

NATO's War Plans For The High North. The Militarization of the Arctic

Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea

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Since the beginning of the year [2009] the United States and NATO have repeatedly indicated in both word and deed their intention to lay claim to and extend their military presence in what they refer to as the High North: The Arctic Circle and the waters connecting with it, the Barents and the Norwegian Seas, as well as the Baltic.

Washington issued National Security Presidential Directive 66 on January 12, 2009 which includes the bellicose claim that "The United States has broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic region [which] include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations." [1] Later in the same month the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] held a two-day Seminar on Security Prospects in the High North in the capital of Iceland attended by the bloc's secretary general and its top military commanders.

This coordinated initiative has been covered in a previous article in this series [2] and plans by the West to encroach on Arctic territory and confront Russia in the western region of the ocean have been addressed in another. [3]

Over the past month efforts by NATO member states, individually and collectively, to increase their military presence and warfighting ability in the High North have accelerated dramatically.



Sweden: NATO's Testing Ground And Battleground

The alarming and aggressive campaign is exemplified by the ongoing 10-day Loyal Arrow 2009 NATO military exercises being conducted in Sweden, described by a major American daily newspaper as “A NATO rapid-reaction force...on a war footing in Swedish Lapland” which consists of “Ten countries, 2,000 troops, a strike aircraft carrier, and 50 fighter jets - including the US Air Force’s F-15 Eagle...participating in war games near contested Arctic territories.”

The same source reflects that “Choosing this place for war games reflects the growing strategic importance of the Arctic, which is estimated to contain a quarter of the Earth’s oil and gas...” [4]

A NATO website offers these details:

“Ten NATO and non-NATO nations will participate in the live flying exercise LAW 09 in Sweden from 8 to 18 June 2009. Some 50 fast jets, which will be based at Norrbotten Wing, Sweden will participate in the exercise. The aim of the exercise is to train units and selected parts of the NATO Response Force Joint Force Air Component Headquarters in the coordination and conduct of air operations. Additionally, NATO Airborne Warning and Control (AWACS) aircraft, as well as other transport aircraft and helicopters, will support the exercise. Some of the participating units will be flying in from bases in Norway and Finland.

“The exercise is based upon a fictitious scenario. Within this scenario, elements of the NATO Response Force (NRF)...will be deployed to a theatre of operations. The NRF was created to provide the Alliance with an effective tool to face the new security threats of the 21st century. It is a rapidly deployable, multinational and joint force with modern equipment able to carry out the full range of Alliance missions whenever and wherever needed, as tasked by the North Atlantic Council.

“About 800-900 troops from Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey and the United States as well as NATO’s airborne early warning component will participate.” [5]

US Air Force personnel flew in from the US-used base in Mildenhall, England and “Air and ground crews from United States Air Forces in Europe joined military units from about 10 other nations June 8...” [6]

The war games are based in the Bothnian Bay in the Northern Baltic Sea and are the largest display of air power in the area's history.

On the first day of the exercises, June 8, it was reported that "The NATO-led air force drill Loyal Arrow started in Northern Sweden today. The British aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious [with 1,000 soldiers] reached the Bothnia Bay. 50 airplanes and 2,000 persons, aircraft carrier personnel included, from ten countries will take part in what will be the biggest air force drill ever in the Finnish-Swedish Bothnia Bay." [7]

Sweden's Lulea airbase and Norway's at Bodo and Finland's at Oulu are being employed for the NATO war games.

Loyal Arrow is centered on a "fictitious scenario" in which "the NATO Response Force (NRF) [is] deployed to a theatre of operations, Lapistan.

"Lapistan is a fictitious undemocratic, unstable country that is ruled by a military clique which hosts terrorist training camps. The exercise's scenario is centered over a conflict over oil and natural gas with Bothnia, a fictitious neighboring NATO country, with some presence of nearby neutral fictitious countries Nordistan and Suomia, who refer to Norway and Finland, respectively." [8]

As the war games were getting underway Stefan Lindgren, vice chairman of Afghan Solidarity in Sweden, filed a complaint with the official ombudsman for discrimination matters and stated that the NATO exercise was both a defamation of the Sami people and also Muslims in Sweden. The "istan" ending reveals a mental connection with NATO's war in Afghanistan.

The indigenous people of the region, the Sami, protested against the racist term "Laps" - forbidden in Sweden - and also against the description of the exercise. [9]

A mainstream newspaper elaborated on the controversy in reporting that "The main indigenous people of Northern Sweden, the Sami, are discontented with the fact that the 'enemy nation' in the exercise's scenario is called 'Lapistan' and have joined the protesters against NATO in the demonstrations. The name is invented by NATO and resembles the derogatory term for Sami people, 'Lapps'". [10]

The American Christian Science Monitor followed up on the story on June 11 with the following quotes:

"These exercises increase the risk of a conflict,' says Anna Ek, head of Sweden's Peace and Arbitration Society. 'They send out offensive and aggressive signals. Should we really be planning for a conflict with Russia while there is still a window of opportunity for cooperation in the Arctic?'

"Neither the Parliament nor the defense committee were informed about the size of this exercise,' says Peter Radberg, a Green Party member of Parliament. 'It looks like a serious attempt to market NATO in Sweden....It risks causing a military escalation in a region where we should be disarming.'" [11]

As the first excerpt reveals, not only were the security, livestock and the very status of the Sami people of northern Sweden endangered, but Loyal Arrow 2009, in conjunction with other military exercises and initiatives to be examined later, is directly targeted against

Russia, NATO's only challenger in its drive into and for domination over the Arctic.

The NATO Out of Sweden group organized activities in Lulea (the site of the Swedish airbase used in the drills) and demonstrated against NATO's use of Norrbotten County as a training ground and firing range for prospective actions at home and abroad.

The organization's Anna-Karin Gudmundson said, "This [exercise] can be perceived as very provocative. The Barents region with its proximity to the Arctic makes it a sensitive area. With all the talk about melting ice and the fight over natural resources this can look like a demonstration of power from NATO's side." [12]

Ofog, another Swedish peace group, announced on June 8 that it was deploying activists to a bombing range near the Vidsel Air Base in Norrbotten to "stop the preparation of war crimes" and to "prevent NATO from bombing the area further." [13]

The group issued a press release that said "Just like NATO we will be in the air, on the land and in the sea. We will do everything in our power to show NATO that their business is hideous and deadly.

"NATO is not a defensive alliance. It is the world's largest nuclear weapons club and war machine." [14]

On the second day of the exercises, June 10th, five members of Ofog were arrested after penetrating the bombing range.

Six more members were arrested as the NATO bombing continued and one of the Ofog activists at the range, Miriam Cordts, said: "NATO is the world's biggest war machine and nuclear weapons club. This aerial exercise in northern Sweden is their largest this year and is designed to make the NATO Response Force even more able to attack wherever they want. 90% of those who are killed in NATO's wars are civilians. It is our responsibility as human beings to do all we can to stop this exercise." [15]

The Ofog activists' intention was to bring a halt to the bombing with their presence, but the NATO exercise continued.

A spokesman for the group commented, "We know that NATO bombs civilians, but this is the first time they have threatened to bomb civilians in Sweden" [16]

Sweden, though not yet a full member of NATO, is hosting the exercises through obligations to the Alliance's Partnership for Peace program and in doing so advancing ever closer to complete NATO integration despite opposition by the majority of Swedes.

Sweden In NATO: Neutrality Is Past Tense

The groundwork for Sweden's incorporation into NATO has been methodically planned for years.

In mid-May Member of Parliament and Liberal Party foreign policy spokesperson Birgitta Ohlsson stated that "For me, and for the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet), it is more evident than ever before that Sweden should be a member of NATO. Political parties can't just follow public opinion, they have to influence it too - and isolationism is very passe." [17]

Shortly thereafter the nation's defense minister, Sten Tolgfors, announced the "biggest restructuring of Sweden's armed forces in modern times" and that "Sweden will, for the first time in many decades, have one defense organization."

What he meant was defined more clearly when he added, "Today, we have a force with one organization for national use, based on a conscript system, and another for international use, based on standing units."

"We will reform our defense based on the lessons we learned from our lead-nation position with the Nordic Battle Group. We will have a battle-group-based defense in the future."

"We have built the Nordic Battle Group together. We are together with Finland in Afghanistan."

That Afghanistan wasn't the only rationale behind Sweden's increased militarization and integration into NATO structures was revealed when Tolgfors, while speaking of the Loyal Arrow exercises in June, said, "Russia has certainly raised its tone of voice over the last couple of years...." [18]

Two days later he visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels where he met with Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and "briefed the Secretary General on the upcoming transformation of Sweden's defence capabilities, which should make Swedish forces more efficient, more deployable and more capable of conducting international operations." [19]

Four days before NATO launched the Loyal Arrow war games, Sweden's ambassador to France, Gunnar Lund, "speaking on behalf of Sweden's foreign minister Carl Bildt," promoted the use of a five-nation Nordic contingent of the European Union's battle groups (to function under NATO's lead through the Berlin Plus and related agreements) in saying "On the military side, I would like to draw your attention to the use of battle groups - a potentially very useful tool to the support of international peace and security."

The Swedish government regretted that the EU hadn't earlier employed the Nordic battle group - with forces from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Ireland and Estonia - and "did not give the green light to sending it to Chad and the Central African Republic last year." [20]

(Sweden, Finland and Ireland are three-fifths of Europe's remaining - nominal - neutral nations, the other two being Switzerland and Austria. All five have now deployed military contingents of varying sizes to serve under NATO in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. In Switzerland a peace group, Switzerland without an Army, "accus[ing] the government of trying to move neutral Switzerland to the NATO military alliance," recently turned in over 100,000 signatures - the amount required to introduce legislation in the parliament - to the federal government against a proposed purchase of new fighter jets, to insure NATO interoperability.)

1,300 Kilometer Border With Russia: NATO Integrates Finland

Last month a meeting of the Nordic Defence Ministerial [the defense chiefs of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland; there is also a joint Nordic-Baltic Defence Ministerial) occurred in Finland where the defense ministries of the five nations "discussed security developments in Northern Europe and exchanged views on the ongoing national

defence transformation processes” and “evaluated common challenges in Africa and Afghanistan.”

“The ministers discussed developments in the High North and possibilities for Nordic cooperation there.

“Similarly, they analyzed possibilities for enhanced Nordic cooperation in the Baltic Sea.” [21]

This came shortly after “Former Norwegian foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg...concluded in a report on Nordic defence cooperation that the five Nordic countries should strengthen security cooperation in the Arctic...” [22]

Less than a week later US Air Force pilots were in Finland to train their counterparts in air refueling procedures of the sort used for long-distance missions and warfare.

According to the operations officer of the Finnish Air Force’s 21st Fighter Squadron, “a captain who asked to remain anonymous due to government policy,” the week-long exercises with Navy F-18 Hornets and an Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker, “help[ed] the squadron, and the service as a whole, meet a government requirement to be able to deploy outside Finland to support NATO forces. Although Finland is not a member of NATO, it is a part of the organization’s Partnership of Peace program, which USAFE [U.S. Air Forces in Europe] also supports.

“This opens our eyes to a much wider operating area.”

The report from which the above comes informed readers that “It’s the first time U.S. Air Forces in Europe has deployed a tanker team to Finland for an air-to-air refueling operation.” [23]

On May 25 of this year the Finnish foreign trade and development minister, Paavo Vayrynen of the Centre Party, said his party’s partner in the ruling coalition, the conservative National Coalition Party, “had mounted a sustained campaign to mould public opinion behind NATO membership.” [24]

Similar initiatives, concerted and surreptitious, to drag nations into NATO against the will of a clear majority of their populations are underway in Sweden and Cyprus, inter alia.

From June 1-4 NATO’s Allied Command Transformation (ACT), based in Norfolk, Virginia, and the Finnish Defence Forces conducted a NPETN [NATO & Partners’ Education and Training Portal] in Helsinki.

A Turkish air force colonel assigned to NPETN described the program as “basically a human network that provides a venue to the members including the NATO Defense College, Joint Warfare Centre, Joint Force Training Centre, NATO School, NATO Communications and Information Systems School, NATO Maritime Interdiction Operational Training Centre, NATO Centres of Excellence, and NATO and Partner Nation’s military education and training centres.” [25]

The three-day conference wasn’t a bilateral affair between NATO’s headquarters in the United States and Finland, however, as it took in nations from no fewer than five continents.

“For the first time in conference history, a representative from Australia, a NATO Contact Country, will attend the discussions.”

The same Turkish NATO representative quoted earlier said, “The conference gives us the opportunity to reach our goals because we will have more input from our Partner Nations, representatives from NATO, Partnership for Peace (PfP), Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), Contact Countries (CC).” [26]

With NATO’s 28 full members, 25 Partnership for Peace candidates, seven members of the Mediterranean Dialogue, six of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative [the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council] and several Contact Countries like Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, etc., the number adds up to nearly a third of the 192 nations in the world.

On the day after the NATO conference in Finland’s capital ended, the nation’s police arrested six peace activists for painting NATO symbols in – blood – red on the walls of the Finnish Defence Command headquarters in Helsinki.

The group, Muurinmurtajat, released a statement saying “it wanted to draw attention to how the practical work of bringing Finland militarily closer to NATO is being done at the Defence Command.” [27]

Five days later the NATO Consultation, Command and Control Agency (NC3A) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Finland on defense technology.

“Finland is a long-standing participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace programme with a strong track record of contributing to NATO missions and exercises.

“Sweden was the first partner country to sign a similar agreement with NC3A in 2007.” [28] On the same day the Finnish armed forces began “their largest military exercise in decades.”

Maanvyöry 2009 (Landslide 2009) includes “18,000 service men, including 7,000 reservists from all three branches of the service.” [29]

Norway: NATO Moves Its Military Into The Arctic

On June 2nd it was announced that Norway will move its Operational Command Headquarters from the south of the nation at Stavanger north to Reitan outside Bodo, “thus making Norway the first country to move its military command leadership to the Arctic.”

“The move is in line with the Government’s increased focus on the northern regions. With the new location above the Arctic Circle, Norway’s supreme operational command will gain first hand contact with all questions concerning the High North.” [30]

During a meeting of NATO parliamentarians in Oslo from May 22-26 NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer held meetings with Prime Minister Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister Store and Defence Minister Strom-Erichsen and had an audience with King Harald V. “Discussions focused on NATO’s post-summit agenda, including the upcoming update of the Alliance Strategic Concept, relations with Russia and new security challenges facing Allies.” [31]

At the same meeting of NATO parliamentarians Norwegian cabinet members told the participants that “NATO should increase its role in the High North,” with State Secretary for Defence Espen Barth Eide insisting “that the High North should be addressed by the next reorganisation of the NATO command structure....” [32]

Norwegian Ambassador to NATO, Kim Traavik, escorted the ambassadors of five fellow NATO countries on a “study trip” to the north of the country after the parliamentary meeting ended to inspect the site of the intended future conflict.

A week before, Norwegian Minister of Defence Anne-Grete Strom- Erichsen “outlined the importance of shaping a common position in defence and security matters concerning the High North. The Minister particularly called for ‘strengthening the relevance of NATO.’ Considering Russia’s recent push in its military and economic spheres in the Arctic Sea, Strom-Erichsen sees a worrying potential for a possible destabilisation in the region.” [33]

The defense chief in her own words:

“The Alliance is at the core of the security and defence strategies of all but one Arctic Ocean state. It therefore cannot avoid defining its role in the area. The challenge will be to devise policies that address fundamental Western security interests....” [34]

At the current time NATO’s Allied Command Transformation is conducting a CWID [Coalition Warrior Interoperability Demonstration] in Lillehammer, Norway from June 1-26 “with particular emphasis on those that would be deployed with NATO-led operations such as Article 5 Response, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Active Endeavour, Kosovo Force or within a NATO Response Force (NRF)....” [35]

An Article 5 response means activating NATO’s collective military assistance provision as has been done with the nearly eight-year-old Afghan war.

On June 6th it was reported that Norway had established an historical record in arms exports and that “Most of the export of Norwegian defence material goes to NATO member nations and to Sweden and Finland.” [36]

Further Encroachment On Russia: NATO In The Baltic Sea

It was reported late last month that NATO would continue its rotational air patrols over Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania until at least 2020. [37] As has been mentioned by Russian officials, the NATO warplanes involved are a five-minute flight from Russia’s second largest city of St. Petersburg.

The Baltic Eagle NATO Response Force (NRF-14) multinational exercise is being conducted from June 2-18 in the Adazi Military Area in Latvia to prepare the Baltic Battalion of Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian armed forces “to test the combat readiness level of the unit.”

“According to the exercise scenario, the troops will deploy into the region of a military conflict and will conduct a wide scale of operations....A significant number of modern weaponry and equipment, including third generation Spike anti-tank guided missiles, modern heavy SISU 8×8 multi purpose transporters, SISU armored personnel carriers, personal assault rifles G36, and others, will

be used in the exercise....”

The Baltic Battalion is a component of the NATO Response Force which in turn “is a highly ready and technologically advanced force of the Alliance made up of land, air, sea and special forces components that can deploy quickly wherever needed. It is self-sustainable and capable of performing missions worldwide across the whole spectrum of operations.” [38]

During the same period the US Navy is has been leading the annual Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercises in the region.

“Maritime forces from 12 countries will participate in the largest multinational naval exercise this year in the Baltic Sea June 8-19.

“The Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercise is an annual event aimed at improving interoperability and cooperation among regional allies” and this years includes naval forces from the US, Britain, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.” [39]

Present are US Rear Adm. John N. Christenson, commander of the Carrier Strike Group 12, and Swedish Rear Adm. Anders Grenstad, commander of the Maritime Component Command and “the Swedish equivalent of the U.S. Navy’s chief of naval operations.” [40]

Five days before BALTOPS 2009 began, the USS Mount Whitney – the flagship of the US Navy’s Sixth Fleet and the command and control ship for the Commander Joint Command Lisbon and the Commander Striking Force NATO, deployed against Russia in the Black Sea after last August’s Caucasus war – arrived off the coast of Lithuania and hosted American expatriate and current Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus.

The latter used the occasion to affirm that “On behalf of the entire nation, the Mount Whitney’s presence is significant to the entire country. It shows respect, provides additional strength and belief to fight for their commitment, but most importantly, the solidarity of the NATO community.”

The US commander responded with, “I would like to publicly thank Lithuania for their [sic] support in Kosovo, Iraq, and especially Afghanistan.” [41]

German Navy, Air Force Return To Neighborhood Of Leningrad

German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung toured the Baltics last week and met with his Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian counterparts to “discuss...pressing issues within NATO and the European Union” and to “strengthen the well-functioning security relations with the three Baltic states.” [42]

German warplanes are to take over the NATO Baltic patrol later this year, which is sure to conjure up memories among those in St. Petersburg old enough to have survived the 900-day siege of the city when it was Leningrad.

As is the arrival of the German navy recently. “A German auxiliary repair ship, one of 10 German units, provides support to more than 40 allied ships participating in [the] Baltic Operations exercise 2009 here....” [43]

NATO's Main Base On The Baltic: Poland

In mid-May a senior Polish defense official stated that "Poland expects a U.S. Patriot battery to be deployed on its soil in 2009 regardless of whether President Barack Obama opts to press ahead with missile defence plans in Europe" and urged NATO "not to neglect potential security threats closer to home in Europe and...expressed [the Polish government's] willingness to host alliance infrastructure." [44]

Washington was quick to oblige: "The U.S. Department of State has confirmed that the Patriot missile battery will be deployed in Poland regardless of what happens with plans for the missile shield system." [45]

Three days later the Financial Times reported that in relation to the Pentagon stationing Patriot missiles in Poland "talks were on track for the completion of final agreements in July, followed by a deployment of 100-110 US soldiers and 196 missiles by the year-end."

Polish Deputy Defense Minister Stanislaw Komorowski was quoted as saying, "This will be the first time US soldiers are stationed on Polish soil, other than those who come under NATO control, on exercises for example....This will be symbolic for Poland." [46]

In early June Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk affirmed "that Poland had not changed its mind about the U. S. anti-missile shield," [47] specifically the stationing of 10 American ground-based interceptor missiles in Redzikowo, northern Poland, site of a former Nazi German Luftwaffe airbase, another historical parallel that should make any informed and sensible Russian nervous.

Late last week Polish government spokesman Pawel Gras said that "the bilateral agreement on the deployment of a U.S.-sponsored anti-missile shield in Poland provided for the delivery of a combat-ready battery" and that planned US Patriot missiles would be "armed and stationed permanently." [48]

On the same day Poland's Defense Minister Bogdan Klich "announced that NATO will locate the Joint Battle Command Centre in Bydgoszcz, northern Poland, following a decision by defense ministers at a NATO meeting in Brussels." [49] The Joint Battle Command Centre will be added to the NATO Joint Forces Training Centre already in Bydgoszcz.

The meeting of NATO defense chiefs was held in Brussels on June 11 and included the defense ministers of all 28 NATO and 22 partner states; the heads of fifty national militaries discussed the war in Afghanistan, the occupation of the Serbian province of Kosovo, naval operations off the coast of Somalia and the Georgian-Russian conflict in the South Caucasus.

The defense chiefs of half a hundred nations not only discussed military operations in three continents but in addition "members of the Nuclear Planning Group held consultations on key current issues related to the Alliance's nuclear policy." [50]

The central component of NATO's 21st Century new Strategic Concept currently being crafted is a continuation and intensification of the bloc's drive east and Poland is marked for a large share of its military deployments and infrastructure.

Poland's Defense Minister Klich "highlight[ed] the fact that NATO has decided to heavily invest in Poland by modernizing military infrastructure including air and sea bases."

The sea bases will be on the Baltic and the air bases within easy striking distance of Russia and its two largest cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Klich offered details on the plans decided upon by NATO last Thursday in revealing that “The Alliance has made the decision to open a new NATO cell, a new joint regiment within NATO. According to the decision, commanders from three regiments will be located in Bydgoszcz.”

“In Bydgoszcz, we will have the permanent commanders of the battalion and other components: one of the six joint mobile modules, a security component and logistics and support operators.” [51] The unit stationed in Poland will be composed of approximately 200 NATO soldiers.

Several days earlier Klich invited the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and Russia’s neighbor Ukraine to join a collective international expeditionary brigade, for alleged peacekeeping operations.

“The Polish defense minister...said that the talks dealt with Ukraine’s cooperation with NATO and the European Union, as well as the countries’ role in military operations, including Ukrainian servicemen’s participation in operations in Afghanistan....The parties also discussed assistance to Ukraine in its efforts to join NATO....

“Ukrainian and Polish defense ministers Yuriy Yekhanurov and Bogdan Klich have invited the Baltic states to join the initiative on the formation of a joint peacekeeping brigade.” [52]

The First American War Against Russia In The Arctic: Lessons Learned And Not Learned

From May 11-21 NATO held the twice-annual Joint Warrior war games – Europe’s largest military exercise – off the coast of Scotland in the North Sea, which connects with the Norwegian Sea bordering the Arctic Ocean.

“More than 20 warships, 75 aircraft and hundreds of personnel were tested in various scenarios” including one in which “a task group of 33 ships and French marines were sent into the fictitious Northern Dispute Zone to tackle the ‘Dragonians’ who had been harassing the ‘Caledonians and Avalonians.

“Soldiers, sailors and air crews from Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and the US were also involved.” [53]

According to the same source the autumn Joint Warrior exercises will be extended from two to three weeks this year.

Regarding American participation in last month’s drills, “USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51), USS Porter (DDG 78), USS Philippine Sea (CG 58), USNS Kanawha (T-AO 193), and COMDESRON 24 took part in the scenario-driven engagement, along with vessels from nine other members of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO). [The Joint warrior] exercise [is] expected to increase fleet efficiency and battle readiness for U.S. and allied navies alike.” [54]

On the other end of the Arctic, from June 15-26 the US will conduct operation Northern Edge

2009 in Alaska which will include “More than 200 aircraft, including B-52s, F-16s and Blackhawk helicopters....In addition, the USS John C. Stennis and its carrier strike group will be operating out of the Gulf of Alaska during the exercises. The nuclear-powered supercarrier has an air wing of more than 70 aircraft and a crew of 5,000 sailors.” [55]

In a feature from a newspaper in the state of Michigan on May 28th, a review of a documentary film included this commentary on a US military unit deployed to Russia’s Arctic region in the ending days of World War I:

“[The] Polar Bear Expedition saw some 5,500 soldiers sent to Archangel, Russia, near the Arctic Circle, in September 1918, just two months before the armistice would end the war. The expedition took shape after the 1917 Russian Revolution, when Russia signed a separate peace with Germany and pulled out of the war.

“At the urging of Winston Churchill – then in the British war office – President Woodrow Wilson...agreed to furnish troops to support the anti-Communist White Russian army. The Americans and some Canadians, who thought they were headed to France, were placed under British command.”

US Senator Carl Levin was present for the screening of the documentary and told the audience, “There are lessons to be learned in history; there are lessons here....The lesson is we must be clear in our mission.” [56]

There are lessons indeed. US troops fought on Russian soil and ended up on the losing side. This is not the lesson that Levin and the political and military leadership of NATO countries as a whole have learned and so risk repeating them on a far grander and more dangerous scale.

Notes

- 1) National Security Presidential Directive 66
<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.htm>
- 2) NATO’s, Pentagon’s New Strategic Battleground: The Arctic
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/37104>
- 3) Canada: Battle Line In East-West Conflict Over The Arctic
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/39795>
- 4) Christian Science Monitor, June 11, 2009
- 5) Allied Air Component Command HQ Ramstein, April 9, 2009
- 6) U.S. Air Forces in Europe, June 8, 2009
- 7) Barents Observer, June 8, 2009
- 8) “Lapistan” inte bra sager Nato, Norrbottens-Kuriren via Wikipedia
- 9) Aftonbladet, June 5 by way of Stefan Lindgren
- 10) Barents Observer, June 8, 2009
- 11) Christian Science Monitor, June 11, 2009
- 12) Sveriges Radio via Barents Observer, June 8, 2009
- 13) The Local, June 10, 2009
- 14) The Local, June 8, 2009
- 15) From Agneta Norberg
- 16) Ibid
- 17) The Local, May 12, 2009

- 18) Defense News, May 17, 2009
- 19) NATO International, May 19, 2009
- 20) Agence France-Presse, June 3, 2009
- 21) Defense Professionals, May 13, 2009
- 22) Barents Observer, May 12, 2009
- 23) U.S. Air Forces in Europe, May 18, 2009
- 24) NewsRoom Finland, May 25, 2009
- 25) NATO International, Allied Command Transformation, May 29, 2009
- 26) Ibid
- 27) Helsinki Times, June 4, 2009
- 28) NATO International, June 9, 2009
- 29) Finnish Broadcasting Company, June 9, 2009
- 30) Barents Observer, June 2, 2009
- 31) NATO International, May 26, 2009
- 32) Jane's Defence Weekly, June 1, 2009
- 33) Norwegian Ministry of Defence, May 14, 2009
- 34) Ibid
- 35) NATO International, Allied Command Transformation, May 18, 2009
- 36) Norway Post, June 6, 2009
- 37) Defense News, May 28, 2009
- 38) Lithuania Ministry of National Defence, May 28, 2009
- 39) U.S. Naval Forces Europe, Navy NewsStand, June 6, 2009
- 40) Ibid
- 41) United States European Command, June 3, 2009
- 42) United Press International, June 9, 2009
- 43) U.S. Naval Forces Europe, June 11, 2009
- 44) Reuters, May 18, 2009
- 45) Warsaw Voice, June 3, 2009
- 46) Financial Times, May 21, 2009
- 47) Trend News Agency, June 3, 2009
- 48) Xinhua News Agency, June 12, 2009
- 49) Polish Radio, June 12, 2009
- 50) NATO International, June 11, 2009
- 51) Polish Radio, June 12, 2009
- 52) Interfax-Ukraine, May 29, 2009
- 53) BBC News, May 22, 2009
- 54) United States Navy, Navy Newsstand, May 22, 2009
- 55) Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, June 12, 2009
- 56) Hometown Life, May 28, 2009

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