

NATO's war summit to convene in Ankara in July

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NATO's 36th Summit of heads of state and government will convene in Ankara on July 7–8. It has been reported that, alongside the leaders of the 32 member states, including US President Donald Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will also attend the summit. While President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkish government prepares to roll out the red carpet for imperialist war criminals led by Trump, a de facto state of emergency will be declared in Ankara to suppress mass protests.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, speaking before Congress on June 3, said this summit "is probably the most important meeting in NATO's history." This meeting will be a historic war summit. It will be driven by escalating imperialist war abroad and the suppression of the social and democratic rights of the working class at home.

The war of aggression against Iran waged by the US, which leads NATO, and its principal ally in the Middle East, Israel, continues. As part of Washington's drive to bring the Middle East under its complete control, Israel's genocide in Gaza and its invasion of southern Lebanon also continue with its backing.

As NATO's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine enters its fifth year, the strikes on Russia's second-largest city, St. Petersburg, and Germany's announcement that it will produce weapons systems with a range of 1,500 kilometers together with Ukraine are increasing the risk of a nuclear conflict.

At the same time, as workers' struggles intensify in the United States, anger is mounting in Europe over genocide, war and their devastating consequences. They have led to general strikes in Italy and Belgium and other forms of mass opposition. Ankara, where the summit is to be held, itself saw significant miners' struggles that reverberated across the country.

The gathering in Ankara will function as a general staff meeting at which the fronts of both the imperialist redivision of the world and the class war against the working class will be coordinated.

US-Europe tensions

The summit will also take place under conditions in which the rift within NATO is deepening. Trump has repeatedly declared his criticisms of and "disappointment" with NATO. Washington accuses its European allies of having leaned on the US military umbrella for decades while building "social safety nets." The inability to use bases in Europe as desired in the war against Iran, and the failure of the European powers to take an active role in forcibly opening the Strait of Hormuz, have deepened this rift. In early May, it was reported that the US would withdraw some 5,000 troops from its ally Germany.

The Trump administration's claims over NATO member Canada and over Greenland, which belongs to Denmark, and its negotiating with

Russian President Vladimir Putin of a separate agreement that would exclude Europe from the spoils of the Ukraine war, are also heightening tensions within the alliance.

The European powers, which view Trump's deal proposals as a threat to their own interests, cannot tolerate even a temporary ceasefire in Ukraine. They want a relentless escalation of the war against Russia and a share in the plunder of the rich resources of both that country and Ukraine. But they do not want a complete collapse of the transatlantic alliance before they have secured their military independence from the US.

Last year's Hague Summit convened under similar tensions. At Trump's demand, NATO leaders pledged to devote at least 5 percent of their GDP to military spending. In the period that followed, the European powers put into effect the largest rearmament program in their history under the banner of "European strategic autonomy," aimed at reducing their military dependence on the US.

Germany's military funds of hundreds of billions of euros, overshadowing the Hitler era, the steps toward reintroducing conscription, the British- and French-led "Coalition of the Willing" and plans to continue the war against Russia with European armies are directly preparing the continent for war. All this is accompanied by cuts to social spending, attacks on living and working conditions, the destruction of democratic rights and the promotion of the far right.

In Türkiye, where official inflation stands at 32 percent and real inflation at 53 percent, increases in military spending are likewise accompanied by cuts to healthcare and pension spending. While falling real wages, unpaid wages and deteriorating living conditions are met with growing resistance within the working class, the Erdoğan government is responding by intensifying police state repression.

The end of Türkiye's balancing policy

Türkiye will host the leaders of the imperialist war alliance for the second time, after the 2004 Istanbul Summit. Possessing NATO's second-largest land army, Türkiye is regarded as an indispensable forward outpost of the alliance at the crossroads of the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus and the Middle East.

In addition to the 4th Air Base in Adana and the Kürecik Radar Base in Malatya, Türkiye hosts NATO command and control centers spread across dozens of cities. It has come to light that the NATO presence in the country is to be reinforced with a new corps. Türkiye is also strengthening its army with investments in its own air defense systems and drone technology. Particularly in the context of its growing rivalry with NATO ally Greece, it is preparing to enshrine the "Blue Homeland" doctrine in law in order to expand its influence in the surrounding waters.

The Erdoğan government is seeking to exploit the country's growing geopolitical importance and the Turkish army's position within NATO to advance the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie. With Trump's return to power, the Erdoğan government has pursued a line increasingly aligned with US aggression in the Middle East, while simultaneously stressing that it is indispensable to Europe's defense.

Ankara is calling for a solution through diplomacy and negotiation in the war against Iran. Nevertheless, the critical bases in Türkiye remain part of the infrastructure of the war. While Erdoğan promotes the narrative that Israel provoked the war against Iran, he signed the Riyadh Declaration condemning Iran's exercise of its right to self-defense.

Ankara continues to mediate the transit through Türkiye of Azerbaijani oil, which is vital to Israel's war machine operating against both the Palestinians in Gaza and Iran. Türkiye has also joined Trump's Gaza "Board of Peace" and played a significant role in imposing the agreement on Hamas.

As NATO's and Ukraine's war against Russia spreads to the Black Sea, Ankara, which is deepening its ties with the European powers, is approaching the end of its "friendly" relations with Moscow. Ankara is turning a blind eye to the attacks, carried out with NATO's covert backing, on commercial vessels departing from Russia in the Black Sea. The establishment in Istanbul of a naval headquarters directed against Russia by the British- and French-led "Coalition of the Willing" is an indication of Ankara's growing integration into the war.

An article published in the *New York Times* on June 7, titled "Erdoğan and Putin: The End of an Unlikely Partnership," reflecting the outlook of US imperialism, writes that Ankara has repositioned itself against Moscow, stating: "Ankara has abandoned its balancing policy between Moscow and NATO and tipped the balance against Putin."

A decade after the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016, which aimed to overthrow Erdoğan with the tacit support of the main NATO powers, Ankara is acting almost entirely in line with the war policies of Washington and the European imperialist powers. This includes policing Türkiye's large refugee population on behalf of the European Union.

The struggle against NATO and imperialism

The Turkish media's marketing of the summit as a "strategic rampancy" reflects the Turkish ruling class's eagerness to deepen its complicity with the imperialist powers.

Among the overwhelming majority within the population, however, there is an entirely different mood. Identified with imperialist aggression, as well as with the military coups in Türkiye and the violent repression of the workers' movement and the left-wing opposition, NATO is a hated, reactionary instrument in the eyes of working people and youth. According to a recent poll, more than 90 percent of the population opposes both the US bases in Türkiye and the war of aggression against Iran.

The Erdoğan government is preparing to respond by declaring a de facto state of emergency in Ankara before and during the summit. All demonstrations, marches and public events in the city will be banned between July 1 and 15; the summit venue, the airport routes and the hotels where the leaders will stay will be declared "red zones"; public employees in nine districts will be placed on administrative leave to empty out the capital; in addition, tens of thousands of police will be deployed, and the entry of foreign activists will be blocked in cooperation with the intelligence agencies of other countries.

This picture sums up what NATO means for working people and youth: Decisions for war will be taken under a police blockade in which the right

to protest has been usurped. It is yet another demonstration that the policy of imperialist war and the turn toward dictatorship at home are two sides of the same class offensive.

The main bourgeois opposition in Türkiye is also in agreement with Erdoğan on loyalty to NATO. Özgür Özel, the elected leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), which is the target of the government's judicial operation, defined the political crisis in Türkiye as a security problem for the "stability" of NATO and Europe in an article published in *Newsweek* ahead of the summit. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who was unlawfully reinstated in Özel's place by a court, had declared NATO "the guarantee of democracy in the 21st century." The competition between Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the CHP in loyalty and service to imperialism is the political-military expression of the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie.

In Türkiye, as in the rest of the world, these interests are diametrically opposed to those of the working class. Not only the peoples directly targeted by the NATO imperialists, but also the working class within the imperialist countries is being forced to pay the price of war and militarism.

The social force that must be mobilized in the struggle against imperialism and war is the working class, united through the production and supply chains of the world economy. To this end, it must break politically both from the bourgeois parties and from the pseudo-left that line up behind them and seek to subordinate workers to the capitalist system, and unify under its own international party. This party is the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 and led today by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

The way forward lies in establishing the complete political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie in the NATO countries and beyond and in building its united mobilization against imperialism on the basis of a socialist, anti-war program.

The Sosyalist Eşitlik Partisi-Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party-Fourth International), the Turkish section of the ICFI, is fighting for this perspective and calls on workers and youth to mobilize against NATO and imperialism around the following demands:

- **The US and Israeli war against Iran, the invasion of Lebanon, and the genocide in Gaza must be halted immediately and unconditionally.**
- **All US armed forces in the Middle East must be withdrawn, and the military bases—including those in Türkiye—that form the infrastructure of imperialist domination must be closed.**
- **The NATO summit scheduled for July in Ankara must be cancelled; Türkiye must withdraw from NATO; NATO must be dissolved; and all resources devoted to militarism and war must be redirected to meet the needs of society.**
- **All sanctions and economic warfare against Iran, Cuba and all other countries must be ended.**
- **All war criminals must be held accountable.**
- **Journalists, opposition politicians and all political prisoners must be released.**
- **The fundamental democratic rights of the Kurdish people must be recognised immediately, beginning with mother-tongue educational and constitutional recognition of the Kurdish language.**



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