

NATO Pulls Pakistan Into Its Global Network

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Global Research, July 24, 2010
[Stop NATO](#) 24 July 2010

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In four months the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will hold a summit in Lisbon, Portugal. The host country was one of the 12 nations that founded the United States-dominated military bloc 61 years ago.

The rival grouping that was created six years after NATO's formation and its expansion into Turkey and Greece in 1952 and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955, the Warsaw Treaty Organization (Warsaw Pact), formally dissolved itself almost twenty years ago.

In the interim since its formation, having grown to 16 members by 1982 with the incorporation of Spain, NATO expanded from 12 to 28 member states and absorbed 12 nations in Eastern Europe over the past 11 years. The last dozen were, except for two former Yugoslav federal republics (Croatia and Slovenia), earlier part of the Warsaw Pact and in three instances (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) also of the Soviet Union.

The North Atlantic military bloc's sole right to maintain its name is that its major powers do largely have coastlines on the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean. The majority of its members do not. Since the Warsaw Pact's demise and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO has subordinated all of Europe through full membership and the Partnership for Peace and more advanced programs.

The newest members of NATO graduated through successive stages of integration from the Partnership for Peace to Individual Partnership Action Plans and Membership Action Plans to full membership. All supplied troops for the occupation of Iraq and now have forces serving under NATO in the Afghan war zone.

Current members of the Partnership for Peace program in Europe are: Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Ireland, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine. Bosnia, Moldova and Montenegro now have Individual Partnership Action Plans and Ukraine was recently granted a special Annual National Program. Russia was a member of the Partnership for Peace from 1992-1999, but suspended participation in that program and the Permanent Joint Council with NATO over the Alliance's 78-day bombing war against Yugoslavia in 1999. However, in 2002 the NATO-Russia Council was inaugurated and though in abeyance after the 2008 Georgia-Russia war is functioning again.

All three former Soviet South Caucasus states – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – are Partnership for Peace members. The first two also have Individual Partnership Action Plans (introduced in 2002) and Georgia its own Annual National Program, which NATO awarded it shortly after its five-day war with Russia in 2008.

In Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are in the Partnership for Peace. Kazakhstan is the first country outside of Europe (inclusive of the Caucasus) to receive an Individual Partnership Action Plan.

In the Middle East and Northern and Western Africa, the following countries are NATO Mediterranean Dialogue partners: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Israel and Egypt each have an Individual Cooperation Program with NATO introduced in the last three years under enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue provisions. Egypt and Jordan have small troop contingents in Afghanistan.

Under the auspices of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative of 2004, NATO has strengthened military ties with the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. All but Oman and Saudi Arabia have formalized military cooperation arrangements with NATO. The United Arab Emirates is one of 46 official Troop Contributing Nations for NATO's war in Afghanistan and there are also Bahraini soldiers in the war theater.

The Brussels-based military bloc also has a category of military cooperation called Contact Countries, which to date include Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. All four have assisted the war in Afghanistan in various capacities and all but Japan have provided NATO with troops. Other Asia-Pacific states have deployed troops to serve under NATO in Afghanistan and as such are arguably already Alliance partners. Those countries include Singapore, Mongolia and Malaysia.

NATO has initiated a Tripartite Commission consisting of its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the armed forces of Afghanistan and Pakistan. A complement to the U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan Tripartite Commission, in 2008 former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth referred to it as the Trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO Military Commission, which is a more accurate, if not its formal, title.

A tally of 28 full NATO members and the partners mentioned above produces a list of at least 70 of the 192 members of the United Nations which are linked to the Western military bloc in some manner.

Of all those nations, Pakistan is the second largest, its population of 170,000,000 only surpassed by that of the U.S. It is also one of only seven nations that acknowledge possessing nuclear weapons.

NATO's grip on Pakistan was increased in 2005 when the military bloc became involved in an earthquake relief operation in the country, NATO's second mission in Asia.

After that Pakistani military officers attended training courses at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany for the first time in 2006. The Pakistani Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time, General Ehsan ul Haq, visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels in the same year.

In 2007 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer became the first NATO secretary general to travel to Pakistan. In the same year Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz visited NATO Headquarters.

The next year President Pervez Musharraf made the same trip, followed by his Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, ten months afterward.

In January of 2009 NATO chief Scheffer visited Pakistan to meet with newly installed President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Defence Minister Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Army chief General Kayani.

Returning the favor, Kayani paid a visit to NATO Headquarters in May, and the next month President Zardari, nine months after assuming his post, traveled to NATO Headquarters for a meeting with the bloc's top governing body, the North Atlantic Council, being the first elected president of Pakistan to do so. In October of last year NATO conducted an international seminar on Pakistan in Brussels which included the ambassadors of all 28 of the bloc's member states. In December NATO launched an Individual Tailored Cooperation Package to consolidate the integration of Pakistan.

This year Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi was at NATO Headquarters in February to meet with the new secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and to address the North Atlantic Council, and last month Prime Minister Gilani led a large government delegation to the same location, where he also met with Rasmussen and addressed the North Atlantic Council.

On either end of the International Conference on Afghanistan held in Kabul on July 20, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen visited Tajikistan, where French NATO forces have been stationed since 2002 and where recent reports detail plans for the U.S. to open a training center [1], and Pakistan.

On July 19 Rasmussen met with Tajik Defense Minister Sherali Khairulloyev and Security Council Secretary Amirkul Azimov to coordinate a common Afghan strategy.

He arrived in Pakistan on July 21, six days after a twenty-member Pakistani parliamentary delegation completed a four-day trip to NATO Headquarters in Belgium "to share information about the Alliance's policies and activities and to strengthen political dialogue between NATO and elected representatives of Pakistan." [2]

The group was also taken to the Allied Command Operations Headquarters, formerly known as Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), the central command of NATO military forces.

While in Islamabad this Wednesday, Rasmussen was accompanied by a large delegation which included NATO Spokesman James Appathurai and Robert Simmons, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security Cooperation and Partnership and its first Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia. [3] Simmons was also in Pakistan in May when he spoke at a conference entitled "NATO's Transition and its Relation with Pakistan."

His comments at the time included the assurance that "Pakistan is NATO's valued partner and our common challenge is war in Afghanistan."

A report of his visit stated, "Simmons emphasized that NATO does not want to limit [itself] to high level dialogue with Pakistan but also to have practical cooperation by making use of the instrument of [an] Individual Cooperation Program to cover civilian and military affairs" [4], the same name as that used by NATO for its advanced partnerships with Israel and Egypt.

On May 21 Rasmussen and other NATO officials met with Pakistani President Zardari and with Chief of Army Staff General Kayani and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Tariq Majid in separate meetings at the military's General Headquarters. During the

meeting with General Majid, discussion “focused on the future NATO strategy for Afghanistan [and] the status of NATO-Pakistan relations including a proposed framework to institutionalize enduring, broad-based and mutually beneficial future cooperation.” [5]

During Zardari’s meeting with Rasmussen, the Pakistani president stated he “appreciated training facilities offered by NATO to Pakistani officers and called for further increasing such facilities,” and “hail[ed] NATO’s intended support for training counter-terrorism units.” [6]

Last year the Pakistani military launched a “counterterrorist” offensive in the Swat Valley and adjoining parts of the North-West Frontier Province that dwarfed in comparison fighting on the other side of the Durand Line, leading to 3,000,000 civilians being displaced according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Oxfam among other sources. There can be little doubt that the operation was ordered by Washington.

Over the past two years the U.S. has killed over 1,000 people with drone missile attacks in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas. There have been reports of NATO helicopter gunship and commando raids in Pakistan launched from Afghanistan.

On July 21 NATO chief Rasmussen said that “Pakistan and NATO enjoy an important relationship and intend to build upon it...it goes beyond Afghanistan.” Indeed. Rasmussen also “commended Pakistan’s operations in the Tribal Areas....He mentioned the tripartite arrangement with NATO and said [NATO] would encourage Pakistan to continue it.” [7]

NATO’s first war in Asia and its first ground war is not limited to Afghanistan. In touting his organization’s “long-term partnership with Pakistan,” the Alliance’s secretary general added that NATO’s presence in Afghanistan and several adjoining nations was “driven not by calendar, but by commitment.” [8]

NATO is in South and Central Asia to stay. In Afghanistan, in Pakistan and in the former Soviet republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan following suit and India next in line. (The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, began a two-day visit to India on July 23, and pledged a continued “commitment” to South and Central Asia.)

In November NATO will endorse its new Strategic Concept, the first since it began its Eastern expansion at the fiftieth anniversary summit in Washington, D.C. in 1999. It is NATO’s first 21st century, first avowedly expeditionary military doctrine. It is the blueprint for global NATO, with partners and operations on at least five continents.

Notes

1) Afghan War: Petraeus Expands U.S. Military Presence Throughout Eurasia

Stop NATO, July 4, 2010

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/07/05/afghan-war-petraeus-expands-u-s-military-presence-throughout-eurasia>

2) North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July 16, 2010

3) Mr. Simmons’ Mission: NATO Bases From Balkans To Chinese Border

Stop NATO, March 4, 2009

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/27/mr-simmons-mission-nato-bases-from-balkans->

[to-chinese-border](#)

- 4) Xinhua News Agency, May 21, 2010
- 5) South Asian News Agency, July 21, 2010
- 6) Associated Press of Pakistan, July 21, 2010
- 7) Daily Times, July 22, 2010
- 8) Ibid

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