

Why it makes much more sense for USA Russia NATO Europe China to collaborate than to act antagonistically

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Summary

Arguments are presented which clearly indicate that it makes much more sense for USA Russia NATO Europe China to collaborate than to act antagonistically.

One. The backdrop of the Cold War was the ideological contraposition among Western societies---based on representative democracy and a competitive market economy---and the Communist governance---based on one-party rule and a State-run economy. This fundamental contraposition no longer exists. Western societies are (rather imperfect) democracies, affected by the standard evils of nationalism populism xenophobia ignorance excessive inequalities and more or less rigged mechanisms of popular representation; yet, as Winston Churchill famously noted, no other form of governance has yet been shown to work better. Russia---and, *de facto*, to a considerable extent also China---are based on analogous systems of governance; albeit considerably more imperfect.

Two. USA Russia NATO Europe China---and the rest of the world---all share the fundamental risk of the universal catastrophe that is likely to be implied by any use “in anger” of nuclear weapons or by any terroristic employment of a nuclear explosive device destroying a city. This is---in my opinion---by far the most serious risk to their societies, indeed possibly even to the survival of *homo sapiens*.

Three. Hence USA Russia NATO Europe China need---in the present and the immediate future---to prevent the breakdown of the existing world-wide regime of nuclear-weapon nonproliferation. This should be an overridingly strong motive to **cooperate**, of which it is hoped relevant decision-makers are well aware; indeed, it is reasonably justified to expect that they are indeed acting on the basis of this awareness (although one sometimes wonders about the priority given to this goal).

Four. Likewise, it is a fundamental interest of USA Russia NATO Europe China---and the rest of the world---to prevent the destruction of a city anywhere by the explosion of a primitive nuclear explosive device manufactured clandestinely there. The most important measure to prevent such an event from happening is to exercise utmost control on the basic materials which would make the achievement of such a terrible task rather easy, should a sufficient quantity of these materials become available to willing perpetrators: weapon-grade Highly Enriched Uranium or, perhaps, Plutonium (100 kilos would be more than enough; the quantities of these materials in existence worldwide---mostly in Russia and the USA---are of the order of a *million* kilos).

The goal of securing and eventually eliminating *all* this material requires of course as universal a world-wide **collaboration** as possible (and, obviously, primarily among Russia and the USA). The Obama administration has been quite active to work in this direction---pressure by Pugwash in this direction might have helped to focus on this goal---but much more remains to be done---including cooperation among the relevant secret services.

Five. The risk that a nuclear war be caused by cyber intrusions in the command and control systems of nuclear weaponry---especially nuclear-tipped ICBMs kept on quick alert---is becoming a matter of justified universal concern. The difficulty---yet the essential need---to institute a certain amount of **collaboration** on these matters, primarily among USA Russia NATO Europe China (and of course also among India and Pakistan) is fairly obvious. Of course unilateral actions---like the termination of the quick alert status of ICBMs---would also be desirable---and, in my humble opinion, quite reasonable; clearly their introduction would be easier in a general atmosphere of, however guarded, collaboration on these matters.

Six. The arguments made above---focused on fundamental interests of the parties, having to do with issues of survival---indicate that a gradual transition from an atmosphere of antagonism and mistrust to collaboration and cooperation on matters of national and international security is in the nature of things. A desirable development bound to happen---sooner or later, better sooner than later---is that the process of integration of Russia---and, in a longer perspective, as well of China---into NATO be resumed and brought to fruition. Thereby NATO---while retaining its character of a military alliance---would be *de facto* gradually transformed in an overall security regime for the Northern Hemisphere.

Seven. For an alliance to be possible and solid there must be a sharing of certain fundamental, overriding interests. I emphasized above the survival of mankind as such a potent motive. But---in terms of more mundane goals---it should also be emphasized that USA Russia NATO Europe China are *all*---by and large, up to the hopes for fairly minor corrections of the world set-up---*status quo* nations.

Eight. And they are now facing a common enemy: world terrorism, with a drive which is certainly acting for a drastic reversal of the current *status quo*. Indeed many consider the existence of a common enemy a (perhaps even the) essential ingredient of any military alliance. I prefer to think that a sharing of fundamental human values---such as, I would argue, now exist (however still quite imperfectly)---among USA Russia NATO Europe China (including their citizenship and their leadership)---is the more solid foundation of an alliance; but certainly the threat of a common enemy is a powerful glue...

Nine. A final consideration, directed at my Russian friends. I understand that the goal of an expansion of NATO englobing gradually Russia and, in some much more gradual sense, also China, might look on the face of it quite unpalatable to them; the more so since this process---which at some point was progressing and whose unfortunate termination was, in my humble opinion, less the fault of Russia or the USA than of an entrenched NATO bureaucracy educated in the Cold War era (but I might be quite wrong)---has already to some extent advanced, without involving Russia, by including in NATO several East European States; a development perceived by many (especially in

Russia) as antagonistic to Russian interests. Here I venture a consideration directed at all my Russian friends, that might make me most unpopular with them as well as with some of my East European friends. Would a situation be preferable---within the undesirable contest of a renewed Tepid War again pitting USA NATO Western Europe and Russia against each other---to leave the countries of Eastern Europe out in the cold, outside NATO, to fend for their own perceived (in)security; how many of them would develop nationalistic public opinions hysterically afraid of neighbor Russia; and, going back to the initial arguments of this paper: how many of them would continue to consider acceptable, under such circumstances, to continue to honor their commitment to the NPT ?

Ten. As indicated by the first part of this paper---and by my overall life commitment (largely via my involvement in Pugwash) to the elimination of nuclear weapons---the scope of this paper might appear somewhat minimal; especially in the context of what many friends consider an important breakthrough, the approval by a large majority of States of a Treaty banning nuclear weapons. I of course consider such a goal most desirable, and I hope

that the Ban Treaty might foster its achievement; but I nevertheless feel that such a goal will not be reached without a recognition of its desirability by, at least, the major nuclear weapon countries. And in this context I consider essential---and moreover in the nature of things, as argued above---the replacement of the Cold War with a policy of **cooperation** by USA Russia NATO Europe China in crucial matters of international security---as an essential precondition for undertaking a *joint* policy aimed at the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe---hence, as naïve logic suggests, in the long run at the total verified elimination of nuclear weaponry and of all the materials necessary and sufficient to manufacture easily nuclear explosive devices.

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