

Eastern Partnership: The West's Final Assault On the Former Soviet Union

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At a meeting of the European Union's General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels on May 26 of last year, Poland, seconded by Sweden, first proposed what has come to be known as the Eastern Partnership, a program to 'integrate' all the European and South Caucasus former Soviet nations – except for Russia – not already in the EU and NATO; that is, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The above are half of the former Soviet republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) established as a sop to Russia immediately after the breakup of the Soviet Union in that year and in theory to be a post-Soviet equivalent of the then European Community, now European Union. (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania never joined and both were absorbed into the European Union and NATO in 2004.)

The Eastern Partnership has since last May been presented as an innocuous enough sounding proposal containing a mission statement to promote “a substantial upgrading of the level of political engagement, including the prospect of a new generation of Association Agreements, far-reaching integration into the EU economy, easier travel to the EU for citizens providing that security requirements are met, enhanced energy security arrangements benefitting all concerned, and increased financial assistance.” (European Union press release, December 3, 2008)

The key phrases, though, are “upgrading of the level of political engagement” and “enhanced energy security arrangements. “

What the Eastern Partnership is designed to accomplish is to complete the destruction of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) comprised of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and the only post-Soviet multinational security structure, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), as well as to abort the formalization of the Belarus-Russia Union State.

Which is to say, to isolate Russia from six of the twelve CIS states, with the other five, in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), simultaneously targeted by a complementary EU initiative.

The ultimate intent of the Eastern Partnership is to wean away all the other ex-Soviet states from economic, trade, political, security and military ties with Russia and to integrate them into broader so-called Euro-Atlantic structures from the European Union itself initially to NATO ultimately.

Coming out of last year's NATO summit in Romania the increased political, security and

military integration – one is tempted to say merger – of the EU and NATO, trumpeted by France’s President Nicholas Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, warmly embraced by the Bush administration and since affirmed most strongly by British Foreign Minister David Miliband at the recent Munich Security Conference, is the yet further consolidation of the longstanding EU-NATO “soft power, hard power” division of labor mutually agreed upon.

“[T]he Partnership would demonstrate the “power of soft power” and acknowledge that the conflict in Georgia in August had influenced the decision to launch the Partnership. ” (PanArmenian. net, December 11, 2008)

The Eastern Partnership was first proposed in May of 2008 as mentioned earlier, but the impetus to endorse it at a meeting of leaders last December was the ‘soft power’ response by the EU to complement NATO’s establishment of the NATO-Georgia Commission a month after Georgia’s invasion of South Ossetia triggered last summer’s Caucasus war.

The EU will provide the ‘diplomatic’ persuasion and the economic subsidies as NATO and its individual member states (in almost every instance in Europe the same as the EU’s) continue to supply Georgia with advanced offensive arms, surveillance systems, military training and permanent advisers.

As a further indication of what the EU’s true objective is, Belarus has been added to the other five only with the proviso it will be accepted “if it accepts a democracy improvement plan.” (PanArmenian. net, December 12, 2008)

The same has not been openly stated regarding Armenia, but for two critical reasons it is in the same category as Belarus, all pabulum concerning democracy notwithstanding. (If democracy in any acceptation of the term was a precondition then the US-installed despot and megalomaniac Mikheil Saakashvili and the hereditary president-for- life dynasty of the Aliev family would disqualify Georgia and Azerbaijan, respectively.)

Armenia and Belarus are both in the second tier of Eastern Partnership candidates and will require a good deal of “improvement” before being absorbed into the West’s new “soft power” drive to the east.

Neither is part of the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) anti-CIS bloc set up in 1997 through the joint efforts of the Clinton administration and its secretary of state Madeleine Albright and its European Union allies in Strasbourg.

Both are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) with Russia and four Central Asian nations (all except for Turkmenistan) , which has in recent years taken on a more overt military mutual defense nature.

The deadly “Daffodil Revolution” in Armenia a year ago and the attempted “Denim Revolution” in Belarus two years before having failed to replicate their predecessors and prototypes in Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in 2005, other means were required to “reorientate” the two nations from their close state-to-state and security relations with Russia.

Hence the need for the Eastern Partnership.

The role of GUAM, whose members are both identified by the EU as the preferred four in the

Partnership and who collectively comprise two-thirds, indeed the foundation, of it, will be taken up in depth later on.

As will the simultaneous and complementary Brussels program aimed at Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, itself mirroring US and NATO military and energy plans for Central Asia.

The day after Poland and Sweden first proposed the initiative in May of last year, the British newspaper The Telegraph, under the headline “Poland takes on Russia with ‘Eastern Partnership’ proposal,” wrote that “Poland will take on its mighty neighbour Russia today when it proposes that the European Union extends its influence deep into the former Soviet Union by establishing an ‘Eastern Partnership’ and more markedly that “The Eastern Partnership would be particularly galling for the Kremlin if its aspiration to include Belarus is achieved.” (The Telegraph, May 26, 2008)

Ahead of last December’s EU summit where the plans were formalized for the implementation of the Eastern Partnership project at the summit of EU heads of state in March of 2009, this commentary appeared in a Georgian paper:

“[T]his latest EU action could entail another consequence, one that few appear to be thinking about now.

“In the early 1990s, the United States took the lead in pushing the idea that EU membership for East European countries could serve as either a surrogate or a stepping stone to NATO membership.

“If that idea should resurface, and some of its authors will be returning to office with the incoming Obama Administration in Washington, it would change both the EU and NATO and equally would change how Moscow would deal with Brussels, thus introducing yet another complication in East-West relations.” (Georgian Daily, December 8, 2008)

With the Czech Republic poised to take over the presidency of the EU in two days, The Telegraph of Britain accurately characterized not only the subversive but the provocative nature of the Eastern Partnership by indicating that “The Czech Republic, which will become the first former Warsaw Pact country to hold the presidency, has made a priority of a scheme to establish closer ties with former Soviet states, irrespective of Russian concerns of encroachment close to its borders.”

It further stated that Czech Foreign Minister Karol Schwarzenberg, coincidentally or otherwise a staunch supporter of US missile radar plans for his country, “stressed that the EU’s relations with the former Soviet states were its own affair and that Russia should not interfere.” (The Telegraph, December 30, 2008)

To insure that the point wasn’t missed in Moscow, Schwarzenberg thundered that Russia should abandon any illusions it might entertain concerning “some privileged interests abroad” and, throwing down the gauntlet altogether, “in such cases a red line must be established beyond which the EU must not make concessions.” (Black Sea Press [Georgia], December 30, 2008)

The Czech foreign minister evinced a curious sense of geography in his use of the word abroad, as Russia borders Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine and is only one nation removed from Armenia and Moldova, whereas his own government is pressing for the

deployment of missile radar facilities and troops from the other side of the world and has troops stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

As though in anticipation of Schwarzenberg's diktat, two weeks earlier Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned "[W]e cannot agree when attempts are being made to pass off the historically conditioned mutually privileged relations between the states in the former Soviet expanse as a 'sphere of influence,'" adding "If you accept that logic, then under this definition fall the European Neighborhood Policy, Eastern Partnership and many other EU (let alone NATO) projects, on which the decisions are taken without the participation of Russia or countries to which they apply." (Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 15, 2008)

Two days ago the last US ambassador to the Soviet Union [1987-1991], Jack Matlock, "explained Russian motivations and highlighted what he considered to be American hypocrisy in geopolitical affairs. While America has claimed nearly monopolistic power in the Western Hemisphere for 200 years, Matlock said, it has increasingly denied Russia its own regional sphere of influence since the fall of the Soviet Union.

"The West has been picking and choosing which principles to uphold." (Yale Daily News, February 12, 2009)

To backtrack, a month after the initial proposal for the establishment of the Eastern Partnership in May of 2008 Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski called the Partnership "the practical and ideological continuation of the European Neighbourhood Policy", which should become a supplement to the Mediterranean Union.... (InfoTag [Moldova], June 26, 2008)

Sikorski was alluding to the Mediterranean Union project of French president Nicholas Sarkozy, which in July 13, 2008 was renamed the Union for the Mediterranean, the southern wing of the European Union's "push east and south" (US State Department phrase for its own emphasis in and from Europe), the eastern complement of which is, of course, the Eastern Partnership.

A summit of EU leaders in Brussels in the same month, June of 2008, further pursued the initiative and the "Eastern Partnership. ..Polish- Swedish proposition of deepening cooperation with Eastern European countries" was discussed. (Polish Radio, June 20, 2008)

The above advancement of the project evoked these comments from a Caucasus news source:

"Moscow itself understood that the main aim of the initiative was to save the above-mentioned countries from the influence of Russia" and "According to the EU Commissioner for Foreign Relations and Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner at least one billion euro per year will be allocated for the Black Sea Synergy project." (Azeri Press Agency, June 30, 2008)

Black Sea Synergy project is synergy not as in the word whose adjective form is synergistic but as in syn + energy. Of the six nations targeted for the Eastern Partnership two, Georgia and Ukraine, are on the Black Sea and one, Azerbaijan, is a Caspian Sea littoral state.

The Eastern Partnership is designed among several other purposes to complement the

Union of the Mediterranean and to augment the Black Sea Synergy program as an integral and advanced component of the West's campaign to dominate world energy supplies and transit and to provide the civilian supplement to NATO's expansion throughout Eurasia, the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East.

The website of the European Commission, the executive branch of the EU, on a page dedicated to Black Sea Synergy includes these comments:

"The Black Sea region, which includes Bulgaria and Romania, occupies a strategic position between Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. The European Union intends to support regional commitments tending to increase mutual confidence and remove obstacles to the stability, security and prosperity of the countries in this region."

"Black Sea Synergy is a cooperation initiative that proposes a new dynamic for the region, its countries and their citizens. Regional cooperation could provide additional value to initiatives in areas of common interest and serve as a bridge to help strengthen relations with neighbouring countries and regions (Caspian Sea, Central Asia, South-eastern Europe)."

And, which will bring the issue back to GUAM and the prospects for further armed confrontations after the model of last August's war in the Caucasus:

"The EC advocates a more active role in addressing frozen conflicts (Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh) ." (Europa, June 3, 2009)

GUAM was set up by the West in 1997 to accomplish several strategic objectives: As a Trojan Horse within the Commonwealth of Independent States – until Georgia withdrew after the war last August all four GUAM member states were in the CIS – it was intended to undermine and ultimately dissolve the community, eventually luring other CIS states away from it. The inclusion of Armenia and Belarus in the Eastern Partnership is an example of this strategy.

Incorporating the four ex-Soviet states into a trans-Eurasian strategic energy and military transit corridor from the Black Sea through the Caspian Sea Basin to Central and South Asia. The addition of Uzbekistan in 1999 extended the range of the bloc, although Uzbekistan would withdraw in 2005.

The GUAM states are involved in all four of the so-called frozen conflicts in the former Soviet Union: Georgia with Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Azerbaijan with Nagorno-Karabakh; Moldova with Transdniestria (Pridnestrovie) .

In fact there are several other unresolved territorial disputes in the GUAM states including Adjara (suppressed and occupied by Georgia in 2004 after a show of force by Saakashvili's American-trained and -equipped army, the first example of the 'peaceful resolution of a frozen conflict') and the ethnic Armenian inhabited area of Samtskhe-Javakheti/ Javakhk in Georgia; Gaguzia in Moldova; and the Crimea and potentially even the Donetsk region in Ukraine.

The four frozen conflicts proper – Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia and Transdniestria – are illustrative of the cataclysmic consequences of the precipitate breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. All four former autonomous republics seceded from the respective Soviet Socialist Federal Republics they had belonged to, in all cases also entailing armed conflict and loss of life.

The four, and the other potential conflict areas mentioned above, for example Crimea in Ukraine, part of Russia for centuries until being ceded to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954, had belonged to the three federal republics they did until 1991 only within the context of the broader Soviet framework; once the latter ceased to exist, so too did the rationale for the autonomous republics remaining within new states that had never before existed as nations – Moldova and Ukraine – or, if so, not for centuries except for a three year period during the Russian civil war with Georgia from 1918–1921 and a two year interlude with Azerbaijan from 1918–1920.

The US and its NATO allies are past masters at fishing in troubled waters and in troubling the waters the better to fish in them, and the frozen conflicts in the former Soviet Union allow the West to impede integration processes within the Commonwealth of Independent States, develop close military ties to the nations involved with them and increasingly to intervene in post-Soviet territory under the auspices of peacekeeping operations whether through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union or, the ultimate objective, NATO.

Most dangerously, the US and all its NATO allies have refused to ratify the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) arms treaty – which has only been approved by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine (as successor states to the former Soviet Union) – and have justified their non-ratification by linking it to the withdrawal of small Russian peacekeeper contingents – mandated by the Commonwealth of Independent States and in at least one instance the United Nations – from Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdniestria.

In the eighteen year interim since the treaty was negotiated until now numerous new nations have been created in Europe – Bosnia, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia (and of course the pseudo-state of Kosovo) – and in the South Caucasus Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia which are not signatories to it and which then could have US and NATO forces and arms stationed on their territories without any provisions made for Russia and the three other nations that have ratified the treaty to monitor them.

Such deployments are not limited to conventional weaponry.

At the 2006 summit in Kiev, Ukraine GUAM expanded its name to GUAM -Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, declared itself an international organization and announced the creation of a joint military ('peacekeeping') force.

The summit also laid out in more detail and candor why the US and its allies created and fostered GUAM, whose expanded format is the Eastern Partnership, to begin with:

"The creation of the bloc is a bold step in promoting energy supply routes linking the Caspian Sea basin and consumers in the E.U. allowing to reduce heavy dependence on Russian energy.

"One of the main projects to be promoted is launching supplies of Caspian Sea crude oil from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan via Georgian and Ukrainian pipelines to markets in Europe....[T]he plan also calls for extending the Odessa-Brody pipeline to Plock of Poland, which is already hooked up with a major oil terminal and an oil refinery in Gdansk."(Ukrainian Journal, May 23, 2006)

The same report contains this important detail: “[T]he situation changed last year when Yushchenko, a pro-Western leader, had been inaugurated to the presidency in Ukraine and had pledged to replace Russian shipments with Caspian supplies. The pipeline would bypass Russia on the way to Ukraine and to the E.U....”
(Ibid)

A Russian commentary of late last autumn reflected the last paragraph’s allusion to the role of putative “color revolutions” in strengthening GUAM’s subservience to Western interests by remarking that the group “was created with a broad list of functions to combat Russian influence in the region, but remained largely unused, before the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and Mikhail Saakashvili’s coming to power in Georgia.” (Russia Today, November 7, 2009)

The following year at its summit in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, a GUAM-US, GUAM-Japan, GUAM-Visegrad Four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia), GUAM-Baltic and other new partnerships were launched.

In November of 2007 the US hosted a meeting of GUAM states national coordinators in Washington where “A special topic of the discussions was the assessment of the potential of Caspian Sea networks in the consolidation of the GUAM states’ energy security and the present-day shape of the Nabucco Project.” (Infotag [Moldova], November 2, 2007)

At the 2008 GUAM summit in Batumi, the capital of Georgian-subjugated Adjara, “The sides [chartered a] course for the development of regional cooperation as a part of the European and Asian integration processes, and for strengthening partnership relations with the US, Poland, Japan and other states as well as international organizations.
“The declaration expressed concern over the protracted conflicts, aggressive separatism.. .and underlined the importance of the international community’s support for the settlement of the conflicts.”(Azeri Press Agency, July 2, 2008)

David Merkel, Assistant to the US Secretary of State “said GUAM unites the Caspian and Black Sea regions and can fulfill the function of connecting Central Asia with the Near East.”(Georgian Public Broadcasting, July 1, 2008)

The Georgian Energy Minister, Aleksandre Khetaguri, extended the reach of GUAM-centered energy projects to the Baltic Sea in adding ““We have discussed the question of an Odessa-Brody-Gdansk pipeline, which will allow the oil from the Caspian countries to be transported first to Ukraine and then to other parts of Eastern Europe.”(The Messenger [Georgia], July 1, 2008)

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The turning point in the West’s resolve to back its GUAM, and now Eastern Partnership, clients to definitively ‘solve’ the issue of the frozen conflicts came at the NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania in April of last year.

All twenty six Alliance members affirmed that Georgia and Ukraine, the most pro-American and pro-NATO of the four GUAM and six Eastern Partnership states, were on an irreversible road to full NATO accession but balked at granting them the Membership Action Plan, the final stage to complete integration.

Two central barriers to a nation joining NATO are unresolved conflicts in and foreign (that is, non-NATO nations’) bases on their territories.

Georgia still laid claim to Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Ukraine still hosted the Russian Sixth Fleet at Sevastopol in the Crimea.

Far from being the rebuff to Georgia and Ukraine and to their American sponsor the non-granting of Membership Action Plans to the two candidates appeared to some, Georgia and Ukraine were both given not only a green light to resolve these issues but in fact were directed if not ordered to do so.

At the beginning of last August Georgian shelling killed six people, including a Russian peacekeeper, and wounded twelve on the outskirts of the capital and on August 7 Georgia's American-armed and -trained armed forces crossed the border and laid waste to much of the South Ossetian capital.

The assault, coming only days after the Pentagon had completed a two week military drill, Exercise Immediate Response 2008, under the sponsorship of NATO's Partnership for Peace program with troops from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, weeks after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had visited the Georgian capital and hours after Georgia's Saakashvili had proclaimed a unilateral ceasefire, led to direct military hostility between Russia and the preeminent client of the US.

During the same interim after the NATO summit Ukrainian authorities escalated their demands that the lease for the Russian Sixth Fleet not be renewed.

Weeks after the Caucasus war ended, the EU convened an extraordinary summit "devoted to the situation in Georgia" at which it adopted a resolution stating that "it is more necessary than ever to support regional cooperation and step up its relations with its eastern neighbours, in particular through its neighbourhood policy, the development of the Black Sea Synergy initiative and an Eastern Partnership. " (ForUm [Ukraine], September 2, 2008)

Shortly thereafter Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk revealed the true dimensions of the Eastern Partnership when he said that, "Developments of the past months, especially the crisis in the Caucasus, have shown the farsightedness of the Swedish and Polish initiative – a proposal for the entire European Union with a global dimension... ." (UNIAN [Ukraine], September 18, 2008)

The above occurred as the US sent a flotilla of warships to Georgian ports on and NATO boosted its naval presence in the Black Sea.

In the middle of last November an energy summit was held in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku and attended by the presidents of Ukraine, Turkey, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Georgia and other heads of states.

American expatriate and current Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus said that "The number of letters in the word 'GUAM' should be increased: it would consolidate both the organization and the participating countries," explaining "[W]e are working towards strengthening the GUAM organization, expanding contacts between the countries of the Baltic, Black and Caspian Sea regions, and making cooperation in the energy field more intense." (Today.AZ [Azerbaijan] , November 14, 2008)

Adamkus' statements were supported in a Western press report of the same day:

"The plan [elaborated at the summit] emphasised developing a 'southern gas corridor' to transport supplies from the Caspian Sea and Middle East regions, bypassing Russia, as well as an energy ring linking Europe and southern Mediterranean countries." (Agence France-Presse, November 14, 2008)

The meeting was overseen by US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman and special envoy of the US president for Eurasian energy issues Boyden Gray.

The main focus was on the Caspian-Black- Sea-Baltic Odessa-Brody- Gdansk oil pipeline project but also included as the Agence France-Presse dispatch alluded to the Nabucco natural gas mega-project which is to take in North African and Persian Gulf as well as Caspian energy resources and transit lines.

While at the summit US Energy Secretary Bodman effused that the "Baku Energy Summit is the continuation of 'The Contract of Century' signed in 1994," an allusion to the contract signed between American and Western companies and Azerbaijan in that year which laid the foundation for the subsequent trans-Eurasian Baku-Tbilisi- Ceyhan oil and Baku-Tbilisi- Erzurum gas pipelines as well as the Nabucco project.

Those three energy undertakings, unprecedented in scope and political capital expended, are to be expanded with the new Eastern Partnership.

....

In late November of last year the EU issue a draft communique on the Eastern partnership which stated, inter alia, "On the energy front, Memorandums of Understanding are to help guarantee EU energy security, leading to 'joint management, and even ownership of pipelines by companies of supplier, transit and consumer countries,'" as well as noting "EU 'concern' over energy infrastructure in conflict zones, such as a Russia-Balkans gas pipeline running through the disputed Moldovan region of Transdnistria. "(Azeri Press Agency, November 25, 2008)

A European Commission report of a few days later included the demand that "The EU must significantly boost relations with Ukraine and five other ex-Soviet republics and make easing Moscow's sway over them a priority.

"The report says the EU must seek "diversification of energy routes by enabling the ex-Soviet nations to build new and better connected pipelines and oil and gas storage facilities.

"The EU wants to see a gas pipeline from the Caucasus fully skirting Russia." (Associated Press, November 30, 2008)

As mentioned above the EU signed the draft communique on the Eastern Partnership in December of last year with the intent of pulling "the EU's six post-Soviet neighbors closer to the West by recognizing their 'European aspirations and creating a new European Economic Area...." (PanArmenian. net, December 3, 2008), "Accelerated partly because of the summer 2008 conflict in the Caucasus.... "(Sofia Echo, December 3, 2008)

On December 12 the heads of state of all 27 EU members approved the establishment of the Eastern Partnership.

Twelve days later the EU special representative to the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, added, "This program was elaborated in the light of the recent developments in the region, the war in Georgia, as well as the concerns of the South Caucasus countries on security

issues...." (Today.AZ, December 24, 2008)

On December 19 Washington signed a United States-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership with its compliant client in Kiev, Viktor Yushchenko, and within a week the Ukraine-Russia gas dispute began, plunging much of Europe into a crisis and renewing Western calls for...energy routes circumventing Russia.

On February 10 of this year Deputy Prime Minister for EU Affairs for the Czech Republic, which assumed the EU presidency on the first of the year, Alexandr Vondra, announced that he expected the Eastern Partnership to be formally inaugurated on May 7 in Prague at the EU summit to be held there.

Dispensing with the standard verbs like assisting and aiding, he added another one - stabilizing.

"The recent gas crisis has not only its technical but also political implications. The crisis highlighted how important it is for the EU to assume responsibility for the stabilisation of its eastern neighbours and to pay them more political and financial attention." (Czech News Agency, February 10, 2009)

The report from which the preceding quote is taken fleshed out the strategy in more detail:

"The Eastern Partnership summit is to be followed by a meeting of the countries that are connected with the 'southern energy corridor' that links the Caspian region with world markets, bypassing Russia....[T]he meeting will probably take place on the same day as the Eastern Partnership summit."(Ibid)

To further tie together the West's plans to penetrate and assimilate all of former Soviet territory, the following day it was reported that "Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek will go to Central Asia on Thursday to have talks on the Eastern Partnership and possible gas supplies for the European Union that would reduce the EU's dependency on Russian gas" and that "During his two-day visit, Topolanek will have talks with top politicians of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, " and, lastly, "Topolanek will negotiate in Central Asia on behalf of the EU as the Czech Republic has been EU president since January."(Czech News Agency, February 11, 2009)

And to further confirm the predetermined and integrated approach toward all non-Russian Commonwealth of Independent States nations, last December a Central Asian news source revealed:

"The European Union launched, on 28 November, a rule of law initiative for Central Asia - one of the key elements of its strategy for a new partnership with five Central Asian countries adopted in May 2007.

"The initiative provides for support for Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.. .."(UzReport [Uzbekistan] , December 19, 2008)

Exploiting the issue of alleged European energy security, a campaign first addressed in a major manner by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Alliance's 2006 summit in Riga, Latvia, the real intent of the Eastern Partnership is to subordinate eleven of the twelve former Soviet states not already in the EU (and NATO) to Brussels...and Washington.

By adding Belarus, either through cooptation or 'regime change,' to the Western column Russia will lose its only buffer against NATO in Europe and the only substantive early warning missile surveillance and air defenses it has outside its own borders.

By adding Armenia Russia will effectively be driven out of the South Caucasus.

With the absorption of the five Central Asian nations, Russia would lose all influence throughout the entire former Soviet space except for its own territory.

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