

Saying No to NATO

By Mary Beaudoin



Spanish protesters rally against NATO and the bloc's bases in the country during a march from Madrid to the Torrejón Air Base on April 25, 2015.

Image: Press TV

It's evident that Europe is being used as a staging ground for threatening other regions. As European citizens protest U.S.-led NATO militarism, U.S. citizens can heed what they say and demand that our government stop intruding on their land with our military bases and machinery of war in what looks like a buildup to World War III. Referred to bitterly as "the Atlanticists" in other parts of the world, NATO nations have moved far from their origins as organizing for defense. NATO has split apart Yugoslavia, bombed Libya to pieces, instigated a literal tug of war in Ukraine, and is encircling Russia. It continues to incorporate compliant nations and divide the world into Allies and Others. Like their European counterparts, people in the U.S. can call out NATO'S role in military madness.

It seems not everyone on the European continent is so enthusiastic about NATO's presence there.

Mladen Bojanic is the former president of Montenegro, one of the six original republics of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia when it was torn asunder in NATO's landmark assertion of "humanitarian intervention." Bojanic, currently a member of the Montenegro parliament, is reported saying that citizens of Montenegro during NATO's 1999 bombing "have strong memories that NATO killed our people, including civilians and especially children, that it destroyed our country and poisoned our air and water." And that "NATO has to know that in Montenegro there are a huge number of people who consider this military alliance a criminal organization which contrary to the stipulations of international law, and far from

reason, right and moral (sic), kills people across the planet and destroys numerous countries.”(1)



Image: oltreleretl.org

Italian physicist Massimo Zucchetti recalls that in 1999, most of the NATO warplanes that bombed the Balkans took off from Italian airbases. Zucchetti is the founder of No War, No NATO and says that Italy is violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by allowing Americans to store nuclear bombs [tactical nuclear, mini-nukes, nuclear bunker busters] in hangars at Aviano and Ghedi Torre air bases. He told Sputnik News on October 1 that NATO is the biggest threat to peace and that Italy should pull out of NATO, which is “at variance with the nation’s

interests,” and instead become “a territory of peace, a link between various parts of Europe.”(2)

War Resisters League International (WRL-intl) describes the many reasons why Spain, another host nation to Trident Juncture 2015, is strategic for NATO: Spain represents the spearhead of NATO in Africa. Hence, it acts as the southern frontier of the European Union to control the migration of people fleeing poverty or war to “Fortress Europe.” NATO could launch an invasion of North Africa from there in the power struggle over Africa. But most of all, War Resisters League speculates that “the main message [that NATO is delivering with this exercise] might be for China, a country with strong economic and geo-strategic interests in Africa.”(3) Activists organized by Global Platform Against Wars protested in the streets of Madrid, and activists in the city of Zaragoza, where NATO has erected a large mobile command post for the exercise, mounted resistance.(4)

Portuguese antiwar activists have plenty of experience opposing NATO from the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon to Chicago in 2012. Among other antiwar groups, the Portugal Council for Peace and Cooperation was an organizer in the anti-NATO activities and continues to be active in 2015.

Trident Juncture 2016 is slated to follow Trident 2015. It’s building toward NATO 2020, the vision that it developed in Chicago in 2012, which considers its primary challenge to “align nations’ priorities with NATO’s priorities.”(5) Further, NATO priorities seem to be aligned with U.S. hegemonic priorities to threaten nuclear war by installing in the year 2020, at its European bases within reach of Russia, B61-12 bombs with capacities four times that of Hiroshima.(6) Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and former Associate Editor the Wall Street Journal, commented that he knows many of the “insane ideologues” who control U.S. foreign policy and that they are “capable of defending U.S. hegemony with nuclear weapons.”(7) If all goes according to plan, allied nation-states will be even more subsumed by such military madness. Moscow says it will be forced to react in defense.

But also significant is the fact that Russia and China have been practicing joint military exercises. Escalating power struggles between nuclear-armed states are a danger to all.

The crazy thing is that the major powers agree—even though tacitly—not to clash directly while they are in the same vicinities as they conduct proxy wars in smaller, more defenseless nations, or while they practice war exercises aimed at each other. If that is possible, it has to be possible not to clash at all.

The U.S. is the dominant power in NATO, and the U.S. still spends by far the most on “defense” and weapons production so it if it led toward deescalating and disarming, it would send a message to the world to stop this race to the death.(8)

It's no time for the U.S. peace movement to relax.



Endnotes:

1. "Say No to NATO, They Owe Us Blood—Former Montenegrin President," sputniknews.com. October 16, 2015. See also: Fool's Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO and Western Delusions by Diana Johnstone (Monthly Review Press, 2002)
2. "NATO, not Russia, Poses Biggest Threat to European Peace," sputniknews.com, October 1, 2015. Regarding nonstrategic, nuclear bombs that the U.S. maintains in Europe: "According to a recently unclassified report, the United States now deploys 160-200 bombs at six bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. Some of these weapons are stored at U.S. bases and would be delivered by U.S. aircraft. Others are stored at bases operated by the 'host nations' and would be delivered by that nation's aircraft if NATO decided to employ nuclear weapons." "Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons." Congressional Research Service, prepared for Members and Committees of Congress. December 19, 2012
3. War Resisters League International. wri-irg.org
4. Global Platform Against Wars. plataformaglobalcontralasguerras.wordpress.com. Tarcoteca Counterinfo. tarcotecacounterinfo.blogspot.com/2015/10/zaragoza-action-plan-against-nato-in
5. "Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces," 2020, May 20, 2012. nato.int
6. Ibid endnote no. 2; "B61-12 Worth Its Weight in Gold and Causing a Lot of Trouble." NukeWatch: Nuclear Watch New Mexico. September 23, 2015; The Globalization of War. Chossudovsky, Michel. Global Research Publishers 2015. "Here are a Few Things the New Air Force Base Will Do Besides Drop Bombs." September 13, 2015. Defense One. Defenseone.com
7. "The Fall of the Unipower." Roberts, Dr. Paul Craig, and Engdahl, F. William. Global Research. globalresearch.ca. October 19, 2015

8. According to the latest figures (2014): U.S. defense spending was 4.5 times larger than the next largest—that of China. The next largest was Russia's with 54% that of China's. Stockholm International Peace Institute. sipri.org