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NATO Expansion, Missile Deployments And Russia's New Military Doctrine

by Rick Rozoff

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In less than a week, NATO has unveiled its ambitions. The Alliance has been enlisting one by one, and more or less coercibly, all countries in Europe, in the Middle East and Oceania in the open-ended war in Afghanistan. Concurrently, on the pretext of responding to an ostensible threat from Iran, NATO is deploying an interceptor nuclear missile system on Russia's borders which overturns the strategic balance with Moscow and calls into question the principle of progressive nuclear disarmament. Russia, on its part, feels directly targeted and is taking urgent measures to revamp its alliances and put its armament programmes back on track.

Developments related to military and security matters in Europe and Asia have been numerous this month and condensed into less than a week of meetings, statements and initiatives on issues ranging from missile shield deployments to the unparalleled escalation of the world's largest war and from a new security system for Europe to a new Russian military doctrine.

A full generation after the end of the Cold War and almost that long since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the past week's events are evocative of another decade and another century. Twenty or more years ago war in Afghanistan and controversial missile placements in Europe were current news in a bipolar world.

Twenty years afterward, with no Soviet Union, no Warsaw Pact and a greatly diminished and truncated Russia, the United States and NATO have militarized Europe to an unprecedented degree – in fact subordinating almost the entire continent under a Washington-dominated military bloc – and have launched the most extensive combat offensive in South Asia in what is already the longest war in the world.

Of 44 nations in Europe and the Caucasus (excluding microstates and the NATO pseudo-state of Kosovo), only six – Belarus, Cyprus, Malta, Moldova, Russia and Serbia – have escaped having

their citizens conscripted by NATO for deployment to the Afghan war front. That number will soon shrink yet further.

Of those 44 countries, only two – Cyprus and Russia – are not members of NATO or its Partnership for Peace transitional program and Cyprus is under intense pressure to join the second.

On February 4 and 5 all 28 NATO defense chiefs met for two days of deliberations in Istanbul, Turkey which concentrated on the war in Afghanistan, the bloc's military deployment in Kosovo and accelerated plans for expanding a world-wide interceptor missile system to Eastern Europe and the Middle East. That gathering followed by eight days a two-day meeting of the NATO Military Committee in Brussels which included 63 military chiefs from NATO nations and 35 Troop Contributing Nations, as the bloc designates them, including the top military commanders of Israel and Pakistan. That conference focused on the Afghan war and NATO's new Strategic Concept to be officially formalized at an Alliance summit later this year.

The commander of all 150,000 U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, attended both two-day meetings. Pentagon chief Robert Gates presided over the second and "Afghanistan and missile defense are examples of the new priorities that Gates wants NATO to focus on." [1]

As indicated by the number of Chiefs of Defense Staff in attendance at the Brussels meetings – 63 – NATO's reach has been extended far beyond Europe and North America over the past decade. Troops serving under the bloc's command in Afghanistan come from every inhabited continent, the Middle East and Oceania: Australia has the largest non-member contingent with over 1,500 soldiers, and other non-European nations like Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates have troops in Afghanistan or on the way there.

On the day the Istanbul NATO defense ministers meeting began Romanian President Traian Basescu announced that he had granted the Obama administration's request to base U.S. interceptor missiles in his nation, following by five weeks the news that U.S. Patriot anti-ballistic missiles would be stationed in a part of Poland a half hour drive from Russia's westernmost border.

The next day, February 5, which marked two months since the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the U.S. and Russia regulating the reduction of nuclear weapons and delivery systems expired, [2] the Russian Interfax news agency announced that "President Dmitry Medvedev has endorsed Russia's military doctrine and basic principles of its nuclear deterrence policy in the period up to 2020...." [3]

The same source cited Security Council Deputy Secretary and former Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Yury Baluyevsky commenting on the new doctrine: "It is planned to develop the ground, sea, and aerial components of the nuclear triad....Russia needs to guarantee its consistent democratic development using such a stability guarantor as nuclear weapons, as a

form of strategic deterrence...Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons only if its very existence as a state is endangered.” [4]

Commentary in the Indian daily The Hindu specified that “The doctrine details 11 external military threats to Russia, seven of which are traced to the West. NATO’s eastward expansion and its push for a global role are identified as the number one threat to Russia.”

The feature added: “The U.S. is the source of other top threats listed in the doctrine even though the country is never mentioned in the document. These include attempts to destabilise countries and regions and undermine strategic stability; military build-ups in neighbouring states and seas; the creation and deployment of strategic missile defences, as well as the militarisation of outer space and deployment of high-precision non-nuclear strategic systems.”

Regarding the timing of the authorization of Russia’s new military strategy, the report connected it with recent U.S. missile shield decisions and the START talks between Washington and Moscow still dragging on.

“The new defence doctrine was signed into law and published a day after Romania announced plans to deploy U.S. interceptor missiles as part of a global missile shield fiercely opposed by Russia. Earlier reports said the Kremlin had been holding back the doctrine, prepared last year, because it did not want to jeopardise talks with the U.S. on a new nuclear arms pact that are still going on.” [5]

A similar observation was made in a report from China’s Xinhua News Agency:

“Analysts say the Romanian decision came at a crucial moment when Washington and Moscow are about to sign a successor document to the expired Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-1). Therefore, the move may upset the thawing Russia-U.S. relations and put their bilateral ties to test.” [6]

The new Russian Military Doctrine (in Russian at http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/461) listed under the heading of “Main external threats of war” the following concerns, with the most pressing first:

The goal of NATO to arrogate to itself the assumption of global functions in violation of international law, and to expand the military infrastructure of NATO nations to Russia’s borders including through expansion of the bloc

Attempts to destabilize the situation in individual states and regions and the undermining of strategic stability

The deployment of military contingents of foreign states (and blocs) on territories neighboring Russia and its allies, as well as in adjacent waters

The establishment and deployment of strategic missile defense systems that undermine global stability and violate the balance of forces in the nuclear field, as well as the militarization of outer space and the deployment of strategic non-nuclear systems precision weapons

Territorial claims against Russia and its allies and interference in their internal affairs

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles and missile technology, increasing the number of states possessing nuclear weapons

The violation by a state of international agreements, and failure to ratify and implement previously signed international treaties on arms limitation and reduction

The use of military force in the territories of states bordering Russia in violation of the UN Charter and other norms of international law

The escalation of armed conflicts on territories neighboring Russia and allied nations

At the 46th annual Munich Security Conference held on February 6 and 7 NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said “I have to say that this new doctrine does not reflect the real world,” though any impartial perusal of the above nine points it addresses would confirm that it portrays the world exactly as it is. Regrettably.

For example, after Romania’s president revealed that U.S. missiles would be deployed in the country, a statement by the nation’s Foreign Affairs Ministry said “Romania was and continues to be a consistent promoter in NATO of the project regarding the gradual-adaptive development of the anti-missile defence system in Europe....The decision to take part in the U.S. system is in full agreement with what the NATO summits in Bucharest in 2008 and in Strasbourg-Kehl in 2009 decided in this respect.” [7]

On the first day of the Munich Security Conference Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in his address that “With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization a real opportunity emerged to make the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] a full-fledged organization providing equal security for all states of the Euro-Atlantic area. However, this opportunity was missed, because the choice was made in favor of the policy of NATO expansion, which meant not only preserving the lines that separated Europe during the Cold War into zones with different levels of security, but also moving those lines eastward. The role of the OSCE was, in fact, reduced to servicing this policy by means of supervision over humanitarian issues in the post-Soviet space.”

He continued with a review of the failure of post-Cold War security measures in Europe:

“That the principle of indivisibility of security in the OSCE does not work doesn’t take long to prove. Let’s recall the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, when a group of OSCE countries, bound by this political declaration, committed aggression against another OSCE country, which was also covered by this principle.

“Everyone also remembers the tragedy of August 2008 in Transcaucasia, where a member country of the OSCE which is bound by various commitments in the sphere of nonuse of force used this force, including against peacekeepers of another member country of the OSCE, in violation not only of the Helsinki Final Act, but also of the concrete peacekeeping agreement devoted to the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, which excludes use of force.” [8]

He was followed the next day by NATO chief Rasmussen, who not only failed to respond to the accusation that peace and security in Europe were endangered by his military organization’s relentless drive toward Russia’s borders, but advocated NATO involvement beyond the continent to encompass the world.

In claiming “that in an age of globalised insecurity, our territorial defence must begin beyond our borders,” Rasmussen urged “that NATO should become a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues.”

His address also included the demand to “take NATO’s transformation to a new level – by connecting the Alliance with the broader international system in entirely new ways.”

Russia cannot propose a common security system for Europe, but NATO can dictate an international one.

Rasmussen boasted that the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan “will further grow in strength this year, with more than 39,000 extra troops,” in the sanguinary killing field the West has created in the long-suffering country.

Not only did he not express a single reservation about a war that is now in its tenth calendar year and growing deadlier by the day, but he celebrated it as a model for the world: “Our Afghanistan experience...leads me to [another] point: the need to turn NATO into a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues....NATO is a framework which has already proven to be uniquely able to combine security consultation, military planning and actual operations for more than just NATO members themselves. Again, look at Afghanistan.” [9]

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the Russian Duma’s International Affairs Committee, also spoke at the Munich Security Conference and said “I believe the problem of NATO today is that NATO develops in reverse order – it tries to act globally more and more but continues to think locally....As soon as NATO starts to reach beyond its borders this is no longer just an internal matter for NATO.”

He also “accused the alliance of provoking the Georgia-Russia conflict by promising Tbilisi eventual membership....” [10]

Current Russian deputy prime minister and former defense minister Sergei Ivanov spoke at Munich too and in regard to the stalled START talks said “It is impossible to talk seriously about the reduction of nuclear capabilities when a nuclear power is working to deploy protective systems against vehicles to deliver nuclear warheads possessed by other countries,” reminding conference participants that “Russia unilaterally cut its tactical nuclear arsenals by 75% in the

early 1990s, but the United States did respond with a similar move and even failed to withdraw its weapons from Europe.” [11]

Two days after the Munich Security Conference the secretary of the Security Council of Russia, Nikolai Patrushev, reiterated Lavrov’s and Kosachev’s earlier concerns, stating “We have grave doubts [that Russia will be more secure due to NATO expansion.] NATO represents a rather serious threat to us.”

A major Russian news agency wrote that “Patrushev criticized NATO for its continued enlargement efforts, including its encouragement of Georgia’s and Ukraine’s bids to join the alliance.

“He also blamed NATO for arming and preparing Georgia for an attack on South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and said NATO countries continued to supply Tbilisi with weaponry despite Russia’s protests.” [12]

To substantiate those concerns, the 10th annual NATO Week began in Ukraine on February 9 and at the same time the government of Georgia “endorsed the Annual National Program of cooperation with NATO [ANP] for 2010,” [13] an initiative launched by NATO shortly after Georgia’s invasion of South Ossetia and war with Russia in August of 2008.

War in the Balkans, war in South Asia, war in the Caucasus. This is the model NATO calls for replicating on a world scale. And as the bloc moves further eastward it brings in his wake troops and military equipment, air and naval bases, and missile shield installations.

On February 9 Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Nikolai Makarov warned “The development and establishment of the (U.S.) missile shield is directed against the Russian Federation.” [14]

He also said “that differences with the United States over plans for a missile defense shield were holding up a nuclear arms reduction treaty” between Washington and Moscow, that “the differences had so far prevented the signing of the arms treaty.” [15]

In further reference to the START negotiations, he stated “U.S. missile defense plans are a threat to Russian national security and have slowed down progress on a new arms control treaty with Washington.”

In Makarov’s own words, “The treaty on strategic offensive weapons we are currently working on must take into account the link between defensive and offensive strategic weapons. This link is very close, they are absolutely interdependent. It would be wrong not to take the missile defense into account.” [16]

Earlier in the week spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Andrei Nesterenko reiterated his nation’s demand that U.S. tactical nuclear arms should be removed from Europe. He said that the “withdrawal of American tactical weapons from Europe back to the United States would be welcome. It should be accompanied by complete and irreversible demolition of the entire

infrastructures supporting the deployment of such weapons in Europe,” and reaffirmed his nation’s position that “nuclear arms should be deployed only in the territory of the states possessing such weapons.” [17]

Six days afterward, to add to Russia’s foreboding and to demonstrate Western recalcitrance on the issue, the insufferable ex-NATO secretary general George Robertson was quoted in the Turkish press acknowledging that the U.S. has from 40 to 90 nuclear weapons at Turkey’s Incirlik Air Base. Lord Robertson made the statement in the context of demanding U.S. warheads remain in Germany. He is of course neither a German nor an American but is a former NATO chieftain and as such considers himself entitled to determine matters of this grave nature.

Also on February 10 a top Polish presidential aide, Wladyslaw Stasiak, was in Washington to discuss the imminent deployment of American Patriot Advanced Capability-3 theater anti-ballistic missiles. He met with members of the U.S. National Security Council and with “experts at the conservative-leaning Heritage Foundation and the Center for International and Strategic Studies.”

Afterward he stated “We talked about the future of NATO in the context of a new strategic concept, as well as present day NATO, especially concerning Article 5 and its practical implementation,” referring to the Alliance’s military intervention provision. [18]

On the same day a spokesman for the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry expressed concerns over U.S. missiles being deployed in its fellow Black Sea nation Romania. “As a neighboring country with Romania, we cannot let U.S. plans for a missile shield deployment in close proximity to our border go unnoticed, especially since some elements are expected to be based in the Black Sea.” [19]

Vladimir Voronin, until last September president of Moldova, which borders both Romania and Ukraine, recently warned that U.S. missile deployments in and off the coast of Romania “could turn neighboring Moldova into a front-line area” and that “Romania’s position on the U.S. missile shield and also open support for it from the Moldovan current leadership could have disastrous consequences for security in the region.” [20]

In doing so he echoed Russian ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin who two days before said “U.S. plans to base a missile-defense system in eastern Europe are a pretext to encroach on Russia’s borders” and “The U.S. is using Iran’s actions to globalize its system of missile defense.” [21]

Four days after his previous comments, Moldova’s Voronin said that “The US ABM deployment in Romania is bringing Europe back to the ‘Cold War’” and that he “doubts that US ABMs are targeted against Iran’s threat only.” [22]

The Pentagon opened a missile radar base in Israel’s Negev Desert in 2008, manned by over 100 military personnel, which has a range of 2,900 miles, almost three times the distance between the Israeli and Iranian capitals. The forward-based X-band radar at the Nevatim Air Base can monitor all of eastern and much of southern Russia.

The more the U.S. and its NATO allies thunder against alleged Iranian threats, the tighter the Western interceptor missile cordon is secured around Russia.

On February 10 the local press wrote that “the Czech Republic is in discussions with the Obama administration to host a command center for the United States’ altered missile defense plan.” [23]

The following day the Chinese ambassador to Russia, Li Hui, spoke with one of his host country’s main news agencies and “reiterated Beijing’s concerns that [U.S. missile shield] plans might disturb the current strategic balance and stability and escalate tensions” and correctly characterizing the true scope of the American interceptor missile project “said the creation of a global missile defense undermined international efforts to bring nuclear proliferation to a halt.” [24]

His warnings, like those of Russia’s, went unheeded in Washington and among its NATO allies. On February 12 Poland approved a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the United States for “100 US soldiers to be stationed in Poland as part of the shield, which will include Patriot missiles and SM-3s.” [25] This may be the first confirmation that American ship-based (and/or land-based adaptations of) Standard Missile-3 longer-range interceptors will be deployed along with Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missiles near Russia’s western border.

Also on February 12 Bulgarian Prime Minister Boiko Borisov revealed that the U.S. will hold talks with his government to station potential first strike-related interceptor missile components in the Black Sea nation. U.S. Ambassador James Warlick confirmed that preliminary discussions have already occurred. The Bulgarian head of state explained the rationale for his willingness to take the risky move: “My opinion is that we have to show solidarity. When you are a member of NATO, you have to work for the collective security.” [26]

Considering all of the above, that the Russian government permitted former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright and her “Group of Experts”/“Wise Men” coterie to promote NATO’s new Strategic Concept at a talk at the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations on February 11 is a travesty, an abomination.

NATO is not the international security provider it now attempts to pose as. It is not a partner to the United Nations, which it has overshadowed and rendered toothless and pathetic, or any other international or regional organization. It is not the foundation for a worldwide “alliance of democracies.”

NATO is a lethal, lawless warfighting axis which unilaterally reserves the right to repeat its armed aggression in the Balkans and South Asia on a global scale. It is an affront and a threat to humanity.

[1] Bloomberg News, February 4, 2010

[2] "With Nuclear, Conventional Arms Pacts Stalled, U.S. Moves Missiles And Troops To Russian Border", by Rick Rozoff, Stop NATO, January 22, 2010.

[3] Interfax, February 5, 2010

[4] Ibid

[5] Vladimir Radyuhin, "New Russian doctrine sees NATO, U.S. as main threat", The Hindu, February 7, 2010

[6] Xinhua News Agency, February 8, 2010

[7] Financiarul, February 6, 2010

[8] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, February 8, 2010

[9] "Speech at the 46th Munich Security Conference", by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Voltaire Network, February 7, 2010.

[10] Reuters, February 7, 2010

[11] Russian Information Agency Novosti, February 6, 2010

[12] Russian Information Agency Novosti, February 9, 2010

[13] Georgia Times, February 10, 2010

[14] Reuters, February 9, 2010

[15] Reuters, February 9, 2010

[16] Associated Press, February 9, 2010

[17] Itar-Tass, February 4, 2010

[18] Polish Radio, February 10, 2010

[19] RosBusinessConsulting, February 10, 2010

[20] Russian Information Agency Novosti, February 7, 2010

[21] Bloomberg News, February 5, 2010

[22] Voice of Russia, February 11, 2010

[23] Prague Post, February 10, 2010

[24] Voice of Russia, February 11, 2010

[25] Deutsche Presse-Agentur, February 12, 2010

[26] Reuters, February 12, 2010