

# German politicians, media support build-up of NATO forces in Eastern Europe

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Leading German politicians, the military and media support the massive rearmament of NATO in Eastern Europe announced by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and NATO Supreme Commander Philip Breedlove in the past few days.

In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* (FAS) last Sunday Rasmussen announced the possible relocation of NATO forces to Eastern Europe and called upon European member states “not to cut back defense spending any further” but rather “invest more money step-by-step in defense.”

On Tuesday Breedlove said that NATO was preparing to fundamentally change its current strategy and station troops in Eastern Europe permanently. “I think that’s something we have to consider,” he said in Ottawa, Canada.

On Thursday Elmar Brok (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, welcomed the plans. He told the newspaper *Die Welt* it was “correct at the moment to consider stationing troops permanently in Eastern Europe. We have to have a debate now, also here in Germany.” NATO needs a “credible deterrent,” in case Putin continues his “aggressive policy,” he said.

In an interview with Deutschlandfunk the chairman of the NATO Military Committee and former Inspector General of the German army General Klaus Naumann also expressed his support. He considered “preparations for a possible deployment sensible because both in 2008 and now Russia has shown in Crimea, that it is not does not abide by its contractual obligations not to change borders in Europe by force.”

Earlier this week, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* had reported that there was growing

support on the part of government politicians “for a more robust intervention by the Alliance and stronger backing for its allies in Eastern Europe in the face of Russian politics and propaganda. Also a permanent stationing of troops and equipment in the Baltic and Poland is no longer a taboo subject.”

Concrete plans are already being prepared and discussed. The defense spokesman of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Rainer Arnold, proposed setting up multinational organizations to which the German army could contribute “its high-end specialist skills.” He cited as examples the Tiger combat helicopter, the new Puma infantry fighting vehicle and the Boxer armored personnel carrier.

In lockstep with Rasmussen, Arnold urged NATO to “also ensure an effective conventional deterrence.” He demanded an end to the “decline of military capabilities based on an uncoordinated approach driven only by financial constraints.”

The CDU foreign policy expert Andreas Schockenhoff also backs the proposal to establish multinational organizations. “It’s not just about armored units, but also capacities to defend against cyber attacks on vital infrastructure and maritime facilities,” he told the FAZ.

The SPD foreign policy expert Dietmar Nietan called on the EU to provide more support to Georgia and Moldova, along with Ukraine. “There should be absolutely no yielding to, or tolerance of Russian pressure aimed at drawing them into the Russian sphere of influence against their will, because that would be appeasement,” he said.

The massive rearmament plans of NATO and the warmongering by German politicians and media representatives make clear who are the real aggressors. The ruling circles in Germany have supported a fascist

coup in Ukraine and are now using the provoked and expected Russian response in Crimea as a pretext to put into practice the long-planned revival of German militarism and German power politics in a close alliance with the US and NATO.

The most cynical representatives in politics and the media openly admit this. In an article headlined “Putin’s gift to NATO,” Matthias Nass, the international correspondent of *Die Zeit*, writes: “This is not what Vladimir Putin wanted. His annexation of Crimea has revived NATO. The identity crisis of the Alliance has been overcome. Brussels strategists in search of work are no longer obliged to look to remote war zones, according to the motto: ‘Out of area, out of business.’ No, now core business is in demand again.”

Nass, one of a number of *Die Zeit* journalists with close links to the US—he regularly takes part in the elite US-run Bilderberg conferences—leaves no doubt what he means. “There is a good chance that Europe will boost its military capacities,” he maintains. “Since the end of the cold war military spending diverged dramatically on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States has invested ever more money for defense with its military budget currently totaling around 700 billion dollars. Germany, however, had invested just \$46 billion in 2012, i.e., almost three percent less than ten years before.”

He continues: “For a long nothing happened and the Europeans preferred to invest even less. Until Putin went after Crimea. Now the old debate is back. Along with Rasmussen Washington’s Defense Minister Chuck Hagel is also calling on NATO states to increase their defense spending.”

The prospect of a massive military buildup has unleashed a veritable war fever in bourgeois editorial offices which have been bombarding readers for weeks with warmongering propaganda against Russia. In a commentary for *Deutsche Welle* under the headline “NATO needs to rethink its strategy,” Bernd Riegert notes that the German army “has just one-tenth of the number of tanks it had 25 years ago, when the Berlin Wall fell.” He claims that “the specter of a Russian attack on NATO territory to the east has re-emerged” and asks, “Was that shift too hasty?”

Riegert demands: “The new reality on the ground will have to be taken into account during a NATO summit in September at the latest. Its defense plans must be

quickly re-worked.” Then he adds: “European defense politicians were happy to be able to drastically reduce their spending during the financial crisis. But that now seems to be a thing of the past. Europeans have to recognize that defense will be expensive and will strain budgets in the years ahead.”

Riegert not only wants to buy tanks to relocate to Eastern Europe, but also nuclear weapons! He writes: “In the face of the new situation created by the Ukraine crisis NATO cannot leave it at conventional arms. Credible deterrence includes nuclear weapons, any talk of which sends a cold chill down the spine.”

No one should have any illusions about the constant protestations that the plans for military upgrade are aimed solely at “deterrence” and the goal of preventing a war with Russia. Exactly the opposite is the case. In reality, the ruling circles in NATO member states and, in particular Germany, are already drawing up plans for war against Russia.

This was highlighted by an article in the current issue of *Die Zeit*. Under the title “Ukraine: on the brink of war,” the newspaper writes: “Merkel does not dare to mention war, the word so many Germans fear. But she must consider the word. For it could be that the West does nothing until it has to do something. Because Putin is taking over Ukraine. Then he is positioned on the eastern border to NATO. From there it is not far to the so-called ‘mutual defense clause,’ which obliges NATO in accordance with Chapter five to consider an attack on one member as an attack on all.”



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