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Nato summit

Towards a new permanent global war? NATO's "new strategic concept"

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After the costly and patriarchal spectacle of this summit held for the greater glory of US President Joseph Biden and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, the main conclusion to be drawn is that NATO has formalised a new leap forward in its old project of establishing itself as a global gendarme at the service of the Western capitalist bloc. Indeed, its "new strategic concept" constitutes a much wider redefinition of its enemies and threats than the concept that led to its birth in 1949, or what was understood during what was known as the "second cold war" in the 1980s.

Now, not only is there a continuation of the global war on "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations" waged in the wake of 9/11, but, after the 2010 hiatus, Russia is once again presented as 'the most significant and direct threat to security'. China is considered a "strategic competitor" in all areas in the medium and long term (as it represents "systemic challenges" to "our security, interests and values"). Most seriously, 'illegal immigration' is described as a "threat" to the 'sovereignty and territorial integrity' of NATO member states. A list, by the way, to which the new candidates, Finland and Sweden, are added, provided they accept the demands of the Turkish regime, another winner at this summit, to the detriment of Kurdish residents in their own countries.

As if all this were not enough, the document is full of mentions of "authoritarian actors", "strategic competitors" and "potential adversaries" resorting to "hybrid warfare strategies" - including "disinformation campaigns, the instrumentalisation of immigration, the manipulation of energy supplies and the use of economic coercion". We read that "conflicts, fragility and instability in Africa and the Middle East directly affect our security and that of our partners".

The document does not shy away from acknowledging that its alleged "defensive" character is mere rhetoric. "While NATO is a defensive Alliance, no one should doubt our strength and determination to defend every inch of Allied territory, to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Allies and to prevail against any aggressor". All this, moreover, based on the reaffirmation of nuclear weapons as NATO's "supreme security guarantee".

In the service of this general militarisation, in addition to the European space being particularly privileged with the reinforcement of the US presence in the East and the growth of NATO rapid reaction forces from 40,000 to 300,000 military personnel, the commitment by all member states to increase their military spending to at least 2% of GDP now appears only as "a floor, not a ceiling", as the Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, has assured us. These proposals, therefore, will serve to increase the profits of the old military-industrial complex that former US President Eisenhower denounced and to relaunch the arms race, including the nuclear arms race, on a global scale.

In short, using the alibi of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the US has managed to make the effects of the defeat suffered in Afghanistan be forgotten very quickly. Washington has thwarted any hint of EU autonomy and has turned the vast majority of European countries into faithful servants of the project of recomposing its hegemony against its main strategic enemies. That means Russia in the short term and China in the medium and long term - but also anything and anyone that might represent a threat to the EU and its geo-economic and political interests anywhere in the world. This approach is closely associated with the defence of Western white supremacy.

In the case of Spain, this new warmongering scenario is euphorically ratified by Pedro Sánchez, who has rushed to once again show his servility to his American friend by means of the "joint declaration between the Kingdom of Spain and the United States of America". In this declaration, alongside proclamations about the "defence of democracy", the two leaders reaffirm themselves as "allies, strategic partners and friends" and agree to "the permanent stationing of US warships" in Spain's Rota naval base, increasing the number of US warships from 4 to 6. They also affirm their

common willingness to collaborate in the "management of irregular migratory flows", or, to put it another way, in migratory necropolitics. They immediately delegate this task to their common friend, the Moroccan regime, recently responsible for the brutal massacre in Melilla that has violated the most basic human rights. Let us not forget that the USA and Spain are complicit in Morocco's illegal occupation of the Western Sahara.

Towards a more militarised and insecure global (dis)order

This unabashed proclamation of NATO as an offensive force, in the East and the South and looking further towards the key geopolitical area of Asia-Pacific, is not new. But this latest affirmation takes place in the general context of a definitive crisis of capitalist globalization, and increased inter-imperialist competition in almost all areas, with the tendency to form new commercial and military blocs.

We are thus witnessing a transition towards a new multipolar and asymmetrical global (dis)order that challenges the centrality of the West, even though the West is determined to maintain its dominant position by all means at its disposal, including with greater recourse to military force. This new phase is taking place in the context of a 'polycrisis' involving multiple challenges that have been accelerated and aggravated by the war in Ukraine. These include the climate and energy crisis, the food crises in a growing number of countries and the resulting migratory movements, stagflation and the threat of recession, the prospect of a new global debt crisis, the hypothesis of a new wave of pandemics and health and care crises, and, last but not least, the risk of military escalation leading to nuclear war.

This set of crises will contribute to strengthening the current authoritarian neoliberalisms. among which the border between liberals and illiberals will become blurred. Turkey, Hungary and Poland continue to be the key reference points. There will be protests and revolts of different types, under the pressure of a far right now able to setting the agenda in many influential countries. For these reasons, we should not be fooled by the reemergence of the fallacious propaganda of those who, thanks to Putin, pretend to present NATO as a bulwark of democracy against authoritarianism, trying to make us forget the very history of this military organisation and, above all, of the United States.

With its "new strategic concept", NATO is only increasing and aggravating multiple crises and inequalities of all kinds, that we were already facing before Russia's unjustifiable and reprehensible war of occupation of Ukraine. With this new concept, NATO inserts these crisis into an indefinite list of enemies and threats, as a framework for the increasing threat of recourse to military force.

For an internationalist and solidarity-based anti-imperialism

[*"The European nuclear disarmament movement does not offer to appease anyone, nor does it want to forget anything. Its offer is to oppose the militarisation of both blocs".*] Edward P. Thompson, Zero Option, 1983: 139).

Although we are today going against the mainstream of Western public opinion and much of the institutional left, there is every reason for the alternative left to denounce outright the new Western imperialist strategy agreed at the Madrid summit and the real threat it poses to the peoples of the world. This denunciation does not have to be in contradiction with our condemnation of the Russian invasion and our support for the Ukrainian people in their

legitimate right to defend themselves, with and without weapons, and without having to identify with the Atlanticist discourse of President Zelenski.

Beyond the neo-campism of some and the neo-Atlanticism of others, our task should always be to foreground support for the peoples under attack, for all those who claim their right to refuge and asylum or, simply, their right to a dignified life, whatever their origin or condition. Only in this way can we build a transnational movement capable of confronting NATO and all imperialisms - be they major or minor - and forging an alternative to the militaristic conception of security that they all share and apply in the various geopolitical areas in which each of them seeks to extend its domination. Against this narrow vision at the service of the different interests of these imperialists, we should advocate for a multidimensional idea of global security, capable of responding to the set of crises mentioned above. We place the defence of life and public and common goods at the centre, in the face of the chronic global emergency. Of course, we know that this is incompatible with the survival of capitalism under any of its versions, be it Western, Eastern or Southern.

And the left?

To conclude, I do not think it is necessary to say much about the implications of all this for Spain, but one thing does seem obvious: Pedro Sánchez's alignment with the leader of the USA and his warmongering discourse now knows no bounds. This has been amply verified at this summit with Sánchez's commitment to double Spain's military budget and his acceptance of the reinforcement of the Rota military-naval base. These decisions come after other outrageous behaviour of the Prime Minister, towards the Sahrawi people or, more recently, his complicity in the massacre of people from Sudan, Chad and other African countries attempting to cross the Spanish border in Melilla.

There can therefore be little doubt that the PSOE is becoming more right-wing in its open dispute with the Partido Popular (PP) of Alberto Núñez Feijóo's. Both mainstream parties are promoting an increasingly neoliberal, racist and militarist agenda, in their competition for the 'extreme centre' of Spanish politics. Faced with this drift and the growing social unrest it could generate, it is likely that disaffection towards politics will increase among the popular classes. But it is also likely that a new mobilising discontent could burst onto the scene. The question is to foresee in what direction the new protests that might emerge might evolve, bearing in mind the definitive exhaustion of the 15M-Podemos cycle and the enormous political vacuum that exists to the left of the PSOE, at least at the national level. It is therefore urgent to open a process of recomposition of an alternative and autonomous left in opposition to this government and in permanent confrontation with the right. A left that is ready to promote, together with the most active sectors of the social movements, a new wave of mobilisations and to contribute to giving them an anti-neoliberal and radically democratic meaning.

Source: [‘El “nuevo concepto estratégico” de la OTAN ¿Hacia una nueva guerra global permanente?’](#)

Translated by Adam Novak for [ESSE](#).

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