

Make NATO civilian and civilised

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• *This is the second of two articles about the coming end of NATO as we know it and what can be done. [The first you find here](#). It may be good to have at least browsed that one before you read on here.*

The Banality of Militarism

In the field of science, business and culture, new ideas, innovative methods, doing new things and doing old things in new ways are activities usually rewarded and admired. That keeps these fields vibrant, alive and interesting to others too.

However, in the field of the all-pervasive, omni-present paradigm of *basic military* defence and security thinking and policy – drop peace because no one has a peace policy – no such dynamics exist.

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“There is an enemy – here or there, today or upcoming – against which we (as your government) need to protect our country and you, our citizen. To do so, we need more weapons (troops, deployments, bases...) the purpose of which is to create ‘stability, security and peace’. We are the good guys having done nothing wrong, but they can’t be trusted: look what they have done or the nasty plans we know they have but cannot tell you.

We have good intentions but too little capacity, they have bad intentions and too much capacity. We seek balance, they seek superiority. While our weapons have long-range capacity, we have only defensive doctrines and we are, therefore, not a threat to them; we’ll only fight if we are attacked. But their long-range weapons are a threat to us. Thus, we need to increase the military budget. For your own sake, cough up more money for new weapons.”

It’s called the arms race and takes various shapes. It’s like two or more scorpions in a bottle, paid by taxpayers with nothing of real value – peace, for instance – given back to them.

Trillions of dollars is spent on this *generalised, repetitive, never-failing intellectual garbage*.

It promises citizens – falsely – that they will get protection, security and peace. Well, it’s like pissing in your pants: Because a few years later, new – *invented* – threats appear and stability, security and peace is threatened and, thus, we need more – for instance 2 per cent of GDP: A stupid discussion because that measure is related to size of the economy and not to any threat assessment.

These are, *grosso modo*, the mechanisms. NATO and its leaders say the same, year after year. So ask yourself:



What happened to the peace our governments promised would follow a few years ago? What happened to the UN Charter goal that we should solve conflicts and make peace, first of all, by peaceful means? What happened to cooperation, confidence-building and the over all better world we have been promised, decade after decade since 1945? Why are we in a new Cold War in Europe – why all those hot wars in the Middle East and elsewhere? *IF these trillions were the rice for real peace?*

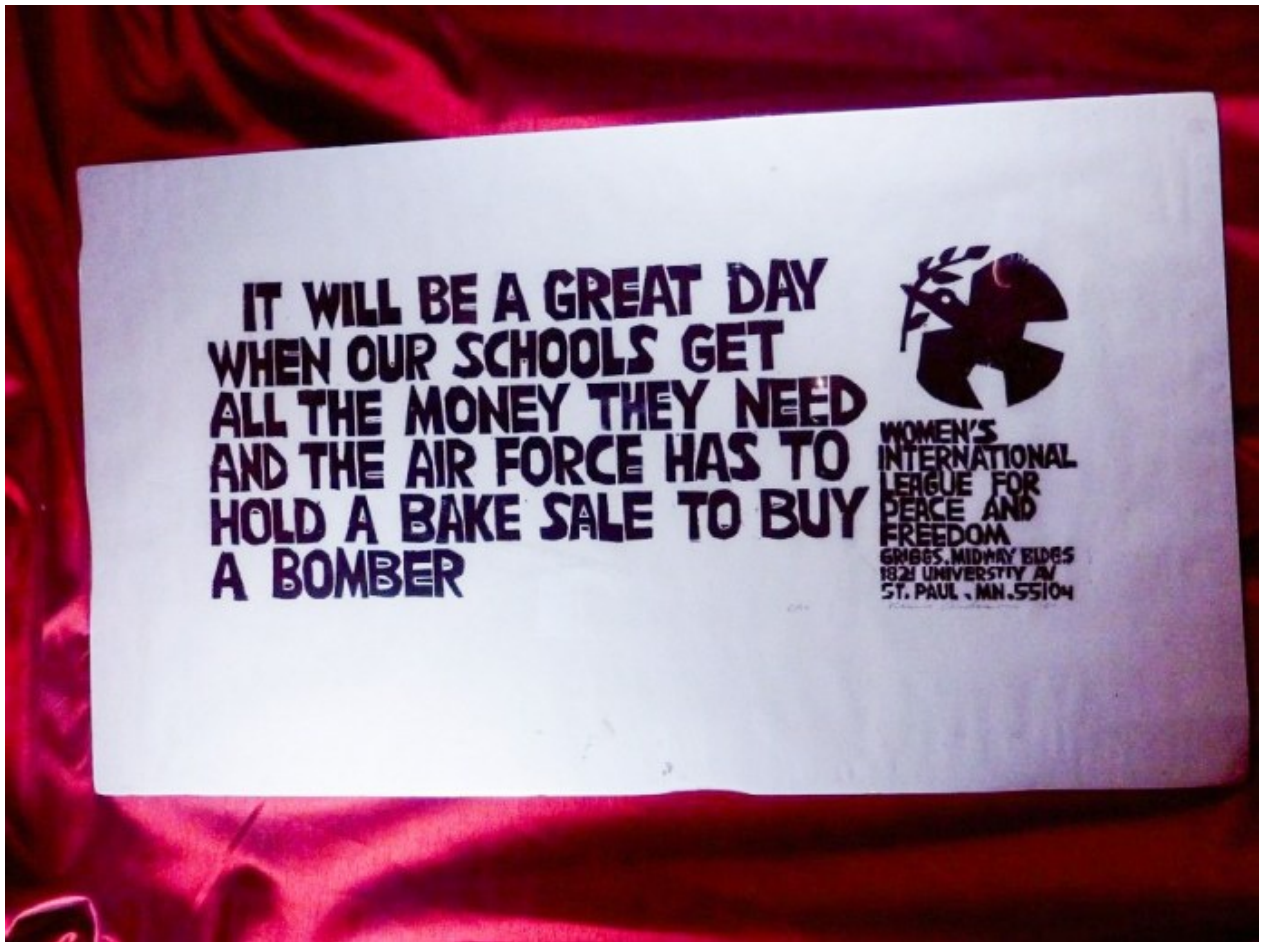
Imagine what would happen if we separated the gigantic military costs – some US\$ 1700 billion worldwide from the tax declaration and instead forced political leaders, the military and the weapons corporations to beg their bread from door to door for war – like humanitarian organisations have to do to help repair the damage these militarist policies cause (citizens pay twice, first for destruction and then for re-construction)? Most of all this *peace-preventing cancer* would disappear.

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How come so many believe in this banality? Because *fearology* is applied to them: making citizens believe that they are constantly and existentially threatened and that more and better weapons is *the* solution. Even when, like after the Cold War ended, the MIMAC invented new enemies – one after the other – to keep itself (and NATO) look relevant and profit.

The militarist Emperor is pretty naked – but a great *perpetuum mobile*. Until citizens and enough people inside that system begin to think and practise moral courage and civil disobedience, it will continue down the drain and, at some point, lead to *either* worldwide destruction *or*, simply, implode and make the West a sad periphery to the Rest.



NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Obsolescence – in a new key

So, let's try instead just a little new thinking. For heuristic purposes, let's assume there are three scenarios for NATO within the next 5-10 year:

1) The Crisis-Dissolution Road

Continue down the present crisis road outlined in the first article, leading to its dissolution à la the Warsaw Pact. We gave 9 reasons [in the first article](#), here is a 10th in a macro-perspective:

10. Change or fall: NATO is doomed to change or fall because the rest of the world (order) is changing. What is usually called the West – not to be confused with “the international community” – is losing power on all power scales to the Rest, China and other Asia in particular.

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It will, therefore, be much better for NATO to do some early warning on its own existence and prepare for a fundamental change and new role in that rapidly emerging world order – which, one can safely predict, will *not* be dominated by the U.S. Empire, nor by NATO members and also not by the EU as such. It will be a multi-polar, cooperative world order.

Europe – including NATO Europe – itself is facing a multitude of crises – economic, management, vision, refugee management, populism, racism and more. It is faces with one big wake-up call: the end of Transatlantic trust and with Brexit, i.e. the likely future departure (more or less) of Britain and the U.S.

Contrary to the common understanding of the European/EU situation, this should be seen as *a golden historic opportunity for Europe – the EU and other Europe, including Russia.*

But that will require a new creative thinking *independent of the paradigm imposed since 1945 on European allies and friends by the US.* Europe will have to think on its own and stand on its own and find its own role – and one more *with* than *against* Russia – in the new future, multipolar Orient-led world order.

As a matter of fact, Empires do go down and with the relative weakening of the West, there is now only *adaptation left for the West* – not resistance and not full-spectrum dominance over The Rest.

The US is fighting all kinds of war it can't win. The Europeans, including European NATO, *can* be smarter.

If such a change isn't coming about soon, it means Crisis and Dissolution. But let's remain hopeful.

Mr. Stoltenberg, it's your turn to make history. Since NATO is meant to defend democracy and freedom, you have the freedom to say something free and creative at your next press conference, take off your mental uniform and become a leading figure in the history of peace. Or resign with honour.

So what about NATO's future?

There could be these two *if Crisis-Dissolution is avoided*:

2) *Humanitarian NATO:*

Strip NATO of its weapons policies and arsenals and turn it into humanity's largest humanitarian transport and communications agency directly under the UN. Since a large number of crises are already at hand and will get worse because of political inaction – or insufficient action – and new crises and war will emerge, there will be an increasing need for a benign, well-financed agency for doing good where people become victims of natural and man-made disasters.

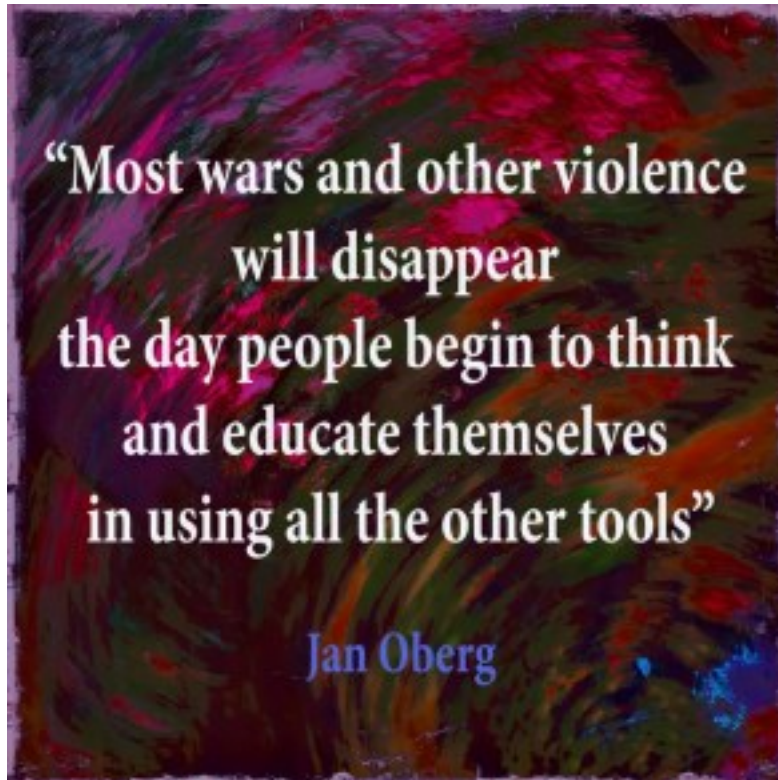
3) *New peace and security NATO:*

Change its philosophy back to its original Treaty provisions (see below) and take it from there to build an entirely new regional peace and security (in that order) system that would be good for both the Europeans/Russia/Middle East and the Rest of the world – whether or not the U.S. would like it.

There may be others, of course, including some kind of combination of these two.

But any scenario that builds primarily on military security, confrontation with Russia, interventionism, war-fighting without prior conflict-management by “civilian means”, nuclear weapons and constant quarrels about increasing military budgets spells doom for NATO.

Such scenarios create more conflict, deeper hatred of and terrorism against the West thanks to failed wars, cause more refugees to flee and consume funds that, in times of economic crisis which we are in, should and can be spent better for civilian purposes.



2. New Humanitarian NATO

With the starving out of the UN and the systematic undermining of its authority by leading NATO countries since Yugoslavia, if not before, it should be obvious to everyone who cares to see and hear that the UN cannot repair the world after war or solve all the socio-economic problems caused by the global capitalist system. Particularly not when the war-system gets about US\$ 1700 million worldwide and the UN budget is less than US\$ 50 billion.

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And integrate it with the UN, preferably a rapidly reformed UN.

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The world would then have a global agency that could intervene in humanitarian crisis situations, rescue people, quickly bring in tents and aid, build refugee camps or other safe zones and provide them with all that is needed for as long as it is needed – all of course in cooperation with local, regional and global humanitarian civil society organisations.

It's doable if the vision, the cooperation and the political will is there.

And what would be more beautiful for NATO than becoming the world's leading UN agency for humanitarian aid, for doing good? I believe that if NATO's own employees were asked: Would you like to spend your life here on preparing for war-fighting and killing or would you rather work every day to save lives worldwide, it must be assumed that the great majority of these good women and men would choose to devote themselves to the latter.

The better we learn to handle conflicts, the less violence we'll need. Only the conflict-illiterate uses violence at an early stage.

New Peace and Security regional Euro-NATO

That – surprisingly – means becoming what it was originally meant to be and what is embedded in its [North Atlantic Treaty of April 1949](#) from which I gladly quote at length – the italics added by me:

The Preamble:

“The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of *the Charter of the United Nations* and their desire to live in *peace with all peoples* and all governments. They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of *democracy*, individual *liberty* and the *rule of law*.”

Article 1:

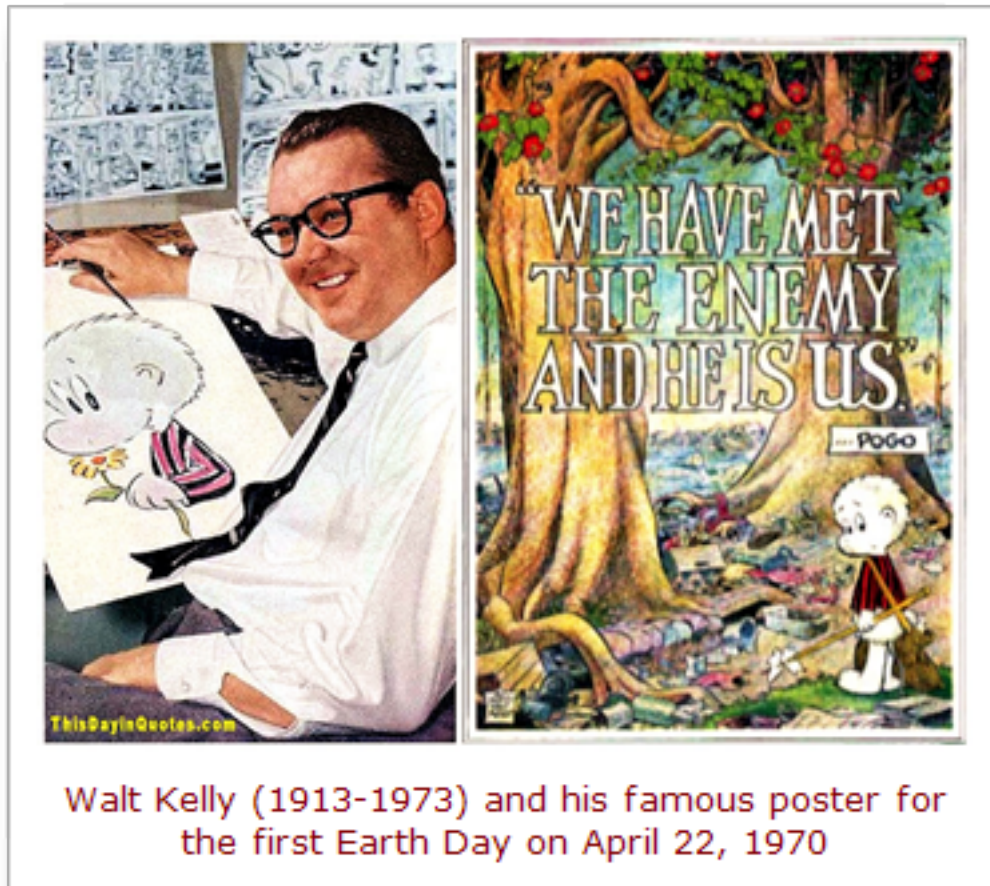
“The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved *by peaceful means* in such a manner that international *peace and security and justice* are not endangered, and to *refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force* in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”

Article 5:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in *Europe or North America* shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective *self-defence* recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations...”

The UN Charter is about nonviolence and the abolition of war. It's about using peaceful means to achieve peace and only use – UN-organised – military means, detailed in Chapter 7 – if and when all civilian means have been tried and found to be in vain.

Only self-defence, defensive weapons and postures



“I’ve met the enemy and he is us” – applies beautifully to militarism that can never produce peace

Think if NATO adhered to such principles in its day-to-day policies. Today it does the exact opposite and wraps it all in boringly predictable rhetoric and the three mantras to explain and legitimize whatever it does: Security, stability and peace – none of them having emerged yet since the end of the First Cold War.

A new NATO that would thus go back to its original Treaty provisions and build its new policies on them, would be very acceptable to the world, seen as no threat to anybody. It would be entirely defensive and only take action if one of its members were first attacked. That’s a basically *defensive* posture and in complete unity with moral principles and international law.

And with a Kantian thinking about world peace: Do only yourself what can be elevated to a general principle adhered to be all others in the system. Defensive postures – self-defence – can be done by everyone without upsetting the system. Offensive “defence” is nonsense and simply can’t, it will lead to eternal armament and militarism. That’s the reason that the UN Charter’s Article 51 talk about self-defence.

What is defensive? Weapons with limited firepower and range. Offensive, on the contrary, means long-range and large, or unlimited, firepower, or destructive potentials. And when can you feel secure? When your own defensive capacity is strong enough to withstand the offensive capacity of the opponent.

Today's Banal Militarism thinking is that "our" defence begins far away – the US sees itself threatened and as having defensive needs anywhere on earth – which can only be perceived as threatening by anybody who is not a close ally. That philosophy means war without end...

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So much for the military dimension – and as long as citizens believe in the utility of weapons, democracy compels us to accept that. But not any military posture, then. Only defensive. So what will need to be done is: Disarmament of all offensive weapons, including of course nuclear weapons, and *re- or transarmament* towards new exclusively defensive thinking, weapons, doctrines and policies.

Arms races would then stop, militarism would stop. Threatening everybody else with destruction on their territory would stop. Fear would diminish. But – of course imperialism, interventionism and war-fighting on somebody else's territory would also be a thing of the past.

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Multi-dimensional defence – civil defence and nonviolence

Of course, military means would not be enough in this new European system. You'd need civil protection too, you'd need in a crisis to be quite self-reliant and increase, in peacetime,

your survival capacity on whatever you can provide yourself. It will also make you defensively strong and increase survival capacity.

Call it *civil defence* – which has many dimensions. And add to that *non-violent resistance* that must be separated from the defensive military in time and space – for instance be well-prepared for the eventuality that your country is occupied in spite of its strong defence. Think of things like civil disobedience, ridiculing the occupier, denying it legitimacy, demonstrations, petitions, peaceful sabotage of things – but no killing of course. Much more can be said on all this – but enough to here.

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Intelligent conflict-handling

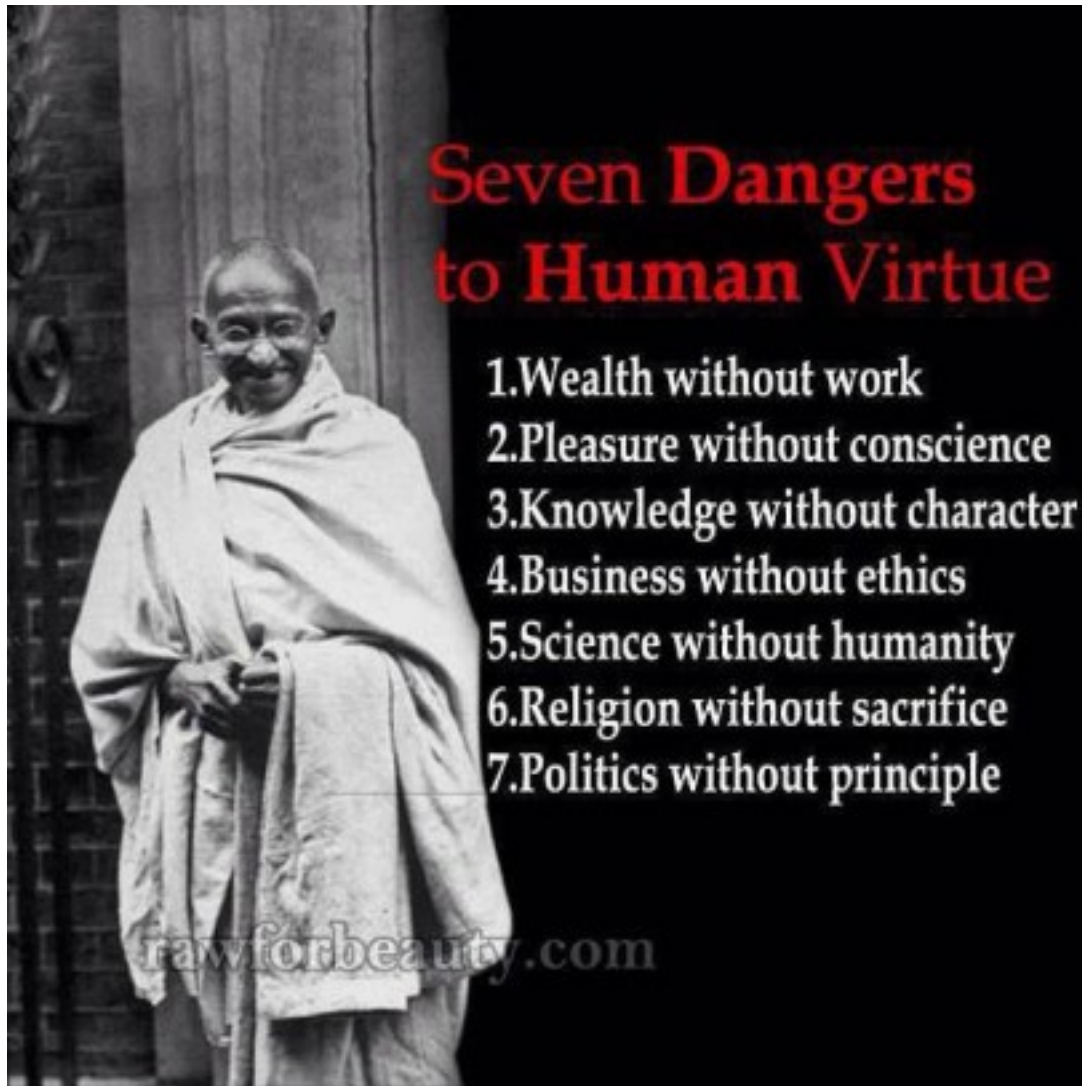
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When did you last solve a conflict in your own life and make friends or peace by slapping the other's face or humiliating him or her? Well, that sort of behaviour is, unfortunately, called "state(wo)manship" in today's world.

One thing is to have a conflict – and like shit conflicts happen – and conflicts can be something good. But the moment you use violence, you add a dimension to the conflict – humiliating, wish for revenge, hatred, never-trust again attitude – and those things make it, invariably, much more difficult to solve the original conflict.

So conflict-intelligent governments and nations use non-violence first – "Let's make nonviolence great again!" – and violence only as an absolutely last resort and only with a mandate from the UN or other international-regional structures that may emerge in the future world.

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And why not?

Think of two streets you walk down: *Violent Street* has people walking and driving by who all carry guns and on the rooftops of the houses you pass there are submachine gun positions. At *Peaceful Street* people walk unarmed but are all trained in [JuJutsu](#). There are no weapons, no threats, no fears and if there is a quarrel, there would be a local neighbourhood guard service and mediators at standby, nearby.

Which would be the more pleasant and safe to you? And why on Earth do we continue to build Violent Streets all over the place?

So, what we are talking about here is a new European peace system that would be secured in many, dense and multi-layered ways, including the use of the good sides of a new NATO, that could cultivate *another defence* – built on component such as *conflict early warning, intelligent conflict-management, early non-violent intervention in crisis, mediation, consultations, provisions of good offices, peace-keeping, -making- and -building* in the spirit of the UN Charter and NATO's own Treaty. And everything else necessary to achieve negotiated solutions to conflicts and other problems.

Such a new Euro-NATO – something like Gorbachev's *European House* that coordinates/integrated also with the OSCE and EU would be an attractive partner for the

world, the Middle East in particular. Finally, after more than 100 years of ‘modern’ interventions for ‘mission civilisatrice’, Europe/NATO itself would have become civilised.

Peace can be learnt! If we want to.

In lieu of a conclusion

Why must car drivers have a driving licence and know traffic rules? In order to get from A to B in the safest way for themselves, reduce violence to people and property and because it is a win-win solution for all. It would be good if those who handle violence in today’s world would have to have a sort of driving licence and know something before they can pull the trigger on other countries and their people.

We’ve got to think differently to survive. Most wars and other violence will disappear the day people begin to think and educate themselves in using all the other tools.

Peace can be learnt! If we want to.

The better we learn to handle conflicts, the less violence we’ll need. Only the *conflict-illiterate* uses violence at an early stage – not because of evil or lack of intelligence (well, in some cases yes...) but because the civil and intelligent means are not part of the discourse and have no budget. Weapons have huge budgets and they are on the shelves ready to use. The MIMAC seeks to maintain that situation, violence being its core interest.

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How we can do defence, security and peace much much better than hitherto has been the case should be the main focus when NATO turns 70 next year. Just return to your Treaty’s words and spirit, scrap what you are and do today, and dare think what a wonderful world it could be when we turn into Peace Street from Violence Street.

Mr. Stoltenberg, it’s your turn to make history. Since NATO is meant to defend democracy and freedom, you have the freedom to say something free and creative at your next press conference, take off your mental uniform and become a leading figure in the history of peace. Or resign with honour.

The rest of shall discuss and use all the nonviolent means at hand to rid the world of militarism *and present alternatives* – the latter being something the peace movement people are still weak on. “No to...” – “Down with...” and angry caricatures isn’t quite enough. The only *armament the world needs* is intellectual and ethical.

Remember Gandhi’s subtle smile when saying that Western civilisation would be a good idea...

Note

Video: The author discusses some of these issues with U.S. diplomat, Michael Springman, on The Debate, [PressTV, July 10, 2018](#)

Photo on top

Jan Oberg in Aleppo, Syria at its liberation in December 2014. See Oberg's pictures of the destruction of that place of human civilisation – and the hope of the liberated people – [here](#).

