

gence chief, whom they might have known from joint military service.

But then we have a blank. We do not know the all-important *link* between the “clean” SB/Gladio structure and those who carried out terrorist acts. How does this “link” relate to the official chain of command? We have in Italy the testimony of Vincenzo Vinciguerra, who admitted having carried out, in 1972, the Peteano terrorist attack. After his arrest, Vinciguerra stated that “parts” of the Italian state and “parts” of what he called “the Atlantic Alliance” secretly supported such terrorism in order to discredit the political left. Whether people like him received their instructions from NATO’s SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe], or from the Pentagon, will be very difficult to establish. There will be next to no written sources, while oral testimony from officials will follow “plausible denial” tactics.

**EIR:** You would rule it out?

**Ganser:** Well, the rule with Gladio is that you cannot rule out anything, that’s exactly the point. After all, secret armies have existed for 40 years in all countries of Western Europe, outside of any control of parliamentary democracy. If that’s possible, you can’t rule out anything.

**EIR:** Vinciguerra’s testimony is controversial. Not for what he said, but for the interpretation. He referred to a paramilitary secret structure, composed of men in uniform and civilians, but he did not mention the name Gladio. According to Prosecutor Guido Salvini, who has conducted the latest investigation on Piazza Fontana,<sup>2</sup> Vinciguerra might refer to a subversive group called “Nuclei di Difesa dello Stato,” and not to the official Gladio structure.

**Ganser:** As I said, there’s a “gap,” there’s a *gray zone* which needs further investigation. On the one hand, we know that there were right-wing terrorist attacks; on the other side we know that NATO, the CIA, and the Italian military secret service operated a secret Gladio army in Italy. That much is clear. Now to the “gray zone”: It is true that Vinciguerra did not mention the name “Gladio” at the time, nor did he say he had received the orders for his terrorist acts from Gladio commanders. But, the full list of Gladio members is still not available, nor with whom they cooperated. So Salvini, who is an outstanding expert in the field, concludes that the “Nuclei di Difesa dello Stato” could have been the “missing link.” See, it’s like a very long chain, and we are trying to piece together the elements of that chain, but as it’s an international secret network, that’s pretty difficult.

**EIR:** Do you have any indications of “sideways” access—outside the formal chain of command—of elements in SB/Gladio structures for terrorist operations?

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2. The Piazza Fontana bombing, on Dec. 12, 1969, killed 16 people and wounded 58.

## The Strategy of Tension

Operation Gladio was first exposed in 1990 in Italy, but existed elsewhere in Europe as well, having been built up by Anglo-American intelligence at the beginning of the Cold War, as the core of a potential guerrilla force able to operate behind enemy lines—referred to as a “stay behind” force—in case of a threatened invasion and occupation of Western Europe by the Warsaw Pact. In the case of Italy, it was documented that Gladio was also involved in the “Strategy of Tension” of right-wing terrorist bombings, aimed at maintaining political control on behalf of certain political networks.

Claudio Celani wrote a four-part series on the “Strategy of Tension: The Case of Italy,” in *EIR* (March 26, April 2, April 9, and April 30, 2004), which was reprinted in a LaRouche in 2004 Presidential Campaign Special Report, *The Synarchist Resurgence Behind the Madrid Train Bombing of March 11, 2004*. He traced the “Strategy of Tension” from Operation Gladio; to the 1969-80 terrorist bombings; the murder of Aldo Moro in 1978; the Propaganda-2 freemasonic lodge and SISMI military intelligence service; and the emergence of new fascist parties in the aftermath of the early 1990s “Clean Hands” demolition of the Italian post-war political system.

**Ganser:** Well, the data point to right-wing terrorist groups. Why would a military intelligence service link up with right-wing terrorist groups? Why would they do that? Because they want to carry out special operations for which they cannot employ their own service’s staff. That’s what I see, in some respect, did happen in Belgium with the Brabant massacres, or in Italy with Piazza Fontana, with Brescia, with Peteano. And this is what I see in Turkey, where the Turkish military secret service penetrated and recruited or linked up with ultra-nationalist extremists like the “Gray Wolves.”

**EIR:** Have you found any indications of entities outside the military or military intelligence command structure, linking up with assets within the SB/Gladio structure, like the Propaganda 2 freemasonic lodge in Italy?

**Ganser:** The answer is difficult. You had defense ministers in the P2 lodge—they were obviously part of the command structure. At times, you had the chiefs of the military intelligence services belonging to P2—they were at the same time part of the Gladio command hierarchy. Other P2 members never show up in any Gladio data. But, somewhere in the military command chain, you do get very close to terrorism.

Also criminals and organized crime structures come in. You know, I specialized in ancient history at one time. The Romans were very much afraid of their own army, that the army would get corrupted through its power and then destroy the Republic. When I saw some of the corruption and crime in the field of covert actions, I thought, "It's literally 'classic'!"

But there are other segments of the military, who still adhere to a strict code of honor, some of them might speak out more in the future, distance themselves from the criminal elements, and give their side of the story. In fact, former Gladio commander Gen. [Gerardo] Serravalle, who published a booklet on the topic, seems to be such a personality.

**EIR:** Did you find in your work any links of financial institutions, of any type, to the SB/Gladio structure?

**Ganser:** No, but I did not look for them.

**EIR:** For a subject as sensitive as Gladio, is Switzerland a convenient or a difficult environment for doing this kind of work?

**Ganser:** Switzerland is rather a convenient, than a difficult environment, for two reasons. First, the Swiss distrust power politics—and great powers. Switzerland is a small country, and small countries traditionally distrust great powers—be they the Germans, French, Russians, Chinese, or the Americans. The small players want these big players to respect the rule of law, for that's their shield and protection. And when these big players manipulate and disregard international law, as they often did in the last century, when they lie and kill, the Swiss do not like that. They, like other small players, sense the danger and, at times, therefore, try to expose the machinations as well as the coverup. Today, such efforts are facilitated by the Internet and the exchange of information among people from all corners of the globe. Ten years ago that would have been much more difficult.

The other positive side about Switzerland is that it has three languages—actually four, but basically German, French, and Italian. I was born in the Italian-speaking part, I got my education in the German-speaking part, and I spent my holidays in the French-speaking part. That was very helpful for my work later. I did most of my studying in English-speaking countries, which was also very helpful for my research. If you read books in many different languages, you will realize that they portray events from different perspectives. Just compare Spanish books on the Cuban Missile Crisis, with books in English on the same subject, or books in Russian. I could only compare English and Spanish, but they were already worlds apart.

The distrust of power in Switzerland, by the way, is not limited to foreigners, but is also very much there among the Swiss. The Swiss government is the only government which must have all the major parties represented in the government; the ministerial posts have to be divided among the four major

parties. I know of no other country in the world with such a governing system. This distrust is so deep-seated, that the Swiss people say about Bern, Switzerland's capital: We hope the parties block each other, otherwise they'll grab the power and run away with it. This distrust goes probably back to the Hapsburgs; it goes a back a long, long way. The Swiss would never allow one Swiss party to dominate the executive, let alone also the legislative and the judiciary; obviously Montesquieu would turn in his grave.

**EIR:** Let us talk about Italy, which seems to be unique in Western Europe, as the Strategy of Tension unfolded there with unparalleled ferocity, compared to other NATO countries. The presence of the largest Communist Party in Europe, the PCI, would be an explanation for this. Do you think that the PCI was really such a threat to democracy and the Western Alliance?

**Ganser:** We know now, after the Cold War is over, that Moscow had paid large amounts of money to the Italian Communist Party or to factions inside the PCI. That was part of the situation in Europe during the Cold War. So you have to ask the question: What would have happened if, for example, in Italy or France, the Communists had gained so much at the polls, that they could have entered the government—meaning Communists in the Interior Ministry, Foreign Ministry, or even the Defense Ministry? I think, a Communist defense minister would have been seen as a real threat to NATO. I'm not sure whether—actually I doubt it—that he would have transferred military secrets to Moscow—that obviously depends on the character and integrity of the person—but he could have. So, I do understand that Washington and London would have seen that as a real threat; a threat from inside so to speak.

**EIR:** But the PCI did undergo quite a transformation during the 1970s, which culminated in its official recognition of NATO. So, was the PCI really a threat then? Don't you think that there were other reasons, maybe unspoken reasons, behind the Strategy of Tension in Italy?

**Ganser:** Sure, the PCI and its members did change in the course of the Cold War. But, speaking of the 1960s and 1970s, the Communists saw how the United States had attacked Vietnam—after having fabricated a lie with the Gulf of Tonkin episode. So, there was massive distrust toward the United States from the PCI, this cannot be ignored. Look at some countries like Germany or Switzerland; they outlawed the Communist Party.

At the same time, and that's documented in the SB/Gladio data, in Greece the Socialists Andreas Papandreou and George Papandreou, his father, also clearly stated that they did not trust NATO at all. And they were no Communists. Or, take de Gaulle, he was certainly no Communist, but he quarrelled with the U.S. and NATO so much that he eventually forced NATO out of France.

**EIR:** In Italy, there have been at least four known attempted military coups in the post-war period—they were all connected to projects to implement “neoliberal-globalist” as opposed to “national-étatist” economic policies. Even the assassination of Aldo Moro fits into this pattern, if one considers the economic policy changes that occurred after 1978. Do you see this as a characteristic feature of the Strategy of Tension in Europe?

**Ganser:** I think that economic matters do play a major role in covert operations. I have studied the evidence in respect to the 1959 Castro revolution in Cuba. The American investors there were very, very afraid of losing their money—and the U.S. launched covert operations to get rid of Castro. The same is true with the Russian Revolution in 1917: France and England (with some U.S. support) tried to overthrow the young Communist regime, but their operations all failed. If there’s a prospect of private property getting nationalized, investors will become very brutal—look at what happened to Mossadegh in Iran in 1953. They will not refrain from anything, and, if they can get governments to run covert operations against a regime they see as threat to their economic interests, they will do just that. So, certainly, from that perspective, there was an economic dimension in the Strategy of Tension, also in Italy.

**EIR:** It does not need to come to nationalization, for covert operations to be launched. We are speaking here about economic policies that take into account social welfare and national economic development—simply the opposite of the neoliberal policies, which today are the basis of globalization.

**Ganser:** It’s true, covert action is sometimes also launched in the absence of nationalizations, hence following social reforms for instance, as in Chile in 1973. And it is true that, in the context of globalization, any resistance to what one may call the “profit system” is being attacked also “by other means”—not just by political or academic arguments. There are the cases of Cuba or Chile in 1973, or even Italy. There’s this very interesting book by John Perkins,<sup>3</sup> but he is being discredited because he also has some rather esoteric views.

The debate, whether “the free market,” which is often not so free, generates economic growth, and moreover solves our moral problems, in the sense how we human beings behave toward each other, and hence helps to create a “better world,” is being fought out in many newspapers and books. It’s a most interesting discourse.

**EIR:** Let us connect this to the Gladio question. Terrorist operations, involving SB/Gladio assets in the context of the Strategy of Tension, had a dual thrust: a) blind terrorism, as in the case of Piazza Fontana or the Bologna train station, and

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3. *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man: How the U.S. Uses Globalization To Cheat Poor Countries Out of Trillions* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004).

b) the physical liquidation of prominent political-economic figures representing a very specific economic and political point of view, like Moro or the bankers Jürgen Ponto and Alfred Herrhausen in Germany. What are your thoughts on this?

**Ganser:** From the data on SB/Gladio that I have seen, I cannot confirm that Ponto and Herrhausen—I would add Olof Palme here—were targeted and killed by “NATO’s secret armies.” It is even most difficult to reconstruct the killing of Aldo Moro: Why was he killed and who pulled the strings? At the same time, I do not exclude that “NATO’s secret armies” were vehicles, the utilization of which made possible that these assassination operations were carried out so efficiently. That really needs further investigation. I would never exclude that the secret armies could have been involved; one can hardly exclude something as long as so little data on the phenomenon has been made available.

The death of Olof Palme in 1986, and the death of Aldo Moro in 1978, those were to Sweden and Italy what the J.F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963 was to the United States. Maybe the Herrhausen assassination in 1989 was the same to Germany. Did they find out who killed Kennedy? No. Some think it was crazy Oswald acting alone; others think the truth was covered up.

**EIR:** Let us stay for a moment with Moro. Do you have any insight on the subject of the “insertion” of SB/Gladio elements into left-terrorist groups?

**Ganser:** If you infiltrate a group and then carry out terror operations with that group, without that group knowing that it has been infiltrated and is being “steered,” that is one of the strategically most sophisticated operations imaginable. To any strategist, that is “beautiful,” just as it is ugly from a moral perspective. On the question, who infiltrated or who might have infiltrated the Red Brigades, I am not an expert, even though one name has been raised quite a few times: Mario Moretti, an ex-neofascist. In the documents that I have seen, Moretti was not being named as one of the Gladiators—but not many Gladiators have been named anyway.

Maybe one should look at Belgium, where the Combatant Communist Cells (CCC) seem to have been a leftist organization which was created in order to be the deposit of evidence of terrorist attacks—which others carried out. The same was with the Piazza Fontana bombing, where the evidence was planted with Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the left-wing editor.

**EIR:** Have you seen the *EIR* material on irregular warfare, Strategy of Tension, or the Moro or Herrhausen cases, much of it already published in the 1970s and 1980s? What are your thoughts about it?

**Ganser:** I have seen some of the *EIR* material now—and it’s rather unique. I cannot say whether everything that’s in these texts is correct or not, because it is a very large field that’s covered there. I had not known *EIR* before you contacted me

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*The Stay Back/Gladio data show that at least elements of some of the “secret armies,” in which NATO was involved, were linked to sponsoring terrorism. So, Stay Back/Gladio is a very delicate issue for NATO. So delicate, that NATO simply does not want to talk about it.*

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and sent me some data. But I have to say that not many people dare speak about these issues. Even if you carefully read leading newspapers, you are never going to get to these questions. The page “secret warfare” is missing in all major media outlets, but they do have several pages on trivia. Therefore, I think it is quite important indeed, that *EIR* deals with these questions, which very much influence our lives. I was really surprised as well, that *EIR* had published these analyses and so much data already 20, 25 years ago.

**EIR:** In your *NZZ* article before Christmas [Dec. 15, 2004], you compared the way international terrorism—mostly “Islamic terrorism”—is currently deployed to be part of the Strategy of Tension. Can you explain that further?

**Ganser:** People very often ask me: It is very interesting what you write about what happened in the 1970s, but I am living now, what is going on now? My usual answer to that is that SB/Gladio, as such, is not operative anymore, but what obviously is still going on is secret warfare. We have secret warfare going on here and now.

I’ll give an example: the wars in the Balkans during the 1990s. In August 1995, the Croatian Army successfully drove the Serbs off occupied Croatian territory. But, in this Operation Oluja, they were covertly assisted by Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), an American private military company. Many people did not know of that at the time, and I myself was very surprised to find out about this Operation Oluja, which later was rated a war crime by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. We know very little of how PMCs—Private Military Companies—are linked to covert action and, at times, war crimes, despite the fact that they operate on all continents today. Then, we had the Kosovo operation, when, on March 24, 1999, the NATO bombing of Serbia started. I looked at what exactly the OSCE did in the weeks before, because William Walker, the U.S. representative to the OSCE, had been linked to covert operations in Latin America. The data I found showed that Walker had the Racak massacre in Kosovo manipulated in order to spread a “genocide claim.” That also impressed German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, despite the fact that the data on the ground did not support this claim. Truth is very often the first victim of war.

**EIR:** And what about 9/11?

**Ganser:** Obviously, for the international research community, the real big thing, right now, is 9/11. Many academic researchers across the globe, and also in the U.S., are asking many questions: Did the Bush Administration deliberately allow the 9/11 attacks to happen, in order to have a pretext for attacking Afghanistan and Iraq, to be able to increase military spending, and to cut back on civil liberties in the U.S.? This is the so-called LIHOP theory—Let It Happen On Purpose.

Or were Bush and his Administration totally surprised by Osama bin Laden, as they claim? This is the so-called SURPRISE theory, which dominated the early media reports.

Or did Osama bin Laden have nothing to do with the attack at all, while conspirators at the Pentagon carried out the operation, as well as the subsequent anthrax attacks? This is the so-called INSIDE JOB theory, which builds on the 1962 “Operation Northwoods” plans of the Pentagon to blow up planes and stage terror attacks in Florida in order to create a pretext for invading Cuba and overthrowing Castro.

Academics who study secret warfare find themselves between these three theories—LIHOP, SURPRISE, and INSIDE JOB. They all are “conspiracy theories,” by the way. Researchers try to find out which theory is best able to account for all the known facts. I must say that 9/11 is an extremely complicated crime and therefore many academics, including myself, have a hard time to figure out which of the three theories fits the true story. So most of us waited to see how the official U.S. investigation into 9/11, the Thomas Kean and Philip Zelikow report, would deal with these three theories. But unfortunately, the 600-page report, published in July 2004 and accepted by Bush as the “official story” of what happened in respect to 9/11, does not even mention the LIHOP and INSIDE JOB theories! It presents SURPRISE as the only possible explanation.

Now, Philip Zelikow is a respected professor of history; as a fellow historian I was therefore very surprised to find that his report is totally unbalanced. Of course, Zelikow is aware of the LIHOP and INSIDE JOB theories, no doubt. How can he author a book on 9/11, which claims to search for the truth, but which totally ignores these theories? He could of course have presented them to the reader and then deconstructed them with the facts available. That’s the normal academic procedure; that would have been all right. But in the utterly unbalanced way this book has been written, it could not be

accepted as a Ph.D. thesis or maybe not even as a Masters thesis at a university. Because it not only fails to mention LIHOP and INSIDE JOB as competing theories, but leaves out all data which support the latter two theories: The collapse of WTC7 (World Trade Center building 7) is not mentioned; the controversial Pentagon picture is not mentioned let alone debated; the BBC report, that six alleged hijackers are still alive, is not mentioned nor debated; the alleged funding of Mohamed Atta by the Pakistani ISI intelligence service is not mentioned; nor the protests of FBI agent Coleen Rowley that there were lies and coverups. The explanations given for NORAD's [North American Aerospace Defense Command] failure to intercept the attacking planes, and for the put options, plus insider trading, are also less than satisfying. So we are back to square one, with three competing theories, while the official U.S. investigation looks very much like a coverup. By the way, the official U.S. investigation is carefully dissected in a just-released book by Prof. David Ray Griffin, an American, like Zelikow. It's very much a battle of the best and the brightest minds in the U.S. now as to what really happened on 9/11.

**EIR:** Do we understand you correctly, that you do not accept the official U.S. government version of 9/11 as represented by the Kean report?

**Ganser:** The Kean report is poor, no doubt. Does that mean that SURPRISE is dead? Not necessarily. All three theories are still in the air and require further testing. The problem is, however, that trust in the White House has been decaying rapidly during the last years. When President Bush and Vice President Cheney were saying Saddam Hussein was behind 9/11, experts were quite surprised that the White House could so recklessly spread such a far-reaching lie. I mean, we have had more than 100,000 civilians killed so far in the war in Iraq, so this issue is extremely serious. Then we had the "Niger Uranium" story, yet another lie, as former U.S. Ambassador Wilson showed. And now the Kean report on 9/11, which looks like a coverup. All that is not reassuring at all.

Academics in the U.S. and across the globe must make a real effort to break through such a web of lies, but that will be difficult, above all because many have simply settled for SURPRISE without knowing the debate at all.

**EIR:** So, you are engaged in a research project on 9/11?

**Ganser:** Yes, I have agreed to teach a class on 9/11 at Zürich University. My students want to know what really happened on 9/11. They are in their 20s and they really want to know: Is it true that the Pentagon staged the attack on itself? That sounds like a man shooting his own foot, only to say afterwards: Oh, somebody shot me and now I have to kill the "perpetrator." Or, was the Pentagon really surprised at being attacked by Osama bin Laden, who was so much smarter than anybody else, including the U.S. government with its vast capabilities? My students want to know about SURPRISE,

LIHOP, and INSIDE JOB. It's a lot of work, but very interesting.

**EIR:** The actions or non-actions of the U.S. government need not necessarily mean that the U.S. government as such was behind 9/11. Could there have been a secret structure that was trying to force the U.S. government in a certain direction via 9/11? The best reference historically would be the Secret Army Organization (OAS)—the secret structure within the French state apparatus in the early 1960s. And here we have here an overlap with our main subject, SB/Gladio. What are your thoughts on this?

**Ganser:** I'm not sure the parallel is a good one. Do I know of a secret, hidden group above or within the U.S. government? No, I don't. If your speculation is correct and there is such a structure, then, I think, there would have been cooperation from within the government with it. I'm a historian and my points of reference are the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense, etc.—and their actions. Of course, historians are well aware that power can also be organized in different and more hidden forms, but I still think closely studying not only the words, but above all the actions of a government, produces the best insights.

When you talk about driving the U.S. government into a certain direction, I would say, yes, of course. There are hundreds of lobbying groups, and, the way I see it, strategic energy policy seems to play a big role. There's much debate on the "peak oil" thesis. It's being said that maybe half of the oil we have on Earth is already used up, so we are running out of oil, while for the future we expect global population to rise to 10 billion and China and India are coming in big, consuming energy. It's quite imaginable that there's a power group, maybe outside, maybe inside the White House and the Pentagon, saying: We must check the power of China, India, the European Union, and make sure we control the oil reserves. As long as we have the military force to control energy resources, we better use it—under whatever pretext.

Brzezinski, for instance, urged in his 1997 book *Chessboard* that the U.S. must try to control what he called "Eurasia"—the landmass of Europe and Asia. Eurasia has historically held the key to global power, so no global power [can be maintained] without control of Eurasia, Brzezinski said, and he's probably right. Of course you can't talk geostrategy to the larger U.S. population, or the European Union (EU) population for that matter, and therefore the U.S. could not start new wars, unless, as Brzezinski put it, "a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat" materialized which could scare the U.S. Congress and population into new wars.

Again, as I said, it is important that we study covert operations. I did my part on SB/Gladio, which is history now. But studying Gladio can instruct our thinking. The forms of secret warfare change with time, but the strategy, the methodology remains very much the same.