

Adriatic Charter And The Balkans: Smaller Nations, Larger NATO

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Outgoing NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer is to be succeeded by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who resigned his position as Danish prime minister to accept the post, on August 1st of this year.

During the past two and a half weeks Scheffer has been paying a series of farewell visits to newly acquired NATO territories like Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Albania and Croatia and to former sovereign nations marked for closer integration and full absorption, Macedonia and Finland.

In the time-honored tradition of retiring Roman proconsuls and British viceroys, he has been making valedictory tours of inspection to admire his handiwork. During his tenure as chief of the world's only military bloc the Alliance added nine new members - Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - three-quarters the amount of member states NATO had when it was formed sixty years ago.

All nine new acquisitions are in Eastern Europe, three border Russian territory and two-thirds of them were former republics of the three multi-ethnic (and in the first two cases multi-confessional) European nations torn apart between 1991-1993: The Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

Smaller morsels are easier to swallow.

On May 9 "De Hoop Scheffer expressed satisfaction with the fact that nine new members joined NATO on his watch as Secretary-General, hoping for Macedonia to become the 10th. [1]

It is assumed that the major factor in Scheffer being named NATO secretary general was his support of the invasion of Iraq when he was Dutch foreign minister and his role in deploying his nation's troops to that country.

His replacement, Rasmussen, played a comparable role as Danish prime minister in 2003 and afterward.

Of the nations Scheffer helped corral into what he is fond of referring to as global NATO, all nine have deployed troops to both Iraq and Afghanistan, in several cases before their accession to and as a precondition for membership in the Alliance.

It was also under his reign that NATO launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to increase military cooperation and exercises with and deployments to the Mediterranean

Dialogue partner states – Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – and the Gulf Cooperation nations – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, thereby tightening the bloc’s grip from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the Persian Gulf.

His swan song, or eagle’s shriek, though is consolidating NATO’s military integration of the region of Southeast Europe where its international expansion began: The Balkans.

Speaking on May 8 in the capital of Albania, Scheffer acknowledged that “In many respects, the origins of NATO’s transformation after the end of the Cold War lie here in Southeast Europe.” [2]

He was addressing a meeting of the Adriatic-5 Group in Tirana with the foreign ministers of Macedonia, Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

The Adriatic-5 Group is an expanded version of the Adriatic Charter established in May of 2003 by then US Secretary of State Colin Powell with Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, “an initiative in the spirit of the 1998 U.S.-Baltic Charter” [3], after discussions between George Bush and his Albanian, Croatian and Macedonian counterparts at the NATO summit in Prague in November of 2002.

All three nations were already and remain NATO Partnership for Peace adjuncts, but the Adriatic Charter was a specifically designed program to place the three states on the fast track to full integration.

As mentioned earlier, expectations for proving the three’s NATO readiness included offering the United States and the Alliance troops for the war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as sponsoring and participating in military exercises and hosting visits by US and allied warships, troops and air forces.

Macedonia’s accession was blocked by Greece because of the ongoing name dispute and so it didn’t join its Albanian and Croatian partners in being granted full membership earlier this year, but on May 8 “NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer on Friday urged Macedonia to solve its name row with Greece, saying it’s the only obstacle on its way to NATO.” [4]

On December 4th of last year Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina were officially invited to join the Adriatic Charter, hence the new designation Adriatic-5 [A5].

At the meeting in Tirana on May 8 “At a joint press conference following the meeting, the [foreign] ministers expressed hope that Serbia and Kosovo would join the Adriatic group as soon as possible....” [5]

With Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia NATO members since 2004 and Albania and Croatia since April of this year, the incorporation of the remaining three Adriatic Charter nations, Serbia and its breakaway province of Kosovo into the Alliance would make the entire Balkans region NATO territory.

The “the origins of NATO’s transformation after the end of the Cold War” began in the Balkans fifteen years ago and the world’s first global military bloc returned to complete its conquest. One which now includes the world’s newest small nation, Montenegro, which

under Western tutelage left the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro to become independent (formally speaking) in 2006, and the world's newest pseudo-state, Kosovo, whose secession from Serbia was formalized by the major NATO powers in February of last year.

As to what degree of sovereignty new NATO members and candidates possess, on May 7 it was announced that "NATO and the Albanian government were in negotiations on the take-over by the Alliance of the full control of Albania's air space." [6]

One is reminded of the Aesopian apologue of the wolf offering to free the sheep from the harsh ministrations of the sheepdog.

Kosovo has hosted the largest US overseas military bases constructed since the Vietnam War, Camp Bondsteel and Camp Monteith, since NATO's takeover of the province in 1999.

At the beginning of this year the secessionist entity in Kosovo, brought to power through NATO's relentless bombing and occupation in 1999, proclaimed its intention to create its own armed forces, the Kosovo Security Force, "a NATO sponsored army established as part of Kosovo's status arrangements for its declaration of independence of last year.

"The United States has already provided the force with army uniforms, while Germany has equipped them with firearms. The training of the force is handled by British KFOR troops." [7]

In addition, Colonel Dieter Jensch of the German Ministry of Defense said that "Germany will assist Kosovo Security Force with 204 military vehicles. The assistance is valued at 2.6 million Euros. Germany will also send 15 military personnel to help build KSF structures and to train the members of this force." [8]

Creating such a force is flagrantly and grossly in violation of United Nations Resolution 1244 and to render this Western-engineered travesty even more criminal, "The Kosovo Security Forces will be commanded by former Kosovo Liberation Army military leader and, until yesterday, Kosovo Protection Corps commander Sulejman Selimi....

"Selimi...was the military head of the Kosovo Liberation Army that fought Serbia in the separatist war of 1998-99." [9]

Regarding the world's - officially - youngest nation, Montenegro, no sooner had former NATO Secretary General and then European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana assisted in wresting it from the State Union with Serbia than the Pentagon spotted another stray lamb.

In October of 2006 the American guided missile cruiser USS Anzio paid the first of a series of ongoing visits to "Montenegro [which is] eager to join NATO's Partnership for Peace outreach program, considered a stepping stone to alliance membership." [10]

The following spring "Four NATO ships, including USS Roosevelt, arrived Saturday in Montenegro's coastal town of Tivat." [11]

Within weeks the USS Emory S. Land submarine tender and the commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Europe, US Navy Adm. Harry Ulrich, arrived in the same city to "host an independence day celebration," with the "Emory S. Land visit[ing] Tivat to provide training

and assistance for the Montenegrin Navy and to strengthen the relationship between the two navies,” and Ulrich stating:

“We’re honored to be here during this historic time of renewed independence in Montenegro’s proud history.

“I’m also proud to have worked regularly with many of the visionary leaders of your great nation in the last year.” [12]

Members of the cigarette smuggling and sex-slave trafficking cabal of Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic have been called many names, but it took the US Navy chief in Europe to elevate them to the status of “visionary leaders.”

The Pentagon conducted a “three day military-to-military familiarization seminar: in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica in August of the same year.” [13]

“Historic time of renewed independence,” indeed.

The same Ulrich, “responsible for NATO-led missions in the Balkans, Iraq and the Mediterranean,” had paid a visit to Macedonia in September of 2006 to recruit troops for deployments abroad. News reports of the time spared readers further examples of his inflated oratory.

Not to ignore any former Yugoslav entity, in December of 2008 it was reported that “NATO foreign and defence ministers have prepared a Partnership for Peace action plan to expand co-operation with Serbia.” [14]

This March NATO summoned the defense ministers and other defense officials of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey to the Croatian capital of Zagreb to “discuss regional security challenges and trends and new possibilities for regional cooperation within the Adriatic Charter....” [15]

The Adriatic Charter was crafted by Washington and personally supervised and implemented by Colin Powell and the Pentagon with the purpose of turning the entire Balkans into a US and NATO military “forward base” and recruiting ground for wars in the so-called Broader Middle East and former Soviet space in the Caucasus and elsewhere.

From the onset of the breakup of Yugoslavia the NATO powers have had ambitious and permanent plans for the Balkans. The expanded - and still expanding - Adriatic Charter is the culmination of those designs.

Notes

- 1) Xinhua News Agency, May 9, 2009
- 2) NATO International, May 8, 2009
- 3) U.S. Department of State, January 20, 2009
- 4) Xinhua News Agency, May 9, 2009
- 5) Macedonian Information Agency, May 9, 2009
- 6) Makfax, May 7, 2009
- 7) Balkan Insight, February 27, 2009
- 8) Kosova Information Center, February 9, 2009
- 9) B92, January 21, 2009

- 10) Associated Press, October 23, 2006
- 11) Associated Press, April 3, 2007
- 12) United States European Command, May 24, 2007
- 13) United States European Command, August 7, 2007
- 14) Southeast European Times, December 5, 2008
- 15) Xinhua News Agency, March 3, 2009

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