

Wars in Europe

The UK has fought all too many wars in Europe. Often we were fighting to defend the right of another country to govern itself, or to support political and religious freedoms. We had to fight Philip II of Spain, Napoleon and Hitler for our very national survival as we fought for Europe's liberties and saw off invasion threats.

After the world war ended in 1945 there was an uneasy peace in much of Europe, with an iron curtain between an enforced Union of the USSR, and the increasing number of democracies in the West as Spain and Greece threw off dictators and military government.

Following the break up of the USSR a series of nasty wars broke out . Slovenia and Croatia detached from Serbia. Bosnia partially left Serbia after an intense civil war. Kosovo wants to leave Serbia.

This century Putin's Russia pushes to recreate part of the old USSR. There is a scramble for influence between an expansion minded EU wishing to grow by arguments, votes and treaties, and Russia prepared to use force as well as persuasion and diplomacy. The EU has pushed its borders up to Russia in Finland, Poland and the Baltic Republics.

The obvious current centre of this battle is Ukraine. The Kosovo/Serbia split, the Transnistria /Moldova split, the Georgia arguments and others are all part of this clash with a subjugating Russia. In Ukraine the EU backed the protests to remove an elected pro Russian President in 2014, only to see Russia seize Crimea. In Georgia today an anti EU majority in Parliament has passed a media control bill which the EU and its supporters condemn. Serbia, and Moldova are both candidate countries to join the EU, though Serbia is out of favour. Kosovo could become a candidate. The range of candidate countries will give the EU closer exposure and longer borders with Russia.

I will look tomorrow at NATO and UK options