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NATO: A Ship of Fools



“A SHIP OF FOOLS”. This is an expression used yesterday to describe the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It was applied to the Western alliance by somebody arguing with me on Facebook.

I’m afraid I had to agree with him, NATO is a ship of fools.

The West has a long and bloody record of failure in recent years in which it has displayed its capacity for the most astonishing, crass, and criminal, irresponsibility. Despite its vast military hardware, its considerable resources in the form of engineers, linguists, historians, and analysts, the West has repeatedly failed to police the dangerous, the psychotic, and the unruly.

In twenty long years in Afghanistan the Americans, the British, and others, did not succeed in their efforts to create a democratic state, or the civil and military infrastructure to support it. At the cost of hundreds of thousands, dead and injured, and millions of displaced and disfigured lives, almost nothing was

achieved.

This pattern was repeated in Iraq. A war against Saddam Hussein and the Baathists was rapidly won, and then, when the tyrant was gone, the egits in Washington and London invited a clique of *émigré* Iraqi politicians to take over. The *émigrés* and their masters in Washington and London had the bright idea of dissolving the Iraqi army, stopping the soldiers' wages, and destroying the Baathist state. In its place they established the 'free market' and a government of ministers and ministries without telephones, lights, or electrical wiring. The general public were left without water, or power, in the midst of an orgy of looting, murders, and score-settling. This was then replaced with a bone-crushing insurgency until Iraq, and subsequently Syria, became a charnal house under the supervision of religious enthusiasts, and an *Alawite* dictator, ably assisted by Russian bombing.

Something similar happened in Libya. When the Gaddafi-family-state looked like it was going to massacre its opponents, Western forces intervened. Mu'amma Al Gaddafi was swiftly laid in the dust, his family-state, destroyed, and replaced by an excellent democratic government in control of nothing. Predictably, the blood-letting continued between various armed groups, with hapless civilians, and refugees from across Africa, suffering the consequences of Western intervention and democratic statecraft.

The West stood by between 1992 and 2008 while Russia degraded and destabilised the Georgian state. Finally, in 2008 the Russo-Georgian war settled matters. Moscow recognised two 'independent' pocket states, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which had been carved out of Georgia's territory by Moscow's forces. This brought Tiblesi's pivot to the West to a shuddering halt, and fatally undermined Georgia's application for NATO membership.

In one situation after another the West, led by the United States, has for thirty years largely failed in its efforts to intervene in support of democratic solutions

against religious enthusiasts, psychotic killers, and other tyrants. It can boast of some success in Sierra Leone, Kosovo, and Bosnia Herzegovina, but these actions do not compensate for the millions killed and maimed in one catastrophe after another where the West has willed the outcome, but not the means.

Now it finds itself stymied by Vladimir Putin. It dares not intervene directly in the war in Ukraine without risking a rapid slide towards a Third World War. Consequently, it is left with economic sanctions, flying the blue and yellow flag of Ukraine, and lighting up public buildings in the colours of the heroic Ukrainian people and state, fighting alone against Putin's Tsarist-Bolshevik fantasy of Russian statehood. Western governments are finding out exactly how powerless they are as long as they refuse to fight Russia head-on in defence of Ukraine. If this powerlessness is allowed to stand and Putin succeeds it will not be long before the rockets are falling on Taipei as Taiwan is battered by overwhelming violence meted out by the Peoples Republic of China. Then the Third World War will come or the Western democracies will humbly submit to the tyrants of Beijing and Moscow.

As a result, there is an air of satisfaction on the British left and far left, as the West faces its inability to do anything much to stop the dictators and tyrants. The left and far-left, together with the peaceniks of the Stop The War Coalition, are always pleased to be proved right when attacking the hapless imperialists of London, Paris, Berlin, and Washington. Haven't they always said that NATO was a ship of fools, crewed by sycophants, and captained by killers interested only in oil and dollars. A crew of criminals and miscreants, truly the capitalist enemies of humanity, red in tooth and claw.

Well yes, how right they are! How right they have always been!

The only problem is, this left, ersatz and otherwise – this near and far left – this left of the Labour Party, and of the Marxist groupuscules, has

been repeatedly defeated in all its efforts to turn things around to our advantage. They have conspicuously failed to win over the mass of working people to the side of anti-capitalism and a socialist future. The reasons for this are complex and considerable, and cannot form part of this brief article. Suffice it to say that the left is as woebegone and impotent as the Western imperialists they are so happy attacking. Consequently, their enjoyment of *schadenfreude* in the face of Western inability to stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine is likely to be short-lived.

An awareness of this has not stopped them dusting down the good old slogans – “The enemy is at home”, let’s fight our own bloody capitalists, not foreign rulers. This has always been the default position of the ‘international working class’, and of internationalists everywhere.

Really?

People who argue for such things are clearly suffering from amnesia, radical amnesia to be sure, but amnesia nonetheless. We well remember that fascism and the Nazi state was defeated by an alliance of imperialists, led by Dwight Eisenhower, and the armies of the Kremlin police-state, led by Marshal Zhukov. This is because the working-class movement in Germany, Italy, Spain, and France was roundly defeated in the nineteen twenties and thirties, and the Stalinist and Imperialist forces were the only ones capable of defeating the Third Reich.

Yes, workers in Britain did not suspend the struggle with their employers and the state, they went on strike and battled over wages and conditions in the usual manner, but they were wise enough to lend fulsome support to Major Clement Attlee, Winston Churchill, Franklin D Roosevelt, and subsequently to Joseph Stalin (when he had parted company with his partner in crime, Adolf Hitler). This is because working people in Britain had a lively understanding of who could actually defend bourgeois democracy in the absence of any effective socialist alternative.

This is not an abstract reflection on socialism or

the almost self-evident need to fight for a socialist future. However, socialism cannot be advanced and we cannot ever succeed if the bourgeois democracies are crushed by a world order ruled over by Presidents Vladimir Putin, and Xi Jinping. This is the miserable truth. It is the *realpolitik* of our situation on the left. It is either NATO: the Ship of Fools, or the tyrants in Moscow and Beijing. There is no third position.

Consequently, we must *do all we can* to ensure that the Tories and the Labour Party *does all they can* to finance and arm the resistance in Ukraine. Putin must not be allowed to succeed, or the Third World War will inevitably be sparked by Beijing's aggression in the South China Sea. Then, all thoughts of socialism, internationalism, and the emancipation of humanity, will literally be dead and dying.