



Trump Questions NATO “Article 5” Mutual Defense Clause

During an interview with Fox News’ Tucker Carlson, President Trump was asked why the United States should go to the defense of a NATO member country if it is attacked. “So, membership in NATO obligates the members to defend any other member that’s attacked,” Carlson [said](#). “So let’s say Montenegro, which joined last year, is attacked. Why should my son go to Montenegro to defend it from attack?”



Montenegro formally joined on June 5, 2017, becoming the alliance’s 29th member.

Trump responded, “I understand what you’re saying. I’ve asked the same question. You know, Montenegro is a tiny country with very strong people.” Trump continued, “They’re very strong people. They’re very aggressive people. They may get aggressive, and congratulations you’re in World War III. Now I understand that, but that’s the way it was set up.”

President Trump was referring to Article 5 of the [North Atlantic Treaty](#), which established NATO and affirms “that an armed attack against one or more of them (NATO countries) in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.” This means that if Montenegro (or any other NATO country) is attacked, then it is to be regarded as an attack against the United States.

As a result, U.S. Armed Forces can be called to action in the defense of another NATO country, dragging the United States into war — possibly even another world war — without either a declaration of war or consent from Congress.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution vests Congress with the power to issue a declaration of war. However, Article 5 of NATO circumvents that constitutional requirement.

The last time the Congress passed a declaration of war was on June 4, 1942, when the U.S. Senate passed [H.J.Res. 321](#), declaring, “A state of war exists” between Romania and the United States. Romania was an Axis power during World War II.

Since World War II, all U.S. military conflicts have been fought under the authority or command of the United Nations, NATO, or the short-lived South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO).

In fact, NATO is a subsidiary of the United Nations. Article 1 of the North Atlantic Treaty affirms NATO’s allegiance as an arm of the United Nations:

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Ultimately, NATO serves the purposes of the UN. The UN Security Council can pass a resolution to authorize the use of force and use NATO as its enforcement mechanism, thereby also calling American forces to combat anywhere around the world without a congressional declaration of war.



Written by [Christian Gomez](#) on July 19, 2018

Trump is right to be asking about the United States' commitment to defend NATO countries when such aid might initiate a war with Russia, thereby igniting a new world war.

Montenegro shares its northwest border, along the Adriatic Sea, with the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been under review since 2010 to become a member of the NATO military alliance.

Ironically, Sarajevo — the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina — was where Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated, thus igniting the First World War.

If Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes the next country to join NATO, then the United States will be bound to defend the country where World War I started. Today, both Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina have precarious relations with the Russian Federation, creating the potential for future conflict.

Americans may, too, want to ask themselves, as Trump has, whether it is in the United States' interest to commit itself to such entangling alliances.

Image: Screenshot of the [Tucker Carlson interview with Trump](#)



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