

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

NATO's Not So Great

In the midst of a feverish international debate over the future of NATO, I was dismayed to find a full page of our beloved newspaper serving as a propaganda outlet for the military industrial complex (July 4 "Worldview").

In 1949, NATO was formed as an alliance to counter Russia's creation of satellite buffer states in the countries they liberated from the Nazis. Russia has been invaded on a regular basis since the time of Napoleon. Having lost 22 million lives in World War II, the Russians were determined to have friendly nations on their borders....

Now that it no longer has any reason to exist, "the mission of the organization has expanded to promote the stability and security of Europe as a whole."

Where? Preventing ethnic slaughter in Bosnia? Chechnya? Maybe Northern Ireland?

The United States has a defense budget of \$268,843,000 with \$35 billion going toward research and development, and \$40 billion toward procurement. This works out as a per capita expenditure of \$1,034, \$135, and \$154 respectively. By way of contrast, our per capita expenditure for the Peace Corps is \$0.85 and the National Endowment for the Arts \$0.38. It is becoming increasingly difficult to justify to the America public Cold War levels of expenditures to fight a non-existent enemy. The United States is the world's largest exporter of arms, controlling half the market, selling \$15 billion per year. Markets must be maintained in an increasingly skeptical world.

The real purpose of NATO's expansion is to force impoverished countries to squander their precious resources on the modernization and expansion of their militaries. An added benefit will be to encircle and infuriate the Russians to the point that their next round of leaders will restore their nation as an enemy worth fighting.

The best and brightest follow the money, and in Eastern Europe the military is where the action will be. Military personnel, not doctors, get all-expense-paid trips to Louisiana.

General John Sheehan assures us that "people who talk to each other don't fight, because if they are busy talking, they have a tendency not to fight." But soldiers, when so ordered, tend to kill, if only to avoid court-martial.

— MARK ANTON, New York

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