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## NATO's Greatest Enemy is Itself



Accidents happen. For Norway at the conclusion of NATO's Trident Juncture 2018 military exercises, such an accident occurred with its Lockheed Martin Aegis-equipped frigate, HNoMS Helge Ingstad.

After a collision with an oil tanker, the frigate's captain ordered the ship aground to prevent a total loss. The quick thinking may have saved the lives of Norwegian sailors and made salvaging operations easier. Thankfully no lives were lost and only eight injuries are being reported by the Western media.

The NATO exercises the Helge Ingstad was participating in simulated an invasion of Norway. As the Council on Foreign Relations made clear in their article, "[NATO's Trident Juncture Exercises: What to Know](#)," the imaginary invaders were obvious stand-ins for Russia.

The CFR piece would claim:

*The aggressor in the simulation is fictitious, but the setting and the scale of the exercises point clearly in one direction. Tensions between NATO and Russia, which shares an Arctic border with Norway, are running high. In the last five years, Russia has annexed Crimea, destabilized eastern Ukraine, provided military aid to a brutal regime in Syria, meddled in Western elections, and either walked away from or allegedly violated major multilateral security treaties.*

Of course none of what the CFR alleges is true and many of the accusations leveled against Russia by the article have long been abandoned by even most in the Western media.

The fact that Norway lost an expensive ship in the middle of this NATO exercise to prepare for a Russian invasion that will never happen suggests that the greatest threat much of Europe faces is from NATO itself, not Moscow.

### **NATO is a Cancer, Not a Shield**

The amount of money required to host NATO members in Norway to prepare for a Russian invasion that will never happen would seem detrimental to Norwegians as well as other European nations spending money to move their forces and their equipment (40,000 personnel, 120 aircraft and 70 ships) to and from the exercise areas.

Training is important and maintaining a strong military as well as a credible deterrence is also important for all nations, both Western Europe and Russia included. But such preparations should be proportional to the prospective threats any nation or bloc of nations face. Such preparations should also clearly be made to create a deterrence rather than a provocation.

NATO's Trident Juncture appears to be more of an exercise to enforce NATO expansion eastward toward Russia's borders than any genuine preparation for a "Russian invasion" that even Norway's leadership says is highly unlikely.

Such exercises and the agenda they serve benefits a handful of special interests, primarily in Washington (Lockheed Martin included), at the expense of NATO's European members.

NATO, driven primarily by Washington and immense corporate interests who hold sway over it, has become a tool used to extend American ambitions around the globe. Few could provide a credible explanation as to what NATO's nearly two decade-long occupation of Afghanistan has to do with defending Europe.

For Norway specifically, Afghanistan has become the grave for at least 10 of its service members and a blackhole that has swallowed several billion dollars in Norwegian expenditures.

Likewise, it was US-led NATO that destroyed the North African nation of Libya (with Norwegian assistance), transforming it into a hotbed of terrorism and triggering a refugee crisis that flooded European territory and continues to be a source of socioeconomic tension today.

In this instance, NATO directly compromised European security, and Norway's taxpayers helped underwrite the disaster.

It is clear that NATO is not protecting Europe. It is using Europe to advance American ambitions around the globe, far beyond any reasonable jurisdiction a defense alliance aimed at protecting Europe should have. As NATO uses Europe, it is consuming funds that could be better used domestically for the European people. The net result of NATO's activities undermine rather than uphold European security.

NATO's Trident Juncture is simply an extension of this process, aimed at ratcheting up tensions with Russia and only further undermining European peace and stability in the process.

### **Other Ways NATO Undermines European Peace and Prosperity**

Beyond military alliances and defense preparations, there are also alternatives for creating a deterrence to war and military aggression. These alternatives include economic cooperation. Here, such cooperation between Europe and Russia is complicated by US-led efforts to economically isolate Russia and sabotage trade and investment between Russia and its neighbors to the west.

By conducting provocative exercises aimed at Russia, tensions are only further encouraged and US efforts to place a wedge deeper between Russia and the rest of Europe further advanced.

What we're left with is a Europe compelled to view its neighbor to the east as an enemy for lack of any viable alternative not met with Washington's ire.

NATO, a supposed defense alliance, instead promotes tensions, exports wars and consumes the blood and treasure of member-states for foreign military adventures thousands of miles from European shores. Considering this, NATO, not Russia, seems to be the greatest threat facing Europe today.

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