

U.S. Recruits Russia As Junior Partner To Maintain Global Dominance

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This past weekend the world witnessed an event that until recently would have seemed inconceivable: A Russian head of state attended a summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

President Dmitry Medvedev participated in the NATO-Russia Council meeting during the second day of the summit in Lisbon, Portugal on November 20 with the heads of state of NATO's 28 member states.

The national leaders signed a Joint Review of 21st Century Common Security Challenges, agreed on resuming joint - NATO and Russian - theater missile defense cooperation and "reconfirmed a shared determination to assist in the stabilisation of Afghanistan and the whole region." [1]

That is, Russia's Medvedev endorsed NATO's agenda without adding anything of substance to it and without asking anything by way of a quid pro quo.

The joint declaration states that "we have embarked on a new stage of cooperation towards a true strategic partnership" and "that the security of all states in the Euro-Atlantic community is indivisible, and that the security of NATO and Russia is intertwined." [2] It also applauds Russia - referred to in the third person - for "facilitating railway transit of non-lethal ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] goods" through its territory for the war in Afghanistan and for "resuming its support to NATO's operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea." The summit declaration referred to Operation Active Endeavor, now in its tenth year, as an Article 5 mission; that is, as part of the first and to date only activation of NATO's collective military assistance provision.

On November 23 Russia signed a pact with NATO to allow "NATO to ship armored vehicles and other equipment from the region [the greater Afghan war theater] back to Europe using the same route via Central Asia and Russia." [3]

The day before the NATO-Russia Council meeting, where Russia was outnumbered 28-1, U.S. President Obama met privately with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Russia's Public Enemy No. 1 as military analyst Alexander Golts described him on the occasion.

Saakashvili, who was educated in the U.S. on a State Department fellowship and came to power through a U.S.-sponsored coup in 2003 which its perpetrators termed the Rose Revolution, ordered sniper and mortar attacks on South Ossetia on August 1, 2008, killing six people including a Russian peacekeeper. The day after the Immediate Response 2008 NATO war games led by 1,000 U.S. troops had ended and with American soldiers and

military equipment still in Georgia.

Six days later, as the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games was underway in Beijing, Georgia launched an all-out assault on the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali.

By the time Russian reinforcements beat back the Georgian offensive and the war ended five days after it had begun, 64 Russian service members had been killed and 323 wounded. The U.S. provided military transport planes to bring 2,000 Georgian troops back from Iraq for the fighting.

Shortly afterward the U.S. rewarded Georgia with the signing of the United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership and NATO formed the NATO-Georgia Commission, out of which an individually tailored Annual National Program(me) was created to further Georgia's integration into the North Atlantic Alliance.

The declaration issued by the recently concluded NATO summit in Portugal includes:

"At the 2008 Bucharest Summit we agreed that Georgia will become a member of NATO and we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions. We will foster political dialogue and practical cooperation with Georgia, including through the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme. We strongly encourage and actively support Georgia's continued implementation of all necessary reforms...in order to advance its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. We welcome the recent opening of the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia which will help in maximising our assistance and support for the country's reform efforts. We welcome Georgia's important contributions to NATO operations, in particular to ISAF. We reiterate our continued support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders....We continue to call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states."

During the opening hours of the Georgian-Russian war of 2008 Mikheil Saakashvili was reported to have held "several phone talks including consultations with NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer." [4]

That almost 400 Russian soldiers had been killed and wounded by Georgian military forces trained, equipped and supported by the U.S. and NATO before, during and since the war doesn't appear to mean much to President Medvedev. That his 28 fellow heads of state in the NATO-Russia Council had unanimously supported the perpetrator of the 2008 war while demanding Russia humiliate itself by rescinding its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia - and withdrawing its troops, thereby leaving both states easy prey for Georgia's next assault - also didn't take the fixed smile off Medvedev's face during his huddling with President Obama and 27 other NATO leaders this past Saturday.

The autumn session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Warsaw, Poland ending three days before the NATO summit began passed a resolution referring to Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "occupied territories." Also in advance of the summit, interim president of Moldova Mihai Ghimpu, who came to his position on the back of the latest "color" uprising in a former Soviet republic - the so-called Twitter Revolution of last year - sent a telegram to NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen calling on the U.S.-dominated military alliance for assistance in ousting 1,500 Russian peacekeepers from Transdnister (Pridnestrovie), which refused to join an independent Moldova (and be absorbed into

Romania, now a NATO member) as the Soviet Union was dissolving in 1990.

But the legendary “reset” button has been pushed by the Obama administration and now Russia has a new “strategic partner.”

Medvedev had only been president of Russia for five months when the war with Georgia broke out and five months after it ended George W. Bush was no longer president of the United States.

Obama and Medvedev, it has been observed, are their respective nations’ first fully post-Cold War heads of state. Medvedev was 26 when the Soviet Union collapsed. Obama was 30.

However, Obama’s vice president, Joseph Biden, was the first American official to visit Georgia after the war in his then-position of chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, pledged to work with the George W. Bush administration to secure \$1 billion in emergency aid for the Saakashvili government, and upon returning to Washington stated:

“I left the country convinced that Russia’s invasion of Georgia may be the one of the most significant event to occur in Europe since the end of communism....[T]he continuing presence of Russian forces in the country has severe implications for the broader region.”

Five days after leaving Georgia - on August 23 - Biden was announced as Barack Obama’s running mate in the 2008 presidential election.

Three weeks after taking up his current post as vice president on January 20, Biden spoke of plans to “press the reset button” with Russia without in any manner adjusting his position on the South Caucasus or any other issue: Russia had invaded Georgia. Georgia had not attacked South Ossetia. Russian actions were characterized as a belated confirmation of Cold War fears of Russian troops and tanks pouring over the territory of a defenseless nation whose only crime was to cherish freedom and democratic values...and so on.

When Obama and Biden moved into the White House in 2009 Obama had only served two-thirds of his first term in the U.S. Senate, where he had been catapulted from the Illinois state legislature in 2005. Biden had served six terms - 36 years - in the Senate and was the outgoing chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Biden, not Obama and the equally foreign policy-challenged Hillary Clinton at the Department of State, is the current administration’s international relations veteran and grey eminence.

Though Obama and Clinton have learned to parrot Biden’s position on not only the South Caucasus but on relations with Russia as a whole.

Last month Clinton met with a delegation led by Georgian Prime Minister Nikoloz Gilauri at the second annual United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership meeting in Washington, D.C. and repeated the accusation that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are “occupied territories,” a charge she made in July while meeting with fellow former short-term New Yorker Mikheil Saakashvili in Tbilisi.

On October 6 she stated: “We continue to call on Russia to end its occupation of Georgian territory, withdraw its forces and abide by its other commitments under the 2008 cease-fire

agreements.”

More broadly, she added:

“The United States remains committed to Georgia’s aspirations for membership in NATO, as reflected in the Alliance’s decisions in Bucharest and Strasbourg-Kehl. We strongly support Georgia’s efforts related to its Annual National Program, which promotes defence reform and guides cooperation with NATO. And we continue to support Georgia’s efforts on defence reform and improving defence capabilities, including NATO interoperability and Georgia’s contributions to ISAF operations in Afghanistan.”

Her comments on assisting the upgrading of Georgia’s military capability led “some observers to surmise that Washington may consider selectively relaxing the undeclared embargo on equipping and training Georgia for defense of the homeland. In that case, interoperability might extend beyond counterinsurgency in expeditionary operations, and start encompassing national defense. The latter would not only answer to Georgia’s own requirements but also enhance its credentials for eventual NATO membership, in line with NATO’s core mission.” [5]

The government of Abkhazia responded by challenging Clinton to label Afghanistan and Iraq “American-occupied territories.”

Russian President Medvedev was silent on the subject.

As to the ultimate purpose of the U.S. training Georgia’s armed forces for deployment to Afghanistan, in September Saakashvili told cadets at a military base in Georgia that “someone may say: ‘we have so many problems, our territories are occupied and there is no time now for going somewhere else to fight.’ But because of these very same problems that we have, we need huge combat experience...and that [Afghan mission] is a unique combat and war school.” [6]

As noted earlier, Obama set aside time on the first day of last week’s NATO summit in Portugal to meet privately with his fellow Columbia University alumnus Saakashvili.

Between Clinton’s meeting with Georgia’s prime minister and Obama’s with its president, State Department spokesman Philip Crowley sided with military ally Japan on what Washington also considers to be “occupied territory,” Russia’s Kuril Islands. On November 2 he affirmed “We do back Japan regarding the Northern Territories,” the Japanese term for the islands.

Russia’s Medvedev has made an odd choice of partners. Washington has consistently supported Japan, with which it is bound by the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, and Georgia, which it is committed to under the terms of the 2009 United States-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, against Russia in regards to territorial disputes and openly accuses Russia of occupying territory belonging to two of its major military allies.

There is no reciprocity in Russian-American relations.

Even in the transition from the former Bush administration’s interceptor missile plans for Eastern Europe, the new Phased Adaptive Approach of current administration – described by Obama himself in September of 2009 as providing “stronger, smarter and swifter defenses

of American forces and America's allies" than his predecessor's would have - will, as formalized by last week's NATO summit declaration, be far broader than 10 ground-based midcourse missiles in Poland.

That NATO chief Rasmussen has repeatedly advocated - and since the Lisbon summit has secured - a U.S.-controlled interceptor missile system over all of Europe as the continent is allegedly threatened because "30 countries have or are aspiring to get missile technology" without ever listing which nations he's speaking of or being pressed to do so by the news media is reprehensible. Four days before the summit began he told journalists in Brussels: "There is no reason to name specific countries, because there are already a lot of them." That the Russian government allows such statements to go unchallenged is criminal.

This May the Pentagon moved the first interceptor missiles into Europe by installing a Patriot Advanced Capability-3 battery in Poland as close to Russia's border - 35 miles - as possible. [7]

The day before the NATO summit in Lisbon, Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich revealed that the U.S. will start rotating F-16 Fighting Falcon jet fighters and Hercules military transport planes to Poland in 2013. The U.S. provided Poland with 48 F-16s between 2006 and 2008, the first deployment of the planes to a former member of the Warsaw Pact and the largest arms purchase in Poland's history. (Russia's Black Sea neighbors Romania and Bulgaria were next in line to purchase F-16 warplanes until the current financial crisis hit Europe.)

On November 16 the U.S. delivered the third of five C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft to Poland. "The C-130 aircraft are Poland's biggest transport planes. Polish crews used the planes to fly to Spain, Georgia, Iraq and Afghanistan." [8]

U.S. F-15C Eagle aerial combat fighters are operating out of the Siauliai Air Base in Lithuania until the end of the year for the now six-year-old NATO Baltic Air Policing mission, and earlier this month they participated in a Baltic Region Training Event with NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft at the Siauliai Air Base.

Fellow Baltic state Estonia recently opened the newly expanded and modernized Amari Air Base for use by NATO and U.S. warplanes. [9]

The U.S. has gained access to and has been employing eight military bases, including three air bases, in Bulgaria and Romania over the past five years.

This February Romania and Bulgaria were prevailed upon by the U.S. to provide missile shield installations for the Pentagon's - and now NATO's - interceptor missile system, in the case of Romania a land-based adaptation of the Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) as the 1936 Montreux Convention prohibits the transit of non-Black Sea nations' warships over 45,000 tons through the Bosphorus Straits and the Dardanelles into the sea and as such effectively excludes U.S. Aegis class destroyers and cruisers equipped with SM-3s. There are no comparable restrictions in the Baltic Sea region where the Pentagon is also going to station land-based SM-3s in Poland.

The U.S. and its NATO allies in Europe have yet to ratify the 1999 Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty - insisting, without legal foundation, on linkage with the demand for the withdrawal of Russian peacekeeping contingents in Transdniestria, Abkhazia

and South Ossetia – and the U.S. and NATO are in direct violation of it through establishing a permanent (in all but name) military presence in several Eastern European countries. [11]

The Pentagon and NATO resumed annual Sea Breeze exercises in Ukraine this July, presided over by commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe and Africa Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, after last year's exercise was cancelled because of domestic opposition, particularly in the Crimea where the exercises are held near the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol.

In former Soviet Central Asia, the U.S. State Department signed a military transit agreement with Kazakhstan and the Defense Department a cooperation agreement with Uzbekistan in the past two weeks. The U.S. and NATO conduct ongoing operations out of bases in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and, though not publicly acknowledged, Turkmenistan. Earlier this year reports surfaced of plans for the Pentagon to construct new multi-million-dollar training bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The U.S. and NATO are also expanding military exercises, deployments and facilities in the Arctic Ocean in concert against their only rival in the region, Russia. [12]

In return for the steadily advancing deployment of U.S. military personnel and infrastructure to Russia's borders, the Medvedev administration is expanding its accommodation of Pentagon and NATO operations in Central and South Asia by providing ever-broader transit and overflight rights for U.S. and NATO troops and equipment headed to Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Last week the U.S. secured a port in Lithuania as the latest transit hub for NATO's Northern Distribution Network to bring supplies and equipment by rail across Russia for the war in Afghanistan. Estonia and Latvia already supply docking facilities for goods coming to the Baltic Sea.

Two years ago Russia granted Germany permission to transit military equipment bound for the German military base in Termez, Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan. Several years before Russian passengers were forced off a train to provide seats for German troops. German troops in Russia.

After assigning its first troops to NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan recently, on November 12 Kazakhstan signed an agreement with the U.S. that allows American military aircraft to fly across the North Pole and over Kazakhstan to supply U.S. forces in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan is a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization and along with Russia and China a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It also shares borders with China and Russia. [13]

Last August U.S. and British troops led a NATO military exercise, Steppe Eagle 2010, in the country.

The new agreement permits the U.S. to send weapons over Kazakh airspace for the first time.

Between the Arctic Ocean and Kazakhstan lies Russia, which had to – and did – agree to the Pentagon flying military aircraft over its territory.

“The new arrangement will also substitute for a previous one under which U.S. military cargo planes flew combat troops and materiel to the Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where

they refueled, and from there to air bases in Kuwait and other destinations in the Persian Gulf, circumventing Iran which forbids American military overflights, and then either directly into the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan or to Pakistan.” [14] Or from Germany over Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus to the Caspian Sea and western Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan, where cargo was transshipped across Tajikistan to Afghanistan. The Northern Distribution Network also includes sea-land-sea shipments through the South Caucasus: Georgia and Azerbaijan on the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, respectively. Decidedly circuitous – and expensive – routes.

Flying over Russia and Kazakhstan allows U.S. military transport planes to go directly from Alaska to Afghanistan without refueling.

“The new route over the North Pole to Bagram Air Base, the military’s main air hub in Afghanistan, will allow troops to fly direct from the United States in a little more than 12 hours.” [15]

Last April Michael McFaul, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and senior director of Russian and Eurasian Affairs at the United States National Security Council, said the agreement would also “allow troops to fly directly from the United States over the North Pole to the region” in addition to supplies and equipment. “This will save money; it will save time in terms of moving our troops and supplies needed into the theater.” [16]

Additionally, “Chartered passenger jets could leave from Chicago and fly over the North Pole to deliver troops.” [17]

Presidents Obama and Medvedev prepared the way for the recent agreement in a verbal commitment on polar overflights in the summer of 2009. “The White House said at the time that the accord would set the stage for 4,500 polar-route flights a year over Russia and Kazakhstan, saving the U.S. government \$133 million annually in fuel, maintenance and other transportation costs.” [18]

The Obama administration has approved a \$708 billion defense budget for next year – the largest in constant dollars since 1946 and over \$2,300 for every man, woman and child in the United States – and Russia is kind enough to save it \$133 million on the war in Afghanistan. The Medvedev government is even more obliging considering that two of three armed groups the U.S. and NATO are laying waste to Afghanistan in the name of fighting are those of Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who Washington – and its then-CIA deputy director, now defense secretary Robert Gates – funded and armed to kill young Russian and other Soviet conscripts in the 1980s.

Soon U.S. and NATO planes, troops and equipment will criss-cross Russia from the west, east and north. Russia has made a new friend, has found a new “strategic partner,” at the expense of its traditional allies, its national interests and its self-respect alike.

The Russian position on regional and international developments has changed radically since then-President Vladimir Putin addressed the Munich Security Conference in February of 2007 and said:

“What then is a unipolar world? However one might embellish this term, at the end of the day it describes a scenario in which there is one centre of authority, one centre of force, one

centre of decision-making. It is a world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And this is pernicious, not only for all those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within. And this, certainly, has nothing in common with democracy. Because democracy is the power of the majority in the light of the interests and opinions of the minority.

“Today we are witnessing an almost unrestrained hyper-use of force – military force – in international relations, a force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts.”

Two years before, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held its fifth annual heads of state summit in Kazakhstan at which India, Pakistan and Iran (in addition to Mongolia) were welcomed as observer nations. Addressing the attendees of those nations and the six members of the SCO – Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – the host country’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev said they represented half of humanity. [19]

After the summit nations as diverse as Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal and even NATO member Turkey expressed interest in joining or affiliating with the SCO.

In reference to the SCO and to the RIC (Russia, China, India) and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, China, India) formats, discussions of a new multipolar world order, of a just, rational and peaceful world, and of a new international security architecture were heard in Eurasia and throughout the world.

When in 2007 Putin warned against the unrestrained use of military force in the world, his comments came three years after the U.S. and its NATO allies had launched three wars in less than four years: In Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. His speech was condemned in the West, after which Putin was labeled a new czar, commissar and so forth, but was welcomed in most of the rest of the world, even being translated and posted on the website of the Turkish armed forces.

Russia is uniquely positioned to rally the world against the post-Cold War unipolar dominance of what current U.S. president Obama referred to as – without irony, though under ironic circumstances: while receiving the Nobel Peace Prize – the world’s sole military superpower. [20]

Because of Russia’s size and location. Because of its vast natural resources, including oil, natural gas and uranium; its military technology; its possession of the only nuclear deterrent and triad of delivery systems that matches those of the U.S. Because of its history: Its predecessor state the Soviet Union had supported independence and national liberation movements in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America for 70 years.

Calls from Russia for, not a revival of a bipolar, but the creation of a multipolar world had to be taken seriously.

After the financial crisis that began on Wall Street in 2008 and soon engulfed the world, Russia suffered several serious blows, affecting its two main export products: Energy and arms.

The price of oil and natural gas plummeted precipitately, which in turn led to a decrease in foreign arms orders from oil- and gas-producing nations and a substantial depletion of

Russia's previously formidable gold and foreign exchange reserves. NATO expansion into Eastern Europe has also led new member states and candidates to discontinue the acquisition of military equipment made, designed and licensed by Russia in favor of U.S. and Western European arms, and deals struck during President Obama's recent visit to India have advanced the displacement of Russia as that Asian giant's main weapons provider.

Nevertheless, the abrupt about-face in Russia's foreign policy is not solely attributable to nor can it be excused by the above-cited developments.

In addition to unconscionably dragging out the completion of the nuclear power plant it has been building in Bushehr after draining Iran of substantial sums of money, in June of this year Russia joined China in voting for the harshest sanctions yet against Iran in the United Nations Security Council. The measures would have stronger, no doubt, without Russian and Chinese efforts to soften them, but both countries had the option of voting against and if need be vetoing them.

Claiming the very sanctions it had supported as the rationale, in September President Medvedev signed a decree which banned the delivery of S-300 air defense missiles to Iran - a \$1 billion dollar package for which Iran had already paid \$166.8 million - and other weapons including tanks, fighter jets, helicopters, ships and missile systems.

At several decisive points in the middle of this decade key Russian officials - including the country's foreign and defense ministers and top military commanders - warned against military attacks against Iran. It is to be assumed that such public pronouncements as well as back channel communications may well have stayed the hand of the U.S., Israel and perhaps both.

However, with the Russian political leadership's turn toward the U.S. and NATO, the prospects of an attack against Iran and all the catastrophic - perhaps cataclysmic - consequences it will unavoidably bring in its wake is heightened dramatically. To an extent that the conflagrations in Afghanistan and Iraq will seem mild in comparison.

In the past year and a half the only military-security formation Russia is a member of - the Collective Security Treaty Organization - has been weakened, perhaps fatally, with Belarus and Uzbekistan drawing back from commitments and joint exercises and the remaining members - Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - being courted and in varying degrees won over by the U.S. and NATO.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, once a model and a source of inspiration for the world, has degenerated into an ineffectual forum, with this year's summit in Uzbekistan a non-event where Russia's Medvedev stated that "Countries which have difficulties with their legal status cannot claim SCO membership." An allusion to Iran and the sanctions Medvedev's government had voted for two days before.

In February of this year Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov hosted Madeleine Albright and her NATO Group of Experts at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations as part of a tour in preparation for presenting a report on the military bloc's new Strategic Concept.

A leading Russian think tank, the Institute of Contemporary Development, issued a report whose contents, divulged in early September, detailed prospects for Russia collaborating

more closely with NATO, even discussing the nation joining the Alliance. President Medvedev is the chairman of the institute's supervisory board.

Two days after the NATO summit in Lisbon ended, Eduard Shevardnadze, former president of Georgia ousted by the "Rose Revolution" and the last foreign minister of the Soviet Union, told one of his nation's newsweeklies that "Russia will become a NATO member soon." [21]

In an analysis published three days before the Lisbon summit, Victor Kovalev, a corresponding member of Russia's Military Science Academy, warned of what confronts Russia as it intensifies its collaboration with NATO:

"The NATO summit which will convene in Lisbon on November 19-20 will adopt the alliance's new strategic concept switching NATO from regional defense to global-scale missions. In practice, the reform will institutionalize the West's victory in the Cold World War III. The already visible results of the victory include the ongoing departure from the Yalta-Potsdam system and the downscaling of the role played by the UN - or at least by the UN Security Council - in international relations."

"The new world order built as we watch on the ruins of the Yalta-Potsdam system automatically energizes a range of negative global processes and is prone with new wars or major regional conflicts. At the moment, the situation in the Far East already appears similar to that in Europe on the eve of World War II." This week's developments on the Korean peninsula bear out the contention.

"Under the circumstances, Russia's priority should be to avoid being dragged into the epicenter of the coming collapse. Hoping to get rid of competitors in the post-capitalist world and to enforce a 'final solution' of the Russian problem, the West is luring Russia into this very epicenter." [22]

The author also pointed out that by assisting the U.S. and NATO in their plans for Eurasia and much of the rest of the world Russia risks alienating the Muslim world. Approximately 20 percent of Russians are Muslims or of Muslim religious background and in 2005 Russia became a permanent observer at the 57-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Russia will also "be neutralized during the planned attack against Iran," though still be affected by whatever broader consequences such an action would entail.

It will expend material resources and political capital on the flagging and failing war in Afghanistan which has already contributed to an explosion in opium production that has led to 2.5 million heroin addicts and 30-40,000 annual overdoses in Russia according to the nation's Federal Drug Control Service.

The Russian analyst also stated that increased cooperation with NATO would lead to Russia Moscow "see[ing] its promising dialog with Beijing suspended as China would end up fully encircled" by a U.S.-created Asian NATO.

Russia will also be expected to distance itself from historical allies in the Arab world like Syria and Libya and to abandon burgeoning relations with Latin American partners like Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Nicaragua and Venezuela have recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which none of Russia's partners in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization have yet to do. The U.S. and its NATO allies - President Medvedev's new

friends – are adamant in branding the two new nations Russian-occupied Georgian territories. Moscow will be punishing its real friends and rewarding its competitors and adversaries.

Africa, where during the Soviet period Russia was the continent's main political and economic partner, will have to be acknowledged as the exclusive province of the Pentagon's Africa Command.

The analyst also warned that Western preconditions for integrating into NATO include the resolution of territorial disputes and could lead to demands to cede the Kuril Islands and even Sakhalin to Japan. That Russia would have to abandon claims in the Arctic Ocean in favor of NATO members the U.S., Canada, Denmark (through Greenland) and Norway, and "as a minimal concession" would have "to renounce its claim to the Lomonosov Ridge."

Russia might also be confronted with territorial claims by Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Georgia and Ukraine and be compelled to make concessions in the Caspian Sea. The Kaliningrad exclave is not free from potential claims by Poland, Lithuania and even Germany.

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It has been a long time since words like multipolar world have been mouthed by Russian officials. Expressions like a just, rational and peaceful world are as rarely heard.

By aligning itself with the U.S. and NATO, Russia has nothing to gain and everything to lose.

Notes

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- 2) NATO-Russia Council Joint Statement
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- 3) Xinhua News Agency, November 23, 2010
- 4) Russia Today, December 31, 2008
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- 5) Jamestown Foundation, October 8, 2010
- 6) Civil Georgia, September 13, 2010
- 7) Poland: U.S. Moves First Missiles, Troops Near Russian Border
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<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/05/29/poland-u-s-moves-first-missiles-troops-near-russian-border>
- 8) Xinhua News Agency, November 17, 2010
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12) Canada Opens Arctic To NATO, Plans Massive Weapons Buildup
Stop NATO, August 29, 2010

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15) New York Times, April 12, 2010

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18) Central Asia Newswire, November 15, 2010

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