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NATO Continues To Prepare For War With Russia

By Peter Korzun

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NATO uses any pretext to accuse Russia of harboring aggressive intentions. It has raised ballyhoo over the recent [deployment](#) of Iskander short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles to the Kaliningrad region.

Time and time again, the alliance reaffirms its bogus Russia narrative. “We see more assertive and stronger Russia that is willing to use force,” [concluded](#) NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg speaking at the round table in Passau, Bavaria on October 10.

At the same time, NATO is pushing ahead with its military “[Schengen zone](#)” in Europe.

“We are working to ensure that each individual soldier will not require a decision at the political level to cross the border,” [said](#) Estonian Defense Minister Hannes Hanso.

The idea is to do away with travel restrictions on the movement of NATO forces troops and equipment across Europe. There will be no need to ask for permissions to move forces across national borders. It will undermine the sovereignty of member states but facilitate the cross-

continent operations instead. The Baltic States and Poland are especially active in promoting the plan. The restrictions in place hinder rapid movement of the 5,000 strong “Very High Readiness Joint Task Force”.

Besides being the first response tool, it could be used for preventing Article 4 situations, such as subterfuge, civil unrest or border infractions, from escalating into armed conflict. The troops can move freely in time of war, but introducing a NATO Schengen zone is needed for concentrating forces in forward areas in preparation for an attack across the Russian border. The formation of the much larger 40 thousand strong NATO Response Force (NRF) is on the way.

Meanwhile, the US and Norwegian militaries are discussing the possibility of deploying US troops in Norway – a country which has a 200 km long common border with Russia. The deployment of US servicemen would be part of a rotating arrangement in the country that would fulfil a “long-standing US wish.” Norwegian newspaper [Adresseavisen](#) reported on October 10 that 300 combat US Marines could soon be in place at the Værnes military base near Trondheim, about 1,000 kilometres from the Russian-Norwegian frontier.

The air station also serves as part of Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway, a program that allows the Corps to store thousands of vehicles and other major pieces of equipment in temperature-controlled caves ready for combat contingency.

Several defence sources told the newspaper that the plans to put US troops at the military base have been underway for some time. According to Military.com, the information that the plans are underway was also [confirmed](#) by American Maj. Gen. Niel E. Nelson, the commander of Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa.

300 Marines can be easily reinforced. The only purpose for the deployment is preparation for an attack against Russia. After all, the Marines Corps is the first strike force. And it’s not Russian Marines being deployed near US national borders, but US Marines deployed in the proximity of Russian borders. The provocative move is taking place at the time the Russia-NATO relationship is at the lowest ebb.

In February, it [was revealed](#) that US Marines were using Cold War era Norwegian caves to store new tanks, artillery and other military equipment to ramp up their presence near the Russia-NATO border.

The military began using the caves to store military equipment in 1981. With the Cold War over, the costs of maintaining the caves were transferred to Norway. The cave complex is back in active use now holding enough equipment to support some 15,000 Marines.

According to Heather Conley, the director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ Europe Program, Northern Europe is now being viewed as a “theatre of operations”.

These steps are taken against the background of the already highlighted [plans](#) to boost NATO’s presence and intensify its military activities in the proximity of Russia’s borders.

The war preparations are taking place at the time Germany – the European economic giant – has announced it wants a more assertive role in European defense and plans to significantly boost its defense expenditure.

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen noted that the German Finance Ministry has accepted to increase defense spending by to a total of 10 billion euros by 2020 for the procurement of equipment and personnel. “Germany is ready to engage ... to take more responsibility...This is the right path, but it will require an enormous commitment of time and money”, she [stressed](#) addressing a biennial gathering of 200 high-ranking military officials in Berlin on October 17.

The alliance is trying to whip up tensions in Europe to reinforce its relevance in the ever changing world. It needs a fictional enemy to keep it together. Without attracting much public attention, NATO is actively involved in military preparations in the proximity of Russia’s borders. Neither the plans for the military “Schengen zone”, nor the deployment of US Marines in Norway, nor Germany beefing up its combat potential have been on the radar screen of Western media.

One provocation follows another against the endless drumbeat of Western media reports about “Russian aggression”. The war preparations greatly reduce European security and the chances for revival of constructive dialogue between Russia and NATO – something Russia has been calling for so many years. Instead, the bloc is doing its best to provoke an arms race with unpredictable results.