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Johannes Stern
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Germany increases military spending for war against Russia

Germany is playing an ever greater role in NATO's aggressive buildup against Russia, increasingly threatening a third world war.

Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht (Social Democrats, SPD) yesterday called for a rapid and massive increase in defense spending to prepare the German armed forces for a possible war against Russia. "The threatening situation on the borders of Ukraine has once again shown us very clearly how important an effective deterrent is unfortunately again today," she explained to *Der Spiegel*. From this, Germany's governing coalition must draw conclusions "for the financing of the German army."



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German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht (SPD) with her U.S. counterpart Lloyd J. Austin III at the NATO defense ministers meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Feb. 16, 2022 (Stephanie Lecocq, Pool Photo via AP)

Lambrecht explained that national and alliance defense within NATO—a code word for the preparation for war against Russia—is one of the core tasks of the German armed forces. “They have to be equipped in the best possible way for this, and that also means that the defense budget must continue to increase,” she said.

The spending figures being discussed behind the scenes are gigantic. According to a detailed paper reported on by *Der Spiegel*, planners for the armed forces have calculated that the military will need an additional €37.6 billion in the years up to 2026. This extra spending will be needed “to fulfill commitments already made to NATO and to be able to implement urgently needed modernization steps, such as the purchase of a new fleet of fighter jets.”

In a speech at the Munich Security Conference, which was all about the war offensive against Russia, Lambrecht repeated her demand. “We have to pay for the security of tomorrow today. And I mean that literally: In order to give ourselves the necessary room for maneuver to modernize our armed forces, we have to be in good financial shape. In other words, we must continue to increase defense spending and do so sustainably,” she commented.

Without mincing words, she declared that the ruling class is once again preparing for full-scale wars. “The conflicts of the future will no longer only be fought on land, at sea and in the air, but also in cyberspace and in space,” she said. “We will always be dealing with new weapon systems: just a few years ago, steerable hypersonic missiles were a thing of the future. Today they are reality.”

Lambrecht identified the nuclear powers, Russia and China, as opponents. Moscow has “developed an exoskeleton that makes soldiers more mobile, more efficient and more resilient,” and in China “bionic research has military priority.” She concluded, “We recognize that we must make our society more resilient to attacks of any kind; that we have to make our armed forces fit for new forms of conflict, for the areas of conflict and the weapons of the future.”

In fact, “the conflicts of the future” have long since begun. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union 30 years ago, the imperialist powers have been at war almost continuously in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. With regard to Russia, they are pursuing the goal of subjugating the resource-rich and geostrategically central country, also as a prerequisite for a war against China.

In the past few weeks and days, the conflict has continued to escalate. The United States and NATO are working systematically to launch a war against Moscow under the fabricated pretext of an alleged Russian invasion of Ukraine.



German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) speaks at the Munich Security Conference on Feb. 18, 2022 (Ina Fassbender/Pool via AP)

“Today, we have to say this very clearly, a new war is threatening in the middle of our Europe,” said German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in her speech at the Munich Security Conference. Russia is making “an absolutely unacceptable threat with its troop deployment against Ukraine, but also against all of us and our peace architecture in Europe.”

Who does the Green foreign minister, who appeared in Munich together with her US counterpart Antony Blinken, think she is kidding? In the Ukraine conflict, it is not Russia that is the aggressor but NATO. In early 2014, Washington and Berlin, in close cooperation with fascist forces, organized a coup against the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich. Ever since, they have been systematically moving troops to Eastern Europe.

At their meeting in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday, the NATO defense ministers decided to further strengthen their presence in Eastern Europe. As part of the so-called “Enhanced Forward Presence,” the military alliance wants to station “battle groups” in Bulgaria and Romania, and possibly also in Hungary and Slovakia in the future. The “battle groups” in the Baltic states and Poland, which have existed since 2017, are currently being strengthened.

Germany is playing a central role in the war buildup against Russia. On Thursday, the German army reported that “the first large marching group of reinforcement forces” had reached the German-led NATO battle group in Lithuania. On the same day, three Eurofighters from the Tactical Air Force Squadron 74 arrived at the Romanian air base Mihail Kogalniceanu to take part in NATO’s so-called air policing.

On Friday evening, Germany, together with other NATO allies, increased the operational readiness of the NATO intervention force. “At the request of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Tod Wolters, and in close coordination with the Allies, the federal government will increase the responsiveness of the German army’s forces registered in the NATO Response Force,” said a statement from the Ministry of Defense.

In concrete terms, this means that the readiness to relocate almost 14,000 soldiers who were deployed to Germany as part of the NATO Response Force is reduced to the minimum of 30 days. According to the Defense Ministry, “further preparatory measures to increase operational readiness and improve NATO’s responsiveness” could follow.

The mobilization is being accompanied by a deafening propaganda campaign in the media, whose lead opinion makers are foaming at the mouth with the demand for war and claiming the government is still responding too timidly. It is “characteristic of the German debate that it is conducted almost exclusively in moral categories, but not based on the question of what helps to assert German interests,” complains Stefan Kornelius, head of the politics desk of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In other words, crimes must be committed once again to secure resources and geostrategic influence. This is the mindset of the ruling class, which has already taken over 120,000 lives in the pandemic.

The aggressive behavior of the German ruling elite confirms the warnings of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP). When then Foreign Minister and current Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) announced at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 that Germany was “too big to only comment on world politics from the sidelines” and had to “engage in foreign and security policy earlier, more decisively and more substantively,” and shortly thereafter supported the coup in Ukraine, we wrote:

History is returning with a vengeance. Almost 70 years after the crimes of the Nazis and its defeat in World War II, the German ruling class is once again adopting the imperialist great power politics of the Kaiser’s Empire and Hitler. The speed of the escalation of the war propaganda against Russia recalls the eve of World War I and World War II. In Ukraine, the German government is cooperating with the fascists of Svoboda and the Right Sector, which stand in the tradition of Nazi collaborators in the Second World War. It is using the country that was occupied by Germany in both world wars as a staging ground against Russia.

Eight years later, the imperialist powers are implementing the program of their fascist collaborators in Ukraine. Oleh Tyahnybok, a member of Ukraine’s parliament and leader of the neo-Nazi Svoboda party, said earlier this month that Russia would have to be “dismembered” and divided into “20 nation-states” to bring Crimea back to Ukraine. Tyahnybok was already one of Steinmeier’s closest allies in 2014.

The Putin regime has no progressive response to the aggression that increasingly follows the lines of the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union by the Nazi Wehrmacht. It represents the interests of a corrupt oligarchy, which has amassed enormous fortunes since the Stalinist restoration of capitalism, and also, with its reactionary nationalism and militarism, it is further increasing the danger of war.

The only way to prevent a relapse into world war and barbarism is through the mobilization of the working class on the basis of an international socialist program.

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