

# Spain's PSOE-Sumar government steps up anti-Russia war propaganda

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24 March 2024

Since French President Emmanuel Macron first proposed last month sending European ground troops to Ukraine to fight Russia, Spain's Socialist Party (PSOE)-Sumar coalition government has escalated its war propaganda against Russia.

In a belligerent interview last week in the Barcelona daily *La Vanguardia*, Defense Minister Margarita Robles insisted that Russia poses an existential threat to all of Europe. She claimed Russian President Vladimir Putin is “an enormous threat to neighboring countries, but also to the international community as a whole.” She added, “Today, a ballistic missile can perfectly reach Spain from Russia.”

The EU and NATO, Robles insisted, must be “aware” of the need to keep supporting Ukraine. “The threat is total and absolute,” she asserted, adding that “Europe's reason for being” is at stake.

This follows a month of hysterical anti-Russian war propaganda by the main pro-PSOE Madrid daily, *El País*. On March 3, it posted the article “Europe is already preparing for a war scenario” and an editorial titled “Europe on the warpath.” On the same day, María Martínez-Bascuñán, the director of the newspaper's Opinion section, wrote: “We know that if we don't send troops and weapons, we are abandoning them [Ukraine] to their fate.”

Another *El País* editorial called on the European powers to launch “an intense labor of political pedagogy” to convince the people to support their war plans. Spanish media are now debating the reintroduction of conscriptions.

It is the NATO imperialist powers, including Spain, and not Russia that created the Ukraine crisis, that now threatens to spark a nuclear Third World War. Washington and its European allies, including Spain, that have created this situation, which threatens to spark a nuclear Third World War. In 2014, they helped a far-

right, virulently anti-Russian regime come to power in Kiev and then systematically rearmed the Ukrainian army. They thereby deliberately provoked a military attack by Russia, which had tried to strike a peace deal with NATO.

They hoped to bleed Russia dry economically and militarily, carve it up, and bring the vast country with its natural resources under their control, to prepare for war against China.

Now, as Ukraine's army goes down to defeat after hundreds of thousands of deaths, leaving Ukraine shattered, NATO's European member states are planning a further escalation. They are increasingly concerned over whether Washington is ready to wage war against Russia, and that their plans could be shipwrecked if Donald Trump were elected president this November.

Asked about Macron's calls to send European troops to Ukraine, Robles claimed to be opposed: “Sending troops would mean a very important escalation and even the possibility of the war escalating.” Robles said Spanish troops “are not and will not be in Ukraine.”

In fact, Spanish troops are already training for war with Russia. During NATO military exercises, Madrid's Defence Staff X account tweeted: “If we want to be prepared to fight in Eastern Europe, instruction and training in crossing water courses is essential.” It added several photos of Spanish soldiers of the Armored Tactical Group *Málaga* at the Bemowo Piskie training area, in Poland.

The reality is that all the NATO powers including Spain are plotting how to continue the escalation behind the backs of the people, who are deeply opposed. According to a NATO survey, 56 percent of Spaniards are not in favour of increasing defence spending. This figure would no doubt be far higher, if those polled were asked about waging war on Russia.

To the extent that the PSOE-Sumar criticize Macron's nakedly warmongering line, it is to explain that they want

to market the escalation with other “language”—that is, to lull workers to sleep while they prepare for war.

Sánchez made this clear at last Thursday’s European Union war summit on boosting European armaments production. Sánchez warned, “You cannot talk happily about third world wars or convey messages that worry citizens.”

Calling to sell Europe’s military build-up less provocatively, Sánchez added, “Citizens want us to continue supporting Ukraine, but we have to use other language. ... I do not feel recognised when people talk about turning Europe into a war economy or with expressions like third world war.”

Stopping the war requires mobilizing working class opposition through an uncompromising struggle against the PSOE-Sumar government and those, such as the pseudo-left Podemos party, who work to tie workers to the bankrupt perspective of launching moral appeals to the ruling parties. In this, Podemos plays a particularly cynical role. From 2020 until the end of last year, Podemos was in power with the PSOE, slavishly backing the PSOE’s arming of Ukrainian militias, including neo-Nazi units like the Azov Battalion.

Last year, however, Podemos split in two. One faction, named Sumar, remained in government. Another, which kept the original name of Podemos, left the government: it was afraid its utterly reactionary policies would be exposed by Madrid’s decision to continue arming the Israeli regime amid genocide in Gaza.

Neither faction is mobilizing opposition to the danger of nuclear war and to the European military build-up; instead, they call on Sánchez to market this policy more skillfully.

Sumar’s deputy spokesperson in parliament, Aina Vidal, said of Robles’ interview: “I think it would be good if the Minister of Defense, although this may appear to be an oxymoron, spoke more about peace and diplomacy.”

The PSOE is using Sumar to pose as an opposition to war within the government. As Vidal spoke, Sánchez and Robles met with 24 representatives of the Spanish defense contractors at the Moncloa palace hailing them as “key” to meeting “urgent needs of the Ukrainian Arms.” Madrid is preparing to send 19 Leopard tanks to Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Podemos co-spokesman Javier Sánchez Serna criticised Robles’ “irresponsible and regrettable” statements. Serna said the PSOE has definitely abandoned the “No to war” position and now “embraces the drums of war.”

While the PSOE intervened in the mass 2002-2003 “No to war” protests against the illegal US-led invasion of Iraq, the PSOE has never been an anti-war party. For decades, it has been the Spanish bourgeoisie’s preferred party of rule. Under its rule, Spain participated in the First Iraq War (1990-1991), the Balkan Wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (1992-1999) and Somalia (1993-1995). The PSOE then supported US-led wars in Afghanistan, Libya and now the genocide in Gaza.

Serna cynically added, “We want to warn the Government of Pedro Sánchez that it will not be able to count on our votes to enroll Spain in any war mission, nor to multiply the military budget at the expense of social expenses and the rights to public services of all Spaniards.” Podemos leader Ione Belarra tweeted: “We will tell the warlords where necessary and as many times as necessary: no to war.”

What a fraud! Podemos will support whatever Spanish imperialism tells it to support. In power, Podemos enrolled Spain in 17 military imperialist missions across the globe, increased military spending to a record €27 billion, and imposed austerity, including labor reforms and pension cuts.

Workers and youth must be mobilised against the imminent danger of total war in Europe. Neither the union bureaucracies tied to the PSOE, Sumar and Podemos, nor the smaller pseudo-left groups in Podemos’ periphery will mobilize the working class against this. This growing danger must be met with the development of a mass anti-war movement in the European, American and international working class, combining the fight against imperialist war with the socialist struggle against social inequality and its root cause, capitalism.



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