

# Force for good?

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## The need to reassure Russia

After the Berlin Wall came down so unexpectedly in 1989, both the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact were disbanded, signalling the end of the Cold War. However, instead of a buffer zone being created between NATO and Russia of neutral former Central European Warsaw Pact members, NATO ruthlessly expanded eastwards to incorporate the territory and armed forces of all those states except Belarus and the Ukraine. In the 1999 Kosovo intervention, the US illegally forced NATO to attack Serbia, causing disputes among NATO member states. Then came Afghanistan, with its hidden agenda to gain control over this strategically important region for access to Central Asia's oil and gas resources. The US then dragged NATO into Iraq, followed by Libya and Syria. Meanwhile, NATO's confrontational response to the 2014 Ukraine/Crimea crisis has revived Russian sensitivities and resentment.

In light of this, as well as NATO's huge conventional military advantage over Russia, there is an overriding need to provide Russia with incentives to become less dependent on its nuclear arsenal for its security. It also needs maximum reassurance that NATO has no offensive intentions. The key is to understand that nuclear disarmament is a security-building process, moving from NATO's outdated and counterproductive adversarial mindset to a co-operative one which is safer, more credible and more cost-effective, and where nuclear weapons are recognised as an irrelevant security liability. Not replacing the Trident force presents the UK

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Government with an opportunity to take leadership in this process.

### **From nuclear deterrence to co-operative security**

As an integral part of breaking free from Cold War thinking, the UK Government's rejection of nuclear deterrence dogma would also open up an urgently needed debate on how best to resolve the currently overlapping and competing security organisations in Europe and North America: NATO and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE provides a way out of what is known as the 'security dilemma', whereby unilateral pursuit of security leads to more insecurity in others who take measures to defend themselves, leading to perpetual hostility and arms racing. In an increasingly interdependent world, *there is no such thing as national security*, as security problems transcend national borders. True security is about seeing it as a safety net for all, not a win/lose military game. Such a shift in mindset allows the introduction of the principles of minimal non-provocative defence, revolving around war prevention by having only enough military capability to deny an aggressor the prospect of easy victory, and to contribute to peacekeeping, disaster relief, and enforcement of international law through the UN.

The OSCE is the world's largest security organisation whose fifty-seven participating states encompass continental Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and North America. It also brings the neutral and non-aligned states of Austria, Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland into the European security system on an equal basis with NATO members.

Within its coverage, the OSCE is the primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Its approach to security is comprehensive and co-operative, dealing with arms control, preventive diplomacy, confidence and security-building measures, human rights, election monitoring, and economic and environmental security. High-profile operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Croatia, Chechnya and Kosovo have meant that it is now judged as much for its operational effectiveness as for its political role and commitments. This particularly applies in its largest and most challenging mission in Kosovo, where it took over from NATO in 1999.

Another benefit of merging NATO into the OSCE would derive from a release of the current tensions between NATO and the European Union over security, as the latter struggles to evolve a common foreign and security policy bedevilled by irreconcilable differences over how to deal with British and French nuclear forces. Although implementing the

necessary paradigm shift in NATO's approach to security would require vision, strong leadership and perseverance, NATO would be transformed into a common safety net for all fifty-seven states 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok'. This would merit a new name: perhaps the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, North Asia and North America (OSCENANA)? Of course, such a fundamental realignment of security structures would only be feasible in close consultation with other related regional initiatives such as the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation.

### **Exploiting the US-UK special relationship**

Despite membership of the world's most influential clubs (P5, G8, OECD, NATO, EU), the UK has struggled to find a role since losing its empire. The UK Government could be pivotal by exploiting its special relationship with the US, initiating a virtuous spiral. As initiator, organiser and energiser of a process that would start to shift Western attitudes from the current adversarial national security paradigm to one embracing co-operative security, the UK would gain a global role it has not enjoyed since the British Empire was at its zenith. This time, however, its influence would be welcomed overwhelmingly as truly a 'force for good'.

*This is an adapted extract from Cdr Green's 2010 book Security Without Nuclear Deterrence, an updated e-book version of which is available from <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00MFTBUZS>.*



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