

PUTIN AND HIS PUPPET STATES

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Prof. Alan Whitehorn, Kingston

Divide and conquer is a well-known historic aphorism for ambitious imperial states. Divide and control is a corollary. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, Moscow's geo-political and foreign policy has opted on a number of occasions to initiate or accentuate the splitting away of small fragments from somewhat weak newly independent states. In so doing, Moscow could more effectively re-assert some control over its historic 'near abroad' and re-extend its sphere of influence over parts of the former Soviet Union. Amongst the examples are: Transnistria splintering from Moldova in 1991, South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia in the early 1990s, and Donetsk and Luhansk from Ukraine in 2014.

The population and territorial size of these micro-states are quite small: about 470,000 persons for Transnistria (4,200 square km), 55,000 for South Ossetia (3,900 square km), 240,000 for Abkhazia (8,700 square km), but a little larger for the more recent examples of Luhansk 1,465,000 (8,400 square km) and Donetsk 2,300,000 (8,900 square km). The recently created micro-puppet states are very much controlled by Russian troops, financing and governmental administrative measures. Moscow has claimed it has intervened to supposedly protect vulnerable ethnic minorities, particularly Russian-speaking populations.

However, Russian history is filled with the repression of ethnic subject peoples. The outside world observes that the emergence of these highly dependent client micro-states is a case of Russian imperial re-expansionism piece by piece. It remains to be seen if there are other cases to follow. An inevitable existential question arises for Armenians 'Is Nagorno-Karabakh next?' It seems to fit the criteria: small population in a tiny fragment of territory with a people vulnerable to ethnic repression.

Alan Whitehorn is an emeritus professor of political science and writes on international relations and ethnic conflict. He has participated in several international workshops on the South Caucasus.

Biography & books

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Comments



DANIEL VARTIVAR SAGHERIAN – 2022-02-25 13:17:26

Further, I just learnt, that to become a NATO member, no FOREIGN soldiers should exist on your land: Thus the rationale of taking some itsy-bitsy pieces of land by Russia in say Georgia, Moldova, the Ukraine,....To make sure their ineligibility of becoming NATO members, until times like this come fore the Ukraine, to continue to Moldova, and then next is Georgia...eventually coming back to a frozen conflict called Artsakh / Gharapagh! BTW, Russia did not quit the Caucasus yet: It just postponed a resolution there.



DANIEL VARTIVAR SAGHERIAN – 2022-02-25 13:10:40

Mr. Whitehorn. All you have to do is look at the splitting of Yugoslavia into 6, and the creation of a country called Croatia: Strictly coastal Adriatic land, a strip running from the shores of almost Italy to almost Greece, thus landlocking Bosnia and Serbia. And then, "becoming" a NATO member, with untouchable borders, cutting sea-access to Bosnia from Turkish Ottoman Islamic powers; and more importantly, cutting Slavic Russian access to Serbia. Look at the WHOLE coastline of Europe: ALL NATO members, guess against who. Creating a helix running from the Balkans to Romania Bulgaria Turkey, and stretching to be to Georgia Armenia Azerbaijan Afghanistan Kazakhstan... where this NATO anti-Russian stretch ended? In Syria my friend. Russia created its own helix through the Caspian to Iran Iraq Syria to the Mediterranean my friend! In Putin's words: You don't want friendship with Russia; but why do you want him an enemy? You will persist with NATO animosity, then you'll get a new "Warsaw Pact". Let's stop playing naive", and spreading innocence. BTW, for Macron, NATO is brain-dead: France and Germany had enough of British gimmicks and stabbings in the back. It is time for Europe to choose: either peaceful friendship with Russia, or return to a new NATO / "WARSAW PACT Cold War era. All I know is this: The U.S. can burn the world 1,000 times; Russia can burn it 100 times; China can burn it 10 times...but the world can be burnt only once!