

Ukraine Dragged Into NATO

Interview

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In a recent interview, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has urged Ukraine to settle the issue of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and remove obstacles in relations with the alliance, in what can be viewed as yet another NATO attempt to steer Ukraine towards the integration of this former Soviet state in the US-led military bloc. Rick Rozoff, the manager of Stop NATO, believes NATO has not relented in its ambition to incorporate Ukraine into NATO ultimately as a full member.

Secretary General of NATO Rasmussen is urging Kiev to remove obstacles in relation to NATO. Can you tell us about that?

It's NATO's intention, and that of the United States, to bring Ukraine into NATO as a full member, which is why there's a special NATO-Ukraine Commission that was set up roughly four years ago, three and a half years ago with the express purpose of doing that. At the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Ukraine and Georgia had both been not given the green light if you will to join NATO as full members or to be granted what's called a Membership Action Program, which is the final stage before full NATO accession. So a compensatory mechanism was set up, which is the commission I mentioned both for Ukraine and Georgia, and despite the change in government where Yanukovich has replaced Yushchenko as head of state of the country. NATO has not relented in its ambition to incorporate Ukraine into NATO, ultimately as a full member. So Rasmussen's comments are in line with that policy of NATO.

And of course two military exercises in Ukraine have recently been concluded, this month, including the annual Operation Sea Breeze which is run by the United States. It's supposedly a joint U.S.-Ukrainian military exercise, naval, in the Black Sea, not too far from the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. And included the participation, last heard for me at any rate, of 20 some odd countries, which are NATO members and NATO partner states. Given Ukraine's location, its size, its role in the armaments industry in post Soviet space and so forth, it's a key acquisition for NATO. It doesn't surprise me that Rasmussen is laying down his terms to Ukraine.

They talk about human rights, the Timoshenko case, Lutsenko, what do you think about their claims?

They're going to overrule decisions made by the parliament in Ukraine, by the president. They're going to trample on the laws of Ukraine in order to support their clients. Yulia Tymoshenko, the gas princess, in the first instance of course. The sort of diktat, almost,

that's emanating from the West in relation to Timoshenko, all but ordering the Yanukovich government to release her and so forth is a further example of the interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations that epitomizes Western behavior. It's not unlike what they're doing in several other countries in the world. They want their allies, or their operatives, the former Viktor Yushchenkos and the current Yulia Timoshenkos, to be free and to operate, furthering the Western agenda in Ukraine.

Hillary Clinton keeps making statements - it's kind of become a habit for her - towards Russia. What about her last statement? Can you comment on this?

The most recent rather may be the worst. It's probably a new low even for Hillary Clinton and that's saying quite a bit. And what we're speaking about of course is her talk at the so-called Friends of Syria meeting in Paris on July, 6th, where she stated to the representatives of an estimated 100 nations and organizations - transparently in attempt to rally them against Russia and China for having the temerity to defend international law and as we just mentioned noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations vis-à-vis Syria and stated that the problem was in her estimate - and one has to watch her as she's making these statements, waving her hand in the air and being almost hysterical. She stated that the problem was that Russia and China were not paying a price for their position in relation to Syria and that they would have to pay a price and that the so-called world community would have to ensure that they do. So, I mean, this is the crudest form of threat, intimidation, vituperation.

What do you think she meant exactly by 'paying a price'?

It's hard to say. Diplomatically, of course. Economically, perhaps. Maybe the U.S. and its Western allies want to do to Russia and China in relation to Syria what they've done to several countries including Russia and China in relation to Iran, which is to say they slap increasingly onerous sanctions on a country like Iran or Syria and then start sanctioning countries dealing with them. Something like this situation obtained in the lead-in to the war against Iraq in 2003 when the George W. Bush administration started accusing perhaps dozens of countries of selling so-called "dual-use" equipment to the government of Iraq and threatening them with, if you will, second-generation sanctions. She could have been alluding to that, economically as well as diplomatically punishing Russia and China. However, the tone and the vociferousness of what she stated suggested she was talking about something yet more, almost threatening Russia and China politically and who knows what? But it was the furthest thing removed from diplomatic language that one can imagine.

But given the fact that she's the Secretary of State of an administration that proudly proclaims itself, and I'm using President Obama's own words, "the world's sole military superpower," she evidently feels she can make statements like that with impunity and that nobody is going to hold her to account for them.

Unfortunately, the world has not.

It gets worse, I suppose, with each successive Secretary of State, but this is a new low point. She made a comparable statement in February of this year, the second time that Russia and China jointly vetoed a resolution in the United Nations Security Council aimed against Syria, where, to use her own word, she referred to Russia and China as being 'despicable'. I think the rest of the world should take note of how the U.S. treats even major powers, the world's

second economic power, China, and one of the world's two major military powers, Russia. If they can be referred to in such derogatory and abrasive terms then you don't need a WikiLeaks' revelation to understand what the U.S. thinks of the governments of other nations.

Can you tell our listeners about the recent attack on a NATO convoy to Afghanistan through Pakistan?

It's being attributed to a Pakistani Taliban group or the Haqqani network - I'm not sure who's being accused of having torched the 12 NATO tankers - but I would say, John, more than anything else this is indicative, I believe, of the general sentiment within Pakistan, which is not in favor - the popular sentiment - of renewing transit or NATO convoys from Pakistan into Afghanistan.

There's overwhelming opposition to collaboration with NATO for the war in Afghanistan if for no other reason that the people in Western Pakistan, ethnic Pashtuns, don't relish the thought of their the cousins on the other side of the border being killed by NATO helicopter gunship attacks or in other military attacks including some of the horrible atrocities that have occurred just this year, for example. And what we're seeing again is that to accommodate NATO is to betray one's own nation and one's people no matter where it occurs.

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