

EDITORIAL

NATO An ‘English-Speaking Empire’ Project from the Start

by Stephan Ossenkopp

The author is an organizer and spokesperson for the Schiller Institute in Germany. This column was submitted both to EIR and to China Daily, which published it on June 2.

June 2—Flanked by the heads of state of new NATO accession candidates Sweden and Finland, U.S. President Joe Biden announced on May 19 that the two countries would “join the strongest, most powerful defensive alliance in the history of the world.” In view of the historic defeat and the panic-stricken withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan last year, it was a rather overblown statement.

Their appearance at the White House was obviously not about historical correctness, but rather a pompous gesture and yet another staged provocation against Russia, which in the past had repeatedly emphasized that NATO’s expansion to its borders would represent an existential threat to its national security because it would move more and more military materiel and personnel directly to its immediate vicinity.

Finland, after all, shares a border with Russia that is more than 1,300 kilometers long and is giving up its 80 years of neutrality for its desired membership in NATO. In his remarks, Biden even went so far as to claim that this was all about the future and a revived NATO that has the tools and resources, the clarity and conviction, to defend “our shared values” and lead the world.

But where is NATO supposed to lead the world? What is its inherent purpose? Under the guise of

“greater security,” U.S.-led NATO merely wants to expand its influence in the world and reassert its claim to global power, without having to consider the security concerns of other states such as Russia and China.

Winston Churchill’s ‘World System’

This claim to be a globally acting hegemon for security issues was already laid in NATO’s cradle, when the United States and Great Britain founded the alliance. Indeed, it is completely erroneous to assume that NATO was created as a defensive alliance, even as a defensive counterpart to an aggressive Warsaw Pact. In fact, NATO preceded the Warsaw Pact by six years.

If one looks back, the opposite is the case. A few years before NATO was founded, Sir Winston Churchill, a descendant of the Duke of Marlborough, delivered a speech on March 5, 1946, at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. This speech, titled “The Sinews of Peace,” has gone down in history as the “Iron Curtain speech.” In it, however, Churchill was not primarily concerned with falsely demonizing the Soviet Union, which had just won a victory over Nazi Germany with terrible losses.

What is almost never reported from this speech is the fact that Churchill rather wanted to militarize the United Nations. He literally said: “The United Nations Organization must immediately begin to be equipped with an international armed force.” These military units, including air forces, were to be placed under what Churchill called a “world organization”—dominated, of course, by Great Britain and the U.S., since, in his

view, this was the only way to ensure peace in the world. He continued:

Neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of the world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples. This means a special relationship between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States.

If, Churchill added, “all British moral and material forces and convictions” were fraternally united with those of America, then “the high-roads of the future will be clear, not only for us but for all, not only for our time, but for a century to come.”

Anglo-American Roots of NATO

This strange venture of a world organization in the cultural tradition of the British Empire, combined with the military-industrial strength of the U.S., was to determine the future. Great Britain and the United States then concluded a permanent, close defense alliance—including worldwide military bases to be used jointly—which was later to become the basis for the founding of NATO. Reactions to Churchill’s Fulton speech were mixed. The *Chicago Sun* newspaper accurately saw it as “British world domination by American arms.”

Some U.S. senators rejected the idea of Washington taking on the legacy of British colonial policy. The Soviet Union rejected the accusations made by Churchill and accused him of saber rattling. Newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Izvestia* spoke of the deliberate destruction of Soviet-American friendship in favor of Anglo-American domination, along with the preparation of military activities. Because the militarization of the United Nations envisaged by Churchill was blocked, the newly created Anglo-American power, against the resistance of the Soviet Union, founded NATO, with the ambition of global power influence and outside the legal framework of the United Nations.

At the signing ceremony for the NATO Treaty on April 4, 1949, in Washington, then U.S. President Harry Truman declared:

There are those who claim that this Treaty is an

aggressive act on the part of the nations which ring the North Atlantic. That is absolutely untrue. The Pact will be a positive, not a negative influence for peace, and its influence will be felt not only in the area it specifically covers but throughout the world.

Moscow charged that the treaty formed an “openly aggressive” alliance against the Soviet Union in violation of the United Nations Charter.

NATO was already expanding quite rapidly at that time, and in 1952 it already included Greece and Turkey. It was not, however, until the Western Allies finally agreed in 1955 to the rearmament of the Federal Republic of Germany and its accession to NATO, in order to bind it permanently to the Western military alliance, that the Soviets responded to West German troops in NATO by forming the Warsaw Pact, signed by eight Eastern European countries. The ensuing decades known as the Cold War represented only a temporary stalemate in NATO’s genesis.

It was thus in the logic of NATO not to dissolve after the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991, but to seize the opportunity offered for its dramatic expansion by the removal of one of its greatest obstacles. The statements made by then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to then Soviet Secretary-General Mikhail Gorbachev, that NATO would not expand further eastward, were hollow rhetoric.

After a brief interlude that even saw the creation of a NATO-Russia Council, NATO nevertheless continued to expand and even became involved in the Balkan conflict in the late 1990s, culminating in the illegal bombing of Belgrade, the Serbian capital, in 1999.

The subsequent NATO expansion in six waves, if you count the bids of Finland and Sweden, and the aggressive and reckless pursuit of NATO’s ultimate purpose, Anglo-American dominance over the world, have brought us to the brink of World War III today. Ukraine’s aspiration to NATO membership, sought since 2008, and the long-running arming of radical anti-Russian Ukrainian militias, are just two of the many red lines NATO has crossed.

U.S.-Led West Continues To Provoke Russia

The unilateral termination of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and other arms control agreements by

the United States, and the deployment of a global ballistic missile defense system, have also contributed to the escalation. Added to this is the increase in provocative maneuvers near the borders of the Russian Federation.

Also, the series of NATO military maneuvers in the immediate vicinity of Russia has continued this year. Two of the currently largest-scale operations, involving some 18,000 troops from 20 countries, are “Defender Europe” and “Swift Response.” They are now taking place in Poland and eight other countries and include parachute drops and helicopter attacks in northern Macedonia. In Estonia, 15,000 soldiers from 14 countries are participating in the “Hedgehog” exercise, one of the country’s largest military exercises since 1991.

In Germany, 7,500 soldiers are taking part in the “Wettiner Heide” exercise, a NATO Response Force exercise. Poland and the three Baltic states will host Europe’s largest integrated air and missile defense exercise in June, with the participation of 23 countries, called “Ramstein Legacy.” The “Baltops” exercise, which also takes place in June, includes amphibious exercises throughout the Baltic Sea region.

China’s Global Security Initiative

NATO is obviously not at all interested in settling any conflict with Russia at the negotiating table. It is counting regionally and globally on Russia’s military

and economic capitulation. The further escalating armament of Ukraine and militarization of the border regions with Russia are driving humankind ever closer toward an open military conflict between nuclear powers, a scenario that, according to many experts, is more dangerous than even during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Despite that, a strong international diplomatic initiative is still missing. The only adequate response to the current world drama at the heads-of-state level came from Chinese President Xi Jinping, who presented a Global Security Initiative at this year’s annual conference of the Boao Forum for Asia, which would incorporate the principles of peaceful coexistence that served as the basis for non-aligned states: mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

NATO does not adhere to any of these principles and is an imperial anachronism whose “divide and rule” methods pose life-threatening dangers to humankind. A complete annulment of NATO and the establishment of a global security architecture that meets the security and development interests of all countries of the world, has become a matter of humankind’s survival.