

NATO: A Promoter of Colonialism in the 21st Century

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Five NATO members continue to possess colonies. These NATO states have no intention of granting their territories independence any time soon. Not only does France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the United States insist on maintaining vestiges of their colonial pasts, but their colonies have been interwoven into NATO's military infrastructure.

The continued presence of French, British, Dutch, Danish, and American colonies around the world extends what is officially called the "North Atlantic Treaty Organization" to the South Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean. If there was ever an organization guilty of blatantly deceptive advertising practices, it is NATO.

Recent attempts to secure more political autonomy in the French Caribbean territories of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and French Guiana, the latter the home of a French space launch facility having strategic importance, have been met with everything from indifference in Paris or extreme hostility. A January 26, 1968 SECRET Central Intelligence Agency report warned against Soviet attempts to establish space tracking facilities in French Guiana. That same year, the Guiana Space Center was established at Korou in the French colony. NATO ordered the suppression of independence moves by the people of Guiana to keep the center solely in the hands of France and the European Space Agency. In March and April 2017, populist tempers flared when Guianese protesters took over the Korou space facility over charges that France was ignoring the people of the colony. Youth unemployment, for example, is at a staggering 55 percent.

Moves by Britain to curb the financial independence of its Caribbean-Atlantic territories of the Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Bermuda, Anguilla, and the British Virgin Islands (BVI) have faced charges in those territories of Britain's re-imposition of colonialism on the self-governing territories. The Dutch have been the most blatantly neo-colonialist in rolling back self-government in St. Maarten, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba. The Dutch totally ignored the results of a 2015 referendum in Bonaire that rejected the island's incorporation into the Netherlands by 65 percent. A 2014 referendum in St. Eustatius also rejected incorporation into the Netherlands. The Dutch colonizers have moved to impose direct rule on both islands with a wink and a nod from NATO.



Aerial picture of [Thule Air Base](#) released by the White House (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

NATO treats its member states' Caribbean and Atlantic territories as military "terra firma," where air and naval bases either currently exist or could be ramped up for military actions. Attempts at independence or a strong degree of autonomy are not in NATO's interests. NATO, through its surrogates in Copenhagen, has deterred any move toward independence by the Faroes and Greenland, both Danish territories that, on paper, enjoy self-government. NATO wants to ensure its continued presence at the U.S. airbase in Thule and deter China from mining operations in rapidly-warming Greenland that target known major deposits of rare earth minerals. Recent elections in Greenland resulted in a victory for Prime Minister Kim Kielsen and his four-party coalition that favors independence from Denmark. One of the parties, Nunatta Qitornai, favors immediate independence from Denmark. A scheduled referendum on a new constitution in the Faroes was postponed for six months. The referendum, which could lead to independence from Denmark, may have been delayed as a result of NATO interference directed through surrogates in Copenhagen and the Faroese capital of Torshavn.

The Dutch have ignored requests for more autonomy in the Caribbean territories of Aruba and Curacao, both sites of U.S. and NATO military and intelligence aerial and naval assets targeting the government of Venezuela and leftist groups in Colombia. The U.S. 12th Air Force, based at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, operates two "Cooperative Security Locations" at Hato International Airport in Curacao and Reina Beatrix International Airport in Aruba.

A 2012 Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the United States and the Netherlands grants access until 2021 to U.S. military forces for "training" and other purposes to Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius, and Saint Maarten. It was after this agreement was signed that the special autonomy enjoyed by these territories began to be rolled back by the governing cliques in The Hague and Amsterdam.

Recent moves by the British government to require its Caribbean and other territories to adopt public ownership registers prior to the end of 2020 or risk having their financial affairs taken over directly from London has resulted in a revolt among the British colonies, especially those in the Caribbean. London maintains that the public ownership registers are necessary to stem the flow of “dirty money” and secret corporate ownership in the wake of the “Panama and Paradise Papers” offshore tax haven financial records’ disclosures. The British territories argued that after the imposition of public ownership records, offshore firms and their money will simply move to other locations where corporate secrecy will continue to be maintained.

Of course, to avoid dictates from London, some British territories are already floating the idea of independence. BVI Premier Orlando Smith said London’s move to infringe on BVI’s self-government calls into question the constitutional relationship between the United Kingdom and the people of the BVI. BVI has moved to establish direct links with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) of independent nations, without the interference of the London colonial authorities. BVI is now represented at CARICOM and Association of Caribbean States meetings by its own External Affairs Secretary. Likewise, Cayman Islands Premier Alden McLaughlin has demanded more control over his islands’ affairs, including national security and membership in the World Trade Organization. British authorities have not only refused but are making moves to impose British financial regulations on the popular offshore business haven.

Caribbean territorial leaders point out that the requirements imposed on them do not apply to the Isle of Man or the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey, which, as crown dependencies of Queen Elizabeth, are not subject to the whims of the British Parliament. If London attempts to impose its will on the crown dependencies, they have let it be known that they will move to cut their links with the British Crown and opt for independence.

NATO, of course, does not want to see any moves toward independence from islands within the Irish Sea, English Channel, or Caribbean. The Trump administration has re-established the U.S. Navy’s Second Fleet, which was disbanded by President Obama in 2011 and will have responsibility for the North Atlantic, including Bermuda and Greenland, the latter also seeking independence from its Danish colonial masters. The U.S. Navy’s Fourth Fleet continues to dominate the American Caribbean territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico; the British territories of the Caymans, Turks and Caicos, Anguilla, BVI, and Montserrat; the Dutch territories of Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire, Saint Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius; and the French territories of Guadeloupe and St. Barthelemy, Martinique, and French Guiana. U.S. Southern Command, based in Miami, exercises an almost viceroy-like political domination over the entire Caribbean region.

NATO is also keeping a wary eye on the French colony of New Caledonia in the Pacific. Neither NATO nor Australia want New Caledonia voters to opt for independence in the upcoming referendum in November of this year. French mainlanders who colonized the island territory are pushing for a “no” vote and French President Emmanuel Macron recently visited the colony to emphasize the importance of retaining the colonial link with France. A major psychological operations campaign is being waged to convince the indigenous Kanaky people that the French colonialists already have the votes to defeat independence. Another psychological campaign is being waged that falsely claims that China is moving in to establish a naval base in nearby Vanuatu.

NATO, while still using the “North Atlantic” designator, does not want to lose its colonial

footprints around the world, from Mayotte in the Indian Ocean and Wallis and Futuna in the South Pacific to St. Helena in the South Atlantic and Guam in the West Pacific. NATO has long been accused of waging neo-colonial wars in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. However, when it comes to basic garden-variety colonialism, NATO is intent on maintaining control over of its member states' territorial toeholds in the seven seas.

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