

# Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez will make her debut as an imperialist strategist at the Munich Security Conference

**Patrick Martin****13 February 2026**

The appearance of Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at the Munich Security Conference (MSC) this weekend is a demonstration of the essential political function of both AOC herself and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the political organization which she joined when she began her political career in 2018.

The DSA is not a socialist organization but a “left” faction of the Democratic Party, one of the two major parties of the American capitalist class. Both the DSA and AOC herself are committed defenders of American imperialism.

AOC will participate in two panels at the conference at the invitation of the German organizers, who are closely linked to that country’s national-security establishment. There she will give voice to the foreign policy of the Democratic Party, whose differences with fascist President Donald Trump largely revolve around his reduction in US military support to the war in Ukraine against Russia.

The entire Munich conference is focused on the mounting conflict between the United States and Europe, whose flashpoints, in addition to Ukraine, include Trump’s demand for Denmark to hand over Greenland to the US and his use of tariffs against former allies, seeking both economic and security advantages.

The MSC, held annually at the luxury Bayerischer Hof hotel since 1963, was founded during the Cold War as the *Wehrkundetagung*—literally, a “defense studies meeting”—by Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist-Schmenzin with the explicit purpose of consolidating the Western military alliance. Kleist-Schmenzin himself had served the Nazi Third Reich as an officer in the Wehrmacht.

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky will be in Munich to accept the annual Ewald von Kleist Award. Zelensky cancelled presidential elections nearly two years ago but continues to rule as the head of a police-state regime that is visibly crumbling under Russian military pressure.

For over six decades, the MSC has served as the premier salon where NATO officials, defense ministers, arms

industry executives, intelligence chiefs and transatlantic policy elites coordinate the strategic consensus that underwrites Western military dominance.

Its guest lists read like a directory of the forces that launched the Iraq War, expanded NATO eastward against repeated warnings, armed Saudi Arabia’s war in Yemen and maintained unconditional military support for Israel. Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and BAE Systems are among its corporate sponsors. Ocasio-Cortez has chosen to make her debut as a “left” representative of American imperialism at this foul gathering.

Several other Democratic presidential candidates are attending the Munich conference, including California Governor Gavin Newsom, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Arizona Senator Ruben Gallego. In a press interview, Gallego said, “We’re doing our best to make sure the world knows the Trump worldview is not the dominant view of foreign policy.”

But it is Ocasio-Cortez whose presence has drawn the most media attention, as it represents her first major venture into the snakepit of imperialist politics. This effort has been widely interpreted as preparation for a 2028 campaign, either for US Senate in New York state, for the seat now held by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, or for the presidency. AOC herself encouraged speculation about her political ambitions, tweeting out a poll showing her defeating Vice President JD Vance in a hypothetical 2028 presidential contest.

Over the past two months in particular, there has been a carefully managed press campaign to elevate her political standing and position her as a leading figure in Congress, if the Democrats win control of the House in November, and as a potential presidential candidate to be brought forward to divert any mass radicalization among working people and youth.

A glowing article in the *New York Times*, published last week under the headline, “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Steps

Onto a Wider Stage,” announced her impending visit to the MSC, calling it “her most significant overseas trip since taking office, according to Mike Casca, her chief of staff. There, she is expected to present a left-wing alternative to Mr. Trump’s shoot-from-the-hip approach to world affairs.”

This is called “being licked into shape.” But not all that much licking is required. AOC, without a single independent thought in her head, is so much silly putty in the hands of managers.

Her supposedly radical rhetoric, and her vast social media following, particularly among young people, make Ocasio-Cortez a valuable asset for American imperialism. AOC is being brought forward to provide a populist gloss for the Democratic Party’s policy of total war in Ukraine.

She speaks for that section of the American bourgeoisie that is unalterably committed to the war and to pursuing a direct military confrontation with nuclear-armed Russia. In this she is true to the political heritage of the DSA, founded by ex-Shachtmanites, rooted in Cold War anticommunism, who demonize Vladimir Putin despite his open repudiation of the Russian Revolution.

Ocasio-Cortez began her own political career in 2018 after an internship as an aide to Senator Edward Kennedy, focusing on immigration and foreign policy issues and a brief foray into business. She ran as an “insurgent” and upset incumbent Joe Crowley in the Democratic primary in a heavily Latino district in Queens and the Bronx. She quickly made her peace with the congressional Democratic leadership and was given significant committee and party assignments by Nancy Pelosi.

During her seven years in Congress, AOC voted to legalize a strike by 100,000 railroad workers and force through a contract the workers had rejected. She cast a vote to provide \$40 billion in weapons to far-right forces in Ukraine and endorsed the US/NATO war against Russia, which threatens a nuclear holocaust. She voted in favor of US military aid to Israel throughout the genocide in Gaza and condemned pro-Palestinian protesters in the US as antisemitic.

In interviews with NBC News Thursday, Ocasio-Cortez said of her trip to Munich, “It’s very important that they see the full spectrum of representation, leadership and thought of the United States.”

Her top foreign policy adviser, Matt Duss, a former aide to Senator Bernie Sanders, claimed that AOC would provide a “working class perspective” on foreign policy. “She believes the U.S. has an important role to play around the world, but military intervention is not the way to do that. And there’s clearly a strong constituency in the country that agrees with that. That’s a constituency Trump and Vance appealed to.”

It is true that Trump and Vance sought to posture, falsely,

as opponents of “endless wars.” But they could only carry out this pretense because of the militarism of the Biden administration and the Democrats, which had the full backing of Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders and the DSA.

Ocasio-Cortez declared her solidarity with Biden in an interview with the *New York Times* in 2023, on which the *World Socialist Web Site* commented:

The most significant statement made in the interview was Ocasio-Cortez’s disavowal of any opposition to American imperialism. “I wouldn’t necessarily characterize my foreign policy goals as oppositional to the president’s or to the United States,” she said. “I am a member of Congress. I have sworn an oath to this country, and I take that oath very seriously.”

The WSWS continued:

When Ocasio-Cortez says that she has “sworn an oath to this country,” what she in fact means is that she has sworn an oath to uphold the interests of the American ruling class at home and abroad.

Notably absent in the interview is any mention of the word “socialism.” Indeed, taken as a whole, the interview confirms that the DSA and AOC have as much to do with socialism as the CIA. In fact, from the standpoint of policies and objectives, the initials are interchangeable.

Three years later, there is no need to change a word in this assessment.



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