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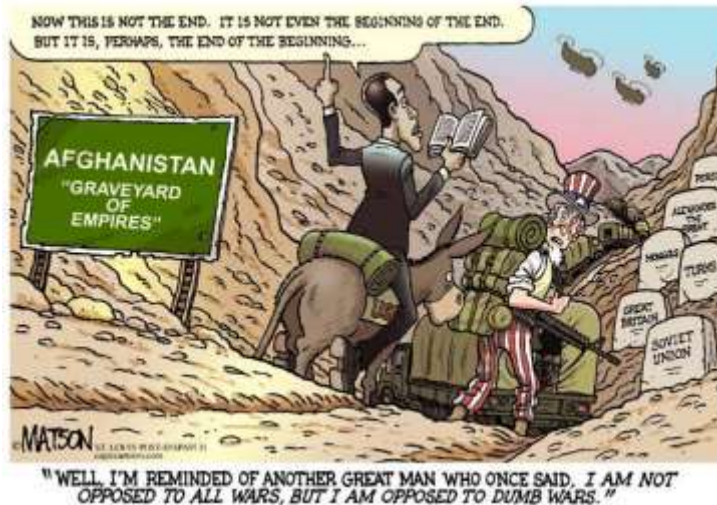
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NATO: Who's the Aggressor? (II)

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The US quest for domination did not stop in «former Yugoslavia». After 9/11 in 2001 the US and NATO invaded Afghanistan, though the Afghan Taliban government had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks in the United States. To this day the war in Afghanistan goes on and none too well for the United States. No wonder Afghanistan is called «the graveyard of empires».



Two years later it was the turn of Iraq though this was mostly an Anglo-American venture. The US government claimed that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had «weapons of mass destruction» (WMD), ready to use. R2P was invoked again to justify the new war. A massive invasion led to the destruction of Iraq and the execution of Saddam. Hundreds of thousands of civilians died because of the US invasion or because of prior stringent economic sanctions. Millions became homeless. US authorities turned Iraq upside down in the hopes of finding proof of Iraqi WMDs. It was all a charade. There were no WMDs. On the gallows Saddam bravely accused his executioners of being traitorous US puppets. The United States claimed its objective was to establish «democracy» in Iraq. President Putin, who could no longer tolerate the bogus American narrative, called it «airstrike democracy».



Submit or be destroyed was the real US message. Twelve years later there is no democracy in Iraq, only ruins, continued war and misery.

In 2011 it was the turn of Libya, a rich, independent country, led by Muammar Gaddafi, who for the previous eight years had maintained constructive relations with the west. The US and NATO

rolled out a new pretext for R2P. Gaddafi's forces had attacked the civilian population, a claim as false and preposterous as the WMDs in Iraq. Russia and China abstained in a UN Security Council vote to approve a «no-fly zone», a position they came to regret, because NATO promptly used the resolution as a pretext for an all-out air war against the Libyan government. Libya was destroyed and Gaddafi, sodomised with a bayonet and murdered. The then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, like some ancient tribal barbarian (no offence intended to the latter) gloated and sneered over images of Gaddafi's bloody corpse. It is reported that Putin has also seen the images and bowed his head in shame and anger. Like Afghanistan and Iraq, Libya remains in ruins, chaos and misery. These are the works, says journalist Pepe Escobar, of the «Empire of Chaos», determined to maintain global hegemony, along with its trusty NATO sidekicks, at whatever cost.

Profligate US/NATO violence did not end there. Encouraged by their «success» in Libya, the United States and some of its NATO «allies», notably France, Britain and Turkey, turned their sights on Syria and its leader Bashar al Assad. After Saddam and Gaddafi, they reckoned, it was Assad's turn to swing. His days were counted, said US officials. That was back in 2011. The Syrian war continues with no end yet in sight. Like Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, Syria is in ruins. It is fighting for survival against a US-NATO backed Jihadist invasion. As elsewhere, the United States and important NATO members have allied themselves with Muslim fundamentalists, who go by many names – Jaish al-Fatah, Ahrar ash-Sham, al-Nusra and Daesh, amongst others – but are cut from the same blood-drenched, terrorist cloth.



Closer to Russian borders, the United States inspired the Georgian attack on South Ossetia in 2008 which ended in catastrophe for Georgia. «We have your backs», American officials told the Georgians, but apparently not. In 2014 the Ukraine became the next battlefield where the United States and European Union (EU) supported a fascist *coup d'état* against the lawfully elected government. The United States intends to make the Ukraine the **buckle** of its anti-Russian *cordon sanitaire*. As in Syria, however, complete success has so far eluded the United States, even though the usual signs of its presence, violence, ruin, and chaos, are everywhere to be seen.



What is one to conclude about the conduct of the United States and NATO since 1991? In what way can NATO now be described as a «defensive» alliance? NATO was not abolished because the United States wanted to maintain its military domination in Europe and check any future, however remote resurgence of Russia. It also wanted to discourage any European movement toward political independence from Washington. When the EU discusses creation of an independent military force, for example, you can count on the United States to exercise its veto. An independent EU army, Washington knows full well, would undermine NATO and thus US domination. Ironically, the *raison d'être* of the EU was to re-establish European political and economic independence, but in fact it has done neither. NATO and the EU, as it presently functions, are institutions enforcing European vassalage to the United States. Instead of protecting European security, NATO has endangered it by dragging Europe into gratuitous **US quarrels** with Russia and into aggressive US wars in the Middle East and Central Asia.

European leaders like David Cameron, François Hollande, and Angela Merkel are US vassals, so much so that they have undermined their countries' economic and security interests. What chains bind these leaders to the United States? Is it personal advantage? Are they afraid to act independently? Are European political and military bureaucracies too tightly bound to Washington? Is the Atlanticist «Deep State» too deeply entrenched? Or, are European leaders simply complacent, taking the easy way out and liking the narcotic pleasures of proximity to US «power»?

Since 1991 the United States has become increasingly belligerent and reckless, like Wilhelmine Germany prior to World War I, but far more dangerous. Washington flaunts international law and makes war against or threatens those states which do not recognise US domination. American elites exhibit no remorse for the death and destruction they have wrought. Any why should they? No one can hold them to account. The EU and NATO serve as «international» cover to legitimise US behaviour. It's the «international community», according to Washington.

Observing these developments, President Putin has become a «truth-teller» challenging Washington's self-interested, exceptionalist narratives. But he has not threatened Europe, or the United States. On the contrary, he urges broad-based security cooperation and has long proposed

Russia-Europe political and economic integration. In spite of these proposals (or because of them, a cynic would say), US policy continues unchanged. When Russia therefore responds to the NATO military build-up in the Eastern Europe by strengthening its defences, don't call it «aggression».

Can Europeans put a brake on escalating tensions? It will not be easy. The best way, really the only way, is for Europe's most influential powers to withdraw from NATO. It's an audacious proposition, I admit, but Europe needs to stop being an American cat's paw and to establish some political distance from Washington. Only Europe can effectively discourage the present course of US policy. Is it not time to break the long cycle of western Russophobia?

Russia wants to be part of Europe, not against Europe. It's a formidable country with formidable people, who would be strong allies in the tough fight which we now face against Daesh. Just remember what the Soviet people did during the Great Patriotic War. Ask the Germans; they'll tell you.

If you get to know the Russians, you'll find they're not a bad lot, who love, laugh and weep like any other people, but who will defend their country fiercely like no others. Sure, they have bad apples, but so do we. I for one would rather have Russians with me than against me.

I ask in conclusion, what about you?