

# A Brief History of Modern Superpowers

From schoolbooks to popular culture, Americans have been fed a steady diet of propaganda that has led them to support reactionary policies around the globe even while fancying themselves advocates of human progress, as historian William Blum explains.

By William Blum

From the Congress of Vienna of 1815 to the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to the "Allies" invasion of Russia in 1918 to the formation of what became the European Union in the 1950s, the great powers of Europe and the world have gotten together in grand meeting halls and on the field of battle to set the ground rules for imperialist exploitation of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Australasia, to Christianize and 'civilize', to remake the maps, and to suppress revolutions and other threats to great-power hegemony.

They have been deadly serious. In 1918, for example, some 13 nations, including France, Great Britain, Rumania, Italy, Serbia, Greece, Japan and the United States, combined in a military invasion of Russia to "strangle at its birth" the nascent Bolshevik state, as Winston Churchill so charmingly put it.

And following World War II, without any concern about who had fought and died to win that war, the Western powers, *sans* the Soviet Union, moved to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO, along with the European Union, then joined the United States in carrying out the Cold War and preventing the Communists and their allies from coming to power legally through elections in France and Italy. That partnership continued after the formal end of the Cold War.

The United States, the European Union and NATO are each superpowers, with extensive military, as well as foreign policy integration, almost all EU members are also members of NATO; almost all NATO members in Europe are in the EU; almost all NATO members have had a military contingent serving under NATO and/or the U.S. in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and elsewhere.

Together, this Holy Triumvirate has torn apart Yugoslavia, invaded and devastated Afghanistan and Iraq, crippled Iran, Cuba and others with sanctions, overthrown the Libyan government, and are on the verge now of the same in Syria. Much of what the Triumvirate has told the world to justify this wanton havoc has concerned Islamic terrorism, but it should be noted that prior to the interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria all three countries were secular and modern. Will the people of those sad lands ever see that life again?

In suppressing the Left in France and Italy, and later in destabilizing the governments of Libya and Syria, the Holy Triumvirate has closely aligned itself with terrorists and terrorist methods to a remarkable extent. [For France and Italy, see [Operation Gladio](#) Wikipedia; and Daniele Ganser, *Operation Gladio: NATO's Top Secret Stay-Behind Armies and Terrorism in Western Europe* (2005)]

In Syria alone, it would be difficult to name any Middle East terrorist group associated with al-Qaeda, employing their standard car bombings and suicide bombers, that is not taking part in the war against President Assad with the support of the Triumvirate.

Is there anything, legally or morally, the Triumvirate regards as outside its purview? Any place not within its geographical mandate? Britain and France have now joined Turkey and Arabian Peninsula states in recognizing a newly formed opposition bloc as the sole representative of the Syrian people.

"From the point of view of international law, this is absolutely unacceptable," Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev declared. "A desire to change the political regime of another state by recognizing a political force as the sole carrier of sovereignty seems to me to be not completely civilized."

France was the first Western state to recognize the newly formed Syrian National Coalition and was swiftly joined by Britain, Italy and the European Union. [Agence France Presse, Nov. 26, 2012] The neck irons tighten.

The European Union in recent years has been facing a financial crisis, where its overriding concern has been to save the banks, not its citizens, inspiring calls from the citizenry of some member states to leave the Union. I think the dissolution of the European Union would benefit world peace by depriving the U.S./NATO mob of a guaranteed partner in crime by returning to the Union's members their individual discretion in foreign policy.

And then we can turn to getting rid of NATO, an organization that not only has a questionable *raison d'être* in the present, but never had any good reason-to-be in the past other than serving as Washington's hit man. [For the best coverage of the NATO monolith, sign up with StopNATO. To get on the mailing list write to Rick Rozoff at [r\\_rozoff@yahoo.com](mailto:r_rozoff@yahoo.com). To see back issues at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato>]

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