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## The United States Lost the Cold War

by *Jacob G. Hornberger*

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As the world celebrates the 25th anniversary of fall of the Berlin Wall, Americans remain more convinced than ever that the United States won the Cold War.

The Cold War brought us a national-security state, which consists of an enormous military establishment, a vast military-industrial complex, an empire of foreign and domestic military bases, ever-growing military budgets, and the ever-increasing militarization of American society.

In his Farewell Address in 1960, President Eisenhower pointed out that type of governmental system was alien to the American way of life. By that he meant that the national-security state was no part of America's governmental system when the Constitution called the federal government into existence and for the next 160 years. It was called into existence for the sole purpose of waging the Cold War against America's World War II partner and ally, the Soviet Union.

Several days ago, the *New York Times* made a startling admission. Quoting a former high U.S. official, the *Times* pointed out that the communist regime in North Korea is also a national-security state.

Thus, “victory” in the Cold War ended up giving America the same type of totalitarian governmental apparatus that exists in North Korea albeit not as oppressive and intrusive — a national-security state apparatus that was no part of America’s constitutional system for the first century-and-a-half of our nation’s existence.

As Eisenhower also told Americans, a military-industrial complex poses a grave threat to a nation’s freedom and well-being. Just ask the North Koreans. Or the Egyptians, whose governmental system is also based on the national-security state model.

Even though the Cold War was used as the excuse for this revolutionary change in America’s governmental system, as we all know the national-security state apparatus didn’t go out of existence when the Cold War ended. Instead, it seems to have become a permanent part of America’s governmental system, notwithstanding the fact that a constitutional amendment was never enacted making it a permanent part of the federal government.

The Cold War bequeathed to the United States an increasingly militarized society, much like that in the Soviet Union. People here extol the troops and revel in military fly-overs at big sporting events, much like those big military parades in which Soviet citizens would praise the troops and revel in the newest army tanks rumbling by in review.

In fact, the militarization of America has now seeped down to the state and local level, where law-enforcement personnel look upon themselves as well-armed and well-trained army sergeants who treat the citizens, who ostensibly are their bosses, as army privates.

The national-security state has destroyed individual conscience in America, at least insofar as its operations are concerned. Every Sunday Americans go to church and then submissively defer to whatever Caesar does to foreigners the rest of the week. Sanctions, embargoes, coups, partnerships with dictatorial regimes, foreign aid, invasions, occupations, wars of aggression, assassinations, torture, kidnapping, detentions. People automatically support it all, without contemplating the rightness or wrongness of it. Anyone who questions or challenges what the national-security state is doing to people overseas is considered suspect, disloyal, un-American, just like dissidents in the Soviet Union were considered. That, of course, was what COINTELPRO was all about.

The CIA is also now considered a permanent part of America's constitutional structure, even though, again, no constitutional amendment was ever enacted bringing it into existence. Like the rest of the national-security establishment, the CIA was called into existence to fight the Cold War against America's wartime communist partner. But as we all know, when the Cold War ended the CIA didn't go away. Like the military-industrial complex, it now considers itself a permanent part of America's governmental structure.

Former President Truman authored an op-ed that was published in the *Washington Post* thirty days after the John Kennedy assassination in 1963 in which Truman stated that the CIA had gone far beyond its intended mission of simply being a Cold War intelligence-gathering agency and, in the process, had become a sinister part of the U.S. government.

And who can argue with that? At the time Truman was writing that op-ed, the CIA was secretly employing Nazis who the CIA knew had participated in the Holocaust and protecting them from detection and prosecution. What was the CIA's justification for such horrific conduct? Oh, the Cold War, of course!

Americans didn't know that people who had proven to be experts in murdering Jews and others had become salaried employees of the U.S. government, just like no one knew about the CIA's MKULTRA experiments, where the CIA was performing medical experiments on unknowing Americans, again in the name of fighting the Cold War against America's former communist partner.

That's because Americans didn't want to know. In the name of the Cold War, they had surrendered their consciences to the national-security state. Worst of all, they still don't want to know what the CIA is doing, even though the Cold War ended 25 years ago.

The Cold War provided the excuse for vesting the CIA with omnipotent power — the same total power that the Soviet government was wielding — the power to burglarize, kidnap, torture, and kill people, including Americans, with impunity, to hire Nazi holocaust experts, to medically experiment on people, to destroy democratic regimes and install and support brutal dictatorial regimes, and who knows what else.

Consider another Cold War relic, the NSA. For years it has engaged in a massive secret surveillance scheme on the American people, just like the Soviet authorities did to the Soviet people, and lying about it under oath to the Congress, the governmental body that consists of the elected representatives of the American people.

When Americans revealed the NSA's Soviet-like surveillance scheme and objected to it, they were treated to the same type of calumny that Soviet dissidents were subjected to by Soviet officials.

Through it all, Americans have lived the life of the lie, the lie that is inculcated in every child in the government's educational system — the lie that says that all this is “freedom” — the lie that says that the United States still has a limited-government, constitutional structure, one that is different from that of the omnipotent-government structure of the Soviet Union. After all, it goes without saying that all a government needs is but one agency with omnipotent power to be an omnipotent government.

Yes, the Soviet Union lost the Cold War. But so did the United States.