

Similar to Biden, NATO Is Aged and Unfit for Leadership

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As NATO wrapped up its Summit and Biden held a crucial press conference, the media frenzy continued to focus on Biden's age and cognitive abilities. Is he too old and disoriented to lead the "free world"? Was he able to get through his press conference without stumbling too many times? Lost in the media coverage about the Summit, however, has been a serious discussion of NATO's advanced age and NATO's ability to lead the "free world."

At 75, NATO has not aged well. Back in 2019, French **President Emmanuel Macron** was already sounding the alarm, [accusing](#) NATO of being "brain dead." While Russia's invasion of Ukraine has given NATO a new lease on life, NATO's embrace of Ukraine actually [makes the conflict](#)-and the world-more dangerous.

Let's remember why NATO was founded. As the contours of the Cold War were emerging after the devastation of WWII, 10 European nations, along with the U.S. and Canada, [came together](#) in 1949 to create an alliance that would deter Soviet expansion, stop the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encourage European political integration. Or, as the alliance's first **Secretary General Lord Ismay quipped**, its purpose was "to keep the Soviets out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

It is decades now since the Soviet Union has disintegrated and European nations have been well integrated. So why is NATO still hanging on? When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, along with its military alliance called the Warsaw Pact, NATO could have-and should have-declared victory and folded. Instead, it [expanded](#) from 16 members in 1991 to 32 members today.

Its eastward expansion not only violated the [promises](#) made by **Secretary of State James Baker** to Soviet leader **Mikhail Gorbachev**, but it was a grave mistake. U.S. diplomat **George Keenan** [warned](#) in 1997 “expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold-War era.” Indeed, while NATO expansion does not justify Russia’s 2022 illegal invasion of Ukraine, it did provoke Russia and inflame tensions. NATO members also [played](#) a key role in the Ukraine’s 2014 coup, the training and arming of Ukrainian forces in preparation for war with Russia, and the quashing of negotiations that could have ended the war in its first two months.

After two years of brutal war, the NATO Summit [focused](#) on how to shore up Ukraine’s flailing efforts to repel Russia. The insistence on setting up a “[Trump-proof](#)” scenario that would guarantee Ukraine billions in military aid for years to come and an “[irreversible path](#)” to NATO membership is really **a guarantee that the war will drag on for years—precisely because NATO membership is Russia’s number one concern**. There was no talk at the Summit of how to end the war by moving towards a ceasefire and peace talks. Why? Because NATO is a military alliance. The only tool it has is a hammer.

We have seen NATO illegally and unsuccessfully wield that hammer in country after country over the past 30 years. From Bosnia and Serbia to Afghanistan and Libya, NATO has justified this violence and instability as defending “the Rules-Based Order,” while repeatedly violating the core precepts of the UN Charter.

NATO is now a military behemoth with [partners](#) far beyond the North Atlantic that encircle the globe from Colombia to Mongolia to Australia. **It has proven to be an aggressive alliance that initiates and escalates wars without international consensus, exacerbates global instability, and prioritizes arms deals over humanitarian needs**. NATO provides a cover for the U.S. to [place nuclear weapons](#) in five European nations, bringing us closer to nuclear war in violation of both the [Treaty](#) on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the [Treaty](#) on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. NATO is endangering us all in a desperate attempt to reassert U.S. global hegemony in what is now a multipolar world.

NATO’s 75th anniversary is an opportune time to take stock of NATO’s outdated world view and violations of international law. NATO should be laid to rest so we can revitalize and democratize the proper venue for dealing with global conflicts: the United Nations.

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Featured image: President Joe Biden shakes hands with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the NATO Summit in Washington, D.C., July 11, 2024 (Official State Department photo by Chuck Kennedy / Public Domain)

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