

NATO's Provocative Lurch Eastward

In July 2023, Paul Keating, former Prime Minister of Australia, spoke plainly against NATO expansion to the East.

President Macron of France is right to warn NATO away from any expansion into Asia, reminding all and sundry of NATO's Atlantic design and focus. NATO's continued existence after and at the end of the Cold War has already denied peaceful unity to the broader Europe, the promise of which the end of the Cold War held open. And besides, the Europeans have been fighting each other for the better part of three hundred years, including giving the rest of us two World Wars in the last hundred. Exporting that malicious poison to Asia would be akin to Asia welcoming the plague upon itself. With all of Asia's recent development amid its long and latent poverty, that promise would be compromised by having anything to do with the militarism of Europe — and militarism egged on by the United States.

Of all the people on the international stage the supreme fool among them is Jens Stoltenberg, the current Secretary-General of NATO. Stoltenberg by instinct and by policy, is simply an accident on its way to happen. In February he was drawing parallels between Russia's assault on Ukraine and China saying, 'we should not make the same mistake with China'. That is, that China should be superintended by the West and strategically circumscribed. Stoltenberg, in his jaundiced view, overlooks the fact that China represents twenty per cent of humanity and now possesses the largest economy in the world. And has no record of attacking other states, unlike the United States, whose bidding Stoltenberg is happy to do.

Stoltenberg conducts himself as an American agent more than he performs as a leader and spokesperson for European security. Whatever his views on and from Europe, Stoltenberg does not represent the second largest European state, France, which the timely statement from the *Élysée* over the weekend makes clear.

Emmanuel Macron is doing the world a service putting a spike into Stoltenberg's wheel — reminding all of us that NATO is a military organisation, not a civil one and an organisation focused on Europe and the Atlantic.