

Worldwide Military Network: NATO's "Global Military Block"

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On July 4 NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen delivered an address entitled "NATO - delivering security in the 21st century" at the Chatham House in London that should lay to rest forever any doubts about Western plans, already well underway, to create an international military network dominated by the United States and its major alliance partners.

Citing new challenges to Western preeminence in the world - with "many commentators predict[ing] the decline of the West as we know it" - especially to the virtually uncontested sway the U.S. and Western Europe have held in the quarter-century post-Cold War era, the military bloc's chief cited "turmoil and uncertainty across the Middle East and North Africa" and "emergence of new powers - economically, politically, and militarily" as areas of concern the alliance must address.

Although the world is "increasingly unpredictable, complex and interlinked," he intoned, nevertheless "Europe and North America still have tremendous resources, resolve, and ideas" and "there is no greater force for positive change" than NATO states on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean working in tandem.

With the emergence of trends toward multipolarity and the potential for a second-generation anti-colonial (or anti-neo-colonial) struggle in the non-"Euro-Atlantic" world - that is, the world of almost eight-ninths of humanity not residing in NATO member states - the "fundamental questions" have to be answered: "How can the Trans-Atlantic community keep its global power of attraction and influence? And as the world shifts, how do we embrace that shift and help shape it?" For which read divert and control contemporary dynamics emanating from beyond the "Trans-Atlantic community."

The solution, of course, is "a strong NATO," one moreover operating throughout the world. In Rasmussen's words: "It is an essential contributor to wider international security and stability. It means we can face today's challenges from a position of strength."

With recent wars in three continents to back up his contention, he added: "We can launch and sustain complex joint operations in a way that no one else can. We can work effectively with partners in a way that no one else can."

NATO's purview, and theaters of war, having already expanded beyond its member states' territory to the Balkans, South Asia, the Arabian Sea and North Africa, the bloc must extend its reach to crisscross the planet and "must continue to strengthen its connection with other countries and organisations around the globe."

The armed forces of nations on all six inhabited continents (see below) must continue to be integrated for NATO interoperability and to provide troops and hardware for future missions. For, Rasmussen reminded his audience: “Military around the world aspire to our standards and the ability of our forces to work together. Importantly, we can integrate other nations’ contributions into complex multinational operations like no other organisation. ”

The international partnerships NATO has cultivated over the past twenty years, often while conducting air and ground wars and post-conflict “peacekeeping” operations “From Afghanistan to the Balkans, and last year over Libya,” must expand beyond the forty or more nations enmeshed in them - which with NATO’s 28 members account for comfortably over a third of the nations in the world - and be added to in all parts of the world.

“Partnership is not a choice between staying at home or going global. It is not peripheral to our business - it is part of NATO’s core business...”

“We cannot deal with today’s security challenges from a purely European perspective. What matters is being engaged wherever our security matters. That means here in Europe. Across the Euro-Atlantic area. And around the globe.”

To do so the home front must be further secured, further integrated militarily.

“Alongside the European Union’s enlargement, NATO’s Open Door policy has already transformed this continent fundamentally, and permanently. ”

European Partnership for Peace members and those with Individual Partnership Action Programs and Membership Action Plans in addition - Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Malta, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine - “have restructured their armed forces” as a prerequisite for NATO integration. That is, they have been “professionalized” by abolishing conscription and shifting their mandate from territorial defense to expeditionary deployments abroad and transitioning from domestic and often Russian armaments to Western ones.

In a statement more truly revealing than perhaps he intended it to be, Rasmussen added:

“At the same time, the prospect of NATO membership gave confidence to investors. Which in turn led to economic drive, development and dynamism. And it is no coincidence that those countries who have joined NATO over the past thirteen years have also joined the European Union, or are preparing to do so.

“10 years ago, I was Prime Minister of Denmark when my country held the presidency of the European Union. That year, at the Copenhagen and Prague Summits, we invited new members to join the European Union, and NATO...”

Under the Berlin Plus agreement adopted at the fiftieth anniversary NATO summit in Washington, D.C. in 1999 and several arrangements in the interim the distinction between NATO and EU military policy has become at most an academic one.

Although “Russian misperceptions about NATO’s Open Door policy persist,” NATO has done its ungrateful neighbor a favor by providing it “Stability on its western borders.” For example, military bases, training and cyber warfare centers, Patriot Advanced Capability-3 and soon Standard Missile-3 interceptor batteries, air patrols by Western warplanes near its northwestern frontiers, and naval, air and infantry war games from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and the South Caucasus.

As if the import of the above comments regarding business investment and the economy could be missed, Rasmussen reiterated:

“Our economy is globalised. Our security is globalised. And if we are to protect our populations effectively, our approach to security has to be globalised too.”

“It means NATO must be able, and willing, to engage politically and militarily with other nations, wherever they may be...” Australia, for example.

The NATO chief recalled visiting Australia last month, where he met with Prime Minister Julia Gillard and signed a Joint Political Declaration. “It is the first of its kind. But I am confident it won’t be the last.”

In Afghanistan, “Australia is part of a NATO-led coalition of 50 nations, the largest in recent history.” (The geography-challenge d Rasmussen added “from all five continents.”) The largest – far the largest – number of nations supplying troops for a war in any country, or in any theater, in history.

Even when, or if, NATO withdraws the bulk of its 130,000-150, 000 forces from Afghanistan, “we won’t get a holiday from history afterwards,” Rasmussen asserted,” as “we must build on the practical experience of working with our partners in order to work even more closely together in the future.”

The ten and a half years NATO has spent in its first Asian war have provided it the opportunity to forge a coalition of 50 nations for the alliance’s next conflicts.

The post-Chicago summit concentration “is about NATO assuming a global perspective, about “[p]laying its part globally, and strengthening our ability to act in concert with our partners around the globe.”

The militaries of the world must be subordinated to NATO standards, practices and policy and be equipped with “interoperable” weapons:

“Today, many partner countries take the opportunities NATO offers to participate in our military education, training and exercises. But this is largely on an ad-hoc basis. I would like to see a much more structured approach. And the broadest possible range of nations being involved in such activities.”

Particular attention must be paid to the integration of and interoperability among special forces:

“We must build on the lessons that we learnt together in action in Afghanistan. So we can boost our ability to act together in the future.”

Ever-expanding global partnerships should focus on “maritime security, energy security, and cyber security” cooperation.

Rasmussen stressed building partnerships, by which it is not to be understood ones of equality, with China and India. In March NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Admiral James Stavridis, spoke to the U.S. Congress on the topic of building partnerships with India and Brazil. The “emergence of new powers” must be neutralized and if possible co-opted. In Rasmussen’s words: “To do all this, we need an alliance that is globally aware. Globally connected. And globally capable. That is my vision for NATO.”

“NATO’s partnerships play a key part in meeting the security concerns of today and tomorrow – be they local, regional, or global. The range of our partnerships reflects the world we live in.”

But among the scores of allies and partners around the world, NATO’s first among equals was, is and ever will remain the U.S.

“The transatlantic bond lies at the very heart of NATO...”

“Some see the United States’ pivot to Asia-Pacific as the end of this unique partnership. They are wrong. The security of America and Europe is indivisible. We are stronger, and safer, when we work together. And that is why NATO remains the indispensable Alliance.”

The indispensable, global military bloc. Rasmussen used the words globe, global, globally, globalized, world and international 27 times in his speech. No one can pretend not to understand what NATO’s plans are.

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