

Russia's Recognition of "North Macedonia" Is Part of the "New Balkans" Plan

By [Andrew Korybko](#)

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*Russia's recognition of "North Macedonia" disappointed many activists in what Moscow would have otherwise continued to regard as the **Republic of Macedonia** per its constitutionally legitimate name, but this purely political move shouldn't have been all that unexpected in hindsight because it correlates with speculation that Moscow plans to take the lead in shaping the "New Balkans".*

Surprise...Or Not?

Russia surprised many observers in the Balkans when it [recognized "North Macedonia"](#) in spite of its previous [principled opposition](#) to the post-Color Revolution government's blatantly illegal disregard of the population's unequivocal refusal to support this move during last year's referendum. Many activists in what Moscow would have otherwise continued to regard as the Republic of Macedonia per its constitutionally legitimate name are sorely disappointed by this purely political move and are struggling to understand why it happened, but the reason actually isn't all that unexpected in hindsight. It needs to be recognized that while there were veritably very powerful soft power merits to Moscow continuing to [inspire](#) (key word) protests by refusing to recognize the so-called "compromise name" that Zaev agreed to impose on his people for the express purpose of expediting the country's entry into the EU and NATO, the modern-day Russian Federation isn't driven whatsoever by ideological motivations like its Soviet predecessor but is instead coldly pragmatic in pursuing its own interests.

"Balancing" The "New World Order" And The Emerging Multipolar One

In contrast to the way that he's often portrayed by [Alt-Media](#) (and especially through misleadingly decontextualized memes and quotes spread by the ["Putinist" cult](#)), President Putin actually isn't as anti-Western as many of his international supporters have been encouraged to believe. He's indisputably a more sovereignty-focused leader than his predecessor and a much stronger one at that, but instead of being the "enemy" of the "New World Order" that a lot of people are under the mistaken impression that he is, President Putin assumed the role of a ["balancer"](#) between it and the [emerging Multipolar World Order](#) in order to enable Russia to decisively influence the balance of power between the American and Chinese superpowers in a game-changing way in pursuing his country's interests at any given time. This flexible grand strategy explains why Russia is simultaneously advancing the construction of alternative multipolar global institutions like the BRICS Development Bank in parallel with seeking a ["New Détente"](#) with the West in order to receive sanctions relief.

Co-opting And Guiding "Inevitable Outcomes"

By accepting this strategic backdrop in spite of the sadness that it might cause in the hearts of well-intended people the world over who placed their entire hopes in President Putin as a “hero” who they mistakenly thought put all of his effort into endlessly fighting against the “New World Order”, it’s much easier to understand Russia’s recognition of “North Macedonia” and the larger motivation behind this move. There’s no doubt that [“The Macedonian Name Deal Threatens To Erase European Identity”](#) and that [“Macedonia’s About To Become The World’s First ‘Politically Correct’ Police State”](#) because of it, but there realistically isn’t anything that Russia can do to prevent any of this from happening. In fact, when faced with seemingly “inevitable outcomes” such as [“Israel’s” “Yinon Plan”](#), Russia actually has a track record of involving itself in these processes to one extent or another as it tries to guide events in the direction of its own interests, with this oftentimes – but not always – overlapping with most of its partners’.

“The New Balkans”

As a case in point, the author reported on three important policymaking pieces by the highly influential Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) earlier this year to conclude that [“Russia Might Return To The Balkans In A Big \(But Controversial\) Way”](#), namely by facilitating Timothy Less’ controversial plan to partition the Balkans along ethno-religious lines through a series of “peaceful” and “democratic” processes instead of the more violent ones that took place when creating the so-called “New Middle East”. This “New Balkans” might not be the ideal future that most of its inhabitants wanted but it could conceivably represent the best “compromise solution” between the many competing visions by all sides and possibly preempt an outbreak of hostilities that could horribly replicate the “New Middle East” in the worst-case scenario, or at least that seems to be how Russia is tacitly “rationalizing” its recognition of “North Macedonia” and possible support of Vucic’s speculated upcoming “compromise” on Kosovo too (the latter of which was elaborated in the above hyperlinked analysis).

Concluding Thoughts

There’s no doubt that Russia’s decision to recognize “North Macedonia” disappointed many in the country and beyond, but that’s largely because they had a mistaken view of President Putin and only saw in this “geopolitical Rorschach blot” whatever they wanted, which in this context mostly seemed to be a “knight in shining armor” who “dedicated his life” to “opposing” the “New World Order”. Professor Dugin was far ahead of his time in writing about [President Putin’s liberal-conservative duality](#) in his 2015 book [“Putin vs Putin: Vladimir Putin Viewed from the Right”](#), which has in hindsight been vindicated by Russia’s visibly evolving approach towards the Balkans and its apparent decision to “co-opt” America’s strategic designs there in order to “guide” this seemingly “inevitable outcome” in the direction of its own interests. [Removing Macedonia from the map](#) (by backing its name change to “North Macedonia”) and eventually recognizing Kosovo are the two catalysts for building the “New Balkans”, though only time will tell if Russia did the right thing.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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About the author:

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