

Spain's PSOE-Sumar government steps up support for NATO wars

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Spain's coalition government, led by the social-democratic Socialist Party (PSOE) and the pseudo-left populist Sumar party, is aggressively aligning itself with NATO's war agenda.

For the first time, Spain will act as a "framework nation" for NATO, taking the lead in a NATO battle group. While Spain currently has 620 troops in a NATO brigade in Latvia under Canadian command, it will now assume command of the Multinational Battle Group in Slovakia. Spanish forces, including 800 soldiers and 200 tanks—the largest tank deployment by Spain to date—will lead troops from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Portugal, with Romanian forces to join in January. These are part of NATO's now well-advanced preparations for war against Russia, a nuclear power.

These plans were approved by NATO at its March 2022 summit in Brussels, which deployed four new battle groups in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovakia. These battalions, positioned by NATO on its eastern flank to threaten Russia, have a new feature: if needed, they are prepared to rapidly expand and transform into brigades within ten days. In the event of an armed conflict against Russia, the force would grow from 1,100 to 2,800 troops, 2,100 of whom would be Spanish.

The weaponry this unit will employ reflects the interconnectedness of NATO's three war fronts: Eastern Europe against Russia, the Middle East against Iran and the Pacific against China. The Spanish-led brigade will include Israeli Spike anti-tank missiles and 81mm mortars manufactured in Israel. Israel markets this weaponry as "combat-tested," as it was used on Palestinians in operations like the genocide against Gaza over the past year. After seeing the effectiveness of these arms for the mass killing of Palestinians, the imperialist powers are preparing to use them against Moscow.

Moreover, as part of war plans against Russia, Spain has also established an advanced element for an army corps

headquarters at the Kuchyňa air base in Slovakia, where it has 33 soldiers. This group serves as a liaison with NATO land headquarters in Bétera, Valencia; in the event of war, 400 soldiers would be transferred from there to set up a command post capable of directing an army corps of 60,000 troops. It is from this base that Spain's Defense Minister, Margarita Robles, made a bellicose speech in August, stating that Ukraine "will always have Spain's support," adding: "This is a war."

Spain's pro-PSOE *El País* praised this initiative, stating: "Spain had never before assumed a military commitment of this magnitude, Defence Ministry sources acknowledge, and it has done so in a scenario where war has ceased to be a remote hypothesis and has become the reality experienced for the past 32 months by a country neighboring Slovakia, the NATO border that the Spanish Army has come to defend." *El País* did not alert its readers to how it escalates Spain's involvement in NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine, including the threat of all-out nuclear war.

In addition to actively participating on NATO's Russian front, Madrid is also expanding its cooperation with the far-right Zionist Israeli regime in the Middle East.

Spain is central to NATO's missile defence shield, a massive system designed to detect and destroy missiles mid-flight. This system involves bases located in Spain, Germany, Poland, Romania, and Turkey, along with US Aegis-class warships, four of which are stationed in Spain's southern port of Rota. Typically, two of these ships patrol the Mediterranean and Black Sea, while the other two are undergoing maintenance.

According to *The Washington Post*, the two operational destroyers stationed at Rota intercepted several Iranian missiles aimed at Israel during the October 1 attack. Back in April, they shot down six ballistic missiles aimed at Israel from Iran and Yemen, and they also participated in

the 2018 US bombing of Syria.

Now, Rota is set to receive the addition of two new destroyers, part of an agreement established by the previous PSOE-Podemos government in 2022. This solidifies Rota's position as the main strategic hub for missile defense ships in Europe. Just last week, the USS Oscar Austin DDG 79 arrived at the base, with a sixth destroyer expected to join next year.

Celebrating the new destroyer's arrival, US Ambassador to Spain Julissa Reynoso made clear Rota is key to US-NATO war plans. She highlighted that "the strategic importance of Rota and these additional ships safeguard peace by providing a shield against multiple threats. We are living in a global moment where NATO's alliance is very important, and through the partnership between the US and Spain and its strengthening, we face the numerous geopolitical challenges of today."

PSOE-Sumar support for the genocide in Gaza is also reflected in Spain's continuing arms trade and military and commercial relations with Israel. At the same time, they try to whitewash their bloodstained hands by advocating a fraudulent two-state solution for Palestinians, all the while pretending to have occasional diplomatic disagreements with Israel.

The Spanish government's interest in the Middle East is not peace, but protecting the interests of Spanish corporations. Prime Minister Perdo Sánchez made this clear after meeting on October 15 with Mohammed Bin Salman, the crown prince and strongman of the savage and criminal Saudi monarchy.

Bin Salman is responsible for, among other things, the torture and murder of opponents of the Saudi royal family, most infamously the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. A Saudi journalist who worked for the *Washington Post*, Khashoggi was tortured, murdered and dismembered on October 2, 2018, in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

Sánchez did not hesitate to present Bin Salman as a pacifist, however, saying: "I expressed my gratitude to him for his commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East." In fact, Bin Salman led a brutal, NATO-backed war against Yemen that had claimed 377,000 lives by the end of 2021.

Long a regional rival of Tehran, Saudi Arabia was cultivated by successive US and European powers as an ally of Israel in a US-led anti-Iranian alliance. This August, Washington announced that it would resume the sale of offensive weaponry to Riyadh, as it prepared for all-out war with Iran.

While PSOE and Sumar are leading much of the current militarist escalation, many of these measures were in fact approved and initiated under the previous PSOE-Podemos government. Sumar's militarism merely continues that of Podemos, which now postures as the "left-wing" opposition to the government, while effectively supporting the minority PSOE-Sumar government in parliament.

According to a Delàs Center study, under the PSOE-Podemos government, military spending increased relentlessly, reaching €27 billion in 2023, or 2.17 percent of GDP—already above the 2 percent that NATO demands of its members. Now PSOE and Sumar, to cope with growing numbers of weapons programmes, are modifying the limits on Spanish military research and development spending, to raise committed spending for 2024-2026 by 20 billion euros.

In the coming weeks, negotiations of the new budget will begin. Podemos, which in its four years in government strengthened military and commercial ties with the Zionist regime, is now, in a fresh act of cynicism, demanding that "the government immediately break commercial and diplomatic ties with the genocidal State of Israel." This is just another maneuver by Podemos to conceal its key role in the rearmament of Spanish imperialism and promote illusions that the PSOE-Sumar government might reverse its pro-war, pro-genocide policies.

Appeals to these rotten pro-capitalist parties of the affluent middle class and to the PSOE will achieve nothing: both are in the service of capitalism and the major Spanish corporations. The only way to stop the war is to develop an international workers' movement against the real cause of war: imperialism and the capitalist profit system.



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