

## Empire and Global Warfare in 2012: NATO as a Global Political and Military Player

By [Rick Rozoff](#)

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Where does America's imperial hubris lead to?

John Robles

*Interview with Rick Rozoff, the manager of the Stop NATO website and mailing list. Recorded on December 21, 2011.*

Can you give us the latest on NATO and your predictions for 2012, as far as the ABM system in Europe and NATO global expansion in general? I know it's a big question.

The past year, of course, has been a momentous one. I think it's been a very troubling one in many regards. What we've seen this year in regard to NATO and what we're likely to see an intensification of next year, 2012, is a follow-up on the Strategic Concept, as they call it, adopted at the Lisbon summit in November 2010, which is unveiling - and unleashing - NATO as an increasingly global political and military player. We saw this with the seven-month aerial campaign, air war, against Libya earlier this year where NATO flew an estimated 26,000 air missions against a small country with six million people, over 9,000 of which were combat sorties. We're seeing that as a template. That's pretty much how NATO officials and heads of state of major NATO countries have characterized it.

We are likely to see more of that, most prominently - it can't be missed - in one manner or another in relation to Syria, but with any number of other potential military interventions. Your listeners are probably aware of the fact that the Collective Security Treaty Organization met in Russia two days ago, on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the only security bloc within the Commonwealth of Independent States, that is amongst former Soviet states. And one of the statements - rather straightforward and candid - was a warning about military intervention in the internal affairs of countries beset by domestic problems. That's clearly an allusion to the Libyan action by the major NATO powers but also in reference to the current crisis in Syria.

On Wednesday a statement by the White House saying that the government of Bashar al-Assad "does not deserve to rule Syria" is an indication that far from being humbled by the recent symbolically important, I suppose, withdrawal of the final U.S. military forces from Iraq of late, that far from being humbled by the debacle in Iraq and the equally catastrophic experience in Afghanistan, the U.S. is still ordering heads of state to resign, as they did earlier this year in Ivory Coast and Libya and may tomorrow in Belarus, or Venezuela and any number of other countries. We still see the imperial hubris of the major Western

countries, the U.S. in the first instance, in determining who is or is not fit to govern most every country in the world.

What was the connection with Gbagbo? You mentioned Ivory Coast.

Earlier this year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Obama and other major US officials ordered Laurent Gbagbo to step down. They didn't recognize the results of the runoff election last December in Ivory Coast. The irony is - it's so transparent as to be undeniable - in the U.S. a comparable situation, a far worse situation, existed in 2000 where George W. Bush received half a million votes less than his opponent and through a decision made by the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land, Bush, the recipient of the fewer votes, was designated the elected president of the United States. Something comparable happened with the decision by the elections commission in Ivory Coast but the U.S., which has one set of rules for itself and another for the rest of the world, determined that the decision reached by the court in Ivory Coast was invalid whereas the one in 2000 in the United States was valid, because it was in the United States.

I thought that maybe there was a NATO connection that I hadn't heard anything about there in Ivory Coast.

There wasn't a NATO connection, but French military forces were instrumental in assaulting government buildings in Abidjan, the commercial capital of the country, and ultimately, directly in the capture of Gbagbo. NATO countries, if not collectively under the banner of NATO, were certainly instrumental there. I've just cited that as part of the pattern over the past year Washington has ordered in so many words heads of state to step down, including Ali Abdullah Saleh, the president of Yemen, Assad in Syria, and Gbagbo in Ivory Coast and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. There are at least four heads of state that they told to step down this year.

Can you tell our listeners a little bit about Kosovo and Serbia?

Yes I can. I have friends in Kosovo and I have friends from Kosovo, ethnic Serbs and others. The situation is that you have besieged enclaves of the few remaining non-Albanian ethnic minorities in Kosovo. I've seen estimates as high as 250,000 ethnic Serbs who have fled the country in terror. Several thousands have been killed, of course, since NATO came in in June of 1999.

I've seen comparable figures for Roma people, so-called Gypsies, including Ashkalis and Egyptians, as they are known in Kosovo. Other ethnic minority groups have suffered similarly. And to have, as I saw a few days ago a tape of the so-called "president" of Kosovo meeting with Hillary Clinton at the White House to sign an agreement on protecting the cultural heritage of Kosovo, when several hundred Orthodox monasteries, churches, cemeteries and so forth have been desecrated and destroyed is a degree of unspeakable - it's not ignorance, Clinton knows pretty well this story. Her husband, after all, is the person responsible for starting a 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia which wrested Kosovo from Yugoslavia and Serbia. This is again the imperial arrogance I was speaking about earlier, that Washington arrogates to itself the exclusive prerogative, or at least in relation to its NATO allies and certain key non-NATO allies, to determine how national boundaries can and cannot be drawn, which political entities are to be recognized as

legitimate countries, such as the NATO pseudo-state of Kosovo, but denying that same right to nations like Abkhazia or South Ossetia.

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