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## **Sweden joining NATO will make the world more dangerous.**

***Councillor Madeleine Johansson writes about the right wing push that drove Sweden into NATO***

It has just been confirmed at the NATO summit that Sweden is joining NATO. Sweden's membership had until now been blocked by Turkiye.

In return for NATO membership the Swedish government has made a number of disgraceful concessions to Turkiye.

Firstly, Sweden has already changed laws to actively persecute the PKK, the Kurdish Workers Party, as a terrorist organisation. On the 6th July, only a week ago, a man in Sweden was convicted of providing finances to the PKK. This is the first time that a Swedish Court has classed the PKK as a terrorist organisation.

The country has also agreed not to provide any support to other Kurdish organisations such as the YPG and the PYD (the political wing of the PKK). The YPG has been one of the main military organisations fighting against Islamic State (IS) in Syria. I'm sure you remember the images of Kurdish female fighters in their battle against IS in Rojava. Sweden has sold the Kurds down the river in exchange for NATO membership.

Secondly, Sweden has agreed to lift its embargo on arms exports to Turkiye. Swedish legislation has prohibited arms exports to any country involved in active warfare or human rights abuses. This legislation has been circumvented on many occasions, for example when Sweden has exported arms to Saudi Arabia despite its horrific war in Yemen. Now Swedish arms manufacturers will be able to expand their sales to Turkiye.

So how is it that a country that stayed neutral during both World Wars has now joined the war mongers in NATO?

Certain sections of the right wing have been wanting Sweden to align with NATO for a long time. There is a significant arms industry in Sweden, with 331 companies involved in arms manufacturing. The big ones are SAAB, BAE Systems Bofors and Nammo. 69 of the companies export arms abroad and they collectively employ about 11,000 people. The owners of SAAB, the Wallenberg family, are some of the most powerful people in Sweden.

In 2022 the Russian attack on Ukraine provided an unprecedented opportunity for the right to push the pro-NATO agenda. The fear of Russia was manipulated into a general support for Ukraine, but also for joining NATO.

Disgracefully, the Social Democrats changed their position on neutrality and took the first steps to joining NATO.

Swedish membership of NATO will not make the world safer, nor will it make Swedish people safer. All it will do is increase profits for the arms industry while people across the world suffer under the jack boots of Western Imperialism.

Here in Ireland, right wing politicians like Leo Varadkar are trying to change the long-standing and strong support for Irish neutrality. They organised a sham consultative forum which was stacked up with pro-NATO contributors. But their efforts haven't worked, working-class people can see through the lies and attempts to undermine Irish neutrality.

For socialists the task is to continue to expose the hypocrisy and war mongering of people like Varadkar and successive Irish governments that have allowed the use of Shannon airport by the US military in their wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Socialists must oppose all attempts to erode Irish neutrality.

**The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.**

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