

NATO Consolidates Grip On Former Yugoslavia

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North Atlantic Treaty Organization chieftain Anders Fogh Rasmussen has spent much of the past week in the former Yugoslavia, visiting Slovenia and Croatia on July 5 and 6, respectively, then arriving in Kosovo with the 28 members of the North Atlantic Council on July 11.

Twenty years after NATO was unleashed as an active warfighting force with a naval blockade of Yugoslavia's Adriatic coast (*Operation Maritime Monitor* and *Operation Maritime Guard*, 1992), enforcement of a no-fly zone in Bosnia (*Operation Deny Flight*, 1993, which included shooting down Bosnian Serb jets) and large-scale bombing of Serb targets (*Operation Deliberate Force*, 1995, involving 400 alliance aircraft), NATO has returned to the Balkans to complete the absorption of former Yugoslavia as a base for operations elsewhere in the world and for the recruitment of expeditionary troops for wars abroad.

In the interim the Western military bloc conducted a savage 78-day bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 before expanding the scope of its wars and other military operations to include Afghanistan and Pakistan, Libya and the Horn of Africa.

NATO military intervention in former Yugoslavia brought about the total dissolution of that nation into its six federal republics and the secession of the Serbian province of Kosovo, which is the world's first NATO-created pseudo-state; a crime-ridden, ethnically-cleansed, economically unviable black hole which should serve, and for the past thirteen years should have served, as a stark, irrefutable warning of what the aftermath of NATO intervention portends for later victims of the same.

In his visit to Slovenia, the first former Yugoslav republic to be recruited into NATO, Rasmussen praised his hosts for contributing to the bloc's missions in war zones and post-conflict occupied territories in stating:

"Your contribution to our missions proves that despite tough economic times, Slovenia can be counted upon. That is why we greatly appreciate your participation in Kosovo and Afghanistan. You are showing a strong commitment to Kosovo and you are doing a great job in helping to advise and train Afghan security forces."

All former Yugoslav republics are now either full NATO members or partners. Slovenia joined the bloc in 2004 and Croatia in 2009. Macedonia would have been dragooned into the alliance along with Croatia except for the longstanding name dispute with Greece, but it has been granted a Membership Action Plan, the final stage before full NATO accession, as has Montenegro, with Bosnia to soon follow.

Montenegro, which became an independent micro-state in 2006 in no small part with NATO assistance, joined the alliance's Partnership for Peace program only six months after declaring independence, while the ink was hardly dry on the declaration. In the same month, December, Bosnia and Serbia, which had also become an independent nation in June after the breakup of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, also joined the Partnership for Peace. In October of that year the USS Anzio Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser docked in the Montenegrin port of Tivat, demonstrating the rapidity with which the Pentagon and NATO move to effect the military integration of newborn states it had not much earlier bombed. (As of earlier this year, Afghanistan and Iraq are members of NATO's new Partners Across the Globe military cooperation program.) *The Associated Press* reported of the above visit: "Montenegro is eager to join NATO's Partnership for Peace outreach program, considered a stepping stone to alliance membership."

Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia have provided NATO contingents for its Kosovo Force (KFOR), initially a 50,000-troop army that entered Kosovo in June 1999.

Montenegro didn't exist as a sovereign state at the time, but Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia fulfilled their NATO obligations by deploying troops to Iraq from 2003 onward. Currently Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia have troops serving with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

While in Slovenia last week, NATO's Rasmussen also lauded the nation's joint contribution with fellow Adriatic Charter members Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro (and Slovenia) in training Afghan security personnel at the Military Police School in Kabul as part of the broader NATO program to create NATO-standard security structures in the war-afflicted country.

The Adriatic Charter is an American initiative established in 2003 to recruit Adriatic Sea littoral and neighboring states into full NATO membership. The original four members were the U.S., Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. Albania and Croatia have since joined the bloc and Macedonia has not only for the reason mentioned above. In 2008 Bosnia and Montenegro became members and Serbia joined as an observer.

At a U.S.-Adriatic Charter defense ministers meeting in Macedonia this March, Celeste Wallander, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia, said the U.S. expects Kosovo and Serbia to join the group. Agim Ceku, minister of Kosovo's fledgling

armed forces, the NATO-created Kosovo Security Force, participated in the meeting along with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta's representative Wallander and the defense ministers of Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

In Croatia on July 6 Rasmussen praised the nation's role in heading up the Adriatic Charter nations' training mission in Afghanistan: "Together, under Croatia's leadership, those countries are building stability in Afghanistan - and cooperation between themselves. They are building security in the heart of Asia but also in the heart of Europe."

Croatia's non-NATO partners in Afghanistan - Bosnia, Macedonia and Montenegro - are serving an apprenticeship for NATO membership, as Croatia and Slovenia did earlier in Iraq. In Rasmussen's words: "NATO is committed to the future of the whole region in the Euro-Atlantic family. And we are determined to help you along that path."

The self-serving flattery bestowed on Croatia and Slovenia was too much for the leading Slovenian newspaper *Delo*, which on July 7 urged the nation to leave NATO as the obligation to spend money on the "failed project" in Afghanistan is diverting resources desperately needed for retirees, young families, culture and education. [1]

Joining NATO, the daily continued, was the largest and most expensive mistake in the country's history, as it is not an alliance that protects its member states but one which intervenes around the world; in fact has waged wars in three continents.

On July 11 Rasmussen and the ambassadors of the 28 NATO member states, collectively constituting the North Atlantic Council, arrived in the Kosovo capital Pristina to meet with head of state Hashim Thaci, who like de facto defense minister Agim Ceku is a former leader of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army.

Without a scintilla of irony, shame or qualification, he delivered himself of this statement:

"NATO is fully committed to the stability and security of the Western Balkans - nowhere more than in Kosovo. For the past 12 years, the NATO-led mission here has helped preserve a safe and secure environment for all people in Kosovo - firmly, fairly and impartially."

Practically as he spoke, two suspects were arrested for the murder of a Kosovo Serb, Sava Mojsić, and the wounding of two others last November. A raid conducted by EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo) police also resulted in the arrests of two other men for possession of automatic rifles and hand grenades.

The Serbian mayor of Kosovska Mitrovica, Krstimir Pantić, said EULEX and KFOR had no intention of apprehending the murderers, although they knew who they were, stating, "There is evidence, the suspects are well-known and they are protected by the interior

minister of the so-called Republic of Kosovo and the Kosovo secret police chief.”

Over a quarter of a million Serbs, Roma, Gorani, Turks and other members of ethnic minorities have been driven out of Kosovo since NATO arrived thirteen years ago – several hundred, along with ethnic Albanians, have been murdered in cold blood – and the NATO chief can pontificate about “stability and security” and “a safe and secure environment for all people in Kosovo.”

Having dispensed with such obligatory rhetoric – monstrous lies – Rasmussen got down to business at his press conference in Pristina, stating:

“Make no mistake. We will make sure KFOR remains robust and credible. We will make sure it has the support it needs for as long as it needs.”

Because, and only because, “We are committed to the Euro-Atlantic future of this region.” Which is to say, having bombed and occupied the former Yugoslavia for a generation, NATO is now conducting the final mopping-up operation.

Note

1) Slovenia’s leading newspaper calls for country to leave NATO

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2012/07/07/slovenias-leading-newspaper-country-must-leave-nato/>

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