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Vilnius: a summit of war and rearmament

The annual summit of NATO took place on July 11 and 12, 2023 in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, practically on the borders of the Russian Federation. A clear sign of the escalation of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

During the summit the heads of state and government of the imperialist and capitalist countries that are at war with Russian imperialism approved plans to:

- Further prolong the ongoing war, an imperialist proxy war that is the continuation of a decades-long policy of expansion, provocations and threats of NATO, paid mainly by the Ukrainian and Russian working masses. This is without providing for any negotiation other than Zelensky's "10-point peace formula" (achievable only with Russia's unlikely defeat on the ground) and thus supporting a protracted war.
- Intensify the war by providing the corrupt Ukrainian regime with cluster bombs, F16s, advanced tanks, long-range missiles, depleted uranium munitions, to consider the use of "tactical" nuclear weapons, in addition to the huge financial support (a fund of another \$20 billion) without which Kiev would collapse.
- Prepare for the expansion of the theater of war in the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Arctic, regions where Russian imperialism is present, as well as in Belarus and Russia itself. This is while military interventions are being prepared in other regions: in the Middle East, in North Africa and in the Sahel, in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the last summit in Madrid it was decided to strengthen the "Battle groups" positioned on NATO's eastern flank and to expand the "NATO Response Force" from 40,000 to more than 300,000 soldiers. In Vilnius it was decided to put these troops in a position of high readiness, adding others until they reached the level of combat brigades and including air and naval forces. In addition, an Allied Response Force has been set up to respond quickly to crisis situations in every direction.

The bandits gathered in Vilnius also discussed the further enlargement of NATO: after Finland, Sweden (it will be the 32nd member, twice as many as in 1990), Georgia, Bosnia, Moldova, etc. The process of integration of Ukraine that will be concluded after the war is advancing. So said Biden, demonstrating how cynical he is using Kiev as its pawn.

This is while NATO's Asian partners (Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea), as well as the EU itself, are increasingly integrated into the US-led war policy to maintain its world hegemony, which is threatened by the rise of imperialist China, which Washington wants to strategically detach from Russia.

The NATO summit in Vilnius has very high costs, so NATO members will have to devote at least 2% of their GDP to NATO spending on a lasting basis. At the same time, it was decided to modernize the war apparatus on the basis of a more developed military industry, this also in

Europe (imperialist Germany is particularly interested), with supply chains that cannot be blocked by imperialist rivals.

As the war is becoming more and more "industrial", the member states are called upon to contribute to exercises (especially on the eastern flank) and military missions with trained and equipped troops, armaments, logistics, growing economic resources, at the expense of the economic and social needs of the workers and peoples.

At the Vilnius Summit, NATO reiterated that strategic nuclear weapons, particularly those possessed by the USA and also stationed in Europe, are the foundation of its war policy, as they are capable of imposing unacceptable costs on the adversary.

This means that the Atlantic Alliance is preparing for war with a nuclear dimension, modernizing and strengthening its atomic terror apparatus.

As a result, the NATO members will increase exercises to prepare to use nuclear weapons simultaneously with conventional weapons. NATO's willingness to use nuclear weapons also emerges from the criticism of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which would undermine NATO's ability to threaten other states.

The arms race of the Western imperialists is therefore continuing. Obviously, imperialist Russia, like imperialist China, will not sit idly by.

The militarist process to which NATO is giving a strong impetus is seeing internal disputes. The imperialist states behind the scenes are fighting over the division of spheres of influence and the spoils of war, for trade agreements and investments, for energy sources and routes, in the face of the "cohesion of solidarity" proclaimed at the summit.

Faced with the USA that wants to bring its allies into line and unload on them (that is, on the working masses of these countries) the costs of ever wider military involvement, the European bourgeoisies are hesitating.

Even behind the reluctance of European governments on cluster bombs, it is not difficult to see the fear of a more massive commitment in a conflict that is also directed against their economies, which are already suffering from energy supply difficulties, the consequences of sanctions, with the now imminent recession.

Europe's warmongers also fear the response of the working masses, who are increasingly tired of suffering the costs of war. The divergences are therefore bound to widen.

But what is the position of Italian imperialism in this process?

It undoubtedly plays a leading role in the ongoing war.

For the US, Meloni [Italian Prime Minister] was a "positive surprise", having followed the line dictated by Washington without breathing (even more so will it have to do so with regard to China).

However, the Italian bourgeoisie must not be reduced to the role of mere servant of the USA. It participates in the war for the interests of its war and energy monopolies, of the big "re/construction" companies that are competing with other monopolies to expand all over the world, dragging behind it the medium and small capitalism.

The ruling class, by participating in the war and the plundering of dependent peoples, is trying to find abroad the solution to its serious internal problems. Therefore, military spending is growing, taken from social and social security spending. But every euro of military spending means an extra euro for oppression and violence against the working masses.

Today the struggle against war and the warmongering government of Meloni, against sending weapons and funds to Ukraine, for the withdrawal of troops sent abroad, for the withdrawal from NATO and all imperialist alliances, for the closure of US and NATO bases, against the increase in military spending at the expense of social ones, for the banning of nuclear weapons, is presented as an item on the agenda. Let us therefore prepare ourselves for an autumn of struggle, without siding with any of the imperialist parties in conflict, but by developing proletarian internationalism which means in the first place a struggle against "our own" imperialism.

As decided in the Milan assembly of June 11, the imperative is to join forces to start a mass struggle that will frustrate the war plans of the Meloni government and NATO. The commitments are clear: to work for the success of the national mobilization of October 21 with demonstrations in front of the military bases of Coltano and Ghedi (in the latter airport there are atomic bombs).

To this end, it is necessary to work for the success of the strike of the conflicting unions on October 20, involving in its preparation the delegates and combative workers of all the unions, intervening in the other deadlines of struggle that are being prepared, closely linking the question of peace to that of the bread and freedom of the workers, raising the flag of international solidarity of the proletarians, of the brotherhood of peoples, which can triumph only with socialism.