

Report: NATO Protest Actions in Warsaw - “The seize of the protest actions was positively surprising”

Thursday 21 July 2016, by [BRAUN Reiner](#), [KARCH Kristine](#), [WIRL Lucas](#) (Date first published: 14 July 2016).

Six organizations of the Polish peace and social movements together with the international Network Not o War – No to NATO conducted the alternative summit “No to War – No to Militarism – Yes to Refugees” and the demonstration “Money for the Hungry not for Tanks” in Warsaw from July 8th to 10th. Aim of the protests actions was the continuous delegitimation of the largest military organization of the world which is permanently and worldwide engaged in wars. The international network No to War – No to NATO has been conducting actions of protest and discussions around each NATO Summit since 2009.

The seize of the protest actions was positively surprising after several months of preparation and learning of the specific and difficult situation of the Polish people and social movements particularly of those being in opposition to NATO. More than 150 people from 18 countries – among others from Russia, GB, Belgium and Spain – discussed about actual wars and conflicts, the constitution of peace, social justice and common security in Europe at the counter summit. The demonstration was conducted with more than 300 participants. Considering the Polish repressions against “Putin understanders” and people in opposition to NATO and militarization, the demonstration was surely a success. The police’s tension expressed itself among others in the hindrance of a group of anarchists “armed” with baguettes to participate in the demonstration. Only after 90 minutes the demonstration was able to move towards its destination to the Vistula River.

The participants were united in their demand of the dissolution of NATO. The participants were concerned about the actual dangers of increasing militarism and the increasing militarization of Eastern Europe, particularly because of the permanently rotating troops, the aggressive maneuvers and NATO’s so called missile defense shield. Many participants reflected that a scenario of a “great war in Europe” is not unthinkable anymore. The participants agreed that the peace movement faces it greatest challenges in years. The NATO infused confrontation with Russia, the global projects of armament like the so called missile defense shield and the modernization of nuclear weapons must be terminated in order to give a process of cooperation in Europe a chance. The deployments of NATO-military structures to the western boarder of Russia as well as Russia’s reaction bear the danger of a consciously triggered war or a war by accident. The alternative is a common and cooperative system of security which focusses on the needs of the people. The final plenary of the counter summit demanded the strengthening of OSCE and a new edition of the Helsinki Process as well as a strengthening and democratization of the UN system. A peaceful development is only possible via cooperation of peoples.

The demonstration against NATO happened under the slogan “Money for the hungry not for tanks – No to War and NATO Bases – Moscow Has Already Been, We Do Not Want Washington – Yes to Refugees and international solidarity”. More than 300 protesters demonstrated colorfully and peacefully, starting at Charles de Gaulle Square, passing the US embassy and ending at the shores of Vistula River in sight of the national stadium, the location of the NATO Summit. Ann Wright, pensioned Cornel of the US Army, called on the US government to disarm and to actively engage in

peace with Russia. The rally in front of the US embassy was a highlight of the protests.

On Sunday the participants of the alternative summit discussed about networking and future actions of the peace movement. The discussions centered around international networking and exchange. The weekend of protests was a positive example of both. In the eye of the expansion of NATO military bases to the East exchange between people from Central and Eastern Europe is particularly important. The organizers decided to continue their work in a Polish-German peace network. One idea are common actions of protest at the bases of the so called missile defense shield. A new military base for "Aegis Ashore" is being built in Redzikowo.

Some media institutions stated after the summit that NATO is flexing its muscles. The inner city of Warsaw offered insights in what this means: more than 10,000 police men and security forces turned the city center into a high security area. Blocked main roads lamed the city for hours. The citizens who could afford it spend the weekend elsewhere. At times the city seemed to be in a state of emergency, seemed to be dead. The close connection with the military-industrial complex could be viewed opposite to the Cultural Palace: the weapons manufactor Raytheon advertised largely for their "Layered Missile Defense - Partnership for Protection".

NATO announced the next location for their summit. Brussels was perceived positively by the participants. In Belgium and Brussels well connected grassroots organizations and a strong peace movement exists. Larger protests seem possible, our preparations have already begun.

Videos, Pictures, press articles can be viewed on www.no-to-nato.org.

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P.S.

* July 18, 2016:

<http://www.no-to-nato.org/2016/07/report-nato-protest-actions-in-warsaw/>