



War Resisters' International

Dissolve NATO: an alliance for war

NATO was founded ostensibly to defend the “free” West against Soviet expansion. Why then did not NATO dissolve when the Soviet Union disintegrated and Warsaw Pact dissolved? The reason is quite simple: because it had become the main vehicle for the coordination of Western military strategy. What follows is a call for peace activists to commit ourselves to raise the demand for the dissolution of NATO.

During the Cold War, NATO developed policies of “first strike” and “first use” of nuclear weapons, it imposed “standardization” on members’ military operations and raised their levels of military spending, and it built up a global military infrastructure of bases and command, control and communications systems.

Since 1990, NATO has expanded, in the number of members, in its influence on policy, and in the scope of its operations. NATO obliges its members to spend disgusting amounts on arms, and its ever-closer cooperation with the European Union has created a powerful policy lobby in favour of increased military spending and weapons “modernization”. All this mainly takes place without much public debate. For instance, outside the peace movement, few people know that the EU’s “rescue loans” to Greece help it maintain a ridiculously high level of military expenditure, including buying new frigates, helicopters, planes and submarines from EU/NATO partners, such as France and Germany.

Today, the military expenditure of all NATO members amounts to more than 70% of global military expenditure. NATO is fighting a major war in Afghanistan, commanding more than 100,000 troops from NATO and non-NATO countries, and is supporting the

war in Iraq. Other NATO operations include KFOR in Kosovo, a so-called anti-terror operation in the Mediterranean, and a so-called anti-piracy operation off the Horn of Africa. The primary purpose of NATO today is military intervention.

“Democracy” has been central to NATO’s rhetoric – not to its practices. Historically it has been linked with covert operations usually carried out by agencies of various member states working together. Today it remains anti-democratic: in its objectives – consolidating the unjust global distribution of power: in its influence – imposing its will regardless of contrary opinion: in its policy-making – usually carried out in secret and based on self-justifying analysis: and in its daily operations – a well illustrated in those countries which decided not to participate in the Iraq war and yet whose military infrastructure has been used to support military operations as well as practices of illegal detention and torture at Guantanamo Bay.

Through partnerships and co-operation agreements, NATO has transformed itself into an increasingly global player. It stands for the maintenance of the global status quo, the military protection and enforcement of Western economic, resources and hegemony interests, and as a consequence the exploitation of the countries of the South.

“War is a crime against humanity. I am therefore determined not to support any kind of war, and to strive for the removal of all causes of war.”
WRI declaration

War Resisters' International is an international network with 83 affiliated organisations in 42 countries. It aims to:

- ▶ connect and support war resisters around the world
- ▶ promote nonviolent action to remove the causes of war

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