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Germany supplies tanks to Ukraine and prepares for war against Russia

According to media reports, the German government is planning further arms deliveries to Ukraine. A report in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* states that armaments worth some €300 million could “be delivered to Ukraine in the short term.” Unlike previous deliveries, the latest shipment would not consist of military equipment from German army stockpiles, but include weapons provided directly by German industry.



Finnish BMP-1 from Soviet production [Credit: Balcer~commonswiki, CC BY-SA 3.0, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>]

The planned shipments are massive. According to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the government’s list of weapons includes “about 200 products.” These included 2,650 Matador-type anti-tank weapons and 18 reconnaissance drones, “which could be delivered

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immediately.” Other items included mortars, machine guns, 3,000 night vision devices, several thousand protective vests and helmets, eight ground monitoring radar devices, airspace monitoring systems and “unprotected and protected vehicles, from touring coaches to armoured off-road vehicles.”

Apparently, Social Democrat Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht has already approved the arms deliveries. Information from “sources around the Ministry of Defence” say that Lambrecht “has no objections” to “the purchase of military equipment for Ukraine according to the list,” writes the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Yesterday, the *Welt am Sonntag* newspaper reported that the German government is now even supplying tanks to Ukraine. This includes 58 gunner tanks which originally came from the stockpiles of the National People’s Army of the former East Germany and are now in Czech possession. The infantry tanks of the type “PbV-501” (also known as BMP-1) are equipped with cannons and machine guns.

After initial restraint, Germany is thus increasingly at the forefront of military support for Ukraine in the war against Russia. According to Ukrainian data, over the past few weeks, 500 anti-tank weapons, 1,000 rounds of ammunition, 500 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and 2,000 Strela missiles have been delivered to Kiev. The heavy weapons of war demanded by Kiev are now following.

At the same time, Germany is systematically expanding its military presence in Eastern Europe. In recent weeks, 350 additional German soldiers were transferred to Lithuania with heavy military equipment to strengthen the NATO battlegroup led by the German army. In addition, the Air Force sent six Eurofighter fighter jets to Romania and 700 soldiers, as well as the anti-aircraft missile system Patriot to Slovakia, where Germany took over the leadership of another battlegroup.

The transfer of troops and the delivery of weapons, which to a large extent go to far-right forces in the Ukrainian army and the so-called territorial defence of the country, are exacerbating the war in Ukraine. These are in effect indirect acts of war against Russia, which are constantly increasing the risk of a direct military conflict with the nuclear power.

In her speech to the federal parliament (Bundestag) on the war budget last week, Lambrecht warned against Russian attacks on arms deliveries. She urged everyone “to refrain from public discussions about when what is delivered and where. Otherwise, those who carry out these deliveries will become targets.” It should not be allowed “that these transports may also become targets of Russian attacks.”

Despite the deafening propaganda in the political establishment and the media, it is becoming increasingly clear that Ukraine is a proxy war between NATO and Russia. With the military alliance’s systematic advance to the Russian border, the imperialist powers literally incited the Kremlin’s reactionary attack on Ukraine. Berlin in particular now sees war as an opportunity to implement long-cherished plans for rearmament and militarisation.

“With the ‘new epoch’ it is now finally possible for us to equip the German army with the means we need to defend the state and the alliance,” Lambrecht enthused in an interview with Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland. “The focus is on equipping the soldiers.” The “new epoch”—a propaganda term for the meticulously planned and prepared return of German militarism—“can also be felt by taking the German army to where it belongs: in the midst of society.”

Lambrecht gave an insight into the far-reaching war and great power plans of the ruling class. In the case of the EU, “there is a plan for a Rapid Reaction Force and the expectation that Germany will take part,” she said. That is why she had “offered that we would provide the core of this force from 2025—with 1,500 soldiers.” It will also involve “permanently strengthening the NATO eastern flank and not just securing it at the moment.”

Central to the implementation of the plans was the swift adoption of the “German Army Special Fund” in parliament. Last week, the defence minister had already spoken to the inspector general of the German Armed Forces, Eberhard Zorn, and Chancellor Olaf Scholz about the use of the planned €100 billion. It is particularly important to her to “procure equipment very quickly that arrives directly to the soldiers.” And then, of course, “there are the many important major projects such as the successor to the Tornado (fighter jet) or the armed drones.”

The decision to buy dozens of nuclear weapons-capable F-35 stealth bombers was followed last weekend by the plan to build a national missile defence shield. Further items will now be announced. “According to informed sources,” the German army could receive another 350 “Puma” and “thus double the number of its gun tanks,” writes the *Handelsblatt*. In addition, “further boxer-type wheel armour and logistics vehicles are likely to be purchased.” The report continued, “it is considered certain that the Federal Navy will receive five more K130 corvettes and one to two additional submarines.”

This is just the beginning. Four weeks after Scholz announced the largest German rearmament programme since Hitler, it has already been declared that the previous plans are not sufficient. “The magnitude of the €100 billion special fund is quickly relativised if you look at the need for ammunition alone,” comments *Handelsblatt*. In order to achieve the NATO target of “30 days of combat capability,” the government would have to “spend at least 20 billion on cartridges, grenades and rockets alone.”

The German armaments industry is rubbing its bloody hands and, in close cooperation with the government, preparing to produce equipment for the war machine. According to *Handelsblatt*, the Ministry of Defence invited the managers of the largest German armaments companies to an “emergency meeting.” The representatives of the ministry had stressed that “the existing military equipment should be upgraded and new material should be purchased as soon as possible.”

According to the newspaper, the Rheinmetall Group alone offered the federal government a list of armaments worth €42 billion. In addition to ammunition, it also includes helicopters, as well as chain armour and wheel armour. “In many plants we work in single-shift operation; we can also work around the clock,” said the CEO of Rheinmetall Armin Papperger. The production of tank ammunition could thus be increased from around 40,000 to 240,000 pieces per year.

Eighty years after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, which killed at least 27 million Soviet citizens, the ruling class is once again on a war path against Russia. At its core, it pursues the same goals as it did during World War II. German imperialism is concerned with militarizing Europe under German leadership in pursuit of its global geostrategic and economic interests. The subjugation of Russia to secure unhindered access to the country’s vast resources is the first step in this process.

“For Europe, it is now up to the German army,” writes *Die Welt* in a commentary and makes a very open plea for NATO and the EU to prepare for a war against Russia—under the leadership of the German armed forces. “With regard to the strategic orientation of the German allies and the reduction of land forces, in particular armoured combat units, in other EU and NATO states, no one apart from Germany can and will provide the necessary armed forces to secure the eastern flank of NATO in such a way that the alliance could exist in a potential conflict with Russia.”

The preparations for war are accompanied by a genuine war against the working class at home. “We are a quasi-war party, a quasi-economic war party,” said Robert Habeck, the Green Minister for Economic Affairs, in the *Tagesthemen* on public television. “And we also pay a price ... and we will become poorer as a result.” By “we” Habeck does not mean the bourgeoisie and the wealthy middle classes for whom he speaks, but the working class, which must bear the costs of the drive to war.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) condemns these mad war plans as well as the government’s demand for the population to make “sacrifices” and be impoverished for German imperialism. We rely on the only social force that can prevent a relapse into world war and barbarism: the international working class. It is inevitably driven into fierce class struggles by social attacks and rising prices. But it needs a clear political perspective that aims to eliminate the cause of inequality and war—the capitalist profit system—and to build a global socialist society.

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