

German expenditure for weapons research has more than doubled since 2010

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Since 2010, the number of weapons research contracts struck by the German Ministry of Defense with universities and research institutions in Germany has more than doubled. The growing involvement of universities in military research projects is a component of the return of German militarism.

Within the last four years, the German Defense Ministry and its departments have assigned more than 700 public research contracts. The volume of these commissions amount to more than €390 million. According to reports in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *NDR Info*, these figures were released by the government in reply to a request from the German Left Party.

A comparison with the past few years shows how massively state demand for weapons research has grown. In the last available time frame for comparison—between 2000 and 2010—the average yearly number of orders for civilian weapons research amounted to €41 million. Since then it has more than doubled to approximately €98 million per year.

A large proportion of this research money goes to non-university civil research institutions. Since 2010 these institutions have accepted contracts totaling more than €360 million. The largest recipient was Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, which maintains close connections to the Defense Ministry.

However, universities are being increasingly integrated into weapons research. In the past four years, a total of 120 research contracts have been concluded totaling more than €28 million. Compared with spending prior to 2010, this represents a yearly increase of approximately 70 percent.

In the past four years alone, a total of 41 German universities have received research orders and money from the defense ministry. The largest sum (€5.8

million) went to the University of Hanover, followed by the University of Kiel (€3 million) and the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences (€2.2 million).

Nothing is known concerning the details of the research projects. The German government claimed that these details were “classified”, and the Left Party has accepted this assessment. A representative of the defense ministry claimed that the research orders could not be released because they could lead to “inferences concerning points of special interest” and “capability deficits” in the army.

The articles in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *NDR* report that the research covers a broad range of military applications. The research is geared toward Army, Marine and Air Force applications, according to the reports. Individual research projects investigate intelligent munitions, firearms and pursuit by drones. A diverse range of research projects are devoted to such topics as wireless technologies, robots, satellite technology, non-fatal shooting and projectile devices, as well as recognition of chemical warfare agents.

The Defense Ministry and the Federal Armed Forces do not force universities and technical colleges to participate. Instead, numerous universities cooperate with them quite openly in carrying out weapons research. The universities in Tübingen, Rostock, Göttingen, Frankfurt, and Konstanz, for example, carry out research assigned to them by the federal army and in so doing violate the Civil Clause, which is codified in university statutes and requires them to carry out research exclusively for civilian purposes.

The scale of university weapons research is made clear by the extent of their enmeshment with the private sector weapons industry. While there are no official numbers showing the exact extent of official support, a

few examples show that the relationship between public universities and international weapons corporations has become quite close.

The scale of this cooperation in the state of Bavaria—where an entire professorship with a budget and supporting staff is funded by the weapons company EADS—is particularly appalling. At the Ingolstadt University of Applied Sciences, the EADS subsidiary Cassidian sponsors a professorship for systems engineering for security oriented applications. According to information obtained by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, an “Innovation Park” has been established on the campus of the University of Augsburg for the purpose of carrying out cooperative work with weapons firms such as Eurocopter, MT Aerospace and Premium Aerotec.

Even foreign armies have subcontracted military research to German civilian research institutions. At the beginning of this year, it was already publicly known that the US military had invested approximately \$10 million in weapons research in Germany. It has become clear that other countries have also availed themselves of the assistance of German civilian research institutions. The defense ministries of Australia, Great Britain, South Korea, Switzerland and Singapore all together have spent more than \$10 million on weapons research in Germany, *NDR* reports. Whether some of that money went to universities is not known.

One reason for the increasing readiness of German universities to collaborate with military institutions is the substantial cuts to public education in recent years. These cuts have forced universities and technical colleges to raise third-party funds in order to maintain ongoing research projects and maintain staff positions. The increasing influence of military institutions and international corporations self-evidently and flagrantly contradicts the requirements of freedom and independence in research and teaching.

The more universities are forced to depend on external funding, the more willing they are to cooperate with the military and the weapons industry. Jan Schür, who works in the chair for high frequency technology at Erlangen University and also receives support from the Defense Ministry, summed up the perspective in a report that appeared in the Bavarian newspaper *Bayerischen Staatszeitung*. “It is irrelevant to us who provides the money if the project is interesting. What is

important to us is that we can pay our employees and buy new devices,” Schür said.

In addition, the fact that universities and private businesses often provide no support for pure research has prompted some colleges to place their hopes in military funding. Thomas Eibert, Professor for High Frequency Technology at the Munich University of Technology, quoted in the same article, says that it is “good that Defense Ministry also invests in research”. He works under a contract with the German Armed Forces on electronic site security and openly states, “I find it good that Germany is working on its defense strategy. And I find it good that we are participating in this.”

Such statements indicate how far many universities in Germany are willing to go in their cooperation with the weapons industry and the military. While the ideological foundations for the return of German militarism are being elaborated by professors in the departments of the humanities and social sciences, natural scientists and engineers will see to its technical requirements.



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