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New US Ambassador to Georgia - a "Carrier Diplomat" is about to Stir Trouble

Carrying on the discussion about US ambassadors and the role they play in enforcing Washington's "rule based order", it's hard to omit the fact that the White House has recently announced that Donald Trump nominated Kelly C. Degnan to be US ambassador to Tbilisi, the position that has been vacant since last spring.

According to the information available on the Internet, she was born in California, where she graduated from the University of Southern California Law Center and practiced law in her home state for a couple of years.

It's also known that she spent five years, working as legal counsel in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau, the states in western Ocenia region that have been in free association with the United States for quite a while.

It's noteworthy that Kelly C. Degnan is a Doctor of Philosophy that holds an undergraduate degree in journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. It's said that she's rather fluent in Italian, French, Turkish, and even Urdu.

In all of its official statements, the White House would reiterate time and again that the person it nominated to serve as US ambassador to Georgia is a "career diplomat." However, there's no arguing that anybody is capable of recognizing a career diplomat when he sees one, and there's no need to stress this notion, unless a person has spent a lot of time working in a different capacity. Say a representative of NATO and its interests?

In this light, it's particularly curious that Kelly C. Degnan is the political advisor to both the Commander of United States Naval Forces Europe and United States Naval Forces Africa.

It's also been revealed that during her 25-year career, she has served as political counselor at the United States mission to NATO in Brussels, and senior civilian representative to Brigade Combat Team Salerno in Khost, Afghanistan.

As an expert that is well-versed in NATO's strategic goals and its plans to further expand eastward, she would often present her opinion to the general public in all sorts of interviews. For instance, she gave an account of her prior service in Pakistan and Afghanistan to Chicago magazine, describing the priorities that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has in those states. According to Kelly C. Degnan, she was tasked with gathering information, analyzing it, processing it, and sending it to Washington, only to receive new instructions from home.

In her yet another interview to the Sofia News Agency, she described the presentation that she presented in Sofia about how the enlargement of the alliance was a good thing for Europe. Additionally, she outlined how soft power was going to shape the new strategic concept and all of NATO's future initiatives in the region, adding that it would be the tool of choice for the alliance for years to come.

Thus, it's pretty clear what are the goals that Kelly C. Degnan is going to pursue once she's allowed to perform the duties of US ambassador to Tbilisi. Especially against the backdrop of the recent announcement made by Georgia's Secretary of the National Security Council, Levan Izoria after a series of consultations he had with the new US military attache to Georgia, Stephanie Begley. According to this senior Georgian official, Tbilisi is planning to sign a three year military deal with Washington, allowing the Pentagon to establish the so-called Cooperative Security Locations in its territory. Those locations are going to serve as supply depots and are said to allow the state that built those to rapidly deploy its forces across another country's territory in case of an emergency. It's clear that by
designating its military bases in Georgia as Cooperative Security Locations it will be able to escape the massive outcry among the local population that is usually associated with the announcement that Washington is going to bring its forces to your home state.

So, the future ambassador must be in real hurry to arrive to Tbilisi to both make history and promote the “new level of military cooperation” between Georgia and the United States. It’s clear that Kelly C. Degnan won’t allow anybody to jeopardize the possibility of such a deal and her expertise will come in handy.

According to the now retired former United States Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Matthew James Bryza the construction of a US-controlled deep-sea port in Anaklia will considerably increase the speed of Georgia’s accession to NATO. It’s said that the construction process is going to be overseen by SSA Marine.

These developments explain the recent aggravation on the border between Georgia and the breakaway region of South Ossetia that was provoked by Tbilisi. It seems that after the self-inflicted wound of the 2008 Georgia-Russian war, Tbilisi wants to settle the score with this region by dragging the US military into this matter. This explains why the absolute majority of Georgian politicians show vocal support to the nomination of Kelly C. Degnan.

It goes without saying that Washington’s military build-up in Georgia together with an increase in the scale of its operations in the Black Sea will inevitably result in a series of aggravations with Russia. What steps the latter may choose to take to address this situation is anybody’s guess, but it’s clear that the Caucasus is about to face turbulent times.

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