

Spain's pseudo-left Sumar feigns opposition to its own government's rearmament programme

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Spain's Prime Minister and Socialist Party (PSOE) leader Pedro Sánchez is preparing to increase military spending to 2 percent of GDP, bringing forward the original 2029 deadline under pressure from the European Union and NATO. Sánchez has already announced that this escalation will not be submitted to a parliamentary vote but imposed by decree through the Council of Ministers—where he will count on the support of his junior partner in government, the pseudo-left Sumar coalition.

By bypassing parliament—where the proposal would have the support of the right-wing Popular Party (PP)—PSOE and Sumar aim to thinly conceal the fact that their militarist agenda is compatible with that of the Spanish right.

Military rearmament is deeply unpopular, particularly as it will be accompanied by intensified austerity. Both PSOE and its coalition allies—first Podemos, now Sumar—have spent years slashing public spending and enforcing social cuts. A November 2024 poll by Spain's Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) revealed that only 14.2 percent of respondents supported significantly increased military spending, while half of the population called for major investments in healthcare and 42 percent in education.

To obscure the scale of the rearmament, Sánchez has openly urged officials not to use the word “rearmament” in public communications. “We must speak to citizens differently when discussing the need to improve European defence and security capabilities,” he said, arguing that “rearmament” gives an incomplete picture of the challenges ahead. In other words, the population must be misled.

Madrid even went so far as to pressure Brussels to

abandon the term “Rearm Europe” in favour of the more Orwellian term “Readiness 2030,” after both Spain and Italy pushed back against the original name for the European Commission's multi-billion euro plan to boost war capabilities and military production across the bloc.

“We are sensitive to the fact that the name as such may trigger some sensitivity in some member states so this is something that, of course, we listen to,” said Paula Pinho, the Commission's chief spokesperson.

For Sumar, the political stakes are even higher. The Spanish working class has historically opposed militarism and war, and support for rearmament would expose Sumar's true character as a pro-imperialist, militarist party of bourgeois order. It would also risk exposing the pro-war role of Podemos, the pseudo-left party within which Sumar originated, and which has also falsely postured as an opponent of militarism.

To deflect attention from its support for rearmament, Sumar backed a parliamentary motion introduced by the Galician nationalist BNG. The motion called on the government to reject European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's proposal for an €800 billion EU military fund, to halt all increases in military spending, and to withdraw Spain from NATO and call for its dissolution.

This was pure theatre. Throughout its year in government with PSOE, Sumar has specialised in striking a few rhetorical poses of dissent while loyally endorsing all key government policies when it counts. This point was underscored by PSOE parliamentary spokesman Patxi López, who bragged: “PSOE and Sumar have already passed 29 laws—more than two per month—in just one year.”

Even in the BNG motion, Sumar tried to water down its wording to make it palatable for PSOE. For example, it proposed replacing the call for NATO's dissolution with a vague plea to "promote an autonomous and shared European security and defence model, independent of NATO." The BNG rejected the amendment—despite its own long record of supporting PSOE-led governments—as part of its own opportunistic attempt to burnish a leftist image ahead of future elections.

Despite everything, Sumar swiftly denied that there was any issue. *El País*, one of the main mouthpieces of the Spanish bourgeoisie, reported that internal sources from Sumar rejected claims that "differences with the PSOE over military spending have widened after this parliamentary episode." These sources in Sumar said they had notified the PSOE "that they were going to support the proposals from the Galician party because it was a non-binding initiative, purely ideological in nature, and does not affect government policy."

According to these Sumar spokespeople quoted by *El País*, the PSOE "understood their position and there is no problem."

Sumar includes a range of bourgeois nationalist parties, ex-Podemos elements, and the Stalinist Communist Party. All of them were previously part of the PSOE-Podemos coalition government. That government launched Spain's current rearmament drive and approved the largest increase in military spending in Spanish history in 2022—now set to be surpassed by the PSOE-Sumar alliance.

Both Podemos and Sumar have supported NATO's war against Russia in Ukraine and the Israeli genocide in Gaza. Despite public denials of arms exports to Israel, an investigation by Progressive International, the Palestinian Youth Movement, and the American Friends Service Committee revealed that Spain shipped more than 60,000 pieces of military equipment to Israel between January 2024 and February 2025.

Spanish ports, particularly Algeciras, have played a key role in arms transit, with over 13,000 tonnes of weaponry bound for Israel passing through them in recent months.

Meanwhile, Israel is actively involved in Spain's rearmament. According to trade data from Datacomex, the PSOE-Sumar government has purchased €3.65 million worth of "battle-tested" Israeli weapons,

including bombs, grenades, torpedoes, missiles, and other forms of ammunition and explosives.

With the help of the trade union bureaucracy, Sumar and Podemos seek to deceive the working class and suppress any opposition to Spain's deepening militarism. Their occasional criticisms are empty gestures designed to preserve illusions, while they ensure the smooth implementation of austerity and imperialist war.

Workers cannot place any faith in these rotten, pro-capitalist vehicles of the privileged middle class. Both Sumar and Podemos serve the interests of capital and the major Spanish corporations. The only way to stop the drive to war is to build an international movement of the working class against imperialism and the capitalist system that gives rise to it.



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