

America's Warm Wars In Russia's Shoes

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This article is third in a series about the issue of the United States vs. China and Russia. The map in Figure 1 shows the members of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO) membership in blue. (Source: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/bild-663315-35955.html>.) Not shown are members on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean: the United States and Canada.

NATO is a military alliance that was created after WWII. Its *members act as a unit of collective defense in response to an attack by an external party*. Over the years, its membership has grown, as additional countries have been admitted into the alliance.

After WWII, the Soviet Union formed a NATO-like alliance (The Warsaw Pact). Its members were Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Albania, East Germany, and the Soviet Union. This alliance no longer exists.

However, the Cold War NATO membership continues to grow, even when the Cold War is over. The important point is that former "allies" of Russia are now aligned against Russia. This situation is an exceptionally sore point for Russia's President Putin and other Russian leaders: Former Warsaw Pact members are now members of NATO, an organization that has evolved to be an alliance against--not the former *grand* USSR but a stripped-down *weakened* Russia.

NATO officials claim that NATO is not aligned against Russia. Then who is its adversary? In answering this question, keep in mind the NATO charter: *Act as a collective defense in response to an attack by an external party*. It is not a charter for *preventive war*. It is a charter for *retaliation*.

Who might be an attacker? China? China poses no threat whatsoever to Europe and with rare exceptions, has for centuries largely kept to itself. As we go down the list of prospective antagonists, no one but Russia is close enough to Western Europe, nor big enough and anti-American-value enough to qualify.

Turning the tables, see Figure 2. We assume Russia has formed the Western Atlantic Treaty Organization (WATO), shown with the nations colored in red. Its charter is the same as NATO: Its members act as a unit of collective defense in response to an attack by an external party.

What would be the reaction of the United States to this military encirclement? I think it safe to say the U.S. would launch its full military arsenal to dislodge WATO from North America. It would prod NATO into actions against any WATO nations that were located in Europe.

The map in Figure 2 is fantasy. The map in Figure 1 is reality. America can encircle, but America will not allow itself to be encircled. As an American citizen, I am thankful my country would never allow a WATO on its borders. I sleep better knowing Canada, Mexico, and other Monroe Doctrine nations do not wish to encircle America with anti-Monroe Doctrine rockets.

Can you imagine Canada or Mexico having WATO missiles programmed to blow-up American cities? Recall the Cuba missile crisis. The idea is absurd. Yet that is what NATO has done regarding post-Cold War Russia. For a while, the United States was working with Poland to place a rocket system on Poland's soil. The stated reason: to counter possible rocket firings into Western Europe from Iran. I am not joking.

No Harbor?

In 1954, when Ukraine was part of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev ceded Crimea to the Ukraine to become the “Autonomous Republic of Crimea.” This action prompted no significant international reaction. It was an internal matter, not affecting any nation but the USSR.

However, for the former USSR, now Russia, Crimea was and is strategically important. It gives Russia one of its three warm water ports (the other two are at St. Petersburg in the Baltic and Vladivostok in the Pacific). Russia has its Black Sea Fleet of over 100 ships harbored at several ports in Crimea.

For years, Ukraine’s government has been a series of ineffective, corrupt administrations. Amidst violent protests that Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was rejecting a pro-western posture and embracing Russia, he fled to Russia. And therein lies the crux of the current problem. Fraudulent or not, he was elected to this post. He claims that any other supposed authority in Ukraine is illegitimate. His claim is backed by Russia and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Safe Harbor

With the likelihood of Ukraine installing a pro-Western government, Russia faced the possibility of the Ukraine taking on a pro-NATO stance. The implications for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet could not be predicted, but none of them were positive for Russia. I think it safe to say that a Ukraine government, no matter how anti-Russian, would not be so foolish to try to “evict” Russia’s fleet from Crimea. But Russia took no chances.

If the United States discovered that its Navy bases in Hawaii, Cuba, etc, might be threatened, we can be assured America would not take a passive approach to the threat. That is exactly what Russia has done with the “annexation” of Crimea. It has now guaranteed that its Mediterranean Black Sea Fleet will have a safe harbor in Crimea.

America and Europe are crying “foul!” against Russia’s interpretation of its interpretation of its Eurasian Monroe Doctrine. What would America do if time-after-time, NATO encroached upon its shores? America would take action to protect its fleets. That is exactly what Russia has done in Crimea.

Paraphrasing Putin: One can tighten a spring only so much before it recoils. The metaphor for this narrative is the gradual tightening of the spring as former Soviet members became part of NATO. The eviction of a pro-Russian government from Ukraine by pro-Western factions triggered the recoiling of the spring.

This situation would never have come about if NATO had included Russia, which Russia actually requested shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But then, what would be the point of NATO’s existence? If Russia were a member of NATO, there would be no bully on the block for NATO to take a stand against. China, the next country Americans will inevitably vilify as a danger to America, is too far away to threaten a NATO country. No other country is big enough or sufficiently atheistic and non-Democratic to be a worthy bully.

If you think Russia will give in and return Crimea to Ukraine, I have a bridge in Brooklyn and over one hundred war ships harbored in Crimea I will sell you.

Even more, Ukraine is considered by Russians to be the soul of Russia. Its present separation from Russia is viewed as a loathsome situation by many Russians. If the Western

powers are naïve enough to think Ukraine is just another appendage that can be attached to the EU (European Union) and NATO, they are flirting with fantasy and danger.

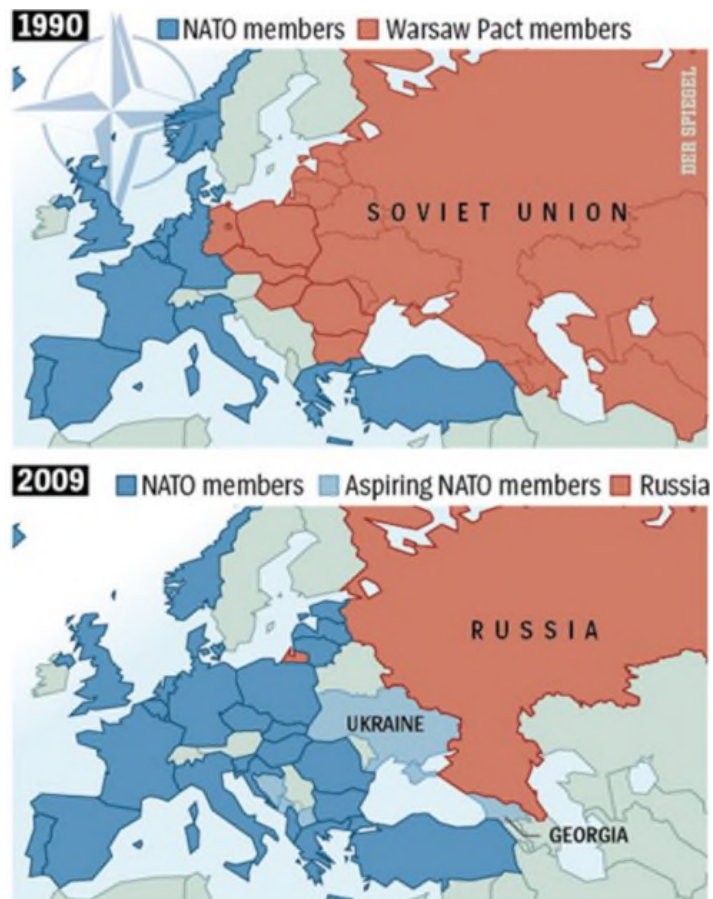


Figure 1. NATO members (in blue). In red: 1990, the former Soviet Union; 2009, Russia



Figure 2. North America (Theoretical WATO countries in red).