

**7mo SEMINARIO EUROPA, AMERICA LATINA y CARIBE**

**visiones compartidas**

**desde la izquierda**



**Horario:** 4pm (Bruxelas)  
10am (Santiago de Chile)  
11am (Sao Paulo-Buenos Aires)  
9am Mexico DF

**ON LINE FACEBOOK**

**11 DE JUNIO DE 2022**

**7mo SEMINARIO EUROPA, AMERICA LATINA y CARIBE**



**visiones  
compartidas**



desde la  
**izquierda**



**ON LINE FACEBOOK**

**11 DE JUNIO DE 2022**

**Horario: 4pm (Bruxelas); 10am (Santiago de Chile); 11am (Sao Paulo-Buenos Aires); 9am Mexico DF**

## **Militarización, OTAN y lucha por la paz**

### **INTRODUCCIÓN:**

**Monica Valente,**  
(Secretaria del Foro de Sao Paulo)

### **1 PANEL:**

**Moderador: Marco Consolo**  
(Coordinador GT del PIE sobre ALC)

**Francisco Contreras**  
(Centro de Estudios Internationell Arena - Suecia)

**Gloria Ramírez**  
(ex Senadora de la República - Colombia)

**Claudia Haydt**  
(Coordinadora Grupo de trabajo Paz del PIE - Alemania)

**Celso Amorim**  
(ex Ministro de defensa - Brasil)

### **2 PANEL:**

**Moderadora: Agustina Alejandro**  
(Coordinadora de la Comisión de jóvenes del Foro de Sao Paulo - Uruguay)

**Angelo Fiore Tartaglia**  
(Asociación Nacional Víctimas Uranio Empobrecido-ANVUI - Italia)

**Mario Volpe**  
(Coordinador General del MMIAS y consultor de la Comisión por Malvinas de la Cámara de Diputados - Argentina)

### **CONCLUSIONES:**

**Maite Mola**  
(Vice-Presidente Partido de la Izquierda Europea)

Interpretation: EN-ES

**“Shared Visions” Seminar**  
**Militarisation, NATO and the Struggle for Peace**  
**11- 6-2022**

Video: <https://www.facebook.com/forodesaopaulo/videos/332453689061066/>

**Mónica Valente**  
**(Executive Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum)**

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening, I am Monica Valente, Executive Secretary of the Sao Paulo Forum, and I have the honour and pleasure, together with the comrades of the Party of the European Left, to open this new edition of the joint seminar “Shared Visions”. This is already the seventh joint seminar that we are holding and in this edition we are going to debate and reflect on the issue of militarisation, NATO and the struggle for peace, which is a common ground of analysis, not only for us in Latin America, but also in Europe.

We are experiencing a growing militarisation and armament throughout the world and the increase in military spending is undoubtedly once again preventing essential resources for social policies such as education, health, employment, food security, from reaching the people. And unfortunately, at the same time we, as Latin America and the Caribbean, are also suffering from the so-called unilateral “sanctions” imposed by imperialism in an attempt to impose a political model, a social model, an economic model, which our peoples do not accept.

So in these times, where we live in a war that for us is not an answer to the resolution of international conflicts in any way, we must fight the roots of war, principally to build a world of solidarity and peace, so that people can eat, have jobs, have dignity in their lives.

Thus the aim of this seminar is to understand this international scenario that affects us greatly, the scenario of conflict and war, but also its economic and social impact on our people. I would like to thank very much the comrades of the Party of the European Left, and our dear leader, vice-president of the PIE, comrade Maite Mola, our friend. I will give the floor to Marco Consolo, who is going to moderate this first panel, and who

is the coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean working group of the Party of the European Left. Let's move on to the reflection. Thank you.

### **First Panel**

**Marco Consolo**

**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Thank you Monica, a big hug to all of you who are connected, we have received greetings from Norway, Italy, Colombia, Chile, in short, from many people. So welcome to this seminar again, which, as Monica reminded us, is the seventh one we are holding together.

The scenario is the one we know, a war scenario, not only in the European Union. I would like to remind you here that there are more than fifty ignored conflicts worldwide. The scenario is, on the one hand, of a relative decline in the hegemony of the United States and the dollar. On the other hand, of the expansion of NATO, and we will talk about this here. I would like to emphasise the expansion towards Asia with the so-called "Aukus Agreement" (Australia, United Kingdom and the United States) and of course, in the case of Latin America the presence of Colombia as a "strategic ally", (no longer a "global partner", but a strategic ally of NATO); the pressure on Brazil to join NATO. As well, in the case of Europe, the very likely entry of Sweden and Finland, which will further increase NATO's expansion.

As Monica reminded us, the issue of so-called "sanctions" or, more precisely, "unilateral coercive measures", is one of the hottest topics in Latin America, along with the growing militarisation on both continents, which several comrades will discuss here.

In addition, I believe that there is also the growing risk of a nuclear conflict. Given this alarming scenario the struggle for peace is obviously the compass that guides the European Left (EL) and the Sao Paulo Forum, leading to a number of street mobilisations that will culminate in the NATO summit/counter-summit that will take place in Madrid at the end of June.

This is my short introduction, so that I can quickly present the panellists and then continue with more detail. First, we have Francisco Contreras, from Sweden, a former Member of Parliament, who is currently working with the Swedish “Studies Centre Internationell Arena”. Then I will introduce Gloria Ramírez, Claudia Haydt and Valter Pomar, who are the next panellists. I’ll stop here and give the floor directly to Francisco Contreras from Sweden for the first intervention. Go ahead Francisco.

**Francisco Contreras  
(Internationale Arena Study Centre – Sweden)**

Thank you Marco. From Sweden, good afternoon, and good morning to Latin America. I would like to thank you for this invitation. In the Scandinavian Nordic countries, we are living through what I would call a "militaristic" moment, a time of war, the trigger for which was of course Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, but which has a broader scope, a historical background of change in security policies for the Nordic countries. These changes are part of the shaping of the political scene in Europe and the world. Marco Consolo has already spoken to us about the changes and challenges of the new political scenario, which I share.

As you know, on 18 May Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO. Unfortunately it is not only the governments who are in favour of NATO, but there are parliamentary majorities and majorities of the population in favour of NATO, I regret to say. In Finland 80% of the population support NATO membership, in Sweden it is between 60 and 70%. In Finland, practically all parties supported NATO membership. The Left Alliance party (Vasemmisto), where there was an opposition and which has 8% in the polls, divided its vote in the parliament, 9 MPs voted in favour of NATO membership and 6 against.

In Sweden, the “Left Party” (Vänsterpartiet) and the Green Party were the only two parties voting against. The Swedish left demanded a referendum, but the social democratic government, whose party was divided on this issue and also because of the general elections in early September, said no to a referendum. But also in Denmark, a founding member of NATO, militarism is having a significant moment.

On 1 July, there was a referendum in which 67% voted to integrate Denmark into the European defence system, and this is historic, because Denmark has long refused to join this type of system. We are talking about 30 years of a constant struggle not to join any integration systems of the European Union, and now they are doing so with regard to the defence system.

Finland, Denmark and Sweden have already committed themselves to follow the recommendation of the US, the Pentagon and NATO to raise defence spending to 2% of GDP.

I'm not going to say much about Norway, just to say that Norway, part of NATO, is a big winner in the war. Oil revenues this year are expected to be six times more than what was budgeted at the beginning of the year. Norway is set to have oil revenues of \$175 billion this year. That is more than Norway's entire national budget, which is around 150 billion dollars. So they have made huge profits with this war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine.

As Naomi Klein says, it is clear that in crisis situations like this, a war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine, a war that we experience daily with hundreds of thousands of refugees who have arrived in Nordic countries, (which is also close to the Nordic imaginary), militarism has taken advantage of this to implement what Naomi Klein calls the Shock Doctrine.

NATO was not popular in Sweden and Finland, and we are talking about only recently.. Months ago, in Sweden there was a strong popular opinion against joining NATO, and it has only been the impact of the war, which has caused shock and confusion in the population, which has created the conditions and turned opinion in favour of joining NATO.

And of course Russophobia is also at play here, it has been important in gaining support, it has been part of the campaign, part of the propaganda machine. As you know, the Swedish and Finnish request has to be ratified by the thirty member countries, because NATO works on the principle of consensus. But of course it already has the support of the United States, which was the first to welcome the Nordic countries into NATO.

And last week a ship called USS Kearsarge arrived in Stockholm, which is the third US amphibious assault ship and the fifth ship of the US Navy. It was in the port of Stockholm and was cheered, both by politicians and the press and also by many people in Stockholm who supported it as a kind of "saviours who have arrived". And this ship is also going to participate in the next military exercises which are already taking place in the Baltic Sea, from 5 June to 17 July. Therefore, NATO military exercises are taking place in the Baltic Sea, and we think that this is going to increase.

But the problem, the spoiler, is Turkey, because Turkey, which is also a NATO member, was blocking Sweden and Finland from joining NATO. According to the Financial Times Turkey is already blocking the decision to process the applications.

However, Turkey is playing its cards to strengthen its position and has five demands that we know about. Then there are all sorts of negotiations, and we will perhaps never know about other things that have been demanded there. The first demand is that Sweden and Finland have to give explicit security guarantees to Turkey and to the other NATO countries, but above all to Turkey.

The second demand is to lift the bans on the export of war material to Turkey. At least Sweden has banned the export of certain war material to Turkey during this time, and this is being lifted.

Turkey's third demand is to weaken the support for the Kurds in Turkey and Syria. Turkey says that they do not want Sweden to serve as a refuge for the so-called terrorists of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, and in general for other Kurds who are for the independence of Kurdistan in Turkey. The Turkish ambassador himself has said that he wants to extradite Kurds who are refugees in Sweden and he put in the list a left-wing member of parliament, Amineh Kakabave. She is not a Kurd from Turkey, but a Kurd from Iran, but she would also be on the list of those who should be extradited.

Turkey's fourth demand is to lift retaliations for Russian anti-aircraft missiles. You know that in 2020 Washington imposed sanctions on the Turkish defence industry in retaliation for the purchase of the Russian S400 anti-missile system, so this is also on the list of demands.

And the fifth is to lift the ban on the purchase of F35 fighter jets, because Turkey was excluded from the US F35 fighter programme. Turkey had already placed the order and paid an advance payment of 1.4 billion dollars, but it was excluded from that programme.

These would be Turkey's five demands to make way for Finland and Sweden's application to NATO.

As you know, Turkey is not just any NATO member: it has the second largest NATO army, with all the NATO access to the Black Sea, it has a military presence in Syria, it also has interests in Libya, and it maintains a mediating position in the war with Russia and Ukraine. It has played an important role in this situation..

What have been the reactions from the Swedish and Finnish authorities? On 9 June, two days ago, the Swedish foreign minister, Ann Linde, presented a new foreign policy statement. Here in Sweden, the foreign policy statement is always made in February. February's statement, said "the government does not intend to apply for NATO membership, the policy and security line remains unchanged, our military freedom serves us well and contributes to stability and security in Northern Europe".

Now, on 9 June, of course with NATO membership imminent, the social democratic government made several adjustments to this foreign policy declaration. In this new declaration, it stipulated that Sweden, as a NATO member, explicitly offers security guarantees to Turkey, which was one of the demands, and also lifts the bans on the export of war material to Turkey, which was another demand. This is the new foreign policy declaration.

Earlier Ann Linden, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had already made a statement rejecting terrorism, and of course this had to do with Turkey's demands concerning the Kurds who are refugees in Sweden. Finland has not really said much. They say that they have had talks with Turkey before, but yesterday the president of Finland, Sauli Niinisto, said that if they had known about Turkey's demands, Finland would not have applied for NATO membership.

What is clear is that it is the Pentagon and the United States that have the final say and are of course in negotiations with Turkey, and it is

they who will decide whether or not Sweden enters. We believe that this will be the case, both for Finland and Sweden.

It is no coincidence that it is social democracy that leads the way on formal entry into NATO in Finland and Sweden. Nor that it is social democracy in Denmark that took the initiative to enter the European Union's defence system. Nor that NATO's Secretary General is Jens Stoltenberg, a Norwegian who comes from a social democratic background. Previously it was Denmark's Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Not coincidentally, this is a long-term Pentagon political strategy that is bearing fruit now, in times of upheaval.

The Norwegian journalist Eirik Vold noted in an article we published in Arena, that according to US embassy cables leaked by WikiLeaks, the US strategy is to use the Nordic countries, seen as anti-militarists and peace mediators - you surely see them as such - as bait to persuade and convince other European countries sceptical of military operations. For the United States, it is clear that it is not the Nordic right-wing, but rather the social democrats which continue to maintain hegemony in these countries, they should lead the various war moves and the Nordic countries' accession to NATO. I think it is wise to bear this in mind: when we talk about the Nordic countries, we often think that social democracy is still the old social democracy of 30 or 40 years ago.

What are the changes in security policy? Pierre Shori, a historic social democratic minister, Olof Palme's minister, Olof Palme's right-hand man, a great friend of Latin America and one of the few social democrats who has raised his voice in the debate to reject NATO membership, says that there are strategic changes in Sweden's security policy.

According to Pierre Shori, Sweden has previously remained firm in its policy of neutrality and has only had two alterations in modern times: one in 1956, when the USSR intervened in Hungary and the United States and NATO desisted from intervening. At that time, there was a discussion initiated by the army and the right-wing forces to obtain nuclear weapons of their own. It was Tage Erlander, Minister of State at that time, through his advisor ( Olof Palme,) who was able to dismantle the nuclear initiative in Sweden. According to Pierre Shori, the other alteration in security policy took place in 2003, when the Swedish army, was in Afghanistan, and following the US change of strategy, moved from UN peacekeeping

forces to serve under the flags of NATO and the Pentagon. This is Pierre Shori 's view .

In my view, I would say that the policy of neutrality and non-alignment had at least two further alterations.

One was in 2009, when they entered into the mutual self-defence of the European Union. The other is when Sweden became a NATO affiliate, a non-member, and that has led to it participating of course in all NATO military exercises and military protocols. We are already talking about 1992, 94', and already since 2016 they are fully involved. The same goes for Finland.

According to Heikki Patomäki, professor of international politics at the University of Helsinki, since the 1990s Finland has been adapting its defence system to NATO and the United States, and the Russian war of aggression is just the final push to join NATO.

I know I have fifteen minutes, so I will start to conclude. I would like to say two things about the conclusions. One is that, as we said, Sweden and Finland have been part of NATO's strategy since the mid-1990s, and this is a change in security doctrine but also a change in rhetorical terms of the policy of neutrality in war and non-aligned in peacetime, which began with Tage Erlander and was later adopted by Olof Palme. Olof Palme said that "the policy of neutrality is in our own national interest, it is not a commodity, it is a national asset that has contributed to a century of peace". That is now lost.

And on the other hand, the Finns also said they were realists and pragmatists, and they had a security doctrine based on neutrality and what was later called "shared security", which was to find a way in Europe to promote security involving both the West and the East, and what became the 57-nation Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Helsinki Declaration in 1975.

Finally, what are the immediate consequences of Sweden and Finland joining NATO? In my opinion there are 7. There may be many more, but the immediate ones:

1. First, the militarisation of the Baltic Sea, which was not free of tension until now, there has always been tension, but now it will be multiplied, as it is a key sea to be used by both NATO and Russia.
2. Second, the direct border between NATO and Russia will double in length, adding the 1,350 kilometres Russia shares with Finland, to the borders of Estonia and Latvia, and this will of course force Moscow to take militaristic measures as well.
3. The third thing is the militarisation of the Arctic. You know, global warming and melting ice are making not only navigation in the Arctic more and more accessible, but also the exploitation of natural resources, and there is an imminent militarisation. Today we know that 7 of the 8 countries that are part of the Arctic Community are aligned with the United States and NATO: in this case Russia is alone, and it is the only country of the 8 that does not share it. And what the SIPRI Institute says is that there are already landing areas, radar stations, submarines, warships in the Arctic.
4. The fourth thing would be the presence of nuclear weapons, of course, which neither Finland nor Sweden have had, but with NATO membership, it is clear that nuclear weapons are going to be present.
5. A fifth point is what Pierre Shori says, that Sweden renounces its anti-nuclear soul, by joining NATO, Sweden loses the possibility to act - as an important international actor - against the existential threat of nuclear weapons.
6. Sixth, the participation of Sweden and Finland in NATO wars; for example, Sweden has participated in Libya with NATO, lent its warplanes. It was also in Afghanistan, but formally has not been at war as part of NATO, and this would change. Also, as I said before, it will increase military spending by 2% of its Gross Domestic Product.
7. And for Finland, a change in its security relations with Russia, which were part of an agreement with the Soviet Union after the

Second World War, is also coming. That agreement is also coming to an end.

Those are, in my view, the immediate changes. I concluded Marco, thank you very much.

**Marco Consolo**

**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Thank you Francisco, very interesting presentation to illuminate all the new developments that are taking place in that part of the world.

I give the floor to Gloria Ramirez. She is from Colombia, a former senator, very active in the peace movement, in the feminist movement.

Of course on the eve of the elections on 19 June, we hope that the option of Gustavo Petro and Francia Marquez can win. Gloria, you have the floor.

**Gloria Ramírez**

**(Former Senator – Colombia)**

Well comrades, good morning. Thank you all for this invitation, and for allowing us to share a little about the situation in our country and how we are seeing this great threat that NATO represents for us. We want to talk about the role of NATO in the world, as an initial context, and what it means to be a NATO member at this time, specifically for our country.

So I would like to start by also thanking you for the stimulating awareness that you have had here in Colombia, the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum, for the support that you gave us, and above all for the unconditional support that you have given to the peace process in this country.

The first reflection we would like to make is how at this moment world peace is extremely weakened and threatened by this arms race, by the increase and expansion of military bases, by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, by the situation that has put the existence of humanity and the planet in danger of extermination as never before. That is why, in the government programme that we are proposing for this country, we clearly want to restore the health of the planet and the power of life as a central exercise.

We are also witnessing a global geopolitical redefinition, with a scenario of advancing serious threats to peace, a growing arms race, a resurgence of the cold war, and a strong sharpening of the contradictions between the main poles of power. We also see how the era of the United States is coming to an end, and how there is a rapid transition towards a multipolar, irreversible world, which is what NATO somehow wants to prevent, in all the processes of resistance and the advance and consolidation of alternative proposals in Latin America.

We also want to point out that throughout the Americas we are living through a time of mobilisations and protests. We see how the people are also rebelling and fighting for their rights and for a better life. This is the reaction we are giving to the imperialist offensive, especially when they want to increase their military presence in the region, in order to secure their hegemonic interests in our region, to consolidate the front against Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, to perpetuate their domination over the immense economic resources of Latin America and the Caribbean and to put an end to Latin American and Caribbean integration. Facing these mass mobilisations, the right-wing wants to continue and has unleashed a tragic repression and restriction of civil liberties: the turn is more and more authoritarian and is left in the hands of the military and the police.

Today our country is living a formidable historical moment.

Since 21 November last year, as never before, a gigantic social mobilisation has been developing, marked above all by its massiveness, its great creativity, its civility, its capacity to make proposals, and which is increasingly becoming part of the rebellion that is sweeping the Latin American continent against the neoliberal policies that have impoverished us and against the war, fundamentally.

We clearly believe that war is not the alternative and that we must work to strengthen a peaceful solution, and this means a fight against nuclear weapons, for disarmament and of course against US interference in our region.

Colombia as a major extra-NATO ally: we would like to say that Colombia is one of the 17 countries in the world that enjoys this status, despite the fact that Colombia is already the country with the largest US

military presence in Latin America. Officially it has 7 US military bases, but we also have to say that there are many more, up to 50 military installations camouflaged under various legal terms. For example, there are dozens of radars along the border with Venezuela.

Mining-energy and infrastructure battalions all advised by the US military. Colombia's army is one of the most powerful armies in the region, with around 300,000 active soldiers, almost outnumbering Brazil's army in terms of military personnel.

I want to stress that this recognition, this signing of the memorandum, which presents Colombia as a “strategic ally” of NATO, has been made just when we are in the midst of an election process. What does this recognition mean?

This is a recognition that implies that Colombia will have privileged access to the US defence industry, special access to military funding, greater collaboration in security technologies, weapons and training with NATO member countries. At the moment, the Colombian army is on a mission to train Ukrainian soldiers in humanitarian mine clearance and military training. That is to say, through NATO's decision, Colombia is already present in a European country, training the Ukrainian army and military in warfare. For us, this is extremely serious, because Colombia is not only an exporter of hired assassins, as in the case of the assassination of the president of Haiti, but it is also involved in the war that is being waged on the European continent.

This is deeply serious because it implies that there is also a readiness for aggression against our neighbouring countries, as in the case of Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, where Colombian President Iván Duque has been positioning foreign relations not only in favour of the United States but clearly in favour of the war.

I also wanted to say that Colombia's military establishment is considered a security exporter by the US Southern Command. And this makes us the "Israel" of Latin America. This is a great contradiction, because it is precisely today that Colombia has a peace agreement, that it wants to get out of 60 years of war with so many victims and so many deaths, and this quality of "strategic ally" makes it an aggressor, a spearhead for attacking our sister countries.

The third thing I want to make clear here is what it means that all this is going on in an election process. At the moment, there is great polarisation in the country, about the kind of change that Colombia needs. With the first electoral round, those who followed the elections realised that one of the axes of this type of change that we are working on has to do with the implementation of the Peace Agreement in its entirety. Not just because it is tackling the causes that have generated the conflict, but because it also leads to a total change in our country's foreign relations: the first thing that will be done is to put Colombia back on the road of Latin American integration. The second is to open relations with Venezuela, with the countries of Latin America and to promote the principles of solidarity.

However, the right-wing has totally unified and we are living through a dirty war, in the midst of threats and assassination attempts against our comrade vice-president, but the Colombian social movement is courageous. It is still alive. And it is fully mobilized, despite the genocide against its leaders, despite the armed control of the paramilitaries in the regions. The popular aspirations are clear, they want to rebuild the social fabric of rights, they want land for the indigenous peoples, for the peasant communities, for the black communities, for the right to eat, for the inclusion of the social transformations in the country, and to remove the logic of business from the fundamental rights of men and women, such as health and education.

A central element is that we will continue to work for the aegis of peace, we will work to ensure that the military bases in Colombia are eliminated and, above all, that they do not continue to violate national sovereignty.

Today, comrades, we believe that it is vitally important that we can make progress in this fight for peace, against militarism. Therefore, we welcome the alternative summit that is going to be held in Spain for alternative models to NATO. We see that the arms race is extremely serious, the figures, for example, in Colombia, are that we have increased military spending to 9,200 millions, in a country that is working towards war. We also see with great concern how, at the Latin American level, there is a very large increase in this military spending.

Worldwide military spending grew, from the data we had until 2019, it has grown 2 % more. Among the five countries with the highest military spending are of course the United States, China, India, Russia and the United Kingdom, but in 2020 military spending in South America decreased by 2.1%. This decrease is mainly explained by the 3.1% drop in Brazil's spending, which nevertheless remains the highest in the region. Meanwhile, for next year in Colombia, military spending will be increased to 3,4%. This means that, instead of advancing towards what CELAC declared Latin America as a "region of peace", Colombia continues to violate this norm. We hope that on 19 June, we will see Colombia make a fundamental change with our presidential candidate Gustavo Petro as president and Francia Márquez as vice-president, and in this way we will be able to turn our country into a great power of life, not only for Colombia but also for the region and the world.

**Marco Consolo**  
**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Thank you Gloria, thank you very much, we wish you all the best for the elections on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, which are very important, very historic, not only for Latin America, but for the whole world. It would be a truly historic possibility for a progressive coalition to win the government of Colombia.

And on the subject of military expenditure, I give the floor to Claudia Haydt, a comrade from the German party "The left" (Die Linke), who is currently the coordinator of the European Left's working group on peace. I would like to remind our speakers to please keep between 15 and 20 minutes.

I also take this opportunity to say that people are connected from Germany, Venezuela, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, Norway, Portugal, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Italy, Spain, Cuba and Argentina.

So Claudia, you have the floor.

**Claudia Haydt**

## **(Coordinator of the “Peace working group” of the European Left – Germany)**

Thank you very much Marco, thank you for inviting me. First to say, yesterday in Germany it was decided to spend 100 billion euros on military spending. That is not a political issue, something that could be negotiated in the next government. Rather it is a decision that has already been implemented in the German Constitution, meaning that future governments will have the constitutional obligation or, let's say, will have considerable pressure to continue spending money on ammunition and on military armament, on planes and so on. Therefore, this is really a huge step towards the militarisation of Germany, and it is really something that I never wanted to witness.

How can this happen? Francisco has already given the answer, in a way. It is the policy of shock. This is a very strange situation, people feel insecure after these kinds of shocks, especially with the Russian aggression in Ukraine, of course. . After after the destruction of the Twin Towers, people also felt insecure, so you cannot really find a rational answer to this. We are looking for political answers but this is an unprecedented issue. Because they are using this shock strategy to implement policies that perhaps they would have liked to implement before, but were unable to because of general opposition. In political theory, there is a consensus about these “windows of opportunities”, in the 6 months following the beginning of a conflict, to apply these shock policies. We see that many politicians are doing so, making irreversible decisions with significant effects on their populations. This is something that we cannot accept in any way. But well, that is the situation in Germany at the moment.

And what does this mean? It means that Germany is going to be number 3 in terms of military spending after China and the United States. Historically, of course, this was never an ideal, that Germany would be number 3, so I hope we can stop it. In addition, this changes the question at the European Union level, because Germany is already a very dominant actor, and it could become a dominant military force too. Although we are not there yet, it seems to be the ambition involving a great deal of money.

Now, military spending like this is going to change things a lot, because this money is not going to be taken from the rich it is going to be taken from the poor.. In this way our society will become poorer, it will become more precarious in many ways, and insecurity will also increase. What we also see (and I do not want to alarm, but I do want to be realistic) is that one of NATO's programmes is a combat air system platform, which involves cooperation between Germany, France and Spain, which is going to cost the taxpayer 500 billion euro over the next decades.

It won't be put on the table all at once, but taxpayers in the different countries are going to have to pay this amount that I have just mentioned. We are not talking about millions, but billions. This is a lot of money and it is going to form a platform for new aircraft, to control drones and a new generation of warfare, including a platform for the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Politicians in Germany have already begun to ask whether there are any obstacles to Germany also possessing nuclear weapons together with other countries.

I would like to return to past foreign policy, that of 1970. There was a memorandum of understanding, regarding Germany's signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty which stated that Germany would not have nuclear weapons. But this would not mean that if the European Union used nuclear weapons, there would be obstacles. In other words, if the European Union had a nuclear arsenal, then Germany could participate in this programme.

This is something we have to take into account. Whilst it won't happen tomorrow, the necessary frameworks are being prepared to permit Germany's use of nuclear weapons. This is one of the big changes we see in the great powers at the moment.

We could also talk about the relationship between NATO and the European Union. Just one year ago, we thought it was totally different, and NATO was obsolete But now, given Putin's attitude and so on, it is stronger than ever despite the existence of internal frictions.. For example, Turkish planes violate the flight zone, etc., several times a day. NATO's relationship with Turkey is changing. Turkey puts a lot of pressure, not only on the Scandinavian countries, but also on NATO as a whole regarding its own ambitions for territorial expansion and

influence. In the end, NATO is not about values, it is about power, ambitions and imperialism.

From the beginning, there was also an alliance with the European Union. As was made clear in the Lisbon Treaty, the EU is not an alternative to NATO, but aims at strengthening the Atlantic alliance, to be like a European arm of NATO. If they wanted to be an alternative they would have a policy framework and other objectives, but this is not happening. So the EU is acting along NATO lines. For me, the European Union, as a military alliance, is like a bad copy of NATO. It is not an alternative.

And, if we think from the EU not-military/civilian power side, it is not an alternative, but rather an additional military force. For example, if we talk about sanctions, and what is happening with them, I think they are not an alternative to war, but a form of warfare. If we talk about the implications of sanctions and how they distract as well, and on the victims of sanctions, we are talking about something that is tantamount to war in the end. Because we also have to think about the rise in prices, grain prices, oil prices, which also impoverishes people, and the countries that are already the poorest, are also having more problems with hunger and illnesses.

So these sanctions are not civilian alternatives, they are part of the weapons of war. And I don't know what is happening in your countries, but in Germany we have like an excess of sanctions: not only economic, but also cultural, including scientific cooperation, for example, because they want to cut all kinds of ties. Now the question is: are these sanctions helping Ukraine? No, they are not. And they are not helping the Russian opposition either. where I have friends who suffer under Putin but also from the sanctions, a double burden..

The sanctions, as I said, don't help Ukraine .They are not conditioned to a ceasefire and are being used to restructure the framework of global cooperation They are implemented and that's it. Furthermore some sanctions are going to take many years to be implemented, and meanwhile cooperation will suffer.. Ties with Russia will be cut and Europe will become more and more dependent on cooperation with the United States. So it's like a whole new world order put in place by sanctions and militarism..

The European Union does not follow its own agenda, it follows that of the United States. It is becoming more and more militarised, leaving the US free to decide what to do in Asia, to strengthen its military forces to confront China, and so on. It is giving the US more and more power.

And what we see, if we are thinking about Madrid, and to sum up and to conclude, is that NATO also said that it was going to implement a new concept. But it's not something new, with new ideas. It's more of the same. Much more of the same. More militarisation, more imperialism and more danger to the rest of the globe .So to be clear, on the issue of stopping the militarisation tendency the only good thing is that in Germany we will never have to accept the argument that there is no money ever again.

Obviously there is all this money available, this 100 billion, and this money could be used for social security, for ecological issues and other needs. We no longer accept this argument that there is no money. Because that is not the reason. What we see is that everything is possible if there is political will. We have to change the focus. Thank you very much.

**Marco Consolo**  
**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Thank you Claudia. It is a question of political will, as you said. What to use this money for.

I would also like to say that we keep receiving greetings, now from Peru, France and Uruguay.

I give the floor to Valter Pomar from Brazil. Valter Pomar is a member of the National Direction of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT). Valter, go ahead.

**Valter Pomar**  
**(National Direction PT - Brazil)**

Good afternoon, and good morning, depending on where you are. Thank you for the invitation to this 7th Seminar. I am going to contribute with my personal views and I start with the following.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a response to NATO's aggression against Russia. We may disagree, and we may even condemn Russia's action, but we can never forget the previous and continuing aggression since 1991. For example I will not forget Yugoslavia, where NATO was part of a massacre. And now they are all "doves". Therefore, in my opinion, the United States and its allies, starting with most but not all the European social democrats, are using the war in Ukraine as a pretext to do what they were going to do anyway. And if it hadn't been this pretext, it would have been another one.

I won't enlarge on this aspect. I don't think it is necessary to argue here, in this seminar, about the link between militarisation and capitalism. About the link between militarisation and imperialism. About the link between militarisation and the United States, which is a nation that has waged wars throughout its history, and is waging more and more wars. Finally, I do not think it is necessary to argue here about the link between militarisation and the moments of structural crisis of capitalism. This is what happened in the long period of the first half of the 20th century.

And the bad news, comrades, is that we are in a moment of structural crisis where the military card, war, will be increasingly present as an option of capitalism for its survival, of imperialism for its survival, of the United States to reaffirm its hegemony. The novelty, in my opinion, is that at this moment, paradoxically, the United States is more dependent on war than it was in the so-called "cold war" period against the Soviet Union.

This is because the United States has lost the economic competition with China. Unlike the Soviets, today the United States has lost the economic competition. This is not the way forward for them.

Secondly, the military-industrial complex, together with the financial sector, remains a fundamental power bloc, and war is a formidable business. Directly and indirectly. As the first comrade who spoke here mentioned, when he was talking about Norway's profits.

Thirdly, because in times of political crisis of legitimacy, such as exists in the United States, war is fundamental. To wage war, to create an external enemy, is fundamental from a political point of view. Because as the mechanisms of hegemony, of legitimisation of capitalism, lose strength, the external enemy, which can be a Chinese, a Russian, a "red", or whatever, becomes very important. Ultimately, for the United States, the military solution is therefore the most obvious, natural and lucrative way out of its crisis of hegemony. That is the point. The rest is circumstantial. Of course, the circumstantial is very important in politics. But let us not forget that it is a pretext, not the cause of what is happening.

This brings us to the following conclusion: it is not a Russia-Ukraine war, it is not a Russia-NATO war, it is a war between the United States and China. It is a war between the United States and China, waged by a third party. China's option, as far as I can perceive, is not war. They have a long-term interest in overcoming the United States and do not need war for this. But it must be clear that, since the rise of Xi Jinping, the Chinese have been preparing for the current situation. In other words, their position today is not passive. They are convinced that the United States can go to war more and more and will not be stopped by a purely rhetorical stance on their part, on the part of the governments, on the part of the peoples.

It is interesting to say that we, on the left, in the broad sense of the word, have never had unity on how to react to wars. Never. Apart from naming the word "peace", if you look at the whole history of the 20th century, the left had conflicting positions. Faced with the First World War, faced with the civil war in Spain, faced with the Second World War and its different moments, faced with the Cold War, faced with the wars of liberation of the European colonies in Africa, where a part of the European Left betrayed, and chose once again to stand in solidarity with its ruling classes, and so on and so forth.

But this is nothing new. That the left has different views on the war and how to react. What is interesting is that this is also happening on the right-wing today. Comrades in Europe may or may not confirm my impression, which is that social democracy, in general, is more susceptible to US pressure than some right-wing, nationalist, proto-fascist sectors. There is a struggle also in the ruling class. But my impression is

that the European ruling class is willing to turn the European Union into an appendage of the US military project. That is my impression. The European Union will not be a third force. It will be an appendix of the US operation.

In conclusion, my opinion is that in Latin America, we will be dragged into this conflict just as we were dragged into the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States. We may or may not like it, we may or may not agree with it, but the dynamic is this. We will be dragged into taking a position on a conflict that apparently does not relate to us directly, from a formal point of view, but which in reality does, because it has to do with the future of humanity. This is the question. This conflict between China and the United States, like the earlier conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, is about the future of humanity. Even if the territories directly involved in the battles are not necessarily Latin American. This has already happened in the Cold War.

But, paradoxically, I propose, as an exercise, that we put ourselves in Washington's point of view. During the Cold War against the Soviet Union, Washington looked at Latin America and saw its almost total economic and military hegemony. Together with a reduced Soviet military presence. Very small. Today, Washington looks at Latin America and sees a tremendous Chinese presence and a greater Russian military presence than during the Cold War. We have to be clear about this.

From Washington's point of view, the situation today is more threatening than it was in the past. The situation is more dangerous today because of its economic weaknesses on the one hand, and the Russian military presence on the other.

For this reason, my opinion is that the pressure from the gringos is going to increase brutally in the region. Comrade Gloria has already spoken here about the case of Colombia. I am not going to add anything. In the case of Brazil, if Jair Bolsonaro, whom I prefer to call a "caveman", wins the presidency, Brazil will follow the same course as Colombia in terms of an increasingly formal integration into NATO. And the presence of nuclear forces in the Malvinas and elsewhere will escalate.

In this sense, we have to sound the alarm on a very wide scale. Most of us in Brazil, most of the left militants, look at this NATO issue as if it were a distant issue, as if it was not a question of today's politics. To give

an example: comrade Aloizio Mercadante, who many here know, a couple of months ago, as a guest of a Live transmission in which I was invited too, together with other comrades, was returning with Lula from Europe, and he says "we have news of this process of rapprochement between NATO and the Bolsonaro government". It was the first time this was discussed in public. Just a few months ago. And for many of us it was a novelty, it was not on the agenda.

So I fully agree with stressing the defence of peace, stressing the defence of a peaceful and the quickest possible way out of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and I am particularly in favour of our whole peace proposal being accompanied by the comprehensive dismantling of NATO. There is no possibility of peace in the world with NATO in existence. NATO is an excrescence and is an aggressive instrument of war, and our principled position must be the end of NATO. It must not exist. And this is really about responding to America's self-assigned right to be the world's policeman.

And finally, here in Latin America, the reconstruction of regional institutions, such as CELAC and UNASUR, is very important, and must place greater emphasis on a common defence policy than in the previous period. Because our armies, not only Colombia's, but Brazil's for example, are taken over from top to bottom by people who think with the Yankee, gringo, and US mind-set. We have to build another defence policy and another type of armed forces, which are not appendages of imperialism in our region.

And to finish, we have to fight Russian phobia and Chinese phobia. And what Claudia talked about here, which we see in Brazil and elsewhere, it's incredible: the level of ideological hysteria that these guys have reached, against Tolstoy, against Chernyshevski, against Tchaikovsky, or whatever. It's like here in Brazil, when the military banned Stendhal's Red and Black, because they thought it was a revolutionary work.

Thank you very much.

**Marco Consolo**  
**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Thank you Valter. I always quote a famous phrase by Gramsci, where he said that "the old is not dead, the new is not born yet, and in this transition, in these chiaroscuros, monsters appear". And the monster is the war which, as you pointed out, is coming with the crisis of capitalism and the redefinition of a new world order that we are seeing.

I would also like to make it clear that as the European Left Party we are clearly against this war and, despite the discussion, there are no pro-war positions, far from it. It is important that our comrades in Latin America and those listening to us from Europe know this. Incidentally, we have received greetings from Greece and Belgium, which I would like to pass on to the speakers at the seminar.

Well, I would like to close the first panel by thanking everyone for their participation, of course, and I would like to give the floor to our moderator for the next panel, Agustina Alejandro. She is from Uruguay and is currently the Coordinator of the Youth Commission of the Sao Paulo Forum. Go ahead Agustina, I introduced you without you introducing yourself.

You have the floor Agustina.

## **Second Panel**

**Agustina Alejandro  
(Coordinator of the Youth Commission of the Sao Paulo Forum -  
Uruguay)**

Thank you very much Marco, thank you very much to all of you. Good morning and good afternoon to all of you present at this seventh seminar of "Shared Visions" from the Left, which is calling us all from Europe, and with the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum. I would simply like, so as not to be repetitive, to welcome this event and its importance.

As persons of the left, such instances are urgent in order to recognise ourselves as united in the defence and perennial construction

of peace, with the need to rethink and build critical thinking in the face of the premise of international actors such as NATO and US imperialism, which seek to maintain a supremacy with material factors of power that they no longer hold.

The young people of the forum, and of the whole world, are concerned about the continuity of warmongering logic that only aggravates the humanitarian crisis, the outdated capitalist model and its instrument, neoliberalism, and brings us closer to a nuclear holocaust and the ultimate disappearance of life on our planet. Just welcoming this instance and this opportunity to participate, I would like to give the floor to our first panellist, Angelo Fiore Tartaglia, who is the spokesperson of the National Association of Depleted Uranium Victims, who is connected from Italy. Please, Angelo.

**Angelo Fiore Tartaglia**  
**(National Association of Depleted Uranium Victims-ANVUI. Italy)**

## **On Depleted Uranium**

### **1. Introduction**

Good morning everyone, my name is Angelo Fiore Tartaglia and I am a lawyer.

With my legal team, we have followed and continue to follow the cases of dead or sick Italian soldiers, who went on missions in territories contaminated with depleted uranium ammunition, since the first case.

The first case, more than twenty years ago, was a soldier of the Italian Army, Andrea Antonaci, who, returning from a mission in Bosnia, was struck by a "non Hodgkin's lymphoma" and died at the age of 26.

Since the first case, the number of dead or sick military personnel has increased a lot: today 270 dead Italian military servicemen have died and more than 8000 are ill.

When I started, there was no law protecting the military, nor any judicial framework.

The road so far has been full of insidiousness and obstacles because the Italian State, even now, denies the use of depleted uranium by NATO and denies the harmful potential of these weapons.

Unfortunately, the use of uranium was not limited to the Balkan territories but was also used in Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and in experimental military polygons.

## **2. A brief history**

The danger of depleted uranium has been known since 1978, following the announcement made by the US military Pentagon that year. Between October 1977 and October 1978, as part of a research project (Air Force Exploratory Development Project 06CD0101) carried out by a number of federal laboratories and research centres in the United States, the Aberdeen tests were conducted at the Eglin military polygon where depleted uranium bullets and ammunition had been detonated.

The metal particles found in the bodies of Italian military who died or became ill due to cancerous formations generated by these metals are in shape, weight and composition completely identical to those found and studied by US researchers at the Eglin military site.

Demonstration of the above can be found in several reports made by nanodiagnostic X-ray microanalysis electron microscopy research following the analysis of exogenous bodies and their chemical composition found in biopsy specimens taken from the bodies of sick or deceased military

In 1979, the US Army's Mobility Equipment Research and Development Command warned that the use of depleted uranium bullets endangers *"not only those in the immediate vicinity, but also those downwind: the particles are rapidly deposited in lung tissue, exposing the host to an increasing toxic dose of alpha radiation, capable of causing cancer and other deadly diseases"*.

In 1990, the United States of America issued and made known the so-called "Golden Rules" (U.S. standards of protection for uranium weapons). Uranium weapons were exploded and on 16 August 1993 the "Department of the Army - Office of the Surgeon General" integrated the above rules with a "Memorandum", specifying and publicising that when military personnel inhale or ingest Depleted Uranium Impact Dust they may run the risk of contracting cancer.

At the end of 1999, the controversy over depleted uranium weapons began to affect the international media, and when they began to discuss the danger of depleted uranium bullets and the deaths of military personnel, the Italian Defence Staff began to transmit the first information about the danger of these weapons and the precautions to be taken (November 1999), although

it had been well aware of the danger and the need to adopt means of protection since 1978 (Eglin Treaty).

This is the destiny that those who knew and had the duty, which was not fulfilled, to intervene to protect the lives of the servants of the homeland, have allowed themselves to trace.

Let us go into detail:

### **3. Geography**

Using official maps, NATO and the United Nations have made public the Balkan sites bombed during the infamous conflict.

By way of example, it should be noted that in the town of Dakovica alone, in Kosovo, more than 300 munitions containing depleted uranium were used. which when added to the other sites analysed makes a total of 8,112 depleted uranium munitions fired in and around the Dakovica area. With regard to the use of depleted uranium and its oncogenetic capacity, as proven by the numerous judgments confirming the etiological link, it should be noted that the Council of State, the highest authority of Italian administrative justice, stated categorically that: *"It is well known that in that period of time the NATO troops present there were currently using depleted uranium munitions, highly susceptible - as such - to cause tumour pathologies"*.

Berkeley International University has quantified chemical and radioactive contamination up to 300 times greater than that present at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where the atomic bomb was used.

### **4. Probative value in accordance with article 2697 of the Italian Civil Code.**

Through nanodiagnostic analyses performed on the diseased tissues of the military, the exposure of the military to environments contaminated by micro- and nano-dusts, full of non-biodegradable and non-biocompatible debris, was highlighted. These heavy metal nanoparticles were ingested and/or inhaled after exposure to environments contaminated by exploding military ordnance, including those containing depleted uranium.

The Rome Administrative Court, in relation to the presence of nanoparticles of heavy metals, has ruled that: *"(...)the only alternative*

*explanation, that the claimant was used in a blast furnace, obviously not even ventilated by the defendant) (...) "*

The World Health Organisation and the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) considered that environmental dusts of the same size or smaller than 2.5 microns (precisely the same as those found in the fabrics of sick military personnel are of class LA carcinogenic (51), that is *certain carcinogens*, considering their oncogenicity to man is sufficiently evident.

After many judicial pronouncements, the Italian legislator has made a list of all the heavy metals which for shape, type and dimension are the same as what is found in the organisms of the sick military personnel. The Legislator has made a classification of the risk.

It cannot be ignored that on 7-2-2018 the IV Parliamentary Commission for the investigation of depleted uranium unequivocally specified that: *"Repeated judgments of the ordinary and administrative judiciary have consistently affirmed the existence, at the legal level, of a causal link between proven exposure to depleted uranium and the pathologies reported by the military"*.

## **5. Civil liability.**

The liability of the Italian State is consistent with the combined provisions of the Civil Code and the Constitution.

The fact, by commitment and/or omission, that caused the appearance of tumour based disease in many members of the Italian military is in clear contrast both with the principle of *neminem laedere* and the constitutionally guaranteed right to health, and with the duty of the employer to take such measures in the management of the company as, in accordance with the particular nature of the work, experience and technique, necessary to protect the physical integrity and the moral personality of the employees.

The legal obligation, to which the Ministry of Defence, which therefore assumed a position of guarantee and protection vis-à-vis the Italian military sent on an international peace mission in the Balkan territories, was subject, arose from its choice to join, thanks to the availability of the Italian army, a military mission in which third parties carried out an illegal activity under the profile of international law, since it was carried out in open contrast to the generally recognised rules of international law.

In a recent decision, the Civil Court of Rome has in fact confirmed a very solid jurisprudential orientation, ruling that: *"The military were sent to the Balkan areas with equipment that was completely inadequate to avoid*

*contamination by the micro-particles of depleted uranium dispersed in the air and water of the places affected by the peacekeeping missions".*

## **6. Recent positions of the highest Italian judicial bodies - evidentiary value of heavy metal nanoparticles**

The last few months have undoubtedly marked the achievement of a firm and indisputable position by the highest bodies of Italian justice with regard to the harmfulness of depleted uranium and the probative value to be attributed to the discovery of micro and nanoparticles of heavy metals inside the cells of military employed on missions in the territories where DU was used.

In particular, the Council of State, the supreme body of administrative justice, has issued a number of judgments.

In the case of a Carabinieri soldier who fell ill after being exposed to substances harmful to the body, it stated: *"The areas in which the appellant was operating had been the target of massive NATO bombing a few years previously, also using depleted uranium ammunition;*

*- the appellant is not aware of having received personal protective equipment;*

*- the appellant, at the time of the events, was young (33 years old)".*

The Council of State, in judgment no. 7564/2020 has indeed created a *suma* of principles applicable to all cases: *"In particular, in the former Yugoslavia, a bombing campaign was carried out with the use of heavy ammunition, with the consequent presence, among others, of a potential and not improbable chemical/radiological risk by inhalation/human ingestion of very fine particles of heavy metals. The "heavy ammunition, remained suspended in the air after the explosions of targets extracted from depleted uranium bullets".*

The unknown cause is not probative evidence for denying the causal link and it is sufficient for the person concerned to demonstrate the occurrence of the disease in probabilistic-statistical terms, as it is not always possible to establish a direct causal link.

## **7. Serbia**

Two years ago, the Serbian lawyer Aleksic contacted me because in his country there was a significant number of people sick or dead because

of the depleted uranium that has contaminated the territory. A number growing every day.

Thousands of people, military and civilians have been affected since the NATO bombed the territories of the former Yugoslavia with depleted uranium.

That is why my colleague Aleksic, and I have already brought several legal cases before Serbian courts.

These cases are against NATO, guilty of bombing the former Yugoslavia with depleted uranium weapons and against the Serbian state for not informing the population about the risk to their health and for not carrying out and acting on environmental protection-cleansing activities. In the first case, as a defence NATO has invoked immunity from prosecution.

We have contrasted this line of defence because there is no immunity when someone commits war crimes such as what happened in the former Yugoslavia, where non-conventional weapons were used against civilian and military targets and where the crime of "ecocide" was committed.

Irreversible damage was caused to the environment and to the citizens.

In Italy and Serbia, we are also carrying out a comparative spirometric study among healthy and sick people. The results show nanoparticles in the bodies of the sick people, typical of the bombed territories, which are not present in the bodies of the healthy people or which are present in a quantity thousands of times lower.

As a lawyer, the only aim is to guarantee justice to all those who have been harmed.

Today, in Italy there have been more than 290 court judgments at every level and in every type of jurisdiction.

I hope that the experience and the court judgments obtained in Italy can help to achieve justice not only for the dead or sick Italian people but for all the people whose lives have been destroyed by the indiscriminate use of such weapons.

Thank you all and see you soon!

**Agustina Alejandro**  
**(Coordinator of the Youth Commission of the Sao Paulo Forum -**  
**Uruguay)**

Thank you very much Angelo for all your work, and to the comrade for the translation. The truth is that it is very important to know all these consequences of war, not only for the future but also those that have already happened, while the warmongering logic continues to kill us, in so many areas.

We continue with the second panellist, comrade Mario Volpe, General Research Coordinator of the Malvinas Museum, and Coordinator of the Malvinas Commission of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies. Mario, are you there?

**Mario Volpe  
(General Research Coordinator of the Malvinas Museum, and  
Advisor of the Malvinas Commission of the Chamber of Deputies -  
Argentina)**

Yes, here I am. Well, I have been very attentive to all the presentations, and I have learned a lot in this short time. Also listening to Angelo's presentation on the subject of depleted uranium, which, as a participant in the Malvinas war, worries me a lot, because we have a statistic that former Malvinas combatants live 10 years less. There are many tumours and many illnesses that we have, without knowing why. I myself had wounds in the Malvinas war and I have a spinal disease, which appeared 4 years ago, nobody knows why. I don't know if it's this or not, but it's interesting, and I think it's also possible to investigate it, because it's within this time.

I wanted to share a Power Point. Basically, the issue of NATO in Latin America also has cultural components, so I am going to show some issues that have to do with Argentina by presenting this map, this planisphere, which has to do with the whole issue of cultural colonisation that we have had for so many years.

If we take a quick look at that planisphere we have all seen, which was a planisphere where, if you remember, Greenland appears enormous, Africa appears almost the size of Greenland... do you remember? I can't remember the name of the best known planisphere.

You look at this one and you will see that it is very different: because we have learned here in the global south that if we look at the planisphere, Greenland appears enormous, Europe appears enormous, the whole of

the global north appears enormous, and yet when we check the sizes, we will see that Africa has 30 million square kilometres and Greenland has 3, that Latin America has 18 and Europe has 10.

So this global north, that we have always been taught, appeared to be twice as big as the southern world.

However, the global south is 100 million square km, and the global north is 50 million square km. Just a detail to start this talk. Also a location that has always been culturally imposed on us, which is why the north on maps is always what we know as global north, although in space there is no north and south in this sense. If we look at the planisphere and put it upside down, we see that South America and the Caribbean appear as an enormous peninsula that is very closely related, very direct to Antarctica. So much so that Argentina joins Antarctica through the Andes Mountains, entering Antarctica under the name of "Antarandes".

Apart from this, the meridian then is no longer the Greenwich meridian passing through London, but passes through South America. This would be our vision, where we are not on a lost peninsula at the bottom of the map, but we are twice the size of the global north, and it is an interesting detail to start there as well.

Another thing is to look at the issue of South America and Antarctica [map]. Today, Antarctica is where all the major powers are looking. In fact, the issue of the occupation of Latin America, the South Atlantic, the Malvinas, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands, and what they call "British Antarctica" in the case of the British, with the largest military base south of the Equator in the Malvinas, is because, evidently, Latin America has access to Antarctica.

It is not the same to enter Antarctica from another side, as it is to enter through the Antarctic Peninsula, which is certainly much closer, much easier and much more accessible, and that is where the minerals are and where the oil is. The rest is very difficult. Therefore, this whole question of locations, so that we can see where we are located in the world, is interesting. I think it has to do with culture, it has to do with this Southern Command mission, it has to do with NATO.

Also, of course, with **natural resources**. Natural resources that are so many, but that are basically alive, because for a start Latin America is the region that has the most fresh water in the world. Why? Maybe Asia

has more fresh water, but Argentina has the most replenished aquifers and the smallest population. So where is there plenty of water? In Latin America, where there is 70% of the freshwater. And where is most of it? In Antarctica, 70% of the world's fresh water. That's why they're looking at the region.

**Fishing.** What is needed at the moment? Food. Because it is in short supply because of the war, they said there could be a food tragedy. Well, then, what is there? Fishing. I will show you a few seconds of squid fishing [video] and how they are taking the resources of South America. Both the Chinese ships of the 201st mile, but especially the British licensed companies.

And there you will see on Google, the illuminated part [graph], which is the boats fishing for this resource in the South Atlantic. The United Kingdom alone has taken as a global business in the last 30 years (that is to say, the average sale of fish taken from the South Atlantic) is 147,000 million dollars in these 30 years. It is not the profit, but what the global business meant, that is, catching the fish and selling it in supermarkets. The figure of this business, almost 150 billion dollars in these 30 years. You can also see [graph] the volume of boats in these areas of the Atlantic, which look almost like cities.

Another fundamental thing, which is related to the future, is **polymetallic nodules**. Fundamental, as we are going to see, for the new projection of the great powers to say that in the year 2030 to 2040 they want to have all cars electric .. Where are they going to get the lithium from? 60% of lithium is in Latin America. Also, where are they going to get the rest of the minerals that are used for cars? This is what we are going to see now. Electric cars do not just need lithium; they need copper and other minerals that are in the sea.

70% of minerals are in the sea. See the video about the polymetallic nodules, existing on the seabed, capable of providing enough metals for our urban lifestyle without destructive intervention of the ecosystem, which would allow a minimum environmental impact, turning the offshore extraction system into a low pollution mining system. Here is another project, which is "Nautilus". 96% percent of the cobalt, 84% of the nickel, and other large percentages of the other metals we were looking at, are extracted from the seabed in this way.

There are the greatest riches in the Pacific, and also in the Atlantic. This is what they are already doing and extracting these minerals, which are called polymetallic nodules. Using that, and with lithium is the only way to process and make these batteries. Imagine that to make electric cars you would need 1.5 billion batteries. Where are they going to get the resources from? There are not enough surface mining resources to be able to do that.

They also have a monitoring system of probes around South America and around Antarctica, which is called the ARGO system, for seabed, hydrocarbon, fisheries and biodiversity surveys. These are buoys that monitor salinity, temperature, current behaviour, climate and other information. More than 1,000 belong to the UK and only 12 to Argentina.

In relation to US dependence on strategic minerals, for them the strategic minerals that appear in the graph are minerals that do not enter into the needs of industry. They are part of US national security. That is why it says there that the United States "is completely vulnerable" in: arsenic, asbestos, bauxite, lithium, etc.

Another thing that is out there is **Methane Hydrate**. New forms of energy that exist in the South Atlantic and elsewhere as well. But here we have a way to extract it: because of the prices of gas and oil, they are starting to extract Methane Hydrates that are equivalent to double all the fossil fuel reserves on the planet. And this is the area, with the extension by the UN of the continental shelf (and Argentina got it), obviously the British in Malvinas have these resources as well and they don't want to lose anything.

**Patenting** is another of the interests that NATO, the Southern Command and the great powers have. In the Antarctic, they are patenting things that cannot be extracted. So what do they do? They extract, or copy, genetic samples and make, for example, medicines, and they patent them, and of course we pay for these patents. I will tell you that one of the fish in the Antarctic, called the "ice fish", has a coating on its organs, which has been extracted, multiplied, patented and today is sold for the protection of transplant organs. Because it is cold, human transplant organs are covered by this. So patenting, Antarctic biodiversity, is almost the main objective, because this involves the pharmaceutical industry and medicine.

Here is a picture of the militarisation of the South Atlantic, regarding Malvinas base. I went to Malvinas recently, and it took me 20 minutes to get out of this military base. This is not to protect 2,000 people who live in Malvinas. This is without a doubt the biggest base south of the Equator, it is full of hangars, and they have a port... [here I show you a second video of my last trip to Malvinas, 2014]. And here you are looking at the base, huge. Well, this is for those who have not seen the Malvinas base.

I also found these there. They are special radars, working in the ionosphere, and they totally control and can even act on the ionosphere, like a microwave, which, by emitting several antennas at the same time, there is talk that they can even produce climate change. I thought the radar was not there. There was a photo, but I went to see it, and I found it [video of the radar]. This is the radar we were looking at, in Malvinas, the "Super Darn". And this is the sweep it makes over Antarctica [graphic], exactly what for us would be Argentine Antarctica, or sometimes South American Antarctica, as we believe it should be called.

This is the area of control of the Southern Command, the little map of the Yankees, so you can see the picture. The red box is all the Southern Command control area. The general of the Southern Command came recently to talk with the Argentine government: according to theme, the problem is that they want to get rid of the Chinese, they want to fight the Chinese who are in mile 201, which would be international waters, and they even sent a coastguard to control fishing in the South Atlantic.

What does an US ship in the South Atlantic have to do with it? It has to do, because these are "our" resources, in inverted commas. The Amazon, the whole of the Argentine sea, everything. So they come to control that, and they come to ask to stop China entering in the area. And that Russia should not enter either. That is what the general of the Southern Command told the Argentine president, and she probably also met with Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

About the military bases on the continent. As the Colombian comrade said today, there are many military bases [list of bases by country, power point], perhaps some need to be updated, but they are the military bases in the continent.

And here, what do we have? What did they come here to do? They came to try to make progress in Brazil and Colombia, as extra-NATO allies. Argentina has been a NATO ally since 1997. We protest, and we say "why is there a US submarine or the US fourth fleet in the South Atlantic from 2008 onwards"? If we are NATO allies, why don't we get out of it? Because there is no government that can support leaving that alliance. So we are allies of NATO, and Argentina was the first, in 1997, and we have not left. Now Colombia is joining, if Brazil joins, it is a step forward as they did in Ukraine, in a different way. We are moving forward as allies. And if Colombia is participating now, Argentina participated in the Gulf War. So we have three NATO allies in Latin America.

Meanwhile, the British keep these islands, these colonies, even in the 21st century. This is colonisation, and look at one detail [Map of the Atlantic]. Falkland, what are our Malvinas, South Georgia, Tristan de Cunha, St. Helena, Ascension and the Caribbean. This is a backbone of military bases controlling the natural resources of Latin America and Africa (African coastal countries). So militarisation continues. The Ascension Island Command is now in Malvinas, since a few years ago, also to reinforce this. The British now have created the "Blue Belt" [Map-graphic].

What do they declare? How do they annul us? By declaring supposed flora and fauna protection zones in the overseas territories. For example, next to South Georgia: they declared 1 million kilometres around South Georgia where you can't fish, you can't do anything, just like in Antarctica, just like in Tristan de Cunha, in St. Helena. They create these huge areas of no fishing, of "conservation", so that they can then have these resources. So, this is another way they have, and they say "when a poor country cannot contribute to this system, the NGOs must enter this system". These include Green Peace and others.

That is why Antarctica is so important. Because, unlike the Arctic, Antarctica is a continent. And to what we are seeing today, which I think is extremely important, I will add a couple more pieces of information in conclusion. From a strategic point of view, in that whole Antarctica sector, if you install satellite bases, you can read satellite passages much faster, you can read satellite information from all over the world.

A satellite base in Antarctica makes satellite readings much faster than in other bases.

Another thing that happens is that here, in Latin America, over the sea, up to latitude 50, there is a natural issue called the "South Atlantic Anomaly". South Atlantic Anomaly means that those belts, channels, which cover us from radiation, are much closer in this sector. They are very low. So when a satellite passes through there, an area full of radiation, they even have to turn it off.

That is why the Malvinas/Magallanes corridor (which is also going to be important for anything that might happen in Panama), is essential so that the satellites passing through here do not have any interference. That is why the port of Malvinas is being expanded, so that larger ships can enter, something they are doing now; they have expanded the Rothera base in Antarctica, they are extending the runways so that large aircraft can land. They are discussing the "silk route", considering that in this part [map, middle of South America, height of the Equator], the route must not enter in Latin America.

To resume, we have all these risks:

- Militarisation of the South Atlantic
- Militarisation of Cyberspace
- Nuclear deterrence
- Information Management
- Biotechnological Experiments
- Exploitation of the seabed and strategic natural assets
- And what we have seen: Antarctica.

So, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil are NATO avant-garde in this region, as extra-NATO allies. Together with the fourth fleet, and the Malvinas base.

I stop here. Thank you very much.

**Agustina Alejandro**  
**(Coordinator of the Youth Commission of the Sao Paulo Forum -**  
**Uruguay)**

Thank you very much Mario. We have been able to perceive, throughout this panel, the logics that have operated and still operate in our region: the warmongering logic, as Angelo told us, about depleted uranium bullets, which are eternal bullets, which not only kill when they hit their victims, but continue to kill even when they missed the shot. They even continue to kill those who fired that same shot.

The imperialist and capitalist logic, and its extractivist model, which Mario was telling us about, in our continent, which is one of the richest in the world in natural resources and yet the most indebted in the developing world. Because, as commander Hugo Chávez said, they have plundered us all our lives and they want to continue plundering us. The consequences of this model have undermined life in every sense and the quality of our planet, the psyche of Humanity. The consequences of this model and its gendarmes are incalculable, psychologically and materially.

To close, I would like to thank our panellists and remember how necessary these instances are to build critical thinking, unity of action and counter-hegemonic construction, as conceptualised by Gramsci, who we have already mentioned a lot today, haven't we?  
Maite, you have the floor.

## Conclusions

**Maite Mola**

**(First Vice-President European Left – Resp. Int. Rel.)**

With your permission Agustina, I am going to make the conclusions of this 7th seminar, as the international responsible of the Party of the European Left and as vice president. First I would like to tell you that it has been extraordinary, I found it wonderful. We have to talk Monica, Marco, to see how we can prepare something important to be able to spread it.

Of course, my conclusions are going to be very different, because conclusions have to be written down and we are going to distribute it. Although honestly the Power Point that the comrade has just presented,

without his explanation is going to be much colder, but it is still a very interesting explanation. We cannot allow this seminar to remain here. We know that there are many people watching it, not only in the zoom space, but also on Facebook and other platforms.

I would like to mention, if I may, the so-called "Los Angeles Summit" and explicitly criticise such aggression on the part of Biden, on the part of the United States, against Latin America and the Caribbean, preventing three very important countries, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, from participating. I do believe that in today's conclusions we must include this total and absolute criticism of the Monroe Doctrine and what the United States is doing or trying to do.

I also tell you that I sincerely hope that the next seminar will be in person, because we need to see each other, to hug each other, because it has been too long since that has happened. But, well, we have the possibility at the Sao Paulo Forum, when it will take place in August, and we can meet and start planning the next work.

I would like to congratulate all the panellists, all extraordinary ones. I would like to congratulate Marco and Agustina, who have been excellent in the moderation and introduction.

I would like to thank Monica Valente, without whom the relationship between the Party of the European Left and the Sao Paulo Forum would undoubtedly be much more complicated. Monica, thank you for your help, especially in a fundamental moment in Brazil, where the dedication of all progressive and left-wing Brazilians has to be to achieve, as the comrades have explained, the ousting of Bolsonaro, for many reasons, and above all so that Lula wins and the country can turn around.

I believe that, from the things we have heard, which have been repeated by various colleagues, for example the first colleague who spoke from Sweden, it is true that the war has once again caused a major division on the left. Many things have been said here, but I do believe that we need to reflect on this, to see how we can prevent them from doing it once again. We have to talk. Valter's speech has been masterful. I do believe that he gave us some important ideas about how conflicts divide us and that should not divide us. Nobody has any doubt that what NATO has been trying to do with Russia is obvious. What happens is that then

there is the war, but how can we reconcile the different positions without ignoring causes and effects. Of course it is really complicated, but I found everything that has been said very interesting.

The issue of the Nordic countries, more than anything else, is also closely linked to the advance of the extreme right-wing and to the advance, which has also been mentioned, of continuing to defend bilateralism over multilateralism. I think that many issues have already been put on the table here, and we could hold 14 seminars on shared visions between now and September, but we have to see how we can work on them.

An important issue has also been raised by Claudia and others: the question of military spending. And what that means. Because in my country, in the Spanish State, the health issue, after the pandemic, is a real disaster, the public health issue. So they spend money on weapons while all public services are exploding at international level. I think it is a fundamental issue, and everything that has been said about the cold war, and also very interesting, I think it has been Gloria, but nevertheless there has been a significant increase in protests in some countries, such as Colombia, for example, which was a country that seemed to be outside this type of thing.

I believe that all this calls for very important reflection. I think that the text sent by the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister is extremely interesting, and we are indeed going to make an effort, as Forum and EL, to disseminate this text, which we find very interesting. In addition, of course, the whole question of militarisation with capitalism, with imperialism, and with the future of Humanity.

And then, this question of the competition between the United States and China on the part of the United States, at the heart of the matter, is very important. The European Union is not going to be an appendix of the United States, it is already an appendix of the United States. At the European level, we are very clear about this.

I will end by saying that yes, indeed, we do not have a summit against NATO in Madrid, but we have a summit for peace in Madrid. I

think it is quite important to preserve this spirit, because a peaceful solution to all the problems that exist is really a strong left-wing project. I would like to add, to what has been said, that of course the dismantling of NATO has to be almost the key words that we have in Madrid and everywhere. But one very important thing is the whole issue of defence that Mr Volpe and Gloria have mentioned, the issue of military bases. I was in Guantánamo a month ago. The fact is that Guantánamo is not only a military base, but also, like the Falkland and so on, a country has been occupied. Therefore, we have to do two things. One, as a Forum, as EL and others, is to call for the dismantling of all NATO and US military bases. And, in the case of Cuba, for the return of Cuban territory. This must be fundamental.

I hope that next 19 June will be a key date in Latin America, because, trusting that the "Historic Pact" will win, what is guaranteed is that Colombia is no longer the same Colombia as it was a few years ago, and we are absolutely happy.

The issue of depleted uranium, in the intervention made by Mr Angelo, is complex. I am a physicist, my dear Angelo, so I think it is very interesting, but I think we also need to have it written down, because there have been more political speeches, and this one, which has a scientific and a political side, we need to have it written down. Thank you very much for your intervention. And we will see Marco and Monica, how we deal with all this.

Finally, I would like to say that I hope that some of us will be able to see each other at the peace summit in Madrid. It would be very important, also for the Sao Paulo Forum, to be represented at this summit, and of course we will see each other later on the different fronts. And finally, I would like to thank Marco, Jorge Drkos, and the people who have prepared this seminar, because it has been a real luxury and a pleasure to have had you. For my part, nothing more, and thank you very much. Agustina, thank you for giving me the floor.

**Marco Consolo**

**(Coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean WG of the European Left)**

Well, that concludes the seminar. I would like to thank the panellist, and everyone from the different continents for their presence. I would like to say that, as always, between the EL and the Sao Paulo Forum, we are going to publish the materials and the video of this seminar, both on the Forum's website and on the EL's website. We only ask for a few days to be able to transcribe and translate this very rich seminar.

So, thank you all, and until next time, of course. A big hug to all the speakers and all the listeners who are here today.

Thank you very much.