

For immediate release (Versione italiana: http://www.boylan.it/comunicato_no-nato.doc)

"NO to NATO" SIT-IN THIS SATURDAY (5-8 pm) IN ROME
outside the Colosseum Metro station, piazza del Colosseo
in solidarity with Sunday's Occupy protest at the NATO summit in Chicago

Click for a picture of the "NATO Empire" maps to be hung up
(not far from the famous Roman Empire wall maps):

http://www.boylan.it/nato_empire_maps.jpg

(Click on each picture to enlarge it.)

The upcoming events:

-- There will be a G8/NATO summit in the U.S. this weekend, at Camp David and then in Chicago. The NATO event will celebrate the transformation of NATO from a North Atlantic to a global military organization, set on maintaining security in Afghanistan even after 2014, on installing a missile shield in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and on resolving the ongoing conflicts in Syria and in Africa.

-- This Sunday, May 20th, the Occupy movement will hold a march and rally in downtown Chicago to protest the globalization of NATO, call for an end to military intervention and occupation worldwide, and demand a reduction in military spending and an increase in social welfare programs:

<http://www.chicagospring.org>

<http://natoprotest.org>

<http://www.tinyurl.com/no-nato-2>

-- During the preceding days, solidarity marches and sit-ins will be held worldwide, for example:

in London on May 19th to say No to NATO: <http://tinyurl.com/no-nato-1>

in Frankfurt from May 16 to 19 to protest the Central European Bank, the G8 and NATO:
<http://blockupy-frankfurt.org>

-- This Saturday (May 19) in Rome, a solidarity "No to NATO" sit-in will be held from 5 to 8 pm outside the Colosseum Metrò station (piazza del Colosseo), not far from the giant marble wall maps depicting the expansion of the Roman Empire which were erected in 1934 by order of Mussolini. Outside the Colosseum station will be hung giant pasteboard maps depicting the expansion of NATO over the years --

http://www.boylan.it/nato_empire_maps.jpg -- from a purely defensive North Atlantic pact to a "global military power serving the imperialistic agenda of the 1%", in the words of the organizers of the sit-in, U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice - Rome and the Italian NoWAR Network in Rome. Happenings will be organized to attract passers-by to the wall maps. A copy of the flyers to be distributed can be seen here: <http://www.boylan.it/no-to-nato-flyer.jpg>

(more) -->

Background material:

Already billed by some commentators as a "twenty-first century Yalta", this week's G8/NATO summit will take place in two phases. First the G8 encounter at Camp David, a Presidential resort outside of Washington in a militarized mountain area inaccessible to the public. (The summit was originally planned for Chicago, along with the NATO meeting, but then moved two months ago "in order mark the separateness of the two events", according to a White House statement; many observers, however, feel the real reason was to avoid the mounting Occupy protest planned for Chicago.) Then, on May 20 and 21, the NATO summit will take place as scheduled in Chicago. It was not feasible logistically to hold both events at Camp David but Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has assured the White House that his new anti-riot powers will enable him to prevent any disruption of the NATO summit.

In the words of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking at the Munich Security Conference last February 4th, NATO needs to move from a purely North Atlantic perspective to a global one, in order to be "able to work with partners such as Sweden, Japan, Australia, members of the Arab League and many others -- and this will be a focus of our efforts in Chicago -- to ensure that NATO remains the hub of a global security network." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqF99QVJqLk>

The division, among participating countries, of "spheres of influence" in the world may very well be the bait used to attract new blood into the NATO alliance, and to strengthen current ties (France has already made a bid for West Africa). This obviously can occur only to the detriment of the countries nicknamed BRICS, China in particular but perhaps also Russia. Indeed two weeks ago the new Russian President, Vladimir Putin, called off his announced participation at the NATO summit and will send instead his Prime Minister, Dmitry Medvedev.

At present NATO includes -- counting not only its members but also its partners, whether for "contact", "dialog" or "cooperation" -- almost more non European nations than ones inside Europe. Indeed, even without the further expansion that Clinton will be calling for at Chicago, it may already be said that the sun never sets on the NATO empire.

The aim of the OccupyChicago protest, shared by those participating in solidarity demonstrations such as the sit-in in Rome on Saturday, is to say stop to this unbridled expansionism. In the words of a spokesperson for "U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice - Rome": "We are obviously all for contact, dialog and cooperation among nations -- but through cultural and economic exchanges, not through planning and undertaking new wars of conquest, such as NATO just conducted in Libya. In a word: yes to culture, yes to commerce, but no to NATO."

U.S. Citizens for Peace & Justice - Rome

www.peaceandjustice.it

Contact (in English or Italian): Anna Farkas, cell: 320-6359555

(in English, Italian or French): Patrick Boylan, cell: 328-0695861

Rete NoWar - Roma

www.peacelink.it

Contact (in Italian or Spanish): Stefania Russo, cell: 320 2186368