

New Military Coalitions directed against Syria and Iran: Leading U.S. Officials Flock To Bulgaria Amid Mideast War Threats

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U.S. Secretary of State visited Bulgaria on February 5 to discuss that nation's contribution to NATO's war effort in Afghanistan, the intensification of joint military training and exercises, pressuring the host country into dropping Russian-made arms in favor of Western ones and the further sabotaging of energy deals - natural gas and nuclear - between Bulgaria and Russia.

The topic of ongoing developments in the Middle East was also discussed. In 2006 Clinton's predecessor Condoleezza Rice secured the use of several military bases in the nation, including the Graf Ignatievo and Bezmer air bases. A year earlier a similar arrangement was reached with neighboring Romania for the use of the Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base near Constanta on the Black Sea. The latter was employed by the Pentagon for the 2003 invasion of Iraq and since for the war in Afghanistan.

China's Xinhua News Agency wrote ahead of Clinton's visit that, "Analysts believe there is no doubt that Bulgaria will respond positively to Clinton's foreign policy, even if they are related to the issues in Iran or Syria."

A Bulgarian news source subsequently revealed that two days after Clinton's departure from Sofia a delegation of U.S. officials including Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for European and NATO Policy James Townsend, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs Marie Yovanovitch and Major General Mark Schissler from U.S. European Command visited the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry.

The Standart news agency wrote that the "extraordinary visit has additionally fed rumours about coming military operations in the Middle East and the formation of new coalitions of the kind existing against Iraq in 2003."

In addition to recent complementary efforts to enlist the South Caucasus nations of Georgia and Azerbaijan in support of military actions against Iran, and perhaps Syria as well, the U.S. and its NATO allies are adding to air and naval bases in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf monarchies others from which to strike Tehran and Damascus.

Rick Rozoff contributed to this report.

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