

Time to Disband NATO: A Rogue Alliance

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When the Cold War ended, many believed there would be a peace dividend, nuclear disarmament, and dismantling of the war machine with industrial conversion to peaceful technology. Instead, we've witnessed the aggressive expansion of NATO, to include the former Soviet Republics, right up to the Russian border, which should be a wake-up call to many living in the American Empire. Many people still labor under the apparently false impression that the US is exemplary in holding up the rule of law, the sanctity of the United Nations, and human rights. After all, Americans were the good guys who defeated Hitler and made the world safe for democracy. The NATO expansion took place despite promises made to Gorbachev after the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union with the fall of the Berlin Wall that if he dropped his objections to the admission of a unified Germany as a full-fledged, fully armed member of NATO, the western states would freeze NATO membership and not expand any further east. Russia lost 20 million people in World War II to the Nazi onslaught, and Russian wariness of a strengthened reunited Germany participating with their former NATO foe was certainly understandable.

I visited the Soviet Union in 1989 on a delegation of the NY Professional Roundtable during the heady days of Gorbachev's newly announced doctrine of glasnost and perestroika—openness and reconstruction. It seemed as though every man over sixty was sporting a chest covered with medals, commemorating their service in the Great War. On every other street corner in Moscow and Leningrad, there were memorials to the war dead. The Piskaryovskoye Cemetery at Leningrad, with acres of mass graves, anonymous mounds of over 500,000 buried there who perished in the 872 day siege of Leningrad, was a painful, searing vision which haunts me still. The siege resulted in the tragic deaths of up to 1,500,000 soldiers and civilians and the evacuation of 1,400,000 more, many of whom died due to starvation and bombardment. The guide for our delegation at one point asked me, "Why don't you Americans trust us?" "Why don't we trust you?" I exclaimed indignantly.

"What about Hungary? What about Czechoslovakia? Why should we trust you?" He looked at me with a pained expression, "But we had to protect our borders from Germany!" I looked into his watery blue eyes and heard the fervent sincerity in his voice. At that moment, I felt betrayed by my government and the years of constant reminders about the communist threat. The land was flat as a table between Russia and Germany. There was no buffer against the German onslaught, except the mountains of Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Russians were in a defensive posture as they built their military might. They were using Eastern Europe as a buffer against any repetition of the ravages of war they had experienced at the hands of Germany.

And the huge multi-trillion dollar buildup of nuclear armaments and NATO forces—what were we defending? We had our forces amassed, including nuclear weapons parked in eight NATO countries on their continent. And when we were the only country on the planet in possession of the bomb—after Hiroshima and Nagasaki- we refused to turn it over to international control under UN auspices, which had been urged by Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the bomb. Instead President Truman insisted on an unfair advantage for the US in his Baruch plan—letting the American people think he was being reasonable, pretending to present fair terms for controlling the bomb which in reality impelled Stalin to get his own bomb—putting us into a tragic and costly arms race—imperiling our own national security and the entire fate of the earth.

Nothing has changed. The Empire has no clothes. It has been revealed. Having unilaterally withdrawn from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, the US is leading NATO to build a ring of missiles round Russia in Europe. It is globalizing its military forces and operations. An armada of missile-laden NATO war ships is deployed in oceans around the world with nearly 1,000 US military bases on every continent on the planet. Working in this expanded military capacity, NATO members and their allies are encircling China in the Pacific, just as we are surrounding Russia, while rejecting Russia and China's repeated proposals to negotiate a ban on weapons in space. NATO is a lawless rogue alliance, determined to control the world's oil and other scarce resources, by brute force.

The US first led NATO into illegal action when it bombed Kosovo in the interests of "protecting" people, without the UN's legally required authorization for any acts of warfare that are not taken in self-defense against an armed attack as required by the UN Charter. The US and its NATO allies refused to go to the UN for permission to enter into hostilities, as required under the UN Charter, because Russia was threatening to veto any such action in the Security Council to protect its ally, Serbia.

Despite the lip service NATO gave to some sort of trumped up "responsibility to protect" Kosovo's Albanians, (by bombing the Serbians to smithereens) Clinton was on the record saying: "If we're going to have a strong economic relationship that includes our ability to sell around the world, Europe has got to be a key That's what this Kosovo thing is all about."1

It's beyond belief that NATO's assault on Libya is only about "protecting civilians" while at the same time hundreds of civilians are being killed by NATO bombs and drones. Here too NATO's old boy colonial network is seeking to secure Libya's oil. NATO is now engaged in three wars in Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The US is also bombing blindly away in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia as well, with "pilots" sitting at their computers and playing with their joysticks, lawlessly targeting "terrorists" with their unmanned drones, raining death and destruction down on the unseen people below, assassinating those whom they suspect may be wishing to do harm, without evidence, trial, finding of guilt, along with a host of innocent men, women and children.

It's time to disband NATO. There will be a NATO summit meeting in Chicago, in May 2012. Grassroots activists are organizing around the world to gather at a counter summit in Chicago to restore the rule of law as a means of resolving international disputes and to voice a new vision of global security and peace. To sign on to this new Call for Action and make common cause with the movement to disband NATO, contact: Judith LeBlanc jleblanc@peaceaction.org or Joseph Gerson jgerson@afsc.org

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