

Spain's PSOE-Sumar government to impose unpopular €10 billion military spending hike by decree

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The Spanish government, a coalition of the social-democratic PSOE and the pseudo-left Sumar, led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, has announced a record €10.47 billion increase in military spending for 2025. The measure aims to meet NATO's 2 percent of GDP target—first demanded by the Trump administration and fully upheld by Biden. “This plan will help us meet [the target] in record time,” Sánchez declared. “Spain will contribute to defending Europe.”

Sánchez plans to impose this increase by decree, bypassing the normal budgetary process out of fear that he lacks the parliamentary support to pass it through a full vote. This authoritarian manoeuvre underscores how militarism and war are inseparable from a drive to dictatorship at home.

This escalation is being implemented as workers face soaring inflation, rampant housing insecurity, and precarious employment. It is an act of class war. The bulk of the funds are earmarked for offensive military hardware: tactical radios, the MC3 command system, a spy satellite, an electronic warfare ship, modernisation of F-100 frigates, a new support ship, the FCAS future air combat system, tracked vehicles, and seven amphibious firefighting aircraft. This is not for domestic safety, but for war.

The plan also includes measures to boost the Ministry of the Interior's cyber intelligence and critical infrastructure capacities, tools that will be used to suppress anti-war and anti-austerity opposition.

In a warmongering address, Sánchez justified the spending by invoking a Europe surrounded by war. “The enemies of Europe,” he said, “are not just using missiles... They're using drones, cyberattacks, and AI to sabotage our supply chains and polarise society.” Sánchez was clearly referring to Ukraine.

This is the largest rearmament initiative in Spain's modern history. It reveals the advanced state of European imperialist war preparations, which are not only directed at Russia and China, but also at the United States, as Washington

intensifies its trade war tariffs against the EU.

The announcement elicited the usual pro-forma criticism from Sumar, PSOE's junior coalition partner. Second Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz, Sumar's de facto leader, condemned the plan as “a proposal born in the United States” and lamented the absence of “coordination at the European level.” She added, “Our model is a coordinated European defence project that does not involve increasing budgets.”

Díaz's reference to the proposal's US origins follows a recent visit by Spanish officials to Washington, where US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent demanded Spain boost military spending and scrap the digital services tax on U.S. tech giants. This came days after Sánchez visited Beijing, making him the first Western leader to do so since the US escalated its global trade war. In response, Bessent warned that aligning with China would be “like cutting their own throat.”

Sumar's posturing is cynical. While decrying NATO's “arms race,” it continues to rule alongside PSOE and implement NATO's agenda. Díaz's complaint is not about rearmament itself but the manner and origin of its orchestration. The real concern within Sumar and its Stalinist Communist Party (PCE) allies is the growing public opposition to war, not the war itself.

Enrique Santiago, PCE leader and Sumar coalition member, cynically claimed opposition to rearmament “not for personal or ethical reasons,” but because “the immense majority of society does not want to be complicit in genocides or rearmament.” He is not in principle opposed to imperialist militarism, but fears opposition to it on his left, from the working class. A November 2024 CIS poll found that only 14.2 percent supported increased military spending, while 50 percent demanded more health investment and 42 percent prioritised education.

Podemos, now out of cabinet but still supporting the government in parliament, joined the charade. It denounced

Sánchez for running a “government of rearmament and war.” Former Equality Minister in the PSOE-Podemos government (2020-2023) Irene Montero declared, “This is not what people voted for,” accusing PSOE of betrayal. Montero said the spending “will compromise people’s well-being” and “will lead to cuts,” making it impossible to continue “advancing feminist, anti-racist, social rights and security. That’s why it’s so important for people to take to the streets and mobilise to say, ‘No to war,’ ‘No to rearmament,’ and to strengthen the forces of peace,” she added in her statement.

Yet Podemos, like Sumar, is thoroughly complicit in the militarist agenda. Since 2020, it has backed every major military escalation, endorsed NATO’s war in Ukraine, and upheld arms sales to Israel. These parties have long served to provide a left cover for Spanish imperialism.

Speculation is mounting that the internal tensions may provoke a government crisis, potentially toppling Sánchez’s coalition. But even if PSOE falls, the militarist drive of the ruling class will not end. It would merely allow Sumar and Podemos to rebrand themselves as anti-war while continuing to advance a nationalist, militarised agenda from the opposition benches.

Podemos’ agitation against US imperialism is not anti-imperialist. It champions “European strategic autonomy,” a euphemism for creating a rival imperialist bloc. Its project divides the working class along national lines and severs solidarity with the millions in the US who are now protesting the fascist policies of the Trump administration and the rule of the oligarchy. Rather than building international unity, Podemos sows divisions that bolster war and repression on both sides of the Atlantic.

This policy of “strategic autonomy” is aligned with the militarist ambitions of Europe’s capitalist class. It entails vast rearmament, the construction of a European military-industrial base, and proposals for a continental-wide nuclear deterrent. This is not an alternative to US domination, but another front in the deepening inter-imperialist conflict that twice plunged the world into global war.

The WSWs has consistently warned that Spain’s pseudo-left—Sumar, Podemos, the PCE—are not opponents of capitalism or war, but agents of imperialism. They speak for a privileged layer of the upper-middle class, fully integrated into the capitalist state, and are hostile to any independent mobilisation of the working class.

Their betrayal is most stark in Spain’s ongoing complicity in Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza. Despite public claims of suspending arms sales, the Sánchez government continues to procure Israeli military hardware “combat-tested” on Palestinians. The Civil Guard’s Economic Affairs Headquarters signed a contract for 15 million 9mm bullets,

worth €6.6 million, with Guardian Defense & Homeland Security S.A., a subsidiary of an Israeli ammunition firm. The deal was discreetly published over the Easter holiday to avoid public backlash. Despite these efforts, the news became public and sparked widespread outrage. Yesterday, the Sánchez government was forced to rescind the contract, amid new revelations that Spain has awarded 46 contracts to the Israeli military industry worth over €1 billion since the start of the genocide in 2023.

The Guardia Civil is a paramilitary police force responsible for, among other things, maintaining public order. It operates with sweeping powers across rural areas and border regions and includes specialised units tasked with suppressing mass protests and strikes. That it sought to procure millions of bullets from an Israeli arms supplier, whose products are “combat-tested” on Palestinians, speaks volumes about the Spanish state’s preparations for internal repression amid mounting class tensions. Even if the bullets are now sourced from another supplier, the purpose remains the same: arming the repressive apparatus of the state against the working class.

The right-wing opposition Popular Party has made a show of demanding clarification, but it too supports rearmament. PP leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo declared that his party “supports the Armed Forces.”

The PSOE–Sumar government’s war preparations mirrors developments across Europe. Nominally “centre-left” parties such as Scholz’s SPD in Germany and the Labour Party in Britain have been the chief parties in preparations for war and militarism. Billions are being funnelled into the military while public services are gutted and democratic rights are suppressed.

This war drive must be answered by the conscious, international mobilisation of the working class. The fight against war is inseparable from the fight against capitalism. What is needed is building a genuine international socialist movement, based on the principles of Trotskyism and the programme of the International Committee of the Fourth International, to put an end to imperialist war and the capitalist system that gives rise to it.



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