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## NATO Drones In Ukraine, What Then?

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Finlandization has been debated in the West as a pattern for Ukraine to follow. Turning Ukraine into the second Finland is not a brainstorm idea striking someone's head there in Brussels. They don't see Ukraine in terms of giving but rather taking. For instance, they are attracted by geopolitical advantage of establishing control over its territory and turning it into a beachhead situated near Russia...

Finlandization is a very simple thing, as they see it. It means comprehensive cooperation with NATO without formal membership. That's the pattern of relationship between NATO and Finland. According to Finish President Sauli Niinistö, NATO membership is not popular in Finland. No matter that, it is the only non-member state to take place in the Saber Strike - 2014 exercise to take place in the period of June 9-20 in the Baltic States and Poland.

Visiting Finland on June 9-1, 2014 Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov adduced the examples of undercover pressure exerted on Moscow by the West: Brussels threatens to freeze the talks on South Stream gas pipeline construction in case Russian refuses to recognize the Kiev authorities.

The West has used Ukraine to launch an unprecedented campaign against Russia while the number of Finns supporting the idea of joining the North Atlantic Alliance is gradually

growing. They filtrate information space to exclude those who fight against the anti-Russian myths related to the events in Ukraine. A significant recent example of “freedom of expression and freedom of speech ” is the dismissal in Finland of the well-known television presenter Jari Sarasvuo and the axing of his talk show after an interview with the Finnish human rights activist Johann Bäckman, whose opinion on Ukraine did not tally with that of our Western colleagues. Bäckman says he is listed as an unwanted person on TV by the Finish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Journalists who breach the rule are in for trouble. This is also a specific feature of the Finish model.

Finlandization presupposes that the West needs Ukraine only as a territory situated near Russia. Zbignew Brzezinski presented the concept and revived the term being applied to Ukraine. According to him, Moscow should understand that the attempts to destabilize Ukraine will be costly while the United States and the European Union should impose really biting sanctions. The relationship with Ukraine should not provoke decisive response on the part of Moscow. In a nutshell, that’s what Brzezinski meant by his interpretation of the concept applied to Ukraine. The West sees as it an advantage that according to this model, Finland formally remains neutral while intensively participating in all programs and activities of North Atlantic Alliance.

In case of Ukraine the application of this pattern implies unambiguous allegiance to the West and participation in NATO-led wars while preserving the so-called neutrality. It is envisioned from the start there will be a wide gap between the words and the deeds.

The issue of hypothetical military presence of NATO in Ukraine is too important to omit. Crimean media outlets have already reported on NATO drones based in Kanatovo (Kirovograd). Two of them were reported to land in Crimea during the confrontation between Simferopol and Maidan in Kiev. It looks like NATO is going to send something more combat capable than just unmanned aerial vehicles.

That’s what the term “rotational presence” is invented for. It is already applied to the Baltic States and Poland. The boots on the ground appear in the area of potential conflict, conduct intelligence gathering and all other kinds of activities and then pull out without leaving permanent bases behind. In case of emergency, the presence could be regular and the facilities deployed would be listed as temporary, not permanent. NATO says it’s not expansion but only routine rotation of personnel and weapons systems. Looks like that’s what they have in mind regarding Ukraine. It has been reported that US military advisors have been sent there. Now it’s boots on the ground they are talking about.

By dragging Finland into NATO Brussels and Washington aim to turn the Finish-Russian border into the forward edge area of stand-off. The same will apply to Ukraine. In the both cases it means making the country dependent on NATO militarily, instigating anti-Russian sentiments among politicians and grass roots, rendering information and other kinds of support to those who spread these sentiments around and quelling any dissent. So talking about the Finlandization concept one should realize exactly what it implies.