

NATO Summit: Chicago Trains 13,000 Police For Mass Arrests

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, July 15, 2011

Chicago Sun-Times 15 July 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Garry McCarthy to NATO, G-8 protesters: Police will be ready

By Frank Main

Chicago Sun-Times

-Joe Iosbaker, spokesman for the United National Antiwar Committee, said Thursday that he was scouting marching routes to McCormick Place, where he said the city might host the summits...“People are saying this will be larger than our RNC protest, which drew 30,000 people,” Iosbaker said, referring to the 2008 Republican National Convention held in St. Paul, Minn...About 50 groups have pledged their support for the demonstrations against NATO and will hold a planning meeting in Chicago on Aug. 28, Iosbaker said.

Battle lines between protesters and the police are already being drawn for the NATO and G-8 summits that Chicago will host next spring.

On Thursday, an anti-war organizer said he was scouting potential staging areas for crowds of protesters expected outside the summits in May.

Meanwhile, police Supt. Garry McCarthy said he’s been planning for three weeks. And he put a deputy superintendent, Debra Kirby, in charge of preparing the Chicago Police Department’s response.

“We have to train for mass arrests,” McCarthy said. “We have to train 13,000 police officers in arrest procedures and containment procedures. At the same time, we will not stop patrolling the city.”

McCarthy said he will send representatives to Pittsburgh and Seattle to learn how those cities dealt with massive protests. In Seattle, about 35,000 people protested a World Trade Organization meeting in 1999...There were violent clashes between protesters and police in Pittsburgh during a G-20 summit in 2009.

McCarthy said he is working with the U.S. Secret Service, State Department and other federal agencies to plan for the protection of the foreign dignitaries who will attend the summits here.

On June 22, President Barack Obama announced the high-level meetings were coming to Chicago — after Obama was lobbied by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, his former chief of staff.

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The summits will be held from May 15-22. Chicago is the first U.S. city other than Washington to host a NATO meeting. The Group of Eight industrialized nations will meet here at the same time.

Joe Iosbaker, spokesman for the United National Antiwar Committee, said Thursday that he was scouting marching routes to McCormick Place, where he said the city might host the summits.

Iosbaker said he already sought permits for protesters to gather downtown at Daley Plaza and the federal plaza. He said he also may seek a permit for a staging area in a lakefront park.

"People are saying this will be larger than our RNC protest, which drew 30,000 people," Iosbaker said, referring to the 2008 Republican National Convention held in St. Paul, Minn.

His group is planning for protests on May 15 and May 19, but he said he expects other coalitions will stage separate actions, too.

"I think there will be some synergy as the movement against corporate globalization comes together with the anti-war movement," Iosbaker said. "Our slogan is 'jobs, healthcare, education, housing — not war.' "

Iosbaker said he is hoping for a peaceful demonstration that will result in no arrests.

"We want our marches and rallies to be things that people can bring their children to," he said. "We want everybody who wants to say something to these heads of state to be heard."

About 50 groups have pledged their support for the demonstrations against NATO and will hold a planning meeting in Chicago on Aug. 28, Iosbaker said.

"We intend on having our rights respected — our rights to assemble, to speak and to march," he said.

Last year, Iosbaker's Logan Square home was searched by FBI agents in an "investigation into activities concerning the material support of terrorism." No charges were filed against Iosbaker, who said the raid was an effort to stifle his war opposition.

Stop NATO e-mail list home page with archives and search engine:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/messages>

Stop NATO website and articles:

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com>

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