NATO prepares to repress mass protests at June 2022 war summit in Madrid

Alejandro López
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The NATO powers are preparing mass repression against anti-war protests at NATO's Madrid summit on June 29-30. The summit's host, Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government, is to spend €37 million and deploy tens of thousands of police to turn downtown Madrid into a fortress. This makes a mockery of NATO's claim to be defending "human rights" and "democracy" by waging war against Russia in Ukraine.

The Madrid summit is particularly important for NATO. It will approve NATO's next Strategic Concept, outlining its mission in the coming decade. The world's largest military organization, led by Washington, responsible for millions of deaths and the devastation of countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya, is set to lay out war plans targeting nuclear-armed Russia and China.

Earlier this month, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the summit "will guide the Alliance as we adapt to a new security reality. It will address the implications of Russia's aggressive actions, and our future relationship with Moscow. For the first time, it will also need to take account of China's growing influence and coercive policies on the global stage, which pose a systemic challenge to our security, and to our democracies."

Fifty delegations will attend, including from non-NATO-member states like Ukraine, and Sweden and Finland, which are already serving as unofficial NATO proxies against Russia. The ruling elites in both Scandinavian countries, which maintained formal neutrality after World War II, have seized on the war in Ukraine to join NATO. Also attending will be Japan, a non-NATO member, now at the center of US-NATO's anti-China partnerships in the Asia-Pacific.

Last October, when it was announced Madrid would host the summit to mark the 40th anniversary of Spain's entry into NATO, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Madrid "would have all the capabilities" to "guarantee security" at a "historic moment" for NATO.

In reality, besides plotting war against major nuclear-armed powers, the Madrid summit will mainly be a show of force targeting domestic opposition to war.

El Mundo reports: "For several days there will be many traffic cuts and exclusive itineraries and lanes will be enabled for the transfer of diplomatic delegations, some of them with up to 1,500 members. Security will be another of the challenges of the meeting, as 30 international leaders will come to the capital to stay in the city's most luxurious hotels and will be fully shielded during those days."

Moreover, it added, NATO is "designing air security plans, cybersecurity plans against possible digital and computer attacks by hackers and special plans in response to the call for massive protests by groups and organizations."

The Spanish Interior Ministry will deploy 12,000 police officers to Madrid, who will join another 12,000 officers from the capital region and 1,000 city police. In total, Madrid will be a fortress with 25,000 cops.

A de facto state of exception in Madrid is being prepared against mass protests. Madrid city's Department of Public Safety and Traffic will deploy 50 tow trucks, 100 patrol cars and 500 motorized agents to check the streets through which the delegations will pass. "Any car that hinders the path of visitors will be removed," municipal sources told *El Mundo*.

A Spanish Interior Ministry report calls for emergency purchases of security equipment, indicating: "The security of the event will be one of the most delicate and important points," as "several

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organizations and social groups are already announcing protests, as happened in previous summits."

Spain is to buy 6,000 tasers, each firing four to six shots. In addition, the government plans to buy security equipment valued in €1.9 million, including 100 metal detector arches, 10 parcel inspection scanners, 1,050 personal cameras and 40 CCTVs.

The preparations to suppress opposition to war underscores the class character of NATO's imperialist war against Russia. As NATO intensifies a horrific conflict with Russia, that threatens to escalate into nuclear war, it is also preparing to repress social opposition at home. The war is intensifying the social and economic crisis in every country and has already provoked mass protests and strikes internationally, including across Europe.

Earlier this month, workers at the Greek railway company TrainOSE in Thessaloniki refused to transport NATO armored vehicles to the Ukrainian border. The vehicles had arrived on US cargo ships at Alexandroupolis port in northern Greece. They were to be sent via Romania and Poland to Ukraine. TrainOSE threatened to sack workers, but they could not get agreement to move the train. Ultimately, the company had to recruit scabs to move the train, and eight strikers were arrested.

Polls show two-thirds of Greeks say that shipping war material to Ukraine puts Greece at risk of war with Russia.

In Italy, workers have protested the transfer of arms and ammunition to Ukraine from Italian seaports and airports disguised as humanitarian aid to Ukraine. On March 14, cargo workers at Pisa airport refused to load ammunition and weapons delivered under boxes tagged as "humanitarian" cargo. Airport workers then refused to send the weapons to Ukraine via Poland. The following day, nearly 2,000 people marched in protest in Pisa.

On March 31, dock workers of the Italian port of Genoa organized a 24-hour strike against the usage of the port for weapons shipments.

In the face of a tidal wave of government and media propaganda demonizing Russia, surveys show 61 percent of Italians oppose raising defense spending. According to an Ipsos poll, 40 percent believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin is not the only one to blame for the conflict.

In Spain, tens of thousands of truck drivers went on a 20-day strike over fuel price hikes amid the NATO war drive targeting Russia and its energy exports. Despite similar mass anti-Russian propaganda in Spain, one poll found that 47 percent of Spaniards oppose the PSOE-Podemos government's plan to more than double the defense budget from €10 billion to €24 billion. Only 45 percent said they supported the planned increase.

Growing working class opposition to imperialist war must now be unified into a powerful international movement. This opposition, however, must be developed independently of and in opposition to pseudo-left parties such as Spain's ruling Podemos party and their political and trade union allies internationally.

This week, the spokeswoman for Podemos, Isa Serra, cynically questioned the huge budget destined to NATO's summit, saying "There are many important challenges at this time, such as social rights, equality and the fight against climate change for which we believe we should host a summit, rather than a militaristic summit like this." The representative of a party which has implemented savage austerity then added, "Faced with the war in Ukraine, at this time, the Government and our country could do much more if we were to host a summit for peace."

In fact, Spain's government has moved aggressively against Russia, stationing 800 troops in Eastern Europe against Russia, including a detachment of 130 airmen and four Eurofighters; three warships in the Black Sea; and sent weapons to the Ukrainian army, including to the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion. Just days before Serra's comments, Sánchez flew to Kiev to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. There, Sánchez promised a new batch of 200 tons of ammunition and military supplies to Ukraine.

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