

NATO: Global Military Bloc Finalizes 21st Century Strategic Doctrine

By [Rick Rozoff](#)

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In Brussels in the first week of May NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen delivered his urbi et orbi (to the city and the world) monthly address, the bloc's Military Committee assembled the defense chiefs of 49 nations supplying troops for the war in Afghanistan and U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden visited the Alliance's headquarters.

As the world faces an almost two-year economic downturn epitomized by the national crisis in Greece and natural disasters like the devastating earthquake in Haiti and the fallout from volcanic eruptions in Iceland, the U.S.-led Western military bloc is preparing for interventions around the world.

For NATO, which however much it pretends to be something else or something more is a military bloc, all problems in the world require some variety of military action.

It exploited an ethnic conflict in Kosovo to launch its first war in Europe in 1999 and attacks on the American cities of New York and Washington two years later to begin its first war in Asia. Having fought a 78-day air war and now waging a nearly nine-year ground war, NATO is hardly a paper, and by no means a defensive, organization.

Its threat to intervene in as many as a score of different areas it has identified as part of its 21st century expeditionary mission is not to be taken lightly.

On May 5 its Secretary General Rasmussen delivered his monthly press briefing in Brussels and announced that he and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will hold a press conference on May 17 after NATO's Group of Experts presents its report on the Alliance's new Strategic Concept.

The new military doctrine will be the first in this century, the first since the completion of NATO's precedent-setting large-scale air war in 1999 and its transition to fighting a ground war and counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan.

It will be the 61-year-old bloc's first global warfighting doctrine based on the past eleven years' military interventions in the Balkans, South Asia and the Horn of Africa, naval and airlift operations in the Mediterranean Sea and Africa, and a training mission in Iraq.

Despite Rasmussen's assurance that all NATO member states "will examine the report carefully" as part of what has been portrayed as a collective, deliberative process, all the important elements of the Strategic Concept were decided upon years ago. In Washington, D.C.

They include a continuation and escalation of the war in South Asia, in both Afghanistan and Pakistan; placing all NATO member states under a joint U.S.-NATO interceptor missile shield; retaining American tactical nuclear weapons on air bases in European nations; expanding the bloc even further into the Balkans and nations of the former Soviet Union; extending ad infinitum naval surveillance and interdiction operations in the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, encompassing many of the world's most vital and strategic shipping lanes and naval choke points; penetrating deeper into the Middle East and Africa through military partnerships and training and other assistance programs.

Global NATO's new strategy also emphasizes universally thematic as well as geographically specific pretexts for intervention around the world under its Article 5 collective military assistance and intervention clause.

In a conference on the new Strategic Concept in London last October 1 conducted jointly by NATO and Lloyd's of London, Rasmussen identified what he referred to as third-millennium concerns that NATO is preparing to confront. [1]

They include but are not limited to (as the list has already expanded in the interim and will do so further) piracy, cyber security, climate change and global warming, storms and flooding, rising sea levels, water shortages and drought, cross-border migration, diminished food production, natural disasters, humanitarian crises, dependence on "foreign sources of fuel energy" and supplies emanating from nations NATO desires to drive out of regional and world markets, carbon dioxide emissions, "factories or energy stations or transmission lines or ports" that require protection, the melting of the Arctic ice cap and, as ever, international terrorism.

The above terms are the exact ones Rasmussen used last year.

And alleged weapons of mass destruction. And missile threats from "rogue states." Nuclear proliferation real or potential or contrived. Territorial disputes, ethnic conflicts, "failed states," endangered individuals or groups covered under the rubric of the "responsibility to protect," competition over natural resources and an ever-evolving list of other justifications for intervention at any time at any spot on the earth for most any reason.

Ahead of this November's NATO summit in Lisbon, Portugal, the defense and foreign ministers of the bloc will meet in Brussels to put the finishing touches on the 21st century Strategic Concept.

In his May 5 press briefly, Rasmussen rattled off a barrage of rhetorical queries the answers to which were a foregone conclusion. "What new missions should NATO take on, to defend our populations against 21st century threats? What should our nuclear policy be? How far should our Partnerships reach?"

To no one's surprise, he responded by saying "my aim is for the new Concept to be ambitious; not only to reflect what we are currently doing, but also to set out what we should be doing to keep the 900 million citizens in NATO countries safe from attack." [2]

Attack from whom or what was not specified, as though the assertion that 28 NATO member states from Canada to Croatia, Iceland to Latvia and Norway to Portugal are and will always be under threat of immediate annihilation by stealthy, nefarious and unprecedentedly capable adversaries is self-evident and as such does not require substantiation. Perhaps he

was alluding to Iran. Or Russia. Or non-state actors. Or to nobody at all.

His remedy for this historically unmatched threat – and though few in the world challenge such contentions they truly pass from the realm of political discourse into what is properly the province of psychiatry – is what the White House and the Pentagon intend it to be: Integrating most all of Europe into the U.S.'s global interceptor missile system, maintaining American nuclear weapons on the continent, fighting an expanding war in Asia 3,000 miles from NATO headquarters, recruiting the few European nations outside the Alliance into its fold, deepening the integration of nations of the former Soviet Union including those in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and intensifying military partnerships with countries in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Oceania.

Regarding U.S. interceptor missile deployments – the list of NATO states where they are planned, all in Eastern Europe, now are reported to include Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania – Rasmussen said that “Because there is a growing threat...Europe needs to continue to contribute to its own defence.”

“NATO is already building a theatre missile defence system to protect our armed forces, when they go out on mission. The cost of expanding that system to cover not only our soldiers, but also our populations – normal citizens in our cities – is less than 200 million Euros.”

In debt-ridden and cash-strapped Europe, the secretary general felt that he only needed to discuss the cost-effectiveness of a program that could trigger a new missile race on the continent. Or far worse – a missile exchange, whether intended or inadvertent.

Rasmussen announced plans to visit Romania on the following two days, May 6 and 7, where, he added, “We will, of course, in our talks, cover the whole agenda, including missile defence. Not least because Romania attaches strong importance to what we consider the core function of NATO – territorial defence, collective defence, according to Article 5 in the NATO Treaty. And in my opinion an effective missile defence is a part of a credible territorial defence in the current security environment in the world. So obviously we will discuss also that issue.”

In February the Romanian government confirmed its commitment to host U.S. Standard Missile-3 anti-ballistic missile interceptors which, as seen above, Rasmussen construes as “territorial defence, collective defence, according to Article 5 in the NATO Treaty.”

In Romania he consulted with President Traian Basescu, Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi and other leading government officials and repeated, word-for-word, his comments at the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Estonia late last month that there were “more than 30 countries having or developing missile capabilities.” Again, no one asked him which thirty nations he was speaking about.

He also rehashed another refrain from the Estonia meeting in stating “In many cases, these missiles could eventually threaten our populations and territories. And several countries are seeking nuclear weapons....[W]e must take a fresh look at missile defence – not as a substitute for nuclear deterrence, but as a complement to it.” The last phrase was also borrowed from the NATO foreign ministers meeting in Tallinn. [3]

In a presentation at the University of Bucharest Rasmussen said that “Allies need to

maintain an appropriate nuclear deterrent.”

More specifically, he said, “I hope that in Lisbon we will decide that missile defence is an Alliance’s mission, by combining the US and the NATO systems. That will provide an effective coverage to our populations.”

While in Bucharest, Rasmussen also reiterated the push to complete the total integration of the Balkans, reaffirming: “We share the view that the best recipe for lasting security and stability in the Balkans is integration of all countries of the region in the euroatlantic structures, into the EU and NATO.”

He praised Romania, which recently disclosed that it would increase its troop numbers in Afghanistan to 1,800, for its display of Alliance solidarity in the war zone, which is “substantial, without caveats.”

Other standard demands of the new Strategic Concept were also addressed, including so-called energy and cyber security, with Rasmussen connecting them to NATO’s Article 5 war clause and with missile shield deployments:

“NATO is a unique mechanism for collecting information from different sources
– We have the means to protect critical energy infrastructure.”

“Nowhere is the need to act today rather than tomorrow more evident than in this area....[A] cyber attack can bring a country down without a single soldier having to cross its borders.”

“NATO’s core task was, continues to be and will remain territorial collective defence of our territories and populations.”

“I am not going to prejudge the new Strategic Concept. But I’ll make one point very clear: We cannot afford to put missile defence, energy security or cyber defence on the back burner. Because new challenges don’t wait until we feel ready to meet them.”

The claim that the populations of all 28 NATO nations, including those of North America, Iceland and Denmark’s Greenland, face an imminent threat from intercontinental ballistic missiles, ones moreover carrying nuclear warheads, ready to be launched by – to name the West’s standard suspects – Iran and Syria calls into question the credibility if not the sanity of the person who made it. On May 5 the NATO secretary general stated in this regard:

“We have...sufficient intelligence to know that we’re faced with a real threat, with Iranian aspirations as regards missile technology and nuclear programs,” adding that he was “confident” the NATO summit in November would agree to protect Washington, D.C., Ottawa and Reykjavik from phantom Iranian missiles.

References to cyber and energy security, though, are undisguised accusations against Russia, one of the world’s two main nuclear powers, and, coupled as they unvaryingly are with NATO’s Article 5 mutual defense clause, would alone warrant an immediate demand for the abolition of the military bloc whose strategic doctrine is based on that policy.

This week the Norwegian ambassador to former Soviet republic and current NATO partner Azerbaijan, bordering both Iran and Russia, said that the new Strategic Concept “will cover

all member states, as well as NATO partner states.” [4]

There are over 40 NATO military partners included in the Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, Contact Countries and Trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO Military Commission programs, so NATO reserves the right to intervene on behalf of some 70 nations, including partners like Israel, Georgia and South Korea. In fact NATO arrogates to itself and to its individual members and its partners the exclusive prerogative of using military force outside (and within) their borders.

Rasmussen’s visit to Romania is to be followed later this month by one to Bulgaria, “a state of strategic importance in view of future plans for the deployment of an anti-missile shield.” [5]

In late April he visited the bloc’s two newest members, Albania and Croatia. After he met with Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha the latter announced “that Albania was prepared to fulfil all commitments that come from its NATO membership, including the positioning of anti-missile defence units on its territory.” [6]

Shortly afterward Chief of Staff of the Albanian Armed Forces General Maksim Malaj revealed that a team of NATO experts was headed to his country and that they “will make a thorough analysis of the geo-strategic factors in our country. If they decide to install elements of the anti-missile defence shield, we will give our permission.” [7]

NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe Admiral James Stavridis visited Bulgaria on April 26 and 27 to meet with the country’s defense minister and military chief.

The Alliance’s top military and civilian leaders visited the Southeastern European nations for discussions on the Strategic Concept. They also drummed up commitments for further deployments to Afghanistan and for the stationing of U.S. missile shield installations in the respective states.

The current NATO-integrated regimes on the Black Sea and in the Balkans are sufficiently compliant and obliging to allow the Pentagon anything it demands from them, whether missile interception sites or the transfer of nuclear warheads currently in Western Europe to locations closer to their prospective use to the east and south.

To insure that the message of Washington’s emissary and intermediary Rasmussen didn’t fail to get through, U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden, deputy commander-in-chief of “the world’s sole military superpower,” arrived in Brussels on May 6 to meet with Rasmussen and to address the European Parliament.

His comments while in the Belgian capital included:

“The United States and European Union have stood side-by-side to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons....In the face of the threat that Iran poses, we are committed to the security of our allies.”

He also said that “Washington remains determined to deploy its planned anti-missile system in Europe to counter the danger of Iran’s nuclear program and its long-range ballistic missiles.”

After Biden met with Rasmussen – the agenda was on “Afghanistan, missile defense, NATO’s Strategic Concept...Pakistan, Iran, counter-terrorism, climate change and energy security” [8] – NATO spokesman James Appathurai stated: “They both share the same view. They believe that NATO should take on territorial missile defense as a NATO mission at the next summit.” [9]

On the occasion of his European visit Biden released an article called “Advancing Europe’s Security” that was dutifully (one could say slavishly) published in the International Herald Tribune and the New York Times for readers on both side of the Atlantic.

The piece included these excerpts:

“The United States and Europe...have built the most successful alliance in history....NATO is revising its ‘strategic concept,’ which contains the guiding principles for NATO’s strategy to deal with security threats, to prepare the alliance for the challenges of the 21st century....[W]e have to devote more attention and resources to deterring and combating security threats to Europe that come from outside Europe.

“[T]oday the Continent faces new and pernicious threats: the spread of weapons of mass destruction to rogue regimes with access to ballistic missile technology, the ongoing threat of terrorist attack enabled by havens in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the prospect of cyber-attack by criminal networks and other actors, and significant energy security challenges....[We] need a more effective conflict-prevention, conflict-management, and crisis-resolution mechanism to defuse crises before they escalate. The Russia-Georgia crisis in August 2008 reminded all of us that we cannot take security in Europe for granted or become complacent.

“[W]e must affirm...the right of states to choose their own security alliances. The indivisibility of security...means that all European countries must abide by certain shared rules: above all, a commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the right of all countries to choose their own alliances freely. And most importantly, we cannot permit the re-establishment of spheres of influence in Europe.” [10]

The last allusion was of course to Russia. Washington will not permit it to have any influence in nations neighboring it, even those that had been part of Russia for centuries and which have large ethnic Russian populations.

There is only one sphere of influence in Europe from the North Sea to the Black Sea: That of the U.S. and NATO.

On the two days during which Rasmussen gave his monthly address and began his visit to Romania and Biden visited Brussels, May 5 and 6, the defense chiefs of 49 nations met at a gathering of NATO’s Military Committee in Brussels. The countries involved were NATO members states, partner states and other non-NATO nations contributing troops to the war in Afghanistan. (In addition to the 49 national contingents officially serving under NATO as troop contributors, Afghanistan and Pakistan work with NATO and nations like Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt and Jordan also have military personnel in the war theater or on their way there.)

The bloc’s two top military commander – U.S. Admiral James Stavridis, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and French General Stephane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander

Transformation – were in attendance, as was General Hakan Syren, Chairman of the EU Military Committee.

The defense ministers and NATO and EU military commanders discussed operations in three continents – Asia (Afghanistan), Europe (Kosovo) and Africa (Somalia) – as well as the NATO training mission in Iraq “in support of Iraq’s Security Forces” [11], the ongoing Operation Active Endeavor naval mission in the Mediterranean, Ukraine becoming the first former Soviet state to join the NATO Response Force, the new Annual National Programs for Ukraine and Georgia, transformation and modernization of the Georgian armed forces, and the integration of NATO and EU missions in Europe, Asia and Africa.

NATO’s 21st century military doctrine – expeditionary, global and aggressive – will leave few parts of the planet unaffected. The 900 million inhabitants of Alliance member states evoked by Secretary General Rasmussen are slightly over one-eighth of the human race, but the leaders of those nations gathered collectively in NATO presume to determine developments in dozens of spheres throughout the entire world. With only 13 percent of the world’s population but over 60 percent of its military spending.

Notes

1) Thousand Deadly Threats: Third Millennium NATO, Western Businesses Collude On New Global Doctrine

Stop NATO, October 2, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/10/02/thousand-deadly-threats-third-millennium-nato-western-businesses-collude-on-new-global-doctrine>

2) All quotes Rasmussen quotes from the NATO website:

<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>

3) Nuclear Weapons And Interceptor Missiles: Twin Pillars Of U.S.-NATO Military Strategy In Europe

Stop NATO, April 23, 2010

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/04/23/nuclear-weapons-and-interceptor-missiles-twin-pillars-of-u-s-nato-military-strategy-in-europe>

4) Trend News Agency, May 4, 2010

5) Standart News, May 5, 2010

6) Focus News Agency, April 30, 2010

7) Focus News Agency, May 5, 2010

8) USA TODAY, May 5, 2010

9) Associated Press, May 6, 2010

10) The White House, May 5, 2010

11) North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 6, 2010

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