

Turkish parliament accepts Finland in NATO: The ruling elite unites in service of imperialism

Bar?? Demir
2 April 2023

The Turkish parliament (TBMM)'s acceptance of Finland's NATO membership, without a single vote against, is a clear declaration of the commitment of the entire ruling class to imperialism.

This move, amid the escalating war by the US-led NATO powers against Russia, is part of NATO's decades-long aggressive eastward expansion. It turns the entire Nordic region into a potential battleground in a war with Russia and increases the danger of a world war between nuclear-armed powers.

Since the Turkish government had issued a tactical veto of Finnish membership in NATO, the overturning of this veto was seen as critical. A unanimous vote of the NATO alliance's 30 member states is required for a country to join NATO. The Hungarian parliament also approved Finland's NATO membership earlier this week. That left only Turkey's approval for the application to go through.

Finland and Sweden decided to join NATO last May, amid the US-led war against Russia in Ukraine. But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an's government declared its opposition and threatened a veto, mainly based on allegations that these countries have supported the Kurdish nationalist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its Syrian affiliate, the People's Protection Units (YPG). Ankara denounces both these organizations as "terrorist." As the *World Socialist Web Site* previously explained, however, this was but a negotiating tactic.

In return for Sweden's and Finland's commitment to meet its demands, Ankara withdrew its veto on Finnish NATO membership. "We have seen that Finland has taken sincere steps to fulfill its commitments in the trilateral memorandum," Erdo?an said at a joint press

conference with Finnish President Niinistö in Ankara on March 17. However, Erdo?an accused Sweden, which has applied for NATO membership along with Finland, of "harbouring terrorists."

On, ahead of upcoming May 14 presidential and parliamentary elections, Erdo?an's approval of Finland's NATO membership was a signal to his NATO allies. "The decision on Finland is a step to counter growing criticism in the West, especially in the US, that 'Turkey is a stumbling block for the expansion of the alliance'," the BBC Türkçe wrote, adding that the move sent a message that "we are committed to NATO."

The protocol approving Finland's NATO membership was adopted with the votes of all parties participating in the vote. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its ally, the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), as well as the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP) and the far-right Good Party, which lead the bourgeois opposition Nation Alliance, all voted in favor.

The Kurdish nationalist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) took part in the talks but did not vote 'no'. The Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P), which has four deputies, also did not take part in the talks or the vote. The Labour and Freedom Alliance (EÖ?), which includes the HDP and T?P, had announced its support for Kemal K?l?çdarolu, the candidate of the National Alliance, in the presidential elections on 14 May.

The CHP, behind which the pseudo-left parties have united as a supposed "alternative" to Erdo?an, enthusiastically supported Finland's NATO membership.

Speaking to Reuters in February 2022, CHP leader

Kılıçdaroğlu hailed NATO, an imperialist war alliance, as a “guarantee of democracy.” He declared, “We are a part of NATO. Therefore, we cannot see ourselves outside this alliance. We have commitments in this regard. We do not see NATO only as a defence institution. Today, in the 21st century, NATO is also a guarantee of democracy.”

Kılıçdaroğlu and his Nation Alliance had won the support of Western capitals with its more openly pro-imperialist and pro-NATO stance. Speaking to the *New York Times* before the 2020 US elections, Joseph Biden openly declared his support for the CHP-led alliance against Erdoğan. It is no coincidence that Kılıçdaroğlu, now the Nation Alliance’s official candidate, has traveled to major NATO countries—including the US, the UK and Germany—in recent months, meeting with representatives of the political and financial elite.

The pseudo-left parties’ support for the Nation Alliance, despite its openly pro-NATO stance, exposes their support for imperialism. As for the TİP, which stood behind the Nation Alliance that the US and European imperialist powers hope will be elected, it took a deliberate decision not to oppose NATO in this historic vote.

While HDP deputy Hilmi Özsoy tried to take an “anti-war” stance in his speech to parliament, the HDP did not oppose the move. Moreover, Özsoy portrayed Helsinki’s application as a result of Russia’s “unprovoked invasion,” rather than as part of NATO’s decades-long eastward expansion: “As you know, discussions on NATO enlargement began after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Sweden and Finland, which have historically remained neutral in military alliances, are seeking NATO membership because of growing security concerns.”

The HDP’s decision to abstain rather than vote “no” exposes the falsity of this position. Özsoy justified this decision with a mealy-mouthed statement: “We never vote ‘yes’ to a military agreement, we always say ‘no’. This is the first time we are doing so in a military agreement. But this time we decided not to take part in this vote because we consider Finland’s security concerns legitimate, and we didn’t want to say ‘no’ either.”

The Socialist Equality Group in Turkey unconditionally opposes the anti-democratic repression

of the Kurdish people and of HDP politicians by the Erdoğan government. However, this in no way diminishes our opposition to the HDP as a pro-imperialist bourgeois party.

HDP did not oppose the US invasions and regime change wars in the Middle East, especially in Iraq and Syria. On the contrary, the YPG, which HDP claims is leading a “Rojava Revolution,” has become the main US proxy force in Syria.

The HDP is officially represented in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It also has close ties with the imperialist political establishment in Europe—especially the ruling German Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens, who enthusiastically support the NATO war against Russia. Because it faces a lawsuit that may result in the HDP being banned, it is running its candidates in the lists of the Green Left Party in Turkey. It is a member of the European Green Party coalition.

The alignment of the entire political establishment in Turkey, including the pseudo-left, behind US imperialism and NATO’s war against Russia has strikingly confirmed the perspective of the Socialist Equality Group: The Nation Alliance led by the CHP is not an alternative to Erdoğan’s People Alliance, but a right-wing rival of it. The pseudo-left supporters of the Nation Alliance work to contain growing social opposition of the working class and youth within the limits of the capitalist system.

The main issues facing the masses of workers and youth in Turkey—official disregard for public health and safety amid pandemics or earthquake, the danger of world war, social inequality and the cost of living, ever more authoritarian forms of rule—are essentially international problems that can only be resolved on a global scale by the working class. The way forward is to build an international working class movement aiming to take power from the bourgeoisie and establish socialism worldwide.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact