

The Formation of NATO: World War II did not End, It was Reconfigured, Directed Eastwards. Rick Rozoff

Global Research News Hour. Interview with Rick Rozoff on 75th Anniversary of NATO. Transcript

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Rick Rozoff is a renowned author and geopolitical analyst, actively involved in opposing war, militarism and interventionism for over fifty years. He manages the [Anti-Bellum and For peace, against war website](#).

In the following interview, recorded on March 26, 2024, Mr. Rozoff talks about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which he has opposed for decades, and where it is headed.

Global Research: It's been said that the real reason an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not really to end the war. The allied Soviet Union had said they were preparing an invasion in early-August 1945, so the US figured it would drop the bombs first and thereby send the message that they had won the war by forcing Japan's surrender. But they were also warning the Soviet Union about their awesome arsenal that could be targeting them. I bring this up, because I suspect the role of NATO to defend the world from the Soviet threat maybe – may not be accurate either. There is another story behind building up NATO. What in your view is the real reason NATO came into existence?

Rick Rozoff: It was a shift in World War II where the Western powers, US, Britain, French Resistance and Free French and such like continued the War, but shifted from waging war against the Axis powers, Germany, Italy, Romania, and so forth, towards the Soviet Union. I mean, it's quite simply that. And Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was, you know, the top commander of allied forces in Europe during World War II became the first supreme allied commander of NATO when NATO was set up in 1949. So, it was a very smooth transition, down to the very same, you know, top commander.

World War II did not, in that sense, end so much as it was reconfigured and directed eastward, that's my read on it. And of course, it was 75 years ago next month that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established, initially with 12 members. All 12 of which, with the exception of Italy, could lay claim to being on the North Atlantic Ocean, by the way. Italy, if you really wanted to stretch the point also, you know, through being in the Mediterranean which is an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean. Of course, now you're looking – well, I don't want to jump too far ahead – but you're looking at NATO which has grown appreciably where the majority of its members are nowhere near the North Atlantic Ocean.

GR: So, basically you're saying that – I mean, like the alliance, you know, to fight off Hitler, I mean I guess they felt they had a good thing coming, so... But, I guess there's somehow that solidarity or whatever. Let's just hold onto this and just direct it towards the Big Red Bear. Is that essentially what you're saying?

RR: That's exactly what happened. And they pivoted, to use the popular expression, on a dime. It didn't take very long. Almost immediately after V-E Day and certainly after V-J Day, you know, Victory in Europe, Victory Over Japan that you alluded to, then the Soviet Union became the replacement for the Third Reich and Mussolini.

And so, the military apparatus that the United States had established during the years from 1943-45 in Italy and in Germany and France and then the Low Countries, Benelux Countries, then became the foundation for NATO which remained and remains to this day, by the way, where the supreme allied commander of NATO has always been an American general or admiral. So, that much has not changed from 1949, or for that matter from 1945, until the current day.

GR: So, during the Cold War, I mean, was there anything, you know, about NATO – because, I mean, you started criticizing NATO before the fall of the Berlin Wall as I understand it. So, what were you finding objectionable back in the Cold War era that set you off?

RR: I wouldn't want to put too fine a point on this because I think, you know, it's going to distract from talking about post-Cold War NATO. And there are people out there who may want to defend NATO up until 1989 or up until 1991, and my argument is really not with them so much anymore, because as interesting as that is, I think we have more pressing concerns to be honest, Michael. And I personally feel that it was meant as a display of American military might in Europe, not only against the Soviet Union, its allies, and Eastern Europe, but also against political parties in countries like France, Belgium, Italy, Communist Party in the first instance, that may have wanted to reach some rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the permanent deployment of US – and the US, you know, Sixth Fleet is still based in Italy. And the US still has nuclear weapons in five European countries and suchlike. But this is all the result of using NATO to position the US Military for a permanent presence in Europe, first of all against the Soviet Union, then again the Soviet successor state: Russia.

Yet also, you know, you mention nuclear weapons. I believe it was as early as 1951, which is to say, only two years after the founding of NATO that the US moved nuclear weapons into Europe, into Britain initially, under NATO auspices and why NATO continues to maintain tactical nuclear weapons in Belgium, in The Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Turkey under what NATO calls "burden sharing," or "nuclear sharing" arrangements.

GR: Well, NATO underwent a transformation after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism, because it otherwise would no longer have a reason to continue, but it did. What do you know about what the thinkers at the top were thinking? I mean, how and when did they come to the conclusion that NATO would now be an aggressive force behind human rights. I mean, subsequently attacking people in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Libya?

RR: The 1989 speech by President H.W. Bush in Mainz, Germany whence the expression – it's actually sometimes published with – the expression I'm going to mention in a second – as it's titled, "A Europe Whole and Free," sometimes "Europe Whole, Free, and at Peace." And this is after the, you know, the dismantling of the Wall in Berlin and the beginning of the reunification of Germany. So, the point is clear coming from Washington, coming from the White House, that Europe was to be "united," — the exact word – there was to be a continental system, you know, if I'm not going too far astray, comparable to those of Napoleon Bonaparte, or for that matter, Hitler, that would unite the entire European continent under one military command.

That has been NATO's objective since 1989. Certainly since 1991 with the formal dissolution of the Warsaw Pact which itself, by the way, was founded six years after NATO and in reaction to not only NATO being founded, but Germany, West Germany, the Southern Republic of Germany, being brought into NATO the preceding year. Contrary to the Potsdam, you know, Accords reached by Britain, United States, and the Soviet Union at the end of World War II.

So, what NATO has accomplished in the interim and is now going to celebrate in all its splendour in July in the United States in Washington at its 75th anniversary summit, is that indeed, the entire European continent, with the exception of Russia and Belarus, have now been brought under NATO command.

GR: But NATO is not just a military force. It seems to me it's a parasite. There are components of NATO that involve industry and jobs and a whole economic and financial infrastructure has grown around NATO. So, there would be massive losses of jobs and a shrinking of a tax base meaning, you know, social programs as well would be compromised. Can you address these sorts of concerns about some who would resist ending NATO or getting out of NATO?

RR: I mean, you're correct about the fact that the NATO countries – I mean, let's look at some arithmetic: the annual collective military spending – this is official, right, through defence ministries and the Defense Department in the United States. It excludes, you know, a good deal other military-related spending. But the official numbers, with the US leading the way by a long shot to the tune of something like 68 percent, but nevertheless, NATO countries account for \$1.3 trillion in military spending per annum. This is as compared to, for example, Russia maybe \$60 billion, you know, a small fraction of that. The population combined or collective population, NATO countries, now with Sweden joining, is 1 billion. You know, Russia is 150 million, if I remember right. So, to place these matters in perspective.

The other thing that needs to be mentioned – and this is the NATO summit in Washington in the Summer – will be the second time a NATO summit has been held in the capital of the United States. That symbolism is not to be missed. There was only one other summit in the United States and it was here in Chicago in 2012. But the first summit in Washington, the first in the United States, was in 1999 to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of NATO.

This one will mark the 75th anniversary.

Fifty years ago – I’m sorry, not 50 years ago but 25 years ago in 1999, when NATO met in Washington NATO had 16 members. When it finishes its summit this July in Washington, it will have 32 members, which is to say twice as many as it had in 1999 when it launched its first full fledged war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the interim also, starting in the 1990s – you read an excerpt which I assumed was mine, it sounded very much like mine at the beginning of the programme – NATO has, in addition to those 32 full members, partners in the neighbourhood of probably 40 officially. And if you want to include the fact that NATO considers the African Union to be a collective partner, it has a liaison office next to that of the African Union in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. But officially, they have 40 members who, together with the – not 40 members, 40 partners – who, together with the 32 members, some of these are countries, are on all six inhabited continents, bar none. And as there are military personnel in Antarctica from NATO countries, you can throw that one in for good measure and all the continents in the world even have NATO presence.

That is something that is so historically unprecedented in scale and scope and ambition and nature, that it really puzzles me and I have to admit it makes me despondent sometimes that for 25 years I’ve been trying to alert people to this, to the scale of it. And I feel that people are either indifferent to it, they downplay it, they mock it. Global Research is not immune itself from running articles that suggest that, you know, NATO is a paper tiger, paper pussycat in one person’s parlance, and so forth. I’ll state my claim, and I hope I’m not wrong, that NATO is a deadly serious business and a real threat to world peace. And if it is, and it has been for the past 25 years, then I think the peace movement and other forces in the world have been grossly negligent in taking this one on.

GR: Going forward then, what would you assume NATO’s next targets would be if there’s no resistance? And you know, what kinds of – how do you expect their development to evolve over the next two or three years?

RR: You know, they’re very open about these matters. There’s nothing esoteric about them. Go to the NATO website. They have two features today and one is at the Moldova [sic] solidifying its relationship with NATO. It’s going to join. But you know, as a precondition for joining, it cannot have foreign troops on its territory, nor can it have unresolved territorial disputes. And Transnistria, you know, fills, you know, both those – checks both of those boxes off. So, it would be necessary. And Transnistria is surrounded by Moldova in the West, Ukraine on the East, it would be necessary to expel the Russian peacekeeping force of the couple thousand troops, and then reincorporate Transnistria into Moldova in order for it to join NATO. But you know, those movements – that movement is well under way.

The general secretary of NATO, as you may know, has just recently made a trip to the three South Caucasus nations of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Armenia has suspended its membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, I would argue justifiably, you know, given Russia’s unwillingness to defend it against attacks from Azerbaijan. And so, what are they doing? They’re wrapping up – they’re doing a mopping up operation. They are absorbing what’s left of the former Soviet Union, except for, at least the moment, Belarus and Russia itself. They’ve already incorporated, of course, some 15 years ago they incorporated – more than that, 17 years ago – they – 20 years ago they incorporated three former Soviet Union republics, you know, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuanian. They, you know,

ensconced themselves deeply in the three countries I've just mentioned in the South Caucasus. Ukraine I don't have to tell you about. And Moldova, that's the former Soviet Union.

So, they have not only – there was a statement by George W. Bush during the round of massive NATO expansions in the early part of the century where, at one NATO summit, seven countries joined at one time. Again, that's totally unprecedented. Two of those former Yugoslav federal republics and three of them former Soviet republics. There was a statement attributed to George W. Bush saying, "The Warsaw Pact has now become NATO, in fact."

GR: Rick Rozoff, thank you very much for your intelligent and eloquent analysis.

RR: Yeah, I wish I had better news to bring you, my friend. You know, we sit back and we allow military monoliths of this scale to spread over the last, you know, 33 years and we effectively do nothing about it. You know, they're not going to be held in check unless we hold them in check. And we have to sound the alarm that the existence of a military bloc of 70-some odd countries on all continents is something that really should ring some bells and really should raise some alarms and people should really commit themselves to looking into it and doing what they can to reign this thing in until it can be dismantled.

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