

Vilnius NATO summit unveils plans for global domination

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The declaration adopted this week by the heads of state and government of the 31 NATO members in Vilnius, Lithuania is a blueprint for global war. Only a fraction of the 24-page document deals with the central issue of the summit, the war in Ukraine. In the rest, NATO declares its intention to impose its will on the entire world. Hardly any continent and region are left out in what the document calls NATO's "360-degree approach."

The focus of the initial portions of the document is on the conflict with Russia. The Putin government is denounced in language that rules out from the outset any solution to the Ukraine war at the negotiating table. There can be "no impunity" for its "war crimes," and "all those responsible" must be "held accountable," NATO demands. A precondition for peace is "Russia's complete and unconditional withdrawal." In language directed at Putin, it states, "In light of its hostile policies and actions, we cannot consider Russia to be our partner."

Much of the media commentary has focused on the fact that, while the communique asserts that "Ukraine's future is in NATO," it does not lay out a specific timeline for membership, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called for. Instead, it states that Ukrainian membership will happen at some future date, "when Allies agree and conditions are met."

For tactical reasons, the major NATO powers, particularly the US and Germany, decided that now is not the time for formal Ukrainian membership, which would trigger Article 5 and deprive the Biden administration of the politically useful fiction that the United States is not at war with Russia. Moreover, it leaves the door open for Poland or other NATO members to deploy, with US approval, troops inside Ukraine without committing the entire alliance to a formal declaration of war.

The maintenance of the legal ambiguity does not mean that NATO is not enormously escalating the war, with Ukraine being endlessly supplied with military and financial support to continue fighting and bleed Russia white.

The new communique declares that "Ukraine's path to full Euro-Atlantic integration has moved beyond the need for the Membership Action Plan" established in 2008, because "Ukraine has become increasingly interoperable and politically integrated with the Alliance."

It adds, "We remain steadfast in our commitment to further step up political and practical support to Ukraine as it continues to defend its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and will continue our support for as long as it takes."

The US, Germany and other NATO countries pledged further

substantial military assistance to Ukraine. The G-7 countries—who were all present in Vilnius, including Japan, which is not a NATO member—pledged extensive assistance to Ukraine in a separate agreement, including the supply of state-of-the-art weapons.

Having instigated the war over Ukraine, the US and NATO powers are utilizing it, at horrific cost to the Ukrainian people, to organize a vast and global military escalation. This applies first of all to the conflict with Russia itself, which is taking on a European-wide character.

Perhaps even more significant than the communique is the war plan, running a total of 4,000 pages, adopted at the conference, which details troop and weapons deployments throughout Eastern Europe. NATO's rapid reaction force will be increased from 40,000 to 300,000 soldiers. The communique refers to the plans "to ensure timely reinforcement of all allies, in line with our 360-degree approach. ... We have committed to fully resource and regularly exercise these plans to be prepared for high-intensity and multi-domain collective defence."

Since NATO's last summit in Madrid a year ago, it has laid a veritable siege ring around Russia. At that time, it invited Finland and Sweden to join and adopted a strategy paper that envisaged a massive increase in NATO troops in Eastern Europe and a significant increase in military spending.

The implementation of these decisions is now well advanced. Finland is a NATO member, and in Vilnius the last obstacles to Sweden's accession were removed. As a result, the land border of NATO member states with Russia has more than doubled in size and has moved to within 150 kilometers of St. Petersburg. The Baltic Sea has become a NATO sea to which Russia has access only via a small corner in St. Petersburg and the besieged enclave of Kaliningrad.

The conflict with Russia is itself part of a blueprint for global domination.

A central focus of the communique is on China, which is accused of employing "a broad range of political, economic, and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power." It is damaging the alliance's security with "malicious hybrid and cyber operations" and "confrontational rhetoric and disinformation," and is attempting "to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains."

The summit declaration declares that the "deepening strategic partnership between the PRC and Russia and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests."

As with every document produced by the imperialist powers, the NATO communique is rife with hypocrisy. The US and European

powers talk about defending national “sovereignty and territorial integrity,” when they themselves have launched wars of aggression in every corner of the globe. They insist on the absolute right of Ukraine to choose its “strategic partners”—that is, to join NATO—but deny that right to China and Russia. They insist on the right of NATO to provide unlimited arms to Ukraine but treat any military assistance to Russia as a veritable act of war.

When the document speaks of upholding a “rules-based international order,” this means an “order” in which every country must do the bidding of the imperialist powers, above all, the United States.

To this end, the “North Atlantic” Treaty Organization has been transformed into a Frankenstein monster that asserts its interests and “values” in every part of the globe. “The Black Sea region is of strategic importance for the Alliance,” the communique states. “The Middle East and Africa are regions of strategic interests. ... The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO.”

On what map, one might ask, does the Middle East, let alone the Indo-Pacific, touch the shorelines of the North Atlantic?

Even in the Arctic, in outer space and in cyberspace, NATO wants to ensure “security.” A cyberattack can serve as a pretext for war: “A single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, on a case-by-case basis.” Article 5 obligates all NATO members to provide assistance to a member under military attack.

Particularly ominous in the document are the repeated references to nuclear war, which has entered into the calculations of the imperialist war planners. “We will individually and collectively deliver the full range of forces, capabilities, plans, resources, assets and infrastructure needed for deterrence and defence, including for high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors,” it states. “Accordingly, we will strengthen training and exercises that simulate conventional and, for Allies concerned, a nuclear dimension of a crisis or conflict, facilitating greater coherence between conventional and nuclear components of NATO’s deterrence and defence posture across all domains and the entire spectrum of conflict.”

The document exposes the political bankruptcy of the strategy of the Putin regime, which has pursued a policy aimed at putting pressure on the imperialist powers for “security guarantees.” But the US and European imperialist powers do not want compromise, they want world domination. Despite the obvious failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive, the United States and NATO will do everything in their power to perpetuate the war no matter how many Ukrainians are killed. Russia has been drawn into a trap from which it can find no exit. The longer the conflict drags on, the greater the pressure on the Putin regime to either escalate or capitulate. Within the framework of the capitalist-based politics of the regime, there is no palatable middle ground to be found.

But the policies of NATO, as they find expression in the Vilnius Communique, have a thoroughly delusional and reckless character. The grandiose plans for world conquest and domination stem from the crisis of global capitalism. For more than 30 years, the US, supported by its European “partners,” has tried to make up for the decline of its economic dominance through military force—with devastating consequences for Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and numerous other countries.

They have only one answer to the incompatibility of the social and international character of modern production, on the one hand, and

private property and the nation-state, on which capitalism is based, on the other: the violent redivision of the world under their domination. This was already the cause of the First and Second World Wars.

The war plans of the imperialist powers will enormously escalate the growth of social conflict. The document pledges all the signatories to commit “at least 2% of our Gross Domestic Product” to war. However, it states, “in many cases, expenditure beyond 2% of GDP will be needed in order to remedy existing shortfalls and meet the requirements across all domains arising from a more contested security order.”

And who will pay for it? The escalation of war abroad is at the same time the escalation of the assault on the social programs, wages and jobs of the vast majority of the population, the working class.

The summit participants are well aware of this. Throughout the document, there are veiled references to internal conflict. It refers to the need to “boost our national and collective ability to ensure continuity of government,” “enable civil support to military operations” and “promote societal resilience.” The document even refers to the possibility of using Article 5 against domestic opponents of governments—“non-state actors”—who “target our political institutions, our critical infrastructure, our societies, our democratic systems, our economies, and the security of our citizens.”

NATO’s claim to impose its will on the whole world, as formulated in the Vilnius summit document, borders on madness. But it is the madness of a ruling class with its back against the wall. For all their saber-rattling and threats, the members of NATO held their summit in Vilnius under conditions of extreme crisis. The ruling elites of the major imperialist powers are trying desperately to hold everything together, including between themselves and within their own governments. Above all, they confront growing social opposition in the working class.

The end of war will come only through the fusing of the developing struggles of the working class with opposition to imperialism. The objective conditions for such a movement are developing rapidly. This year has already seen mass protests and strikes in the US, France, Germany, the UK and all the major capitalist countries. All the governments overseeing the escalation of war are despised, and there is massive latent opposition to war in the international working class.

The task is to make this objective movement politically conscious, to develop within the working class an understanding of the need to connect the fight against inequality and exploitation with the fight against imperialist war and the capitalist nation-state system. We urge all those who agree with this perspective to join and build the International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections, the Socialist Equality Parties.



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