

# **“Regime Reboot” and the Macedonia Protest Movement. Balkan Megaprojects Pave Way for Grand Eurasian Free Trade Area**

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*Below is the June 2016 interview in English published by Oriental Review of Hybrid Warfare expert Andrew Korybko with the Macedonian media “[Vecer](#)” (Evening). Korybko addresses the US R-TOR (Regime Tweaking – Regime Change – Regime Reboot) strategy in the Balkans, and efforts by Russia and China to stabilize Eurasia.*

*You’re in Skopje at the moment, where the so-called “Colorful Revolution” has been ongoing for two months already. What are the real reasons and the goals behind this in the context of the geopolitical constellations in the region?*

The “Colorful Revolution” that’s presently ongoing in the Republic of Macedonia is nothing more than a Color Revolution masquerading as a “legitimate” civil society movement. It’s really a foreign-supported regime change attempt that employs state-of-art political technologies inspired by the teachings of Gene Sharp, the godfather of this stratagem. Some participants and international observers genuinely believe that what’s happening in Skopje is an organic initiative, but others are aware of its artificial nature and pursuit of ulterior motives. It doesn’t take much effort for any neutral observer to find out which forces are pulling the protesters’ strings, since much information has already been publicly released by the patriotic elements of the Macedonian media about the [involvement of the Soros OSI Foundation](#) and the [close coordination](#) between the protesters and the US Embassy. Soros and his multitude of affiliated organizations provided the “seed funding” for organizing the wide assortment of “NGOs” that are leading the anti-government movement, and the billionaire philanthropist controls the finances that allow SDSM to pay protesters and bus them into Skopje from all across the country. These protesters, of course, are either “useful idiots” or willing conspirators like was already mentioned. They participate in these events for a few reasons, all of which could potentially overlap depending on the particular individual involved:

- \* the “Liberal-Democratic” ideology that Zaev and his handlers have been trying to brainwash people with through their control of various media apparatuses has succeeded in misleading a minority of the masses, a few of whom are attracted to the “romantic” idea of taking part in a “revolution” and egotistically relish the potential mainstream and social media attention that they could receive;

- \* some people have an immediate financial incentive to get paid a day’s wages for only doing a few hours of active or passive work, such as “protesting” or attending “workshops”, “training seminars”, etc., respectively, and see their paid participation in

the Color Revolution as an easy job that could go on indefinitely;

\* and others are simply career opportunists that want to capitalize on what they believe will be a successful regime change operation and use this chance to ingratiate themselves with the forthcoming powers-to-be, angling to ascend to the halls of power on the backs of the misguided fools and paid “protesters” that they hope will help them get there.

It’s important to point out at this moment that the US is pursuing three interlinked strategic objectives through its support of the Color Revolution. From the relatively mildest to the most extreme, these are:

\*Regime Tweaking, or the enactment of governmental concessions without immediately changing the head of state and/or the ruling party;

\* Regime Change, or the overthrow of the democratically elected and legitimate authorities through either “constitutional” (Brazil) or unconstitutional (Ukraine) means;

\* and a Regime Reboot, or changing the constitution (such as through “[Identity Federalism](#)”, functioning in many current cases as an internal partition) in order to completely rewrite the ‘rules of the game’.



A Budapest-Belgrade-Skopje-Athens line would complement the EU’s TEN-T plan.

*Beside Macedonia, we can see protests in Serbia, Montenegro, R.Srpska, Croatia... There are turmoils in the Balkan states precisely in the period when Moscow and Beijing promoted the two major economic projects the Turkish stream and the Chinese Railway from Budapest to Athens. What is the connection between the destabilizations and this projects?*

Of course, the US’ ultimate fallback plan is to devastate the Balkans with another regional war if it can’t seize control of the geostrategic territory through which Russia’s Balkan Stream and China’s Balkan Silk Road are expected to pass, but if it could be led to believe that it could further its objective through the relatively inexpensive investment in long-term Regime Tweaking and “constitutional” Regime Change, then it will usually opt for this scenario. Repeating the earlier order from the relatively mildest to the most extreme goals, and understanding that in this particular context of prospectively unfolding violence that one step would simply phase into the other according to a predetermined timeframe, it can be expected that the US will try to promote:

\* Regime Tweaking by ordering SDSM back into the government on Washington’s terms so that it can dismantle VMRO’s domestic and international achievements and gain control of key state institutions (judicial, intelligence, military, etc.), which in turn would help SDSM steal a future election as a means of “legitimizing” its ‘soft coup’;

\* Regime Change by getting rid of VMRO completely and consequently instigating a civil conflict between the patriots and the SDSM coup supporters, predictably expanding into a multisided war that evokes strong shades of an externally manufactured “clash of civilizations’ by involving the terrorist supporters of “Greater Albania”;

\* and a total Regime Reboot by forcing a “federal solution” onto the Republic of Macedonia that divides the country between Orthodox Macedonians and Muslim Albanians and leads to the eventual erosion of Macedonian identity, foreseeably culminating in the constitutional name being changed and the “federal” halves being [internationally partitioned](#) between Greater Albania and Greater Bulgaria.

This three-step approach is being pushed by the US out of the strong determination that its strategists have in disrupting, influencing, or controlling Russia’s (currently suspended) Balkan Stream gas pipeline and China’s Balkan Silk Road high-speed rail project from Budapest to the Greek port of Piraeus (and potentially one day as far afield as Warsaw, Riga, and Saint Petersburg).

A subservient VMRO government, which has now proven itself totally impossible for the US to achieve, was envisioned to act as an influencing proxy on giving the US an indirect presence along the vital chokepoint through which these two projects are expected to pass, potentially even allowing it to one day cancel or outright control these initiatives. Since this option is no longer feasible for the US, it instead wants to carry out direct Regime Change via a Color Revolution or phased Regime Change via pressured Regime Tinkering (brought about by the Color Revolution or potential Hybrid War) which would result in its SDSM agents taking control of the state on behalf of Washington. If this fallback plan can’t succeed, then the US might likely resort to instigating a “clash of civilizations” between Orthodox Macedonians and Muslim Albanians (whether as a coordinated part of the Regime Change operation or conducted separately thereof) in order to radically push through its Regime Reboot agenda in totally reconfiguring the Macedonian state and preparing for its eventual dismantlement by Albania and Bulgaria.

As for what’s presently being seen in the other Balkan states, that’s also very closely connected with the formula I spoke about earlier as regards to Regime Tweaking, Regime Change, and a Regime Reboot. In connection to Republika Srpska, the aim is to overthrow Milorad Dodik and install a compliant pro-Western surrogate who would go along with the dismantlement of the autonomous republic’s sovereignty and its neo-imperial absorption into a Brussels-dominated Bosnia. The confusing situation in Serbia is similar – what started off as patriotic anti-NATO protests designed to constructively pressure the government into reversing its pro-Western course were quickly diverted into suspicious manifestations that nowadays could be weaponized to do more in pressuring Serbia away from Russia and China than from the EU and the US. It’s beginning to look like the US’ hijacked the positive “Regime Tweaking” purposes of the anti-NATO protests and replaced them with its own pro-Western “Liberal-Democratic” proxies designed to be a “bottom-up” complement to the top-down coercion that Washington is now imposing upon Belgrade.

Serbia is a very desirable target for the US because of its position alongside Russia and China’s Balkan Megaprojects. Although further inland than the Republic of Macedonia, it still occupies a very important space, and in the event that Macedonia once more succeeds in repelling the Hybrid War threat against it, then it’s forecast that the US will redirect its destabilization efforts further down the line, in this case, towards Serbia. Therefore, what’s happening there nowadays is a sort of strategic ‘insurance policy’ that the US is preparing for just in case it needs to move forward with this scenario. Moreover, Serbia’s interest in joining the Russian-led Eurasian Union trading bloc scares the US and the EU, both of which understand that the most practical way for the non-contiguous states to interact with one another is via China’s forthcoming Balkan Silk Road, which in this case would take goods from Belgrade to Piraeus via rail and then ship them to Russia by sea. This further

emphasizes the paramount importance that the multipolar world is placing on employing this high-speed rail route as its preferred access point into the continental hinterlands, beginning with Serbia and then extending throughout the rest of Central and Eastern Europe, though such a vision also conversely ‘justifies’ why the US could be interested in destabilizing Serbia once more in order to offset this project’s viability.

Additionally, there’s talk that Russia might build the so-called Poseidon Pipeline across the Black Sea and then through Bulgaria, Greece, and across the Adriatic Sea to Italy. Should this project ever see the light of day, then it’s likely that a branch would follow the South Stream blueprint and extend into Serbia, the envisioned hub of the original project. Assuming that there’s at least a potential that this could happen, then even if the Balkan Stream project remains indefinitely frozen, then Serbia would still be able to bring together the Chinese and Russian Megaprojects, thereby making it an irresistible target for the US. To complement the prospective internal destabilization of Serbia, the US looks ready to lure it into an international crisis in Bosnia, which is why it’s so adamant about creating turmoil in Republika Srpska. Washington knows that Belgrade’s security is directly connected to the stability of Banja Luka, and if its brotherly entity in Bosnia comes under threat, then all of Serbia indirectly affected by extent. Strategizing in advance of the fact that the internal disruptions in Serbia might fizzle out, the US is already preparing for the “Plan B” of focusing on Republika Srpska as a means of attracting Serbian attention and possible involvement, with the American-anticipated outcome being that this could disastrously entangle Belgrade in yet another regional conflict that ends up leading to large-scale strategic reversals.



Russian President Putin visited Serbia in 2015 and recently sat on the Byzantine throne in Athos, while Chinese President Xi Jinping also visited Belgrade one week ago. What’s your view on these events and what are the future political implications for the Balkan states?

It’s highly symbolic that both the Russian and Chinese leaders would find the Balkans worthy of their personal attention, and this just goes to reinforce the region’s strategic importance that I’ve emphasized in multiple interviews across the past year. The two nodes of the Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership are actively cooperating in courting the Balkan states, with each side recognizing that they need the other in order to fulfill their joint vision of promoting multipolarity in the region and then further afield throughout the rest of Europe. Russia has the civilizational heritage and energy supplies necessary for gaining the goodwill of most of the region’s people and powering their industries, while China has the investment capital needed for large-scale development projects. Russia is also seeking to invest in the region and certainly has the capability to do so, but it’s just that China has the recent experience in constructing the type of trade corridors that would greatly benefit both Moscow and Beijing.

Russian and Chinese cooperative involvement in the Balkans shouldn’t be seen as a competition (though that’s precisely how unipolar-affiliated media outlets and NGOs will try to mischievously portray it), but rather as one hand washing the other. Other than Central Asia, there is no other region in the world that has as much of a potential for bringing these

two Great Powers together than the Balkans, and there's no doubt that the region will see a lot more Russian and Chinese involvement in the coming years.

*In this sense, how important are the Balkans for the multipolar world and how does Macedonia fit into all of this?*

The Balkans are the geostrategic 'backdoor' to Europe, or in other words, the access point that the leading multipolar powers of Russia and China want to use in avoiding the "cordon sanitaire" that the US and NATO are setting up in Eastern Europe and gaining direct access to the heart of the continent. The Balkan Megaprojects – Russia's Balkan Stream and China's Balkan Silk Road – are compatible plans that will power the region and make it the focal point of an entirely unprecedented north-south economic corridor linking together Central and Eastern Europe. With the passing of time and the proper planning, this could foreseeably liberate the region from unipolar institutional influence and steadily replace it with its multipolar counterpart, ideally a supercontinental free trade area between Lisbon and Vladivostok.

President Putin's announcement during the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum that Russia is still interested in reaching a trade deal with the EU should be linked with Prime Minister Medvedev's late-2015 proposal for multilateral integration between the Eurasian Union, the SCO, and ASEAN. Taken together, this hemispheric strategy amounts to what I at the time called the "[Grand Eurasian Free Trade Area](#)", or GEFTA, but key to ensuring Europe's participation in this revolutionary structure is to actualize the Balkan Megaprojects as a means of demonstrating the connective infrastructural viability of this plan.

✖ It's here where the Republic of Macedonia has an irreplaceable role in linking the East (Russia, China) and West (EU) just like Alexander did millennia ago, although in a completely different way of course. While Russia's Balkan Stream project is indefinitely suspended for the time being and the recently discussed Poseidon Pipeline might bypass the country in favor of directly connecting to South Stream's envisioned Serbian hub instead, Macedonia is still the bottleneck chokepoint through which China's Balkan Silk Road high-speed rail project must pass, and it's this component of the Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership's Balkan policy that's the most substantially transformative in bringing multipolarity into Europe. After all, for as important as energy corridors are, they're always trumped by developmental ones when it comes to the real-sector economy, which is what China's project is aspiring to accomplish. In order for the Balkan Silk Road to evolve into a transregional north-south corridor connecting the broad space between Piraeus and St. Petersburg and facilitating Europe's eventual accession into GEFTA, it must first go through Macedonia, thus making the tiny country disproportionately important in global strategic affairs and explaining why the US has dedicated so much time to destabilizing it.

If Macedonia can beat back this asymmetrical aggression and remain stable, then it would serve as the geographic foundation for the Balkan Silk Road and become the strategic cornerstone for bringing together the rest of Eurasia via the positive effect that it would have in attracting the EU to GEFTA. While this is a long-term strategy, it shouldn't be forgotten that every far-reaching plan starts off humbly enough. Even though some observers may not yet recognize the global strategic significance of the Republic of Macedonia in the framework of the New Cold War and GEFTA, that doesn't make it any less important in actuality, and the lack of awareness merely serves as a cover for distracting the public's attention from the true intention behind the latest destabilizations.

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Andrew Korybko is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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