

Germany sends troops to Iraq

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This week, the German army (Bundeswehr) sent an initial group of soldiers to Iraq. The mission of the six soldiers is to set up a so-called military liaison post in Erbil to coordinate the delivery of weapons and military equipment.

Although the group is small in number, the dispatch of Bundeswehr specialists to Iraq is of great significance and can be expanded very quickly.

In 2003, the German government declared its opposition to the US-led war against Iraq, which it described as a military adventure. Now it has undergone a 180 degree turn and is sending arms and soldiers to Iraq in order to be involved as the US resumes bombing the country.

It was first claimed that the relief supplies and weapons would be received and distributed by UN staff, but now the government has decided that the Bundeswehr should coordinate and supervise this work directly.

The Press and Information Office of the Bundeswehr announced that the first shipment had been compiled and will arrive in northern Iraq in the next few days. The shipment includes 4,000 protective vests, 4,000 combat helmets, hundreds of radios, mine detectors and night vision devices. The chairman of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union Bundestag (parliament) faction, Volker Kauder, announced that further shipments would be put together as soon as possible. They will include anti-tank weapons, equipment to de-activate mines, guns and ammunition.

With the deployment of soldiers, the government has established a *fait accompli* prior to a parliamentary debate scheduled for Monday. It has thereby demonstrated its disdain and contempt for the Bundestag, whose only role consists in rubber-stamping decisions already made and implemented.

The military intervention in Iraq is part of the new militarist foreign policy announced by the German

government and German president at the start of the year. It is supported by all of the parliamentary parties and put into practice in the form of a veritable conspiracy of the ruling elite against widespread popular resistance.

The parliamentary debate was announced one day after polls revealed that over 70 percent of the population is opposed to the supply of arms. At the same time, the governing parties made clear that the Bundestag had nothing to say in the matter. The decision was made by the leadership of the Bundeswehr and a small group of members of the government who will continue to decide on the scope and selection of the supply of arms and the deployment of troops.

In her so-called “summer” interview on German TV last Sunday, Chancellor Angela Merkel categorically ruled out “combat missions by German soldiers in Iraq under any circumstances”. Barely four days later, she has agreed to the deployment of Bundeswehr soldiers in Iraq under conditions that can very quickly lead to combat.

Following its intervention in Afghanistan, the mission of the Bundeswehr was still largely presented as participation in allegedly “purely humanitarian missions” such as building schools and drilling wells. In reality, heavily armed soldiers are then sent to protect the “humanitarian soldiers” and permitted to engage in combat missions. In the end, the Bundeswehr is fully involved in war, utilizing the type of brutal methods that resulted in the massacre at Kunduz (Afghanistan) in the autumn of 2009.

Chancellor Merkel justified the latest army mission with reference to the “atrocities of the Islamist IS [Islamic State] militias” that one could describe as “genocide”. Social Democrat Party (SPD) parliamentary leader Thomas Oppermann even told the *Handelsblatt* newspaper “that genocide is raging in Iraq with defenseless people in great danger who need help

and support”.

General Hans-Lothar Domröse declared that the situation in Iraq was “dramatic”, but that Kurdish militias were capable of “standing up to the IS”. They were able to fight them, provided they were rapidly and properly armed.

Media reports on the deployment of German soldiers in the media have repeatedly emphasized that the UN has warned of “the imminent massacre of members of religious minorities, such as the Christians”. They also stress that, according to the US State Department, the United States, Canada, Croatia, Albania, Italy, France, Denmark and the UK are all sending arms to the war zone. The Czech Republic has already prepared the shipment of several million cartridges for Kalashnikov machine guns, hand grenades and anti-tank weapons with a total value of 1.5 million euros.

The reports of a veritable avalanche of international arms shipments are intended to give the impression that the German military intervention in Iraq is nothing new, and that Germany is in good company. In reality, the deployment of soldiers to Iraq is an open break with the principle proclaimed by all German governments since the Second World War, that Germany would not take part in civil wars or wars anywhere in the world with soldiers and weapons.

This principle was a response to the devastating war crimes of German imperialism in the First and Second World Wars. After 1945, Germany was economically and militarily subordinated to the dominant world power, the US. The collapse of the Stalinist regime and the dissolution of the Soviet Union transformed the situation and exacerbated conflicts between the major powers.

Now, following the takeover of power by the Grand Coalition (Conservatives and Social Democrats), Germany has embarked on a course of militarism with breathtaking speed and recklessness. The ruling class is intent, despite fierce popular resistance, on establishing Germany as a military world power.



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