

NATO: 75 and Still Threatening. “NATO Needed to be Globalized”

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Bring out the bon bons, the bubbles, and the praise filled memoranda for that old alliance. At the three-quarter century mark of its existence, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is showing itself to be a greater nuisance than ever, gossiping, meddling, and dreaming of greater acts of mischief under the umbrella of manufactured insecurity.

It is also being coquettish to certain countries (Ukraine, figures prominently in the wooing stakes) making promises it can never make good.

Its defenders, as is to be expected, see something very different before the mirror. **They call the alliance a call for freedom, its enduring importance a reassuring presence.** The more appropriate response would be convenience, the assurance of an alliance with collective obligations that would, given the circumstances, compel all parties to wage war against the aggressor. In terms of alliances, this is one programmed for conflict.

NATO is a crusted visage of a problem long dead. In the Cold War theatre, it featured in the third act of every play involving the United States and the USSR, a performance that always took place under the threat of a nuclear cloud. Any confrontation in Europe's centre could have resulted in the pulverization of an entire continent. For its part, Moscow had the Warsaw Pact countries.

At the end of the Cold War, NATO had effectively ceased to be relevant as a deterrent force on the European continent. A new cut of clothing was sought for the members. Rather than passing into retirement, it became, in essence, a broader auxiliary force of US power. In the absence of a countering Soviet Union, the organisation adopted a gonzo approach to international security.

In 1999, the alliance became a killing machine for evangelical humanitarianism, ostensibly seeking to protect one ethnic group against the predations of another in Kosovo.

In 2011, it involved itself in military operations against a country posing no threat to any members of the alliance. NATO, along with a steady air attacks and missile barrages, enforced the no-fly zone over Libya as the country was ushered to imminent, post-Qaddafi collapse. When the International Security Force (ISAF) completed its ill-fated mission in Afghanistan in 2015, NATO was again on the scene.

NATO's [Strategic Concept](#) document released at the end of June 2022 took much sustenance from the Ukraine conflict while warning about China's ambitions, a fairly crude admission that it wished to move beyond its territorial limits. "The People's Republic of China's (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and

values.” Why such an alliance should worry about such eastward ambitions illustrates the wayward dysfunction of the association.

On April 27, 2022 the **then UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss** and ultimately doomed prime minister pushed the view that **NATO needed to be globalised**. Her Mansion House [speech](#) at the Lord Mayor’s Easter Banquet was one of those cat-out-of-the-bag disclosures that abandons pretence revealing, in its place, a disturbing reality.

After making it clear that NATO’s “open door policy” was “sacrosanct”, Truss also saw security in global terms, another way of promoting a broader commitment to international mischief. She rejected “the false choice between Euro-Atlantic security and Indo-Pacific security. In the modern world we need both.” A “global NATO” was needed. “By that I don’t mean extending the membership to those from other regions. I mean that NATO must have a global outlook, ready to tackle global threats.”

Praise for the alliance tends to resemble an actuarial assessment about risk and security. Consider this from former US ambassador to NATO, **Douglas Lute**. NATO, in [his mind](#), is “the single most important geostrategic advantage over any potential adversary or competitor”. With pride, he notes that “Russia and China have nothing comparable. The 32 allies in NATO train together, operate together, live together under a standing unified command structure, making them far more capable militarily than any ad-hoc arrangement.”

There is nothing to suggest in these remarks that NATO was one of the single most provocative security arrangements that helped precipitate a war that torments and convulses eastern Europe. Many a Washington mandarin has been of such a view: moving closer to Russia’s borders was not merely an act of diplomatic condescension but open military provocation.

One should, with tireless consistency, refer to the State Department’s doyen of Soviet studies, **George F. Kennan**, **on this very point. In 1997, he [issued the appropriate warning](#) about the decision to expand NATO towards the Russian border:**

“Such a decision may be expected to inflame nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion; to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy; to restore the atmosphere of the cold war to East-West relations, and to impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking.”

This speared provocation is repeated in the [2024 NATO Declaration](#) made in Washington this month. It is effaced of history and context, Ukraine being a tabula rasa in the international system with no role other than that of glorified victimhood, a charity case abused in the international system. “We stand in unity and solidarity in the face of a brutal war of aggression on the European continent and a critical time for our security,” states the declaration.

Kyiv is promised aid under the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine program, though such provision is, in the manner of an all-promising eunuch, crowned by a caveat: “NSATU will not, under international law, make NATO a party to the conflict.” The prospects for future conflict are guaranteed by the promise, however empty, that, “Ukraine’s future is in NATO.”

The declaration goes on to speak on the “interoperable” and “integrated” nature of Kyiv’s operations with the alliance. “As Ukraine continues this vital work, we will continue to support it on its irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership.”

NATO’s warring streak was further affirmed at the Washington summit by injudicious remarks about trying to make it “Trump proof” – a testament to the sleepless nights the strategists must be having at the prospect of a presidency that may change the order of things. He is bound to have gotten wind of that fact. Aggravated, the Republican contender may well withdraw the US imperium from the alliance’s clutches. In Washington’s absence, the NATO family might retreat into fractious insignificance. The ensuing anarchy, rather than stimulating war, may well do the opposite.

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