

# German magazine *Der Spiegel* campaigns for war and rearmament

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One of the most unmistakable signs of the return of German militarism is the barrage of war propaganda in the media. The conservative *Die Welt* and *FAZ*, the liberal *Süddeutsche* and *Zeit* and the “Green” *taz* newspaper have all published a torrent of articles urging German rearmament and more aggressive action against Russia.

The most recent example of such propaganda is provided by Dirk Kurbjuweit in the magazine *Der Spiegel*.

In an essay entitled “The Power of the Powerless,” Kurbjuweit declares that the West needs the “properties of [the war god] Mars, i.e. weapons, military capabilities, and on occasion the resolve to use them.” He adds, “Not to rearm, not to engage in economic competition, to stay out of world affairs would be equally noble and insane”.

In support of his demand for war and rearmament, Kurbjuweit employs an argument reminiscent of a third-rate fantasy novel: There are the good and the bad. The good ones are “western democracies”, the bad are the “authoritarian states”, Russia and China. Facts, arguments and events that contradict his black and white depiction are obscured, distorted or simply denied.

The rulers in Russia and China “oppress their people”. China is “expansive” and will soon be “an authoritarian superpower”. Russian President Vladimir Putin has “revived Russia’s thirst for power... These regimes have no problem with morality. Legitimacy is secondary for them given that their own legitimacy is doubtful”.

The West, however, “fails to engage in active power politics, it will not conquer territories and change maps”. The Western democracies “have a moral foundation that limits warlike activities. They are

limited to resolving internal conflicts peacefully. This has an effect on their determination. They must seek a legitimate basis for foreign deployments”.

Kurbjuweit concedes that the US has indeed “on occasion sometimes acted abroad like an authoritarian regime”. But Obama “has ended this policy”. He acts like “a dove of peace... This America has no designs on hegemonial power”.

Dirk Kurbjuweit is 51 years old. He wrote for *Die Zeit* for nine years, and 15 years for *Der Spiegel*. He has also written several books. He cannot be excused on the basis of naivety or ignorance.

He knows that the wars that devastated Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and other countries emanated not from Russia or China, but from the United States and its European allies. He knows that “dove of peace” Obama has built up a global monitoring network, carries out an illegal drone war with thousands of victims, and is expanding US power in East Asia in opposition to China as part of his “pivot to Asia”.

Kurbjuweit also knows that the “expansive project” of the West is not, as he claims, dedicated to “democracy”. In order to subject Ukraine to their influence and repel Russia, Berlin and Washington worked together with known fascists, nationalists and right-wing oligarchs to organized a violent putsch in Kiev.

Kurbjuweit is simply regurgitating imperialist propaganda. His lies about the alleged democratic and moral motives of the West hide an extremely reactionary argument. The West is weak and indecisive because it is democratic; Russia and China are strong because they are authoritarian—this theme runs like a red thread through his essay.

“The West behaves gently and compliantly in the Ukraine crisis. But what if the world is not allocated

along pacifist rules?” he asks in his opening paragraph. “Currently authoritarian regimes have the advantage. One reason is their determination”, he writes. Again and again, Kurbjuweit emphasizes the inevitability of further conflict with Russia and China. The West should not hope that the local ruler will end up like Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, “but should be prepared for further confrontations”.

The conclusion is inescapable: In order to survive in a conflict between “authoritarian states” and “Western democracies”, the latter must renounce all and any democratic legitimacy. It was the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet who once proclaimed: “Democracy must be bathed in blood occasionally, so that it can continue to exist”. Now Kurbjuweit suggests something similar in order to conduct a victorious war against Russia and China.

Finally, Kurbjuweit advises against relying on the United States, which “has become quite moody... Europe should look urgently to establish its own army, military strategy and common foreign policy”.

Kurbjuweit has been campaigning for some time for a revival of German militarism. In early February he published an article in *Der Spiegel* entitled “The change of the past”, in which he declared “it is high time” for a “revision” of the assessment of German responsibility for the First and Second World Wars.

In the article he attacks the German historian Fritz Fischer, who demonstrated in his 1961 book *Germany's Aims in the First World War* that Germany bore a significant share of the responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War. Fischer's theses were “in principle outrageous”, the Berlin historian Herfried Münkler tells Kurbjuweit.

Regarding the Second World War, Kurbjuweit draws upon Ernst Nolte, who unleashed the “historian's controversy” in 1986, with his assertion that National Socialism was an understandable reaction to Bolshevism. In discussion with Kurbjuweit, Nolte not only defends his past thesis but goes on to assert, without being challenged, that Poland and England bore a large responsibility for the Second World War because they refused to forge an agreement with Hitler. He accuses the Jews of having “partial responsibility for the Gulag, because some Bolsheviks were Jews”.

Nolte's arguments have been backed up by the Berlin-based historian Jörg Baberowski, who explains in an

interview with Kurbjuweit that Nolte had been “wrongly treated” and adds that Hitler was “not cruel”.

This trivialization of the historical crimes of German imperialism is preparing the path for new crimes. This is made abundantly clear by Kurbjuweit's latest plea for war and rearmament.

This author also recommends: The crisis in Ukraine and the sea change in German foreign policy [3 April 2014]



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