

## The “Sovereign Right” to Join Military Blocs

### Description

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Excerpt:

**The Warsaw Pact was dismantled and the Soviet Union dissolved, which made NATO the only military bloc in Europe. By rejecting an inclusive European security architecture, Washington was able to monopolise security, as states could either have guarantees within the US-led military alliance or be left with uncertainty outside the tent.**

With NATO being the only game in town, former truths about security were denounced. The fundamental principle of European security is now that states must have the sovereign right to choose membership in military blocs. In other words, they have the right to be in the bloc, no matter what anyone else thinks.

Peace derives from compromise and the constraining of rival military blocs, but NATO has rebranded itself as a liberal democratic institution and thus a ‘force for good’. No longer does peace depend on compromise and constraints, but rather on the compromising of values, and the acceptance of limitation on expansionism is deemed tantamount to appeasement. Any Russian concern about zero-sum bloc politics is dismissed as “paranoia”, a “zero-sum mentality”, and a “Cold War mentality”. Russian opposition to NATO expansionism is viewed simply as a rejection of democratic values and an indication of Russia’s expansionist intentions.

We are told that NATO is a liberal democratic institution that poses no threat to anyone, does not do zero-sum politics and cannot have spheres of influence. The term ‘sphere of influence’ used to infer ‘exclusive influence’ achieved by incorporating a state into a military bloc. NATO has now turned the meaning of this word on its head, as ‘sphere of influence’ is now used to mean Russia limiting the sovereign right of its neighbours to join the bloc.

George Orwell brilliantly summed up how propaganda turns language on its head to make dissent impossible: “War is peace, freedom is slavery and ignorance is strength”. **In the age of NATO hegemony, invasion is humanitarian intervention, coup is democratic revolution, subversion is democracy promotion, gunboat diplomacy is freedom of navigation, torture is enhanced interrogation techniques, sphere of influence is a ring of well-governed states, expansion of military blocs is European integration, dominance is negotiating from a position of strength, purging the media and political opposition in Ukraine is defending democracy against Russian hybrid war, and Russia’s demands for guarantees against NATO expansionism are an assault on democracy and sovereignty.**

The entire principle of the sovereign right to join military blocs is premised on the bloc being the sole option. Both the EU and NATO refuse to cooperate with the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization for fear it may be perceived as legitimate. Similarly, Hillary Clinton announced that Washington was determined to “slow down or prevent” the development of the Eurasian Economic Union. The argument of sovereign choice is insincere if NATO is the only legitimate option.

## **The new balance of power**

More powerful states will naturally embrace principles that remove constraints. Now the era of unipolarity is over and the world is transitioning to multipolarity, will the West accept a return to seeking peace by constraining military blocs? It seems fair to assume the term ‘sovereign right’ to join military alliances would disappear from the American vocabulary if Russia returned its nuclear missiles to Cuba or China developed a military alliance with states in Central America.

Putin and US President Joe Biden will speak on Tuesday, at a time when stakes are high. It may be the last chance to avert a modern-day European Cuban Missile Crisis.