

Ex-Swiss Ambassador Reveals: Europe's Losing Control | Amb. Georges Martin

Europe is heading toward a total war with Russia, while the elites responsible keep fueling the fire. What madness has taken hold of the continent's political leaders, and what drives European diplomats to finally not stop this runaway train toward disaster? To shed light on these questions, I'm joined by a career diplomat who has worked for decades alongside his European counterparts. I'm pleased to welcome Ambassador Georges Martin. Ambassador Martin was a Swiss diplomat, notably serving as ambassador to Indonesia and several African countries. He ended his career in Bern as Deputy State Secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

#Pascal

Hello everyone, this is Pascal Lottaz from "Neutrality Studies," and today I'm speaking with a fellow Swiss citizen. I'm pleased to welcome Ambassador Georges Martin. Ambassador Georges Martin served as a Swiss diplomat, notably as ambassador to Indonesia and several African countries. He concluded his career in Bern as Deputy State Secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

#Georges

Georges, welcome. — Yes, thank you.

#Pascal

Thank you, Pascal. It's a pleasure, thank you. So, can we start with your... how do you see the current course of European affairs? And then, in the second part of our interview, we'll also talk about Swiss neutrality. But let's start with the European Union. What's happening now? Or more broadly, in Europe, across the continent?

#Georges

With the European continent, I honestly don't understand what's happening in Europe anymore, Pascal. I woke up this morning rereading the statements made by NATO's Secretary General, Mr. Stoltenberg, who, over the weekend, simply told us that the period from 1939 to 1945 would be nothing compared to what lies ahead. That we've understood nothing, that we're going to experience something even worse than what our grandparents went through. This man is a warmonger. It's an extremely dangerous war of words. I think Europeans are deceiving themselves;

they're engaged in a verbal battle against an enemy—an enemy they created themselves. And all of this means that, in the end, the situation in Europe today is, I believe, perhaps more dangerous than ever before in history.

#Pascal

What do you think is actually more dangerous? The Europeans' approach toward Russia, toward America, or toward the Global South?

#Georges

It feels like Europe is getting everything wrong. Europe has lost the Global South. Now Europe is taking a different path from the United States of America, which is never very favorable. And then, ultimately, above all, Europe—after our leaders danced and had fun until 2022... Our leaders never believed in war, in Ukraine for example. So now they've adopted a warlike attitude. It feels like what unites Europe today is nothing but hatred of Russia. And this verbal, warlike inflation is extremely dangerous.

Wars have always begun with words. It's words that start wars. So, if we want peace, we urgently need leaders in Europe today who can offer us words of peace — and they don't exist. That's what's truly dangerous. The European leaders, the so-called coalition of the willing, who met, I believe, this past weekend and are meeting again in Berlin today, are warmongers. They are people preparing us — I hope they're wrong, I'm convinced they're wrong — but they are preparing us for a future of war, a future that will be extremely serious for all Europeans.

#Pascal

You, as a former ambassador, as a diplomat for Switzerland—when do you think this change began? Because I still remember a Europe, even a European Union, that was a symbol of peace, and those weren't just words. We had good relations, and the European Union was also working for peace in the Balkans and in other countries. And now, we've lost all that. When did it start? When did the Union begin to change?

#Georges

So maybe we need to go back to the end of the USSR. I think that in the early 1990s, the European Union didn't understand the new era that was beginning. On the other hand, the United States and NATO, in particular, understood it very well. You know, I was an ambassador and head of the security policy division at the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2010. And in 2010, I organized seminars in Switzerland with representatives from NATO, the Russian Federation, major NATO

countries, and so on. Those seminars were extremely stimulating. We really felt like we were creating a new Europe. It was a kind of reconciliation between the Europe of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol, and that of our great writers, our great thinkers too, and the Americans.

But among us, there was an American representative from the State Department who told us, "Be careful, I just came back from Moscow, and I have the impression that in the offices in Moscow and Washington, the 'Kaltkrieger,' as they say in German, are still around. And those people are just waiting for one thing: to restart the tensions." And the NATO representatives who took part in our seminars told us, "Honestly, we're going to lose our jobs if peace takes hold in Europe." Their only future depended on tensions flaring up again between East and West. Of course, we didn't believe them. We thought the era of great brotherhood, of reunions across the northern hemisphere, had begun... You know, Pascal, I was in Indonesia, as you mentioned.

When I came back from Indonesia, and also from Africa, I was absolutely stunned to see that the Northern Hemisphere, from Vladivostok to Vancouver, had never really managed to find a peaceful way to live together. And then, shortly after 1990, tensions started again... The war in Yugoslavia, I think that was a key moment. The war in the former Yugoslavia ultimately broke that movement. In fact, it's said that Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, actually turned his plane around on his way to Washington when he learned that the bombings in Serbia had begun. He said, "Well, that's it. It's over."

"Our common path with the West is over, because we understand them." So, to answer your question, as early as the 1990s, Europeans failed to grasp that the advocates of tension—especially the American strategic goals of containing Russia, striking it, and reducing it if possible—when those people began to recreate those tensions, Europeans lived in carelessness. They didn't understand. So they simply focused on their own small needs. And Védérine said that Europe had become "Helvetized": Europe had turned into a large entity that looked only at itself. It no longer looked south, nor at what was happening on its own continent. And when war returned to the continent, it was poorly prepared.

And Europe was caught a bit off guard. Europe no longer had a unifying project. It stopped coming together and building federalism, even just federalism itself. All of that came to a halt. So some, within the European Union, saw in the rise of tensions and the declaration of war in Ukraine a new unifying project. And that's what's terrible. And you're right: Europe, which used to be a machine for peace, has become a machine for war. Europe has turned into a kind of mini-European NATO. And the only thing Europe has been saying for the past three or four years is: war, war, war. And that's not at all in Europe's DNA. If Europe is waging war, it means Europe has failed. And that's the big problem with the European Union today.

#Pascal

So now, the people who don't agree with what's being said on this channel, and with what you're saying, they claim it's Russia. They say Russia is the only one responsible for the war in Ukraine, and that Europe is working to... to help Ukraine regain its peace. But it's a vision of peace that requires fighting for it. So, how do you see this war, and also, the importance of what has happened over the past four years in Switzerland, actually, regarding how foreign or European affairs are interpreted for the people?

#Georges

Yes, so indeed, I think the big problem is that for most of our leaders, history began in 2022. A small parenthesis: just like in the Middle East, history began on October 7, 2023. But those leaders aren't stupid. They're surrounded by extremely competent teams, by people capable of producing strategic analyses, by people who know that history didn't start in 2022. So what we're witnessing is a vast manipulation, a propaganda effort. It's as if... I don't really like to make it personal, but still, it's as if Ms. von der Leyen had realized that her only chance to move things forward, her only chance to assert herself, was precisely to cling to that war, to talk about nothing but the war, to put the war in people's minds morning, noon, and night.

And that, let's remember Anne Morelli's little book, "War Propaganda." That's exactly what's happening in Europe. And I think from that point on, it's extremely complicated, extremely difficult to change the mindset. And I think those leaders are comfortable with that mindset. Now, Switzerland is the same. I think in Switzerland, people were caught off guard, like everywhere else, by the war. Personally, I was surprised — I don't know about you, Pascal, but I was surprised that Putin declared war. I thought Putin had everything he needed to return to the international stage. He was about to be accepted by the Americans at their level. And then, the war began.

I was surprised, like many observers. But in Switzerland, we weren't prepared at all either. And I think the Federal Council, our government, fell into a kind of panic. At first, it wanted to apply the sanctions as usual. I was in office when we applied sanctions against Iran, or even against other countries, with restraint, with skill. We always managed to make those countries understand that if we were sanctioning them, it was because we had no choice, that there was pressure on us, but that we were distancing ourselves from this automatic adoption of sanctions. So, remember: when the war broke out on Friday, the Federal Council said, as usual, that we would avoid circumvention, and so on.

And on Monday, bam, we accept all the sanctions. And up to now, we've adopted — I think the sanctions package has gone beyond twenty — we've adopted all the sanctions, systematically, without thinking. And that, basically, showed that our authorities were in a kind of panic, that they were under pressure. And then, militarily, I also think that there are some people in Switzerland — and I used to call them, by analogy with other countries, "the deep state" — I think, and I actually know them, they're civil servants, high-ranking officials, who are convinced that Switzerland's future

lies in NATO. They're officials who believe that, like Finland and Sweden, we should seize the momentum to finally join NATO. And, by the way, the European Union as well.

And that, ultimately, is what's extremely dangerous for Switzerland, because we have a system that's supposed to prepare us for exactly the kind of crisis we're experiencing today. That is to say, a system—well, neutrality, quite simply. And precisely when neutrality is put to the test, it becomes a real-life trial: everything collapses, people want to give it all up. And that's what's extremely serious—both serious and foolish—because right now we have the chance to prove Switzerland's importance and usefulness in this wartime context.

#Pascal

We can now see how the European Union is using this moment to give itself more powers over the member states. We can see it clearly now with the frozen Russian funds in Belgium. How does that work? We saw it with Ms. von der Leyen's decision to declare that the entire EU airspace can no longer be used by Russian civilian aircraft. That was not a power the Union had before, but the member states accepted it. They're accepting this "power grab," as it's called in English. Do you think the relationship between the Union and Switzerland has also moved in that direction? Are we seeing Switzerland getting closer to the Union, in fact, without asking the people whether they want it or not?

#Georges

Absolutely. In fact, he will have to ask for it. Fortunately, we would have votes on that. Yes, indeed, I think there's a double phenomenon. Gravity today is pulling us toward Europe. It's like a capsule that has left Earth's atmosphere and is coming back. And that gravity is pulling us toward Europe because our political authorities have allowed it, maybe even wanted it, in some cases, and it's drawing us toward Europe at high speed. And at the same time, there's what people still call, somewhat naively, this bilateral path. You know, this way — which is very good — of strengthening our economic relations with Europe.

#Pascal

We did it... just for people who don't know how relations between Switzerland and the Union have worked up to now. Could you simply explain the bilateral path we've taken since the 1990s?

#Georges

That's right. So, the bilateral paths. In '92, the Swiss voted on the European Economic Area. I was in favor of the European Economic Area. It would have been like Norway and Liechtenstein, a "tailor-made" solution, as we say in Franglais, to ensure our bilateral relations. Switzerland has to survive economically, because it's at the center of the single market. We have to export. So, those

agreements we call bilateral were precisely meant to create the greatest possible harmony in our economic exchanges.

We had Bilaterals I, Bilaterals II. And now we have to keep going, because there are certain sectors — electricity, among others — that aren't covered by those bilateral agreements, which were old-style agreements. That is, we negotiated, we had an agreement, and then we applied it. But it wasn't "alive," so to speak. Whereas now, the European Union has told us: "That's over. We don't have the time, we don't have time to devote to you anymore. So if we make a new package of agreements, they'll be living agreements, agreements that will evolve on their own." That's the well-known automatic adoption of developments in European law.

So, in Switzerland, we've come up with new vocabulary to sell it to the citizens: we call it "dynamic alignment." That means, or at least suggests, that we could oppose this alignment. Which is a lie, because in the end, Europe would put so much pressure on us that we wouldn't have a choice. We could hold referendums, we could launch initiatives against it, but Europe would say, "OK, but everything will stop, there will be no more economic exchanges," and so on. So, the pressure from the European Union would be such that, if we have this new package of agreements that the government falsely calls "Bilateral 3" — because "Bilateral 3" brings to mind for the Swiss the memory of Bilaterals 1 and 2, which work very well.

In the end, it should really be called "Integration Agreement 1." It would be a first integration agreement. Because, ultimately, yes, with this seriousness, with this need to find... Maybe some economists say that in Switzerland it isn't necessary to have a new package of agreements under the label of the bilaterals — what we call Bilaterals 1 and 2 — but let's assume it is necessary. With this gravity pulling us politically and geostrategically toward Europe, and toward NATO as well, it's becoming very complicated to manage this approach and keep it purely, I would say, technical. Politically, we are getting closer every week, every month, to the European Union.

#Pascal

Yes, that's one of the biggest problems we have right now in Switzerland, actually, because we can't live without the European Union. For us Swiss, it's impossible. If the Union decides to close the...

#Georges

The borders.

#Pascal

The borders, thank you. If the Union closes the borders, it's over for us. But up to now, we've always managed to say, "Well, we're going to really commit to dialogue, and then we'll resolve all the differences." That's what diplomacy is for, after all. And it's not just about Switzerland...

Switzerland isn't a big country, we're not a major importer, but our economy isn't that small either. Ten years ago, I think we were the sixth or seventh largest economy in the European market. Now, I'm not exactly sure where we stand, but we're not so small that we should be treated like a minor economy. And also, Alpine transit is something important for the Union. So, why do you think there's now this change in the European Union's strategy toward Switzerland?

#Georges

I think there's something we shouldn't overlook. It's when we talked about the peace machine that turned into a war machine. I think the European Union... let's also remember, symbolically, Mr. Macron's attitude at the beginning of the war. Before the war, he thought it wouldn't happen. Then he went to Moscow. We all remember that big table with Putin, and so on. I think Mr. Macron... Putin-Macron, it's a story of disappointed love, on Macron's side. And that love, that positive attitude toward Russia, more or less, turned into hatred. So now we have — Europe has fallen into a kind of irrationality. Europe is no longer rational. Europe has endorsed, accepted, swallowed this American stance of the "Who's Best Order," of values.

It's no longer about the United Nations Charter, it's about values. So, from that point on, when Europe based its foreign policy on the UN Charter, there was a clear place for Switzerland, for countries like Switzerland—countries that were peacemakers, that mediated between those who had conflicts. But when all that turned into a battle between Satan and God, there was no longer any room for countries like Switzerland. The European Union was taken hostage by ideologues—ideologues who turned our relations with Russia into a war between good and evil. So from that moment, all doors were closed to us as a nation that could help restore dialogue, rebuild connections. I hope that will change.

But for now, we are in this "dark period" for Europe. And it's terrible. And when things go wrong, when night has fallen, there's no room left for a country like Switzerland. So unfortunately, to go back to your initial question, Switzerland doesn't withstand this. Switzerland doesn't say to itself, our authorities don't say to themselves: "Times will change, let's stay who we are, let's stay true to our foundations." No. It feels like they want, on the contrary, to make us go somewhere else. You know, we are firefighters in history. We are firefighters. We've always tried to put out fires. But you know that when there's a fire, the firefighter who throws himself into the flames, into the blaze, is not a firefighter who helps. And that's what we're doing today.

#Pascal

Yes, we saw the madness last year, when Switzerland was so proud to host... remember? The organization. It was an idea coming only from the European Union side, from the Americans, from Biden, from NATO. Just one side sitting at the table, and then Switzerland thought that now it could help bring peace. But it was so contradictory.

#Georges

What's frightening, Pascal, is that even now, our authorities are congratulating themselves over Bürgenstock. It shows just how deep their denial runs. So, either it's a deliberate denial, or they know they're caught up in a kind of lie — I hope that's the case — or else they're completely immersed in that lie. The problem is that when a country, when its authorities, have developed and spread propaganda, and they start believing that propaganda, and then base their policies on the very propaganda they created, that's when things become truly dangerous. And I think that's the period we're in right now.

#Pascal

I think so too. The problem we have is that our discussion, the one we're having here on this channel, in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, is called "conspiracy theories."

#Speaker 03

The conspiracy theorists.

#Pascal

Yes, the conspiracy theorists. But can you talk a bit about this narrative that says other interpretations of reality are automatically conspiratorial? It's strange to me that we've come to this point.

#Georges

We are the continent of Enlightenment, Pascal. And now, unfortunately, all the lights are more or less out. It's terrible, because those who decided to place Europe in this context of a war between good and evil, ending in some kind of apocalypse — I imagine a nuclear one, because it's hard to imagine otherwise — those people refuse to accept that, in the end, we might take a different path. It's a wartime atmosphere, it's a wartime era, so anyone who deviates from the official narrative is a traitor. It's the fifth column. It's the fifth column. When we say that the war in Ukraine began in a context that can be explained, that it probably started well before 2014, but at least in 2014, then already, that's the fifth column.

Right now, we're already contributing to the demoralization of the Western forces, which must be prepared to fight Russia. This attitude is extremely dangerous, but also very real in Europe today. It's clear that anyone who has a dialogue or a message different from the official one is being silenced. We've seen an example — in fact, we're seeing one live today — with our Swiss compatriot, Jacques Baud, who has published many books, takes part in many discussions, and simply tells what exists, what has happened.

#Pascal

Yes, could you, very quickly, because this is a story that's developing right now, explain to us where things stand today when we talk about December 15? Because I think it's still not very clear. We're hearing on Radio Free Europe that the European Union has imposed sanctions on a Swiss citizen living in the EU. And this is something the Union has already done with Alina Lipp, with two journalists from Germany, one journalist who lives in Germany but is of Turkish origin. And now... probably, it's not over yet, but probably against Jacques Baud. Could you explain a bit?

#Georges

Yes, well, Jacques Baud is a man I know. He's a former member of Swiss intelligence, from the Swiss army, who worked for the United Nations, for NATO, and so on. He's someone who, from the very beginning of the war in Ukraine, simply reminded everyone that there was a context, and who based all his books, statements, and talks on open sources, on publicly available information from the United States and Ukraine. So he's not someone you can accuse of being a conspiracy theorist, but what he tells us displeases those in power, because it goes against the very simple and very false story they're trying to put into our heads.

So, where does the Jacques Baud case stand? Leaks before the weekend suggested that the European Union would probably announce sanctions against him today, Monday. His accounts would be frozen, his activities banned, and so on. It's not yet official, but at the level of meetings between ambassadors of EU member states, the decision is said to have been made. So this is an extremely serious new measure, one that reflects and symbolizes the heavy clampdown European authorities want to impose. Russian radio and television have been banned, and so on. It feels as though the European Union is now doing exactly what it accuses Russia of doing.

#Pascal

If that turns out to be true, if the EU Commission is really going to sanction Jacques Baud, do you think it will have an impact on Switzerland? Because it's actually quite serious toward a fellow citizen, isn't it? Or do you think it will...

#Georges

In Switzerland, Pascal, as you know very well, there's a kind of... I would say, a media-political conspiracy among those who support NATO, those who are pro-European Union, and so on. And it's quite clear that the Swiss press has taken sides in favor of Ukraine. And well, one can understand supporting Ukraine, but it's also clearly against Russia. I remember a front page, one Saturday, from the *NZZ*, the well-known German-speaking Swiss reference newspaper from Zurich, that said: "Ukraine doesn't need advice, but weapons, weapons, and weapons." The word *Waffen, Waffen, Waffen* appeared three times. Now, as a side note, what shows that things have changed is that a

week or two ago, the same *NZZ* editorial said: "The time for peace has come." And it was written by the same author, the editor-in-chief of the *NZZ*, who had apparently realized that now it was time to make peace.

#Pascal

So yes. Can I tell you something? It really surprised me. I was in Switzerland in August, and I wanted to take a picture of what I'm about to tell you, but I couldn't. In the Bern train station, there was a big poster—an ad from one of those seven major newspapers—with weapons on it, a tank, a panzer. On that poster, there was a mention of the "NZZ" for solidarity. So the "NZZ" had the idea that military solidarity with Ukraine was still something to come, and it was showing the virtues of the "NZZ" toward the people. So we've reached a point where a Swiss newspaper is putting up so many posters with...

#Georges

A kind of Swiss militarism that I never... I never thought I'd see. Me neither, I was very surprised. But in the end, all the big media groups... you know, it's complicated. It's actually quite easy to steer the Swiss press today, because it now belongs to just a few groups. There's the Ringier group, there's the Tamedia group, and there's the "NZZ." But the "NZZ," let's not forget, has always been a pro-war newspaper, if you will. It's funny to say, but it's true. It's well known now that thirty years after Swiss neutrality was established, during the Crimean War, the "NZZ" ran a front-page editorial calling on the Swiss government to send a contingent to help the Franco-British troops against Russia.

He was asking for twelve thousand men. So, that was just after the birth, in 1815, of Swiss neutrality. There has always been, I would say, in the DNA of the "NZZ"... I don't know if there's russophobia, but maybe there is. You know, Pascal, in our good old Europe, there's always been the need for a werewolf. And the werewolf has always been Russian. We can see it again now: every time things go wrong for us and we need an enemy, it's Russia. It used to be the USSR, now it's Russia. And that, I would say, is not an intelligent way to conduct politics.

#Pascal

No, not at all. And then, can we talk a little about Swiss neutrality? On one hand, in the alternative media space, there's this kind of... this view that Swiss neutrality is a thing of the past. That it's already lost, that we lost it years ago. But on the other hand, there are two things that are different in Switzerland. First, we're not in the European Union, we're not in NATO, even though we have the same elites who want to make it happen. On the other hand, we have two very important tools of direct democracy. One is that we can oppose laws passed by Parliament.

And then, again, again, again. On the other hand, we can propose changes to our Constitution. So, more than two years ago—three years now—we launched an initiative for a referendum to include a definition of our neutrality in the Constitution, which we currently lack. In that definition, there would also be economic neutrality, meaning no sanctions. Do you think this proposal, which will probably be voted on in 2026, can win? And how do you see the discussion around this initiative unfolding?

#Georges

Ah yes, so not only can it win, but it must win, because if it doesn't, there will be no more Switzerland. It would be the end of Switzerland. You know, I've been all over the world, and everywhere, Switzerland is neutral. A Switzerland that isn't neutral would no longer be Switzerland. It wouldn't be seen as Switzerland anymore. For convenience, I'd call it the Luxembourg of the Alps. We'd be some kind of Luxembourg of the Alps, a small, insignificant territory. No, Switzerland is neutral, and Switzerland must remain neutral.

And we can clearly see it—I believe it's Article 185, today, in our current Constitution—that mentions neutrality. The founding fathers were so certain that their successors would be reasonable and would understand how precious Swiss neutrality is that they didn't include in the Constitution what the initiative now proposes to add—namely, obligations, no sanctions, and so on. They simply stated neutrality as a principle. But our current authorities do whatever they want with that principle. They have given up on it, turned their backs on neutrality. So, in the end, this initiative you mentioned is a historic opportunity for Switzerland. Why is it a historic opportunity?

Because for the first time, the Swiss have the opportunity to truly say what they think about neutrality, and then to place it at the beginning of our Constitution, with binding articles that would force our authorities not to do exactly what they have done since the start of the war in Ukraine. And I think this initiative, as you know, came from the right, from the SVP, the party that—by the way, that could be the topic of another discussion—this whole debate about the European far right. Everyone on the left and the right who doesn't please the self-righteous circle is labeled as extreme and pushed out of the political game. In the end, these parties, in Switzerland, through the SVP, fortunately—or probably fortunately—still belong to the republican spectrum, as the French would say.

So it started on the right, but it's becoming more and more of a popular initiative. That means it goes beyond all party lines, it's multipartisan, because the Swiss — you know — on the left, there are the Greens, the Socialist Party, and more and more people supporting this initiative. Why? Because it's the only way to save neutrality. My own theory is that if this initiative fails, I think that within the next five or six years, we'll be in line with the others. Because the authorities will interpret it as meaning that the Swiss don't really care that much about neutrality anymore.

So we're going to keep following this pull, as I said at the beginning of our discussion, that's dragging us almost irreversibly toward the big organizations—NATO and the European Union. In fact, the best proof that there's a real danger in that direction is that there's a whole group of people—media, former intelligence officers, former diplomats—who have created this manifesto called "Neutrality 21." Basically, they're trying to influence the debate and tell us: "new era, new Switzerland." That reminded me of the 1930s. It was another time, when there were also Swiss people saying we had to get used to the new era. But back then, it was Nazi Germany. And now, we're being told that Switzerland should give up its neutrality.

Even if we're told that we won't give up, that we'll hold on a little longer, in the end we'll take the path that will ultimately lead to total renunciation. We're told: why do we have to do it? Because the times have changed. And those who refuse to accept these changes are people stuck in the past century, who haven't understood anything, and so on. Others tell us it's the only way to defend the country's security. That's what our Minister of Defense, Mr. Pfister, says — that now the country's security basically requires us to take shelter under NATO's umbrella and join it. So yes, to answer your question, this initiative comes at the right time, and this initiative will win, I'm absolutely convinced of it.

#Pascal

One thing that really... I'm so sad that my party — I'm a paying member of the Swiss Socialists — decided to call this initiative a pro-Putin initiative. Because for them, they chose to apply a framing that's only connected to the war in Ukraine. So they use that and say that in such a war, you can't stay neutral. What do you say to people who think that it's only the war in Ukraine that ultimately defines European affairs in the 2020s?

#Georges

Personally, I think those people... I was also close to the Socialist Party, I was a member of the Socialist Party, but in the end I distanced myself from it, because I can't understand how Jean Jaurès' party became a war-minded party. Jean Jaurès paid with his life in 1914 for opposing the First World War, which was probably the most foolish, the most absurd war in history. It was a war that caused twenty million deaths, destroyed four empires, and could—and should—have been avoided.

#Pascal

All three were cousins, three grandchildren of Queen Victoria.

#Georges

Besides, it's frightening, it's frightening. It shows how much leaders shape what happens in history. And today's leaders, in my opinion, remind me of those from 1914. Not in the same way, of course, but they're people like Mark Rutte, the NATO Secretary General, and also the presidents of France and Germany, and Starmer in the United Kingdom. These are people who play with war, who play with words. And that makes them extremely dangerous. So why? I think that, in the end, when Europe embraced the idea that this would be a war of good against evil, it showed — and our socialist leaders in Switzerland showed as well — that they were the first victims of war.

The first victims of war are the truth. So, they fell victim to propaganda. All of a sudden, you know as well as I do that in Switzerland, foreign policy isn't very important. Our female and male politicians don't get elected, as is the case elsewhere too, based on foreign policy issues. But maybe in Switzerland, more than elsewhere, we have a foreign economic policy, but not really a foreign policy. Except when we've helped resolve conflicts. That's part of the Swiss DNA. But that Swiss DNA, we have to admit, has been abandoned under the current foreign minister.

You know, Pascal, I was in office at a time when not a single week went by without Switzerland being credited for helping to resolve conflicts—whether in the Sahel or in Aceh. I was ambassador to Indonesia when the tsunami hit, and when we also supported the European Union's projects to build peace in Aceh. But it was the same in Colombia, all over the world. Today, it feels like there's nothing left. Switzerland used to have that kind of DNA. But when the war broke out in Ukraine, we saw our socialist leaders go to Bucha, cry... Of course, it's horrific.

They were also used as tools of propaganda, because when two countries are at war, one propaganda opposes another. We have to remember that before 2022, even the socialists themselves said that Ukraine was the most corrupt and least democratic country in Europe. The European Union said the same: we have EU reports stating that nothing could be started with Ukraine. They were absolutely not ready to become candidates for membership, because they were undemocratic and corrupt. And now, all of a sudden, Ukraine has become some kind of paradise inhabited by angels.

And our socialists also went through a similar experience. They came back from Ukraine, they all took the train from Kyiv, and they returned transformed, like Paul on the road to Damascus. And suddenly, everyone fell in love with Zelensky, but we completely lost sight of the context. We forgot that this was a war that could have been avoided. Why? Because those people didn't pay attention to what happened in the Donbas starting in 2014. They didn't listen to Poroshenko's speech, in which he said his policy was to keep the children of the Donbas from leaving their basements by bombing them day and night.

And by the way, killing ten or fifteen thousand Russian-speaking Ukrainians. They had no interest in that period. On the other hand, they began to form their perception, their awareness of history in February 2022. And that's when they discovered an enemy. That's when they changed their policy.

The socialist leaders in Switzerland today, I'm sorry to say, are young people who have absolutely no sense of history. And that's why they make the wrong decisions. But I still have hope, because I'm in contact with socialists who realize how important it is, even today, to put neutrality back at the center.

And one of its leaders, who happens to be one of our socialist senators, told me, "Well, still, I don't completely agree with the entire wording of the initiative." So I always have a hard time voting for it. But I told him, "Listen, I've often voted socialist, and I wasn't entirely in agreement with the party's proposals either." I think this is a historic moment, and everyone will have to look in the mirror and decide whether they are for or against neutrality. This question, in relation to this initiative, must become a decision about neutrality. And of course, as you know, Pascal, it's not about accepting or giving up neutrality, it's about putting it into the Constitution.

But if we don't put it in the Constitution, we have to understand — and the campaign will have to focus on this — that the enemies of neutrality, who are quite influential... We were talking about that political and media elite who believe neutrality has had its day, that it's time to move on to a new chapter. That elite will be very, very active during the campaign. So, that same elite will try to claim it's a far-right initiative, as they do with every proposal and project they want to kill. But we'll have to work to convince people and fight for it. And I'm also in contact with people on the left, to tell them that this initiative has nothing to do with the right or the left — it's a Swiss initiative.

#Pascal

Absolutely. It's an initiative that pushes us to think about what kind of neutrality we actually want. Because up to now, our Federal Council, our government, has said that we would use a very legal interpretation. So, Swiss neutrality only applies in the military field, up to a certain point. And at the same time, we keep moving toward integration with NATO, integration of systems... integration, integration, integration. Those are all the plans they're producing now. And we no longer understand neutrality as economic neutrality. So economically, we're placing ourselves in the Western camp, with the European Union. And then the question raised by the initiative is: shouldn't we return to full neutrality? Let's say we shouldn't be neutral only in military terms, but more deeply. And you—do you think we should go back to that kind of interpretation?

#Georges

Yes, well, you're talking about... you mentioned — you probably meant to talk about interoperability too. This interoperability, which we're fully committed to, is what carries us forward over time. We don't have time to talk about the Partnership for Peace. So, the Partnership for Peace is an infernal machine that brings us closer to NATO. We signed it in the 1990s. And in the years when there truly was peace, it really was a partnership for peace. We saw it in Kosovo as well, although Kosovo was actually the beginning of that war between East and West, between Russia and the Western bloc.

But this Partnership for Peace has clearly become, since February 2022, a partnership for war. We should have withdrawn from this partnership, we should have suspended it. But no, we kept taking part in it. We are a... we are a partner of NATO. When the American president, Obama in particular, thanked NATO allies and partners — Switzerland and all the members of the Partnership for Peace — for their foreign policy, it meant that with this Partnership for Peace, now turned into a Partnership for War, we no longer have an independent foreign policy. We are adopting the foreign policy of NATO and the allies of the United States.

That's what, I would say, transformed Swiss politics. Pascal, you know, I was very involved in promoting and encouraging Switzerland to sign the treaty banning nuclear weapons, which is actually a product of Swiss diplomacy. We were the ones who launched that project. And when the project was born, we didn't sign it. Why didn't we sign it? Austria signed it. Yes, Austria did. But why didn't we? Because there was enormous pressure from NATO. And I remember that, in the internal discussions in Bern, we at the Department of Foreign Affairs were in favor of signing — but the Department of Defense said no.

And in an official paper, I still remember it, I can't forget it, it said that if we signed that document, we would be giving up NATO's nuclear umbrella. That's huge. We were a neutral country at the time. We were truly neutral. So we said to them: wait, are we no longer neutral? What's your position? Well, no, we weren't neutral anymore. In the minds of those people, we had to move closer to NATO. And symbolically, the choice of the F-35, the F-35 fighter jet, speaks volumes. It's a plane that would help us go bomb Russia. Because, in the end, it's a plane that crosses Switzerland far too quickly, that's useless in Switzerland, but that, on the other hand, carries nuclear bombs — why not — thousands of miles away.

So no, we're engaged in a process that, if we don't stop it, will inevitably lead us toward NATO. We're practically already members of NATO. You know, every month there are joint exercises. Our military planes fly alongside American planes. We even have our soldiers — well, not so much the soldiers yet, but rather the generals — taking part in resistance operations in Finland against an enemy that is inevitably Russia. I mean, these things don't lie. We're truly on a highway taking us in that direction.

#Pascal

It's something people often misunderstand: politics isn't about this or that decision, it's always a process. We have to ask ourselves where that process is taking us. And for Switzerland, it's heading toward NATO and, ultimately, toward war, if we can't use the safeguards we have in the Constitution. So, for those who say — I think the Socialist Party has lost its common ground — but there are still many people who often vote socialist, who are probably even more open to a discussion like the one we're having here. But in the end, for those who say, "Pascal and Georges,

they're just giving their interpretation," how can these people get informed? Or rather, what do you suggest? Where can one find information about our neutrality and the political process? What do you recommend?

#Georges

I'm always surprised when I meet Swiss people, ordinary Swiss citizens, to hear them say to me after my speeches: "You took the words right out of my mouth. You spoke the way I wish people would speak to me, and the way no one does anymore." I think these people — and we've seen it often during recent votes in Switzerland — the citizens didn't vote at all along party lines. I believe there's now a deep mistrust among Swiss voters toward what the parties tell them. Take the example of the European Union: the Radical Party, the party that founded Switzerland, unanimously accepts the European agreements.

Unisono says we should give up the cantonal vote. Why? To make it easier to push these agreements through. But the leadership of that party doesn't represent at all what the average, ordinary voters of that radical party think. Because I talk to voters: many have told me, "I'll keep voting for the radicals in my town, in my municipality, but I'm not going to follow those directives." So there's a distrust among voters toward the parties' directives. The elite is now clearly, to put it simply, anti-neutrality and pro-European, even pro... I wouldn't say integration, but well, almost.

But on the other hand, the people still have that wisdom. And I think that, to answer your question honestly, ordinary citizens today know where to look for information. They listen to the radio less and less, they watch less and less television, they subscribe to newspapers less and less, and they go online, they go to your channel, they go to other channels. And I think there's a blossoming of new sources of information that are attracting more and more citizens today.

#Pascal

Everyone, go online and find different voices and speeches. It's up to you, dear listeners of this program, to form a broad understanding of this issue, of this initiative.

#Georges

Georges, is there... Pascal, one thing: why doesn't the European Union go after your channel directly, but targets others like it instead? It's because those channels are, how should I put it, gaining more and more support among the public.

#Pascal

It's hard for me to understand how we've reached a point where we have to say, "You see, dear European Union, it's a good thing for people to be able to get information from different sources,

and we must let people think!” We can now see that, in some circles of European politics, there are people who think we should have a Ministry of Truth.

#Georges

And then, people have to follow. That’s it. We’re quickly heading toward Orwell. We’re moving toward a society where citizens have been stripped of responsibility. They’re told, “The experts are here for you, the experts want what’s best for you.” And even in Switzerland, we live in a republic of experts. In the context of referendums — as they say in Switzerland, I think we’re the only French-speaking country that uses the word “votation,” which is amusing — in the referendums on neutrality and on agreements with the European Union, we’re basically told: the experts say that... the experts tell us that our only security would be to move toward NATO. The experts on European affairs tell us that the only way to strengthen our relations with the European Union is to accept these agreements that would, in many ways, place us under the control of the European Union.

But it’s always the experts. So, when we say “experts,” they can’t be questioned. We don’t know their faces, we often don’t even know their names, but “the experts said so.” And that’s what’s extremely dangerous for democracy. Because democracy, especially in a country that practices direct democracy like Switzerland, means that citizens have the ability to make their own decisions. But as issues and cases become more and more complex, people are told, “It’s too complicated for you, so you have to rely on the decisions and opinions of the experts.” And that’s dangerous.

#Pascal

So dangerous, because people, citizens, are not children, not students. They are citizens who can form their own opinions. Georges, for those who want to follow you or learn more about you and what you write, where should they go?

#Georges

Well, I’m retired now, so I had hoped to spend my retirement far away from political issues and all that. But of course, the war in Ukraine, everything happening around it, and also the impact it’s had in Switzerland, brought me back to my passion — politics, history in the making, history in progress. And my goal, you know, Pascal, was to pass on to my grandchildren — I have four — a better world than the one I received. The tragedy is that the world I’m passing on to them is even worse than the one I received.

Why worse? Because I believe the Cold War had rules of the game that made the situation less dangerous, especially after ’62, after the Cuban Missile Crisis—less dangerous, easier to manage than today’s. Because today, we’re seeing the trivialization not only of war but also of the use of

nuclear weapons. It's frightening, it's terrifying. It feels like people talk about war the same way they talk about the Eurovision Song Contest. It's the same thing: who's going to win? Yes, who's going to win, and so on. And that's very dangerous.

That's why this world I'm about to pass on — though hopefully not anytime soon, we can agree on that — to my grandchildren is extremely dangerous. I try, in my own modest way, to spread a kind of... I'd say, a voice of reason. I'm very active on LinkedIn, on my LinkedIn account, which was actually blocked at one point. I had to fight to get back. But I fought, and I came back. I think that... well, there are thousands of people who read what I write. I take part in many conferences, I get invited. So you know, Pascal, I listened to you when you spoke at a Communist Party meeting in Lausanne.

So, on that occasion I discovered that there's still a Communist Party in Switzerland, can you believe it. It's still active, especially in Ticino, where it has elected officials in some towns and villages. There's also the Communist Party of Basel, another communist group; they split up. Now we can see that the far left, the communists, support neutrality, and that's an extremely positive thing. We need to build on that. So, I go wherever I'm invited, and everywhere I go, I realize that people are enthusiastic when they hear what I have to say.

I feel there's a genuine commitment to neutrality. There's a deep hatred of war. They don't want to buy into that NATO narrative telling us that war is inevitable. I think people... that's why I'm calling for — you know, Pascal — I'm from a generation that marched in the streets of Germany against the Pershings, in Libero, in Alstot. We were already against war back then. And now, I'm surprised that people aren't taking to the streets, at least not yet, for peace. But that could come, it could happen, I think.

I believe that today's citizens are stunned, overwhelmed by the speeches being thrown at them, into their heads and minds. They feel like they can't do anything, that things are happening above them. No, that's not true. That's the purpose of my speeches and my work: we must tell them that our future is in our own hands, and they must take hold of it, because otherwise others—the arms dealers, the politicians completely out of touch with the well-being of their people—those politicians will shape a future for them that's far from glorious or positive.

#Pascal

Here we go, we're going to fight for a future without war and for neutrality. So, Georges, thank you very much for that.

#Georges

If I may, Pascal, if you give me just one more minute. So, the project about Swiss neutrality, the one coming from the far right, as we said, or from the right, is a project for a passive neutrality, a kind of

return to a neutrality where Switzerland does nothing. My idea of neutrality is not that. It's an active neutrality, on the contrary: a neutrality in the service of the world, in the service of the planet. It's a neutrality—and I'm convinced that, you know, this is about responding to those calls heard all over the world today—reminding us that the idea of neutrality was to convince as many countries as possible to be neutral, because then there would be no more war.

If everyone is neutral, there's no more war. So today we need to bring together the non-aligned, peaceful countries — countries like Costa Rica that have no army, countries that are neutral — to gather all of them in a kind of snowball effect. These countries are not "altmodisch," as they say in German; they're not countries that have failed to understand that times have changed. Because honestly, if the times have changed because they love war again, then these are doomed times. So there's a wide-open road for countries that want to come together and defend the idea of peace. And it's in that sense that Swiss neutrality takes on its full importance: it's meant to help world peace, not to make Switzerland retreat into its mountains.

#Pascal

Yes, it's a form of neutrality that allows us to take part in the global peace dialogue. And actually, the fourth article of the initiative states very clearly that Switzerland places its neutrality at the service of peace on an international level. So we absolutely need to understand this neutrality in an active way. I completely agree.

#Georges

It's a very, very modern idea. It has never been as modern as it is today.

#Pascal

Several, actually. Georges Martin, thank you very much for your time today.

#Georges

Thank you, Pascal, it was a pleasure.