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## NATO's Warmongers

### *The Belligerent Alliance*

by BRIAN CLOUGHLEY

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato) has deployed reconnaissance aircraft to Poland and Romania “to monitor the Ukrainian crisis” in order to “intensify our ongoing assessment of the implications of this crisis for Alliance security.”

But there is no threat whatsoever to any member of Nato. There is no crisis affecting that redundant military grouping. The current dispute between Russia and Ukraine has nothing to do with any Nato country. But their bilateral problem has resulted in deployment of squadrons of US F-15 attack aircraft to Lithuania and F-16s to Poland.

And the Pentagon has sent a guided missile frigate to the Black Sea for “engagements with Bulgarian and Romanian navies.” (Not that this seems much of a threat because the last US frigate in the Black Sea ran aground and is still being towed back to its Mediterranean home port.)

Nobody (except Russia) knows what other jiggery-pokery the US and its Nato puppets are up to in the way of sending ships, spooks and planes to threaten Russia, although it is obvious that tension is being deliberately ramped up. But is anyone going to order Nato to go to war because the people of Crimea had a democratic referendum and voted to join Russia? That's what the people of Crimea want. And what right has Nato or anyone else to dictate to them otherwise? What is all this fuss about?

Quite simply, it is about trying to stop Russia from prospering and spreading its interests, which has been America's objective for a very long time.

The Cold War between the US-dominated Nato and the Soviet Union and its allies of the Warsaw Pact is said to have lasted from 1947 to 1991. But it never ended – at least not for the US and Nato. And now that there is an internal problem in Ukraine, encouraged by US support for insurgents who overthrew its president (a nasty piece of corruption, to be sure; but he had been elected freely and fairly), it is apparent that the Cold War is alive, well and living in the Pentagon and Nato HQ.

The Nato HQ is a vast new concrete and glass palace in Belgium that in 2010 was contracted to be built for US\$640 million. Apart from the fact that it isn't needed, the main problem is an enormous cost-overrun “resulting from miscalculation.” It has run aground, expensively, and will now cost US\$1.7 billion. Nato seems to be as proficient at planning its finances as in planning military excursions, such as the Libya and Afghanistan disasters.

Nato was formed in 1949 with the objectives of “detering Soviet expansionism, forbidding the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent, and encouraging European political integration.”

When West Germany was encouraged to re-arm and become a member of Nato in 1955 the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact. (It was Germany that invaded Russia in WW2 and killed 20 million people, not the other way round. A mere ten years after the war, Moscow wasn't keen on German rearmament.)

The years went by and the two sides squared up to each other from time to time but the confrontation ended when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. The standoff was over. There was no ‘Soviet expansionism’ to deter; there was no prospect of ‘revival of nationalist militarism’; and European integration was well under way, with the creation of the European Union in 1993. But there were problems.

There was genocidal chaos in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and Nato took the side of anti-Serbian separatists in its military campaign against a country that had not in any way threatened any member of Nato. But Nato thought it had found a reason for its existence.

In one particularly bizarre episode, the Nato commander, US General Wesley Clark (Nato is always commanded by a US general), ordered confrontation with Russian troops. As the BBC reported, “the Russians, who played a crucial role in persuading Yugoslav President Milosevic to end the war, had expected to police their own sector of Kosovo, independent of Nato. When they did not get it, they felt double-crossed. As Nato’s peacekeepers prepared to enter the province they discovered the Russians had got there first.”

Clark ordered Nato troops to confront them. Britain’s General Jackson considered that this course of action “seemed to me probably not the right way to start off a relationship with Russians who were going to become part of my command.” Of course he was right, and in a heated exchange with Clark, Jackson told him that “I’m not going to start the Third World War for you.”

We must all of us hope that there is an equally cool-headed senior officer who might be able to control the present build-up and confrontation.

Nato’s vast air forces blitzed Yugoslavia into submission. When the Balkan war was over, leaving the region in fragments, Nato congratulated itself and looked for another reason to remain in being. Europe was at peace and there were no indications that there could ever be a conflict. There could have been a new era for Russia. But it wasn’t allowed to see the dawn of reconciliation because Nato desperately wanted to expand its numbers and surround and threaten the new Russia that was so anxious to join the comity of nations.

Nato asked Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to join in 1999. Then in 2004 came Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. To increase the net-drawing round Russia’s borders, Albania and Croatia were added in 2009. At the Chicago Nato summit in May 2012 it was declared that “At the 2008 Bucharest Summit we agreed that Georgia will become a member of Nato and we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions.”

Why did the US want all these countries to join Nato? Russia was no threat to any of them. But Russia could present an economic threat to the US, especially as it was prospering through its cooperation with the European Union in provision of gas, oil and coal. And, who knows? – there

could have been a very much wider economic union: that of Russia with greater Europe. This was to be circumvented at all costs.

So Nato re-invented itself at the bidding of Washington. According to Nato, it “has a new mission: extending peace through the strategic projection of security... This is not a mission of choice, but of necessity. The Allies neither invented nor desired it.” Well, in that case, just who did desire and invent it?

Nato’s members “undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered.” Right now they are engaging in provocative military confrontation that could hazard world peace. Let’s hope, for all our sakes, that they don’t run aground.