

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

Master's Thesis

Cold War Operation Gladio and Modern Hybrid Warfare



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Master in International Security Studies

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Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague, Czech Republic
Date: 30 July 2024
Signature of the author

Matteo Fiorino

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References

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Abstract

This thesis examines the structure and effects of the various Stay-Behind networks in the countries where they were established. Using historical research and analysis of these covert operations all over Europe in the first two chapters, this paper seeks to examine how the construction of those secret networks impacted the economic, political, and social equilibrium of the concerned territories. The case studies contained in the first two chapters of France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, Turkey, and Italy will demonstrate how those structures, even if established in different countries, had common elements and shared the same objective. In the third chapter, a study on the definition and application of hybrid warfare will be effectuated, and various examples will be furnished, with the objective of giving the reader concrete examples of how the modern conflicts that we are facing are usually far from the regular battles faced in the past. This thesis argues that even if the Stay-Behind networks are part of an operation that happened decades ago, a connection between them and methods of hybrid warfare could be effectuated. This connection will be represented by two different approaches, an offensive and a defensive one, and it will be supported by examples showing the impact that those approaches had and could have on our modern society.

Keywords

Stay-Behind, Gladio, Hybrid Warfare, Cold War, Total Defense.

Abstrakt

Tato práce zkoumá strukturu a účinky různých sítí Stay-Behind v zemích, kde byly založeny. Na základě historického výzkumu a analýzy těchto tajných operací po celé Evropě se v prvních dvou kapitolách práce snaží prozkoumat, jak konstrukce těchto tajných sítí ovlivnila hospodářskou, politickou a sociální rovnováhu dotčených území. Případové studie obsažené v prvních dvou kapitolách o Francii, Belgii, Lucembursku, Dánsku, Turecku a Itálii ukáží, jak tyto struktury, i když vznikly v různých zemích, měly společné prvky a stejný cíl. Ve třetí kapitole bude provedena studie o definici a aplikaci hybridní války a budou uvedeny různé příklady s cílem poskytnout čtenáři konkrétní příklady toho, jak jsou moderní konflikty, kterým čelíme, obvykle vzdáleny běžným bojům, jimž jsme čelili v minulosti. Tato práce tvrdí, že i když jsou sítě Stay-Behind součástí operace, která se odehrála před desítkami let, lze mezi nimi a metodami hybridní války zefektivnit spojení. Toto spojení bude představeno dvěma různými přístupy, útočným a obranným, a bude podpořeno příklady ukazujícími dopad, který tyto přístupy měly a mohly mít na naši moderní společnost.

Klíčová slova

Stay-Behind, Gladio, Hybridní válka, Studená válka, Totální obrana.

Název práce

Operace Gladio za studené války a moderní hybridní válka.

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List of abbreviation

ACC = Allied Clandestine Committee

ACPO = Action Politique

BCRA = Bureaux Central de renseignement et d'Action

BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation

CAG = Centro Addestramento Guastatori

CIA = Central Intelligence Agency

CPC = Clandestine Plan Committee

DCI = Partito della Democrazia Cristiana

Department EH = Electra House

DST = Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire

DGER = Direction Generale des Etudes et de Recherche

ECA = Esercito Clandestino Anticomunista

KSC = Komunistická Strana Československa

MIR = Military Intelligence, Research

MI6 = Military Intelligence, section 6

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSC = United Nations Security Council resolution

OSS = Office of Strategic Services

PCF = Parti communiste français

PCI = Partito Comunista Italiano

PSI = Partito Sociale Italiano

PSIUP = Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria

RSI = Repubblica Socialista Italiana

SS = Schutzstaffel

SAS = Special Air Service

SDECE = Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionage

Section D = Destruction

SGRS = Service Général du Renseignement et de la Sécurité

SIFAR = Servizio informazioni forze armate

SIS = Secret Intelligence Service

SOE = Special Operations Executive

SRE = Service de Reinsegnement de l'Etat

UK = United Kingdom

USSR = Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic

WW2 = Second World War

Literature Review

Gérald Arboit, in his article “Retour sur les reseaux Stay Behind en Europe: le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise,” offers a very interesting analysis of the Stay-Behind networks and their structure in Europe.

Daniele Ganser, in his book "NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe," talks about the origins of the Gladio operation, connecting it to the various occidental countries where the stay-behind net was created such for example as Italy, France; Belgium and Denmark. This is an interesting work that offers a good overview and the functioning of the stay-behind network in all of Europe.

“Nome in codice Gladio” by Mirko Croccoli offers very detailed research of the Gladio operation and describes its effects on the Italian Plomb Ages; therefore, it has to be included in this thesis.

Leopoldo Nuti's article “The Italian ‘Stay-Behind’ Network – The Origins of Operation ‘Gladio’” describes in detail the origin of the paramilitary structure.

Gérald Arboit in his research “quelles armées secrètes de l'OTAN” offers a good study over the structure of the Stay-Behind organization, its creation and the role that those secrets structures had across Europe.

“Stay Behind: A Clandestine Cold War Phenomenon” by Olav Riste offers a good overview of the clandestine net established in various Western countries to avoid any Soviet occupation or took off power in those territories.

“Gladio: The Secret U.S. War to Subvert Italian Democracy in Covert Action” by Arthur E. Rowse offers a good description of Gladio's roots and the connection between the CIA and the various Italian actors.

Jéronimo Barbin in his paper « La guerre hybride: un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles » offers a really good view on the concept of hybrid warfare. How this concept is understood and adopted by the various nations.

Jean-Charles Coste in « De la guerre hybride à l'hybridité cyberélectronique ». Offers a good understanding of how information-disinformation plays a crucial role in modern conflicts, especially considering the dimension of cyber warfare.

Otto C. Fiala, in his work “Resistance Operating Concept,” offers a really good perspective on the modern way of conflicts that are used in our time, where direct confrontation between two states is not usual. Also, a lot of techniques implemented in Gladio Operation could be identified in hybrid warfare doctrine and will be compared further in this work with the approach of Total Defence.

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War represented one of the periods with the most tension after the Second World War. This non-declared conflict was fought between two blocks, the Occidental one, represented by the US and its allies, and the Eastern block, led by Russia and its allies (USSR). The Cold War started in the aftermath of the Second World Conflict until 26 December 1991 (the fall of the USSR). It took its name from the definition given by journalist Walter Lippmann to indicate that it was a war of words and ideas. In opposition to a direct conflict, the Cold one was fought with culture, sport, propaganda, and intelligence services.

It is at this time that both blocks established many covert operations; one of them, the creation of the Stay-Behind networks, is at the core of this work. This operation aimed to create a net of operational teams in various allied countries with the knowledge to conduct sabotage and guerilla actions on their national soil. The friendly countries, all members of NATO or allied with the United States, were kept in the dark concerning these operations that were conducted mainly by the secret services of the countries, backed up and financed by the CIA. The most famous Stay-Behind network was the Italian one called Gladio. It was acknowledged by the public in 1990, and after that, many allied countries started to look for similar structures in their territories, and some of them found it. The main objective of the Stay-Behind networks was to oppose resistance to an enemy invasion; in the context of the Cold War, the enemy was represented by the USSR.

The motivation at the core of this work will be in the first chapters to deepen the knowledge of such a particular operation conducted in a special context as the Cold War. In the third chapter, the main focus will be to connect an operation carried out decades ago with the current method of warfare characterized by a concept of hybridity. This work seeks to connect the Stay Behind networks that operated in Europe to the modern hybrid warfare concept that we are facing now. To do so, a historical analysis of the Stay Behind

organizations will be effectuated, followed by a comparison with the modern tactics of conflict faced in our time and how the two could be linked.

The thesis is composed of three chapters, the first one aims to clarify the concept of a Stay-Behind operation, study how those operations were structured, how and why they were created in the aftermath of the Second World War. Then examples of such structures will be furnished, considering various European countries as case studies explaining the peculiarity of the networks in every territory considered. The case studies selected for the first chapter will be France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, and Turkey.

The second chapter will focus only on the network in Italy, named Gladio, from the sword carried by the legionaries during ancient Rome. It was the first country to acknowledge those secret structures, and the Latin country represented one of the most important territories for Washington due to the popularity of the communist party and its proximity with the USSR. The Stay-Behind network in Italy was accused, instead of being dormant in the eventuality of a foreign invasion, of conducting illegal activities, such as terrorist attacks, false flag operations, and misinformation campaigns. The study in this paper will try to make light of those accusations furnishing a historical and political perspective, focusing on the creation of the Gladio network and its role in the peninsula after the Second World War.

The third and last chapter of this thesis will have hybrid warfare as the main subject. In the first part of the chapter, a definition of such a complex term will be established considering as starting line the current used descriptions. In the second part of the chapter, examples will be furnished on modern operations that are considered hybrid, their planning, applications and effects. In the last part of the chapter, hybrid warfare will be compared with the stay-behind networks; it will be explained how those structures could operate in a broader hybrid strategy, and two approaches will be studied, an offensive one and a defensive one.

Finally, in conclusion, after the historical analysis of the first two chapters and the integration of a modern conflict theory of the stay-behind networks, the two approaches will be compared, and further ideas for the research will be furnished.

FIRST CHAPTER

1.1 THE FORMATION OF THE STAY-BEHIND NETWORKS

In the aftermath of the Second World War, new tension arose in the European space, this new period of hostility will be called the Cold War era. As soon as one global conflict was ended, another one was on the edge. During this “Cold War Era” that went from 1947 to 25 December 1999, when the Communist flag was lowered for the last time at the Kremlin and changed with the Russian tricolor, there was a clear delineation between two fronts: the Eastern block and the Western block. The Eastern one was composed of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), which was led by Russia and composed of the countries that appertained to the Warsaw Pact; the Occidental one was formed by the United States, that were leading the newborn NATO member countries. Both those blocks were keeping a large number of troops located in the area of central Europe, affronting each other indirectly, separated by “the Iron Curtain” as labelled by UK’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill during a speech in March 1946¹. The Cold War was defined as such using a term first coined by the English writer George Orwell in an article that was published in 1945; this text contained the idea of the author and his prediction considering the absence of a direct conflict, and instead, a stalemate between two nuclear superpowers². Both Russia and the US started the so-called arms race, as both of them tried to obtain the most modern weapons, from classical ones to nuclear. The American strategy modeled upon the thought of the impossibility of cohabitation between the two countries was the one defined as containment, coined by the diplomat George Kennan; this strategy explained in the “Long Telegram” that he wrote was

1 Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, February 27). Iron Curtain speech. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Iron-Curtain-Speech>

2 Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, March 30). Cold War. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>

about the long-term firm and vigilant containment of Russia³, that also brought to the annexation into NATO of ex-soviet republic after the fall of the USSR.

This lack of a direct confrontation between the blocks led to a war that was not declared but still fought, especially with indirect methods. A large number of NATO member countries on the Western Front also had formed in the past World War a baseline for the organizations later known as "stay-behind networks," whose objective was to stay dormant in areas that may be captured by Soviet forces during a conflict against the West⁴.

The Stay Behind network started to exist before the Cold War, a good "ancestor" could be the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) and, in particular the "Section D". During WW2, Germany's rapid conquest made it necessary for the Allies to create clandestine forces that would be infiltrated and operate behind enemy's lines in the various invaded countries, so UK prime minister Churchill developed the SOE as a response to this strategic need⁵. The SOE was created by the union of two branches of intelligence services, plus the department EH of the foreign office that was used to distribute propaganda. The two intelligence sections of the SOE were, respectively, the MIR, which is the military intelligence service seconded by the War Office (Ministry of War), and Section D⁶. The British Foreign Intelligence Service SIS (Secret Intelligence Service), also known as MI6, created in 1938 a branch called Section D under the command of Major Laurence Grand, with the main task to conduct clandestine sabotage and propaganda operations⁷. The SOE was officially created in 1940, and it was placed under the supervision of Hugh Dalton of the Economic Warfare, the Ministry of Economy. The British Prime minister was directly responsible for this organization, which

3 Onion, A., Sullivan, M., Mullen, M., & Zapata, C. (2023, June 26). Cold War: Summary, Combatants, Start & End | HISTORY. *HISTORY*. <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>

4 Fiala, O., & Petterson, U. (2020). ROC(K) Solid Preparedness: Resistance Operations Concept in the Shadow of Russia. *PRISM*, 8(4), 16–29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26918231>

5 Toledano, J. S. (2023, December 13). *Special Operations Executive: Churchill's Secret Army*. Grey Dynamics. <https://greydynamics.com/special-operations-executive/>

6 *Enseigner la mémoire ? - Histoire et mémoire des réseaux - La section française du SOE par Jean-Pierre Husson*. (n.d.). https://pedagogie.ac-reims.fr/memoire/enseigner/memoire_reseaux/soe.htm

7 SOE - the Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Charity. (2018, January 21). The Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Charity. <https://holdsworthtrust.org/soe/>

was not subject to the British military hierarchy⁸. Dalton, being a prominent member of the Labour Party, was extremely interested in conducting operations of political warfare inside the territory of occupied Europe; such actions included the planning and execution of acts of terrorism, the invitation of labor unrest, strikes, and riots, as well as sabotaging military and industrial objectives⁹. After the German army defeated and conquered France, Minister Dalton insisted that a covert war against the occupying forces in the subjugated territories was required. Dalton took inspiration from similar guerilla movements that were used in Ireland against the British troops.

One of the most famous actions carried out by the SOE was, for example, the execution of Operation Anthropoid, which consisted in the assassination in Prague of Reinhard Heydrich that was the Deputy Chief of the Schutzstaffel (SS)¹⁰, considered one of the most powerful men in the Third Reich. Following the war, the SOE was integrated into MI6. A lot of agents of the SOE that had operative roles during the Second World War transitioned into positions where their various acquired competencies of subversion and sabotage might be fit in the application of the preparation of potential future hostilities¹¹. In this case, many of those agents took part in the planning of countermeasures or guerrilla planning operations during the Cold War, as a clash between the West and the Communist block was considered almost inevitable. It goes without saying that Operation Stay Behind was carried out by the CIA with deep collaboration with MI6 and other Occidental secret services that took a lot from the guerilla and destabilization actions used by the SOE during the Second World Conflict.

8 M'intéresse, L. Ç., & Bourguilleau, A. (2022, July 25). Special Operations Executive (SOE) : l'armée secrète de Churchill. *Ça M'intéresse*. <https://www.caminteresse.fr/histoire/special-operations-executive-soe-larmee-secrete-de-churchill-11168586/>

9 Toledano, J. S. (2023b, December 13). *Special Operations Executive: Churchill's Secret Army*. Grey Dynamics. <https://greydynamics.com/special-operations-executive/>

10 *Special Operations Executive*. (n.d.). National Army Museum. <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/SOE#:~:text=SOE%20also%20operated%20in%20the,This%20sometimes%20had%20unforeseen%20circumstances.>

11 Wharton, J. (n.d.). *Sabotage and subversion: the secret operations of the SOE*. Forces Network. <https://www.forces.net/heritage/history/sabotage-and-subversion-secret-operations-soe>

After the end of the Second World War and later during the Cold War, the United States and the Occidental countries feared an invasion from the Soviet Union. Very important for the creation of the Stay Behind operation was the period in 1948 after the Czechoslovak coup d'état in Prague. The Golpe operated during late February 1948 and brought, with Soviet backing, the KSC, the communist party of Czechoslovakia, to power.

A consequence of the Prague golpe was the adoption of the resolution NSC 10/2 by the United States Security Council on Office of Special Projects. This resolution stated the creation in the Central Intelligence Agency of an office for a special project intending to conduct covert operations of espionage and counterespionage abroad¹². The concept of Covert operation evolved after the Second World War from the concept of covert psychological operations to full-scale covert political activity; this shift was influenced by George Kennan's idea of organized political warfare, defined as using all sorts of means of war to achieve national objectives¹³. This was the resolution that allowed the creation of stay-behind networks all over Europe.

The objective of Gladio was the creation by the CIA, MI6 (UK's foreign intelligence service), and NATO members of stay-behind networks all over Europe, with the task of conducting guerilla actions if an eventual Soviet invasion or occupation would occur. The planning and execution of the stay-behind network took as a model a previous sabotage and guerilla mission carried out by the UK during WW2, which consisted of infiltration of several teams behind enemy lines to carry out subversive actions¹⁴.

The Stay Behind operations were part of the bigger political plan actuated in the aftermath of the Second World Conflict, with the main objective of maintaining Western influence all over

12 *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945–1950, Emergence of the intelligence establishment - Office of the Historian*. (n.d.). <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945-50Intel/d292>

13 Rudgers, D. F. (2000). The Origins of Covert Action. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35(2), 249–262. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261206>

14 Michael R. D. Foot. (1981). Was SOE Any Good? *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16(1), 167. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/260622>

Europe, deterring at the same time from any Soviet action that would undermine this plan. The sabotage teams were trained and equipped with modern weapons and communication systems, but even if their main task was to fight against a Soviet invasion, the occasion never came.

The first countries primarily targeted were Germany and Austria; this was justified by the presence of US and occidental troops in the areas. In the beginning Eastern European nations that were under Soviet control were excluded in the planning of covert activities. This decision was revoked in 1946 and 1947, and SIS started to organize networks in nations where Russia's covert actions were possible to occur in Western Europe. The plan that the UK elaborated was to station some spies in every large city in Western Europe, and those agents were ready to carry out sabotage operations in case the Soviet Union decided to attempt a campaign to conquer European territories. However, in other nations, the Foreign Office would not accept carrying out this kind of operation as it would be a diplomatic disaster if discovered that Great Britain was recruiting agents on friendly soil¹⁵.

The Stay Behind network came officially into the public eye after the end of the Cold War, when in 1990, Giulio Andreotti, the Italian Prime Minister, admitted the existence of a secret army, both in the Italian territory as well as in the majority of NATO members country¹⁶. Andreotti defined Gladio as a covert resistance network whose primary objectives were intelligence collection as well as sabotage, propaganda, and guerilla warfare, all to be activated in case of an enemy's invasion; the Italian one was established in November 1956 as a result of a collaboration between the CIA and the Italian military secret service¹⁷, Sifar (Servizio informazioni forze armate).

15 Riste, O. (2014). "Stay Behind": A Clandestine Cold War Phenomenon. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16(4), 41. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26926142>

16 Gallanti, L. (2022, June 20). Ipotesi Gladio: la mano lunga della CIA. *www.storicang.it*. https://www.storicang.it/a/ipotesi-gladio-mano-lunga-della-cia_15604

17 Pacini, G. (2007). Le origini dell'operazione Stay Behind, 1943-1956. *Contemporanea*, 10(4), 581–606. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24653296>

1.2 STAY BEHIND NETWORK IN FRANCE

Operation Stay Behind, as said before, was formed in most of the NATO countries; in Italy, it took the name of Gladio, and in France, it was “Plan Bleu,” which means blue plan. It’s important to know what was the participation of France during WW2 in terms of covert operations carried out by the partisans in collaboration with infiltrated teams, as this set a base for the future structure of the French Gladio network. During the Second World War, France was conquered already in June 1940 when Paris was taken over by the German troops, and the right wings of the military and the government assumed power led under Philippe Petain as the new chief of government, who was willing to collaborate with the occupant forces¹⁸. Meanwhile, Petain formed a fascist government in Vichy, and French general Charles de Gaulle found refuge in London and affirmed on the BBC radio program that the war was not over and that the fight of the French people against the nazi troops must continue¹⁹. While in the UK, General De Gaulle continued the fight against the Germans; an important step was the formation of the BCRA (Bureaux Central de renseignement et d’Action), the secret service of the free France that had as a main task the planning and execution of guerilla action in enemy territory. An important factor about the BCRA that has to be enlightened is the fact that unlike the British, who assigned various clandestine activities to separate and often rival services such as the MI6, MI5, and later the SOE, the BCRA, therefore, constituted a unique and centralized unit²⁰. This entity was, therefore, responsible not only for intelligence activities but all clandestine activities carried out in France on behalf of the Free France led by De Gaulle.

18 *Suivez le fil historique de l’exode*. (n.d.). Musée De La Libération Leclerc Moulin. <https://www.museeliberation-leclerc-moulin.paris.fr/suivez-le-fil-historique-de-lexode#:~:text=14%20juin%201940.,%C2%AB%20ville%20ouverte%20%C2%BB%20sans%20combattre>.

19 Piketty, G. (n.d.). Charles De Gaulle, paroles publiques - Appel à continuer la lutte - Ina.fr. Charles De Gaulle - Paroles Publiques. <https://fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaulle00301/appele-a-continuer-la-lutte.html>

20 Albertelli, S. (2007, June 15). *Le BCRA, service de renseignement de la France libre*. <https://journals.openedition.org/rha/1783>

Usually, the missions carried out by the agents of the BCRA consisted of an infiltration, usually by parachutes in France, where once landed, they would melt with the local population and plan subversive action as well as recruit new agents directly on the field. The French secret service suffered several casualties and was shut down before the end of the war. However, the BCRA was used as a model for the constitution of the French Secret Army in the Stay Behind network in France, especially in terms of its structure, tactics, and members, as concerning the French Stay-Behind, many of the concerned agents had served as BCRA operatives in the past²¹. At the end of the Second World War, the fourth French Republic took place, and General Charles de Gaulle came back from Great Britain and became Prime Minister. In the aftermath of the conflict, the left, mainly represented by the PCF (Parti Communiste Francais), was gaining a lot of influence, especially due to its leading role during the war fighting the Germans and being a focal point for the resistance organization developed during that period. On the other hand, the right political wing was formed by ex-collaborators of the Vichy Republic as well as most of the industrial and economic leading society which was strongly against the passage of France to a Communist country. The CIA and the British were strongly convinced not to let the Communists take power in France, also because they thought the communist party in the Hexagon had strong ties with Moscow and was financed by this last one. So for the US and the UK, whether it was with democratic elections or by a coup d'etat, the PCF would not go to power. In this case, a very important shift happened in the 1945 elections, where the PCF won with a majority of 26,1% and the worker movement with 23,3%, demonstrating without any doubt that the left had won the elections and represented the majority²².

Even if the left parties won, De Gaulle refused to give them important ministry in his government, also because as several other European countries France desperately needed

21 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 84. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

22 *Perspective Monde*. (n.d.). <https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMElection?codePays=FRA&dateElection=FRA19451021&codeInstitution=1>

the money from the Marshall Plan that would have come from the US, who would never give them to a filo-communist country. Even if General De Gaulle didn't let the PCF have an important ministry in his government, the power of the left parties in France was undeniable. An important mention should be made for Charles Tillon member of the PCF who was appointed Air Minister. The Air Force, in this way, became influenced by the decision-making process inside the Communist Party. This raised suspicion among the high-ranked military in France, in particular, General Martial Valin, who started to have the impression that the Air Minister and his collaborators were exclusively acting in favor of the interests of their party and, consequently, the Soviet Union²³.

Therefore the Americans, through the collaboration of the MI6, contacted the early-born French Secret Service DGER (Direction Generale des Etudes et de Recherche) to set up a network and train operatives, especially in the north of France; the clandestine teams were then deployed in all the country and were formed by several agents of the DGER, communist resistance members and ex BCRA operatives²⁴. As in the case of Lieutenant Francois Meyer, contacted by the DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire) for the launch of Operation Smala in 1947 with the objective of creating a network of vigilance and interior protection in order to prepare for the national reconquest in the event of a possible Soviet attack, the plan asserted that in case of invasion the resisting forces would be forced to be exfiltrated in North Africa through Spain and there plan the reconquest²⁵.

But a few years later, on June 30, 1947, Édouard Depreux, the French Minister of the Interior, revealed at a press conference the existence of a right-wing associated conspiracy against the Republic affirming that there was a plan of attack, called Plan Bleu with the task to

23 Villatoux, M. (2010). The fight against subversion in France in the forties and fifties. *Inflexions*, 14, 165-172. <https://doi.org/10.3917/infle.014.0165>

24 Riste, O. (2014). "Stay Behind": A Clandestine Cold War Phenomenon. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 16(4), 48. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26926142>

25 Arboit, G. (2017, August 30). *Retour sur les reseaux Stay Behind en Europe : le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise - Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement*. Centre Français De Recherche Sur Le Renseignement, 9. https://cf2r.org/historique/retour-sur-les-reseaux-stay-behind-en-europe-le-cas-de-lorganisation-luxembourgeoise/#_ftn13

destabilize the actual government carrying out a “coup d’Etat”²⁶. The investigations that followed demonstrated that the conspirators intended to escalate the tension creating a “strategy of tension” in the Hexagon by committing various terrorist attacks (the assassination of the Gaulle was also considered) under false flag operations to blame it on the left and preparing the ground for a golpe that the population victim of the attacks would not totally refuse²⁷.

Another Stay Behind network created in France was the so-called Mission 48, known by different names such as Arc en-Ciel (Rainbow) and Rose des Vents (Wind Rose); the agents recruited were mostly ex-partisans who fought in the resistance during the Second World Conflict in the anti-communist or conservatory unit²⁸. The objective of such an operation was to develop in France a vast network of sleeper cells that were equipped with radio transmitters, weapons, and explosives that could be organized to form a clandestine resistance in case of a Soviet invasion and occupation of the country²⁹. The Mission 48 network, regrouped in the SDECE (Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionage), had as objectives also the localization and subsequent neutralization of Communist subversives within the French territory, and according to the larger CIA and NATO plans for anti-Communist covert operations in Western Europe the planning of an appropriate exile base overseas in this case, Marocco, and exfiltration procedures in case of invasion³⁰.

26 Brun, O. & Poirot, J. (2021). 54. 30 juin 1947. Un complot appelé « Plan bleu » est révélé par le ministre de l’Intérieur. Dans : , O. Brun & J. Poirot (Dir), *Le renseignement français en 100 dates* (pp. 187-190). Paris: Perrin.

27 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO’s secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,88.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

28 Arboit, G. QUELLES « ARMÉES SECRÈTES » DE L’OTAN ? Rapport de recherche #18. [Rapport de recherche] 18, Centre français de recherche sur le renseignement. 2016, pp.11. <hal-01310326>

29 Tenebaum, E. (2016, October 1). *Mythes et réalités d’une stratégie « stay-behind » au début de la guerre froide (1945-1954)*. Fragments Sur Les Temps Présents. <https://tempsresents.com/2016/04/22/mythes-et-realites-dune-strategie-stay-behind-au-debut-de-la-guerre-froide-1945-1954/#sdendnote22sym>

30 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO’s secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,90.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

Psychological warfare also had a prominent role in France during the Cold War, as the PCF was the party with the most sustainers, and for this reason, governmental teams with the task of fighting against communist propaganda were instituted. The Minister of Defence from 1949-1950 and later President of the Council of Ministers in 1950-1951 René Pleven was particularly concerned about the Red propaganda carried out in his country since the French Communist Party systematically used misinformation and propaganda to spread news that were hostile to national defence and were destabilizing the country. Faced with this threat, Pleven decided to act decisively; in February 1950, he established a new government office, the ACPO (Action Politique), with the precise task of countering the spreading of communist propaganda and with the purpose of safeguarding psychological protection of the population³¹.

The goal was to centralize all information regarding communist attacks against the country or the army and formulate an immediate response, which could consist in the legal way of bringing charges and taking legal action against the press, but also taking direct action like counterpropaganda³².

Pleven, in particular, charged Jean-Paul David, a fervent anti-communist, to fight against Red propaganda and financed the movement Peace and Freedom founded by the latter. The main weapon used by the movement in the psychological war against communist influence remains above all, the use of images, in five years, the movement released at least one thousand posters in only one month³³.

The goal of the ACPO was to centralize all information concerning communist activities both in national territory and abroad and to develop effective strategies to counter those

31 Villatoux, M. (2010). La lutte contre la subversion en France au tournant des années 1950. *Inflexions*, 14, 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.3917/infle.014.0083>

32 Villatoux, M. (2010). The fight against subversion in France in the forties and fifties. *Inflexions*, 14, 165-172. <https://doi.org/10.3917/infle.014.0165>

33 Delporte, C. (2019). Paix et Liberté : l'anticommunisme par l'image (affiche de Chancel, 1950). *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, 29, 49-56. <https://doi.org/10.3917/parl2.029.0049>

movements. To fight against the red propaganda, the Action politique office used several methods. This could be through legal action, where the ACPO could denounce and take to court communist newspaper associates who were then accused of spreading false news or hostile propaganda. Another method was to use Counter-propaganda actions such as posters or press articles were produced and distributed to present an alternative vision to the red one³⁴.

With the goal of discrediting communism and promoting the values of French democracy. The ACPO also supported anti-communist movements as a method of countering Moscow's propaganda, the French government offered funding and logistical support to groups and organizations fighting against communist influence in France but also abroad. A good example of the use of counter-propaganda by the organization of David is the "Peace and Freedom" movement mentioned before. Founded in 1950 and sustained by the French government, this movement was particularly keen for the effective production of political posters. In five years, "Peace and Freedom" produced and distributed thousands of posters, using powerful images and incisive slogans to convey key messages and influence public opinion³⁵. The psychological war against communism was a crucial aspect of French strategy during the Cold War. The techniques put in place by the ACPO and other anti-communist movements helped to reduce the spread of red ideas in France and to consolidate the consensus towards the Western democratic system.

During the Cold War, psychological warfare was practiced worldwide. It occupied a fundamental role during the American-Soviet confrontation and contributed to the Soviets' final collapse. The Soviets were experts in disinformation but unable to meet the challenge of

34 Villatoux, M. (2010). La lutte contre la subversion en France au tournant des années 1950. *Inflexions*, 14, 83-91. <https://doi.org/10.3917/infle.014.0083>

35 Villatoux, M. (2010). The fight against subversion in France in the forties and fifties. *Inflexions*, 14, 165-172. <https://doi.org/10.3917/infle.014.0165>

our hypermedia age, defined as the passing of human time by saturating information³⁶.

1.3 STAY BEHIND NETWORK IN BELGIUM

Stay-behind networks were also established in Belgium. During the Second World conflict the Belgian territories were invaded at the beginning of 1940 when the army of Bruxelles surrendered to the German military. The Belgian government had to find refuge in the UK and planned the resistance from there. The SOE started to train agents to be parachuted into occupied territory and carry out a wide range of activities, such as the distribution of resistance journals, the hiding and exfiltration of Jews and refugees, the gathering and delivery of military intelligence to the Allies, and various acts of sabotage³⁷.

The Belgian agents were actively tracked down by the Germans due to their efficacy, as stated in a report effectuated by the Abwehr, the German counterintelligence agency that defined the secret services of Bruxelles as a big threat to German control over the conquered territory, especially, the Belgian SGRS (Service Général du Renseignement et de la Sécurité) established various escape routes to London for the British RAF (Royal Air Force) pilots, resistance members and agents that were discovered by the nazi counterespionage³⁸. As in the French case, once the war ended, the networks created were then used to establish stay-behind networks to guarantee resistance activities in case of a Communist invasion of Belgium. The Belgian Gladio was divided into two branches, one military and one civilian, strictly correlated and in cooperation between each other, the SDRA8 and STC/Mob, under

36 Géré, F. (2023). *La guerre psychologique | Institut de Stratégie Comparée*. <https://www.institut-strategie.fr/la-guerre-psychologique/>

37 Realfonzo, U. (n.d.). *The Brussels Times*. <https://www.brusselstimes.com/942409/remembering-the-belgian-resistance-in-ww2>

38 Wilfred_Burie. (2017). *“Belgians remember them”: The Belgian resistance*. <https://www.belgians-remember-them.eu/resistance.php>

the direction of the Defense Ministry, the SGRS, was known as SDRA8 and was the military wing of the Stay Behind network³⁹.

As said by Colonel Bernard Legrand, the last officer responsible for the network in Belgium, in an interview in 2015, the organization was composed of twelve military instructors, nearly all from para-commando groups; they were responsible for a "civilian" network of roughly forty operatives who were enlisted by the armed forces from every field of society⁴⁰. These civilian operatives were sent abroad with the express intent of gathering pertinent pieces of information and passing it along to support the decision-making of the Belgian government; that in case of invasion would have been in exile, those civilians were in positions that were strategically important for gathering intelligence⁴¹. As Belgium was integrated into the Stay Behind network set in Europe, a common structure to monitor the operation was created between NATO states, this structure was named the Allied Clandestine Committee (ACC), a command center inside NATO formed as it stepped up covert operations adjacent to the CPC (Clandestine Plan Committee) that has as objectives to develop forms of cooperation in the fight against subversion and infiltration enemy activities⁴².

Legrand affirmed that even if each participating country remained independent in the management of its network, an international clandestine structure was essential to coordinate some common exercises and to prepare for occupation at a concerted response

43.

39 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 125. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

40 Rtbf, & Rtbf. (2015, November 5). Réseau 'Gladio': en 2015, le 'patron' des espions belges s'exprimait pour la 1ère fois depuis 1991. RTBF. <https://www.rtbf.be/article/reseau-gladio-en-2015-le-patron-des-espions-belges-s-exprimait-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-1991-9128333>

41 Rtbf, & Rtbf. (2015, November 5). Réseau 'Gladio': en 2015, le 'patron' des espions belges s'exprimait pour la 1ère fois depuis 1991. RTBF. <https://www.rtbf.be/article/reseau-gladio-en-2015-le-patron-des-espions-belges-s-exprimait-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-1991-9128333>

42 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 129. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

43 Rtbf, & Rtbf. (2015, November 5). Réseau 'Gladio': en 2015, le 'patron' des espions belges s'exprimait pour la 1ère fois depuis 1991. RTBF. <https://www.rtbf.be/article/reseau-gladio-en-2015-le-patron-des-espions-belges-s-exprimait-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-1991-9128333>

The first ACC reunion was held for the first time in France on April 29, 1958, while the French were serving as host nation, but this changed when General De Gaulle believed that France must break away from its reliance on the United States without giving up its membership in the Atlantic Alliance. De Gaulle was also convinced that NATO had to undergo a reform. The general was especially against the integrated military system because he believed that France should always be in total charge of its own defense⁴⁴. Subsequently, General Charles de Gaulle declared his desire for more military autonomy and removed France from NATO's integrated military command structure in 1966; this was also motivated by France's determination to maintain its nuclear deterrent, rejecting at the same time any kind of military command over its armed forces, and expel all foreign forces from its soil⁴⁵. Therefore France was no longer represented on committees such as the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group, even though it was still a member of NATO and actively participated in its political processes. French military were momentarily separated from NATO commands, and foreign forces were evacuated from French territory. Due to this reform, the ACC was moved to Bruxelles. Inside the ACC, there was a section, SDRA11, that was financed by NATO, while SDRA8, the covert action branch of the Belgian Gladio, was paid by the Belgian Defence Department⁴⁶. The members were all in possession of an official cover that allowed them to deceive those who should not know about it. Including within military structures. Legrand affirmed that only three ministers per member country were aware of the existence of the clandestine structure⁴⁷. In October 1991, the Allied Clandestine Committee had its final acknowledged meeting, which was presided over by Belgian SGRS

44 Vaïsse, M. (2009). France and NATO: An History. *Politique étrangère*, , 139
150. <https://doi.org/10.3917/pe.hs3.0139>

45 Nato. (n.d.-b). *France and NATO - 1949*. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_160672.htm

46 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 129. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

47 Rtbf, & Rtbf. (2015b, November 5). *Réseau 'Gladio': en 2015, le 'patron' des espions belges s'exprimait pour la 1ère fois depuis 1991*. RTBF. <https://www.rtbf.be/article/reseau-gladio-en-2015-le-patron-des-espions-belges-s-exprimait-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-1991-9128333>

Director General Raymond Van Calster,⁴⁸ and as in Italy, the Belgian Gladio will also be suspected of having participated in acts to create a strategy of tension, and subsequently, a Senate commission of inquiry will be established in 1992, but no one will be persecuted or condemned⁴⁹.

1.4 STAY BEHIND NETWORK IN LUXEMBURG

In the Luxemburg case, very little pieces of information were made available to the public concerning the Stay Behind network.

Prime Minister Jacques Santer stated in front of the Parliament in 1990 that in the event of a conflict, the network established in the country would have most likely played a role of coordination with occidental Special Forces, in particular with the US Green Berets and the British SAS (Special Air Service)⁵⁰. However, the prime minister did not go into detail about the involvement of the American secret services or the MI6 in Luxembourg; the main functions of the secret network established in the country were to provide NATO members with intelligence on the political and military conditions in their state, and mostly elaborate plan escape routes from the seized country and assist the armed forces in case of enemy occupation⁵¹.

However, the process of the establishment of the network could be assessed around July 1960 when a law, which protects the secrets related to the external security of the State established that a Civil Intelligence Service SRE (Service de Reinseignement de l'Etat) was

48 Lamfalussy, C. (2015, December 8). L'ex-chef du réseau Stay-behind livre ses secrets mais aucun nom. *La Libre.be*. <https://www.lalibre.be/belgique/2015/12/07/lex-chef-du-reseau-stay-behind-livre-ses-secrets-mais-aucun-nom-72K2TQBD7VFOBAMI7FHOKIKBGY/>

49 Rtbf, & Rtbf. (2015, November 5). *Réseau 'Gladio': en 2015, le 'patron' des espions belges s'exprimait pour la 1ère fois depuis 1991*. RTBF. <https://www.rtbf.be/article/reseau-gladio-en-2015-le-patron-des-espions-belges-s-exprimait-pour-la-1ere-fois-depuis-1991-9128333>

50 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 166. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

51 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 166. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

organized by the State and was under the direct authority of the president, who established its organization and relations with other administrations⁵². In November of the same year, the department organized inside of the intelligence service the creation of a group called “Plans”, which was responsible for developing all plans related to special missions; this department was responsible for the recruitment, training, and assignment of the agents, as well as the provision and use of the necessary equipment⁵³.

This “Plan” group was the special branch of the intelligence service that was in charge of planning operations during wartime in collaboration with allied services within the ACC. The group was responsible for the establishment of the Stay Behind network in the Luxembourg territory. Similarly to the Belgian case, here too a distinction was made between the planning section and the operative one, the section “Operations” responsible for carrying out direct action⁵⁴. The command structure was composed of a seconded army officer and two instructors who, during peacetime, were responsible for creating and maintaining a network of clandestine agents specially recruited, trained, and organized to stay on-site and operate from the country after the enemy occupation⁵⁵.

Luxembourg's Stay Behind unit was dissolved in 1989⁵⁶. It was made public in a report made in 2008 that, as demonstrated in the response to Parliamentary Question No. 2577, members of the “Stay Behind” network participated in training in the fields of intelligence and infiltration of exfiltration, and they were not trained in the handling of explosives and carry out sabotage actions⁵⁷.

52 Arboit, G. (2009). Les réseaux Stay behind en Europe : le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise. *Guerres Mondiales Et Conflits Contemporains*, n° 235(3), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.235.0145>

53 Arboit, G. (2009). Les réseaux Stay behind en Europe : le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise. *Guerres Mondiales Et Conflits Contemporains*, n° 235(3), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.235.0145>

54 Arboit, G. (2009). Les réseaux Stay behind en Europe : le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise. *Guerres Mondiales Et Conflits Contemporains*, n° 235(3), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.235.0145>

55 Arboit, G. (2009). Les réseaux Stay behind en Europe : le cas de l'organisation luxembourgeoise. *Guerres Mondiales Et Conflits Contemporains*, n° 235(3), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.235.0145>

56 *History*. (2019, December 6). State Intelligence Service // the Luxembourg Government.

<https://sre.gouvernement.lu/en/histoire.html>

57 *Prise de position du ministère d'État au sujet d'une publication sur le site Internet concernant le “Stay Behind” et l'affaire des poseurs de bombes*. (2013, October 5). gouvernement.lu // Le Gouvernement Luxembourgeois.

1.5 STAY BEHIND IN DENMARK

Little is known of the Danish stay-behind network that took the name of “Absalon” from a Danish bishop who, in the medieval Ages, defeated the Russians. Absalon as the same operations established in the neighboring European countries was a clandestine network with anti-communist tendencies established in collaboration with Occidental secret services during the Cold War with the purpose of conducting guerrilla operations and sabotage actions in the event of a Soviet invasion or takeover by a Communist government

in Denmark. Resources provided by resistance fighters were also utilized by the intelligence agencies in Denmark when they reestablished themselves following the Liberation⁵⁸.

Operation Absalon was managed by Danish military intelligence and included members of the army, navy, and air force. The network was divided into several autonomous cells, each of which was responsible for a specific geographical area. The members of the cells were trained in guerrilla operations, sabotage and clandestine communications.

The network was formed after the country had an occupation experience that happened during the Second World War and allegedly numbered not more than 360 agents; as in all the other nations the network was designed to have been expanded in the event of enemy occupation and as in the other countries, the organization was modeled after the resistance movement that took place against the Germans during the world conflict⁵⁹.

https://gouvernement.lu/fr/actualites/toutes_actualites/communiqués/2013/05-mai/10-stay-behind.html

58 Arboit, G. QUELLES « ARMÉES SECRÈTES » DE L'OTAN ? Rapport de recherche #18. [Rapport de recherche] 18, Centre français de recherche sur le renseignement. 2016, pp.11. <hal-01310326>

59 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 168. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

1.6 STAY BEHIND IN TURKEY

Turkish Stay Behind network became known in 1990 after the Italian Gladio revelations. Following the devastation brought by the Second World Conflict, the priority for Washington was to integrate Turkey into the newborn Western anti-communist defense system called NATO. This decision was mainly supported by the fact that Turkey's geographical position in the middle of two continents, the European and Asian one made Ankara a crucial asset for the Americans. Both during the complicated period of the Cold War and after it, Turkey served as a crucial base for U.S. and NATO operations in the Middle East and the strategically significant Caucasus region. Especially in the case of the Middle East territories, for the US, it was fundamental to be allied with Turkey as it represented a window of influence and control over the oil in those regions; this pivotal role was perhaps most evidently during the Second Gulf War in 1991, where Turkey's cooperation proved instrumental in the success of the allied campaign⁶⁰.

Turkey officially joined NATO in April 1952, which was a significant achievement in the Cold War competition; however, this membership was not without its hidden stipulations. In particular, a previously undisclosed clause established that future members would be charged to create a dedicated national security agency whose primary focus would be to combat the spread of communism through a network of covert agents⁶¹.

Turkey was in a particular strategic location; in fact, its border was, for a significant portion, common with the one of the Soviet Union on the southern part. This particular geographic characteristic made Ankara very important to NATO countries. This proximity made Turkey a vital barrier against potential Soviet aggression, as it guarded around a third of the alliance's land borders with Warsaw Pact countries and also it was seen as a window to the Middle

60 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 225. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

61 Gökay, B. (2014, March 31). *The specter of deep state (Contra-Guerrillas) still haunts Turkey – CESRAN International*. <https://cesran.org/the-specter-of-deep-state-contra-guerrillas-still-haunts-turkey.html>

East by the US⁶². This strategic value represented a significant economic benefit for Turkey's elite, who emerged as the prominent defense contractors for the U.S. military-industrial complex; as a result, billions of dollars coming from Washington were destined for Ankara, increasing the development of its armed forces⁶³.

However, the Cold War strategy of encircling Russia led by the US occasionally brought to very dangerous situations that risked to escalate in a third-world conflict. As an example, in 1961, in a move perceived by many as a strategic bet, Washington deployed nuclear-armed Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy, placing them within striking distance of the Soviet Union⁶⁴. This action further increased tensions, and the world witnessed a near-catastrophic outcome. In response to the American action, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev ordered the deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba, directly threatening the American mainland. This episode, known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, pushed the World to the precipice of nuclear war. Fortunately, President Kennedy resolved the crisis through diplomatic channels, securing the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba in exchange for a U.S. pledge to withdraw the Jupiter missiles from Turkey⁶⁵.

The 1959 military agreement between Turkey and the United States added additional terms from the ones regarding external threats. It considered the use of "counter-guerilla" forces not only in the case of a foreign invasion but also in the event of an internal uprising against the established Turkish government sustained by Washington⁶⁶.

62 Kolay, A., Tataroğlu, B., & Postacioğlu, E. (2022, February 15). Turkey, Bridge Between Two Poles: A Brief Study of Turkey's State During the Cold War Era. TUIÇ Akademi. <https://www.tuicakademi.org/turkey-bridge-between-two-poles-a-brief-study-of-turkeys-state-during-the-cold-war-era/>

63 Ganser, D. (2005). NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe, 225. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

64 Burr, W., & Nuti, L. (n.d.). *The Jupiter Missiles and the Endgame of the Cuban Missile Crisis: Sealing the Deal with Italy and Turkey*. Wilson Center. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/jupiter-missiles-and-endgame-cuban-missile-crisis-sealing-deal-italy-and-turkey>

65 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 225. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

66 Gökay, B. (2014, March 31). *The specter of deep state (Contra-Guerrillas) still haunts Turkey – CESRAN International*. <https://cesran.org/the-specter-of-deep-state-contra-guerrillas-still-haunts-turkey.html>

The Turkish stay-behind organization was allegedly established by far-right Colonel Turks, who established contact with the CIA in 1948, and during this period, the Colonel, directed by the CIA instructions, began to create in his country a clandestine structure opposed to communist ideology⁶⁷. As later shown by the coup d'état that was conducted in 1980, which was named the "US-backed coup," in which the generals that took part in the Golpe were also the leaders of the Turkey branch of NATO's Operation Stay Behind⁶⁸.

The backbone of Turkey's Gladio organization was the Counter-Guerrilla, a covert organization overseen by the Special Warfare Department; this clandestine group was established in the aftermath of the Cold War and was compartmentalized into five distinct branches⁶⁹. The Training Group served as the starting base of the Counter-Guerrilla, where the training of the recruits was effectuated, such training included not only conventional warfare tactics but also techniques of interrogation and psychological warfare, the second one was the Special Unit, which could be defined as a highly specialized counter-insurgency force⁷⁰. The third element was the Special Section which was very similar to the special unit but differed from this one as it was the section dedicated exclusively to the island of Cyprus, this branch conducted covert operations on the island, as it represented a neuralgic point throughout the Cold War due to its proximity to the Soviet Union⁷¹. The fourth element was the so-called Coordination Group, also known as the Third Bureau, which played a critical role in ensuring continuous collaboration between the disparate branches of the Counter-Guerrilla; this branch arranged the good functioning of the exchange of information and ensured that all branches acted in unison towards achieving the objectives of the

67 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,225.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

68 Ünver, H. A. (n.d.). *Turkey's "Deep-State" and the Ergenekon conundrum*. Middle East Institute. https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkeys-deep-state-and-ergenekon-conundrum#_ftn11

69 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,226.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

70 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,226.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

71 Bezci, E., & Borroz, N. (2016, September 16). *The CIA and a Turkish coup*. War on the Rocks. <https://warontherocks.com/2016/09/the-cia-and-a-turkish-coup/>

paramilitary group⁷². The last element was the Administrative Section, which provided the crucial logistical and administrative elements for the entire Turkish Stay-Behind organization; this section ensured the correct development of the various operations of the entire clandestine apparatus, handling everything from personnel records and financial resources to equipment procurement and maintenance⁷³.

The Counter-Guerilla group was involved in some of the most controversial events in modern Turkish history, including, for example, the massacre that happened in 1977 in Taksim Square, in which 42 people were killed during a peaceful demonstration⁷⁴. Another example could be the paramilitary organization's involvement in the military coup of 1980 discussed previously, which consisted of the military taking power and establishing an authoritarian regime⁷⁵. Even after the discovery of NATO's covert Stay-Behind operations in Western Europe, the Turkish secret army continued to operate as the paramilitaries could no longer be easily shut down since they were deeply established in the Turkish political system

⁷⁶.

The Stay Behind Operation in Turkey and the Counter Guerilla group remain a controversial and unclear chapter in Cold War and Turkish history. Their activities had a profound impact on Turkey's politics.

72 Ganser, D. (2005). NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe,226.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

73 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,226.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

74 Davison, D. (2019, May 1). Today in European history: the Taksim Square massacre (1977). *Foreign Exchanges*. <https://www.foreignexchanges.news/p/today-in-cold-war-history-the-taksim>

75 Petti, M. (2023, September 12). The Ankara method: Turkey's coup at the turning point of the Cold War. Kurdish Peace Institute. <https://www.kurdishpeace.org/research/history/the-ankara-method-turkeys-coup-at-the-turning-point-of-the-cold-war/>

76 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,241.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

SECOND CHAPTER

2.1 THE ITALIAN CASE

The Stay Behind operation in Italy was, without doubt, the most “famous” one among the similar European networks, probably this was due to the mediatic exposure given by the Latin country and by the fact that the Italian operation was the first one to be discovered and such type of operation was not usually disclosed to the public and opened to discussion. The discovery of Gladio brought the attention of all European member states in searching for similar structures within their territory, at the investigation of the influence that such operations might have had or hadn't in the politics of the countries.

Concerning the establishment of the Stay Behind networks across Europe, Italy had the highest priority and attention for at least two reasons. The first was due to the importance of its geographical position, the border between the Western bloc and the Soviet bloc, and the second reason was the fact that it had one of the strongest and most structured communist parties in Europe. In fact, due to the history of the country, after the war and the end of the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, the communist ideals were supported by many in the peninsula, also strengthened by the adhesion to that current of thoughts by many partisan units that fought during the war.

The name given to the Italian network came from the typical sword used by the legionaries during the Roman Empire. On 24 October 1990, the name "Gladio" was first mentioned in a report destined for the Parliamentary Committee, specially established to guarantee a response to Terrorist Killings; this commission was called “Commissione Stragi,” created in 1988 and in function until 2001. The report was exposed by Senator Giulio Andreotti, enlisted in the ranks of the Christian Democrats, already three times President of the Council and

two-time Minister of Defence; the senator spoke publicly about the secret structure and was interviewed on 2 November 1999 as a witness during a hearing in the Gladio trial⁷⁷.

After the Second World War and the establishment of the republic, the peninsula was split into factions, composed of the ex-collaborationists of the regime or monarchists who didn't take very well the new institutional structure, the sustainers of the democracy and the left-wing parties that looked at the East towards Russia hoping for a communist turn. Considering also the partisan units in major part affiliated with left-wing ideology strongly hopped for a red "tournament" of the Italian political sphere, especially considering that the communist PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano) was very influential at the time and received funding from Moscow⁷⁸. It goes without saying that for Washington, it was unacceptable that a communist party could be established in Western Europe, especially in a country that represented such a geopolitical importance, such as Italy. As for Washington, Europe had to present itself as a united block composed of republics and capital countries united in opposition to their soviet neighbor. Is then possible to affirm that the Marshall Plan was a pivotal moment in the early history of European integration, as it was a very important strategic decision taken by the States to influence the Western countries devastated by the war.

The Marshall Plan could be defined as one of the best representations of a significant example of the overt use of American economic power in foreign policy and the first deliberate attempt by the United States to export its culture overseas⁷⁹. Significant importance was held by the elections in 1948, where the DCI (Partito della Democrazia

77 Gallanti, L. (2022b, June 20). Ipotesi Gladio: la mano lunga della CIA. *www.storicang.it*.

https://www.storicang.it/a/ipotesi-gladio-mano-lunga-della-cia_15604

78 Merlo, S. (2019, July 12). Quando i rubli del Pci erano una cosa seria. *Il Foglio*.

<https://www.ilfoglio.it/politica/2019/07/12/news/quando-i-rubli-del-pci-erano-una-cosa-seria-265274/>

79 Burk, Kathleen. Review of *The Marshall Plan: Filling in Some of the Blanks*, by Dominique Barjot, Rémi Baudouin, Danièle Voldman, Matthias Kipping, Ove Bjarnar, Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, Axel Frohn, et al. *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 2 (2001): 267–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20081789>.

Cristiana) won against the PCI; this event was not negligible because the exclusion of the communist party from the government allowed Italy to join NATO on 4 April 1949.

It is interesting to notice that only a few times earlier, in 1949, the first Italian military secret service after the end of the war was established in the peninsula in close cooperation with the CIA. Placed under the directions of the Defence Ministry, the newborn unit was called SIFAR (Servizio Informazioni Forze Armate), and General Giovanni Carlo was nominated to be its first Director⁸⁰.

To outline the strategic role that the Latin country played for Washington, it is interesting to analyze the statement contained in a secret document of the National Security Council on April 1950 made by US President Truman when he asserted that Italy was a key country for American security and that the US has to be prepared to use all their political, economic, and, if necessary, military force in order to stop the PCI to gain power. Truman asserted that the United States had to be prepared to take serious countermeasures, which included an invasion if parts of Italy fell under Communist control after an armed insurrection⁸¹.

The CIA's involvement in Gladio was the fruit of a particular US policy. The Pentagon, which was also involved, edited Field Manual 30– 31, an instruction book for Gladio and the others stay behind networks. This manual was written with two appendices entitled simply A and B. Appendix B contained in particular the signature of General William Westmoreland, who, after commanding US military operations in Vietnam, served as US Army Chief of Staff. This manual, also called with the name of General Westmoreland, had the objective of creating and supporting publicly the fight conducted by insurgent groups in an allied country. The Field Manual 30-31 instructed US covert forces to carry out acts of violence, then blame them on communists in accordance with false flag operation conduct. It also contained

80 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,168.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

81 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*,67.<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

instructions to infiltrate both right and left-wing organizations and then encourage them to use violence with the objective of promoting a strategy of the tension⁸². Vary critics would be moved concerning the second part of the manual; the first one, A, was also used during the Vietnam War and was cited by various military authors, instead appendix B, composed of only twelve pages, was never recognized as official and then attributed to successful propaganda operations conducted by the Soviets⁸³ with the objective to create destabilization in the relationship between the US and their allies. This thesis is also supported by the mistakes found on the appendix signed by Westmoreland, mistakes such as style, format, and phraseology that confirm the forgery and the origin of the forger⁸⁴.

Gladio was the fruit of this continuous fight between West and East, as the main objective of all Stay Behind networks is not to properly fight an invasion but to slow and cause harm to the enemy occupants in order to gain time and allow the proper army to organize a solid line of defense, together with the exfiltration of key components of the government to safe places. It is more correct, then, to affirm that the clandestine teams could be used to destroy rail stations, poison water, and set up a net of resistance sacks behind enemy lines. Truman, in his speech, clearly asserted that the United States had to be ready to take countermeasures in case the Communist party succeeded in taking control of the government even through legal means, or in case the Italian government ceased to oppose the Communist threat both domestically and internationally.

Considering specifically Gladio's beginnings, the first attempt to establish a true stay-behind organization in the Italian peninsula was related to a potential Yugoslavian invasion. As is commonly known, Yugoslavia and Italy fought each other for control of the Venezia Giulia

82 Griffin, D. R., & Cobb, C. W. (2023b). NATO/US false-flag attacks in Europe. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*/ the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 82(5), 455–470. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12534>

83 Cavallo, L. (2019, November 13). Le stragi in Italia e il presunto Manual 30-31B della U.S. Army. *Avanti*. <https://www.avantionline.it/le-stragi-in-italia-e-il-presunto-manual-30-31b-della-u-s-army/>

84 Cavallo, L. (2019, November 13). Le stragi in Italia e il presunto Manual 30-31B della U.S. Army. *Avanti*. <https://www.avantionline.it/le-stragi-in-italia-e-il-presunto-manual-30-31b-della-u-s-army/>

region after the war. It was considering the tense situation between the two powers that Italian partisans that were in the region offered to keep a covert network that would be triggered in the event that Yugoslavia attempted to take control of the area⁸⁵.

One particular partisan unit was very active in the north; it was called "Osoppo" and was founded in 1943; it was an antifascist organization that fought during the war, together with the red factions of the resistance against the German forces present in northern Italy⁸⁶. Of course, those formations were well known to the SOE and OSS and later the CIA, which collaborated with them; it's so comprehensible that the Americans chose this unit to put the foundation of Gladio, as they knew them, and they collaborated together during the war.

Shortly after, in January 1946, the three leaders who were at the head of the "Osoppo" resistance organization during the war made the decision to reform the group and to request official recognition from the Army. When hostilities with Yugoslavia reached a breaking point in April 1946, Chief of Staff General Raffaele Cadorna officially approved the reorganization of the "Osoppo" group; consequently, a special liaison unit was established in the Army's 5th Territorial Command Headquarters, and after the peace treaty was signed in February 1947, the unit was formally renamed "38 Corpo Volontari della Liberta"⁸⁷.

It's important to underline that immediately after the Second World Conflict, Gladio was not the only clandestine group created on the Peninsula. It's crucial to underline that because some terrorist actions such as bombing, killings, or attacks perpetrated by those subversive groups were wrongly attributed to Gladio members. As previously affirmed, other covert networks were established and continued to operate across the Latin country while the Army established the Stay Behind network teams in the northeast; in particular, the Army was also in contact with the counter-communist group Esercito Clandestino Anticomunista (ECA). As

85 Panvini, G. (n.d.). *Le altre Gladio. La lotta segreta anticomunista in Italia. 1943-1991* - SISCO. SISCO. <https://www.sisco.it/recensione-annale/le-altre-gladio-la-lotta-segreta-anticomunista-in-italia-1943-1991/>

86 *Brigate Osoppo*. (n.d.). ANPI. <https://www.anpi.it/libri/brigata-osoppo>

87 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 955–980. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

the name suggests, this group was fiercely opposed ideologically to the red ideology, and its primary objective appeared to have been to respond with violent actions to a potential communist revolution attempt, according to a report sent by a US intelligence agent in June 1947⁸⁸. The ECA was formed because, at that time, for the ones that fought alongside the RSI (Repubblica Socialista Italiana), the government installed by Mussolini and sustained by the Germans in north Italy, the Republic was associated with communism, therefore a lot of components of the ECA were ex-members of the RSI; usually paratroopers or ex Decima X⁸⁹. It's important to specify this last mentioned Decima XMAS, especially in relation with its founder Junio Valerio Borghese because he was involved in the formation of right wing groups whose actions were mistaken and attributed to Gladio members.

Borghese, also nicknamed as the black prince, was the founder and leader of the Italian naval commando unit Decima Flottiglia MAS (10th Light Flotilla), also called with the abbreviation X MAS. Following Italy's signing of an armistice with the Allies on September 8, 1943, Borghese and his men chose to fight for the Republic established by Mussolini "Salò Republic" in northern Italy. Borghese troops started a fierce guerilla, especially against the partisan units. After the war, Borghese was captured by the partisans and was about to be executed until, on April 25, 1945, Admiral Ellery Stone, the US Consul in occupied Italy and a personal friend of the Borghese family, ordered the OSS member James Angleton (future chief of counter-espionage of the CIA) to save Borghese⁹⁰. Borghese was then taken to Rome by Angleton, who disguised him with a US officer's uniform and brought him to stand trial for the war crimes committed by his unit. Due to the protection furnished by Washington, the black prince avoided the death sentence and was released a few times later after the Togliatti amnesty.

88 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

89 *Il triestino della X Mas fonda l'esercito anticomunista - Il Piccolo*. (2011, March 10). Archivio - Il Piccolo. https://ricerca.gelocal.it/ilpiccolo/archivio/ilpiccolo/2011/03/10/NZ_08_172942.html

90 Ganser, D. (2005). *NATO's secret armies: Operation GLADIO and terrorism in Western Europe*, 64. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA77169540>

General Umberto Broccoli, the head of Italian military intelligence SIFAR, addressed a memorandum to General Efsio Marras, the chief of staff on date October 8, 1951, discussing intelligence activities during enemy occupation. In his memo named "Intelligence and Operational Organization in the National Territory Susceptible to Enemy Occupation," General Broccoli recommended the establishment of a network that could support forces positioned behind enemy lines during a communist invasion, conduct stay-behind operations, and generally furnish intelligence on the enemy-occupied areas⁹¹.

The CAG (Centro Addestramento Guastatori) the Saboteurs' Training Centre was established in 1953 on a vast tract of land in Capo Marrargiu (Sardinia) as a specific training camp for the select members of the organisation, with a small port, a runway for aircraft landing and one for helicopters, a shooting range and underground bunkers, all enclosed by walls and barriers electrified⁹². The CIA provided financial support for the camp's construction starting in 1954, citing a unique bilateral arrangement between the US and Italian intelligence agencies⁹³.

Officially, Gladio was born in November 1956; that's when the documents that constituted the accord between the Italian and US secret services were signed for the creation of a stay-behind organization⁹⁴. The establishment of a training branch SAD: Sezione Addestramento under the Intelligence Service's "R" office (Ricerche all'estero) was approved by General Giovanni De Lorenzo, Head of SIFAR, by late September 25, the new body was established on October 1st and consisted of two groups and a head of the section⁹⁵. Its duties included general organization, continual secretarial work for the two large guerrilla units, known as Stella Alpina and Stella Marina, activation of the operational branches (intelligence, stay-

91 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

92 La storia di Gladio. (2020b, October 24). *Il Post*. <https://www.ilpost.it/2020/10/24/gladio-stay-behind/>

93 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

94 La storia di Gladio. (2020, October 24). *Il Post*. <https://www.ilpost.it/2020/10/24/gladio-stay-behind/>

95 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 965. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

behind, propaganda, escape, and guerrilla), and maintenance of some smaller units in a state of high readiness⁹⁶. The Osoppo brigade then integrated the newborn Gladio organization.

Gladio's structure was organized into several cells that were trained by US green berets, UK's SAS, or Italian special forces in a secret camp in Sardinia. The operatives members of Gladio were in total 622, all of them civilians who were trained in the military base of Torre Poglina⁹⁷. This structure was the main base of Gladio and was maintained by the American Secret Services. Considering the structure of the Italian Stay Behind network, it was divided into small groups of different members; the teams with more personnel were the ones located in the north of Italy. Ten were experts in sabotage, six in espionage, propaganda, escape and evasion strategies, and twelve in guerilla warfare; agent and commando training was the responsibility of a different division⁹⁸. These irregular forces had access to powerful explosives such as C4, grenades, and handguns stored in subterranean hidden compartments in Italian "NASCO." Since some of these weapons may have been utilized for completely different objectives than those for which they were initially intended, the deployment of the arms caches (NASCO) around the potential zones of activity has been one of the "shadiest" components of the entire operation run in Italy. The majority of this material was supplied by the CIA between 1959 and 1960, and it was kept in Naples until being sent to the CAG at Capo Marrargiu; according to parliamentary reports, by the early 1960s, there were enough supplies to equip the majority of the teams⁹⁹.

96 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 965. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

97 Crocoli, M. (2017). *Nome in codice Gladio*, 90. History Biographic Book.

98 Rowse, A. "Gladio - The Secret U.S. War To Subvert Italian Democracy," *Covert Action Quarterly*, no. 49 (Summer 1994).

99 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

After the discovery of Gladio, the organization was accused of subversive acts, in particular considering the “Solo Plan”. This last one was another project aimed to prevent the communist party from taking power. The Solo Plan was carried out by the General Command of the Carabinieri during the political crisis that occurred during the summer of 1964 and was handed over to the top of the Army at a meeting held on July 14. At the time, for some months, Italy was governed by the first center-left government, led by Christian Democrat Aldo Moro, with the vice-president of the socialist Pietro Nenni. The President of the Republic opposed the center-left because he considered it the antechamber of the entrance of the communists to the government¹⁰⁰.

The Solo Plan was composed of three distinct parts that represented the division of Italy into North, center, and south. The first was about the protection of the most important cities, such as Milan, Turin, and Genoa, which were considered vital areas for the industry of the northern part of Italy. Then the second step consisted of the occupation of the communist newspaper L'Unità as well as the bases of the three principal left-oriented parties, the PCI, PSI (Partito Sociale Italiano), and PSIUP (Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria)¹⁰¹. The second part also contained an intervention for the Carabinieri to enter and control Rome's key strategic locations, especially the protection of the Quirinal and the Italian television official station, and the third section was about the occupation of the towns in the south of Italy such as Naples, Bari, and Palermo¹⁰².

The most controversial aspect of this Plan was that it contained a list of people to be transferred in case of a Red golpe. In April, De Lorenzo demanded that the secret services SIFAR send him the subversive individuals, who were all connected to communist parties or

100 Pagano, G. (2021, September 21). Piano Solo, quando si cominciò a perdere il senso dello Stato. *Micromega*. <https://www.micromega.net/piano-solo-libri-segni-franzinelli/>

101 Giacone, A. (2009). Le « Plan Solo » : anatomie d'un « coup d'État ». *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, 12, 67-86. <https://doi.org/10.3917/parl.012.0067>

102 Giacone, A. (2009). Le « Plan Solo » : anatomie d'un « coup d'État ». *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, 12, 67-86. <https://doi.org/10.3917/parl.012.0067>

red press or associations, available in all police prefectures, that consisted of a list of 731 people; that list was later sent on 13 April to the three division commanders¹⁰³. Once arrested, those elements would be transferred, by plane and by boat, to the locality of Capo Marrargiu (Sardinia), where there was the base of the Stay Behind organization Gladio; this last part was decided without acknowledged by Washinton or any NATO country¹⁰⁴. It is also not totally wrong to assume that the members of Gladio weren't even aware of this detail, as secrecy was a key element of the operators, and the need-to-know principle was always used. Even the elements of the same team didn't fully know the identity of the teammates; they just knew each other by name (usually a false one); the same was valid for those who trained them, the only ones to know the complete and true identity of the gladiators were the recruiters¹⁰⁵. Luckily the solo plan never received the green light, thanks to the political accord between the DCI and the left parties. Different was the Golpe Borghese a few years later, which could be defined as one of the most intense events that characterized the strategy of tension in the Italian peninsula.

Led by Junio Valerio Borghese, a far-right extremist and founder of Fronte Nazionale (far-right party), the coup aimed to overthrow the Italian government and establish a right-wing government. For the members it was necessary to establish a strong state, adopting an authoritative and efficient system of control that would express itself as having as first priority the needs of the nation. The objectives of the action, which would take place mainly in Rome, were the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, which represented for Borghese key points for the further development of insurrectional action; at the same time, there were plans to occupy the headquarters of the state television channel RAI, together with power

103 Giacone, A. (2009). Le « Plan Solo » : anatomie d'un « coup d'État ». *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, 12, 67-86. <https://doi.org/10.3917/parl.012.0067>

104 Giacone, A. (2009). Le « Plan Solo » : anatomie d'un « coup d'État ». *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, 12, 67-86. <https://doi.org/10.3917/parl.012.0067>

105 Crocoli, M. (2017). *Nome in codice Gladio*, 93. History Biographic Book.

and telephone stations, as well as to initiate serious disturbances in various parts of the city¹⁰⁶. The objective was to determine with those subversive actions the decisive and awaited intervention of the military, that in Borghese's plan would bring more stability and secure the situation under his control. The proclamation that the black prince was to address to the nation was ready, as was the operational program of the new government. Among the main points were the maintenance of Italy within the Atlantic Alliance, the appointment of a special envoy to the United States to discuss possible Italian participation in the Vietnam conflict, and the request for a loan to deal with the economic crisis¹⁰⁷. Luckily the golpe was cancelled at the last moment, some sustains due to the non-cooperation of military personnel that was to open the gates of the Ministry of Defence. Another option is that the Americans with whom Borghese had deep ties (especially James Jesus Angleton, chief of counterespionage) stopped the prince a few instants before the final order. Thanks to the CIA's influence, the attempted golpe was discovered by the press only months later, avoiding a scandal, and the participants already left the country. A few months later to avoid the PCI from gaining the elections, Washington distributes 10 million dollars to candidates from the DC¹⁰⁸.

Gladio members were accused of various attacks; one of them was the Paetano attack, where an anonymous phone call led the police to investigate an abandoned car that was filled with C4, caused the death of 3 Carabinieri and wounded 2 others; subsequently, a phone call claimed the deaths of the left-wing terrorist group, a thesis supported later by a police expert in explosives¹⁰⁹. This version was sustained until Judge Felice Casson decided to look back into it. This event could be considered as the one that brought Gladio to the attention of the investigator of the police, even if, at the beginning, they didn't know it was

106 Tonietto, N. (2016). Un colpo di stato mancato? Il golpe Borghese e l'everzione nera in Italia. *Diacronie, Studi Di Storia Contemporanea*, N° 27, 3. <https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.4247>

107 Tonietto, N. (2016). Un colpo di stato mancato? Il golpe Borghese e l'everzione nera in Italia. *Diacronie, Studi Di Storia Contemporanea*, N° 27, 3. <https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.4247>

108 Rowse, A « Gladio: The Secret US War to Subvert Italian Democracy », 26. *Covert Action*, no 49, summer 1994,

109 Ganser, D. (2016, January 4). NATO's secret armies. Operation GLADIO and the strategy of tension. *Global Research*. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/natos-secret-armies-operation-gladio-and-the-strategy-of-tension/5500132>

related to the Italian Stay Behind Network. Everything started with the discovery by the Carabinieri of a box full of weapons, ammunition, and explosive C4 in the mountains of the Friuli region¹¹⁰. The Italian military police had three main options about the owner of the stock, red-wing extremists, weapons from the black market, and independents from Croatia. This is related to the Paetano event, as the detonator of the C4 used to make the car explode was from this box found in the Friuli region.

This attack could be represented as a (failed) false flag operation as the objective of the perpetrators was to attribute the attack to left extremists "Brigate Rosse", then after years of investigations, the man behind the attack confessed. His name was Vincenzo Vinciguerra, a member of the neofascist organization Ordine Nuovo. This attack is connected with Gladio because Vinciguerra, during his confession, talked about a paramilitary organization that was in possession of a large number of weapons and explosives, formed with the objective of contrasting a Russian invasion on Italian soil¹¹¹. The right-wing terrorist was talking about the Italian Stay Behind network. So, to summarise, the Peteano attack carried out in 1972 was executed by Vincenzo Vinciguerra, a member of the Italian fascist organization Ordine Nuovo. The SIFAR, at the beginning, mistakenly attributed the incident to the Brigate Rosse, an extremist left-wing terrorist organization. Judge Felice Casson detained Vinciguerra in 1984 and revived the long-ago Peteano case, which ultimately resulted in the Gladio army's revelation. The connection was made by the most potent explosive at the time, C4, which was also employed by NATO and kept in the Gladio armaments caches. As it was the one that Judge Casson was able to demonstrate was used in the Peteano incident¹¹². Gladio might not have been found had the Peteano terror assault not been thoroughly investigated.

110 Piccolo, I. (2020, November 25). Quel Nasco di Gladio al cimitero di Mariano «Scoprimmo le armi scavando in cappella». Il Piccolo. <https://ilpiccolo.gelocal.it/trieste/cronaca/2020/11/25/news/quel-nasco-di-gladio-al-cimitero-di-mariano-scoprimmo-le-armi-scavando-in-cappella-1.39583575>

111 Cardillo, D. (2021, April 2). Gladio e gli apparati deviati: la genesi della "strategia della tensione" Osservatorio Globalizzazione. <https://osservatorioglobalizzazione.it/dossier/italia-campo-di-battaglia/gladio-e-gli-apparati-deviati-la-genesi-della-strategia-della-tensione/>

112 Ganser, D. (n.d.). Gladio: NATO's stay-behind armies and terrorism in Cold War Italy | Frieden durch Recht. <http://frieden-durch-recht.info/gladio-natos-stay-behind-armies-and-terrorism-in-cold-war-italy/>

Another attack that was wrongly attributed to the Italian network was the one that happened in Alcamo Marina, Sicily. January 27, 1976, two Carabinieri were murdered during the night after an unidentified individual or group entered the military structure where the victims were located, burning the door with an oxy-hydrogen flame. After the investigations, five young men were accused of the murder; two of them ran away and found refuge in Brazil, one died in prison, and the last one spent 22 years in detention¹¹³. Luckily in 2008, new evidence proved the innocence of the previous accused. Since the beginning, the fact that four young men, two of them at the time minors, could be the ones behind such a professional execution was not believed by everybody, and as the process was not clear, some came out with different theories, as the one in 2012, 2013 and 2017 where the Gladio teams were accused¹¹⁴. The problem with this version is that the Gladio branch in Sicily was established in May 1976, which means that at the time of the murder in January, Gladio didn't even exist on the Italian island¹¹⁵. Those events should demonstrate how the Gladio structure was used by Italian media to make "the first page" answering crimes that didn't have a clear explanation and also instrumentalized to expose a critic of the US presence in the Peninsula and the presence of the Latin country in the NATO alliance.

During the process that happened in 1990, the thesis of Gladio behind the connection to fascist extremists was studied but didn't find any guilty verdicts. This is because it is important to underline it again: the members of the Gladio organization were selected with precaution, and a background check was conducted for all of them. One fundamental condition to be enrolled was to be not affiliated with any political party or ideology, this was done also to never evoke the doubt and curiosity of police forces that would bring them to investigate and maybe discover the organization. As it was made clear by Andreotti in his

113 Amadore, N. (2023, January 30). Strage di Alcamo Marina, quei misteri di Alkammar che fanno ancora paura. Il Sole 24 ORE. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/strage-di-alcamo-marina-quei-misteri-alkamar-che-fanno-ancora-paura-AERgwEZC>

114 Crocoli, M. (2017). *Nome in codice Gladio*, 182. History Biographic Book.

115 Crocoli, M. (2017). *Nome in codice Gladio*, 182. History Biographic Book.

report, the terror Italy had experienced during the Cold War had nothing to do with the Gladio covert networks in particular, even if, as he admitted, they had not been disbanded years earlier and were still fully operational. He clarified that all Gladio network members had undergone deep background checks prior to being considered for admission and that the selection process was based on the "rigorous application" of the Secret Service Act, which guaranteed their "scrupulous fidelity to the values of the anti-fascist republic constitution" and excluded any individual holding political or administrative office, or affiliation to political parties¹¹⁶.

To conclude, it's important to underline that after all the documents released to the parliamentary committees established for the investigation after Gladio became notorious in 1990, it's not possible to affirm that the members of 'Gladio' were involved in any illegal activities connected with the terrorism of the late 1960s and of the 1970s¹¹⁷. Even if we could affirm that Gladio was part of the strategy of the tension operated in those years or a product of it, and it contributed to the strength of the tension between the political parties as, above all, the PCI was persuaded that the Gladio soldiers had as its objective to target them throughout the post-war era¹¹⁸.

As also outlined by the chief of the Italian military intelligence, Ammiraglio Fulvio Martini, who affirmed that Operation Gladio had no ties to right-wing groups and that its only purpose was to fight against the enemy in case of an invasion. "Not one of the 622 was ever involved in any conspiracies or plots," Admiral Martini affirmed when he testified in front of the parliamentary commission¹¹⁹. Gladio was the product of the geopolitical situation in Europe

116 Ganser, D. (2006). The ghost of Machiavelli: An approach to operation Gladio and terrorism in cold war Italy. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 45(2), 111–154. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-006-9015-7>

117 Nuti, L. (2007). The Italian 'Stay-Behind' network – The origins of operation 'Gladio.' *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 30(6), 960. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701676501>

118 Ganser, D. (2006). The ghost of Machiavelli: An approach to operation Gladio and terrorism in cold war Italy. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 45(2), 122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-006-9015-7>

119 Haberman, C. (1990). EVOLUTION IN EUROPE; Italy discloses its web of Cold War guerrillas. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/16/world/evolution-in-europe-italy-discloses-its-web-of-cold-war-guerrillas.html>

during the Cold War, it was an “instrument” that the Occident had to fight against the Soviets, and this is true for all stay-behind armies, not only the Italian one. What could be considered at the edge of legality was the fact that the various members of the government were not informed of this structure, but considering the nature of this one is understandable, such operations, if discovered, have a high risk of causing diplomatic tension (to say the least). Besides that, Washington didn’t want to reveal such a program to any left government affiliated with such an operation, for the obvious reason that it could put in danger the structure and the operatives in the area, but also to avoid the Russians discovering it.

Even if the members of Gladio didn’t actively participate in illegal action is possible and proven that the weapons used in some terrorist attacks came from the hidden reserve of the network. As Andreotti affirmed, the covert stay-behind army maintained autonomous weaponry stockpiles in order to function independently of regular forces in the event of a Soviet invasion. Andreotti said that the CIA had furnished most of the equipment, which was hidden in more than one hundred armament caches located around the peninsula in fields, forests, and even beneath churches and cemeteries¹²⁰. So there was the possibility for those catches hidden “in the wild” to be found and used by everyone, and that’s what happened, for example, with the Paetano attack. The members of Gladio were not responsible but the weapon that was destined to be used by them ended up in the wrong hands.

What is possible to affirm, on the other hand, as Crocoli made clear in his book,¹²¹ is that Gladio was composed of volunteers, all civilians who made an oath of secrecy and were guaranteed anonymity if they accepted the mission. This last part was broken with the process that made all the names of the members public.

120 Ganser, D. (2006). The ghost of Machiavelli: An approach to operation Gladio and terrorism in cold war Italy. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 45(2), 121. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-006-9015-7>

121 Crocoli, M. (2017). *Nome in codice Gladio*, 93. History Biographic Book.

THIRD CHAPTER.

3.1 ESTABLISH A DEFINITION OF WAR AND HYBRID WARFARE.

The first thing necessary to do before talking about hybrid warfare is to define war. The following definition that was given by Clausewitz, a Prussian general is old but still solid: “War is the social relationship established between two sovereign political communities when they decide to settle their differences through armed violence”¹²². So the violence that is intrinsic to the concept of war is what gives war specificity inside the social world. It is possible to define war also as the process of perfecting violence to be the most “surgical” possible in order to achieve the determined goal with the least possible losses. Is important also to underline that war is a “crescendo” of tension and action during the time, as all the resources can’t be deployed immediately. The work of Clausewitz is from the past; it refers to a different era. Now, the instruments and weapons have changed and evolved, but the theory and the approach described by the Prussian general were good before, and they are good now.

Very important for the victory, as highlighted by Clausewitz, is the concordance between military and political objectives¹²³. This is also true now; if the politicians are not in accord with the military, it will result in confusion and, consequently, the failure of the campaign. The conflicts of our times are far different from the ones that occurred during the time of the Prussian Officer due to the modernization of the equipment, geopolitical order, and new menaces. Now, there is no more war (intended as a declaration of war), and it’s not usual to face the enemy in the open field one in front of the other as it was before. Even the conflict in Ukraine, which now is a form of “classic” conflict, was not planned to be that way. The original

122 Smith, H. (2024, June 19). Clausewitz’s Definition of War and its Limits - Military Strategy Magazine. Military Strategy Magazine. <https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/clausewitzs-definition-of-war-and-its-limits/>

123 Clausewitz, C. V., 1780-1831. (1984). On war. In M. Howard & P. Paret (Eds.). Princeton University Press,81. <https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/EWS%20On%20War%20Reading%20Book%201%20Ch%201%20Ch%202.pdf>

plan of Moscow was to seize power through a “blitz” operation and ensure a filo-Russian government. Due to the failure of this operation and the resistance actuated by the Ukrainians backed by the West, Russia decided to enhance a full-scale conflict. The conflicts nowadays are more conducted through precise operations led by trained professionals instead of frontal charges. But the “philosophy” of Clausewitz was correct and applicable hundreds of years ago as it is now because the final objective of any conflict or operation is victory with fewer losses than possible, and this is obtainable only with the combination of the use of force and tactics, that must be all in accord with political decisions.

Now that a definition of “classic” war has been given, it is necessary to establish a definition for the term “hybrid warfare” at the core of this final chapter. For the first time, it was used by Frank Hoffman in his work to analyze the new US strategic culture¹²⁴, the concept gained then importance in the International community following the Lebanon War in 2006 between the Israeli forces and the paramilitary group Hezbollah, confirming, according to Hoffman, that a non-state actor could combine the lethality of a regular force with the fanaticism and longevity of an irregular force¹²⁵.

This term could be used to describe a form of war that goes against the traditional Western adopted model. This new form of conflict is also labeled with terms such as irregular, fourth generation, and asymmetric. All those words are not equal between them but underline the division with the traditional view of the conflict, from which, it’s important to precise, western armies are modelled.

It is, therefore, important to agree on a clear definition of hybrid warfare. It could be the combination in a broader strategy, or even in a single operation, of regular and irregular

124 Fridman, Ofer, "The Birth of 'Hybrid Warfare'", Russian "Hybrid Warfare": Resurgence and Politicization (2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 21 Feb. 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190877378.003.0003>.

125 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 110. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

warfare modes, and forces. That is the ability to combine what is called regular war and irregular war.

Because if we are talking only about Irregular war, this type of conflict is as old, or even older than the traditional definition of conflict. The guerrilla warfare, ambushes, and propaganda are not recent events. Since conflict was born, the parties involved have conducted violent actions against each other. Talking specifically about irregular war, this mode of conflict is usually undertaken as a reaction to the domination of a bigger, more modern, powerful opponent as in order to be able to oppose resistance and wound or defeat e stronger enemy those insurrectional forces use irregular tactics¹²⁶.

So, if we consider both terms, regular war, and irregular war, there is nothing new. The new concept of conflict, then, is a union of those tactics, and this is the peculiarity of it¹²⁷. It's important to understand that the term hybrid warfare is not a stable one. With this affirmation, I want to underline the fact that inside the scope of this hybridity, not only military operations or the use of weapons (considered here as the use of guns, bombs, missiles, etc) are used. Hybrid warfare is in deep connection with modernity. Using a basic example, it's possible to consider geospatial images like the ones accessible by everybody on Google Earth or Google Maps; those types of images a few decades ago were possessed only by intelligence agencies, and now everybody can use them, including groups with the objective of conducting irregular activities. This example was to affirm that the definition that we have now of hybrid warfare didn't include the same element ten years ago and will not include the same elements ten years from now; it's an evolving term.

126 Tenenbaum, E. (2023). What is irregular warfare? . Encyclopédie D'histoire Numérique De L'Europe.

<https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/wars-and-memories/war-fronts/what-irregular-warfare>

127 Schmid, J. (2021). Considérations sur la guerre hybride. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 146.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

The interest of the hybrid manoeuvre is based on the ability to put the opponent in an operative dilemma called concentration dispersion¹²⁸, this means, forcing the enemy to concentrate its force in a multitude of directions outside, but also inside. It is required to disperse the resources available to protect its rear, to maintain control over its territory delivered to subversion and destabilized by operations of guerrilla warfare and terrorist attacks. Naturally, this dilemma of dispersion concentration can only be imposed if the hybrid fighter possesses a certain number of resources that would allow it to attack on different fronts and, at the same time, protect itself. To be successful, it is necessary to have superior operative mobility, it needs to be technologically advanced, and, of course, it has to have an excellent ability to react quickly¹²⁹.

3.2 HYBRID WARFARE IN PRACTICAL SCENARIOS

An example of that hybrid maneuver that succeeded due to the application of the concentration-dispersion concept is the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, especially considering the mix between cyberwarfare actions coupled with direct intervention. Russia could be a good example of using technology to create destabilization and chaos to reach a precise objective. Due to a lack of morals, a lack of scruples, and a tradition of using technology and manipulation of information as a tool, it puts Moscow in a position of advantage if the adversary acts with different “rules”. Especially considering the cyber compartment, Russia is notably one of the best in this domain; this is supported by the national cyber power index report stating that Moscow has one of the most powerful cyber offensive capabilities¹³⁰. This willingness to invest and sustain the cyber compartment could

128 Tenenbaum, É. (2016). Guerre hybride : concept stratégique ou confusion sémantique ?. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 788, 33. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.788.0031>

129 Tenenbaum, É. (2016). Guerre hybride : concept stratégique ou confusion sémantique ?. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 788, 34. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.788.0031>

130 Voo J. & Hemani I. & Cassidy D. *National Cyber Power Index 2022*. (2022, September). Belfer center for Science and International Affairs. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/national-cyber-power-index-2022>

be based on the concept expressed in 1999. This is when Russian general Igor Sergeev affirmed that Russia couldn't compete with the West in terms of weapons and so it had to develop some asymmetrical skills to compensate for the gap¹³¹. Since then, Russian cyber operations have started to be used more frequently; this, coupled with a lack of morals, pushed Moscow to test its cyber capabilities in different domains, coupling them also with actions on the ground. Moscow gained experience with various cyber operations through the years. As outlined in a report edited in 2016 by the Department of Homeland Security, which stated that 75% of the ransomware was created in Russia¹³². The Kremlin has always used technology to conduct misinformation operations and destabilize the country's government to achieve specific objectives.

A new approach to hybrid conflict was theorized and later practiced by the Russian general Gerasimov. The Russian officer theorized a new approach to modern conflicts that he illustrated in what is called the Gerasimov Doctrine. According to the author, hybrid conflict is a new style of warfare that is fundamentally different from conventional or linear combat. He describes this new style of conflict as non-linear because it refers to its lack of distinct front lines, as the core of the new approach is based on asymmetrical tactics and the use of non-military methods to accomplish strategic goals¹³³.

To establish this new theory, the general observed past events, such as the Arab Spring in 2013, which served as a catalyst for the elaboration of the doctrine¹³⁴. Moscow saw these uprisings as a reiteration of the events that occurred in Iraq in 2003 and the Colour Revolutions throughout the post-Soviet zone that were carried out in the first years of the twenty-first century. According to the Kremlin, these socio-political disturbances were

131 Pomerantsev P. Inside the Kremlin's hall of mirrors. (2015, 09 April). The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/apr/09/kremlin-hall-of-mirrors-military-information-psychology>

132 Awad O. This is why Russian hackers are so good. (2018, 28 March). Vice.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/59j3kx/this-is-why-russian-hackers-are-so-good>

133 Emanuelli, P. (2022, February 20). Che cos'è la dottrina Gerasimov. InsideOver.

<https://it.insideover.com/schede/guerra/che-cose-la-dottrina-gerasimov.html>

134 Nascetti, G. (2020, December 3). La "dottrina" Gerasimov e il New Generation Warfare - Geopolitica.info.

Geopolitica.info. <https://www.geopolitica.info/la-dottrina-gerasimov-e-il-new-generation-warfare/>

caused by Washington's renewed desire to organize a new wave of colored revolutions to defeat governments that did not support American interests¹³⁵. Moscow found this unacceptable because it would have devastating effects on its allies, in particular Syria and Libya. As Gerasimov said, the role of non-military means is now as important, or sometimes more important than the pure use of force. In fact, at the core of the Russian New Generation Warfare, there is the use of non-military means with the objective of destabilizing the enemy. Gerasimov sustained that in the future, therefore, there would be wars no longer declared but fought in what he defines as grey areas, in which it would no longer be possible to distinguish peace and conflict situations.

At the core of the Gerasimov doctrine, there are activities that include informational campaigns, the employment of special operations forces, and the creation of internal resistance to establish a permanent operating front over the entirety of the enemy state. Russia's new theory of 'New Generation Warfare' was based on five basic pillars: political subversion, through the dissemination of Fake News (Information Warfare) or propaganda; indirect influence, such as demonstrations or cyber-attacks; military intervention, with the deployment of troops at the borders or clandestine destabilization operations; deterrence through border exercises or air patrols; and finally the fifth pillar, manipulation of agreements such as supporting rebel groups or violating established truces¹³⁶.

To understand this theory, it's useful to understand that at the core of Russian thoughts, there is the willingness to re-establish the Soviet empire, and for that, it is necessary to "fight" against the West, and this is the objective of Russian new generation warfare. General Gerasimov said that new challenges require a rethink of the forms and methods of combat operations; the general point out also that in this new way of battle, the emphasis on conflict

135 Aragona, G. (2018). La Russia post-sovietica. Dalla caduta del comunismo a Putin: storia della grande transizione. Oscar storia, 126.

136 Karber, P. A. (n.d.). Russia's 'New Generation Warfare' | National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. https://www.nga.mil/news/Russias_New_Generation_Warfare.html

strategies has shifted progressively in the direction of the integrated employment of non-military means in order to achieve political-strategic victory in the fight¹³⁷. The new generation warfare, in order to maximize the destabilizing effect of the protest effectuated by the population and generate confusion and discontent, will use a union of political, economic, and diplomatic cybernetic actions. At the core of Gerasimov's doctrine, there is also the willingness to not be directly involved in the conflict or at least not furnish any proof of who is behind the attack.

The Gerasimov doctrine is a "tactical" expansion of the theory first used by Hoffman. And the Crimean Conflict in 2014 was the perfect occasion to test the new doctrine and assess Russian capabilities¹³⁸. It is important to understand that for Putin the Cold War never ended and he always wanted to restore the past empire. Gerasimov's doctrine perfectly suits this objective, as it allows the president to put pressure and carry out hostile acts without declaring overtly a conflict. The Russo-Ukrainian conflict in 2014 was the perfect field for Moscow to test the new generation of warfare preached by General Gerasimov. In this theory, particular emphasis was accorded to the destabilization of the enemy with extensive use of information warfare, coupled with cyber-attacks and propaganda. A good example of a misinformation operation is represented by an image used by a Russian official television channel representing a line of cars that wanted to go out of Ukraine into Russian territory, in reality, it was the opposite, Ukrainians wanted to cross the border to go to Poland¹³⁹. Another example of Russian information warfare could be that following the incident that culminated in the destruction of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, various pro-Russian accounts began to post, especially on Twitter, claiming that the Ukrainian Air Force shot down the plane or that

137 Adamsky, D. (2017). L'évolution de la pensée stratégique et de l'art opératif russes. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 801, 85-92. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.801.0085>

138 Menotti, R. (2023, February 6). Dalla Dottrina Gerasimov alla Dottrina Putin. *Aspenia Online*. <https://aspeniaonline.it/dalla-dottrina-gerasimov-alla-dottrina-putin/>

139 Jaitner, M., & Mattsson, P. A. (2015). *Russian Information Warfare of 2014*. NATO CCD COE Publications, Tallinn, 42. <https://doi.org/10.1109/cycon.2015.7158467>

the cabin was full with bodies before taking off¹⁴⁰. An example of the application of this concept of hybridity was also the Russian operation on Ukrainian soil in the 2014 operation in Crimea, where masked men labeled as “little green men” entered Ukrainian soil. Those troops, most probably composed of elite Russian Units such as recon paratroopers, were entirely dressed in green and with no visible name or sign, or flag on the uniform; this visible apparent non-affiliation to any governmental or non-governmental organization allowed Moscow to publicly deny any involvement in the events that were occurring¹⁴¹. These non-affiliated forces, coupled with irregular pro-Russian separatist fighters in eastern Ukraine, represent two essential features of hybrid warfare. The resulting ambiguity prevents, paralyzes, or deters a rapid and unified response by the adversary or the international community.

Concerning the invasion of Crimea, it is also crucial to note that Russian forces already had access to Ukrainian technology and operating systems. Russian components were frequently used in those systems, and as Jim Lewis, a foreign American service officer, noted, the Kremlin might have access to the main communication companies operating on Ukrainian soil¹⁴². The communication intercept techniques used by Ukraine and Russia were very similar. A system developed by the KGB to monitor electronic communications inside the Soviet Union, the current version of the system, was able to furnish the Russian forces access to landline, mobile, and email communication in Ukraine¹⁴³. Russia successfully laid the groundwork for the actual invasion of Crimea by engaging in cyberwarfare and disinformation campaigns. Due to a complete failure of the internet servers and the

140 De Castella, T. (2014, September 8). Malaysia Airlines MH370: The persistence of conspiracy theories. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29083905>

141 Shevchenko, V. (2014, March 11). “Little green men” or “Russian invaders”? BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26532154>

142 Polityuk P. & Finkle J. Ukraine says communications hit, MPs phones blocked. (2014, 04 March). Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-cybersecurity-idUSBREA231R220140304>

143 Tucker P. Why Ukraine Has Already Lost The Cyberwar, Too. (2014, 28 April). Defense One. <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2014/04/why-ukraine-has-already-lost-cyberwar-too/83350/>

interception of all communications, DDoS assaults made access to internet websites impossible, and Russia's use of malware prevented Ukraine from effectively contrasting with the ground forces due to the complete collapse of all internet servers and systems of communications.

The case of the operation in Crimea, however, illustrates another important connection that has to be taken into consideration. The more closely linked and connected a country's relations with its adversary and the more pronounced their mutual dependence, the more potential starting points for hybrid warfare methods exist, which will also tend to be more effective¹⁴⁴, as demonstrated by the cyberattacks that completely paralyzed the Ukrainian response.

But the Crimea conflict was not the first time that Moscow used Cyberwarfare and misinformation to help its cause. Already in 2008, when Russia invaded Georgia, cyber warfare operations played a significant role. This was demonstrated by the action of Russian hackers that successfully attacked Georgian governmental websites, excluding it from all its presence online¹⁴⁵. Also, a more recent example could be the presidential elections held in America in 2017, which saw the opposition of the Democratic Hilary Clinton to Republican Donald Trump, who assumed the post of president of the United States on 20 January 2017. An investigation last several years that was named "Russiagate" proved that Russia influenced the election campaign in favor of the Republican candidate. Many of Donald Trump's advisers had connections with Russian intelligence, as in the case of Paul Manafort, president of Trump's election staff, who tightened relations with Konstantin Kilimnik, a Russian intelligence agent¹⁴⁶.

144 Schmid, J. (2021). *Considérations sur la guerre hybride*. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 141.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

145 Daileida C. *Could Russia Use Cyberwarfare to Further Destabilize Ukraine?* (2014, 14 April). Mashable.

<https://mashable.com/archive/russia-ukraine-cyber-warfare>

146 D'Arcais A. *La Russia dietro l'elezione di Trump nel 2016": le conclusioni dell'inchiesta del Senato Usa*. (2020, 18 August). *La Repubblica*. https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2020/08/18/news/russia_elezione_trump_2016_manafort-264909957/

However, after the Russian military aggression in Ukraine in 2014, the concept experienced a mutation of its form. Since then, the term has been used to characterize several military but, most of all, non-military practices, considered coordinated and centralized, seeking to destabilize an adverse society as a whole¹⁴⁷. So, even if not military, those actions were inserted in a broader plan with the final goal being the destabilization of the enemy.

Shortly after the invasion of Crimea in 2014, in 2015 the European External Action Service (EEAS) addressed the issue of hybrid threats by publishing a discussion paper entitled “Countering Hybrid Threats”, hybrid warfare is defined in this case as a mixture of military and non-military, centrally designed and controlled actions¹⁴⁸. Like NATO, the EEAS sees it as a strategy of influence aimed at destabilizing and weakening an opponent. To guard against these threats, the EEAS recommends the establishment of a “crisis cell against hybrid threats” to improve the exchange of information between the various EU bodies, including NATO¹⁴⁹.

In Germany, the government considered the term, hybrid war, as something that does not aim to destroy the opposing armed forces but to destabilize a country by attacking its governmental structures and institutions¹⁵⁰. This action had the final objective of weakening its national cohesion. The methods used would vary, ranging from propaganda to fake news, including cyberattacks, expanding Hoffman’s initial conception, which focused more on the military aspect of the actor operating modes. Following various computer attacks and disinformation campaigns, the authorities and large parts of German society see themselves as victims of such a campaign that Russia would lead against the West¹⁵¹.

147 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 110. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

148 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 110. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

149 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 115. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

150 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 110. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

151 Barbin, J. (2018). La guerre hybride : un concept stratégique flou aux conséquences politiques réelles. Les Champs de Mars, 30+S, 111-112. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lcdm.030.0166>

Hybrid warfare represents a very dangerous and new way to fight as it potentially uses all strategic areas and all sources of power ranging from politics, and diplomacy to intelligence, military, and economy, hybrid warfare includes the use of force as a defining element in all the components of a nation. From terror, sabotage, and subversion to guerrilla warfare, conventional war, and even nuclear conflict, all possible levels of escalation can be envisaged or even combined¹⁵². That's the new element of hybridity, it contains both elements of soft and hard power all working with the same final goal.

So to resume, a hybrid conflict has the following characteristics. War is not declared or even necessarily led, but the aggressor attacks in an overtly violent way and takes in part, or totally, what he established as objective. To obtain his prefixed goal the attacking actor will use rapid and unexpected actions of a political, military, covert, or propaganda nature to destabilize and surprise the enemy. Another characteristic is the impossibility of identifying a clear enemy, hybrid actors act in such a way that they can always denigrate their actions with some plausibility, or at least do so in such a way that actions cannot be clearly assigned to them in a timely manner following the rule of the plausible deniability. As in the case of the Russian operation in Ukraine in 2014 with the Little Green Men coupled with cyber-attacks and sustain to separatist groups. The opposing forces are not necessarily in a direct way, but rather sometimes disarmed and pushed to join the ranks of the opposite actor by a combination of financial incentives, threats, and pressures (direct or indirect).

In this regard, it is important to take into consideration aspects such as the combination and relations between irregular and conventional forms and concepts, the separatists of the State in eastern Ukraine rely mainly on irregular means and methods based on subversive actions and propaganda. However, behind these separatist groups hide the scenario of conventional military and nuclear threats impersonated by Russia. So the military elements

152 Schmid, J. (2021). Considérations sur la guerre hybride. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 142.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

of Russia's action that would be visible from the outside were not and are not intended to decide the conflict, but to obtain a decision already obtained in other areas by subversive means, illegal, propaganda, or political¹⁵³.

Is possible to affirm that with the operation in Crimea Moscow wanted to have a taste of the Ukrainian defenses, to use it as a testing field in preparation for a bigger operation that we saw in action a few years ago with what Russia defines as a "special operation" but was without doubt an invasion. Russia is without a doubt one of the players in the World that really applied in various occasions the hybrid concept successfully in offensive actions. It is possible to relate the hybridity to the core of Moscow's foreign policy, based principally on the Primakov doctrine. Evgeny Primakov was a man who had gained experience in the USSR, an expert in the territories of the Middle East, that he had treated as a journalist, covering all the conflicts that had taken place in that area. He had a university career as director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR¹⁵⁴. In the 1980s he was placed in charge of the external intelligence services of the Soviet Union, and that's where he elaborated the theory that is at the core of the Russian external policy¹⁵⁵.

Since 1993, Primakov has criticized the expansion of NATO into the eastern territories, defining American interests as incompatible with Russian ones. Stating also that a world with more power poles was safer than one with only one pole of power in the United States. The Primakov doctrine was based on three pillars that indicated its objectives. The first pillar concerned the creation of an axis operating in an anti-American way; this coalition, according to the foreign minister, would be formed by China, India, Iran, and, of course, Russia. The second pillar consisted of strengthening relations with the Confederation of

153 Schmid, J. (2021). *Considérations sur la guerre hybride*. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 144.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

154 Menicucci, G. (1997). *The Privatization of Russian Middle East Studies*. *Middle East Report* 205.
<https://merip.org/1997/12/the-privatization-of-russian-middle-east-studies/>

155 Pelizza, S. (2015, July 3). *Yevgeny Primakov e il ritorno della Russia*. *Il Caffè Geopolitico*.
<https://ilcaffegeopolitico.net/30592/yevgeny-primakov-ritorno-della-russia>

States Independent, and the third pillar was the need to stem the expansion of NATO in the eastern territories¹⁵⁶. In such a view, Ukraine represents the territory Moscow will not renounce, especially as for Russia, Ukraine was and always will be part of its territory and will never accept to be so circled by NATO forces.

Considering the impossibility of identifying the enemy, that's usually a characteristic of hybrid conflicts, but in some cases, it can be avoided, as in the conflict carried out by the Islamic State, where they make sure to let everybody know about their action. However, this behavior has a clear willingness to reach the destabilization of the victim in a psychological way. A terrorist attack that produces casualties will enhance fear that, in the worst case, would become paranoia. It will also produce and feed behavior of defiance and deepen the division between communities, which could lead to clashes between them that would bring more internal tension to the country affected. ISIS, in an optic of hybridity, will also use its success to publicize itself through propaganda and show the adversary as weak and not able to stop them. This will push a suggestable audience to embrace their cause and join them or to commit other violent actions in their name.

The Russian tactic experienced in Georgia, then in Crimea, and now in Ukraine is the one that aims to destroy the overall discipline and organization of the adversary, with the dual objective of degrading its operational effectiveness while affecting its willingness to fight. Once again, Russian cyber support to ground action illustrates this perfectly by focusing on the feelings of the population and the armed forces while at the same time paralyzing the levels of command to ultimately impose an order established by Moscow¹⁵⁷. To cite another example, this time not of a nation but a group that used and still uses hybrid tactics is ISIS. The interest of jihadist groups in the digital environment is very marked. The attacks of 9/11

156Nascetti, G. (2020, September 23). La dottrina Primakov: alle radici della politica estera di Putin - Geopolitica.info. Geopolitica.info. <https://www.geopolitica.info/la-dottrina-primakov-alle-radici-della-politica-estera-di-putin/>

157 Coste, J. (2016). De la guerre hybride à l'hybridité cyberélectronique. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 788, 19-23. <https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.788.0019>

had already highlighted the use of the cyber compartment, whether for recruitment, coordination, or even training. Nevertheless, the Islamic State has massively used cyberspace, notably through its recruitment networks, video productions, and its digital propaganda magazine Dabiq; as the cornerstone of its organization, the recruitment of foreign fighters is largely done through the use of the Internet¹⁵⁸.

3.3 AN OFFENSIVE APPROACH FOR STAY BEHIND NETWORKS.

The stay-behind networks established in the Cold War could be a very interesting and useful tool in hybrid conflicts like the ones that we are facing. The original networks were created with the objective of fighting Moscow in case of physical invasion.

A hybrid war of the type that took place, for example, on the field of Ukraine in 2022, would pose a particular challenge to Europe if it were conducted against a European country; because it would challenge the way NATO and the EU manage crises and defense. Although the probability seems low in the current future, NATO's military defense in an extreme situation could be weakened by subversive means that would strike nations from the inside with the rise of tension in society. This may be due, for example, as a result of a long-standing disorder, infiltration, propaganda, or destabilization¹⁵⁹. Those are all actions that could be carried out by a stay-behind network in order to destabilize the political, decisional process of the country and weaken it from the inside, multiplying the "open fronts" and, in eventuality, preparing for the major and direct military operation. Now if we take into consideration the EU or NATO and Russia, the possibility of direct conflict is remote if we consider Moscow as a rational actor. Some scholars would argue on that. Also, considering the geographical position between the Baltic country and the Russians, it would be possible that, through time,

158 Coste, J. (2016). De la guerre hybride à l'hybridité cyberélectronique. *Revue Défense Nationale*, 788, 19-23.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.788.0019>

159 Schmid, J. (2021). Considérations sur la guerre hybride. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 141-148.

<https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

Moscow established a network of dormant cells that could, in case the order was received, carry out violent action and neutralize neuralgic points to allow a main body of soldiers to cross and carry out military operations on the neighbor's soil. Since their security and defense policy is mainly directed toward external threats, neither NATO nor the EU would be ready, able, or clearly prepared to protect their Member States against such challenges that lie at the indistinct separation between internal and external security¹⁶⁰.

Now, considering stay-behind networks, the new tactics that such an organization could carry out would not be limited only to sabotage and guerilla actions but also to misinformation operations, false flags, and propaganda. Of course, the members would also have the knowledge to conduct direct actions like sabotage and guerilla in case of direct war scenarios. What could be interesting is the recent Russian operations concerning the legislative elections in France. Russia's objective would be to influence French society systemically to provoke a transition to a closed society where tension would arise between the population¹⁶¹. The Kremlin's interference mainly involves disinformation campaigns on Twitter and Facebook for example a false announcement of the recruitment of the French army for Ukraine was broadcast a few days before the European elections in order to comfort Internet users with the idea that Emmanuel Macron was preparing to enter into war against Russia¹⁶². This particular news surfed the declarations done by the French president on the need to send French troops on Ukrainian soil.

Such affirmations were condemned by other EU countries, affirming that they wanted to avoid a risk of direct confrontation with Moscow. During the legislative campaign carried out in the hexagon fake accounts controlled by the Kremlin were established for trolling and

160 Schmid, J. (2021). Considérations sur la guerre hybride. *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*, 235, 141-148. <https://doi.org/10.3917/all.235.0141>

161 Hidalgo, C. (2024b, July 3). Législatives 2024 : comment le Kremlin aurait tenté d'influencer le scrutin pour déstabiliser la France. *Le Figaro*. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/elections/legislatives/legislatives-2024-comment-le-kremlin-auroit-tente-d-influencer-le-scrutin-pour-destabiliser-la-france-20240703>

162 Hidalgo, C. (2024, July 3). Législatives 2024 : comment le Kremlin aurait tenté d'influencer le scrutin pour déstabiliser la France. *Le Figaro*. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/elections/legislatives/legislatives-2024-comment-le-kremlin-auroit-tente-d-influencer-le-scrutin-pour-destabiliser-la-france-20240703>

targeted political ads that have used 'news events that could sow discord, even revolt. All these news were ideologically close to the extreme right and extreme left in France with the objective of pushing the rise of extremes and weakening the current government. This troll strategy has been accompanied by concrete actions on the ground. Before the European elections, the Russian external intelligence (FSB) was accused of conducting an operation consisting of the drawing of David star tags on buildings in the Paris region. As well as tags of red hands found on the Wall of Righteous in front of the Holocaust memorial in Paris last May. All in the context of export of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in France¹⁶³ and dividing even more the society creating social tension.

3.4 A THE EVOLUTION OF A STAY-BEHIND NETWORK

Concerning the Stay-behind networks, they were created based on a defensive concept, the fear of Soviet Invasion; the use of the concept described above is considered a more offensive use that is possible to apply to those networks and the one that is most likely used by Moscow. If we consider now the original defensive approach, an interesting “upgrade” to it could be the concept of total defense. The concept of 'total defense', also called 'comprehensive defense,' refers to an approach embraced by society in its entirety concerning topics such as national defense and security. This particular concept has been adopted by several nations, particularly those bordering hegemonic powers like Russia. It includes all activities necessary to prepare a nation for conflict in defense of its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, consisting of both civil and military defense¹⁶⁴. This concept acknowledges that a hostile actor could attack not only in a direct and classical way so in the form of traditional conventional military actions but also indirectly

163 Hidalgo, C. (2024, July 3). Législatives 2024 : comment le Kremlin aurait tenté d'influencer le scrutin pour déstabiliser la France. Le Figaro. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/elections/legislatives/legislatives-2024-comment-le-kremlin-auroit-tente-d-influencer-le-scrutin-pour-destabiliser-la-france-20240703>

164 Fiala, O. C. (2020). Resistance Operating Concept,18. <http://fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1392106>

without the use of force or direct confrontation. The action would be instead towards the country's economy or society, with the objective to weaken its cohesion and determination to organize an efficient response against threats. This kind of attack (indirect) is, as shown earlier, a key element in a hybrid conflict, and examples of how they've been used have been mentioned above, for example, DDoS attacks to neutralize Ukrainian communication or the operation carried out by the GRU in France to destabilize the legislative elections. Misinformation campaign used during the Crimea invasion, the propaganda promoted by ISIS. Those are all elements of hybrid warfare that are not attacks, defined as military operations, but those actions still have repercussions on the society, mining the union, creating tension, and not allowing an efficient response.

The effect that those attacks want to generate is total confusion; a situation like that (on a smaller scale) is represented by the effect had on the French police by the Terrorist Attacks that occurred on 13 and 14 November 2015. The response forces were completely paralyzed due to the variety of attacks that happened at the same time, now this is an example focused on the police, but if conducted successfully, a hybrid operation would target not only this apparatus but the economic one, the social one, the sanity sector, and finally the military one. That would leave the targeted country completely disoriented as attacked on multiple and different fronts, paralyzing it. In that situation, an actual military operation (on a large scale) would be much more likely to succeed, putting the victim under the control of the hostile force that could be seen through intensive propaganda as the re-stabilizer of the order and accepted consequently by the population. The concept of Total defense tries to give a country the tools to resist hybrid threats, from economical to military. The objective is to counter the confusion that could occur in a conflict open on various fronts.

This concept is based on the inclusion of not only governmental agencies and public institutions from the national to a smaller scale, such as the municipal level, but also private

and commercial enterprises, and in particular individuals, so common citizens. This approach includes the society entirely, giving each member a task, with the objective of participating in planning a common defence that would avoid a variety of attacks. Through the organization of certain civil activities like the energy stock and/or rationing, how the organization and distribution of food will be carried out in hostile situations as well as the maintaining of secure communications. In this way, the transportation routes on the different levels, such as ground, air, and sea, could be maintained operational, and in case it is not possible to use them, find others. An example of alternative solutions in a hostile environment could be observed during the recent and ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict; when prevented by constant Russian bombing, the Ukrainians were forced to build a society underground. Metro stations are now used as schools or adapted to let people sleep and recover.

In order to be successful, resistance organizations should plan and coordinate with capable and supportive allies, than it will be even harder for an occupying force to maintain control of the area. This planning should be done together and integrated as much as possible. Such planning should also take into consideration the placement of a government in exile, which must receive immediate recognition and material support from allies and partners as it was planned during stay-behind operations across Europe.

So the concept of total defense is to be integrated (as it is already in a few countries) inside a broader National Defense Strategy, with the intent to mobilize all support necessary to defend the nation and its territorial integrity against armed attack, that includes the cooperations with other states through alliances for example (NATO). Total defense demands that in every possible occupied region, the organization of a ready, strong, determined, and persistent resistance has the capacity to fight a more powerful adversary. So it is possible to make a comparison with Stay-Behind networks, which were clandestine

operations, with the necessity to remain secret due to the scandal that would occur if they were discovered. Secrecy also came with a cost; if no one knew about its existence, it made it hard to carry out, hard to finance and justify. In the case of the concept of total defense, it's something that is totally public and backed by the State, financed by it, and acknowledged by the International community.

The stay-behind networks could count on a few hundred elements (again due to the secrecy) that had the knowledge to conduct sabotage and guerilla operations in order to slow the enemy down, waiting for the local army to structure a proper answer. With a total defense initiative, the population and society, in general, will be posing a threat to the offensive force, also considering that this initiative offers a major protection due to the fact it is not only focused on military action but also on economic, political, and social ones. It will also solve the problem of hiding weapons on civilian soil. As explained in the previous chapter, Italy was full of NASCO, and even if it was really hard to find the weapons, as they were hidden in cemeteries, churches, and other places where a weapon was hard to imagine. Nevertheless, it was still possible that a non-authorized individual could find them and as they weren't registered or known by local authorities, it would be harder to localize them if used improperly.

Of course, if we're talking about military tactics, surprising the enemy is a big advantage; the stay-behind had this positive element. It is possible to imagine that in the case of the application of a total defense concept, some civilian groups would receive more advanced military training to conduct more damage to an invading force. But again, this initiative would be coordinated and, most of all, acknowledged by the state. The negative sides of a Stay Behind operation will be mitigated with an approach of total defense, but the condition that really is essential for the correct functioning of such an approach is a State where citizens

are united, trust, and follow the decision of the ones they elected. This approach will never work in a society that is divided.

Total Defense has been implemented or is in the process of being implemented in several nations, including Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, and Denmark. One example of good functioning considering this approach is the case of Switzerland's Cold War model. The approach used by the country involved every aspect of society, including the private sector, local government, and non-governmental organizations, all of them working together with the objective of improving national security¹⁶⁵. The entire population was subject to receive training was it military or civilian. At the same time, the whole national infrastructure and industrial production were modified, and it was made possible for them to transition in case of conflict to defense usage, for example, in the production of bullets or mechanic parts that would go to the army. This extensive civil defense network and wide civic integration achieved a high level of collective strength as the nation was working as one body. A critical component of Switzerland's Total Defense was the ability to conduct resistance operations in occupied Swiss territory; the Swiss military's plan integrated resistance operations with the constitution of a robust conventional force which included that after the collapse of regular military units, the ones that were in condition would continue the fight in the occupied regions as guerrillas or partisans¹⁶⁶. At the same time, the civil population in these areas would practice nonviolent resistance. All those actions would pose a problem to an enemy that, after a conflict, had to ensure the control and cooperation of the locals, using a lot of resources to succeed.

Another example is Finland's Societal Security Strategy, which also takes a comprehensive approach to national defense and resilience. This approach includes governmental efforts to

165 Eberle, B. (2023, November 15). The Swiss went too far in dismantling their defenses – GIS Reports. GIS Reports. <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/defense/>

166 Berzina, I. (2020). From 'Total' to 'Comprehensive' National Defence: the Development of the Concept in Europe. *Journal on Baltic Security*, 6(2), 1-9. doi:10.2478/jobs-2020-0006

establish large cash reserves to continue the good continuity of the market in case of economic dysfunctions. The Finnish approach included the creation of the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK), a voluntary organization having the objective of promoting national defense through safety and security training in dangerous scenarios¹⁶⁷. The concept of 'total defense' or 'comprehensive defense' represents an ideal approach that all a nation could establish concerning national security. Combining military, civil, economic, and societal elements to deter and defend against a wide range of threats this approach could be extremely useful to avoid total collapse in case of conflict. Practical examples from countries like Switzerland and Finland demonstrate how this concept can be implemented, involving the mobilization of the entire population and national resources to ensure the security of the country and the ability to resist an occupying force. By adopting a total defense strategy, nations can strengthen their deterrence and defense capabilities while also adopting a sense of national unity and cohesion in the case of potential aggression¹⁶⁸.

From a military point of view, maybe this approach will not deter an aggressive actor from carrying out a violent action, but it will make clear that in order to conquer all the state, a lot of resources (army, weapons, economy, energy) has to be used, representing a huge cost for the aggressor. It is also important to underline that once the territory is conquered it is necessary to maintain control of it, and that's hard to do if all the population is been trained to slow and fight the occupying force with every possible measure. The Total defence approach takes elements from a stay-behind network and expands them to the population instead of a few selected groups, multiplying the deterrence factor and defensive capabilities. Those factors, coupled with the total legality of such action, in contrast with a stay-behind net, also make it possible to push the allies to follow such a model without fear of a scandal or

167 Persson, E. (2024, February 2). Whole-of-Society Preparedness: Finland's approach - National Preparedness Commission. National Preparedness Commission. <https://nationalpreparednesscommission.uk/publications/whole-of-society-preparedness-finlands-approach/>

168 Fiala, O. C. (2020). Resistance Operating Concept,171. <http://fhs.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:1392106>

combination from any international actor. This makes the concept of total defence a good alternative to a Gladio structured operation and would be interesting to observe its application in the future.

CONCLUSION

From the work and research in this thesis, it is possible to have now a clear conception of the Stay-Behind operations all across Europe, as well as their motivations, structure, and duties, covered in the first chapter of this work. The case studies of France, Belgium, Luxemburg, Denmark, and Turkey demonstrated how those secret structures, inserted in a broader strategy led by NATO countries to avoid a communist turn, impacted various aspects of the nations where they were established.

The results obtained from the Italy case study summarized in the second chapter demonstrate how easy it is for the media to manipulate and transform some actions to mislead the lecturer. This could be brought through time to speculations and theories not based on real facts, which would feed even more the untruthfulness of some declarations.

In the third chapter of this research, it was possible to establish a clear definition of such a complex topic as hybrid warfare, clarifying that it is a term that is evolving and that the definition that we have now will not be the same few years in the future. The research questions this paper wanted to answer were: How did the Stay Behind networks impact the society where they were established, and Is it possible to connect the Stay-Behind operations to the modern tactics of hybrid warfare that we are facing?

Through this last chapter, it was possible to establish two connections between the hybridity of the conflict and the Stay-Behind networks. One connection was offensive. Considering the use of those structures to conduct sabotage guerilla and propaganda operations on foreign grounds in order to destabilize the country and deepen the tension in the society. The second connection that was possible to explore was a defensive approach embedded in the innovative concept of Total Defence. This approach took some aspects from the Stay-Behind operations but expanded it to the entirety of the population instead of a selected group and intended to cover most crisis scenarios instead of only a hostile invasion. Many countries do

not adopt this approach due to the extreme coordination and cohesion between the state and the society required for its success. This work wants to show that even if the tactics and technology have evolved, the underlying principles of resilience, adaptability, and civilian engagement remain essential for safeguarding societies against the multitude of threats faced in our time.

It could be interesting in the future to study more the Total Defence approach, focusing on its applications and the impact that it has on the population, for example, if it affects daily life positively or negatively and if it gives a feeling of total security to the societies that employ it. For future research, it would be interesting also to study in depth the conditions necessary for the application of such a modern approach.

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