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NATO's SECRET ARMIES

Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe

DANIELE GANSER

Foreword by Dr John Prados

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NATO'S SECRET ARMIES

This book tells the story of NATO's secret anti-Communist stay-behind armies that were set up by the CIA and MI6 after the Second World War in all countries of Western Europe and in some countries became tragically linked to right-wing terrorism.

Daniele Ganser is a Senior Researcher at the Center for Security Studies at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, Switzerland.

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TO BEA

I will always admire how you live up to the principles
that you perceive to be true, wise and enlightened.

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

The growth of Intelligence abuses reflects a more general failure of our basic institutions.

US Senator Frank Church (1976)

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FOREWORD

At the height of the Cold War there was effectively a front line in Europe. Winston Churchill once called it the Iron Curtain and said it ran from Szczecin on the Baltic Sea to Trieste on the Adriatic Sea. Both sides deployed military power along this line in the expectation of a major combat. The Western European powers created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) precisely to fight that expected war but the strength they could marshal remained limited. The Soviet Union, and after the mid-1950s the Soviet Bloc, consistently had greater numbers of troops, tanks, planes, guns, and other equipment. This is not the place to pull apart analyses of the military balance, to dissect issues of quantitative versus qualitative, or rigid versus flexible tactics. Rather the point is that for many years there was a certain expectation that greater numbers would prevail and the Soviets might be capable of taking over all of Europe.

Planning for the day the Cold War turned hot, given the expected Soviet threat, necessarily led to thoughts of how to counter a Russian military occupation of Western Europe. That immediately suggested comparison with the Second World War, when Resistance movements in many European countries had bedevilled Nazi occupiers. In 1939–1945 the anti-Nazi Resistance forces had had to be improvised. How much the better, reasoned the planners, if the entire enterprise could be prepared and equipped in advance.

The executive agents in the creation of the stay-behind networks were the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States and the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS or MI6) of the United Kingdom. Other major actors included security services in a number of European countries. In all cases identical techniques were used. The intelligence services made an effort to establish distinct networks for spying on the occupiers, that is espionage, and for sabotage, or subverting an enemy occupation. To establish the networks the CIA and others recruited individuals willing to participate in these dangerous activities, often allowing such initial, or chief, agents to recruit additional sub-agents. Intelligence services provided some training, placed caches of arms, ammunition, radio equipment, and other items for their networks, and set up regular channels for contact. The degree of cooperation in some cases ranged up to the conduct of exercises with military units or paramilitary forces. The number of recruits for the

secret armies ranged from dozens in some nations to hundreds or even thousands in others.

The Resistance example was always an obvious one. Observers of the secret Cold War assumed the existence of the networks; so there are occasional references to the stay-behind networks in spy memoirs and literature. But by and large the subject was acknowledged with a wink and a nod. Until almost the end of the Cold War. In the summer of 1990, after the collapse of Soviet-dominated regimes in Eastern Europe, but prior to the final disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Italian government made public the existence of such a network in that country. Over the years since there has been a recurrent stream of revelations regarding similar networks in many European nations, and in a number of countries there have been official investigations.

For the first time in this book, Daniele Ganser has brought together the full story of the networks the Italians came to call 'Gladio'. This is a significant and disturbing history. The notion of the project in the intelligence services undoubtedly began as an effort to create forces that would remain quiescent until war brought them into play. Instead, in country after country we find the same groups of individuals or cells originally activated for the wartime function beginning to exercise their strength in peacetime political processes. Sometimes these efforts involved violence, even terrorism, and sometimes the terrorists made use of the very equipment furnished to them for their Cold War function. Even worse, police and security services in a number of cases chose to protect the perpetrators of crimes to preserve their Cold War capabilities. These latter actions resulted in the effective suppression of knowledge of Gladio networks long after their activities became not merely counterproductive but dangerous.

Mining evidence from parliamentary inquiries, investigative accounts, documentary sources, trials, and individuals he has interviewed, Ganser tracks the revelation of Gladio in many countries and fills in the record of what these networks actually did. Many of their accomplishments were in fact antidemocratic, undermining the very fabric of the societies they were meant to protect. Moreover, by laying the records in different nations side by side, Ganser's research shows a common process at work. That is, networks created to be quiescent became activists in political causes as a rule and not as an exception.

Deep as Dr Ganser's research has been, there is a side to the Gladio story he cannot yet reveal. This relates to the purposeful actions of the CIA, MI6 and other intelligence services. Because of the secrecy of government records in the United States, for example, it is still not possible to sketch in detail the CIA's orders to its networks, which could show whether there was a deliberate effort to interfere with political processes in the countries where Gladio networks were active. There were real efforts carried out by Gladio agents but their controllers' orders remain in the shadows, so it is not yet possible to establish the extent of the US role overall in the years of the Cold War. The same is true of MI6 for Great Britain and for security services elsewhere. At a minimum Dr Ganser's record shows that capabilities created for straightforward purposes as part of the Cold War ultimately turned to

FOREWORD

more sinister ends. Freedom of Information in the United States provides an avenue to open up government documents; but that process is exceedingly slow and subject to many exemptions, one of which is intended precisely to shield records on activities of this type. The United Kingdom has a rule that releases documents after a certain number of years, but there is a longer interval required for documents of this type, and exceptions are permitted to government when documents are finally released to the public. The information superhighway is barely a macadam path when it comes to throwing light on the truth of the Gladio networks.

In this age of global concern with terrorism it is especially upsetting to discover that Western Europe and the United States collaborated in creating networks that took up terrorism. In the United States such nations are called 'state sponsors' and are the object of hostility and sanction. Can it be the United States itself, Britain, France, Italy, and others who should be on the list of state sponsors? The Gladio story needs to be told completely so as to establish the truth in this matter. Daniele Ganser has taken the critical first step down this road. This book should be read to discover the overall contours of Gladio and to begin to appreciate the importance of the final answers that are still lacking.

John Prados
Washington, DC

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When looking for a PhD research topic in early 1998, I became interested in the Gladio phenomenon, of which I had not previously heard. After some research I realised that despite its great importance for the most recent political, social and military history of Western Europe and the United States, only very limited work had been carried out on the phenomenon of the secret NATO armies, with no single study on the topic available in English. As the complex structure of the network and the mysteries surrounding it increasingly caught my interest, many well-meaning friends advised me against taking it as a PhD topic. Very sensibly they argued that I would gain access neither to the archives of the secret services, nor to primary data on the topic from NATO and its Office of Security. Furthermore they predicted that the number of countries, which by the end of my research had unexpectedly risen to fourteen, as well as the time frame I intended to investigate in each of these countries, five decades, not only would wear me out, but would also necessarily leave my findings fragmented and incomplete. That in addition to these problems I would have to work with texts in more than ten different European languages, of which I personally could only read five, made matters crystal clear: Gladio was not a suitable PhD research topic.

With great fascination for the phenomenon, a certain degree of youthful stubbornness, and above all a supportive environment I nevertheless embarked upon the research project and dedicated the next four years of my life to the investigation. At the time my determination to proceed, and my ability to convince my advising professors, was based on one single original document from the Italian military secret service SIFAR, dated June 1, 1959 and entitled 'The special forces of SIFAR and Operation Gladio'. This document proved that a CIA- and NATO-linked secret army code-named Gladio had existed in Italy during the Cold War, yet further original documents were very hard to come by. In retrospect I therefore have to admit that my well-meaning friends had been right. For among the numerous obstacles that arose during the years of research many were the ones predicted.

First of all, the field of research was indeed large, both as to the number of countries, and to the time frame. I started with a focus on Italy, where operation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gladio was exposed in 1990. Based on the Italian sources I quickly realised, however, that the so-called stay-behind armies had existed in all 16 NATO countries during the Cold War. Further research led me to conclude that of the 16 NATO countries both Iceland, with no armed forces, and Canada, far removed from the Soviet frontier, could be neglected. Yet, while I was somewhat relieved to calculate that this would leave me with the analysis of stay-behind armies in 14 countries, I found with a certain surprise that secret stay-behind armies with indirect links to NATO had also existed in the four neutral countries, Sweden, Finland, Austria and my native Switzerland, during the Cold War. In this book I am presenting the data for the NATO countries only. A forthcoming publication will deal specifically with the equally sensitive issues of secret NATO-linked stay-behind armies in the neutral countries.

Next to the challenges that arise with respect to the number of countries, gathering data for each single country too proved difficult. It was most distressing that governments, NATO and secret services withheld requested documents despite a FOIA request to the CIA, numerous letters to NATO, and official requests to European governments. Next to only a very small number of primary documents, the analysis had therefore to be based on numerous secondary sources, including parliamentary reports, testimonies of persons involved as reported by the international press, articles, books and documentaries, needless to say, such secondary sources can never be a substitute for the original primary documents, and all future research must clearly aim for access to primary documents. If, however, the data presented hereafter first of all enables researchers to gain an overview of a phenomenon which otherwise might have remained inaccessible, and in the second place enables processes which in the future will lead to access to primary documents, then the main purposes of this book will have been achieved.

That despite the mentioned numerous obstacles, the years of intensive research have led to a hopefully valuable international analysis of the stay-behind armies and the secret war in Western Europe is to a large degree attributable to the international professional help and support that I was allowed to enjoy. First of all I want to thank my two academic advisers for their truly valuable assistance, Professor Georg Kreis of Basel University, and Professor Jussi Hanhimaki of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, formerly with the London School of Economics and Political Science where we met in a most stimulating environment. Their feedback on numerous drafts sharpened my questions when they were too vague. Their frank criticism helped me to focus on the secret armies when I was drifting away. And their experience in the field of academic research restrained my judgement, and opened the way for a balanced understanding. When I presented my Gladio research and passed my final PhD exams in September 2001, we all felt that it was a timely book, for in that month, investigations into international terrorism had become a high priority on the agenda. During the subsequent years we have in a very strange way become accustomed to living in a world that suffers from both war and terrorism, and my warm thanks therefore

also go to Professor Andreas Wenger, Director of the Center for Security Studies in Zurich, for his support for future research into Gladio and terrorism here at the institute.

Furthermore my gratitude goes to Washington-based CIA author William Blum who first drew my attention to Gladio and taught me a lot on covert action and secret warfare. Very warm thanks also go to Professor Noam Chomsky in Boston who not only encouraged my research, but also provided me with valuable contacts during our meetings in the United States and in Switzerland. In Cambridge, Professor Christopher Andrew supported my research, while in Washington, Professor Christopher Simpson drew my attention to interesting contacts in the United States. In Austria, Professor Siegfried Beer provided me with valuable data and kindly encouraged my research. In London, finally, I copied numerous valuable documents at the Statewatch institute, where Trevor Hemmings proved to me how excellent work can be done with little money.

It must be stated here at the outset of the book that all quotes other than from English originals are translations by the author, who alone bears responsibility for their accuracy. At the same time it goes without saying that the numerous countries could not have been investigated without the help of my international network, which assisted me both in the initial phase of locating and getting hold of the documents, and during subsequent translation hours. In Germany I want to thank journalist and Gladio author Leo Müller, as well as Erich Schmidt Eenboom from the research institute on peace and politics. In the Netherlands, Dr Paul Koedijk and Dr Cees Wiebes, as well as Frans Kluiters, all members of the Netherlands Intelligence Studies Association, kindly shared with me valuable Gladio material and interesting days in Amsterdam, while academic Micha de Roo assisted me with the Dutch translations. In Denmark, I want to thank Professor Paul Villaume of Copenhagen University who shared interesting data with me, and Eva Ellenberger of Basel University who helped me to understand the Danish texts. In Norway, I want to thank my friend Pal Johansen for our excellent time at the London School of Economics and Political Science and his professional help in crucial times when it came to the translation of Norwegian texts. In Austria, journalist Markus Kemmerling and the Zoom political magazine supported my research. In Basel, Ali Burhan Kirmizitas helped me greatly with the translation of Turkish texts and provided me with important documents on Gladio in Turkey. Academic Ivo Cunha kindly shared with me data on Gladio in Portugal and in Spain, while my university friends Baptiste Blanch and Francisco Bouzas assisted me with the Portuguese and Spanish translations. My friend and fellow academic Martin Kamber finally had the energy to plough through an early PhD manuscript of over a thousand pages, whereupon he wisely let me know that the text had to be shortened. Thanks to Ruth Eymann I was able to retreat to a both beautiful and silent chalet in a remote valley of the Swiss mountains to carry out that task.

After the PhD thesis had been accepted *insigni cum laude* at the history department of Basel University in Switzerland, Frank Cass and Andrew Humphrys of

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Daniele Ganser
Sils Maria, Switzerland

ACRONYMS

ACC	Allied Clandestine Committee
AN	Avanguardia Nazionale
AP	Aginter-Press
BCRA	Bureau Central de Renseignement et d'Action
BDJ	Bund Deutscher Jugend
BfV	Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz
BI	Bureau Inlichtingen
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst
BUPO	Bundespolizei
BVD	Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst
CAG	Centro Addestramento Guastatori
CCC	Cellules Communistes Combattantes
CCUO	Comité Clandestin Union Occidentale
CERP	Centre d'Entrainement des Reserves Parachutistes
CESID	Centro Superior de Informacion de la Defensa
CGT	Confederation Generale du Travail
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps
CIG	Central Intelligence Group
COI	Coordinator of Strategic Information
COS	CIA Chief of Station
CPC	Clandestine Planning Committee
DCI	Democrazia Christiana Italiana
DCI	Director of Central Intelligence
DDO	CIA Deputy Director of Operations
DDP	CIA Deputy Director of Plans
DGER	Direction Generale des Etudes et Recherches
DGS	Direction General De Seguridad
DGSE	Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur
DIA	Defence Intelligence Agency
DO	CIA Directorate of Operations
DP	CIA Directorate of Plans

ACRONYMS

DST	Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDP	Fronte Democratico Popolare
FHO	Fremde Heere Ost
FE	Forsvarets Efterretningstjeneste
FJ	Front de la Jeunesse
FM	Field Manual
GESTAPO	Geheime Staatspolizei
IDB	Inlichtingendienst Buitenland
ISI	Inter Services Intelligence
I&O	Intelligence en Operations
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KGB	Committee of the Security of the State
KKE	Greek Communist Party
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschland
LOK	Lochos Oreinion Katadromon
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, short Stasi
MHP	Millietici Hareket Partisi
MI5	Security Service
MI6	Secret Intelligence Service (SIS)
MIT	Milli Istihbaarat Teskilati
MRP	Mouvement Republicain Populaire
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIS	Norwegian Intelligence Service
NOS	NATO Office of Security
NSA	National Security Agency
NSC	National Security Council
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, short Nazi
OACI	Organisation Armee contre le Communisme International
OAS	Organisation de l'Armée Secrete
OeWSGV	Oesterreichischer Wander- Sport- und Geselligkeitsverein
OG	Organisation Gehlen
OHP	Ozel Harp Dairesi
OKK	Ozel Kuvvetler Komutanligi
OMPAM	Organizzazione Mondial del Pensiero e dell' Assistenza Massonica
ON	Ordine Nuovo
OPC	CIA Office of Policy Coordination
OSP	Office of Special Projects
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
P-26	Projekt 26
P-27	Projekt 27
P2	Propaganda Due
PCF	Parti Communiste Francais

ACRONYMS

PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PIDE	Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado
PKK	Parlamentarische Kontrollkommission
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion
ROC	Rocamboles
RPF	Rassemblement du Peuple Francais
S/B	Stay-behind
SAC	Service d'Action Civique
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAD	Sezione Addestramento Guastatori
SAS	Special Air Service
SAZ	Sectie Algemene Zaken
SDECE	Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre Espionnage
SDRA	Service De Renseignements et d'Action
SECED	Servicio Central de Documentacion de la Defensa
SEIN	Servicio Informacion Naval
SGR	Service General de Renseignement
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SID	Servizio Informazioni Difesa
SIFAR	Servizio di Informazioni delle Forze Armate
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
SISDE	Servizio Informazioni Sicurezza Democratica
SISMI	Servizio Informazioni Sicurezza Militare
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland
SPG	Special Procedures Group
SS	Schutzstaffel
TD	Technischer Dienst
TMBB	Tripartite Meeting Belgian/Brussels
UNA	Untergruppe Nachrichtendienst und Abwehr
UNO	United Nations Organisation
VALPO	Valtion Poliisi
WACL	World Anticommunist League
WNP	Westland New Post

INTRODUCTION

As the Cold War ended, following juridical investigations into mysterious acts of terrorism in Italy, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti was forced to confirm in August 1990 that a secret army existed in Italy and other countries across Western Europe that were part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Coordinated by the unorthodox warfare section of NATO, the secret army had been set up by the US secret service Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6 or SIS) after the end of the Second World War to fight Communism in Western Europe. The clandestine network, which after the revelations of the Italian Prime Minister was researched by judges, parliamentarians, academics and investigative journalists across Europe, is now understood to have been code-named 'Gladio' (the sword) in Italy, while in other countries the network operated under different names including 'Absalon' in Denmark, 'ROC' in Norway and 'SDRA8' in Belgium. In each country the military secret service operated the anti-Communist army within the state in close collaboration with the CIA or the MI6 unknown to parliaments and populations. In each country, leading members of the executive, including Prime Ministers, Presidents, Interior Ministers and Defence Ministers, were involved in the conspiracy, while the 'Allied Clandestine Committee' (ACC), sometimes also euphemistically called the 'Allied Co-ordination Committee' and the 'Clandestine Planning Committee' (CPC), less conspicuously at times also called 'Coordination and Planning Committee' of NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), coordinated the networks on the international level. The last confirmed secret meeting of ACC with representatives of European secret services took place on October 24, 1990 in Brussels.

As the details of the operation emerged, the press concluded that the 'story seems straight from the pages of a political thriller'.¹ The secret armies were equipped by the CIA and the MI6 with machine guns, explosives, munitions and high-tech communication equipment hidden in arms caches in forests, meadows and underground bunkers across Western Europe. Leading officers of the secret network trained together with the US Green Berets Special Forces in the United States of America and the British SAS Special Forces in England. Recruited among strictly anti-Communist segments of the society the secret Gladio soldiers

included moderate conservatives as well as right-wing extremists such as notorious right-wing terrorists Stefano delle Chiaie and Yves Guérin Serac. In its strategic design the secret army was a direct copy of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), which during the Second World War had parachuted into enemy-held territory and fought a secret war behind enemy lines.

In case of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe the secret Gladio soldiers under NATO command would have formed a so-called stay-behind network operating behind enemy lines, strengthening and setting up local resistance movements in enemy-held territory, evacuating shot-down pilots and sabotaging the supply lines and production centres of the occupation forces with explosives. Yet the Soviet invasion never came. The real and present danger in the eyes of the secret war strategists in Washington and London were the at-times numerically strong Communist parties in the democracies of Western Europe. Hence the network in the total absence of a Soviet invasion took up arms in numerous countries and fought a secret war against the political forces of the left. The secret armies, as the secondary sources now available suggest, were involved in a whole series of terrorist operations and human rights violations that they wrongly blamed on the Communists in order to discredit the left at the polls. The operations always aimed at spreading maximum fear among the population and ranged from bomb massacres in trains and market squares (Italy), the use of systematic torture of opponents of the regime (Turkey), the support for right-wing coup d'états (Greece and Turkey), to the smashing of opposition groups (Portugal and Spain). As the secret armies were discovered, NATO as well as the governments of the United States and Great Britain refused to take a stand on what by then was alleged by the press to be 'the best-kept, and most damaging, political-military secret since World War II'.²

A TERRORIST ATTACK IN ITALY

In a forest near the Italian village Peteano a car bomb exploded on May 31, 1972. The bomb gravely wounded one and killed three members of the Carabinieri, Italy's paramilitary police force. The Carabinieri had been lured to the spot by an anonymous phone call. Inspecting the abandoned Fiat 500, one of the Carabinieri had opened the hood of the car that triggered the bomb. An anonymous call to the police two days later implicated the Red Brigades, a Communist terrorist group attempting to change the balance of power in Italy at the time through hostage-takings and cold-blooded assassinations of exponents of the state. The police immediately cracked down on the Italian left and rounded up some 200 Communists. For more than a decade the Italian population believed that the Red Brigades had committed the Peteano terrorist attack.

Then, in 1984, young Italian Judge Felice Casson reopened the long dormant case after having discovered with surprise an entire series of blunders and fabrications surrounding the Peteano atrocity. Judge Casson found that there had been no police investigation on the scene. He also discovered that the report which at the time claimed that the explosive used in Peteano had been the one traditionally used by the Red Brigades was a forgery. Marco Morin, an expert for explosives of the Italian police, had deliberately provided fake expertise. He was a member of the Italian right-wing organisation 'Ordine Nuovo' and within the Cold War context contributed his part to what he thought was a legitimate way of combating the influence of the Italian Communists. Judge Casson was able to prove that the explosive used in Peteano contrary to Morin's expertise was C4, the most powerful explosive available at the time, used also by NATO. 'I wanted that new light should be shed on these years of lies and mysteries, that's all', Casson years later told journalists in his tiny office in an eighteenth-century courthouse on the banks of Venice's lagoon. 'I wanted that Italy should for once know the truth.'¹

On February 24, 1972, a group of Carabinieri had by chance discovered an underground arms cache near Trieste containing arms, munitions and C4 explosive identical to the one used in Peteano. The Carabinieri believed that they had unveiled the arsenal of a criminal network. Years later, the investigation of Judge Casson was able to reconstruct that they had stumbled across one of more than hundred underground arsenals of the NATO-linked stay-behind secret army that

in Italy was code-named Gladio, the sword. Casson found that the Italian military secret service and the government at the time had gone to great lengths in order to keep the Trieste discovery and above all its larger strategic context a secret.

As Casson continued to investigate the mysterious cases of Peteano and Trieste, he discovered with surprise that not the Italian left but Italian right-wing groups and the military secret service had been involved in the Peteano terror. Casson's investigation revealed that the right-wing organisation Ordine Nuovo had collaborated very closely with the Italian Military Secret Service, SID (Servizio Informazioni Difesa). Together they had engineered the Peteano terror and then wrongly blamed the militant extreme Italian left, the Red Brigades. Judge Casson identified Ordine Nuovo member Vincenzo Vinciguerra as the man who had planted the Peteano bomb. Being the last man in a long chain of command, Vinciguerra was arrested years after the crime. He confessed and testified that he had been covered by an entire network of sympathisers in Italy and abroad who had ensured that after the attack he could escape. 'A whole mechanism came into action', Vinciguerra recalled, 'that is, the Carabinieri, the Minister of the Interior, the customs services and the military and civilian intelligence services accepted the ideological reasoning behind the attack'.²

Vinciguerra was right to point out that the Peteano terror had occurred during a particularly agitated historical period. With the beginning of the flower power revolution, the mass student protests against violence in general and the war in Vietnam in particular, the ideological battle between the political left and the political right had intensified in Western Europe and the United States in the late 1960s. The vast majority of people engaged in the left-wing social movements relied on non-violent forms of protest including demonstrations, civil disobedience and above all heated debates. In the Italian parliament the strong Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI), and to a lesser degree the Italian Socialist Party (Partito Socialista Italiano, PSI), sympathised with the movement. They criticised the United States, the Vietnam War and above all the distribution of power in Italy, for despite their numerical strength in parliament the PCI was not assigned ministerial positions and hence was deliberately kept outside the government. Also the Italian right knew that this was a blatant discrimination and a violation of basic democratic principles.

It was in this Cold War context and the battle for power in Western Europe that the extreme left and the extreme right resorted to terror. On the extreme left the Italian Communist Red Brigades and Germany's Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) were the two most prominent terrorist groups in Western Europe. Founded by students of the University of Trento with little to no military training, the Red Brigades included Margherita Cagol, Alberto Franceschini and Alberto Curcio. Like the RAF, they were convinced that violence had to be employed in order to change the existing power structure that they perceived as unjust and corrupt. Like the RAF the terror of the Red Brigades did not attack mass gatherings of the population, but very selectively targeted individuals whom they thought represented the 'state apparatus', such as bankers, generals and ministers whom they

kidnapped and often assassinated. Operating above all in the 1970s the death toll of the Red Brigades in Italy reached 75 people. Then, due to their limited military and strategic skills and experience they were rounded up, arrested, tried and imprisoned.

On the other side of the Cold War spectrum also the extreme right resorted to violence. In Italy the network included secret Gladio soldiers, the military secret services and fascist organisations such as Ordine Nuovo. Contrary to the terror of the left, the terror of the right aimed to strike fear to the bones of the entire society and hence secretly planted its bombs among the population to kill large numbers indiscriminately in order to wrongly blame the Communists. The Peteano terror, as judge Casson found, belonged to this sort of crime and continued a sequence that had started in 1969. In that year, shortly before Christmas four bombs had exploded in public places in Rome and Milan. The bombs killed 16 and maimed and wounded 80, most of which were farmers who after a day on the market had deposited their modest earnings in the Farmer's Bank on the Piazza Fontana in Milan. According to an evil strategy the terror was wrongly blamed on the Communists and the extreme left, traces were covered up and arrests followed immediately. The population at large had little chances to find out the truth, as the military secret service went to great lengths to cover up the crime. In Milan one of the deadly bombs had not gone off due to timer failure, but in an immediate cover-up the bomb was destroyed on the scene by the secret service, while parts of a bomb were planted in the villa of well-known leftist editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.³

'The official figures say that alone in the period between January 1, 1969 and December 31, 1987, there have been in Italy 14591 acts of violence with a political motivation', Italian Senator Giovanni Pellegrino, president of Italy's parliamentary commission investigating Gladio and the massacres, recalled the very violent period of Italy's most recent history. 'It is maybe worth remembering that these "acts" have left behind 491 dead and 1181 injured and maimed. Figures of a war, with no parallel in any other European country.'⁴ Following the Piazza Fontana massacre of 1969 and the Peteano terrorist attack of 1972, prominent massacres in Italy included a bomb which on May 28, 1974 exploded in Brescia in the midst of an anti-Fascist demonstration, killing eight and injuring and maiming 102. On August 4, 1974 another bomb exploded on the Rome-to-Munich train 'Italicus Express', killing 12 and injuring and maiming 48. The atrocities culminated on a sunny afternoon during the Italian national holiday when on August 2, 1980 a massive explosion ripped through the waiting room of the second class at the Bologna railway station, killing 85 people in the blast and seriously injuring and maiming a further 200. The Bologna massacre ever since ranges amongst the largest terrorist onslaughts that Europe had seen in the twentieth century.

Contrary to the Red Brigades who ended up in jail, the terrorists of the right mysteriously escaped after each massacre because, as Vinciguerra correctly pointed out, the security apparatus of the Italian state and the military secret services protected them. As the Piazza Fontana terror was years later traced back to the Italian right, Ordine Nuovo member Franco Freda was questioned whether

in retrospect he feels that powerful people higher up in the hierarchy including Generals and Ministers had manipulated him. Freda, a declared admirer of Hitler who had published 'Mein Kampf' in Italian in his own small publishing house, replied that according to his understanding nobody can escape manipulation: 'The life of every one is manipulated by those with more power', right-wing terrorist Freda declared. 'In my case I accept that I have been a puppet in the hands of ideas, but not in the hands of men from the secret services here [in Italy] or abroad. That is to say that I have voluntarily fought my own war, following the strategic design that came from my own ideas. That is all.'⁵

In March 2001 General Giandelio Maletti, former head of Italian counter-intelligence, suggested that next to the Gladio secret army, the Italian secret service and a group of Italian right-wing terrorists, the massacres which had discredited the Italian Communists had also been supported by the White House in Washington and the US secret service CIA. At a trial of right-wing extremists accused to have been involved in the Piazza Fontana massacre, Maletti testified: 'The CIA, following the directives of its government, wanted to create an 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.' 'The impression was that the Americans would do anything to stop Italy from sliding to the left', the General explained and added: 'Don't forget that Nixon was in charge and Nixon was a strange man, a very intelligent politician, but a man of rather unorthodox initiatives.' In retrospect the 79-year-old Maletti offered criticism and regret: 'Italy has been dealt with as a sort of protectorate' of the United States. 'I am ashamed to think that we are still subject to special supervision.'⁶

Already in the 1970s and 1980s the Italian parliament, within which the Communist and Socialist parties controlled a large share of the power, had become increasingly alarmed by the fact that a seemingly endless chain of mysterious massacres shocked the country without that the terrorists nor the people behind them could be identified. Although rumours among the Italian left already at the time had it that the mysterious acts of violence represented a form of undeclared secret warfare of the United States against the Italian Communists, the far-fetched theory could not be proven. Then, in 1988 the Italian Senate established a special investigative parliamentary commission presided by Senator Libero Gualtieri under the telling name of 'Parliamentary Commission of the Italian Senate for the Investigation of terrorism in Italy and the reasons why the individuals responsible for the massacres could not be identified: Terrorism, the massacres and the political-historical contest.'⁷ The work of the parliamentary investigation proved to be extremely difficult. Witnesses withheld testimony. Documents were destroyed. And the commission itself, made up of the competing political parties from the Italian left and the Italian right, was split on what exactly the historical truth in Italy was, and disagreed on how many of its sensitive findings should be presented to the public.

Judge Casson, meanwhile from the testimonies of Peteano terrorist Vincenzo Vinciguerra and the documents he had discovered, started to understand the

complex secret military strategy that had been employed. He gradually started to understand that he was dealing not with private, but with state terrorism, paid by tax money. Under the name 'strategy of tension' the massacres aimed to create tension among the entire population. The right-wing extremists and their supporters within NATO feared that the Italian Communists would become too powerful and hence in an attempt to 'destabilise in order to stabilise' the secret right-wing soldiers linked to the Gladio armies carried out massacres, which they blamed on the left. 'As far as the secret services are concerned the Peteano attack is part of what has been called "the strategy of tension"', Judge Casson explained the strategy to non-experts in a BBC documentation on Gladio. 'That's to say, to create tension within the country to promote conservative, reactionary social and political tendencies. While this strategy was being implemented, it was necessary to protect those behind it because evidence implicating them was being discovered. Witnesses withheld information to cover right-wing extremists.'⁸ Right-wing terrorist Vinciguerra, who like others with contacts to the Gladio branch of the Italian military secret service, had been killed for his political conviction, related: 'You had to attack civilians, the people, women, children, innocent people, unknown people far removed from any political game. 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.'⁹

The monstrosity of the diabolic plan was only slowly being uncovered, and still today a great number of missing links remain and above all original documents are lacking. 'With the massacre of Peteano, and with all those that have followed', Vinciguerra explained on trial in 1984, 'the knowledge should by now be clear that there existed a real live structure, occult and hidden, with the capacity of giving a strategic direction to the outrages'. The structure, he said, 'lies within the state itself. There exists in Italy a secret force parallel to the armed forces, composed of civilians and military men, in an anti-Soviet capacity that is, to organise a resistance on Italian soil against a Russian army'. Without giving the code name this testimony revealed the NATO-linked Gladio secret stay-behind army. It is, Vinciguerra explained, 'a secret organisation, a super-organisation with a network of communications, arms and explosives, and men trained to use them'. Vinciguerra disclosed that this 'super-organisation which, lacking a Soviet military invasion which might not happen, took up the task, on NATO's behalf, of preventing a slip to the left in the political balance of the country. This they did, with the assistance of the official secret services and the political and military forces.'¹⁰

More than two decades have passed since right-wing terrorist Vinciguerra had offered this far-reaching testimony, which for the first time in Italy's history linked both the Gladio stay-behind and NATO directly to the terrorist massacres that the country had suffered from. Only now, years later, does a larger research public understand what Vinciguerra actually meant, as the existence of the secret stay-behind network has been confirmed and the arms and explosives had been dug up.

Is Vinciguerra thus a credible source? The events following the trial suggest that he is. The secret army was discovered in 1990. And in what amounted to an indirect confirmation that the right-wing terrorist had revealed the truth, Vinciguerra immediately lost all higher protection he had enjoyed during the previous years. In marked contrast to other right-wing terrorists that had collaborated with the Italian military secret service and walked free, Vinciguerra after his revelations was sentenced for life and imprisoned.

But Vinciguerra had not been the first to draw the link between Gladio, NATO and the massacres, he had not been the first to reveal the Gladio conspiracy in Italy. In 1974 the Italian investigating judge Giovanni Tamburino in the course of his investigation into right-wing terrorism in Italy had taken the unprecedented step of arresting General Vito Miceli, the chief of the Italian military secret service SID on the charge of ‘promoting, setting up, and organising, together with others, a secret association of military and civilians aimed at provoking an armed insurrection to bring about an illegal change in the constitution of the state and the form of government’.¹¹

Miceli, previously responsible for the NATO Security Office, on trial on November 17, 1974 furiously revealed the existence of the Gladio army hidden as a special branch of the military secret service SID: ‘A Super SID on my orders? Of course! But I have not organised it myself to make a coup d’état. This was the United States and NATO who asked me to do it!’¹² With his excellent transatlantic contacts Miceli got off lightly. He was released on bail and spent six months in a military hospital. Forced by the investigations of Judge Casson, Prime Minister Andreotti 16 years later exposed the Gladio secret in front of the Italian parliament. This angered Miceli greatly. Shortly before his death in October 1990 he shouted: ‘I have gone to prison because I did not want to reveal the existence of this super secret organisation. And now Andreotti comes along and tells it to Parliament!’¹³

In prison Peteano bomber Vinciguerra explained to judge Casson that not only Ordine Nuovo but also other prominent Italian right-wing organisations such as Avanguardia Nazionale had cooperated with the military secret service and the Gladio secret army to weaken the political left in Italy: ‘The terrorist line was followed by camouflaged people, people belonging to the security apparatus, or those linked to the state apparatus through rapport or collaboration. I say that every single outrage that followed from 1969 fitted into a single organised matrix.’ Right-wing terrorist and Ordine Nuovo member Vinciguerra explained that he and his fellow right-wing extremists had been recruited to cooperate with the Gladio secret army to carry out the most bloody operations: ‘Avanguardia Nazionale, like Ordine Nuovo, were being mobilised into the battle as part of an anti-Communist strategy originating not with organisations deviant from the institutions of power, but from the state itself, and specifically from within the ambit of the state’s relations within the Atlantic Alliance.’¹⁴

Judge Casson was alarmed at what he had found. In an attempt to eradicate this rotten core of the state he followed the traces of the mysterious Gladio underground army which had manipulated Italian politics during the Cold War and in

January 1990 requested permission from the highest Italian authorities to extend his research to the archives of the Italian military secret service Servizio informazioni sicurezza Militare (SISMI), until 1978 known as SID. In July 1990, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti consented and allowed Judge Casson to research in the archives of Palazzo Braschi, the headquarters of SISMI in Rome. It was inside Palazzo Braschi where Casson discovered the documents, which proved for the first time that a secret army code-named Gladio existed in Italy as a sub-branch of the military secret service with the task to carry out unorthodox warfare. Moreover Casson found documents that connected both the biggest military alliance of the world, NATO, and the world's only remaining superpower, the United States, to Gladio, subversion, and right-wing terrorists in Italy and also other countries in Western Europe. This knowledge meant that Casson for some time was in serious danger, of which he was aware, for Italian judges with too much knowledge had been shot in the streets of Italy before: 'From July until October 1990 I was the only one who knew something [about operation Gladio], this could have been unfortunate for me.'¹⁵

As Casson survived, the knot unravelled. Based on the documents he had discovered, Casson contacted the parliamentary commission, which under Senator Libero Gualtieri was investigating the massacres and terrorism. Gualtieri and his fellow Senators were greatly worried by the findings which Casson had made and agreed that the investigation into the Gladio secret army had to be included in the work of the commission, for it represented the key to both the massacres and the reasons why they had remained mysterious for so many years. On August 2, 1990 the Senators ordered the head of the Italian executive, Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, 'to inform the parliament within sixty days with respect to the existence, characteristics and purpose of a parallel and occult structure which is said to have operated within our secret service of the military with the aim to condition the political life of the country'.¹⁶

The next day, on August 3, 1990, Prime Minister Andreotti took a stand in front of the parliamentary commission and for the first time in Italy's post-war history confirmed as acting member of the Italian government that a NATO-linked secret security structure had existed in the country. Andreotti assured the Senators that he would present a written report to the parliamentary commission on the secret security structure within 60 days: 'I will present to the Commission a very precise report which I have asked the Defence Department to prepare. It is about the activities based on NATO planning that have been started for the eventuality of an attack and occupation of Italy or parts of Italy. As far as I have been informed by the secret services such activities have continued until 1972. After that it was decided that they were no longer necessary. I will provide the Commission with all the necessary documentation, be it on the problem in general, be it on the specific findings made by judge Casson in the context of his investigations into the Peteano massacre.'¹⁷

Aged 71 at the time of his Gladio testimony, Giulio Andreotti, is not a regular source by any standards. At the time of his testimony he looked back on a lifelong

political career with probably no parallels in any country of Western Europe. As the leading representative of the conservative Christian Democratic Party (Democrazia Cristiana Italiana, DCI), which had functioned as a bulwark against the PCI during the entire Cold War, Andreotti had enjoyed the support of the United States. He personally knew all US presidents, and by many within and outside Italy was considered to be the most powerful politician of Italy's First Republic (1945–1993).

Although the governments in Italy's fragile First Republic had changed in short intervals Andreotti throughout the Cold War had cunningly managed to remain in power in numerous coalitions and had thus established himself as the dominant presence in the Italian government residence at Palazzo Chigi in Rome. Born in Rome in 1919, Andreotti became Minister of the Interior at the age of 35, and thereafter established an unprecedented record by holding the office of Prime Minister seven times, and serving furthermore 21 times as Minister, of which six times as Foreign Minister. His admirers compared him with Julius Caesar and called him 'divine Giulio', while his critics have accused him of being the quintessential back-room wheeler-dealer and nicknamed him 'the uncle'. Allegedly Andreotti's favourite gangster movie was 'Good fellows' for Robert De Niro's line 'never rat on your friends and always keep your mouth shut'. Most agreed that it was part of Andreotti's strategy which had allowed divine Giulio to survive a large number of Italy's intrigues and crimes, many of which he was directly involved in.¹⁸

By exposing Operation Gladio and the secret armies of NATO 'the uncle' had broken his silence. As the First Republic collapsed with the end of the Cold War, powerful Andreotti, then an old man, was dragged in front of numerous courts in Italy which accused him of having manipulated the political institutions, of having cooperated with the mafia and of having given secret orders according to which opponents were assassinated. 'The Justice system has gone crazy', acting Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi shouted when in November 2002 the appeals court in Perugia sentenced Andreotti for 24 years in prison. As the judges received death threats and were put under police protection, the television channels interrupted their broadcasting on the Italian football league to report that Andreotti had been found guilty for having given Mafia boss Gaetano Badalamenti the order to kill investigative journalist Mino Pecorelli in 1979 in order to cover up the truth on the assassination of Aldo Moro, the chairman of the DCI. The Catholic Church attempted to save the reputation of divine Giulio when Cardinal Fiorenzo Angelini, upon learning the shattering news, declared: 'Also Jesus Christ was crucified before his resurrection.' Yet despite all the alarm Andreotti did not end up behind prison bars as the verdicts were overruled in October 2003 and 'the uncle' walked free.

During the first Gladio revelations in front of the Italian Senators on August 3, 1990 'the uncle' had with reference to the secret stay-behind army cunningly claimed that 'such activities have continued until 1972' in order to limit the personal damage which loomed. For in 1974 as acting Defence Minister Andreotti had gone on the

record stating to a judicial inquiry investigating right-wing massacres: 'I can say that the head of the secret services has repeatedly and unequivocally excluded the existence of a hidden organisation of any type or size.'¹⁹ In 1978 he made a similar testimony in front of judges investigating a right-wing bombing in Milan.

When the Italian press revealed that the secret Gladio army, far from having been closed down in 1972 was still active Andreotti's lie collapsed. Thereafter in August and September 1990, like seldom before during his time in office, Andreotti very actively transferred international messages, searched contacts and had meetings with numerous ambassadors.²⁰ As international support was not forthcoming, the Prime Minister, fearing for his power, went into the offensive and attempted to highlight the responsibility of the White House in the United States and numerous other governments in Western Europe who had all not only conspired in the secret war against the Communists but actively participated in it. In order to draw attention to the involvement of foreign nations, Andreotti employed an effective but somewhat awkward strategy. On October 18, 1990 he sent his messenger to walk in a great hurry the few steps from the government residence at Palazzo Chigi in Rome to Piazza San Macuto where the parliamentary commission resided. The messenger delivered Andreotti's report entitled 'The so called "Parallel SID" – The Gladio Case' to the secretary at the reception of Palazzo Chigi. A member of the parliamentary commission, Senator Roberto Ciciomessere, heard by coincidence that Andreotti's report had arrived and passed by the secretary at Palazzo Chigi. Upon looking through the text the Senator was mightily surprised, for in it Andreotti provided not only a brief description of operation Gladio, but contrary to his August 3 statement admitted also that the occult Gladio organisation was still active.

Senator Ciciomessere asked for a photocopy, yet this was denied, as according to standing procedures, first the President of the commission, Senator Gualtieri, was to read the report. Yet Gualtieri never got to read this first version of Andreotti's report on operation Gladio. For exactly when Gualtieri was about to put the sensitive document into his briefcase three days later to take it home and read it over the weekend the telephone rang, and on the phone was the Prime Minister himself who told the Senator that he immediately needed his report back 'because a few passages need reworking'. Gualtieri was annoyed but assented reluctantly and sent the document back to Andreotti's Palazzo Chigi after photocopies had been made.²¹ The unusual manoeuvres of Giulio Andreotti sent a roar through Italy and heightened the attention. The newspapers headlined 'Operation Giulio' in a word play on 'Operation Gladio' and between 50,000 and 400,000 annoyed, scared and angry people organised by the PCI marched through central Rome in one of the biggest demonstrations in the capital for years chanting and carrying banners: 'We want truth.' Some marchers dressed up as Gladiators. While PCI leader Achille Occhetto told the crowd in the central Piazza del Popolo that this march will force the government to reveal the dark secrets long held back: 'We are here to obtain truth and transparency.'²²

On October 24 Senator Gualtieri had Andreotti's report on the 'Parallel SID' back in his hands. Shortened by two pages this final version was now only ten

pages long. Senator Gualtieri compared it with the photocopies made of the first version and immediately noted that sensitive parts especially on the international connection and similar secret organisations in other countries had been cut out. Furthermore the secret parallel organisation, which before had been spoken of in the present tense implying continuous existence, was now spoken of in the past tense. The awkward strategy of Andreotti to send in a document, withdraw and amend it, only to provide it anew, could thus hide nothing. Observers agreed that the manoeuvre necessarily drew attention exactly to the amended parts, hence the international dimension of the affair, in order to take away some weight from Andreotti's shoulders. But no international support was forthcoming.

In his final report Andreotti explained that Gladio had been conceived as a network of clandestine resistance within NATO countries to confront an eventual Soviet invasion. After the war the Italian military secret service Servizio di Informazioni delle Forze Armate (SIFAR) predecessor of the SID, and the CIA had signed 'an accord relative to the "organisation and activity of the post-occupation clandestine network", an accord commonly referred to as Stay Behind, in which all preceding commitments relevant to matters concerning Italy and the United States were reconfirmed'. The cooperation between the CIA and the Italian military secret service, as Andreotti explained in the document, was supervised and coordinated by secret non-orthodox warfare centres of NATO: 'Once the clandestine resistance organisation was constituted, Italy was called upon to participate... in the works of the CCP (Clandestine Planning Committee) of 1959, operating within the ambit of SHAPE [NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe]...; in 1964 the Italian secret service also entered the ACC (Allied Clandestine Committee).'²³

The secret Gladio army, as Andreotti revealed, was well armed. The equipment provided by the CIA was buried in 139 hiding spots across the country in forests, meadows and even under churches and cemeteries. According to the explanations of Andreotti the Gladio caches included 'portable arms, ammunition, explosives, hand grenades, knives and daggers, 60 mm mortars, several 57 mm recoilless rifles, sniper rifles, radio transmitters, binoculars and various tools'.²⁴ Andreotti's sensational testimony did not only lead to an outcry concerning the corruption of the government and the CIA among the press and the population, but also to a hunt for the secret arms caches. Padre Giuciano recalls the day when the press came to search for the hidden Gladio secrets in his church with ambiguous feelings: 'I was forewarned in the afternoon when two journalists from "Il Gazzettino" asked me if I knew anything about arms deposits here at the church. They started to dig right here and found two boxes right away. Then the text also said a thirty centimetres from the window. So they came over here and dug down. One box was kept aside by them because it contained a phosphorous bomb. They sent the Carabinieri outside whilst two experts opened this box, another had two machine guns in it. All the guns were new, in perfect shape. They had never been used.'²⁵

Contrary to the testimony of right-wing terrorist Vinciguerra of the 1980s, Andreotti stressed in his 1990 report that the Italian military secret service in general as well as the Gladio members in particular had nothing to do with the terror that

Italy had suffered from. He explained that all Gladiators before their recruitment had gone through intensive testing and were chosen based on the 'rigorous application' of the Secret Service Act to ensure their 'scrupulous fidelity to the values of the anti-fascist republican constitution' and to exclude anyone who held administrative or political office. Moreover, the law required that, as Andreotti noted, 'the preselected subjects do not have a penal record, do not partake in active politics, nor participate in any sort of extremist movement'.²⁶ At the same time Andreotti stressed that the members of the network could not be questioned by judges and that member names and further details on the secret army were classified. The 'operation, on account of its current forms of organisation and application – as foreseen by NATO directives and integrated into its relative planning – is to be carried out and refined in a framework of absolute secrecy.'²⁷

The Andreotti revelations on the 'parallel SID' shocked Italy. For many, a secret CIA NATO army in Italy and beyond seemed hardly credible. Was such a structure at all legal? The Italian daily *La Stampa* harshly commented: 'No raison d'état could be worth maintaining, covering up or defending a secret military structure composed of ideologically selected members – dependent upon, or at least under the influence of, a foreign power – that allegedly serves as an instrument of political struggle. No definition could be given to it other than high treason and an attack on the Constitution.'²⁸ In the Italian Senate representatives of the Green Party, the Communists and the Independent Leftist Party accused the government of having used the Gladio units for domestic surveillance and acts of terror to condition the political climate. Above all the Italian Communist Party (PCI) was convinced that not foreign armies but they themselves had been the true target of the Gladio armies during the entire post-war period. Commentators insisted that 'with this mysterious Parallel SID, conjured up to head off an impossible coup by the left, we have seriously risked making a coup d'état by the right possible... We cannot accept that... this super SID was passed off as a military instrument destined to operate "in case of enemy occupation". The true enemy is only and has always been the Italian Communist party, i.e. an internal enemy.'²⁹

Unwilling to shoulder the blame alone Prime Minister Andreotti on the very same day that he presented his final Gladio report stepped in front of the Italian parliament and declared: 'Each chief of government has been informed of the existence of Gladio'.³⁰ This caused massive embarrassment and compromised, among others, former Socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi (1983–1987), former Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini of the Republican Party (1981–1982) who at the time of Andreotti's revelations was President of the Senate, former Prime Minister Arnaldo Forlani (1980–1981) who in 1990 was serving as secretary of the ruling DCI, and above all former Prime Minister Francesco Cossiga (1978–1979) who in 1990 was the acting Italian President. The high-ranking magistrates thus drawn into the abyss by Andreotti reacted with confusion. Craxi claimed that he had not been informed, until he was confronted with a document on Gladio he had signed himself as Prime Minister. Spadolini and Forlani also suffered from general amnesia, but later had to make smaller amendments to their statements. Spadolini to