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Germany commits tens of thousands of soldiers, combat aircraft and ships in the deployment against Russia

The two-day NATO summit in Madrid, which ended yesterday, was dominated by the military alliance's preparations for war against the nuclear powers Russia and China. NATO's new Strategic Concept describes Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." NATO "cannot consider the Russian Federation to be our partner" and will "significantly strengthen deterrence and defence for all allies."



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz during a media conference at the NATO summit in Madrid [AP Photo/Manu Fernandez]

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For the first time in NATO's history, the alliance also has China in its crosshairs. The newly adopted NATO strategy speaks of "malicious hybrid and cyber operations," "disinformation" and "confrontational rhetoric," among other things. It therefore plans "to address the systemic challenges posed by the PRC [People's Republic of China] to Euro-Atlantic security and ensure NATO's enduring ability to guarantee the defence and security of Allies."

The cynicism is breathtaking. In fact, it is the NATO powers, and their imperialist allies in the South Pacific—including Japan and Australia, both of which were represented in Madrid—who are the aggressors in world politics. They have been waging war almost continuously for 30 years and have reduced entire countries to rubble. Russia and China have also been systematically encircled with the aim of weakening and militarily subjugating these resource-rich and geostrategically important countries.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a desperate and, at its core, reactionary response by the capitalist Putin regime to NATO's war policy, which is now being further escalated. The summit launched measures directly aimed at expanding the NATO-led proxy war in Ukraine into an all-out war against Russia.

With the accession of Finland and Sweden, NATO is turning Scandinavia and the entire Baltic Sea into a second front in the war against Russia. Finland alone has a land border with Russia that is more than 1,300 kilometres long. Should "military contingents and military infrastructure be stationed" in these states, Russia would be forced to respond in kind, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned in the Turkmenistan capital Ashgabat on Thursday.

NATO has decided to turn the whole of Europe into a military staging area for war against Russia. NATO's rapid reaction force (NRF) will be increased from 40,000 to well over 300,000 soldiers, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced at a press conference. The "battle groups in the eastern part of the alliance" would be strengthened up to brigade level.

All in all, it concerns the "biggest restructuring of our collective deterrence and defence since the Cold War"—a euphemism for the preparations now underway for a devastating hot war. What is planned, he said, was, "More pre-positioned equipment, and stockpiles of

military supplies. More forward-deployed capabilities, like air defence. Strengthened command and control. And upgraded defence plans, with forces pre-assigned to defend specific Allies.”

The forces deployed would then “exercise together with home defence forces. And they will become familiar with local terrain, facilities, and our new pre-positioned stocks.” This would enable them to “respond smoothly and swiftly to any emergency.” Specifically, the troops are to be ready for war within a few days. According to a report in *Der Spiegel*, the new NATO documents speak of a so-called “notice to effect.” According to this, troop units “would not only have to be ready to leave within 10 days but would have to arrive at the place of operations and be ready to fight; the rest would have to be ready within 30 days at the latest.”

The Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) is playing a central role in this massive rearmament. “In future, we will provide credible and substantial support for the new force structure, whose forces the NATO Secretary General has put at 300,000 for the first hours and days of a crisis,” Chancellor Olaf Scholz said at his press conference at the summit.

Germany had set the standard in the alliance with its “announcement to keep a combat brigade [i.e., up to 5,000 soldiers] exclusively available for the defence of alliance territory in Lithuania.” In addition, he said, “the offer to provide a regional naval command for the Baltic Sea region will enable us to assume leadership responsibility in the maritime domain.”

And that is far from all. “In addition, and in high readiness, the Bundeswehr will permanently maintain at its core an armoured division in the order of 15,000 soldiers for the defence of north-eastern Europe, over 60 aircraft and up to 20 naval units,” Scholz added.

Scholz made clear that the ruling class in Germany regarded the offensive against Russia as an opportunity to increase its own weight within Europe and NATO, and to re-establish itself as a leading imperialist power after losing two world wars in the 20th century. “As a logistical hub in Europe,” Germany made “a strategically important contribution to NATO’s collective defence capability,” Scholz explained.

Eighty-one years ago, on June 22, 1941, Hitler's army, the Wehrmacht, invaded the Soviet Union and began a war of extermination that claimed the lives of at least 27 million Soviet citizens. Despite these monstrous crimes, the thrust of German imperialism is once again directed towards the East.

"Today, in coordination with NATO, we have already expanded our presence on the eastern flank geographically, and, among other things, by contributing to air surveillance in Poland and Romania with Eurofighters as well as to the NATO unit in Slovakia with currently 500 soldiers and the high-value Patriot capability," Scholz boasted.

Then, as if moved by the old militaristic megalomania, he exulted that Germany would "further expand its contribution on land, at sea and in the air." Among other things, he offered to establish a regional maritime command for the Baltic Sea in Rostock. In addition, he "promised that in future, the Bundeswehr will maintain an armoured division for north-eastern Europe, among other things."

Scholz also used his appearance to defend the massive German arms deliveries to Ukraine, many of which are going to right-wing extremist forces in the Ukrainian army and the country's so-called territorial defence. It was "right, what we are doing, that we are supplying weapons to Ukraine," he declared. This included, "of course, the self-propelled howitzers that we have delivered" and the multiple rocket launchers, "but also, all those deliveries that we provide for defence against attacks from the air." This course would "be continued in this way."

He said the same applied to the historic rearmament of the Bundeswehr that he had announced previously. "No one should believe that when the 100 billion from the special fund is spent, there will suddenly no longer be a requirement to continue investing accordingly," he threatened. However, "for the change of direction" one needed "to set the points, so to speak" and this was "the 100 billion euro Bundeswehr special fund."

Scholz's press conference and the NATO summit are more than a warning. The imperialist ruling elite have made clear they are preparing for a devastating third world war, for which the working class will pay in every way. As cannon fodder on the battlefields, and in the form of massive attacks on social and democratic rights, and in financing and enforcing

the war policy. The only way to prevent a catastrophe is to build a socialist movement of the international working class against war and its root cause: capitalism

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