

NATO Seeks to Punish Belgrade's Ukraine War Policy by Arming Kosovo

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*After supplying equipment and emboldening a militarized Ukraine, Britain has now started arming Kosovo's Albanians with Javelin and NLAW anti-tank missile systems. The British Embassy in Belgrade said that some Serbian media published fabricated claims of arms exports from the United Kingdom to Kosovo and claimed that there was no truth to those allegations. However, Serbian Minister of the Interior **Aleksandar Vulin** insists that the UK did transfer weapons to Kosovo, stating:*

“You are creating an army, arming them, giving them armored vehicles, anti-tank systems, drones, conducting training, we hear that you are sending them to trial courses in Turkey and Albania,” adding that the integration of Kosovo into NATO is only intended to “provoke Serbia.”

London seemingly wants to use the situation in Ukraine to increase pressure on the Serbs over the issues in Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH). Before the Russian military operation commenced in Ukraine, Britain was already heavily involved in security issues in the Balkans. It is recalled that Boris Johnson warned of an extremely dangerous situation in the Balkans as early as December last year and appointed Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to the Western Balkans.

Following Brexit, the UK did everything it could to keep its presence in Europe, including in the Western Balkans where the roots of conflict already exist and threaten to boil over. The UK advocated for the maximum strengthening of Operation Althea (formally the European

Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina), the strengthening of the NATO contingent in the country, and even coordinated the unilateral arrival of British contingents and forces on the territory of BiH.

Such British (and NATO) militarization awakens anxieties and counters the security of both Serbia and the Balkans, with the violent wars of the 1990's still fresh in the memory. The UK will likely continue to deliver equipment to the Balkans and also encourage other NATO members to strengthen anti-Serbian militaries in the region.

This comes as Montenegro seems synchronised in terms of Russophobia and pointing to Serbia as a disruptive factor in the region. This is ironic when considering Montenegro has no independence itself and follows the interests of the UK and US instead. Albania is also another key to Anglo designs over the Balkans, especially as they enthusiastically express their willingness to take practical steps to strengthen NATO forces in the Balkans.

The Western arming of Kosovo, bolstering of BiH, and encouragement for Montenegro and Albania to militarize is a warning to Serbia that it should not be so close to Russia, especially in the context of the Ukraine War.

The fact that foreign instructors are arriving with military systems in Kosovo is not a novelty because they have so far trained Kosovo Albanian soldiers in special forces, support units, telecommunications, anti-armour, PVO systems and more. However, this is likely just elementary training and an incomplete process with a future aim of fully equipping Kosovo's forces with much more powerful weapon systems.

London is making such a decision to arm Kosovo even though there is no complete consensus in NATO regarding the status of the territory, with Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain refusing to recognize its illegally declared independence from Serbia. Despite a consensus not being reached, London and Washington are working tirelessly to assist Pristina and construct some kind of Kosovo Army.

In effect, the Anglo Alliance are further radicalising Kosovo's Albanians and encouraging destabilisation in the Balkans. Instead of punishing Kosovo's de facto Prime Minister Albin Kurti for banning Kosovo Serbs from voting, they reward him with weapons and further integration into NATO.

Lightweight anti-missile and Javelin anti-tank systems, most commonly mentioned as part of a Western "support" package for the Ukrainian Armed Forces against Russia, have become part of the arsenal of Kosovo's so-called security forces. The acquisition was agreed at a meeting between Albin Kurti and Boris Johnson in February this year, and according to Serbia but denied by the UK, the first contingent of 50 systems was delivered in April.

At the same time, the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee will hold a session to discuss a draft resolution that will invite Serbia to harmonise with EU decisions in foreign and security policy, including sanctions on Russia. A draft resolution proposed by EP rapporteur for Serbia, Vladimir Bilczyk, expressed regret over the fact that Serbia failed to comply with EU sanctions following Russia's military operation in Ukraine and urged Serbian authorities to show "a real commitment to EU values."

The draft resolution reminds Serbian authorities that progress in the dialogue on normalising relations with Kosovo will determine the pace of EU accession negotiations. The proposed

text is to be adopted by the European Parliament at a plenary session this year.

In effect, the EU and the Anglo Alliance are working in tandem to move Serbia away from Russia. The EU provides the carrot of bloc membership while the Anglo Alliance provides the stick by arming, training and militarizing Kosovo's Albanians against Serbia. Given that Serbia has already experienced the full horrors of NATO and could do little as Europe divided the Serbian people by establishing new countries and not allowing them to be in the borders of Serbia, it is unlikely that Belgrade will be intimidated into abandoning its long, tried and tested relationship with Moscow.

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