

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://fff.org/2013/12/19/the-sordid-roots-of-the-national-security-state/>

THE SORDID ROOTS OF THE NATIONAL- SECURITY STATE

by Jacob G. Hornberger

December 19, 2013

Given that most all of us living today have been born and raised under a national-security state apparatus, we've all been inculcated with the notion that the enormous military empire, CIA, and NSA are a necessary and permanent part of our lives. We've all been taught that our very freedom and well-being depend on the existence of these agencies. In fact, we praise them and glorify them for "defending our freedoms," "keeping us safe," and protecting "national security."

It's important, however, to bear in mind that the Founding Fathers fully and totally rejected this type of governmental structure and way of life, which is why our American ancestors lived without such an apparatus for the first 150 years of American history. Our predecessors understood that enormous, permanent military establishments and secret intelligence agencies were hallmarks of totalitarian regimes, not free societies, and, in fact, constituted grave threats against the freedom and well-being of the citizenry.

So, how did the U.S. national-security state apparatus come into existence? What caused the American people to move in this totalitarian-like direction? Why did Americans decide to reject the philosophy of liberty and limited government of the Founding Fathers in favor of militarism, empire, foreign interventionism, covert operations, coups, torture, assassinations, spying, surveillance, and the like?

The justification for this revolutionary change in direction for the United States was rooted in the post- World War II fear of the Soviet Union in particular (and to a certain extent communist China) and communism in general. U.S. officials convinced the American people that a national-security state apparatus was necessary to prevent the United States from being conquered by communism and the Soviet Union.

As Senator Arthur Vandenberg told President Harry Truman, the president needed to “scare hell out of the American people,” which is precisely what Truman and his successor President Eisenhower did. Americans who grew up in the 1950s lived lives of constant fear—fear that communists were everywhere, fear that communism was a contagious illness of the mind that was spreading throughout America and the rest of the world, and fear that the Soviet Union was going to initiate a nuclear attack on the United States. Fear became the coin of the realm for the national-security state.

Why was there even a Cold War? Why was there a constant state of hostilities between the United States and Soviet Union for so long? After all, let’s not forget that these two nations worked together in partnership for four years to defeat the Nazi regime. Why couldn’t that spirit of cooperation have continued after World War II?

Sure, the Soviet Union was a brutal communist regime. No doubt about that. But the fact remains—the United States and the Soviet Union worked together to win the war. It didn’t have to be that way. The war could have been waged with the Soviet Union and the United States (and the Allied powers) acting independently of each other to defeat Nazi Germany. Instead, they worked together.

So, why couldn’t the United States and the Soviet Union have co-existed after World War II in the same way that the United States coexists with countries like China and Vietnam today? Those two countries are run by brutal communist regimes. In fact, during the Cold War U.S. officials taught Americans to hate China as much as the Soviet Union. Why couldn’t that type of situation have developed after World War II?

One big reason is that then there would have been no justification for the national-security state apparatus that the statist wanted to graft onto our constitutional order. In order to induce Americans to move in a totalitarian-type direction, the statist needed a new big official enemy, one as big as the Nazi regime, one that could be used to “scare hell out of the American people.”

U.S. officials pointed to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe after the war was over and essentially ordered the Soviets to get out of those countries and to refrain from installing puppet regimes there. They expected their orders to be followed, especially given that the U.S. government was the only power to have nuclear weapons and, as shown by Nagasaki and Hiroshima, had the will to employ them.

President Truman went out of his way to insult and demean the Soviets. At a meeting in April 1945, Truman lashed out at Soviet Minister Molotov, insulting and demeaning him to such an extent that Molotov said to Truman that he had never been talked to like that. Truman said to him—Keep your agreements and you won’t be talked to like that. Truman later bragged to a friend that he had given Molotov “the straight one-two to the jaw.”

To Truman, it was irrelevant that the United States and Great Britain had previously delivered Eastern Europe into the hands of the Soviet Union. That was the cost of the partnership between the West and the Soviets. In fact, at any time during the war, the United States could have attempted to negotiate a peace with Germany before the Soviets had begun pushing the German forces back across Eastern Europe, that could have, say, sent Hitler and his henchmen to South America and kept Eastern Europe free and independent of both Nazi and Soviet control. FDR said no because this would constitute a betrayal of his partnership with the Soviet communists. Unconditional surrender was his policy.

Was it any surprise that the Soviets remained occupying Eastern Europe after the war? How could it be? The Soviet Union had been invaded by Germany twice in the past 20 years. Moreover, don’t forget that the United States was quickly rebuilding and rearming West Germany as well as integrating many Nazi officials into its Cold War military-intelligence operations.

While no one could condone the Soviet Union’s refusal to exit East Germany and Eastern Europe, one can still understand why they were doing it—to provide a buffer against a possible third invasion from Germany. Don’t forget, after all, that the extreme irrational paranoia that the U.S. government displayed with communist regimes in Cuba, Chile, and elsewhere in Latin

America. Why would we expect the Soviet Union to behave with less paranoia about another German attack in the future?

But U.S. officials couldn't see it that way. They used the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe and East Germany to convince Americans that the Soviet Union was bent on worldwide conquest. The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming They're going to attack the United States, occupy our country too, run the IRS and the public schools, and brainwash Americans into loving communism.

It was a totally irrational fear. The last thing the Soviets wanted was a war with the United States. Remember: They lost more than 20 million people in WWII. Compare that to American deaths of 418,000. Their country had been invaded and destroyed by Nazi forces. The United States was never invaded or bombed. The Soviet Union's productive capacity was decimated at the end of the war. The American productive capacity was still running at full speed.

Why in the world would the Soviets have wanted a war against its WWII partner and ally under those unfavorable conditions, especially since there was no possibility that they could have won such a war? And don't forget the biggest factor of all: The United States had atomic weapons and the Soviets didn't. Equally important, as U.S. officials showed the Soviets with their atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, U.S. officials wouldn't hesitate to use them against Soviet cities.

Peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union was the last thing that U.S. officials wanted. Peaceful coexistence wouldn't justify the rise of the permanent military establishment, a foreign empire of military bases, a CIA, a NSA, covert operations, spying, foreign interventionism, coups, assassinations, torture, surveillance, spying, and support of foreign dictatorships. By "scaring hell out of the American people," U.S. officials could induce them to reject the founding principles of their nation and support a communist-like and totalitarian-like governmental structure grafted onto their constitutional system, all in the new name of "national security" and protecting the nation from communists and the Soviet Union.

It wasn't until the administration of John F. Kennedy when a glimmer of light shone through the Cold War darkness. In his famous Peace Speech at American University, Kennedy reminded Americans of the World War II partnership that had been entered into between the United States and the Soviet Union. He talked about the devastating losses that the Soviet people had lost during the war. He emphasized that the Russian people were human too. He asked Americans to

put themselves in the position of the Russians and to empathize and understand their reasoning. Most important, he called for ending the Cold War. He said that there was absolutely no reason why the two nations, despite their philosophical differences, couldn't peacefully coexist in the world.

While Kennedy's Peace Speech was overwhelmingly well-received by the Russian people, including Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, it was a shocking notion to the U.S. national-security establishment, a notion that added to the deep anger and hatred that national-security officials had for Kennedy. For them, war with the Soviet Union was inevitable and necessary. They believed that the sooner war came, the better, given that the U.S. still had nuclear superiority over the Soviets.

But Kennedy, of course, has been proven right. If the United States could peacefully coexist with communist China and communist Vietnam, along with communist North Korea and communist Cuba, and a whole host of leftist-socialist regimes in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and elsewhere, there is absolutely no reason why the same couldn't have been done with the Soviet Union, not only in 1963 but also in 1945. Of course though, that would have meant that there would have been no justification for the establishment and rise of the permanent U.S. national-security state, along with its army of well-paid lobbyists and contractors.