

Balkans: Staging Ground For NATO's Post-Cold War Order

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Global Research, February 09, 2009

Stop NATO 9 February 2009

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The world hasn't begun to recover from the events of 1991, a true annus terribilis whose watershed nature was insufficiently appreciated at the time and has been practically ignored since.

The year initiated the first attempt in history to enforce worldwide military, political, economic and cultural unipolarity; the advent in earnest of neoliberalism with all the devastating economic and social consequences it has wrought since then; the genesis of US-led and Western-supported air, ground, counterinsurgency and proxy wars against defenseless targets from the Middle East to the Balkans, South Asia to Africa.

The major political events of the year were three:

1. The Operation Desert Storm war against Iraq and the inauguration of US-engineered gratuitous wars of convenience waged under the auspices of self-designated coalitions of the willing – major NATO powers and whichever client states could be bribed or bullied into providing false plumage for the alias adopted then and ever after, the “international community” – as often as not impersonating the United Nations or even more presumptuously humanity.
2. The seemingly instantaneous breakup of the Soviet Union into its fifteen constituent federal republics.
3. The beginning of the fragmentation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the largely German-instigated secession of, first, Croatia and Slovenia, and then Macedonia.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Europe saw the end of the only two simultaneous multi-ethnic and multi-confessional federated nations in Europe, leaving only Serbia and Russia (meaningfully) now in that category.

With these two concomitant dismemberments, 1991 also issued in the demolition of the edifice of the entire post-World War I and -World War II system of international relations which had often been observed even in the breach, with the main institutional manifestation of the second, the United Nations, undermined and supplanted, and the confirmation and codification of the post-World War II definition of state-to-state principles in Europe, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, torn to shreds.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (Helsinki) Final Act of August 1, 1975 states in its section on Inviolability of frontiers that:

“The participating States regard as inviolable all one another’s frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers.

“Accordingly, they will also refrain from any demand for, or act of, seizure and usurpation of part or all of the territory of any participating State.”

In its statement on Territorial integrity of States the Final Act adds:

“The participating States will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States.

“Accordingly, they will refrain from any action inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations against the territorial integrity, political independence or the unity of any participating State, and in particular from any such action constituting a threat or use of force.”

Strongly implicit in the above principles is the acknowledgment that national borders in Europe as decided upon at the 1945 Yalta and Potsdam conferences and confirmed in the United Nations at its founding in 1945, however imperfect in various respects, were inviolable and all the signatories to the Helsinki Final Act – including the US and all its NATO allies – committed themselves to the irrefragable territorial integrity of all European nations as constituted after the end of the world’s most deadly and devastating war, one caused by the last attempt to redraw borders in Europe and Asia.

There are now nineteen nations in Europe (including the South Caucasus) that could not be found on a map at the time of the Helsinki Final Act: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Germany (united), Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine, and one aborted pseudo-state, Kosovo.

All but reunified Germany (itself only two years old at the time) didn’t exist until 1991 and many are nations that never were independent countries until that year.

If Operation Desert Storm was the opening act in defining the Post-Cold War new American and NATO order, and the breakup of the Soviet Union allowed for its full implementation and the launching of a new Eurasian Great Game from the Baltic to the Black and from the Black to the Caspian seas, Yugoslavia and its former republics would be the main laboratory for the post-post-Yalta and post-Helsinki world.

In reference to the Balkans wars of the 1990s, the aftermath of which alone will be dealt with here, suffice it to say that a veritable mountain range of selective hyperbole, inverted logic, puerile bromides, the attribution of collective and exclusive guilt to one party (the Serbs), the ‘clairvoyant’ ascription of evil motives to only one of the belligerents (again the Serbs, at almost all times to almost all Serbs), ad nauseam, the popularized distillation of them has been summed up by most all Western commentators with two cliched chestnuts: Yugoslavia broke up because of a mythic Greater Serbia project and former and late Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic “started and lost four wars.”

Parroting the last two inanities is all that’s required to pass muster as a Balkans expert in most circles in the West and much of the rest of the world.

Starting in the summer of 1991 this writer asserted that the entire compendium of such received prejudices could be refuted, could be demolished, with one word: Macedonia.

The events in Macedonia at that time are a subject fairly begging for book-length examination and analysis, but this synopsis will due for now:

Following the NATO takeover of the Serbian province of Kosovo in June of 1999, with their so-called Kosovo Liberation Army allies in tow, the latter almost immediately metastasized into similar armed formations in South Serbia (Liberation Army of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja) and Macedonia (National Liberation Army) as well as suspected offshoots in Montenegro and northeastern Greece (Epirus).

The NLA of Ali Ahmeti, also a founder of the KLA, launched murderous attacks inside Macedonia from its bases in NATO-occupied Kosovo, at times marching right past American Kosovo Protection Corps (KFOR) troops, even dragging artillery with them as they did so. Macedonia was in the opening stages of a full-fledged civil war instigated from neighboring Kosovo.

While then NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson initially referred to the NLA invaders as “murderous thugs,” NATO, the US and the EU threatened the Macedonian government into signing the Ohrid Framework Agreement on August 13, which legitimized the NLA, brought it into the national parliament as a political party (under a different name) and even installed Ahmeti as a cabinet minister in the federal government.

The above is detailed for two reasons: There is only a negligible Serbian minority in Macedonia and at the time former Yugoslav president Milosevic was languishing in a prison cell in the Hague, where he had been taken after being illegally whisked away from Belgrade in a NATO helicopter.

Remember the Western mantra: Serbian nationalism and Sloboban Milosevic were culpable for all unrest and violence in former Yugoslavia.

Having unleashed the prototype of the now infamous ‘color revolutions’ that have since afflicted Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Lebanon and toppled the government of Slobodan Milosevic in the autumn of 2000, the US and NATO now had governments installed in all six former Yugoslav federal republics that would permit what the Rambouillet Appendix B ultimatum to Yugoslavia ten years ago had aimed at, the rejection of which by Belgrade had been used by NATO for its 78-day bombing war against Yugoslavia the same year, particularly this provision:

“NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations.”

What has occurred in the interim incontrovertibly reveals what was hidden behind the mask of NATO’s ‘humanitarian intervention,’ replete with cluster bombs and depleted uranium munitions, graphite weapons and terror bombing, arming and training racist pogromists for ethnocide and murder, demolishing bridges, factories, broadcasting stations and the Chinese embassy in Belgrade: To turn the Balkans into a permanent military colony for the

subjugation of the region and for the expansion of NATO to points east and south, along its new silk route to the Chinese border and throughout the so-called Broader Middle East and into Africa.

In the seminal and near-prophetic presentation “Why Is NATO In Yugoslavia?” of January of 1996, the late and irreplaceable American scholar Sean Gervasi remarked of NATO’s first military deployment, in Bosnia of the preceding year, that its objectives included a far broader strategy:

“These have to do with an emerging strategy for securing the resources of the Caspian Sea region and for “stabilizing” the countries of Eastern Europe – ultimately for ‘stabilizing’ Russia and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States....Not a few commentators have made the point that Western actions in extending NATO even raise the risks of nuclear conflict....” (The paper is worth reading in its totality at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/GER108A.html>)

A recent news item offers the latest verification of the claim regarding the current escalation of war in South Asia:

“Navy Captain Kevin Aandahl, spokesman for the US Transportation Command [said] one route could go from the Balkans to ...south through Central Asia to Afghanistan.” (Agence France-Presse, February 6, 2009)

NATO’s longstanding plans to transform the Balkans into one large military colony for bases locally, troops for wars further afield and a staging ground for military actions to the east and the south will be explored nation by nation and after that in terms of the general strategy at the end of this article.

The consolidation of US and NATO military integration of the Balkans as a whole, the former Yugoslavia in particular, has proceeded unremittingly and inexorably over the past ten years and is most disturbingly exemplified by recent developments in the world’s newest nation, Montenegro, and the West’s new, less than a year old, “NATO pseudo-state,” Kosovo.

Montenegro declared its unilateral abrogation of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro, itself created from the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2003, on May 21, 2006.

It is the 192nd and latest state to join the United Nations.

Within seven months, perhaps before it even completed putting its national seal on government stationary, it was absorbed into NATO’s Partnership for Peace program.

Montenegrins themselves were never consulted on the matter:

“Polls have suggested that 70% of Montenegrins would vote against joining NATO if given a chance to do so.

“One of the primary reasons for the citizenry’s resistance to the desires of their political leaders is lingering resentment for the NATO’s intervention in the Balkans in 1999.” (Montenegro Times, April 4, 2008)

Last June NATO’s Norfolk, Virginia-based Allied Command Transformation conducted a Euro-Atlantic Partnership Work Programme (EAPWP) seminar in the Montenegrin capital of

Podgorica, which was described as being “designed for regional Partnership for Peace (PfP) defence and military officials who are responsible for security and defence policy, strategic planning and execution.

“Partners were introduced to transformational principles for maintaining competitive military advantage over potential adversaries in the 21st Century....” (NATO International, Allied Command Transformation, June 12, 2008)

Less than two weeks later NATO launched an Intensified Dialogue with Montenegro after “Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Dragana Radulovic and Deputy Minister for Defence Mr. Drasko Jovanovic met with NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security Cooperation and Partnership [and for the Caucasus and Central Asia] Robert F. Simmons Jr....”(NATO International, June 25, 2008)

Only five months later, such is the accelerated pace of integration, the US’s and NATO’s long-term man in Podgorica, President Milo Djukanovic, after announcing that he had been assured by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer that ‘NATO is not tired of enlargement,’ “handed over Montenegro’s formal application for NATO’s membership action plan [Individual Partnership Action Plan]...seen as the last step before full membership....” (Associated Press, November 5, 2008)

Less than a month afterward – – note the breathtaking telescoping of time and stages – Montenegro joined Bosnia in being pulled into the Adriatic Charter, which is “a cooperation mechanism initiated by the United States in 2003 [and] consists of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia [which] aims to co-ordinate NATO membership preparations.”(MakFax [Macedonia], December 4, 2008)

Albania and Croatia are slated to be granted full NATO membership at the Alliance’s sixtieth anniversary summit on April 3-4, with Macedonia to follow once the ‘name dispute’ with Greece is settled.

The next, inevitable, step soon followed.

On December 17, 2008 Montenegro’s ambassador to the US, Miodrag Vlahovic, signed a NATO Partnership for Peace Status of Forces Agreement, which establishes terms and conditions for the stationing of NATO nations’, including the US’s, military forces in a partner nation.

The very same day the Montenegrin parliament authorized the first, nominal but precedent setting, military deployment to Afghanistan to serve under NATO’s command.

This is in keeping with the simultaneous withdrawal of troops by fellow Balkans NATO partners – Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Macedonia – from Iraq in December and the announcement that all four would increase their troop commitments in Afghanistan.

On January 27 of the current year a NATO delegation arrived in the capital of Montenegro “for the evaluation of the IPAP [Individual Partnership Action Plan]” just commenced last November, the demands of which are far-reaching enough to include “[C]riteria for NATO and EU membership [including] the significant role of the Directorate for Anticorruption Initiative in drafting anticorruption laws [and a] recently initiated process of drafting the Law on integrity, which is completely a new piece of legislation in Montenegro [and projects] planned in the field of local self-government, public administration and the private

sector.”(Government of Montenegro, January 27, 2009)

To be NATOized is to be subordinated in every category, even being dictated to in matters of “local self-government.”

Only days ago Frank Boland, head of NATO’s Defense Policy Planning Directorate, told a Balkans daily “Montenegro could become a NATO member in 2012 given the overall progress the country has made thus far” but that “Montenegro first will have to get rid of its old weapons, which needs to be stored safely and later destroyed. The country also needs to adjust troop training in line with NATO standards.” (MakFax, February 2, 2009)

....

Kosovo, which seceded from Serbia on February 18, 2008, after the mediation of Britain, France, Germany and Italy – the very four nations that ‘mediated’ Nazi Germany’s seizure of the Czech Sudetenland 60 years earlier at Munich – is, almost a full year later, only recognized by 54 of the world’s 192 nations.

It is the site of Camps Bondsteel and Camp Monteith, built after Serbian forces were expelled from the province and the largest overseas US military installations constructed since the Vietnam War.

The majority of the countries recognizing the illegal secession are NATO members, candidates and partners with an assortment of ‘coalition of the willing’ entities – so far has the stature and influence of the West waned in the past few years – as Belize, Liechtenstein, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and Samoa.

Within five months of the US- and NATO-engineered breaking off of the historical heart of Serbia, Kosovo’s prime minister and former KLA commander Hashim Thaci, who then US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright first started grooming as a future head of state in 2000 when she personally squirmed him around the State Department, United Nations and Democratic Party nominating convention in Los Angeles, delivered himself of the pledge that:

“We will present our goal and vision that Kosovo be part of the Euro-Atlantic family, part of NATO and the European Union as soon as possible.” (Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, July 9, 2008)

Eight days later Thaci was in Washington, his first visit as ‘head of state,’ meeting with Albright’s successor once removed Condoleezza Rice, where he effused that “Kosovo and the people of Kosovo bow before the government and the people of America for their support.” (Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo, July 18, 2008)

To be recalled the next time one reads in reference to Kosovo such elevated terms as independent, free, self-determined. Thaci’s ‘capital’ as of last December now has a George Bush Street as well as a statue erected to Bill Clinton.

The following month Kosovo Defense Minister Fehmi Mujeta (readers can add as many inverted commas here and afterward as they choose) affirmed that “Kosovo will build a continuous partnership with NATO, fulfilling its standards and necessary capacities in the defense field” and that the “Kosovo Security Force will be the nucleus of the future Kosovo army matching NATO standards.” (New Kosova Report [Sweden], August 19, 2008)

In a remarkable feat of historical and geographic legerdemain, Thaci last month asserted that Kosovo was “never Serbian” and that “We are part of the European family, we will be part of the EU and NATO.....” (Tanjug News Agency, January 24, 2009)

A demonstration of the diplomacy and statesmanship taught to him by his tutors Madeleine Albright, Condoleezza Rice and former United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) chief Bernard Kouchner, now French foreign minister.

Local Serbs, whose ancestors lived in Kosovo for at least 800 years, of course have, to the West, the temerity to differ with Thaci’s revisionist history and NATO’s KFOR troops have dealt with them ruthlessly on behalf of Thaci and his fellow KLA veterans.

The commander of French NATO forces in Kosovo, General Michel Yakovleff, early last month threatened besieged Serbs with the warning to “Be aware of the strong determination of KFOR to respond, even brutally if necessary, to all forms of violence.” (Deutsche Welle, January 9, 2009)

That is, to any attempts by ethnic Serbs and other minorities to defend themselves after thousands of Serbs, Roma, Ashkalis, Egyptians, Gorans and Turks have been murdered and ‘disappeared’ since June of 1999 and as many as 4-500,000 have been terrorized into fleeing the province.

A week earlier a Kosovo separatist authority announced that the former KLA, current Kosovo Protection Corps would be transformed into a Kosovo Security Force – the embryo of a national armed forces – and that a “nine-week training course would be run by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Kosovo Force, or KFOR, an international peacekeeping mission led by NATO.” (Associated Press, February 2, 2009)

Within days NATO announced it was in fact forming a new Kosovo army.

In a dispatch titled “NATO says new Kosovo force to be launched on Jan 21,” it was announced that “[The Kosovo Security Force] will replace the KPC [Kosovo Protection Corps], a 3,500-strong ...force backed up by some 2,000 reservists that was mostly composed of former Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas who fought against Serbian rule” and that “Kosovo President Fatmir Sejdiu has named KPC [and before that KLA] commander Sylejman Selimi to head the new force.” (Reuters, January 14, 2009)

The Kosovo Security Force’s uniforms will be supplied by the US Pentagon (B92 [Serbia], January 17, 2009) and its troops “will be trained by British Army officers, with their uniforms provided by the U.S., and their vehicles by Germany.” (Beta News Agency [Serbia], January 20, 2009)

And if any doubts could remain regarding the organic and inextricable links between NATO and the KLA (in whichever avatar), a former KLA commander has eliminated them.

“The Kosovo Security Force is striving to become part of NATO... said Kosovo Security Force commander Sylejman Selimi [who added] ‘NATO has been showing interest in assisting the establishment of the Kosovo Security Force and I believe that the cooperation will go on. We are happy to acquire NATO’s experience in training, equipment and infrastructure.’” (Focus News Agency [Bulgaria], January 23, 2009)

NATO returned the favor the next day by formally announcing on its website that “KFOR representatives will present the concept of the recruitment campaign for the new Kosovo Security Force to the public at the University of Pristina.”

(NATO International, January 24, 2009)

The above immediately drew the well-warranted ire of both Serbia and Russia, with, in addition to current Serbian government officials, former prime minister Vojislav Kostunica complaining that ““NATO is making and arming Kosovo’s army” and that NATO (and its KFOR operation) are “no longer paying any attention to Serbia, and are implementing the Ahtisaari plan openly, building a Kosovo army.”

Kostunica in the same statement urged a reevaluation of Serbia’s Partnership for Peace status, which had been secured by NATO two years ago, in the (certain) event that the Alliance persists in building its proxy army.

The Russian ambassador to Serbia Aleksandr Konuzin was equally vehement in his denunciation, stating “Forming these forces is a remilitarization of Kosovo and, in itself, runs counter to Resolution 1244.” (FoNet/Danas [Serbia], January 27, 2009)

Lastly on this topic, Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac claimed at the end of last month that the new Kosovo army is also being prepared, in addition to suppressing minority and other loyalist forces in Kosovo, for integration into NATO military operations aboard, presumably to join their Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Romanian and Slovenian Balkans counterparts in Afghanistan and future NATO war zones.

In 2004 arch-war criminal and then head of the Kosovo Protection Corps Agim Ceku offered members of the Corps, referred to by Western officials and journalists as a “civilian emergency services organisation,” to the US for use in the war in Iraq.

....

Serbia itself is not to get away unmolested and its sons and daughters spared the fate of their neighbors.

It was dragged into NATO’s Partnership for peace along with Bosnia and Montenegro in 2006 and last October NATO Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Serbian Defense Minister Dragan Sutanovac signed a security agreement that “will facilitate military-to military cooperation between Serbia and the alliance.” (New Europe, October 6, 2008)

In 2003 the Western press was full of accounts of 1,000 Serbian troops being sent to Afghanistan to fight under NATO command.

The deployment never materialized, but with Serbia the only former Yugoslav Partnership for Peace member without troops there, the prospect still remains.

....

Bosnia is the first former Yugoslav republic to have suffered the presence of NATO troops.

In the opening days of this year the Bosnian government, which had just recalled its last troops from Iraq, transparently in response to US and NATO demands, revealed that it had authorized the first deployment of troops to Afghanistan to serve with NATO’s International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

....

Croatia, which has been shepherded toward full NATO membership over the past five years through the US's Adriatic Charter along with Albania and Macedonia, will be inducted into the Alliance at the April summit.

Preparatory to its final initiation, the US signed an 'Additional SOFA' (Status of Forces Agreement) with the nation last summer described at the time as "an international agreement between Croatia and the US determining issues regarding US forces' presence in Croatia within the framework of cooperation connected with the NATO and PfP." (Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, July 3, 2008)

In the spring Croatia hosted an international NATO exercise called MEDCEUR 08, which in addition to the US, its sponsor, included "12 members of NATO's Partnership for Peace Program - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine," in an illustration of how NATO is jointly integrating Balkans and former Soviet states into its global army. (Agence France-Presse, May 2, 2008)

Shortly thereafter Croatia was also the site for Adriatic Shield 08, an international "exercise...being held under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that was launched by the United States in 2003.

"The three-day exercise...is co-organized by Poland and the United States, with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro and Slovenia also taking part." (Agence France-Presse, May 12, 2008)

....

Albania, another Adriatic Charter graduate, for years hosted NATO forces in Durres.

Last November its Foreign Minister Lulzim Basha met with NATO chief Scheffer and pledged assistance in the creation of Kosovo's new army. The nation has troops stationed in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq and Chad. In April it will be brought into NATO as a full member.

....

In November of 2008 Macedonia held the largest military exercise in its history, Macedonian Flash - 04, "an air-land exercise aimed at evaluating the preparedness of ARM [Army of the Republic of Macedonia] troops for deployment in NATO-led missions," for which a "NATO team [was] tasked to observe and evaluate the units' operational capabilities, their interoperability and application of the NATO standards in conducting of the training exercises" (MakFax, November 2, 2008), indeed "watched by 70 NATO representatives from 26 Alliance's member states. (MakFax, November 3, 2008)

A month later a high-ranking delegation of the NATO Military Committee, led by the committee chairman Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, arrived in Macedonia to discuss "the current and future participation of Macedonian troops in missions abroad." (MakFax, December 8, 2008)

Early last month Macedonia deployed another contingent of troops to Afghanistan to serve with a NATO mechanized infantry unit. A few days ago a delegation of the French armed forces visited the country to evaluate the “participation of its troops in missions abroad.” (Focus News Agency, February 4, 2009)

....

Slovenia, one of the first two Yugoslav federal republics to secede from the nation, is the first and to date only one to be fully integrated into NATO, being absorbed after the Istanbul summit in 2004.

Before leaving office last month US President George Bush included Slovenia and the other six newest NATO members in the classified nuclear information agreement ATOMAL.

Last November its troops were among those participating in a joint NATO-Afghan army Joint Multinational Training Command exercise in Germany.

A month earlier a NATO flotilla of four warships and 800 sailors docked in the Slovenian port of Koper.

Days ago its government announced a modest increase in troops being deployed to Afghanistan in addition to sending security personnel to Gaza.

NATO has plans to open a center for training mountain troops in Slovenia, if it hasn't done so already.

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Bulgaria and Romania became full NATO members after the Istanbul summit also.

The next year the US commenced plans to take over three bases in Bulgaria and four in Romania as ‘forward operating sites’ and ‘pre-positioning’ staging grounds for operations to the east.

The Pentagon is to station several thousand troops at these full spectrum – infantry, air force, naval – locations.

....

In October of 2008 US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates at a meeting of the Southeast European Defense Ministerial (SEDM) in Macedonia “urged Eastern European leaders to shift their military efforts from Iraq to Afghanistan, where their forces are more urgently needed.” (Associated Press, October 9, 2008)

At the time of the ten non-US members of the SEDM nine – Italy, Greece, Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Slovenia and Croatia – had a combined level of 5,100 troops in Afghanistan. The last, Bosnia, has now pledged troops also in responses to Gates’ orders.

A concise summary of the SEDM is as follows:

“The SEDM currently includes Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Romania, the United States, Slovenia, Turkey, Croatia, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and such observer countries as Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro.

The Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial was set up in 1996....as a bridge with Euro-Atlantic organizations, particularly NATO.” (National Radio Company of Ukraine, October 9, 2008)

Before his appearance at the SEDM meeting Gates was in Kosovo meeting with leaders of the separatist regime there and “went from Kosovo to Macedonia, where he participated in a southeastern Europe defense ministers conference. While there, he met with his Ukraine counterpart and expressed America’s support for NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine. He also spoke to the defense ministers of Montenegro and Macedonia about recognizing Kosovo. Both nations did so Oct. 9.” (United States European Command, October 14, 2008)

That is, the US Pentagon chief went to Kosovo to meet with US troops stationed there and with Kosovo officials, surely Hashim Thaci among others, then left for Macedonia where he ordered the host government and that of Montenegro to recognize Kosovo’s independence, which both do the following day.

Also in October US President Bush, while signing papers formalizing Washington’s support for Albania’s and Croatia’s NATO admission, “reiterated U.S. support for prospective NATO members Ukraine, Georgia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Herzegovina,” and added, ““The door to NATO membership also remains open to the people of Serbia should they choose that path.”” (Agence France-Presse, October 24, 2008)

A sentiment seconded by former Bulgarian foreign minister and current reputed candidate for NATO’s top post Solomon Passy, who said at practically the same moment “I hope this won’t stop until the other countries from the West Balkans (Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo) become NATO member states” and said that “if this happens, one third of NATO member states will be from the Balkans...” (Focus News Agency, October 23, 2008)

....

At the beginning of 1991 Yugoslavia was a united country, a member and founder of the Non-Aligned Movement, with no foreign bases on its soil and no troops stationed abroad.

In the intervening eighteen years it has been torn to pieces and its fragments turned into little better than NATO military occupation zones and recruiting grounds for foreign wars.

The prototype for what awaits much of the world if the developments of 1991 aren’t soon halted and reversed.

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