

A Sea Painted NATO Black

By [Pepe Escobar](#)

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Welcome to the latest NATO show: [Sea Breeze](#) starts today and goes all the way to July 23. The co-hosts are the US Sixth Fleet and the Ukrainian Navy. The main protagonist is Standing NATO Maritime Group 2.

The show, in NATO speak, is just an innocent display of “strengthening deterrence and defense”. NATO spin tells us the exercise is “growing in popularity” and now features more than 30 nations “from six continents” deploying 5,000 troops, 32 ships, 40 aircraft and “18 special operations and dive teams”. All committed to implement and improve that magical NATO concept: “interoperability”.

Now let’s clear the fog and get to the heart of the matter. NATO is projecting the impression that it’s taking over selected stretches of the Black Sea in the name of “peace”. NATO’s supreme articles of faith, reiterated in its latest summit, are “Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea” and “support for Ukraine sovereignty”. So for NATO, Russia is an enemy of “peace”. Everything else is hybrid war fog.

NATO not only “does not and will not recognize Russia’s illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea” but also denounces its “temporary occupation”. This script, redacted in Washington, is recited by Kiev and virtually the whole EU.

NATO bills itself as committed to “transatlantic unity”. Geography tells us the Black Sea has not been annexed to the Atlantic. But that’s no impediment for NATO’s goodwill – which the record shows turned Libya, in northern Africa, into a wasteland run by militias. As for the intersection of Central and South Asia, NATO’s collective behind was unceremoniously kicked by a bunch of ragged Pashtuns with counterfeit Kalashnikovs.

Meet the Bucharest 9

The White House [defines](#) its NATO eastern flank allies as the Bucharest 9.

The Bucharest 9 includes the members of the Visegrad Four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia); the Baltic trio (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania); and two Black Sea neighbors (Bulgaria and Romania). No Ukraine – at least not yet.

When the White House refers to “strengthening transatlantic relations”, this means above

all “closer cooperation with our nine Allies in Central Europe and the Baltic and Black Sea regions on the full range of challenges.” Translation: “full range of challenges” means Russia.

So welcome to the return, in style, of the Intermarium – as in “between the seas”, mostly the Baltic and Black, with the Adriatic as a side show.

After WWI, the drive for what would possibly become a geopolitical entente included the three Baltics, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Belarus and Ukraine. That concoction was made in Poland.

Now, under the hegemon and its NATO weaponized arm, a revamped Baltic-Black Sea intermarium is being pushed as the new Cold War 2.0 Iron Wall against Russia. That’s why the definitive incorporation of Ukraine to NATO is so important for Washington – as it would solidify the intermarium for good.

Double O Seven does Monty Python

The prequel to Sea Breeze took place last week, via a farcical Britannia Rules The Waves stunt enacted like a Monty Python sketch – yet with potentially explosive overtones.

Imagine waiting at a bus stop somewhere in Kent and finding a soggy blob – nearly 50 pages – of [secret documents](#) in a trash bin detailing Ministry of Defense elaborations on the explicitly provocative deployment of the Defender destroyer off Sebastopol, in the Crimean coast.

Even a BBC journalist embedded with the destroyer [smashed](#) the official London spin that this was a mere “innocent passage”. Moreover, the Defender weapons were fully loaded – as it advanced two nautical miles inside Russian waters. Moscow released a [video](#) documenting the stunt.

It gets better. The soggy blob found in Kent revealed not only discussions about the possible Russian reaction to the “innocent passage”, but also digressions about the Brits, “encouraged” by the Americans, leaving commandos behind in Afghanistan after the troop pull out next 9/11.

That would qualify as extra evidence that the Anglo-American-NATO combo will not really “leave” Afghanistan.

A vague “member of the public” contacted the BBC when he innocently found the geopolitically radioactive materials. No one knows whether this was a leak, a trap or a silly mistake. If the “member of the public” were a true whistleblower he would have gone the Wikileaks way, not BBC.

The “innocent passage” happened only hours after London [signed a deal](#) with Kiev for the “enhancement of Ukrainian naval capabilities”.

On the Russian reaction front, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova summed it all up: “London has demonstrated yet another provocative action followed by a bunch of lies to cover it up. 007 agents are not what they used to be.”

Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean front, which NATO considers its Mare Nostrum, two Russian Mig-31k fighters – capable of carrying Khinzal hypersonic missiles – were redeployed last week to Syria. The Khinzal range encompasses the whole Mediterranean, east as well as east.

Across the Global South, NATO promoting “global peace” in the port of Odessa, in the Black Sea, is bound to evoke shades of Libya cum Afghanistan. Austin Powers, self-billed [Agent Double Oh! Behave!](#) would perfectly fit in the Kent trash bin “secret documents” caper. “Oh. Behave!” totally applies to Sea Breeze. Otherwise, the opportunity might arise to say hello to Mr. Kinzhal.

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Pepe Escobar, born in Brazil, is a correspondent and editor-at-large at Asia Times and columnist for Consortium News and Strategic Culture in Moscow. Since the mid-1980s he’s lived and worked as a foreign correspondent in London, Paris, Milan, Los Angeles, Singapore, Bangkok. He has extensively covered Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia to China, Iran, Iraq and the wider Middle East. Pepe is the author of Globalistan – How the Globalized World is Dissolving into Liquid War; Red Zone Blues: A Snapshot of Baghdad during the Surge. He was contributing editor to The Empire and The Crescent and Tutto in Vendita in Italy. His last two books are Empire of Chaos and 2030. Pepe is also associated with the Paris-based European Academy of Geopolitics. When not on the road he lives between Paris and Bangkok.

He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Featured image: Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 will take part in Exercise Sea Breeze 21 from 28 June 2021 and run through 23 July 2021. (NATO courtesy photo by SNMG2)

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