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By John Catalinotto
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Thousands protest NATO Summit in Madrid

With the U.S.-led NATO about to begin its June 28-30 Summit in Madrid, following an agenda that includes prolonging the war against Russia in Ukraine and adding China as a key strategic enemy of the imperialist alliance, thousands of people took to the streets of the Spanish capital to protest NATO aggression.



UNAC spokesperson Joe Lombardo on banner (second from left) in Madrid march, June 26: 'NATO no, bases out, government is complicit.' Credit: UNAC

The protesters, mainly anti-imperialist forces in the Spanish state with some representatives from other NATO-member countries, marched from the main Atocha rail station through downtown Madrid to the Plaza España. They held banners reading “No to NATO,” “Bases out” and criticized the social-democratic government as complicit with NATO’s aggressive war policy.

While the Biden administration and the corporate media has presented NATO as united behind the U.S.-led intervention against Russia, many suspect this is a façade. Backing the anti-Russian war has put all Europe at risk of disaster. Sanctions aimed at Russia have boomeranged against European industries dependent on Russian energy sources.

And the latest war news implies that the Russian army is winning in the Donbass region.



Lead banner of Madrid anti-NATO march, June 26: ‘No to NATO, no to wars, yes for peace.’ Credit: El Pais

The Madrid protest added a dimension to NATO’s problems. It showed that a core of the working-class movement inside the imperialist countries had withstood the anti-Russia propaganda barrage. And it raised the possibility of a more massive resistance, as the imperialist ruling class imposes the cost of the war on the workers.

While the weight of imperialist propaganda has influenced part of the peace movement to criticize Russia as much as NATO, there is another part that is convinced that the real source of aggression is the U.S.-led NATO militarists.

WW talks to UNAC representative

The U.S. antiwar movement has representatives in Madrid, and Workers World spoke with one of them, Joe Lombardo, after the June 26 demonstration. Lombardo, a leader of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), felt encouraged by the militancy and anti-imperialist character of the march — which had participants from both counter-summit conferences.

“There were two separate counter-summits in Madrid, both on June 24 and 25, to show opposition to the NATO summit and the dangers of war,” he said. “One was organized by mainly social-democratic forces. The other was mainly anti-imperialist forces in Spain, who welcomed my talk and the UNAC statement as part of their conference.”

Lombardo said in his talk to the anti-imperialists that “the United States is the main imperialist power in the world. NATO is its partner in crime.” Regarding Ukraine, he said that Washington “would like to see Russia become a country that will follow its dictates and eventually be used to help surround China, which is currently challenging U.S. hegemony and is therefore the main enemy of the U.S. today.”

Lombardo added that the war in Ukraine might have been avoided if the NATO leaders simply said they would not let Ukraine join NATO. He ended by saying that “the U.S. empire and hegemony was being challenged” in Ukraine and that “every socialist and every peace activist should take heart from this” and embrace it. See unacpeace.org for more information.

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