

Dangerous Crossroads: NATO Commander Paints Dark Picture of “An Imminent Russian Threat” as US-NATO Move to Further Isolate Russia

Planners to come up with a range of military options, including deployments of sea, air and land forces.

By [Lionel Reynolds](#)

Global Research, April 05, 2014

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In an interview with Reuters, General Philip Breedlove, NATO Supreme Allied Commander, painted a foreboding picture of an imminent Russian threat. Breedlove claimed that there are 40,000 troops massed on the Ukrainian border. He went on to claim that the troops are in a high level of readiness and that all the required components of an invading force are in place, including the required mix of personnel and materiel. He claimed they could achieve their strategic goal within three to five days.

Russia has repeatedly downplayed any threat, claiming that the troops are involved in routine exercises.

Breedlove continued to speculate what the ‘goal’ of this force might be, and offered three possible scenarios:

1. Russian forces remain deployed on the border as a plausible military threat to help secure Russian interests in the unfolding situation in the Ukraine.
2. The force is deployed to secure a land-bridge between Russian and the Crimea.
3. The force is deployed to sweep across the South of Ukraine via Odessa and link up with the isolated Russian enclave in Trans-Dniester, on the Moldovan-Ukrainian border.

Breedlove did not speculate that Russian forces may be used to secure Eastern Ukraine – a favourite topic of speculation in the western media following the secession of Crimea. He went on to explain that the NATO council had asked planners to come up with a range of military options by April 15, including potential deployments of sea, air and land forces.

In the meantime, the US has sent F-15’s and F-16’s to Poland and the Baltic states.

NATO also continues to step up the diplomatic pressure on Russia. On April 1st NATO announced suspension of a range of military and civil joint-ventures with Russia. This will impact a number of joint programs in Afghanistan, including counter-narcotics and some military supplies to the Afghan army.

A team from NATO is due to visit Ukraine next week in response to a ‘request for help’ from the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry. A team of 16 senior Ukrainian officers has joined NATO for military exercises in Bulgaria.

NATO is the world’s most powerful military bloc. It was supposedly founded as a collective

security bloc in which each member undertook to come to the aid of a fellow member in appropriate circumstances. The 28 members that currently make up NATO are responsible for 70% of global defence expenditure, and 70% of that expenditure is accounted for by the USA. In 2012, NATO accounted for \$1.02 trillion in defence expenditure, compared to China's \$166 billion, and Russia's \$90 billion. (See recent [report by Stripes.com](#))

USSR had Proposed Joining NATO in 1955

The imperialist and anti-communist nature of NATO was exposed in 1955 when the USSR proposed joining. [Documentary evidence demonstrates that the proposals were genuine](#) . The USSR had earlier proposed a European collective security arrangement that would have excluded the USA. When this elicited a negative response from the UK and France, the USSR floated the idea of joining NATO. The suggestion was never even seriously considered by the West. The USSR went on to form the Warsaw Pact.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has overseen military interventions in Bosnia in 1994/5, Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan from 2003, and Libya in 2011. In the same time period, Russia has been involved in the Chechen Wars of 1994 and 1999, and the short South Ossetia war of 2008.

NATO's military operations have had a wholly different character to Russia's. NATO's military interventions have been imperialist exercises in regime destabilisation and regime change, executed under cover of 'humanitarian interventions'. In each case, when the democratic and internationalist verbiage is cast aside, the underlying geopolitical reality is that the US and its clients assumed the right, irrespective of the UN, to overthrow a foreign government by military force.

Russia's military operations, on the other hand, have been typical cases of a major power defending its internal integrity and local interests. Russia is not acting as if it has the right to overthrow any regime it takes a dislike to. It has been involved in conflicts arising from internal ethnic and religious separatism (Chechnya), and border disputes triggered by the perceived need to defend Russian populations with irredentist aspirations (South Ossetia, Trans-Dniester, Crimea).

NATO has been expanding since 1999. In that year the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became full members. In 2004 they were joined by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and in 2009 by Albania and Croatia. There is a multi-stage accession process which requires members to comply with political and military governance criteria. Currently, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia are in the 'Membership Action Plan' stage - the final stage pending full accession.

The Ukrainian crisis has created new opportunities for the USA and its client states to further isolate Russia from the rest of Europe. US geopolitical strategy has always feared the emergence of a Eurasian bloc that might challenge US hegemony. In the post-cold war era, this has driven an expansion of NATO and the EU up to the Russian border.

Alongside the political-military strategy of NATO and EU expansion, the economic strategy is to break the reliance of Europe on Russian gas and oil by developing the port and storage infrastructure to support shipping LNG between the USA and EU. This would be a lucrative trade for the US corporate interests that are driving the shale gas revolution in the USA. The same corporate interests are also busy snapping up European exploration

contracts for shale reserves – including in the Ukraine, which is believed to have major shale deposits. In addition to this, the intention is to re-route supply of pipeline gas from the eastern corridor – from Russia via the Ukraine – to the southern corridor – from the Caspian basin via Turkey.

Washington and Brussels played a critical role in sponsoring and supporting the February coup that brought the nationalist Yatsenyuk regime to power in the Ukraine. It is difficult to believe that Washington analysis and intelligence was so poor as to be caught completely unawares by the Russian response. On that basis the Western role in the Ukrainian coup can be seen as a direct provocation to Russia that is designed in part to further isolate Russia while strengthening US hegemony in Europe.

General Breedlove's musings about Russian intentions should be assessed on that basis.

Lionel Reynolds is an independent analyst based in Australia. He runs the blog www.dispatchesfromempire.com

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Lionel Reynolds](#), Global Research, 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Lionel Reynolds](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long as the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca