



“NATO means war! No to the new NATO Strategy“

is the message in the final declaration of the international Counter Summit parallel to the official NATO Summit.

At the Counter Summit more than 250 participants from 21 countries discussed about the new NATO Strategy and peaceful civil alternatives. The Counter Summit was being organized by the international network “No to war – No to NATO”.

Unanimously, the participants evaluated the new strategic concept as war-mongering and called for an alternative: a just world without war and nuclear weapons. Defining for the Counter Summit was the clear cognition that encompassing disarmament, the end of wars and the abolition of military bases can only be reached against NATO's will. The call for an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan grows stronger and broader. At the Counter Summit the dominant opinion called for a stronger connection and networking of the international peace movement which needs to coordinate more effectively its work against the military alliance of NATO. The communist party of Portugal (PCP) stood alone in neglecting “an internationalization of the protests against NATO”! For a left party, this position is not credible.

The Counter Summit developed new arguments which encourage to strongly work against the implementation of the new strategic concept.

Words followed actions: about 100 participants of the Counter Summit engaged in successful actions of civil disobedience on Saturday morning in which an entrance way of the congress center of the NATO Summit was blockaded non-violently.

According to the organizers of the demonstration (Paz sim – NATO nao) about 30,000 people followed the call of the Portuguese Peace Council, the international network No to war – No to NATO, as well as many other organizations and parties and demonstrated peacefully and non-violently in Lisbon. No to NATO was heard throughout the city center. Red flags were the dominant accessories of this demonstration for peace which should have deserved the highlighting of collectivity for peace instead of sectarian behaviors.

The summon up of violence by the media really took place: precisely, in the form of not allowing 200 activists to the demonstration and in detaining 41 activists of civil disobedience which were kept detained without being allowed to contact to lawyers. This is strictly illegal! Once more it became obvious that NATO and democracy are not compatible. As well as NATO means aggression to the exterior, it means decomposition of democracy and participation in the interior. By now all detained were set free.

A successful media and public outreach campaign spread our word on the dangers of NATO to a broad audience. The activities for peace were being spread to NATO countries and in the whole world. This is a success due to continuity of the protests by the international network, the engagement of the peace movement in between the summits as well as due to the livestream on the internet. The charisma of the engagement was encouraging and shows that the debates on violence have passed and a contentual debate on politics of war is again in the focus. For this, non-violent actions are inevitable.

It was important and good to protest in Lisbon moving and acting: we made a small step towards the delegitimization of NATO. Where ever NATO meets, where armament and war are propagandized, the international peace movement will be. We will not stand still and quiet – until the abolition of NATO.

In total another impression stays: the successful international cooperation crossing political and ideological borders, crossing party and organizational structures within the international network “No to war – No to NATO” has not enough spread enough to Portugal to reach collective actions of the peace and leftist groups. But this is what is needed in the struggle against the most powerful military alliance of the world. To think out loud, this was an obstacle to a broader, bigger and more charismatic mobilization.

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