



Why Is It “All About NATO?”

by Julie Enslow

Nothing can ever justify Putin’s brutal and illegal invasion of Russia on Ukraine. So why does the Peace Movement call for the end of NATO and place so much of the blame for the original cause of this horrendous war on NATO expansion?

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) was founded after World War II as a mutual defensive alliance. The Treaty was signed initially by 12 nations in 1949 - the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, United States, Canada, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. Over time 18 more nations have joined, with a total of 30 members. By 1954 it served as the military balance of Western Europe against the newly established Warsaw Pact of the Soviet Union and several Eastern European countries. (USSR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, East Germany.)

The NATO alliance requires all member nations to come to the defense of any one of them if that nation is attacked or threatened. That means that the United States could go to war over Luxembourg for example, although the situation was of no threat to the US itself.

At the end of the Cold War when the Berlin Wall came down in 1991 and the Soviet Union fell apart, the Warsaw Pact dissolved. With Mikhail Gorbachev as president of the Soviet Union, it was the perfect time for the dissolution of NATO and the building of friendly relations and a mutual security agreement with Russia. This was strongly recommended by many military leaders and leading diplomats, including the esteemed George Kennan, former US Ambassador to Russia. In fact, Kennan predicted the current scenario if NATO expanded eastward.

However, western leaders were persuaded to retain the alliance, in part by the military industrial complex that

wanted to continue to sell massive amounts of armaments to NATO countries.



“...not one inch to the east...”

In 1991 an agreement was made with Russia that if they agreed to the unification of East and West Germany, NATO would promise not to move “one inch to the east” beyond Germany. This was verbalized by Secretary of State James Baker and several other US state department people. Records of the promises are found in documents and meeting notes, and were released publicly in 2017.

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NATO went on to break the promise by adding 14 more countries to the east of Germany right up to the border of Russia. Most of that expansion was under US President Clinton. With NATO expansion on the near horizon, a prophetic letter was sent to then-President Bill Clinton. Signed by 50 prominent figures in the foreign-policy establishment – including a half-dozen former senators and former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara - it warned that “the current U.S.-led effort to expand NATO” was “a policy error of historic proportions. We believe that NATO expansion will decrease allied security and unsettle European stability.”

Over the years US nuclear weapons have been deployed in five NATO nations - Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany and Turkey. A missile defense system was installed in Poland and Romania. In 2014 NATO sent a “Spearhead Force” of 5,000 troops into Eastern Europe. NATO war games regularly take place close to the Russian border. All these actions are perceived by Russia as a real threat to their security. They have drawn the line on NATO expansion into Ukraine.

If Russia installed nuclear weapons, missile defense and thousands of troops on the border of Canada or Mexico, the United States would not stand for it. Remember the Cuba Missile Crisis which brought us to the verge of nuclear war in 1962? Soviet President Khrushchev agreed to pull back nuclear missiles from Cuba and President Kennedy secretly agreed to remove US nuclear weapons from Turkey. That time the world was saved.

Now an Offensive Alliance

Huge profits have been made by the US weapons industry with sales to NATO nations. New member states of NATO are required to buy new weapons that are compatible with the rest of the NATO forces. And the weapons provided have been used.

NATO has moved from being a *defensive* alliance to an *offensive* alliance. They have been part of aggressive military action in Serbia (1999), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2004), and Libya (2011). The European peace movement has called for an end to NATO for several years. In 2010 thousands gathered in Chicago for a NO TO NATO rally. Several busloads of folks from Peace Action Wisconsin participated.

NATO also ensures security and defense of its allies beyond its member states. This makes things even more

complicated. It has declared Ukraine an “ally.”



The Current Crisis

Ukraine has wanted to join NATO in recent years and was encouraged by the US. However, certain standards are required to become a member state. The US has been supplying Ukraine with weapons to build up its military capacity as required by NATO. But the fact that Ukraine has been engaged in a civil war in the east and has disputed borders has eliminated them from qualifying for NATO membership.

Russia has made it clear that they will not tolerate NATO expanding to Ukraine. The Minsk 2 Agreement of 2015 signed by Russia, Ukraine, US, and several NATO countries, would have made Ukraine a neutral country and declared the predominately Russian eastern region of the Donbas an independent republic, but still part of Ukraine. This was never implemented by Ukraine or encouraged by the US.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 28, 2022, NATO has deployed a 40,000 Response Force in Eastern Europe, with some of the countries abutting Ukraine. NATO is also supplying Ukraine with more weapons. If the Russian bombardments of Western Ukraine spill over, even accidentally, to bordering NATO countries such as Poland, it could lead to NATO entering the war.

The real nightmare lies in the potential for direct military conflict between nuclear armed Russia and the nuclear armed NATO alliance. The chance of an escalation to nuclear war is horrifyingly real. A no-fly zone imposed on Russia by NATO would mean a direct confrontation and a US war with Russia.

This is the closest that our world has been to a nuclear holocaust since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. At that time Presidents Khrushchev and Kennedy were both willing to back off and negotiate a withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Cuba and Turkey. Can we assume that today's leaders will choose the path of sanity and preservation of life?

Are Sanctions a Substitute for War? *Over 40 Countries Targeted by US*

Excerpts from Sanctions Kill Campaign. Edited by Julie Enslow.

The current regime of sanctions against Russia is not a substitute for war, but a form of economic warfare. Sanctions can kill many thousands just as bombs do. Sanctions create hyperinflation, artificial famines, social upheavals, and health crises that punish civilian populations. As US President Biden said, the sanctions are intended “to inflict further pain.”

Economic sanctions that target an entire country are collective punishment and illegal under international law. It is argued that there may be times when specifically targeted sanctions may be effective and useful to put pressure on individual leaders, but not impact on the total population.

Washington has unilaterally imposed over 5,500 sanctions on Russia, making it the most sanctioned target of US aggressive policies. Although many of these sanctions are targeted specifically on President Putin and powerful Russian oligarchs, many are now affecting the ordinary citizens of Russia.

Sanctions on Russian natural gas and oil have already reduced sales by two thirds. This is having a huge impact as nearly half of the Russian economy has come from fossil fuel sales. The sanctions affect more than Russian oil and gas. They also impact large international sales of Russian wheat, affecting food resources in many countries. Removing the sanctions if Russia leaves Ukraine should be a central part of the negotiations.

The United Nations did not approve the US-instigated sanctions. Many countries now refuse to join with the US/EU sanctions imposed on Russia. To date India, Pakistan, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and other countries with smaller economies have refused to comply with the US measures. In fact, almost all of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, and most of Asia reject the sanctions.



Militarism and Climate Change *Big Oil and the Ukraine Conflict*

**Zoom Presentation by
George Martin and Julie Enslow**

Wed. May 18, 7 pm

See www.peaceactionwi.org for the zoom contact.

George Martin and Julie Enslow have presented workshops on militarism and climate change at national and international conferences and World Social Forums. George is a former program director for Peace Action WI and was national co-chair of United for Peace and Justice for eight years during the Iraq War. Julie is a founder and former organizer for Peace Action WI. Both are now active leaders in the climate action group 350 Milwaukee.



Unfortunately, the Russian people are not the only victims of these unilateral coercive measures. **Over 40 countries, comprising a third of humanity, are so targeted by the US.** These include Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, China, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Third countries trading with targets of US sanctions also face heavy fines.

As over 60 years of US sanctions against the Cuban Revolution prove, sanctions meant to achieve the regime change the US wants to impose have, in fact, only resulted in raining misery upon the targeted people.

Speaking Out for Afghans

Milwaukee activists were in the streets on a cold Saturday, showing our support for the Afghan people. We held signs and spoke out, demanding that Biden stop choking the Afghan economy by stealing money from their central bank. Instead, give Afghans their money, unfreeze their assets in the US Federal Reserve Bank, allow their banks and economy to function, and increase humanitarian aid. Stop the mass starvation that is on track to kill more people than died in the 20 years of war !



Peace Action WI demonstrates to unfreeze Afghan assets.



Tom Niebler stands up for the Afghan people.

More Than 13,000 Afghan Infants Have Died of Hunger Since January

Democracy Now! March 22, 2022

Afghanistan's Health Ministry says widespread malnutrition is leading to a surge of premature births and infant deaths. The ministry estimates that, since January, more than 13,000 newborn babies have died from malnutrition and hunger-related diseases. That's more than six infant deaths per hour.

Some 3.5 million children need nutritional support, and 95% of Afghanistan's population does not have enough to eat. Human Rights Watch says U.S.-led sanctions are impairing Afghans' basic human rights to life, food, healthcare and jobs.

Afghanistan urgently needs a functioning banking system to address its hunger crisis, with U.S. sanctions on Afghanistan's central bank making large transactions impossible.

Call upon your Representatives and Senators to tell Pres. Biden to unfreeze the Afghan money held in the US Federal Reserve Bank. It is a matter of life or death. Give Afghanistan a chance for a functioning economy and access to their own money. DC Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121

The Mobilizer

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End Military Intervention, Transfer Military Spending to Human Needs, Abolish Nuclear Weapons & Power. Oppose Racism & Sexism, Protect the Environment.

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US Hypocrisy and the War in Ukraine

by Jeremy Scahill - The Intercept, March 7, 2022

There is no contradiction between standing with the people of Ukraine and against Russia's heinous invasion and being honest about the hypocrisy, war crimes, and militarism of the U.S. and NATO. We have an undeniable moral responsibility to prioritize holding our own government accountable for its crimes because they are being done in our names and with our tax dollars. That does not mean we should be silent in the face of the crimes of Russia or other nations, but we do bear a specific responsibility for the acts of war committed by our own nations.

The global response to Putin's war has already exposed the tragic double standard when it comes to war victims. The people of Yemen have been suffering for more than a decade under a merciless campaign of bombing initiated by Obama in 2009 that morphed into a scorched-earth campaign by U.S.-armed-and-supported Saudi Arabia, which continues to this moment. How many of the people with Ukrainian flag avatars on their Twitter profiles have spent days or weeks pleading for the world to stand up for ordinary Yemenis living under the hell of American bombs and Saudi warplanes? The same question applies in the case of the Palestinians who live under an apartheid state imposed by Israel and backed up by a sustained campaign of annihilation supported and encouraged by the U.S. How can people argue in favor of Ukrainian rights to self-defense while simultaneously stripping Palestinians of that same right?

Vladimir Putin and the Russian officials responsible for this invasion of Ukraine should face justice. Once the evidence has been gathered, every war crime should be investigated, indictments issued, and prosecutions undertaken. The obvious venue for this would be before the International Criminal Court (ICC). Yet here is an inconvenient fact: The U.S. has refused to ratify the Rome Statute, which established the ICC. In 2002, Bush signed legislation that authorizes the U.S. to literally conduct military operations in The Hague to liberate any American personnel brought to trial for war crimes. It is indefensible that the U.S. has established a precedent that powerful nations need not be held accountable for their crimes. It is a precedent that Russia knows well, exploits regularly, and will certainly use again and again.



Anti-war demo in early Feb. at Teutonia & Capitol Dr.



Brian Bunzel and Joy Shroeder on Brady and Farwell.



Peace Action demonstrating against the war on Ukraine and NATO expansion.

All Photos by James Oldenburg.

PEACE CALENDAR

April/May 2022

Stand for Peace - Every Saturday from Noon to 1 pm.
Please wear masks. Flags and signs supplied by Peace Action of WI. See ad for locations.

Stand for a Livable Climate - Support Student Climate Action - **Every Friday 12 Noon to 1pm. UWM Union, Kenwood and Maryland until Earth Day.** Organized by 350MKE and endorsed by Peace Action of WI. Signs provided. Check 350 Milwaukee's website for updates.

Wed. April 6, 7pm ET Special Peace Action of WI Event - Medea Benjamin Reports on her Afghanistan Trip in March.
Co-sponsored on Zoom by Peace Action of Wisconsin and Massachusetts PA. For Zoom link go to our website, www.peaceactionwi.org

Sat. April 9, 12 noon. Stand for Peace to Oppose War Taxes. Stop using our tax money for war and nuclear weapons. 51st and Silver Spring. Sponsored by Peace Action WI.

Wed. April 13, 7pm. Demilitarize, Decolonize, Decarbonize - A War Industry Resisters Network Webinar. A Zoom webinar. Featuring three indigenous activists who have had first-hand experience resisting the military-industrial-fossil fuel-banking complex - Tara Houska, Leona Morgan, Mikey Inouye.

Fri. April 22, 12 noon. EARTH DAY Rally and March for a Livable Future. Gather at Milwaukee City Hall, Water St. and Wells. Organized by 350 Milwaukee and a coalition of climate action groups, including Peace Action of WI. Check our website for updates.

Wed. April 27, 7pm End the Wars Coalition Meeting on Zoom.

Sun., Mon., May 1 & 2, 11am MAY DAY- General Strike Days without Latinx and Immigrants. Sunday May 1, 11am - assemble at Voces de la Frontera, 733 W. Mitchell for march. Monday, May 2, 11am - State Capitol Building in Madison.

Wed. May 18, 7pm Militarism and Climate Change. Zoom presentation by Julie Enslow and George Martin.
Sponsored by Peace Action of WI. For zoom link go to our website, www.peaceactionwi.org

Wed. May 25, 7pm Milwaukee End the Wars Coalition Meeting on Zoom.

More updated information on local peace and justice events can be found on our website, www.peaceactionwi.org and actors.



**Every
Saturday
Noon - 1pm**

April 2: Brady/Farwell (free Julian Assange)

April 9: 51st/Silver Spring (no tax \$ for war)

April 16: King/North

April 23: Greenfield/Chavez (16th St.)

April 30: Port Washington/Silver Spring

May 7: Layton/Howell

May 14: Bluemound/Hwy 100

May 21: Capitol/Teutonia

May 28: Lincoln Memorial Drive/Lafayette Hill

Face Masks suggested

Thank You Volunteers

- The Mobilizer: Thanks to Julie Enslow and Christy Breihan for editing this newsletter.
- Mail Crew: These folks have helped with mailings during the past several months -Mary Alice Martines, Marsha Vila, Mary Laan, Babette Grunow, Sue Cottrell, David Lindberg, Tom Neibler, Trish Beausang, Joyce Ellwanger, Barbara Markoff, Roger Hansen, John Payton, Jill Ferguson, Jan Watson, Don Timmerman, Roberta Thurston, Mary Laan.
- Thanks to Kevin Horvath for the donation of a new printer. It is a nice upgrade for our office.
- Thanks to Tom Rodman for many hours of computer tech advice.
- Thanks to George Martin for bringing his sound amplification system to our rallies and leading chants.
- Thanks to Samir Moukaddam for keeping the Peace Center on Keefe Ave. going over the past few years.



EARTH DAY

Friday, April 22, 2022

Milwaukee Rally and March for a Livable Planet 12 noon

Gather - Milwaukee City Hall
Water Street and Wells

Code Red for Planet Earth!! System Change, Not Climate Change!

Sponsored by Milwaukee Earth Day Coalition

*Initiated by 350 Milwaukee
www.350milwaukee.weebly.com*

Fossil Fuels and War

“Human-induced climate change and the war on Ukraine have the same roots, fossil fuels, and our dependence on them.” *Svitlana Krakovska*, Ukraine’s leading climate scientist.

“What we are experiencing today is Russia using its natural gas resources as an economic and political weapon.

The answer is not more domestic production, but to dramatically reduce the United States’ dependence on fossil fuels. We can fight authoritarianism and climate change at the same time by making massive investments in clean, renewable energy.” *Inside Climate News*

“Putin’s war in Ukraine is being fueled by the world’s addiction to oil.” *Fortune Magazine*

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1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212

Call office for information on monthly sustainers.

If you are not receiving our *Peace Action Email Alerts* please email us your email address so you can keep in touch with current activities.

Good News for Venezuela

It appears that the US may be moving toward lifting economic sanctions on Venezuela. US officials visited Venezuela in recent weeks to discuss purchasing Venezuelan oil after stopping Russian oil imports. Once again oil plays a huge role in foreign policy.

Unfortunately, it has taken the tragedy of war in Ukraine to lift the crippling economic warfare against Venezuela.



George Martin (left) leads chants at our demonstration for No War on Ukraine and No NATO Expansion.

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DATED MATERIAL

The Suffering Continues in Afghanistan

Peace Action of WI and Massachusetts Peace Action present



Medea Benjamin, *Founder of Code Pink*
speaking on her Afghanistan Trip in March 2022

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 8 PM ET, 7 PM CT

*Register for **Zoom** link on Peace Action website, peaceactionwi.org*