreotti said “Well,

no. You can't say that and that's not true because there was a secret meeting of the representatives of the secret armies from all the different countries and the French were also there". So what we had was really a fight between the European countries, with Italy starting to break the news. Then Greece came along and said they had a secret army. And Germany came along and said they had a secret army, then Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. And even neutral countries like Switzerland, Sweden and Finland had secret armies. The French at one moment tried to walk away and say, "No. We're a great exception". But then Mitterand had to confirm that they had a secret army. The last confirmed secret meeting of the Allied Clandestine Committee, ACC, which coordinated the secret NATO armies, took place on October 24, 1990, in Brussels.

In the ACC structure the representatives of the different countries met. So each country had a military secret service, and the head of the department responsible for the secret army called the "stay-behind" structure would meet at different places in Europe at least once a year. But the position of NATO was put into question on November 5, 1990 when a German parliamentarian demanded that the government of Helmut Kohl look into the question of Gladio structures in Germany. They first said that NATO had never contemplated a guerilla war or clandestine operations. So imagine that: you have an Italian prime minister who says NATO has a secret army called "Gladio" or "stay-behind" in other countries. Secret armies had different names. In Belgium it was called SDRA8, in Switzerland it was called P26, in Germany it was just called "stay-behind". The names changed from country to country, but the link to NATO was the recurring pattern. And NATO said, "No. It's not true. It never existed". And then the next day NATO officials had to admit that the previous day's denial had been false and that they would not comment on matters of military secrecy.

So today most people in Western Europe if you ask them what "Gladio" is or what "stay-behind" is they have no clue. I then researched this story and published a book. The book has now been translated into ten languages. But still keep in mind that maybe ten thousand people read that book and out of a population of five hundred million ten thousand is much less than one per cent. It's just a very small group which knows about it. Can I ask here in the room maybe by a show of hands how many people knew of the existence of "Gladio: stay-behind" before they came to the conference?

Maybe everybody? No. OK. Half of the room. Less than a half. A third, twenty percent.

Now what I could establish is the countries where the secret “stay-behind” armies existed. They are dark blue countries on the map. They are Norway in the North and Denmark, obviously the Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain, Portugal, Italy, also Greece and Turkey, Great Britain. And the bright blue were the neutral countries. As you all know they are Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Austria and Ireland. These countries are not members of NATO.

It was very delicate in Switzerland that we had a secret army and still today the position of the Swiss government is “Yes. We had a secret army. But no, there were no links to NATO”. It is confirmed that the secret army in Switzerland was in very close contact with the British and obviously the British had a very strong position within NATO. So if there was a contact it seems to have been an indirect contact. No direct contact, so the Swiss would not take part in NATO meetings.

We’ve recently published an article on the role of Sweden in the “stay-behind” and also on the role of Finland which was not part of the NATO organization. That’s clear. But we have data to confirm that they had such resistance networks which were secretly linked to NATO.

The European Parliament said in 1990 that they need to have an investigation into these secret armies. But only three countries carried out an investigation. They are Belgium (in yellow on this map), Switzerland and Italy. So these parliamentary reports were then made public and they are now important sources of information for historians like me who try to understand how many people were in these networks, what these networks were doing, who was in command and how was the training and the financial structure organized in these networks.

To give you an example, this is the data from Switzerland: The Swiss bought a house in Ireland. And they said, “In case Western Europe is occupied by the Soviet Union, we have already a house in Ireland where we can send the Swiss government”. I talked to people in the “stay-behind” network and you have to understand that forty years ago we and Russia were enemies. We didn’t trust each other at all. Now it’s very good that we have come together and talk to each other and try to understand each other. I mean that is something. I’m very active in the global peace

movement and that's very important that people talk to each other. Israelis and Iranians should talk to each other. I'm fully convinced of that. Obviously, it's true there is a lot of distrust among human beings. But if we start to bomb each other it's not a good idea. So just an example in the Cold War, the Swiss government had this house in Ireland for a government in exile. Now we don't have it any more, it was sold, obviously, when the secret army P26 was dissolved.

The chain of command of the secret armies was very clear. The Pentagon was in charge. Really it was an American organization. Maybe you remember the quote of Nixon. He once said, "NATO is the only organization, international organization, which worked and that's because it is a military organization which is always hierarchical and because the Americans are in charge". So Nixon always said, "NATO really is an American structure". I mean, to be perfectly clear the Supreme Allied Commander, the SACEUR, the highest NATO officer, is always an American general. The Secretary General, right now Rasmussen, a Danish man, is always a European. But the SACEUR is a much more powerful position. The Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe located in Belgium was then the structure which coordinated the secret armies through two groups. One was the Allied Clandestine Committee, which I have already mentioned, and the other group was the Clandestine Planning Committee (CPC). That was confirmed by the Belgian Senate which investigated the secret armies. But when ten years later I tried to get documents from NATO on these meetings of the ACC and the CPC, they said, "They never existed". So you see that the history has been erased, has been rewritten. History is always written by the winners, obviously, and NATO does not want to talk about Gladio.

The CIA and the MI6 were strongly involved in secret operations and the training of "stay-behind" networks. They provided arms, they provided training, and they provided know-how. Obviously, the secret services in Italy, France and Germany cooperated closely with the CIA and the MI6. The Swiss, for instance, travelled to Great Britain and got training there and then came back to Switzerland. The British and the Americans were respected as the best in that field. Sometimes there was a quarrel. The Italians, for instance, said, "We should take the arms from the Americans and because they give us the arms for free we should take the training from the British because the British are the best". When the British found out that

they were very angry because they wanted to sell the arms. The Italians got it for free from the USA. But that's a detail.

The European Union in 1990 passed a resolution on the "stay-behind" armies. What it said was, "The European Union protests vigorously at the assumption by certain US military personnel at SHAPE and in NATO of the right to encourage the establishment in Europe of a clandestine intelligence and operation network, calling for "a full investigation into NATO structure, aims, and all other aspects of these clandestine organizations and their use for illegal interference into internal political affairs of the countries concerned, and the problem of terrorism in Europe".

Now what you see here is that the European Parliament wanted more information, but they never got that information. You have to keep in mind the European Parliament has no power when it comes to questions of military secrecy and defense. That is always a national affair and the European Parliament has no power in it. So all they did was they asked for more information but they never got it. But they linked the secret armies to terrorism. That is the most difficult thing we are researching. We tried to find out this question whether the "stay-behind" armies of NATO were linked to acts of terrorism in Western Europe. And that then would be CIA terrorism in Europe. That is something some people cannot even think of. They think it is impossible in Western Europe. Most people in NATO countries say, "It's impossible that we have CIA terrorism. They would maybe do it in Latin America, but they would never do it in Europe".

Now the documents I worked with, for instance, from Italy, show that Gladio was also designed to be used internally. This is one document from 1959 and it is from the defense department. It's from the secret service "Military Secret Service in Italy". It says "Office R, section SAD". That's exactly the section of Military Secret Service in Italy which was responsible for "Gladio". It says that firstly the secret "stay-behind" army was responsible to become active in case of a Soviet invasion carrying out a guerilla war in occupied territories. After I've talked to many people and I've looked at a lot of documents, I see that was the primary function of the "stay-behind" network. They really feared a Soviet invasion, that's why they put arms everywhere: in mountains, meadows, cemeteries - in many different places. They thought that if the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe and the normal European forces would be defeated, the Europeans would have the second army and that would be a secret army which could then blow up

bridges and exfiltrate pilots which were shot down. This is a sort of thinking. And especially Norway. You have to keep in mind, that Norwegians were also part of the “stay-behind” network. They were very strongly influenced by the World War II experience when they were occupied by the Germans very quickly. So they said, “What we need is a secret army”. Their main thinking was “next might be not Germans, it might be the Russians. Then we need something”. The Italian document also says, secondly, the secret army needs to carry out domestic operations in case of emergency situations. That is the delicate question. What are emergency situations? That would be situations when there is no invasion, but still secret armies would become activated.

The parliamentarians had no idea that secret armies existed, the public had no idea that secret armies existed and the media had no idea that secret armies existed. So it was really a parallel network. And the Italian judge Felice Casson, who actually first found out that the secret army existed, had discovered this secret by investigating acts of terrorism. That’s something peculiar. The secret armies were discovered because one Italian judge investigated acts of terrorism. He researched the attack of Peteano of 1972. In the late 1980s he got access to the archives of the Military Secret Service and then later he was allowed to establish that the secret networks were linked to this act of terrorism.

You have seen this person before in this film. His name is Vincenzo Vinciguerra. He is a right-wing extremist. Today you would call him a terrorist because he planted that bomb in Peteano and blew things up. And he confirmed in 1984 the existence in Italy of a secret force parallel to the armed forces composed of civilians and military men and of anti-Soviet capacity that was to organize the resistance on Italian soil against the Russian army. It is a secret organization, a super secret organization with a network of communications, arms, explosives and men trained to use them, he said. And when he said that in 1984 everybody laughed. Everybody said, “He is completely nuts. It’s impossible. That’s just some right-wing idiot who spreads stories that are wrong”. He said, “There are links to NATO and to the highest level of the Military Secret Service”, but nobody wanted to believe him. But he was absolutely correct. He also said that “the super-organization, lacking the Soviet military invasion, which might not happen, took up the task, on NATO’s behalf, of preventing a slip to the left of political balance of the country. This they did with the assistance of the official secret service and the political and military

forces". This is very important quote because what it really means is that he says the secret armies were used in Western Europe. They carried out terrorist attacks and blamed them on the communists, on the Italian communists. This discredited the communists and created fear in Italy. Do you see my message? This is called "strategy of tension": to carry out a terrorist attack, shock the public and blame the political opponent for it. This strategy is not very well-known and when I first heard about it I was completely shocked. I thought, "What? They did this basically with tax money because the secret service is paid by the citizens". It's already hard to pay taxes as we know, but then actually to have terrorism funded through tax money is absolutely unacceptable, state terrorism is a very delicate affair.

So this debate continues today. "You had to attack civilians, the people, women, children, innocent people and unknown people, far-removed from any political game". That is still Vincenzo Vinciguerra in front of the judges, that's what he said to explain terror in Italy. "The reason was quite simple. They were supposed to force these people, the Italian public, to turn to the state to ask for greater security. This is the political logic that lies behind all the massacres and the bombings, which remain unpunished, because the state cannot convict itself or declare itself responsible for what happened". That is a really complicated situation. If it is state terrorism in any country – this is not only in Italy, in Belgium, in every country in the world really, if it's state terrorism, the state has no interest to talk about it. It's obviously something very nasty. And everybody will try to cover its traces. But we all know that it exists and it's very hard for historians to talk about it and it's very hard to research it.

Then in the year 2000 the Italian Senate published a report on these secret "Gladio" networks and their links to acts of terrorism in Italy. The report explains that obviously these acts of terrorism during the Cold War in Italy were carried out by many different groups. I'm not saying it was always "Gladio". That would be too simple. They were carried out by different groups but in some cases we have links which show the Secret "Gladio" army was involved. We don't have proof, we don't have a NATO document which says, "Carry out a terrorist attack in Italy". Nothing of that sort exists. We have proof that NATO had secret armies, we have proof that the CIA and the MI6 were involved. We have proof that the secret armies were called "Gladio" in Italy, for instance. And we have proof that terrorist attacks occurred. But as for this last link between the right-wing extremist

and NATO, we have no written confirmation. We have only oral testimony like the one by Vinciguerra. The Italian Senate investigation concluded that “these massacres, those bombs, those military actions have been organized or promoted or supported by men of the Italian state institutions, and as it has been discovered recently - by men linked to the structures of US intelligence.” So this is what the Senators found. That is a document which is twelve years old and it’s very fragile, very sensitive. I’m not sure if you fully realize the implications: it means that in Western Europe we have a debate about US terrorism in Europe. It’s a very complicated debate. Most people say that we shouldn’t have such a debate, because the Americans would never do that. I think we should have such a debate because the evidence forces us to look at this dark chapter of European history.

Then we have Giandelio Maletti. On the picture we have Nixon, but it’s obviously not the quote from Nixon. But we have Giandelio Maletti, he is a former head of Italian counter-intelligence. He was part of Italian security operations. And you must understand that the Italian members of the secret service were approached by families who said, “Why did you attack women? Why did you attack children? Why did you kill people in Italian streets? You were supposed to protect us”. So this is the internal debate. And then the general Maletti defended himself and said, “Yes. We were involved in these terrorist attacks, but we didn’t do it just for fun. We were acting in a bigger international geostrategic network. We were actually asked by Americans to do this to discredit Italian communists”. He says, and I quote, that “the CIA, following the directives of its government, wanted to create Italian nationalism capable of halting what it saw as a slide to the left and for this purpose it may have made use of right-wing terrorism.” He says “Maybe”. He doesn’t say they did. He says “Maybe”. It is very difficult to prove. He continues: “Don’t forget that Nixon was in charge and that Nixon was a strange man: a very intelligent politician but a man of rather unorthodox initiatives”. So that’s what Maletti says during the trial for the terrorist’s attack 1969 Piazza Fontana. And Maletti adds, “Yes. Italians were involved but probably the orders came from Nixon”. He says, “I don’t have proof, but Nixon and his people, Kissinger for instance, wanted to stop the Italian communists. They may have given arms to the Italian right-wing terrorists. They may have carried out the terrorist attack to discredit everybody at the political left.” And it’s called the “strategy of tension”. Tension is fear.

Now in France, as you know, we also had tensions between the military and the government. When de Gaulle was in power, he said that he wanted to give Algeria its independence. Remember, that the French military was very dissatisfied because they had lost in World War II. Then in the 50s they had lost in Vietnam. And now to give away Algeria in the 60s for them was like a third defeat. They didn't want to give away Algeria. So you had this division between French officers, not everybody, but some people in the French military and de Gaulle in Paris. At this moment the secret "stay-behind" network, which was part of the NATO structure, acted against de Gaulle. The person who says that this was the case is admiral Pierre Lacoste. I'm not sure whether you know Pierre Lacoste, he is also from the French military intelligence. He was the man who blew up the Greenpeace ship "Rainbow warrior" in 1985. Greenpeace wanted to protest against French nuclear tests in the Pacific. At that time Mitterrand wanted to have these atomic tests and then he said, "Somebody should stop that ship" and then Pierre Lacoste had his people to blow it up. It was French terrorism. But here he says on Gladio and stay-behind: "Some terrorist actions, actions against de Gaulle and his Algerian peace plan had been carried out by the groups that included a limited number of people from the French "stay-behind" network.

So in this case we don't have de Gaulle giving the order because the attacks were against him. In this case we have people in the military who organized the Organisation armée secrète (OAS) and other groups who fought against the decision of Paris to actually leave Algeria its independence.

I could go through all the countries and in each country it's a little bit different. In Turkey, for instance, we had three military coups d'états in the Cold War period. In the last one in 1980 the director of the secret "stay-behind" army took power. Also in Greece in 1967 we have links between the "stay-behind" network and the military which came to power in Greece. I'm fully convinced that it's important to talk about "Gladio".

Americans have until today refused to talk about "Gladio". We have American president Bush, the older one, who didn't want to talk about it when it was first discovered in 1990. But we have the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, that's John Galvin, he served as SACEUR from 1987 to 1992, and when the secret armies were revealed in 1990 he confirmed it on November 7, 1990 in front of NATO ambassadors. NATO ambassadors

wanted to know if it is true: is there a secret army? They didn't know about it. So they gathered in Brussels and he said "Yes, it's true. We had a secret army. It was coordinated by SHAPE". But it's important that you realize this distinction. Then the SACEUR said, "The secret armies were just waiting for the Soviet invasion. As there was no Soviet invasion they never did a thing at all. NATO has no links to terrorism". That's the official way NATO talks about the "stay-behind" today. And if we try to say that there were links to terrorism, NATO always says, "These were just a few crazy right-wing people who did things we didn't want them to do". So it's always the structure of plausible denial.

In Germany we had a parliamentarian, his name is Hermann Scheer, he's now dead. He looked at the data and found in 1990 that the secret army in Germany had former SS members in it, because in Germany when the secret army was set up it wanted to make sure that it's strongly anti-communist. So what they really did is they recruited on the far-right and they searched for people who could shoot and kill. So it was logical that some people from the SS went directly into the secret armies. Reinhard Gehlen, the director of the German secret service, was not brought to the Nurnberg trials, but was taken directly into the secret service of Germany and worked as the director. It's incredible, most people in Europe are not aware of it, but the Americans installed Gehlen. Hermann Scheer was very critical of all that and called the "stay-behind" in Germany a "Ku-Klux-Klan". And he wanted the government in Germany to investigate the German "stay-behind". Keep in mind that Germans have different political parties and Scheer was a member of SPD, a socialist group. At the time when the secret armies were discovered the government was the government of Helmut Kohl, which was the CDU. So the SPD asked the CDU to have an in-depth investigation into the secret army and then the CDU people said, "We need to have a secret meeting". Then they had a secret meeting and then they said, "Listen. When your people were in government, so the government of Willy Brandt (the SPD) for instance, the secret army also existed, so you are covering the secret as well. If you now want to begin an investigation we're going to take you down with us". Therefore they didn't have an investigation.

We're not sure how much the KGB knew about the "stay-behind". We think they knew quite a lot. One operation was called "Operation Scorpion", in this case the BND Secretary Heidrun Hofer was targeted by the KGB, she worked within the BND fourth department in Munich and that was the

department responsible for “stay-behind”. It seems (that was already in the 70s) the KGB knew everything about “stay-behind” armies. Maybe someone in the room can tell me more about it later. It was always a question: how much was known in Moscow about NATO secret armies. Heidrun Hofer didn’t want actually to betray the secret, she told her husband Hans about it, but Hans was a double agent, a KGB agent. When she found out it she wanted to commit suicide.

One thing which we presently are researching is the terrorist attack in Munich in 1980, where there was a bomb which killed 13 people. It was the biggest terrorist attack carried out throughout the Cold War in Germany. And the questions, which several researchers are working on now, is whether the stay-behind armies were involved. The official story is that Gundolf Köhler, 21, pictured here, was alone and he planned the bombing and he died at the terrorist attack. He was a member of the right-wing “Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann”. It was the right-wing group in Germany. So if you go to Germany today and if you talk about 1980 Munich terrorist attack, people will say, “Yes, it’s Gundolf Köhler –and the case is closed. It’s just closed, he was the lonely man and just crazy”.

But we have people around Gundolf Köhler who seem to be involved. Heinz Lembke is a German who supplied the “Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann” with weapons and explosives. German right-wing extremists confirmed: “Mr. Lembke showed us different forms of explosives, he said he had a lot of weapons and that he could give us a lot of weapons.” And later indeed a big arms cache was discovered in the Lüneburger Heide, this seems to be an arms cache of the “stay-behind” army. We don’t have proof but it seems to be the case, because after the terrorist attack of 1980 we expected police to go there and take out all these arms, but they didn’t touch them. For a full year they didn’t touch these arms. That would only make sense if these arms belonged to a greater strategic framework, which was to be used in case of a Soviet invasion. But that’s the problem: you can have arms caches and then right-wing terrorist can give them to another right-wing terrorists and then you can have a terrorist attack. So it was discovered a year later that these arms were there and Lembke was about to talk about the “stay-behind” and the secret armies. He wanted to say a lot and then he was found dead in the prison cell. So also in Germany the topic of “Gladio” and “stay-behind” is a very sensitive topic.

Herta Däubler Gmelin, she was a member of the German Parliament said, "Can you tell us whether after the discovery of the arms caches of Mister Lembke there are new insights into the Munich terror attack ?" On the political level there is a debate about this. But the government always says "There is no link".

Coming to the conclusion: This slide is of my Institute, the Swiss Institute for Peace and Energy Research, SIPER. Maybe to just sum it up because I see that Veronika wants to move ahead with timing. I can confirm and you'll find more details in my book that NATO during the Cold War had a secret army. In Italy it was called "Gladio", in Germany it was called "stay-behind", in Norway it was called ROC, in Belgium it was called SDR8, in Turkey it was called "Counter-guerilla". It had all sort of different names. Secondly, the secret armies were coordinated by the CIA and the MI6. They were trained by special forces SIS from Britain and "Green Berets" from the USA. And they prepared for a Soviet invasion. Now what I cannot prove is that the secret armies were carrying out terrorist attacks. I cannot prove it but I've shown you a lot of data which indicates that they were linked to terrorist attacks. But I have no written documents from NATO which says, "Carry out a terrorist attack in Italy". It's called the strategy of tension. It seems to have taken place but it's very delicate.

Thank you very much for your attention.