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Dr. phil. Daniele Ganser:

**- Media Competence -
How Does War Propaganda Work and What Can Be Done About It?**

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Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for the warm welcome.

My name is Daniele Ganser. I'm Swiss as you can probably tell by my accent. But I hope you can understand me well, anyway. I am a historian and a peace researcher, and tonight I want to talk to you about media competence, how war propaganda works and what can be done about it.

It's actually quite a difficult topic. Last May I was here, too. Back then we were faced with the problem that there were still many people waiting outside unable to come in. The lecture I held was about the regime change in Ukraine. I was outside and people said, "Mr Ganser, I've come a long way to be here and you're the lecturer. So surely you can organise a place for me, all the tickets are sold out." And I felt quite embarrassed because I can't do that. I can't change health and safety regulations. There are only as many seats as there are. I am the lecturer alright, but there's nothing I can do. So I had to say to those people, "I am sorry, but you'll have to go home again."

There are so many people thinking independently, forming their own opinion, trying to get to the truth, trying to find a way out of the vicious circle of violence, who don't want any wars of aggression, decapitations, rape, lies or war propaganda. They are the majority! You have to keep that in mind! In a world where you might get disoriented and wonder, "Am I the only one who minds being driven into war again and again?" The answer is: No, you are not the only one, there are thousands!

I would also like to explain to you that we are right in the middle of this media revolution. I am a historian and I am observing this media revolution. We have filmed the lecture I held here in May. And just so you see the proportions: There were 500 people at the cinema and 300,000 people watched it online. That's a ratio of 1:600. That means that each of you here would have 600 people sitting on your lap, digitally. That's unbelievable! We could never have done this in the past. When I held a lecture at university, it never used to get filmed.

And this is the media revolution now. There are many good lectures online. I would advise you to use the internet and listen to lectures for free. It's a great bonus and it's not something that will happen sometime in the future. It's already here and we are right in the middle of it. This is being filmed, too, now, and will be put online later on. And so it will go on. It won't stop.

A few years ago, I met Noam Chomsky in Boston in the USA. He's a very intelligent scientist and he said: "The second superpower is public opinion."

That means the first superpower today is obviously the American Empire. But the second superpower really is public opinion. So your opinion, or the opinion in Germany or Switzerland or Austria, thus in the German-

speaking area, it matters!

There are PR companies spending millions to influence your opinion.

If someone spends millions they don't do that for fun, but they know that public opinion - how a brand like Nike is perceived or Glencore - can be influenced.

That's why you have to understand that you have power. Because only you decide what to believe.

You have got immense power, and sometimes it can be overwhelming because you're not sure how to form an opinion with so many different views being bandied about. But that's the exciting thing of our times: There are many different opinions on any given topic, also on war propaganda or media competence.

I'll present you my views tonight, but I would encourage you to check out different viewpoints on war propaganda and media competence as well.

I receive a lot of emails, and I can't answer them anymore. I'll be honest, I appreciate them, but I can't answer all of them. Please email other people!

I mostly get emails from young people.

Someone wrote: "My name is Matthias, I am 22 years old and I have been studying your work." Another wrote: "My youngest nephew, 16-year-old Sebastian, brought you to my attention during the summer holidays."

So I wondered: if they are all so young, who is this talk for? And then I decided - and I don't want you to be too irritated by it - tonight's talk is for young people. I'll be explaining certain things in this talk which will be obvious to older people. But I'll do that for the 15-25-year-olds specifically.

Someone else said: "I don't know whether you read this email, but if so, I would like to express my deep admiration. My name is Jonas and I'm 16. I would really like to see you live sometime, it's a bit difficult, but I want you to know that there are many people, particularly young people, agreeing with you."

So obviously, media competence is vitally important, particularly for the 15-25-year-olds. They are very internet-savvy, but of course they wonder, "Which website should I trust, which story is right and which is wrong?"

I remember my grandfather. Every day, he would get a local Swiss newspaper. He would take it out of the letterbox, read it, put it on a pile at the end of the week and then it would be disposed of. And that was the world. Whatever was written in that paper, that was the world. He would never have thought, "Well, maybe they are lying, maybe they are following their own agenda." That time is over.

Nowadays people have a lot more choice, so it's a lot more difficult to find your way around. My first tip - and I don't say that because I write books - my first tip really is: read books!

Once you have gained media competence you'll see that there are books, there's TV, radio, internet, all sorts of different things. But in books you've got coherent information about a subject matter, on 100 or 200 pages. And your mind can deal with that a lot better than with the news, for example.

You know the news, right? It is split into 3 minute-long segments, then there follows the next topic. That's nearly impossible for the mind to grasp.

Imagine that lessons at school were only 3 minutes long.

So you would start with maths, let's do that for 3 minutes. It would be explained how division works.

Suddenly, the English class starts. Everybody has to talk English now. We're gonna do 3 minutes of English and we want everybody to really focus on the English language. And then,

there's a change again. It's geography now, where the difference between Iran and Iraq is explained.

The students get more and more confused. Whatever might be next? (*speaks French*) Oh, it's the French lesson today. Good morning everyone. We'll do 3 minutes of French.

It would be a complete chaos. Then there's physics. The teacher says, "Well, unfortunately, we've only got 3 minutes, but I'd like to examine with you in detail the law of free fall. As an example I've brought WTC 7."

That would be impossible. You wouldn't be able to process it. No school teaches in 3-minute intervals. Yet this is what the evening news on TV is like. The same goes for the radio. Test yourself whether you are able to process it and put it into context. Watch the news. And when it's over, write down what you remember. You'll find you're not going to remember all of the 10 stories. And what you do remember is completely superficial: There will be rain in the morning and Federer has lost. Federer is a Swiss tennis player, I don't know whether you know him. But those things are completely superficial. And we really cannot process all the details. I would encourage you to do a self-test. So do read books!

What books to read is always a question. There are thousands. I mainly read non-fiction. William Blum's "Killing Hope" is one I can recommend. It's a difficult read, because it's about the American Empire, about all the countries in which the Americans have staged coups, where they have killed people, where they have attacked. It's not encouraging. I read it myself when I was 25 years old, studying at the University of Basel. I read it and I was shocked, to be honest. I asked myself: "Well, I've been at school for ages and also at university. No professor has ever told me anything about secret warfare." This topic was completely taboo. So don't wait until these things are being taught at university. Get yourselves informed!

Another book I find interesting is by Michael Lüders, a German writer. William Blum is American. We met in Washington where we exchanged ideas.

I met Michael Lüders as well. He's a very intelligent German journalist who investigates the conflicts in the Middle East, the war in Syria, the war in Iraq and who examines the role of the West from a historical-critical perspective.

Normally, that role is never highlighted. It's only ever being said, "Muslims are idiots. They are killing each other, no idea why." And that is just too simplistic. That's not how it is at all.

Then a very interesting book by Wolfgang Bittner. It's about the American influence in Europe, specifically the crisis in Ukraine. I've also chosen Matthias Bröckers' and Paul Schreyer's book "Wir sind die Guten" (*We are the good guys*). This is about the conflict in Ukraine. The title is tongue in cheek, of course.

But this is how media propaganda works: Whatever we do, we do for the benefit of human rights. If you're wondering why the Bundeswehr (*German army*) is in Afghanistan, it's because of human rights, of course. Why was Saddam Hussein toppled? Because of human rights. Why did we go into Libya in 2011? All because of human rights. We, that is the NATO countries or the West, Europe, North America, everything we do is because of human rights. This is what you're always being told. And it's up to you to either accept it or to check it yourself and then either believe or reject it. And this is a book that gives you some insight.

I also read other books, e.g. "Selbstdenken" (*Think for yourself*) by Harald Welzer. He is a sociologist. He doesn't talk about the CIA or Ukraine, but he encourages people to think about the state of the world.

I've chosen these books for now and I do want to apologise to all the other writers. Because I know I will get emails saying, "Mr Ganser, why didn't you mention my book?" There are many great books. I just basically wanted to say that reading is very worthwhile. I say this to the 25-year-olds, the 20-year-olds and to the 15-year-olds.

I have written books, too. I don't want to go into detail. It's these 3 books. The first book I wrote was about the Cuban Missile Crisis (*Engl. title: Reckless Gamble*). That was the first time

I realised there was such a thing as secret warfare. The other book about NATO's secret armies was my dissertation. I don't want to go into that here, either.

And "Europa im Erdölrausch" deals with the fact that we've needed and have been using oil for about 150 years now. We are using about 90 million barrels a day, that's 45 supertankers every day. That means we need a lot of raw materials, and these resources are being obtained ruthlessly. Thus I'm interested in whether the transition to renewable energies can be a contribution to peace. And I think it can. I'm researching the relation between war, peace and energy.

Now I want to give you a specific example and travel around the world with you a little. We'll be travelling the world tonight, in our mind, of course.

First stop Cuba. Off to the Caribbean, never a bad idea.

Fidel Castro reigned there for a long time and I researched a lie which went like this: In April 1961, the Americans carried out the Bay of Pigs invasion. Most people know this. They wanted to topple Fidel Castro. The Cubans went to the UN Security Council and said: "The Americans are trying to overthrow our government."

The invasion failed. Fidel Castro beat that small army and arrested them. At the time I was studying at university. This picture from 1997 is just to show the young people I was a student, too, once. I was 25 at the time and it was the first time I discovered secret warfare. I had had no idea before.

What did I find out?

I found out that during the Bay of Pigs invasion on April 15, 1961, US ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, claimed that the bombs falling onto Cuba were being thrown by disgruntled Cuban pilots who had deserted their army. This is what is written in the UN protocols which I have studied and I thought, "That is unbelievable! They're trying to overthrow a government in another country, they throw bombs and then they claim it was Cubans bombing their own country for being such a terrible dictatorship."

And these types of lies are still being told in international politics today. That's what I want to say to the 15-25-year-olds: It's not pretty finding this out, because you shouldn't lie. I always tell that to my kids. They are quite small still. It leads to a lot of violence. And the spiral of violence consists of two elements: there's not only violence, but also the lies. These two combined make sure we are stuck in this never-ending spiral of violence. We can't just stop the violence, we also have to stop the lies.

We've got a choice: We can continue or even intensify it, then we will just suffer more. It's all fine, we do have a choice. But one of them is simply not as nice.

Another message to the 15-25-year-olds is: Don't just read books, but listen to music, too. You could say, "Well, they do that anyway." Music can empower you when you feel weak or unmotivated. Listening to your favourite music makes you feel better. That's a good idea. Listening to music is also a form of media consumption. Here's people dancing while listening to music in Rostock in 2013. Listening to music and dancing more often would be much better than consuming more war propaganda. Because the effect of war propaganda is absurd: you end up hating people you do not know and you support wars where they bomb countries you have never been to.

Another tip: Listen to lectures! And by the way, you're really good at it.

Here's a lecture I've watched recently. I watch lectures at the office or at home in the evening. With smart TV's you can switch to YouTube and watch a lecture. Modern TV's can do that. That might be a lifesaver for TV, because normally I would advise against watching so much TV. But if you can choose the lectures yourself and watch them with your friends, I'm all for it.

Here's a lecture I recommend by Rainer Mausfeld: "Warum schweigen die Lämmer?" (*Why do the lambs stay silent?*). What he says is the following.

Oh, that's another thing I wanted to explain. The reason we are able to listen to lectures at all

is all down to the internet.

I know you know. But as I've said, this talk is for the 15-25-year-olds. I want to explain to them that there was a time in my life when the internet didn't exist. Older people can relate to that, but young people have no idea.

In 1996 I was studying in Amsterdam, this is the picture. And I was asked, "Daniele, will you join us?" And I'm like, "What's up?"- "We'll go on the internet." And I said, " What is that?" - "Well, it's brand-new. There's a room here at the uni with lots of computers where we can use the internet." And I thought, "Well, if everyone's going, it must be cool." That's how it was in 1996, nearly 20 years ago. It's crazy, only 20 years ago. We used Netscape Navigator as the browser. The pictures would render very slowly, like this. We're talking about stills, not videos or lectures. And I want to tell that to the 15-25-year-olds because they don't know. Older people do remember. Also, when logging on, the modems would go (*makes beeping sound*) and 15 minutes later you were online.

Nowadays, via YouTube, you have the option of watching this lecture again, because it's being filmed and will be put on YouTube.

YouTube has been around since 2005. You see what I'm doing. I always work with dates, I'm a historian. That's my job, that's how I work. YouTube has been around for 10 years, the internet for 20 years and that has revolutionised the whole media landscape.

We also have the smartphone which combines phone, email and internet. It was introduced by Apple's Steve Jobs in 2007. Not that long ago. 10 years of smartphone, 10 years of YouTube. For historians this kind of time frame is equivalent to the blink of an eye.

A quick recap: they did not have YouTube in the Middle Ages, but today we do. That's why we have to get clear about what we can do with these new kinds of media.

In his lecture, Mr Mausfeld says something very shocking: "American wars have claimed 20 million lives."

You don't read that in the F.A.Z. (*German newspaper*) every day.

"We have to realise that we are being manipulated. According to official documents, the US has been responsible for the deaths of 20-30 million people since the end of the Second World War. With these kinds of dimensions you have to wonder how it is possible to keep this monstrous figure pretty much hidden from public view. The facts are known. But by way of fragmentation and decontextualisation, they have been obfuscated for the public. That means it has never happened. And if it had, it wouldn't matter. Nobody cares."

And there he said something very smart. He uses the terms "fragmentation" and "decontextualisation".

"Fragmentation" means splitting it up into smaller pieces. By doing that, nobody can put it back together. And "decontextualisation" means taking it out of context, out of a meaningful environment.

You can ask, "Is this true? Is the US an empire and do they kill?" And I have to say, the answer is: Yes, that's right.

How would you recognise an empire?

The US have the dollar, which is the most important currency in the world. When dealing with media competence, you will soon enough encounter the subject of the US Empire. You will see that they never call it "US Empire" in the newspapers. Never!

The *Süddeutsche* (*German newspaper*) never says, "The US Empire has decided to bomb such and such countries in order to further peace."

They always call it "the international community", meaning us in the West. Pay attention to semantics. The US is the empire of our time.

For us historians it's normal that there is always an empire. It used to be the British Empire. This is how I explain it to my students: on a computer keyboard you've got the dollar sign and the pound sign. The dollar sign can be typed straight away, but for the pound you need to hold down the shift-key. (*Swiss keyboard layout*). This shows it was the old empire.

"We're a very young empire, and we don't even want to think of ourselves as being an empire", says George Friedman, an American geostrategist. In the US, it is not common to say, "We're an empire and we look after our imperial interests."

Imperial interests are always the same: more money and more power. Human rights don't feature. If you examine the history of the world from an imperial perspective, things become more transparent.

You can also tell an empire by their number of aircraft carriers.

Germany does not have any, nor does Switzerland, it's uncanny. Nor does Austria, another famous Alpine country. The USA on the other hand has got 10. Great Britain has 2, China has 1 and Russia has 1.

If you control the seas, you also control the trade routes and you are able to bomb countries by moving the aircraft carriers nearby. You bring in submarines and if you've got the air force as well, you can intervene.

But careful! You also need to - and you know that by now - control the second superpower!

Public opinion.

That's why you have to control the media, too, and say, "We conduct this war in order to help."

"Is there a power imbalance between the US and Germany?", August Hanning was asked.

Hanning is German and used to be the head of the German intelligence service BND.

He said, "Sure, the US is the elephant and we're the pony."

That's quite a cool image! I was wondering, "If Germany is the pony, what are Switzerland and Austria?" Are they the guinea pigs, or something? I don't know.

By the way, I don't think it's a fitting metaphor, since elephants don't torture or have secret prisons. And ponies don't have an arms industry. We're doing a great injustice to the animals.

Let's look at the military bases...

For the 15-25-year-olds: What's a military base? It's a camp of the empire in another country. US military bases are marked blue. There are quite a few. There are some in Germany, e.g. Ramstein. SIPER is the institute I head. The Swiss Institute for Peace and Energy Research. Then the Russian military bases (*marked in red*). They have a base in Syria, as most of you know, which they don't want to lose. So they don't want Assad to fall. Ukraine is also a contested area.

You don't need to be an expert to see that the Americans have the most bases in the world. It's normal for an empire. The green areas are places where both countries have military bases.

Of course, people demonstrate against military bases, here in Germany against Ramstein. They say there are American drones flying from here killing people in other countries. I think these demonstrations are justified because Germany is being used as a springboard in order to wage wars.

And that's not OK. You have to realise that the empire has bases in vassal states and not the other way around. There are American military bases in Italy, but Italy does not have any bases in the US. There are American military bases in Germany, but Germany does not have any in the US. There are also American bases in Afghanistan, but the Afghans - that would be interesting, if the Afghans had a military base in let's say Florida.

(*Heckling*)

I won't enter into a discussion. I'm just kidding.

Of course, I'm not in favour of Afghanistan having military bases in Florida. I just want you to train changing your perspective now and then. We think it's completely normal for the Americans to have a base at Bagram Air Base.

I've been researching war propaganda for a very long time.

And Ukraine 2014 is a very interesting example. I won't go into detail. I'll just show you quickly how television reported on it.

Here ARD: "Putin has made sure that war has become an option again in our region of the world. He is no longer a partner, he's an opponent."

This is from 2014 and as you know, commentaries on TV go: "We explain the world to you." What they are saying here is that Putin is 100% responsible for the war in Ukraine. I think that is the wrong conclusion.

I checked in the paper I read in Switzerland, "Finanz und Wirtschaft" (*Finance and Economy*). I give many talks for the private sector. My talks are quite expensive and the private sector pays me and they say: "Mr Ganser, will you explain to us how wars work? We find that very interesting. However, as a member of the board I can't really tell that to my colleagues, but I can get you to tell them." That's how it works.

So I have to know a lot about the world of finance and about the economy. That is why I've subscribed to the "Finanz und Wirtschaft" newspaper which costs about 400 sFr per year and is published twice weekly. So what does my paper say about Ukraine?

"With the annexation of Crimea in early 2014, the Kremlin has provoked the sanctions imposed by the US, the EU and other countries."

So this paper also claims that the 'first shot' came from the Kremlin, that the Kremlin started it. ARD and the Swiss paper agree on who is responsible for the chaos in Ukraine: the Russians.

In the alternative media, e.g. Weltnetz.tv you hear other voices. Here Ray McGovern says: "It was a coup sponsored by the West, no doubt about it." The West being the USA and other NATO countries.

So the question is: Who's right?

Here's very important advice for the 15-25-year-olds: Always look at both mainstream and alternative media. Then you have a spectrum of different opinions and then you can form your own. If you keep hearing the same story, you won't know any other and you might think that everyone thinks that way. This is not the case. There are different opinions on any given topic.

I examined: when did the coup happen, when was the government of Yanukovich overthrown? It was during the massacre of February 20, 2014.

And when was Crimea made part of Russia? On March 16, 2014.

As everybody can see, February 20 comes before March 16. So the coup was first and then came the annexation. It didn't start with the annexation, as it's commonly portrayed.

This is a very important point: Always watch the timeline! What happened first? You may recognise this from the sandbox: You have kids, and if you don't have any yet, watch other kids. So suddenly there are screams. You saw one kid hitting the other over the head with a spade and you think, "Well, this goes against anything peace studies advocate." Then you have to go talk to the children. One will say, "I hit him over the head because he threw sand in my eyes first."

The de-escalation strategy is that either is unacceptable. "Please don't do that."

But if you didn't see the part with the sand and you only concentrate on the spade, then you've missed an important part on the timeline. That goes for the Ukraine just as well as for the sandbox. A very important point!

In that lecture I dealt with the regime change in detail, you can check it there.

I thought it was great that after the talk, I was approached for an interview by Russia Today, but people said straight away, "Don't watch Russia Today, it's Putin's channel! Obviously, Putin would be interested as to who had carried out the coup in Ukraine."

But not only Putin is interested in that. In Switzerland we are interested. There are many people in Germany that are interested. I would have gone on ZDF or ARD (*German TV stations*), but they didn't approach me.

Russia Today did, I went into the studio and we talked about the coup on the Maidan.

So I recommend watching Fox News *and* Russia Today or ZDF *and* Russia Today. Compare how they report on the same topic.

"Der Spiegel" has suffered a huge loss of trust during the war in Ukraine. It's fair to say that

the media revolution has gained momentum with the war in Ukraine.

"Der Spiegel" used many simple tricks. On a cover they depicted lots of people to make it look like "this is what everyone believes."

In July 2014, after the shooting of MH17, they wrote, "Stop Putin now!"

Then the peace movement photoshopped it and wrote, "Stop war propaganda now!"

Someone went even further and wrote, "Stop Spiegel now!"

I want to show you that people are awake. They don't say anymore, "It must be true because 'Der Spiegel' said so."

So do read "Der Spiegel". There are some good articles in it, too. Compare it to other articles. And if they've written something different, go figure out what your opinion is. Strive for your opinion. Many people find that too tedious and say, "I believe it, I believe that the Russians are evil and Americans help. That's how it's always been. It gives me a certain sense of security." (*German comedian*) Volker Pispers said, "If you know the enemy, your day has got structure." And he's completely right, isn't he? Losing these structures can make it difficult.

What you have to know is that daily newspapers are suffering immensely. They are losing more and more readers. It used to be 30 million, now it's down to 17 million. (*In Germany*) For the 15-25-year-olds: If you don't read any daily papers, I understand.

But daily newspapers are still around, so I want to look at them a bit more closely. When reading a paper you have to ask yourself, "Who's writing here?" There are lots of different authors and I want to emphasise that there are some brilliant journalists around. But unfortunately, there are also those spreading war propaganda. That makes it a little hard for us, because we have to figure out whether it is war propaganda or clarifying information. I also recommend listening to the radio with a critical mind. Most people listen to the radio while doing something else: they are driving in their car, working or doing the cleaning. It goes in one ear and out the other and in the end you know that the Russians are evil. Why? "Not sure, I had to turn right at the time."

This subtle influencing occurs when you listen with only half an ear.

Sometimes there are brilliant features on the radio. There are many good radio journalists, but also some really bad reporting, unfortunately.

Let's look at a concrete example: Let's go to Vietnam and look at the war lies. This war started in 1964, a long time ago.

At the time, the American President Johnson went on TV and said the following, and it's an original quote:

"As President and Commander in Chief, it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed hostile actions against United States ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have today required me to order the military forces of the United States to take action in reply. The initial attack on the destroyer Maddox, on August 2, was repeated today by a number of hostile vessels ...This new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us...the importance of the struggle for peace and security in southeast Asia. ..Firmness in the right is indispensable today for peace."

And that's that.

So when a war starts, a good trick used in war propaganda is to say "the others attacked us first". It's very old but one of the most popular tricks of those people spreading war propaganda.

Which ship were they referring to? It's the USS Maddox, and according to the president, it had been off the coast of Vietnam when it got attacked. There had indeed been one skirmish on August 2. On August 4 the USS Maddox went back, but there was no fighting.

So the story that the USS Maddox was attacked is false.

Still we have to ask ourselves why we know that today. And we know because of the National

Security Agency, the NSA, also famous because of Edward Snowden who rightly criticised them for spying on us all. So even the pony farm is being spied on.

"In December 2005 the NSA released more than 140 formerly top secret documents relating to the Gulf of Tonkin incident in August 1964. Among them a study by NSA historian Robert Hanyon which confirms what other historians have been suspecting for a long time: There was no second attack on a US ship on August 4 in the Gulf of Tonkin."

It didn't happen!

Who said that? John Prados, he's a researcher I know well. I met him in Washington. He works for the National Security Archive. They do very good work. John wrote the preface for the English edition of my book "NATO's Secret Armies".

Researchers investigating secret warfare are familiar with each other and exchange data: "Got any new info on the Gulf of Tonkin incident?"

In the press at the time, on August 5, it said, "North Vietnamese attack US destroyer." A destroyer is a warship.

The others attacked! Americans reading this for breakfast thinking "Gosh, we're being attacked again? Where is it? Vietnam? Let's go to war then."

And that is the intended reflex.

The "Washington Post" is considered a quality paper, which it isn't. Because here they wrote, "American Planes Hit North Vietnam After Second Attack on Our Destroyers; Move Taken to Halt New Aggression." August 1964.

I really want to appeal to the 15-25-year-olds again: You might think this is crazy, but this is exactly how it works.

A lie is spread via the media, confusing the population and leading them into war. It's so simple, but it keeps happening.

The "New York Times", also considered a quality paper, but is not, since it has supported so many wars. Sure, certain articles are fantastic. But if you look at the New York Times reporting during wars, the conclusion is: it's a complete failure!

"President Johnson has ordered retaliatory action against gunboats and 'certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam' after renewed attacks against American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin". Cover page, August 1964.

So again the same story: "The others started it. We only retaliate."

But historians have shown that, no, the others didn't start it.

You wonder, "Do the intelligent services have people at the New York Times and the Washington Post?" And here's a former CIA member, the late Howard Hunt, a member of the CIA between 1948-1970, thus during the Gulf of Tonkin incident. And he said:

"The list of organizations that cooperated with the agency was a veritable 'Who's Who' of the media industry, including ABC, NBC, the Associated Press, UPI, Reuters, Newsweek magazine and others."

So newspapers are also being influenced on the inside by the intelligent services. And if the intelligent services want to sell you a war, they can phone an agency friendly journalist to get the story on the cover. So I understand when people say, "I'm not reading that anymore, I won't spend any money on this paper anymore."

Media competence is very challenging as far as newspapers are concerned. I'm not saying: Don't read any newspapers anymore. Read them if you like.

But be especially vigilant when there's a call to violence. When it is said we have to bomb this or that country, then you have to look closely and ask, "And why is that? What's going on here?"

Who benefits?

The arms industry has definitely profited from the Vietnam War. So they want to keep selling wars to you. There's the American arms industry, but there's also the Swiss and the German

arms industry. For the arms manufacturer Krauss-Maffei from Munich who builds the Leopard tank, new wars are attractive. That doesn't mean they're phoning the paper saying, "Please write that we have to intervene in such and such a country." But there are networks which are called "the military-industrial complex". And they benefit from the spiral of violence. I keep saying: We, as human beings have a choice: We could just as well manufacture solar power systems. It's possible! Then we would also create jobs. Because it always comes down to jobs in the end. I find jobs which support renewable energies a lot more meaningful than jobs which support war.

If we look at military spending, we see that there's a lot of money involved. The US spends more than 600 billion per year. That's approx. 2 billion a day. China spends about 200 billion, Russia around 80 billion, next the Saudis, a textbook democracy in the Middle East. Then France, then Germany 40 billion. So the US defence budget is the biggest by far. They are the American Empire. So obviously, they have to sell their wars via the media. That goes hand in hand.

What about the local people? Why did they become refugees? If you say, "I don't care. The arms industry, media lies, I don't care about any of that. I've got my garden and want a quiet life."

All of a sudden, the refugees are here. These things are interrelated. People flee when their living environment is being destroyed. They would rather stay where they were born. That's where their friends are, their language, where they're familiar. But if they are without any economic prospects and if their security is not guaranteed due to war, then they have to leave.

But they have no idea - look at this woman and the child - they have no idea whether or not the Maddox had been attacked in August. Civilians get caught up in the crossfire and don't have the time to research it. They have to try to survive.

Death toll: 3 million Vietnamese, 58,000 US soldiers.

So do not ever underestimate the dangers of war propaganda! It's no small matter! It leads to losses on a massive scale which could have been prevented. There's no law saying we have to employ war propaganda.

Media competence is important.

In 1997, there was a terrorist attack in Luxor, Egypt. 62 people were killed, 36 of which from Switzerland. They were killed at this temple, and as there's always a lot of blood after a massacre, the Egyptians washed it away with water. This is where the water was flowing down. What did the press do? They coloured it red. "Just like a war-torn country", the headline in "Blick" (*Swiss tabloid*) read.

"Blick" is a 'quality paper' along the lines of "Bild" (*German tabloid*). They want to increase circulation, and in order to do that they don't stop at manipulating a picture.

This is how it was. And that is how it was in the paper.

Later we found out that it was photoshopped. It always takes us a certain amount of time. I do have to apologise for that. Historians are slow, but precise.

When people say, "Mr Ganser, it's interesting that you told us that in 1964 the Vietnam War started with a lie, but that was a long time ago. Can't you explain what's going on in Syria at the moment?"

Then I say, "I'm doing my best, but I'll need a few more years until I can comment on that."

It's true. It takes us a little longer, but in the end you'll have reliable data.

And you can keep this in mind: War propaganda is a fact. It has been proven. And pictures are being manipulated. That's also been proven.

Again, to the 15-25-year-olds: Keep in mind that you can be deceived.

Media competence is important!

That's nothing new. In 1925, Edward Bernays wrote a book called "Propaganda" in which he said, it was possible to "regiment the public mind every bit as much as an army regiments their bodies."

In the worst case scenario he is right. But at the end of the day I would tell you - and there are 500 people here tonight - you can control your way of thinking. You can, it is possible. You can steer your thoughts to the right, to the left, up or down. Try to control your own thoughts. Then you will be able to recognise war propaganda. The best way is to always hear two different sides regarding a topic.

War lies Kuwait 1990:

It happened a while back. War lies again. Just so you become familiar with war lies, I've brought you some specific examples.

At the time it was about children. Children are well suited as far as war lies are concerned. Why? Because it's very emotional. Why are children such an emotional topic? Simply because we were all children once. There's empirical evidence. We can all relate to children.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the American President Bush sen. said, "We have to liberate Kuwait."

And some of the officers said, "No, it's probably just a war over oil, over resources." And Bush said, "No, this war is about good against evil. We are the good guys, they are the bad guys."

And in order to demonise the opponent, in order to make evil tangible, it was claimed, "Saddam's soldiers went into a hospital and took these sweet children out of their incubators." Newborn babies are in incubators if they are really weak. So they took the weakest of the weak and threw them head first to the ground. Infanticide.

It wasn't President Bush who said that, nor General Schwarzkopf, who led and won the war. It was said by a girl. She was crying while she said, "I was working as a nurse at the hospital. I saw it with my own eyes."

Watch out now! I'm telling you as a historian:

If a 16-year-old girl tearfully talks about child murder, you're done. You're right where they wanted you. Your reactions: "What a barbarity. Let's go to war. Where is it? Iraq? Iran? Is that the same country?"

And this reaction is intended. By the way, cheeky plug, in my book I go into more detail.

On TV, it was repeated by the president again and again. Many people's TV's are in the living room or even in the bedroom. With that, you have war propaganda in the centre of your home.

I always say: If somebody were to come into your home throwing ketchup against the walls, many people would say, "That's not on. I really don't want any ketchup on the wall or the curtains. Please clean it up again." Yes, we like it clean.

But I have to say, the device nearby, the TV, is a lot more dangerous than ketchup on the wall. If you let war propaganda into your home uncritically, what happens is just what was intended to:

In the end you hate people you do not know. You support wars you don't understand.

But at the pub you're going to say, "We have to bomb the Russians, or Saddam, Saddam in Afghanistan. Oh no, that's someone else. Who's that again in Afghanistan? The Taliban. Or Gaddafi, luckily, he's gone now. Things are a lot better in Libya now."

And this attitude is created by the media.

After the war, historians found out that the story wasn't true. The incubator story was false. The girl called Nayirah had never worked at the hospital. There were no dead children. Instead, she was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the US. And she didn't come up with the story herself. As a 16-year-old girl you don't just think, "Tomorrow I'll initiate a war." Actually she was cast by a PR agency, Hill & Knowlton. And the budget for this war story was paid for by the Kuwaitis. Because later they received reparation payments by the Iraqis, running into billions. So somehow it was worthwhile. The Americans have a base in Kuwait now. The only ones getting fooled were the public.

That's why I say: Avoid TV. I say that explicitly because TV is so popular.

But I do want to put it into perspective.

My wife said, "Why don't we get rid of the TV?" And I want to be transparent and admit that it was me who said, "Well, actually I want to keep it a while longer."

I really do admire people who got rid of it. Is there anybody here in the room who has done that?

Sometimes I get asked, "Why do you still have a TV?" And I reply, "There are two things on TV: One is political information, for which I need my TV hardly ever. But I do need it for entertainment purposes." And I admit I like watching Champions League. I watch football. I tell that to the 15-25-year-olds, too: If you watch TV, you might watch "The Voice of Germany" or whatever it is you like to watch. I understand that you like watching that, because the coaches on "The Voice of Germany" often say, "Work from the soul and put everything into it!" That's very good advice.

I'm not saying everything that's on TV is bad. Working from the soul gives you a lot of energy. But do differentiate. Champions League and "The Voice of Germany" are pure entertainment. But if the news is next and they say, "The Russians are the bad guys because of Ukraine", when it comes to the political section, I would advise caution. Ask yourself, "Is this entertainment or information/education I am consuming now?"

An email I received: "I'm listening to your talks on YouTube while renovating my bathroom. ZDF, ARD and n-tv are only background noise and weather report. I'm a teacher for history amongst others."

That means our relationship with TV is changing right this moment.

Someone else wrote: "I want to pay my respect for your courage and your commitment. It's bad enough that nowadays courage is needed again for the kind of work you do publicly. At 64 I'm a lawyer close to retiring and for decades my work had used up so much of my energy that I only consumed the daily news passively..."

This is a very important point: If you work a lot, you don't have the time to do your own research which makes you an easy target for war propaganda.

You do take in the information, but you don't double check it, because you are too tired, because you have too much work to do.

I know many unemployed people that are much better informed than people that work a lot every day.

"...without having the energy to deal with their astonishing uniformity. It's possible to sedate a people by providing work and modest prosperity."

Says a lawyer who is now retired and who has delved deeper into the workings of the media, because now he has the time.

Watching TV is very popular. If you look at the favourite pastimes of Germans, things they do at least once a week, "Watching TV" is at the top.

Then "Listening to the radio", which also belongs to media. Phoning, internet, papers and magazines, also media.

And here, very worthwhile: "Contemplating one's own thoughts". This is not media consumption. These are your own thoughts, which is great because newspapers are the editors' thoughts.

"Spending time with the partner". "Sleeping in" is also not media consumption. You are completely free from war propaganda.

"Talking about important topics", very worthwhile and doesn't normally involve war propaganda.

"Computer", "Taking care of oneself", "Drinking coffee and eating cake", which normally doesn't involve war propaganda.

(Someone shouting: "Shopping, washing the car.")

Ganser: Yes, that's missing.

"10 hours of media consumption" these sources claim.

This is by ARD and ZDF. And I asked myself, "10 hours a day? There are only 24 hours in a

day.”

This study is of course commissioned by those trying to sell ad space and then they say people are consuming more and more.

They say people sleep for 8 hours, then they consume media for 10 hours. Then there are 6 hours left.

I don't know whether these numbers are right. Try and see for yourself how often you use media outlets. Then you can divide it up into the different categories: radio, TV, internet, daily newspapers, books, magazines.

But we should be clear that we consume media at least an hour each day. Nearly everyone does.

So media competence is very important.

This is an email which really touched me. It was written by a young woman and she wrote: “About 4 months ago I came across a video by Ken Jebsen on YouTube. I've been following his videos ever since and stopped watching TV altogether. I've switched to alternative media and read many books, yours as well. I try waking up my environment, but to no avail. I'm quite young, I still go to school and people are not sympathetic. Teachers tell us to 'watch more TV in order to find our way in society'. How can it be that my politics teacher has no clue what's going on and tells us students thing like that? During lessons, nothing gets questioned, and if someone does it anyway, they are not listened to. I'm really fed up with it. The problem is that I have nobody to talk to. For example, I once asked a fellow student how it was possible that the US president who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize can go and have thousands of people killed by remote-controlled drones. But my friend wasn't interested and didn't know either. It seems I am alone amongst a bunch of people who have been fooled, but who don't care about others and who won't do anything about it as long as they themselves are OK.”

I'd like to encourage this young woman and the 15-25-year-olds to continue on their path. It's a sign that someone thinks completely independently. She knows about the drone wars, that Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and recognises that this doesn't go together. She's able to connect the dots. But she is alone and then it's very difficult. It would be easier if there was somebody else to exchange ideas with.

That's why it's important for anyone using alternative media to find people to share their new insights with. That's very important.

The drone war is terrible and completely hushed up by the media. It doesn't exist. Sometimes you do hear about it, but that hardly ever happens.

Noam Chomsky says, “The drone war program is the most extreme terrorist campaign of modern times.”

What are the figures? The drone war didn't start in 2011, that's a typo, sorry. It started in October 2001, shortly after 9/11. My mistake, I can't correct it at the moment, but it should say '2001'.

6000 people dead, most of them in Afghanistan.

This drone war shows what Aldus Huxley was talking about when he said, “The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people forget that certain other sets of people are human.”

For example Hutus and Tutsies.

And that is it. That's the purpose of war propaganda.

At the moment the drone war works like this: The drones don't strike here, but somewhere in another country. We are told that they are all terrorists, that's why it's OK to kill them.

That's always the way war propaganda works: The other one is denigrated and thus deprived of his right to live. And that's wrong.

This is what it looks like in countries where these wars are fought.

An American, Brandon Bryant, worked as a drone pilot for nearly 6 years. - They are not on the plane, drones are unmanned planes. They are in the US or someplace else.

Then he resigned and received a certificate: 6000 flight hours, 1626 enemies killed in action.

He said, "The number made me feel sick to my stomach."

If you're that young and you've already killed 1600 people, it's a very difficult situation. What is obvious is that there is no discussion about it in the media.

If it were the other way round, let's say Afghanistan possessed drones and they were to kill 100 people in Switzerland, then 20 in Munich and 50 people in Vienna, you could be sure it would be a talking point here.

But because it's in Pakistan or Yemen and because they are terrorists who need to be wiped out anyway, it's OK, somehow.

That's media competence and war propaganda in your heads in today's world.

I'm not saying that this is what you're thinking. But I want to let you know, that many do think that way.

But the young woman writing this email to me doesn't think like that. She has freed herself and says, "That's wrong. Those people mustn't be killed."

And I want to stress that: You're right even if you're only 16 years old. You got it. Those people should not be killed, it is wrong.

What does it mean killing people via drones? Does that reduce the threat of terrorism?

Terrorism does exist. No, the threat grows. Because sometimes wedding parties are hit by a drone. Any survivors will be radicalised. Obviously! And then you have to wonder, "Why does "Der Spiegel" not keep reporting on those killed by drones or show pictures to explain what's going on in Ramstein, what's going on in the US? Why don't they publish that? Why is it a non-story?"

You can see that the media have the power to put the focus on a topic. They say, "The terror in Paris, 10 dead, that's an important topic and that's why we have to increase surveillance." "6000 killed by drones is not an important topic, that's why we don't report it."

Of course, Islamist propaganda and agitation exist as well. And I want to emphasise and tell the 15-25-year-olds that that's also wrong. It's not just about criticising NATO, we also have to be careful that Islamist agitation doesn't spread.

In March 2015, some 10-11-year-old children from a primary school in Neu-Ulm (*Berlin*) said, "Christians have to be killed", or "Jews are on a par with pigs" or "Whoever draws a cross has to go to hell."

These are small children, 10 and 11-year-olds. That shows that the spiral of violence is gaining more and more momentum. And I'd like to encourage the 15-25-year-olds and all the older ones too: Just stand up and say no!

Religion is not supposed to be a group to identify with in order to make it right to kill the other group. That's what happens quite often. You use one religion for a group to identify with, then you devalue the other and say they have to be killed. And that happens on both sides, because religion can provide a strong sense of identity. That's why it works so well.

But it's a sign that we will really have to address the drone wars, the wars we are fighting as well as the wars the Muslims are fighting.

War lies in Iraq. How did that go?

Colin Powell, Secretary of State, holds up this ominously looking vial, proclaiming, "Saddam has got weapons of mass destruction."

That was a lie.

2005 Colin Powell apologised, which is very rare. "He felt terrible that the alleged evidence presented before the UN turned out to be false. He said it was a blot on his record."

So sometimes politicians do apologise for war propaganda. But I'm telling you, don't rely on it. It is very rare. It is very rare indeed.

At the time, neoconservatives like Wolfowitz, Cheney and Rumsfeld were calling the shots. And

very often they would say, "We have to kill the others. We have to use torture, we have to attack, we have to kill."

Historians are about to examine how those people's minds work. What do they want? It's a very difficult task.

What we do know is that Cheney who also counts himself among the neoconservatives lied, too. He said, "We have reason to believe that Saddam is building nuclear weapons."

That wasn't true. But this is an example of how war propaganda works: It has to be emotional. If you said, "Saddam Hussein is building a motorway," nobody would care. If you say, "He's building an atomic bomb to give to terrorists in order to create a nuclear 9/11 in LA", then people will say, "Let's go to war, we can't have that!" But what was said here wasn't true.

The Europeans participated, too. Tony Blair said: "Iraq has chemical and biological weapons...which could be activated within 45 minutes." This was a lie, too. It was a lie from start to finish.

And it's such a disappointment that there are so many lies and that people like Blair and Cheney go completely unpunished.

This is a question I get asked a lot by 15-25-year-olds: "It was proven to be a lie, so why not go to Cheney, tell him he's a war criminal and arrest him?"

Go to the US to see Cheney, take a lawyer with you and he will say, "Oh OK, nice to meet you. Here are my 100 lawyers, you're under suspicion of being a terrorist." Then you'll see who wins, because the thing is there's always some sort of imbalance of power. You remember the story with the pony. This imbalance of power is real.

In the Middle Ages, the king was riding through the town, dismounted his horse, raped a woman and rode on. There was nothing you could do about it. If you defended yourself, you got killed.

And nowadays we think, "Well, we live in a democracy now, these things don't happen anymore".

But even today there's abuse of power on a massive scale. It's not as bad as in the Middle Ages, but it's bad in a different sort of way. There's abuse of power on a massive scale and I'd advise you not to put up with it.

That doesn't mean that there is anything you can do about it right away. But in your mind you can cultivate the attitude of: "I think that's not OK."

Of course, there are people who are very proactive, for example Wikileaks. Wikileaks showed how in Iraq, US soldiers shot journalists in Baghdad. That was the video "Collateral murder" which has received 15 million clicks. This is an original document of what war looks like in reality.

This is what war looks like.

Julian Assange is in an embassy in London and can't leave anymore. Which means, if you're courageous and show what wars are really like, you won't be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Then you won't even be able to leave the embassy. This is the state of the media now.

What was the body count of those lies?

"This investigation comes to the conclusion that the war has, directly or indirectly, killed around 1 million people in Iraq."

The investigation was conducted by doctors. In Afghanistan 220,000, in Pakistan 80,000.

"During 12 years the war on terror has killed a total of around 1.3 million people."

They were all Muslims. But still people in the West, in NATO countries, are convinced that Muslims are more violent. And why is that? Because of the media.

What other advice could I give to the 15-25-year-olds?

Avoid the news!

We're all addicted to the news. "What happened again?" You receive the latest news on your smartphone. We cannot process the news. As a rule, it's a lot better to have coherent news instead of fragmented news. It's a lot more valuable.

You hear about the Volkswagen-scandal. It's big news, everyone's talking about it. What happened?

People were deceived about the true figures of Diesel emission. That was wrong. Someone from Volkswagen had to resign straight away.

But did Cheney resign when the lies about the weapons of mass destruction were uncovered? Of course not.

That's the relationship between the empire and less powerful countries. Because the crime of starting a war with a lie leading to a million dead is a lot greater than tweaking the emission data of Diesel motors. That's not OK, don't get me wrong. I don't want to make excuses for Volkswagen.

But just so you see how the media decide what's the moral high ground. Who needs to go, who can stay?

Now we've got the Islamic State, a very difficult subject for historians.

What I can say is they are fundamentalist, they behead people, they're completely radicalised. They go against everything that peace studies advocate. They are not tolerant, not at all.

And there are young people, not many, who go to these countries to join the Islamic State.

Note to the 15-25-year-olds, if you're prepared to listen to a peace researcher: Don't ever do that! Don't go to war. Don't join the Islamic State!

Of course you might say, "I wouldn't have done that anyway."

"Journalist Jürgen Todenhöfer talks to Christian Emde, a German convert to Islam, who in 2014 joined IS in Syria and who urges total war and global supremacy of Islam. 'He was brainwashed into becoming a killer', according to Todenhöfer. From the town of Kassel, 40 boys and girls between the age of 15 and 23 have joined IS abroad. 'That's crazy', he said in July 2015."

This is a real problem, because these young people have lost their bearings inside the spiral of violence. Is it the Muslims who are bad, or the US or NATO?

My advice: Keep out of the spiral of violence altogether. Don't kill anybody!

This region is in chaos at the moment: Syria, Iraq. This whole area.

You know Saudi Arabia is at war with Yemen. This is a very unstable area and the challenge is to find out how those wars have started, how the chaos was set off by war propaganda.

And President Assad said: "...the crucial juncture in what happened in Syria is something that many people wouldn't even think of. It was the Iraq war in 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq. We were strongly opposed to that invasion... We are Iraq's neighbours..."

That's true, they share a long border.

"...and we knew that things were moving in the direction of dividing societies and creating unrest... with Western support and Gulf money, particularly from Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and with Turkish logistic support...All these factors together brought things to what we have today."

So Cheney's and Powell's lies had far-reaching repercussions. The stream of refugees we're facing today is linked to those war lies. You need to connect the dots.

The war in Syria: Sunni militants want to topple Assad. They are supported by the Saudis who are Sunnis as well, while the Iranians and the Russians want to keep Assad in power.

We keep hearing about refugees, they are here. But there's no talk of the issue of war propaganda.

It should say in every article, "The refugee problem forces us to take a closer look at the issue of war propaganda." Because war propaganda is the root cause for starting these wars and

destroying these people's homes.

If you look at it on a map, at the institute (*SIPER*) we've created a map where the refugees originate.

They come from this destabilised region. Here, there's a war in Libya, NATO operations. Here, you've got the attack of Iraq by the British and the Americans. There are operations in Syria, wars in Afghanistan.

And here you have to connect the dots. These things are interrelated. But in my opinion, that is hardly ever done as far as the refugee issue is concerned. What's the cause of the stream?

Assad made a controversial statement, he asked, "Who are these groups? Who are ISIS and al-Nusra? They are simply extremist products of the West."

Extremist products of the West?

"...(like) al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in order to fight the Soviet Union."

It's a very far-reaching statement he makes. He said it on Russia Today. And now you can ask, "Is ISIS really a product of the West? Isn't it rather the West who is fighting ISIS?"

This is a subject you can try to get your head around. It is one of the most controversial topics to come to grips with at the moment.

What I can tell you is that the second part of the statement is true: "Like al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in order to fight the Soviet Union."

Here we can prove that Muslim militants had been armed once before in order to beat an opponent.

According to the old adage: The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

I'll explain:

War lies in Afghanistan 1979: 2 million Afghans dead, 15,000 on the Soviet side.

Back then the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and later, the CIA armed the Mujahideen, radical Sunnis from e.g. Saudi Arabia.

And Brzeziński, former security adviser to Jimmy Carter said, "No, we've armed those Muslim radicals a long time before that."

This is where it gets interesting.

He says: "According to the official version of history CIA aid to the Mujahideen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan on December 24, 1979. But reality, closely guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents (*Mujahideen*) ...And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that...this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention."

So to recap: Who is Brzeziński? He is the security adviser to the president in the White House. The White House decides to aid those Muslim radicals in order to weaken the Soviet Union.

And don't get me wrong here, they aren't enthusiastic about radical Islam in the US, not at all. But at the same time they are seen as useful idiots who can be used to harm someone who is disliked. This is a dangerous game.

Here we've got Brzeziński and Carter together in the White House.

This was only revealed in 1998. A journalist asked him, "...do you regret having supported Islamic fundamentalism?"

Brzeziński was part of it, he is a very good source. He was in the White House.

And he said, "...it was an excellent idea...What is more important in world history? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?"

People like him have a completely different way of thinking.

That's what I'd like the 15-25-year-olds to know: There are people in this world who think, "We have to kill, we have to deceive for the 'common good'".

They are convinced that that's a good idea.

The Soviet Union needs to be weakened. That's why the Mujahideen have to be supported. The CIA provides arms, the Saudis provide money. There are a few million casualties. That doesn't matter, because the objective is to weaken the Soviet Union.

Similar things might be going on with ISIS in Syria now. But here I say: We haven't completed our research, yet.

I'll get back to you in two years' time. Maybe then I'll have some more material.

I can't comment on Syria, yet. All I can say is that in Afghanistan, covert warfare was used and people were utterly deceived.

Osama bin Laden was the most famous out of the "stirred-up Muslims". And it's a tragedy of Western politics that Sunni and Wahhabi radicals have been used to destabilise entire regions. By the way, that was continued in the war in Bosnia.

Another email I've received: "I talk to colleagues that I value, and as soon as I raise a topic such as e.g. 9/11 or NATO's expansion to the east, they turn away, saying, 'Not that rubbish again', or 'Cut it out'".

So it's very difficult to talk about these topics. Maybe you've had similar experiences. And I can tell you: You're in good company.

"...'We're only puppets on a string. If we were thinking the way you do, we wouldn't dare to go outside anymore!'"

He says, "Most people don't care about being enlightened. All they care about is their family, wife and children and they just carry on."

And what he says is certainly true. But there are also thousands of people who concern themselves with these kinds of topics.

And I want you to remember: Please don't be dejected!

It is a bit difficult now. But the point is, there are 7 billion people, and only about 1 percent, 70 million, of which are actively involved in the machinations of war and deception.

Admittedly, those 70 million keep us on our toes, but the majority doesn't deceive or kill. It is an absolute minority.

Somebody else writes: "I find it interesting that there seems to be a certain code amongst those people who are critical towards the media and those who aren't. That doesn't only include topics such as 9/11, but also topics such as the crisis in Ukraine or the recent events concerning refugees heading for Europe. This code manifests itself as follows: If you meet some strangers at a conference or during leisure time, say, after exchanging only about three sentences, like-minded people quickly find one another and start discussing controversial subjects."

I find that very interesting. Because the question is: If people consume totally different media outlets, one always reads the Spiegel and thinks that's the truth, another always watches Russia Today and KenFm, and then they meet you at a party.

One goes: "Did you watch the report about MH 17?" And so it starts. Worlds collide.

I would make the case for talking to everyone openly, but don't try and proselytise!

Never tell anybody, "You must read this, or do that." Everybody is free to decide. Attempting to convert people is not a good idea!

What I recommend, and that goes to the 15-25-year-olds again: Look for information yourself! So if you're interested: Mujahideen, Afghanistan, Brzeziński, type it into Google. Then you've got the data.

This wasn't possible before. I've explained it already: I first used the internet in 1996, others a bit earlier maybe. Now the internet has been around for 20 years, not very long. Nowadays it helps anyone doing research. You can enter a word, you could type 'permaculture' if you're interested. It's a lot better than consuming media passively every evening when you don't even decide what you are interested in.

Active is better than passive.

In the past we had passive media consumption. Here's a radio from 1935 called "Goebbels' Mouth".

So Goebbels would proclaim what's what. People had no possibility of questioning war propaganda. They didn't have that possibility.

It's a big mistake to think that just because Goebbels is dead, there's no war propaganda anymore. A very big mistake!

I went to Vienna, to the university. And here it says "Against war and violence". And that still holds true. I'm telling this to the 15-25-year-olds who are confused. Who are alone to some extent and who don't know who to talk to. Who don't understand why everyone else watches TV and supports drone wars.

To those I say: It's right to be against war and violence. Talk to your friends, talk to your parents, too. Even if your parents disagree, stay relaxed! It shouldn't cause a family rift. You can say, "That is your opinion on 9/11 and this is mine". Or "That is your view on Ukraine and this is mine".

That is very valuable.

Some of my students in Switzerland tell me: "My father reads the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (*Swiss newspaper*) and he watches 'Die Tagesschau' (*Swiss TV news*)."

"OK", I say, "what does he think about 9/11?"

The student says, "He believes Bush. If the news on TV and the newspaper say so, that must be how it is."

I say: "OK, interesting." Then I ask the father: "How's it going?"

And he says: "Great course you're teaching, my son loves it. But, you know, he's always using the internet. Could you please tell him that any idiot can post anything on the web, there is no verification of sources." I say: "Yes, interesting, thank you."

The point is, they are both right. The youngster says of the older one that he hasn't even realised that the real stories are not shown on the news on TV.

And the older one says of the youngster that he hasn't realised that there's no quality control on the web.

A dialogue is vital between the two generations!

Look for information yourself!

Media usage: 80 hours a week, or 11 hours a day. We keep seeing statistics like these. Newspaper consumption is down, internet use is up, TV has a big share, radio, computer games...

So tonight you're investing two hours in media competence. It's a good investment, because every day you exhibit a certain media behaviour. And I hope that it will be different after this talk.

This is how it is nowadays. Everyone is staring at their smartphones, mesmerised. That's the situation today.

My answer: Take a digital time-out! Go to the forest without your smartphone! Go to the mountains for a week with someone you like, without phone or internet access. Do that again. We used to do that in the past. It was great!

Nowadays it's like: "Yes, I'll talk to you, but I'm just texting someone else..." Or: "I'd really like to talk, but I'm chatting now and I don't want to miss what's going on. We can catch up tomorrow."

You're always somewhere else. Try being where you are!

I've got friends who are teachers. They go to the mountains with their students where there's no electricity. After two days, all smartphones are dead. There's no electricity. Nobody is able to recharge. They nearly go crazy.

This is for the 15-25-year-olds again, older people may laugh:

Don't go crazy because your smartphone is dead. Take the opportunity to talk to each other

eye to eye. And just try and hang in there when you get bored because you don't receive any news. We tend to distract ourselves because we can't stand being alone with ourselves sometimes. Then we'd rather chat with someone without maybe even being interested in how they are. But at least you don't have to deal with yourself then. And if you're all by yourself in nature, you're confronted with yourself and that's a good thing. Then you experience your own thoughts, your own feelings.

That's why I say: Offline is the new luxury.

I'm happy that you acknowledge it with applause, but I know that many 15-25-year-olds don't see it that way. They may think: "I liked Ganser up until that point when he said 'Offline is the new luxury.' What did he mean by that? That's total rubbish!"

To those I say: Try it for yourself. Put your mobile away for a day, if you can. Then put it away for 3 days or a week and notice any changes. You might say, "Well, then I won't know when the next party's on and my chat and anyway..." Tell your friends: "I'll be offline for a week." They won't leave you. And those who do weren't your friends in the first place. That brings order.

I myself do take digital time-outs. This is me on the Aletsch Glacier. I was in the mountains by myself. There were some friends as well, it was a really beautiful region. I didn't take my mobile, and I really wanted to see the sun rise. So I stayed up all night waiting for the moment when the sun would rise. And it was beautiful.

It's very important to experience those wonderful moments. And we'll experience them when we are in close contact with other people and when we're in nature. That works really well.

If you're glued to your iPhone and learn that there's been another terrorist attack in Ankara, you won't understand and you won't have a beautiful moment.

So I would make sure you treat yourself to digital time-outs even if it's a challenge.

Here I've summarised the recommendations for more media competence:

1. Look for the information yourself.
2. Take a digital time-out
3. Read books
4. Listen to music
5. Listen to talks
6. Avoid TV
7. Avoid the news
8. Consume radio and newspapers with a critical mind
9. Check the source
10. Be the most positive person you know

This one is the most difficult.

I want to explain "check the source" in more detail. And I also want to explain being "the most positive person you know".

I know I've flooded you with a lot of material tonight. Are you able to go on? Let's do this! I told myself: I'll go to Berlin and I won't go easy on the people. We'll go on a long tour and climb several mountains. But we do have to discuss "checking the source".

Who is writing?

When reading a text, it is vital to know that it's not giraffes writing, nor is it elephants or ponies. It's always people.

And anyone who writes or gives talks has a particular world view. He has certain thoughts and feelings which can rub off on you. That's why you always need to check who's writing.

For example: The Munich Security Conference takes place every year.

There will be reports about the Munich Security Conference in the press. Peace researchers have just started to look at those reports. It's very interesting.

Outside, people are demonstrating, and inside they are talking about security or war.

Now the question is, how do the media report on the demonstrations and the talks respectively?

And the conclusion is:

Dr Uwe Kröger, who I've never met, has examined how the media report on it.

MSC being the Munich Security Conference.

Depiction e.g. in the FAZ positive for the conference, but negative for the protests.

You can look at it empirically.

"Süddeutsche Zeitung" very conspicuous: Depiction of the conference always positive, depiction of the protest always negative.

You need to ask yourself: Who is the writer?

Kornelius writes for the "Süddeutsche". Then you need to ask whether you should follow him.

I'd say, you'd better not. But that's just a recommendation. Should you follow his thinking?

On NATO he says: "Those looking for alternatives to NATO will soon be disappointed. There isn't a better one." Thus he is a loyal supporter of NATO. So if at the MSC they say the

Bundeswehr needs to go to Afghanistan, NATO is called for, then he'll write that that's

important and the right thing to do.

Frankenberger writes for the "Frankfurter Allgemeine" (FAZ). Seeing as the majority of Germans are skeptical towards NATO military operations, especially in Afghanistan, Frankenberger argues that: "Politics must not shy away from the battle of opinions on the home front. Over here, the battle to win over the hearts and minds needs to be fought, as well."

Both newspapers' circulation is down. But sometimes it's good to take a look at the heads behind the desks.

My advice to the 15-25-year-olds: Always "google" the author's name. Then you get a picture and you can decide whether or not to follow them. Of course, you can't go by the picture. Do look for some quotes as well.

You can follow Rasmussen, too, of course. He has claimed: "NATO is the most successful peace movement the world has ever known."

I don't see it that way. I don't. But Rasmussen is the secretary general of NATO.

This is why reviewing the sources is essential in order to gain media competence.

You need to keep asking: Who's writing?

You can ask yourself now: Who's talking here? It's Ganser.

Do you agree with him? Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't. You really don't have to agree with anybody all the time. Not at all.

Think for yourself!

I prefer political satire. I tell that to the 15-25-year-olds. That's intelligent entertainment, because they can get away with things you would never get to hear in mainstream media otherwise.

Volker Pispers used this wonderful phrase: "If you know the enemy, your day has got structure."

And it's really true. We love our bogeymen because they provide stability. Evil Russian, good American. Then the world had some kind of order. Today there's such chaos.

Good choice: political satire. Here's "Die Anstalt" shown on ZDF.

I see you've enjoyed it, too. They used the phrase: "But then all those newspapers are nothing but the local edition of NATO's PR department?"

I was really amused because in my opinion it's pretty much spot on.

It's not only ironic, but also empirical and that makes it interesting.

Sometimes I get asked: "Mr Ganser, why are you still doing peace research? Another war to be examined, another terrorist attack. Why are you doing this to yourself?"

I answer: "It's fascinating." And they say: "Do you even think that the German-speaking area can be mobilised?"

And I say: "Let's take a closer look."

How big an area is it? There are about 81 million people in Germany, 8 million in Switzerland and 8 million in Austria. To simplify, we can say the German-speaking area includes about 100 million people.

Now ask yourselves, out of these 100 million how many actually read "Der Spiegel"? You may think it must be a lot, but if you look at it: Here it says 1 million, but the new figure is only 800,000.

So it's 1 percent. That isn't much. That means that it's certainly possible for the opinions of a leading newspaper to change over time.

It's not about 80 million people using different media outlets, it's just the 1 percent-threshold which needs to be crossed. And it is happening.

Here's "Der Spiegel" again. The enemy is clear, it's Putin at the moment.

I took part in a discussion on KenFM called "Positionen" which had 500,000 clicks. That's half of the Spiegel's circulation.

The applause goes to Ken Jebsen who I want to congratulate because he is pulling off a media revolution. He's already reached half of the Spiegel's circulation and there are some interesting years ahead. Things are changing.

I'm saying this to the 15-25-year-olds again: Please don't think everything's lost, wars will spread and we are all going to die and there's nothing we can do about it.

That's not how it is! People are free to decide what the future should be like. It's also up to you, what you decide, what you're consuming, what you're posting, what you're sharing, what you are talking about.

This rule "check the source" is very close to my heart. It's the number one rule for historians.

"I was delighted to watch your lecture online. What internet news sites/ thinkers could you recommend to my students and myself in order to do active research?"

I keep getting asked this question. And because I can't answer all the emails, I decided to pick some for this talk.

These people I can recommend:

I like Noam Chomsky, I met him. I like Ulrich Tilgner, I met him. I like Michael Klare, I met him.

I like Michael Lüders, I met him. I like Erich Gysling, I met him. I like Ken Jebsen, I met him. So I didn't just read their books, I met them as well and got to know them.

Matthias Bröckers, a very independent mind. Andreas von Bülow, very independent.

Mehdi Hassan I've never met, he's British, I really recommend him. He did this interview with Rasmussen - it's only in English I'm afraid - when Rasmussen said: "NATO is the most successful peace movement or organisation which the world has ever seen." To which Mehdi Hassan replied: "Well, I'm not sure that everybody killed in Afghanistan would agree with that proposition."

He's a journalist who dares to ask critical questions.

Jürgen Todenhöfer I mentioned before.

Richard Gage, very actively involved in the research of 9/11.

And William Blum, I mentioned his book "Killing Hope".

There are many more, you can look them up.

I have noticed it's a little male-dominated. I'm going to expand it a bit.

But when it comes to war and peace, no, war, it's different with peace. But when it come to war, it's mostly men doing the thinking.

I went to Qatar with Ulrich Tilgner, we were right in the middle of it.

Andreas von Bülow I met at a peace forum in Bremen. We were interviewed by Scobel, who I think is a very good journalist, very open-minded.

Here are the mainstream media. You know RTL, ZDF, ARD, Pro7, Spiegel Online, Süddeutsche, Blick.

You can read that, but you could also...

Oops, sorry, this is another picture: "Stop the lies, we don't want your wars!" This is the peace movement.

From now on I would judge all media products along the lines of: Do they promote wars and the spiral of violence? Or do they aid in getting out of the spiral? That's a quality characteristic you can use for orientation purposes.

I've listed some alternative media outlets. I'm not saying that I think all of them are great. But they are interesting. I like reading the "Nachdenkseiten".

There are some more: "Kontext", "German-Foreign-Policy", "junge Welt" can be counted among the alternative media. "RT Deutsch" I've mentioned already, they did an interview with me. "Weltnetz" did a very good interview on the coup in Ukraine. Here and there you do find great stuff. "Free21", "KenFM", "Telepolis", "Global Research".

These media outlets exist. And what I would advise is that you alternate between mainstream and alternative, if you can.

Someone wrote: "With regard to media revolution, the classical media outlets seem like a dream world to me. We are being passively entertained and TV is a bad influence. Some people tell me, watching TV is a good way to mentally unwind. And that's exactly how it is. But there comes a time when you wake up and start to question things and actively look for the facts yourself. For this purpose, the possibilities brought about by the internet are simply brilliant..."

So, many people are feeling the change.

"...and are revolutionising the way we communicate. By the way, the good thing about waking up is that - once awake - you can't go back to the world of dreams."

That's true. Once you've understood that there is such a thing as war propaganda, you won't forget. That's the point.

What should we do?

My advice for the 15-25-year-olds again:

Read "Spiegel Online", they've got some good articles sometimes, and then read the "Nachdenkseiten". Read "Spiegel Online" for a month, and then "Nachdenkseiten" for a month. Then you've got a broad spectrum. And in order to be able to form your own opinion, you need a spectrum.

The mainstream doesn't provide a spectrum anymore. It's just one narrative. And you do need a counter narrative. Only then you'll be able to find your own way between those opposing poles.

Alternate between "ARD" and "Russia Today", or between "Pro7" and "KenFM".

The narratives won't be identical.

And now for the most controversial topic of my research:

I've been in contact with the media for a long time. I write books, I give talks, I do radio interviews, I'm invited to TV stations. And the 9/11 research turned out to be the most problematic.

This building got pulverised. I called for a new investigation and got into big trouble.

Just take a deep breath, we're nearly done. I'm a little tired and so are you, probably. Do you still want to do this last round? Good!

I know it's a lot of work, but seeing as we've started, we might as well finish it.

"In a 2006 survey 85 percent of American soldiers in Iraq said that the 'main mission' was to 'retaliate for Saddam's role' in the September 11 attacks."

You see that? That's the result of war propaganda. War propaganda can be lethal, make no mistake!

An explanation for the 15-25-year-olds:

Saddam Hussein was the Iraqi dictator and had absolutely nothing to do with the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Which means all those soldiers, 80 percent, don't have a clue. But they are in this

country shooting people without knowing the facts. And that's tragic. They get shot themselves, their friends get killed, intestines lying everywhere. That's what war is like. Let's not kid ourselves.

Then they go back to the US, completely traumatised, many committing suicide, because they can't take it anymore. So never say: "A bit of war propaganda won't do the people any harm." That's not how it is. It's a tragedy!

You can say, "Well, they just got them mixed up. Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are names that can be confused." But then they went to the wrong country! Osama bin Laden was in Afghanistan.

Pay attention to how things are presented to you and take a close look.

The Germans have sent soldiers to Afghanistan. Why did they do that? Because of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The question now is whether the terrorist attacks are used as war propaganda. I'm telling you it's a hot potato. It really is.

It was claimed we would have to go to war with Afghanistan because bin Laden had been responsible for the terrorist attacks. The terrorist attacks happened on September 11, 2001. On October 7, 2001, a month later, the war in Afghanistan started.

On 9/11 these two towers were hit by planes and they collapsed. There's a third building in the background called World Trade Center 7. It collapsed as well, but without being hit by a plane. I know many people here are aware of that. But I keep meeting people who are ill-informed when it comes to the facts concerning 9/11. They don't know how many towers collapsed. This is the third tower. It collapsed on September 11 without being hit by a plane. So our task as historians is: We've got 2 planes and 3 towers. That's a conundrum. And it's really difficult because we are the ones writing history.

So what we did first is we looked at the "9/11 Commission Report" which was published in 2004.

Bush placed his hand on it and said, "That's the truth", which made us sit up and take notice. We wanted to find out how the collapse of WTC 7 was explained. In this report the building is named, but there's no mention of its collapse. A report, 600 pages long and the information that WTC 7 collapsed is omitted.

I really have to say that's not on. Since "Copy-Paste-Guttenberg" you're familiar with academic quality control. We can assess whether or not it is a good report. And I can clearly say this one is not worth the paper it is written on. It's of no value whatsoever.

This also goes to the 15-25-year-olds: It's not good enough to say: "Two or three buildings, who cares, it was a tough day."

It's the crux of the matter! You've got to stay adamant.

We also need to keep in mind - the 15-25-year-olds will be interested in that - we are all being spied on by the NSA.

Why? Because they claim that after 9/11 people have to be monitored better.

That's another reason to get to the bottom of what really happened on 9/11.

NATO in Afghanistan, drones, torture, secret prisons. It was an important event, we have to examine it. The Iraq war is linked to 9/11, the refugees are linked to the Iraq war because the Iraq war has destabilised Syria and because the refugees come from Syria.

You see the chain of events, it's a long chain, but this is the causal relation.

What I did at the time is I talked to structural engineers, and Jörg Schneider from the ETH Zurich told me: "In my opinion, WTC 7 was with the highest probability brought down by controlled demolition done by experts."

And I have to say that I don't know whether it was blown up or whether it collapsed due to a fire, which is the other narrative: That the building collapsed due to fire. But that's the dispute. And there needs to be a debate about it on the public service channels. We have to clarify

whether it collapsed due to controlled demolition or due to fire.

You'll find that the public service channels are struggling really hard when it comes to this debate.

But it won't go away. Most people still know where they were on September 11, although it was 14 years ago. That means it was a key event.

What's the story about the fire?

It is claimed that column 79 had been destabilised by fire which caused the whole building to collapse at free fall speed.

I repeat: Column 79 had been destabilised by fire which made the whole building collapse at free fall speed.

Everybody needs to make up their own mind about whether to believe it or not.

Richard Gage, I've already mentioned that I think he's a very important researcher, he's an American architect and he says:

"We are a group of 2200 architects and engineers demanding a real investigation into 9/11...

...WTC 7 drops like a rock at free-fall acceleration straight down...symmetrically. A building like this cannot fall straight down...due to normal office fires,"

so he excludes the fire-based narrative.

"...the official reason given us by NIST..."

NIST being the National Institute for Standards and Technology, the department claiming it was a fire.

"... without all 81 columns on each floor being removed simultaneously. It looks exactly like a controlled demolition...Normal office fires have never brought down a skyscraper ever before....The official story cannot possibly be true...We have a very serious problem. We need a real investigation", he said in August 2014.

So NIST claims it was a fire. Here I would advise the students and the young people to switch back and forth. Fire or controlled demolition? But watch out because your whole world view may depend on it. Don't rush into anything. Talk about it with those people you trust the most, who you think are the most intelligent, the most experienced, the most sincere. Talk to them. And ask them: "Do you think WTC 7 collapsed due to fire or controlled demolition?" It's certainly going to spark a lively debate.

In the US the 9/11 truth movement say: "WTC 7 didn't just blow itself up." Meaning: If it was detonated, it was done by people. If it collapsed due to fire, the official story can survive.

I say it again: I won't rule out either fire or controlled demolition. I'm just saying that it's a hotly contested topic in today's war and propaganda research, and it will be for quite some time to come.

In August 2015, which was 2 months ago, a new study was published which I can recommend, by Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth, including Richard Gage.

"NIST has acknowledged that WTC 7 did enter free fall for 2.25 seconds after which the descent slowed down."

Imagine a building which is in free fall for a moment - 2 seconds is a short time, but sometimes historians have to concern themselves with such a small detail. If something is in free fall for 2 seconds, then there's no resistance during that time. Resistance will be zero, otherwise it wouldn't be in free fall, there would be something to slow it down.

You have to go and figure it out. I won't do it all for you. You'll have to think for yourselves.

Richard Gates says: "Based on the...observations...the most likely hypothesis for the destruction of WTC 7 is that it was caused by controlled demolition."

Now let's take a look at how our venerable "New York Times" handles this discrepancy.

They are located in New York and so was the attack, so "The New York Times" should be *the* authority.

The architects ask: "Why does the New York Times not report on the 2000 architects and engineers who are demanding a new investigation into the collapse of WTC 7? Why do they not report that there is data supporting controlled demolition?"

We're talking about the workings of the media.

Then a quote from 2013 from New York Times journalist David Sanger: "We have not found any evidence so far to suggest that the building collapses were caused by anything other than the two airplanes that flew into them."

Words can't express how sick it makes me feel when I read this.

WTC 7 was not hit by a plane. That's the whole point! And he knows it. This man is not stupid. He did notice that no plane flew into WTC 7. And still he thinks he could get away with an answer like that.

That just goes to show that many people believe that we, the people, are completely stupid. They think we are completely dumb. And my answer is: No, we're not!

The architects asked NIST: "If you say it was fire which made the building collapse, then please show us the data."

Because they've based it on a computer model, just a computer model.

NIST replied: "Unfortunately, we can't give you the data for reasons of national security."

I'm not kidding. That's the current status of research.

Here it says: "We are withholding 3,370 files. The NIST Director determined that the release of these data might jeopardize public safety."

What kind of rubbish is that? The architects and engineers want to find out whether WTC 7 collapsed due to fire or controlled demolition. NIST say it was fire, but they won't release the data. That's not scientific, I'll tell you as a scientist.

To the 15-25-year-olds: Stay alert, stay critical.

This picture, on the other hand, I like a lot. It shows the total failure of the mass media.

Because this debate doesn't exist in the media. On the contrary, these poor architects and engineers have to drive round in a silly little vehicle, well it is ridiculous. It says: "Did you know a third tower fell on 9/11?"

This was in San Diego in July 2013.

People walking past thinking: What's going on here?

"Building 7 not hit by a plane, collapsed in free fall 7 hours after the Twin Towers did."

But that it needs to be printed on a small van means that it's not featured either on Fox News or on CNN.

Just imagine that the weather forecast in Germany would be deemed too controversial. ARD wouldn't feature it anymore. It would only be shown on a single van driving through Germany. You would go: "We're having a party at the weekend. What will the weather be like? Has anybody seen the van already?"

You'd be on the phone going: "It's near Munich, but it went so fast, I couldn't see it properly."

It would be absurd. Completely absurd.

But that is exactly what happens in the 9/11 debate. That is absurd as well.

I wondered: Did the TV news report on it? And I searched and many TV channels didn't report it which made me feel sad.

But then I felt happy because Jane Standley of the BBC did report it.

So I was happy and thought: "Well at least there was a mention." But then I found out that she reported it too early.

She did a report on the 5 o'clock news, but the building collapsed at 5.20pm and that's not a sign of quality journalism.

Because historians go by this rule: First the event, then the report. And if it's the other way round, we become skeptical.

In 2008 the BBC apologised for the false report: "We were working on an incorrect news agency report. We had this statement from Reuters."

It's the task of historians to find out why the media reported it early. And that's nearly impossible. Because at Reuters nobody can really be held accountable. It's impossible to trace.

To the 15-25-year-olds: Do stay alert. It's the least you should do.

I already mentioned "Checking the source".

As to what concerns the "most positive person", I had to learn the hard way how I feel when I'm attacked.

Two years after the terrorist attacks, "Der Spiegel" printed this cover: "The September 11 Conspiracy".

Anyone who had done research with a critical eye was vilified: "How fanatic conspiracy theorists turn reality upside down."

I say: If only you had used the time doing proper research on the collapse of WTC 7. Then we would have a debate based on facts.

But this is tabloid journalism based purely on emotions.

In 2006 "Der Spiegel" did ask: "Why did WTC 7 collapse?"

"Didn't the skyscraper collapse in suspicious uniformity? Could it have been detonated?"

Currently, the National Institute of Standards and Technology is carrying out research into the collapse of building 7. According to NIST, the loss of a single column..."

- the legendary column 79 -

" ...made the whole building collapse."

It's fine to write it like this, but please include that "Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth" have come to the conclusion that the building was blasted by controlled demolition.

Then the reader would be given the choice between "fire" and "controlled demolition".

But it's not on that you only get a one-dimensional story claiming it collapsed due to fire.

Richard Gage came to Berlin. He's the foremost researcher on 9/11 in the US. And how is he being treated? It's a disgrace, a complete disgrace. (*Bild headline: "Why do Urania provide a platform for conspiracy nutcase?"*)

This man has got something to say about the stream of refugees, about the causes of war, about a very important topic. And what are they doing?

I'll explain it to you:

First they discredit him by calling him a conspiracy nutcase. Then they take an unflattering picture.

And you know how it is when you take pictures of yourself, right? Some can be quite unflattering. You delete those and keep the good ones. A picture with the mouth wide open is not ideal.

But that's exactly the picture they used. And not surprisingly, there's no debate about WTC 7.

My advice, and it will surprise you: Don't read "Bild".

Somebody wrote: "The worst thing is that those who ask questions (and I include myself) are rudely insulted. Although there's reason to believe that somebody 'lent a hand' with 9/11. I keep asking: 'Someone should explain to me why WTC 7 collapsed.' The answer I receive is: 'WTC 7? What's that?'"

A word of warning: If you start discussing 9/11 with your friends, you might be in for a tense afternoon or evening. I know first hand.

2006 I looked like that, without a beard but with glasses. Men only have a limited range of options. The title was "The peace researcher". I was 33, that was 10 years ago. It was in January 2006.

I published an article titled: "The fierce debate about 9/11." I pointed out that there was a third building and I quoted structural engineers claiming that the building was detonated. Shortly after, I was branded a conspiracy theorist. Within a year, my career went from "peace researcher" to "conspiracy theorist". What happened in between? WTC 7!

So I've experienced it first hand. I was young, I was naive, I didn't see it coming. I thought the media would be supportive if an issue needed clarification. I didn't have a clue.

The US ambassador (*to Switzerland*) said: "Professor Albert Stahl and Dr Daniele Ganser are scientists whose excellent reputations extend far beyond the borders. It is therefore all the

more surprising that they would back such conspiracy theories.”

So if you ask questions - I never backed any theory, even today I'm only asking questions. If you dare to ask - it's our job as scientists, we have to clarify that. But when it comes to 9/11, you get into a lot of trouble. That's how it is. You'll be attacked straight away.

“ETH and Uni (*Swiss universities*) distance themselves from conspiracy theorist.”

That was in the same year. I worked at the ETH Zurich at the Center for Security Studies and I thought: That's not on!

I bought this paper because I was interviewed. Here, they've got a picture of the Twin Towers exploding, no WTC 7, of course, and my picture with the caption: “I'll have to stick it out.”

Which is what I said. I said: “Why do you suppress any discussion?”

Here it says: “According to experts, Ganser's statements are completely absurd.”

That was 10 years ago. This is the first time I show this publicly. Why? Because it hurts. It really hurts being publicly put down.

Other professors from ETH called me and said: “They really put a spin on it because I said you were an excellent scientist with a doctorate, you've done research into terrorism, you are very knowledgeable when it comes to covert warfare. But they didn't use my quote.”

They only used the quotes of those who attacked me. They left out anyone who supported me. Then they came up with the headline. That's how the media operate.

It's terrible. Because the man who attacked me, Victor Mauer, the expert, called it “completely absurd ideas.”

I know Victor, he was in the same department. I thought to myself: Victor of all people!

When I read it I went: Victor of all people! Because I knew that he knew WTC 7 had collapsed. We both knew.

Then a few years went by and it was revealed that Victor Mauer had made up his doctorate. He had to leave ETH straight away.

So the 'expert' who attacked me had claimed to hold a doctorate without ever finishing his dissertation.

Friends emailed it to me and when I read it I thought: Unbelievable!

Note to the 15-25-year-olds: If you meet with resistance - and if you think for yourself you will - keep going! Stand your ground. You don't know whether your opponent is honest. You don't know. You only know your own thoughts. Stay true to the results of your research. Thank you.

The main problem regarding media competence today is not that we know too little. Let's be honest, we know a lot. The main thing is that we won't be intimidated.

It all comes down to fear in the end. Yes, fear again. Fear frequently plays a role in our lives: The fear of being abandoned, the fear of not being loved, the fear of not being understood. All these fears exist, they are real.

If you work in research, you are also scared of losing your job, that you won't have any money, that you can't find another job. That's why many of the researchers have stopped talking about 9/11 or war propaganda.

I think this is wrong. We have to face our fear and still stay positive.

What we have now - and then I'm done, you have my word. What we have now is an edit war on Wikipedia.

Wikipedia is part of the new media, and at the top it says: “Ganser picks up conspiracy theories concerning September 11.”

So I'm attacked on Wikipedia, too.

Markus Fiedler has investigated how it works. I don't know him. Tomorrow, I'll meet him for the first time. He's a biology teacher. He noticed how I get slagged off on Wikipedia and wanted to find out who's behind it.

Then he investigated and made a film which is online called “The Dark Side of Wikipedia”.

You've got to watch it. It's really gripping. It shows the people who are actively involved and your media competence will have improved after watching it.

We've reached the end. A quick recap:
10 rules to improve media competence:

1. Reject war lies. - Very important!
2. Harness the digital revolution
3. Look for content yourself
4. Take a digital time-out
5. Look for good journalists and researchers
6. Recognise the two superpowers: Public opinion and the USA
7. Change perspectives
8. Check the source
9. Be mindful, courageous and curious
10. Be the most positive person you know

Especially to the 15-25-year-olds I want to say from the bottom of my heart: The world is a beautiful place. Most people are absolutely likeable.

It's not like your neighbour would want to behead you tomorrow or another neighbour is planning a terrorist attack. Or that the teacher is planning a rape and everything will be bombed to smithereens.

That's not how it is. Most people have a real interest in peace and that brings hope. And this hope is justified. And it continues to be upheld by many people.

I'll close with this quote:

"The power of propaganda, however, is limited by a person's inner freedom to decide for or against something. And any human being is endowed with this inner freedom."

That means you are completely free to decide what information to absorb and which to discard. Whether you take a digital time-out in the forest, which topic you want to talk about when you're in a group of people, what you post, what you like. I hope you enjoy it! It's exciting.

Take digital time-outs now and then, that's very important, I'm sure.

And look at the world from a certain distance and always with a smile. It's a beautiful place, I'm positive.

Sorry I had so much negative news today. It needed to be said. It's a healthy sort of disappointment.

Did I mention my books? I don't know.

On that note: Good night and thank you very much.

Translation by Stefanie van der Meer