

Hybrid Wars: Breaking the Balkans. NATO's Southern Expansionism

Part IV

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Global Research, May 28, 2016

[Oriental Review](#) 27 May 2016

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [THE BALKANS](#)

(Please read [Part I](#), [Part II](#), and [Part III](#) prior to this article)

[Part III](#) heavily detailed the three most explosive regional factors currently threatening the Balkans, whereas this current chapter will look at three less imminent, but no less impactful, ones that could also throw the region's stability into jeopardy.

The Croatian-Serbian Missile Race

Historical Foundation:

The rivalry between Croatia and Serbia is centuries-long, stretching to before either of them were modern-day nation states and back to the time when they were still under the occupation of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, respectively. It's been argued that both people are of the same ethnic origin, with their only substantial differences being in dialect and adherence to a particular Christian sect (Catholicism for Croats, Orthodoxy for Serbs). Extended research has already been published on the fraternal similarities between these two people and the reasons for their contemporary perception of "separateness" as regards the other, so the present study will refrain from repeating what has already been established long before it and begin the historical discourse from the more relevant period of World War II.

Leading up to the intercommunal hostilities that formally broke out after the Nazi invasion (although incidents of violence were indeed present right before then), the Croats had been agitating for an autonomous ethno-centric sub-state within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and they finally received their wish with the August 1939 Cvetkovic-Macek Agreement that established the Croatian Banovina. The Ustase, a hyper-fascist Croatian organization led by Ante Pavelic, had been pushing for this for quite some time, seeing it as a stepping stone to outright independence and the fulfillment of their nationalist ambitions to forge Greater Croatia. Observed from abroad, the Croatian fascists obviously seemed like ideal and natural partners for the Nazis to cooperate with before and after their forthcoming invasion of Yugoslavia, and it's no surprise that Hitler would later work hand-in-glove with Pavelic in exterminating the Serbs. Their pre-war collaboration was so deep that the "Independent State of Croatia", the Nazi-controlled puppet project during World War II (the most radical manifestation of Greater Croatia), would be declared right after Hitler's invasion and over a week prior to the formal capitulation of the Yugoslav government, suggesting that its supporters were eagerly awaiting the offensive and understood that it was only with Nazi support that their nationalist nightmare could become a reality.

✘ The pertinence that all of this has to the present era is that the Hitler-Pavelic project for Greater Croatia incorporated the entirety of Bosnia and created a precedent (however ethically disturbing and brief) of 'leadership' in the Western Balkans that imprinted a very specific form of geo-nationalism on the historical memory of most Croats. While thankfully never carried out to the ultra-extreme form of its fascist predecessors, this brand of radical Croatian nationalism would return as a factor during the destructive dissolution of Yugoslavia. The Croatian military wanted not only to purge ethnic Serbs from the Republic of Serbian Krajina that they had established in part of the former Socialist Republic of Croatia (itself the post-war formalization of most of the Croatian Banovina), but they wanted to take it even further and cleanse their rival demographic from most of Bosnia as well (although this latter objective thankfully failed). Indicative of just how intimately intertwined the genocide against Serbs has become in the modern-day Croatian national identity, 5 August, the date that the Republic of Serbian Krajina was destroyed, is annually celebrated as the "Day of Victory and Thanksgiving and the Day of Croatian Defenders".

The takeaway from this broad overview is that the Croatian political-military establishment is vehemently anti-Serbian and that the geo-nationalist historical memory still lingering from World War II can be easily manipulated to gin the population up for supporting another crusade. The focal point in any forthcoming conflict for carving out a Greater Croatia (whether in fact or in form) is undoubtedly Bosnia, and the provocations that Sarajevo has lately launched against Republika Srpska bode quite negatively for the entity's future stability. More than likely, the Croatian deep state (the permanent military, diplomatic, and intelligence apparatuses) is interested in unbalancing Bosnia in order to create the opportunity for wiping Republika Srpska from the map and turning the entirety of the country into an American-Croatian protectorate, or in other words, the post-modern manifestation of the Hitler-Pavelic project for Greater Croatia.

Missile vs. Missile:

This brings the study to the point of discussing the missile race that's begun between Croatia and Serbia. It was [reported](#) in mid-October 2015 that Croatia is planning to purchase 16 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) from the US. Although no formal statement was yet to be issued on the topic, it's predicted that Croatia will claim that the MLRS are for "defensive" purposes and shouldn't trigger worry from anyone, but the fact that they give the country the capability of striking Serbia is a cause for serious concern. It's perplexing to try and make sense of what's foreseen to be Croatia's "defensive" 'justification' for the arms purchase considering that the system only has an offensive purpose. It's thus not for naught that Serbian Prime Minister Vucic spoke about his [interest](#) in purchasing Russian anti-missile systems and other equipment during his late-October visit to Moscow, since Serbia now needs to find a way to nullify this emerging military threat.

✘ Of course, if Serbia for whatever reason backs out of its verbal commitment to purchase the Russian arms, then it would automatically place itself in a position of military blackmail vis-à-vis Croatia (acting as a Lead From Behind proxy on behalf of the US) and would be powerless to correct the military imbalance. Provided that both transfers go through, then it's inevitable that the US will push its Croatian proxy into purchasing different sets of weaponry in order to upset the strategic equilibrium that Serbia's Russian-made anti-missile systems would bring to the region. This would beget a symmetrical response from Serbia, thus plunging the two neighbors into an American-initiated arms race that neither of their two frail economies might be able to sustain.

In this sense, Croatia would have an institutional advantage over Serbia since its NATO membership might entitle it to discounted weaponry that could prove effective in shifting the military balance, while Serbia has no such agreement with Russia. Nonetheless, in such a case Russia would probably propose an advantageous and deferred payment plan to allow Serbia to receive the necessary defensive armaments in maintaining its security. Cyclically, one sale leads to another, and before anyone realizes what happened (except of course the US, which engineered this whole scenario), the Western and Central Balkans' strongest militaries are engaged in a spiraling arms race across every military spectrum, drawing their American and Russian allies closer to a New Cold War proxy confrontation with the other.

Battleground Bosnia:

Going back to the conclusion reached after the historical overview at the beginning of this subsection, Croatia and its Western backers are working closely with Sarajevo in engineering the pretexts (whether legal, military, or 'socially driven' through a Color Revolution) to abolish Republika Srpska. Such a struggle won't come easy, however, as the Serbs are sure to symmetrically fight back against any aggressive infringement on their sovereignty, be it legal and/or military. Everything that's happening right now as regards the Croatian military buildup is predicated on preparing Zagreb to take the lead in any prospective anti-Srpska operation, whether through a direct or indirect role. The Bosnian Armed Forces are not capable on their own of carrying out the task, considering also that the Serbian members would immediately mutiny and fight for their constituent republic as opposed to the overall federation (which is being hijacked by the Croat-Muslim entity as it is). Therefore, from the perspective of American grand strategy in waging the next battle in the War on Serbia and drawing Belgrade into a Reverse Brzezinski trap, it's imperative for it to use Croatia as its vanguard proxy in achieving this geo-critical objective.

At this juncture, Croatia's missile buildup makes complete sense, since it gives Zagreb the capacity to project force into Serbia to counter any support that Belgrade gives to Banja Luka. It's not for sure that Croatia would ever directly attack Serbia itself (although it might feel compelled to if the US pressures it in this direction), but the mere fact that American missiles could once more rain down on Serbian cities would certainly affect Serbia's strategic calculations in this scenario. If the country didn't have adequate defenses for nullifying this threat, then Croatia would be able to blackmail Serbia and prevent it from directly or indirectly intervening to support Republika Srpska. However, if Serbia's defenses were buffeted with state-of-the-art Russian-built anti-missile technology, then Croatia's blackmail threat instantly disappears and Belgrade would have a much freer course of action in assisting Republika Srpska however it deemed fit.

☒ Croatia would then only have the choice of attacking Serbia directly in face-to-face aggression either in the Bosnian 'middle ground' or directly on its own soil and risk escalating the war to unforeseen heights. Depending on the global New Cold War conditions at the time, the US and NATO might not be so eager to directly assist in Croatia's offensive, thus hanging it out to dry in fighting Serbia on its own. This isn't a risk that Croatia's decision makers would want to take lightly, thus meaning that if their surface-to-surface missile blackmail is deterred by Serbia's Russian-provided anti-missile defense systems, then it becomes markedly less likely that they'd directly attack Serbian soil and would probably contain their aggression to the Bosnian battlespace. In turn, this increases the chances that Republika Srpska can withstand whatever joint Croatian-Muslim offensive is being planned against them, knowing that they can depend on Serbian assistance if need be without having to fear that their ally is under ballistic-missile blackmail in being forced to

stay on the sidelines. From a larger and conclusive perspective, [Serbian-Russian military cooperation](#) in balancing against the Croatian-American buildup might even indefinitely delay a unipolar offensive on Republika Srpska and give the multipolar world the adequate time that it needs in brainstorming a solution to this impending brinksmanship.

NATO's "Drang Nach Suden"

Southern Expansionism:

During the final years of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the US reached a [verbal agreement](#) whereby Moscow would allow for the reunification of Germany in exchange for the US agreeing to never expand NATO further East. As history attests, the US shamelessly reneged on its guarantee the moment the Soviet Union collapsed and was powerless to effectively stop it, swallowing up almost the entirety of Eastern Europe (save for Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine) and all the Baltic States by 2004. What's less studied by observers is NATO's "Drang Nach Suden" (Drive to the South), which represents one of the last fronts of continental NATO expansionism and has been in the works ever since the end of the Cold War.

Theoretically speaking, this corner of Europe didn't fall under the Soviets' purvey when they made their verbal agreement with the US. Moscow didn't have any forces stationed in Yugoslavia or Albania that would soon be withdrawn, thus making these countries' prospective membership into NATO a moot point for Moscow to even discuss because it had no power or influence one way or another to even decide on it. Faced with its own internal problems and its forthcoming theater-wide withdraw from Central and Eastern Europe, it's likely that the Soviet Union didn't even consider the then-unthinkable scenario that a series of American-engineered proto-Hybrid Wars would soon lead to the dissolution of Yugoslavia along federative lines and one day see two of its formerly unified members plus Albania under the NATO nuclear umbrella.

Alas, that's exactly what happened, and it can be suggested that one of the US' partial motivations for dismembering Yugoslavia was to create a chain of weakened nation-states that would be much easier to absorb into the bloc than the formerly unified and strong federal entity. It was earlier discussed at the beginning of the book's Balkan research that Slovenia was the most gung-ho pro-Western state out of the entire former Yugoslavia, being the first to join both the EU and NATO. To remind the reader of what was written at that earlier point, Slovenia was largely insulated from the chaos of the Yugoslav Wars owing to its advantageous geography, and its small population was disproportionately well endowed with a legacy of Yugoslav investment that allowed it to rapidly achieve the highest GDP per capita of all the former communist countries in Europe.

Consequently, it joined NATO and the EU in 2004, making it the first Balkan state with membership in both organizations. This was designed to serve as an example-setting precedent for other similarly pro-Western regional elite who wanted to emulate the "Slovenian success story", leading them to believe that it was Ljubljana's impassioned desire to join Western-dominated institutions that explained its success and not its inimitable geographic, historic, and economic factors. Be that as it was, the deceptive ploy prevailed in convincing the Croatian elite of their own self-delusions and consequently in furthering their informational investments in misleading the rest of the population into supporting their predetermined decision to join both blocs. Zagreb would later enter into NATO in 2009 and join the EU in 2013, thus following the Slovenian scenario and dispensing

of the tiny Balkan country's strategic purpose to either organization (hence the institutional neglect that it's received from both since then).



Slovenian servicemen serve the U.S. interests in Gerat province, Afghanistan, 2010.

The situation was a bit different with Albania, as it wasn't influenced by Slovenia's example at all. It joined NATO the same year that Croatia did for the complementary reasons of supporting the US' Lead From Behind grand strategy in the Western Balkans and in placing itself in a more 'regionally intimidating' position for promoting Greater Albania sometime again in the future (most likely against Macedonia). Also, it can't be discounted that Tirana's elites were motivated to a large degree by their conception of 'triumphalism' in formally allying with the bloc that bombarded Serbia and led to the temporary severing of its Province of Kosovo. Taking into account the Albanian understanding of 'pride' and how the Ottoman-era culture of completely disrespecting one's enemy are still influential factors that impact on the Albanian psyche, it's very likely that one of the country's driving interests in joining NATO was simply to spite Serbia.

Waiting In The Wings?:

Looking at the rest of the Balkans, every country has some form or another of institutional relations with NATO.

Serbia

To begin with, Serbia agreed to an [Individual Partnership Action Plan](#) in January 2015, in an event that bizarrely received barely any publicity in the country's media. One would have been led to believe that Serbia's closer relations with the same military bloc that bombed it into submission 16 years prior would garner intense outcry among the country's opinion leaders and institutions, but the fact that it didn't speaks loudly about the strong entrenchment of influential pro-Western figures inside the country's establishment.

Also, it's notable that this decision was undertaken under the Vucic's Premiership, which has gone to great lengths to please the West. This stands in stark contrast to the contemporaneous Nikolic Presidency, which has worked hard to make pragmatic strides in Serbia's relations with Russia. The glaring discrepancy between the foreign policy priorities of the Prime Minister and the President doesn't seem to be an elaborate 'balancing' ruse between the West and Russia, but rather a clumsy and disjointed struggle to hash out compromise between the respective Serbian elites that each figurehead represents.



Anti-NATO march in Belgrade, February 2016

This political predicament is inherently untenable and cannot progress for much longer without the country being thrown into domestic destabilization. Pragmatic approaches towards multiple geopolitical directions are welcome for any country, but when radical moves such as deepening the relationship with NATO are made, it indicates a decisive

power play on behalf of the pro-Western forces. Couple that early-2015 announcement with the news at the end of the year in December that Belgrade is [formally in accession talks](#) with Brussels, and 2015 becomes the 'Year of the West' for Serbia. This can't help but result in opposition from the pragmatic voices represented by Nikolic (who is reflective of the majority of society), which must feel their influence waning amidst Vucic's pro-Western advancements.

The governmental split that's being produced by Vucic's unwavering pro-Western institutional course (continued despite his visit to Moscow and appeal for Russian weaponry) will inevitably result in an intensification of the ongoing power struggle between the two factions of the Serbian elite, the pro-Westernizers and the political pragmatists, unless Vucic tempers his approach. Failure to do so will force the country into the same manipulated "civilizational choice" that the West imposed on Ukraine in November 2013, which would ultimately work out to the US' grand strategic benefit at the expense of every Serbian. Provocatively speaking, it might follow the Ukrainian scenario so closely that a Color Revolution breaks out in Belgrade, albeit with diametrically different geopolitical consequences than the pro-Western one that succeeded in Kiev.

Bosnia

Moving along, Bosnia and the other two remaining Balkan countries that will be discussed have agreed to Membership Action Plans with NATO, which means that they have officially committed their governments to a path that's supposed to end with NATO membership some time or another. It's practically impossible for this scheme to succeed in Bosnia without a renewal of civil warfare between Republika Srpska and the Croat-Muslim entity, but more than likely, that's the point of Sarajevo pursuing such a farfetched plan. The Serbs would never accept joining NATO because that would lead to the extinguishment of their autonomous republic, but reversely, if the autonomy of Republika Srpska could be revoked (the scenarios of which Sarajevo and its Western patrons are subtly exploring), then NATO membership would be institutionally uncontested and incapable of being stopped. As has been discussed extensively already, Bosnia is a giant geopolitical time bomb that's waiting to be detonated by the West, and Sarajevo's determined and timed movement towards NATO could be the spark that lights the next Balkan fuse.

Macedonia

The surface conviction among many is that Skopje has committed itself to an irreversible pro-Western trajectory regardless of leadership, and judging by official statements on the matter, that does indeed seem to be the case. Digging deeper, however, and unraveling the changing domestic and international contexts surrounding Macedonia, the argument can convincingly be made that there's more than meets the eye when it comes to Skopje's pro-Western institutional associations. December 2014 forever changed the calculations of the Macedonian leadership because of the Russia and China's dual announcements of the Balkan Stream and Balkan Silk Road megaprojects, respectively, both of which are envisioned to crucially transit through the country's territory.

Of course, neither Great Power would have made such ambitious plans without having first consulted with the Macedonian government, and Skopje was more than willing to agree after taking stock of the enormous economic windfall that it would receive from either project's successful completion. Also, neither Moscow nor Beijing likely made any ultimatums to Skopje for its cooperation (such as saying that it mustn't join NATO and/or the

EU), but that it was probably strongly implied that substantially moving forward with either of these 'formal' institutional goals could endanger the projects, and thus, the geostrategic and economically profitable benefits that Macedonia stood to incur.

After discreetly acquiring Macedonia's advance approval for their initiatives, Russia and China went public with their regional visions, but this triggered the US to initiate its back-up regime change plans for the country in order to keep it firmly in its orbit and pressure it to cancel the multipolar megaprojects. The US was probably tipped off to its geopolitical rivals' plans well in advance and had begun tinkering with a destabilization scenario in Macedonia long ago, using it and its allies' spy agencies to surreptitiously wiretap government and private citizens for use in a forthcoming political blackmail campaign. In the months preceding the monumental multipolar announcements relating to Macedonia, the US ordered its regime change proxy, 'opposition' leader Zoran Zaev, to selectively release suggestive snippets from the Western intelligence agency-doctored 'recordings' in order to test the waters and gauge the public's reaction.



Pro-government rally in Skopje, May 2015

After recognizing that the 'wiretap' scenario had the potential to stir a critical mass of manipulated public unrest (with the hand-in-hand support of Soros-affiliated organizations and media outlets), the US knew that it had a powerful tool with which to pressure the government. Prime Minister Gruevski didn't fold to Washington's implied regime change demands, however, and he instead stood proudly defiant in the face of the externally imposed coup attempt being pursued against him. At around this time in early 2015, he probably started getting second doubts about his 'Western partners' (if he hadn't had them already by this point) and questioning the strategic wisdom of continuing his country's established pro-Western course.

At the same time, being the leader of a super-strategic but comparatively small country, Gruevski keenly understood his limits of action and came to the conclusion that forcefully rejecting the West would be contrary to his and his country's physical security. This explains why his formal statements are in support of the unipolar EU and NATO, while his multipolar actions in cooperating with the Balkan Silk Road and Balkan Stream megaprojects speak more sincerely to the strategic direction that he truly plans on taking his country. Gruevski's prudence in taking this approach was vindicated after the US attempted an unsuccessful Hybrid War push against him in May 2015 (Zaev's failed Color Revolution intermingled with the Albanian terrorist plots in Kumanovo), showing the desperate lengths that they were willing to go in getting him removed and stopping the multipolar megaprojects.

Despite this obvious regime change attempt and the subsequently more subtle methods being employed to try and oust him (the EU-mediated 'negotiations' with the 'opposition' and the forthcoming early elections), Gruevski is still aware that if he succumbs to the emotional temptation to publicly disown the EU and NATO in response, then he might fall victim to an assassination attempt (which is what [the plane scare over Switzerland in late-May 2015](#) was meant to convey to him). For these reasons, the Macedonian Premier must continue his clever game of telling the West what they want to hear while doing the opposite in practice, although it's unclear whether he can continue doing so indefinitely without being forced by the US into making a resolute choice one way or another.

For the time being, however, although Macedonia is formally pursuing integration into Western institutions, its policies in practice are purposely ambiguous, and in light of the changed domestic and international circumstances that were just explained, one should hold off on rendering full judgement about Gruevski's officially declared commitments until after he gains more freedom of political maneuverability following the early elections in April.

Fighting Back:

The final Balkan country that has yet to be discussed is Montenegro, which just received its [official invitation to join NATO](#) during the bloc's early-December meeting in Brussels. Even before the announcement was ever formally made, Prime Minister Djukanovic (the country's ruler in one form or another for almost the past thirty years) [declared](#) that his country would unreservedly accept NATO membership, prompting an [unprecedented display of public unrest](#). The majority of the 600,000 or so Montenegrin citizens are against their country joining the same military bloc that bombed it 16 years ago when it was still part of rump Yugoslavia, and the political opposition has called for the issue to be put before a referendum. The government refused to accede to their suggestion and instead responded with [disproportionate force](#) that suppressed the protests and produced an ever stronger reaction of anti-NATO sentiment.

The result was that the violent crackdown predictably intimidated some of the population and led to a noticeable decline in their outward protest activity. This government interpreted this according its preordained expectations and assumed that this meant that the anti-NATO movement was finished. That wasn't the case, however, since the form of resistance had [simply adapted](#) to the repressive conditions in the country and moved away from large manifestations in the capital in favor of smaller gatherings in the towns and villages. On the one hand, this was a tactical necessity in order to preserve the protesters' safety, but on the other, it created the deceptive illusion that the population had been forced into complacency and may have unintentionally contributed to NATO going forward with the membership offering, as opposed to withholding it out of fear that extending the invitation would push the country over the edge and result in the overthrow of their long-cherished proxy.



Opposition parties demand a national referendum on the issue of Montenegro's membership in NATO, December 2015.

As it stands, it's expected to take between one to two years for Montenegro for complete the NATO accession process, meaning that there's a critical last-minute window of opportunity for the protesters to make history and be the first to carry their country away from the organization after it's already agreed to join. Theoretically speaking, it's entirely possible for Montenegro to set a new precedent in this regard, but it's clear that the only way to do this is by overthrowing the government or pressuring it to the extent that it acquiesces to a referendum. Granted, even a public vote might not be enough to stop the NATO machine, since it's unsure at this time whether it would be just as crooked of a motion as the previous ballots held under Djukanovic's rule. More than likely, given the donkey-like obstinacy that Djukanovic and his Mafioso clique have, plus their propensity to resort to extreme violence amidst pressure, it's probable that the only way to reverse the NATO

decision is to replace Djukanovic with a sincere opposition figure that will pull Montenegro out of the initiation process before it's fully completed.

Montenegro's strategic importance to NATO is disproportionate to its tiny size, and its membership in the bloc is an important step in bringing Serbia more firmly under Atlantic control. Assuming the most negative scenario where Montenegrins are unable to save their country from occupation, then NATO would have succeeded in tightening its noose of encirclement around Serbia and would then feel more confident in making bolder moves against it and Republika Srpska in the future. Keep in mind that Montenegrins are closely related to Serbs and that many Serbs still live in the country. Officially, the government lists them as being 28% of the population, but given Djukanovic's history of statistical manipulations (be it in the 2006 independence referendum or every election in which he's ran), the real percentage is likely higher. This is all very important for NATO since they know that they can thus exploit Montenegro as a 'social laboratory' for perfecting informational and other strategies for use against the larger Serbian demographics in Republika Srpska and Serbia, thereby giving their campaign in the tiny Adriatic country a heightened strategic importance that is usually lost on most observers.

With all that being said, the anti-NATO and anti-government resistance movements in Montenegro (which are morphing into a unified force at the moment) are indispensably important in pushing back against NATO's "Drang Nach Suden". Their success would provide the Central Balkans with strategic breathing space and stunningly put a sudden halt to the strategic plan that the US had taken for granted up until that point. Looked at from the opposite perspective, NATO sees the incorporation of Montenegro as one of the final pieces in completing its geo-military encirclement of Serbia. It also tangentially expects to receive valuable social feedback from this experience that it can then weaponize against Republika Srpska and Serbia, and the critical momentum that Montenegro's accession would create could turn into a psychological battering ram for diminishing the population's resistance in these two states and the Republic of Macedonia. Due to the high stakes involved for all sides, it's doubtful that Djukanovic and his allies would leave in peace if confronted with a renewed opposition movement against them, thus raising the disturbing specter that the country might descend into civil war if its people try to free themselves from impending NATO domination.

Orban The Fox

Victor Orban may not be a wolf in sheep's clothing, but he's definitely a fox. He slyly presents himself as a populist voice that outspokenly represents emerging social norms, placing him at the vanguard of a changing Europe and endearing him with millions of fawning followers. There's unquestionably a strong degree of institutional resistance from the established European powers to his raging popularity and iconic status, but by and large, this 'old guard' resistance to the ideals that Orban embodies only makes his popularity surge even more, and he's quickly become an iconic and cult-like figure throughout Central and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans.

A fox is known for its cunningness, and this trait more than any other aptly describes the Hungarian Prime Minister. To many, Orban defines a new generation of 'anti-systemic' European leaders that are bravely defying the unipolar dictates of the US and the EU, but upon closer scrutiny, this is all but a carefully crafted sham (albeit with sincere convictions on Orban's part) to 'let the fox loose in the henhouse' and undermine multipolar social movements before they ever have the chance to enact tangible change in Europe.

The Shifting EU Zeitgeist:

It's important for the reader to suitably comprehend the shifting social mood that's been underway in Europe for at least the past couple of years. Maligned by the mainstream media as "Euroscepticism", it could more accurately be described as "Euro-caution", with many people all over the continent progressively becoming disenchanting with the anti-democratic dictates given to their countries by Brussels and behaving more reluctantly in following its commands. Whether it's the Greek bailout packages or the current "refugee" crisis to name but two of most prominent examples, the EU's actions have struck a raw nerve with a critical mass of people who no longer endorse the organization in its present form. The radical liberal-progressive ideology and rabid power moves of the past decade have finally caught up to its technocratic elite, and they're having to unexpectedly (for them, at least) contend with rising conservative and pro-sovereignty resistance to their rule. The threat lies in the fact that this organic pan-continental social movement could become 'uncontrollable' and either lead to the EU's dissolution (whether in full or in part) or indefinitely cripple its efficiency if a Euro-cautionary national leader decides to make things difficult and obstruct the organization's functioning (the caveat being that the said individual mustn't be co-opted by the US and acting under its strategic guidance, whether purposely or unwittingly).

The Two-Faced Fraud:

Viktor Orban, however, took Euro-cautionary steps to cripple the EU when he fenced off the Hungarian border with Serbia and initiated a chain reaction of border buffering that unsettled the Balkan region. The more prominent aftershocks of this policy indirectly resulted in EU-leader Germany re-imposing temporary border restrictions with Austria and de-facto violating the very same principles that it had previously pledged to protect at all costs. Partially as a result of this and other actions, Orban has become the leader of the anti-"refugee" movement in Europe, taking the strongest and loudest stand of any EU member in [questioning the intentions](#) of these individuals, [legally challenging](#) Brussels' quota resettlement scheme, and [decrying](#) the liberal-progressive 'religion' of 'multiculturalism' and 'zero-borders'. In a sense, he's positioned Hungary as the underdog in foiling Angela Merkel's German-led vision of a liberal-progressive Europe, conservatively proposing a more sovereignty-centric approach to intra-union affairs and spearheading the way in leading by example. In general, Orban's approach has enjoyed the full backing of his citizenry, as well as many other distressed Euro-cautionary individuals all across Central and Eastern Europe, turning him into the normative leader of the EU's new nation-centric zeitgeist.



Hungarian PM Victor Orban

Enchanted by his fearless rebukes of Brussels and the strength of personality that he has in carrying out his populist decisions, Orban's international supporters tend to overlook his less scrutinized role as a sleazy salesman for NATO expansionism. It was [reported](#) in early October that Hungary would host one of the bloc's command centers, despite not sharing any border with Russia and thus invalidating the organization's stated reasoning for such a facility. Looked at in a regional perspective, Romania and Bulgaria are doing the same thing, and the one point of commonality that they all share is that these countries border Serbia, one of the only European countries that's not part of the grouping and is a key transit state for Balkan Stream and the Balkan Silk Road. Keep in mind that Hungary is supposed to be

the terminal point for both projects, but alas, this doesn't mean that Orban is immune from the temptation to project influence towards the country that he'll one day become strategically dependent on if either project is ultimately completed.

In late November, Orban [announced](#) that he supports NATO membership for Macedonia, 'justifying' his position by saying that while Hungary wants "a unified economic and security zone, today there is a void between Hungary and Greece", implying that it needs to be filled not just by the Macedonia, but also by Serbia. Granted, Hungary is in a much better position to influence the latter than it is the former, and it could potentially exert pressure on it by inciting ethnic disturbances in the demographically heterogeneous Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Orban's personal motivation wouldn't be to disrupt the multipolar megaprojects that are expected to make his country the premier trade and energy hub of Central Europe, but to use this newfound position to expand Hungary's influence over its neighbors and de-facto resurrect a new form of the Hungarian Empire ([St. Steven's Space](#), as it was referred to earlier). Of course, this neo-imperial vision can easily be used by the US as a carrot in goading Orban along into carrying out his majestic fantasy of national glory in order to facilitate the 'unintentional' obstruction of both projects, with the Hungarian leader being too blinded by the new nationalism that's taken hold of his thinking (and that of Europe in general) to realize that he's been tricked.

Around the same time that he was trying to impress Macedonian Prime Minister Gruevski with his fervent pro-NATO attitude, Orban also [met](#) with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and received a congratulatory pat on the back for all that he has done in stepping up Hungary's "collective security" commitment. What was being specifically addressed was how Orban increased the country's defense budget (with the expectation that some of the new funds will be diverted to NATO) and ordered his country to participate in the anti-Russian Baltic "air-policing mission". The NATO chief also thanked Orban for continuing to provide Hungarian troops to the bloc's ongoing occupations of Afghanistan and the Serbian Province of Kosovo. Along the topic of NATO, Orban's Foreign Minister [attended](#) the early-December summit in Brussels and helped brainstorm ideas for how the US-led military alliance could get more heavily involved in the Mideast against ISIL. Assessed from a neutral perspective unadulterated by the sway of Orban's magnetic political personality and attractive advocacy of social conservatism, it's objectively accurate to state that he's one of the most pro-NATO leaders in the entire EU, and worse still, he's also the only one that's gained enough social 'trust' from the Central Balkan people to potentially mislead some of them down the path of formal American occupation.

Nationalist Pressures:

It was earlier stated that Orban, led by his own desires, won't intentionally do anything that would make the Balkan Stream and Balkan Silk Road projects unviable, believing that Hungary has too much to strategically lose than to foolishly play with fire for no tangible reason whatsoever. The problem arises when one becomes mindful of just how strong of an influence nationalist thought has on Orban and the rest of the population at the moment, and herein it's necessary to draw a definitive difference with patriotism. Nationalism and patriotism are commonly (but improperly) used interchangeably by many people, unaware that although they might at times manifest themselves in similar ways, they are conceptually separate strands of thought. Nationalists tend to be more influenced by racial interests than state-based ones whether they're cognizant of this reality or not, and in many of the cases where people blur the distinction between patriotism and nationalism (like in Hungary), the country in question has a strong degree of ethnic homogeneity. Patriotism

differs from the previous by placing a stronger emphasis on the whole country's interests, not just those of the titular majority, even if they come off as contravening the "racial interest" ardently supported by their nationalist counterparts.

A good example of this is in Russian Patriots supporting the authorities in the Muslim and autonomous Chechen Republic despite the majority of the Russian Federation being ethnic Russians and Orthodox Christian practitioners. A Russian Nationalist is absolutely opposed to any form of positive interaction with the non-Russian, non-Orthodox members of the country's society, believing that individuals who don't share these two demographic traits aren't worthy of being part of Russia. Per this example, Russian Nationalists are thus predisposed to the racist slogans of American proxy Alexei Navalny to "stop feeding the Caucasus", with the inference that Russia should 'cut them off' to become independent countries. This would lead to the voluntary Brzezinski-esque unravelling of the diverse Russian state and fulfill the US' principle geopolitical objective for a fraction of the cost. Comparatively, a Russian Patriot has a vested interest in preserving Russia's rich cultural, ethnic, and religious history and not in cutting the country apart based on identity lines, seeing his motherland's diversity as a source of its civilizational strength.

Returning back to Hungary after clarifying this important difference between concepts, it's difficult at the moment to tell whether Orban is a nationalist or a patriot, since, as was mentioned, his country is one of those hard-to-discern types where the vast majority of the population is ethnically homogenous. The deciding factor in assessing which of the two ideologies he actually adheres to is in his government's policies towards the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, where they constitute around 13% of the population heavily concentrated near the border. At this time, Orban hasn't taken any concrete moves in supporting that community's "separateness" from the Serbian state, but the real test will come if the nationalist Jobbik Party happens to stir up ethnic discontent [there](#) and prompts a news-making provocation that he's forced to respond to.

Should this happen, then the Hungarian Prime Minister would find himself in a political trap of his own making. He has already done so much to promote nationalism/patriotism (it's not yet clear which one because of the blur between them due to Hungary's demographic situation) that some citizens will surely be upset at him regardless of what he does because they too were confused over which ideology Orban had been peddling. The nationalists will be distraught to the point of potentially protesting against him if he doesn't take strong and forceful anti-Serbian measures in response to a Jobbik provocation in Vojvodina, whereas patriots will be equally upset with him if he does, realizing that such a move would endanger Balkan Stream and the Balkan Silk Road. The very zeitgeist that Orban thought he had under his control could unwittingly prove to be his undoing if the nationalist opposition chooses to put him in the spot and force his hand one way or the other. Along the same train of thought, the US could indirectly influence Jobbik in this direction, knowing that their nationalist ideology makes them gullibly susceptible to being led along such a route.

The anti-government protests that could erupt in this scenario would be much more intense than the ones that preceded them in October 2014. At that time, NGOs organized thousands of people to march against him after the government levied a [controversial internet tax](#), and John McCain even joined in the fray by maligning Orban as a "[neo-fascist dictator](#)". While the fervor quickly died down after Budapest backtracked on the tax, the message that the protests sent was clear - the US is more than capable of stirring up Color Revolution unrest in Hungary if Orban doesn't fall in line with its preferred policies. While he's 'behaving' himself nice and well for the moment, if he ever does decide to 'step out of line' in a

significant enough manner, the US could revive the Color Revolution threat against him, but by replacing the anti-tax protesters with much more aggressive and violent nationalists, provided of course that Orban falls deeper into the trap by refusing to go along with the anti-Serbian provocation scenario that's set for him. Predictably, however, he'll probably acquiesce to whatever he's being guided to do, since the October 2014 Color Revolution scare seems to have made a significant enough of an impression on him that he's now promoting NATO to the highest degree.

The Verdict:

Orban pretends to be against 'the system', but in all actuality, he supports the US' unipolar deigns in crafty and unexpected ways. His continental popularity stems mostly from being a vanguard of the evolving strategic paradigm for controlling post-"refugee" Europe, where nationalism/patriotism (again, the difference depends on domestic contexts and the individual leader practicing it) are becoming the order of the day. The US is turning away from using liberal-progressives as its agents of choice and is instead switching to nationalists and fake patriots, with the latter label being used to describe people who verbally espouse "patriotism" but actually practice nationalism. Orban falls under this category, since he's deceptively gained much of Central and Eastern Europe's trust through his conservative commentary and nationalist actions regarding the "refugee" crisis, but he's a Trojan Horse in spreading normative support for NATO.

It's too early to tell if he'll voluntarily practice his nationalist-NATO policies towards Serbia or if he'll have to be tricked into doing so by the US and/or Jobbik, but there's a very real possibility that Hungary will one day activate its ethnic card in Vojvodina for whatever political ends it has in mind (be it to gain a one-up advantage on 'upstream' Serbia or to viciously destroy the multilateral Balkan Stream and Balkan Silk Road projects). For these reasons, while Orban might appear like a willingly enthusiastic multipolar partner in some respects (and he could very well be serious in his cooperative intent owing to the strategic-economic advantages that Hungary will predictably reap), he's also an easily misled unipolar stooge in others, if not an outright agent of the US.

To be continued...



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