

Following Malaysian plane disaster: German media pushes for confrontation with Moscow

Peter Schwarz
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Barely 24 hours after the crash of a Malaysian passenger jet over Ukraine, leading German media outlets are pushing for an escalation of the confrontation with Russia.

In February, the German government, working closely with Washington, supported the coup in Ukraine that brought a pro-Western regime to power. However, Berlin has been more cautious than Washington in imposing sanctions on Russia due to concerns over German economic interests. And in the wake of the recent spying scandal, calls for greater German independence from the US in regard to foreign policy have grown louder.

Now, the advocates of aggressive action against Russia are using the air disaster to go back on the offensive and force more cautious voices to retreat.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) has published two articles online calling for stronger action against Russia. On Thursday, Reinhard Vesper wrote under the headline “Moscow’s Aggression” that the shooting down of the Malaysian passenger plane was a tragic consequence of the war in Ukraine. While it remained to be clarified “who the guilty are,” it was already clear, the newspaper wrote, “who is responsible for this war”—namely Russia. Even if there was no proof that Russia was to blame, “there are enough facts to speak of Russian aggression against Ukraine.”

In other words, even if there is no proof that the Russian military or pro-Russian separatists shot down the plane—and even if it should transpire that the Ukrainian armed forces were responsible—Russia will still remain the guilty party. The commentary concludes that it is “high time for harsher sanctions than those that have been agreed in Brussels.”

On Friday, Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger reiterated the same theme in an article entitled “Mass Murder Over

East Ukraine.” “Is the death of around three hundred people... the unsettling event that brings about a turn in this conflict?” he asks. He then denounces Russia: “It wants to interfere in this conflict; it wants to destabilise Ukraine; it wants to safeguard its influence.” The European Union “must now decide whether it tightens the sanctions screw or whether it continues to chase illusions,” he concludes.

Stefan Kornelius has written a commentary in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Kornelius, who enjoys close relations with the US, has long defended Germany’s strategic alliance with the United States and demanded harsh action against the Putin regime. More recently, he has begun to waver, criticising the US for its spying activities in Germany.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has noted that “his future orientation will ultimately depend on the course the German ruling elite steers as it tries to return to an aggressive and militarist foreign policy.”

For the moment, Kornelius seems to have come to the conclusion that the trend is again swinging towards Washington. He, too, has to admit that up to now there have only been “indications” that Russia or the separatists allied with Moscow are responsible for shooting down the plane. However, like Reinhard Vesper in the FAZ, he sees this as irrelevant.

“Without Russian support and the mobilisation of fighters by Moscow, this war would long have been contained,” he declares in an article headlined “The Monster Created by Putin.” He continues: “As long as Vladimir Putin does not call the pro-Moscow militias to order, they will continue with their irrational and murderous struggle.”

If proof comes to light of the separatists’ or Moscow’s complicity, “then Russia must feel the full weight of the sanctions—also and especially from

Europe,” Kornelius demands. He does not stop there, raising the question of military intervention. “The shooting down leads directly to the UN Security Council, [where] Ukraine may ask for military support,” he writes hopefully.

Where the FAZ and *Süddeutsche* go, *Die Zeit* and *taz* must go as well.

In *Die Zeit*, Carsten Luther bluntly calls for a military confrontation with Russia, under the headline “This Shooting Down Changes Everything.” He writes: “Since so many passengers were on board from Western countries, the dispute between Russia and Ukraine is internationalised. There is no avoiding further sanctions against Russia, and this time they must not be surgical and selective. And under these conditions, participation by Western forces in military operations is no longer a taboo.”

Taz is also advocating military confrontation. In the fashion typical of the Greens, their foreign affairs editor Dominic Johnson first demands a “full investigation,” only to threaten military violence if Moscow does not “cooperate fully.”

“If local obstacles are put in the way of clarifying the deaths of the 298 passengers, Kiev’s international allies could take this as grounds for more actively pursuing the forcible restoration of Ukraine’s state authority throughout the country,” writes Johnson. “It is still an exaggeration to speak of a fateful hour for war or peace in Europe. But maybe not for long.”

That the hacks in the bourgeois media are exploiting the deaths of nearly 300 innocent people to call for war with Russia, which could culminate in a nuclear world war with untold casualties, exposes the falsity of their arguments.

The shooting down of a passenger jet, if that is what happened, is a terrible crime. But it is the Western powers that bear the main responsibility for creating the circumstances in which such a crime is even possible.

In their attempts to bring Ukraine, with its raw materials, transit routes and productive agricultural land, under their control, and to encircle Russia, they organised a putsch in Kiev and drove the country into a civil war. German imperialism is pursuing the same aims as in the First and Second World Wars, when it violently occupied Ukraine. And it is collaborating with the same forces: the governing Fatherland Party and its fascist coalition partner Svoboda hail Nazi

collaborators like Stepan Bandera as national heroes.

Washington and Berlin stood by approvingly as their fascist allies attacked political opponents and massacred 40 people in a trade union building in Odessa. They have encouraged President Poroshenko to act brutally against his opponents in the east of the country and bombard the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that the conflict would escalate.

Condemnation of the Western warmongers does not mean support for Russian President Putin. He defends the interests of the oligarchy that emerged from the restoration of capitalism. But this does not excuse the warmongers on German editorial boards who are calling for war on behalf of German imperialism.



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