For Decades Russia Has Been Forced to Respond to NATO Expansion

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established in 1949 on the pretext of "containing Soviet influence", has almost doubled in size within the past two decades alone. In 1998, NATO comprised 16 member states, but with repeated expansions up to Russia's very borders, it now contains almost 30 countries.

Though seldom mentioned in mainstream discourse, NATO is a US-dominated organization, whose orders are issued from Washington and customarily obeyed. The US is by far the largest contributor to the alliance, spending more than all other member nations put together.

One of the critical reasons behind NATO's formation almost 70 years ago, was to prevent Europe pursuing a path independent of America (a policy carefully concealed from the public). Among the first NATO signatories, were the former European imperial powers of France, Britain, Portugal, Belgium and the Netherlands. Now subservient to US domination, they would pose no threat to the great superpower, however unlikely the prospect may have been.

In the decades since, the European powers have meekly followed their master's lead. Whether it be with regard the timid and servile attitude toward an increasingly expansionist Israel – or the provocative American-led policies directed at Russia, a country repeatedly invaded in the past, most recently by Hitler's Germany.

As the euphoria of victory in World War II dissipated, the USSR quickly replaced the Third Reich as the West's public enemy number one. Previously, during the war years, the American and British leaders Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had affably called Joseph Stalin (image on the right), their Soviet counterpart, "Uncle Joe". This despite the fact, just a few years before, Stalin had overseen a not inconsiderable level of bloodletting

during the Great Purge.

Betraying a classic hallmark of Western hypocrisy, gone were any reservations relating to Stalin personally, or Russia, once they were undertaking a task of benefit to them. That is, Russia shouldering the vast majority of burden in defeating the most destructive regime in world history, Nazi Germany.

In war time, Roosevelt and Churchill willingly saw Stalin on more than one occasion, during world famous meetings that were mostly cordial. However, once his service to the West was performed, Stalin was no longer uncle but dictator – a pattern repeated later when the US and Britain heavily supported despots like the Shah, Suharto, Somoza, Pinochet, etc., before later often distancing themselves from them.

Upon Stalin's death in March 1953, there was nothing to be heard from Churchill regarding the departed "Uncle Joe". Churchill sent no condolences, made no comments, did not even post a sympathy card, despite having previously said that "Stalin never broke his word to me".

The relationship between America and Britain toward the Soviet Union hardened during the presidency of Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman (1945-1953). As early as 1941 Truman, then a US senator, had said:

> "If we see that Germany is winning [the war], we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning, we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible. Although I don't want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances".

As a result of such hawkish views, it seems hardly surprising that NATO was formed during Truman's presidency. He described NATO's arrival as "a shield against aggression" whose aim it was "to promote and preserve peace throughout the world".

In January 1949, following his successful re-election, Truman launched a tirade against Communism, asserting that the ideology "subjects the individual to arrest without lawful cause, punishment without trial".

Truman's criticisms were clearly directed at the USSR. Such pronouncements add weight to the later opinions of America's political scientist, Samuel Huntington, who wrote in 1981 that the US has been conjuring the "misimpression that it is the Soviet Union you are fighting… ever since the Truman doctrine".

Continuing his re-election speech, Truman assured that the US was going to "restore peace,

stability, and freedom to the world". Just months later, America suffered the immeasurable "loss of China" after forces loyal to Mao Zedong (image on the left) in mainland China routed the Kuomintang, US-backed forces.

Enraged at China's exit from US control, Truman quickly denounced Zedong's Communist Party as being "a cut throat organization" that will "never be recognized by us as the government of China". It mattered little to Truman that Zedong enjoyed mass popular support, that had been building for years prior to his October 1949 takeover. Truman derogatorily labeled the revolutionary leader as "Mousie Dung", keeping in line with his early disregard for the "Chinaman".

Critics in the US described the Chinese revolution as "an avoidable catastrophe" – while hundreds of thousands of US sympathizers fled to Taiwan, an island about 400 miles east of Hong Kong. Truman's belief that the US would be a force for "peace, stability and freedom" has, in the unfolding seven decades, proved dramatically misguided. Indeed, some of the most severe crimes occurred during Truman's presidency.

Two years after his address, in 1951, the US Air Force was virtually leveling Korea in the east, while also releasing thousands of tons of napalm upon the country, a lethal incendiary fluid. The Koreans suffered an appalling loss of life during the war against their country, with the use of napalm upon civilian areas being banned as late as 1980.

Elsewhere, led by the US, the original signatories of NATO agreed that,

> "An armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all".

Policies like this increased the risk of conflict.

Discounted were views like those of US Senator Robert A. Taft, the eldest son of former president William Howard Taft (in office, 1909-1913). Senator Taft insisted that NATO was "not a peace program", but in reality represented "a war program".

In July 1949, Senator Taft further [criticized](#) the newly formed NATO by saying the military alliance could instigate "a third world war", which "might easily destroy civilization on this earth". Senator Taft was not a wild-eyed radical, but a conservative politician, and member of the Republican Party for many years. It is difficult to imagine such comments as his being uttered today from a Republican senator, or indeed a Democrat.

However, Senator Taft's views hold as much resonance now as they did then. One can assume he would be aghast at NATO enlargement that has continued to Russia's borders. In the post-Soviet Union era, almost a dozen countries all previously part of the USSR-led Warsaw Pact, are now members of NATO – including Latvia and Estonia along Russia's frontiers.

The Warsaw Pact was formed in mid-July 1955, primarily to combat the growing threat of NATO, hardly an unreasonable strategy. NATO had been expanding as early as 1952 with the accession of Turkey and Greece. West Germany then joined NATO in early July 1955, just days before the Warsaw Pact's creation.

As a result, NATO has produced a militarized domino effect throughout Europe, whereby

Russia was compelled to react to renewed threats against her. In recent years, Vladimir Putin has intervened in Georgia and the Ukraine, both on Russia's borders, to prevent those countries also "joining NATO", as publicly announced at a 2008 NATO summit.

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