

German media steps up its warmongering

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6 September 2014

It has now become a matter of course. Whenever a new offensive for war commences, Germany's mainstream media reacts at once. Journalists with close ties to German and American government circles immediately ratchet up their propaganda. This was once again the case on September 4. The propagandists for war switched gears at the start of the NATO summit in Wales, which is focused on the intensified militarization of Europe and direct preparations for war against Russia.

Three themes dominated Germany's newspapers on Thursday. Editorials written by journalists such as Stefan Kornelius (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*), Nikolas Busse (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), Jochen Bittner and Josef Joffe (*Die Zeit*) and Patrick Schmitz (*Spiegel Online*) combined propaganda against Russia with support for the deployment of NATO troops in Eastern Europe and demands for increased defense spending.

Under the title "NATO must be prepared," Bittner welcomes the fact that NATO is finally "considering a worse case scenario" and "reacting hard and decisively to the notion of a New Russia (Novorossiya)." Last November, Bittner had already written an article for the *New York Times* calling for a "re-evaluation of German pacifism." Bittner and Busse co-authored the strategy document "New Power—new responsibility. Elements of German foreign and security policy in a changing world." Now he is evidently elated that his wildest expectations are being translated into action.

He writes, "At the summit, which begins today in Wales, the Alliance will discuss how they can rapidly move thousands of combat troops to the east in the event of a Russian attack on Poland, Romania and the Baltic states. According to the NATO Secretary General, a 'spearhead' of about 5,000 soldiers, led by new command centers, occupied in rotation by German troops, is to be mobilized within hours to counter any attack."

His colleague Busse, the EU and NATO correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, appears to think these plans do not go far enough. Under the title "The Return of Deterrence," he complains that the "concept of deterrence... was forgotten after 1989," and "for the following twenty years NATO did not even consider it necessary to develop operational plans in the event of a Russian attack." At the summit, "this will be corrected minimally," Busse writes, but NATO is still "a long way away from preparing for major tank battles."

Busse regards the main obstacle to a much broader militarization to be widespread popular resistance. "Perhaps the biggest problem of this return to a policy of deterrence is the fact that local societies are completely unprepared. Especially Germany has got used to the stability of Europe and good trade with Russia; Deterrence and classic power politics were no longer a part of the political experience of the world's population for one or two generations. This explains in part ... the violent reactions on the Internet to the West's Ukraine policy. Many people seem to fear that Germany will be drawn into a war with Russia."

In order to "prepare local societies" and enable a new generation to make war part of their "political experience," the cynics in German editorial offices use the type of lies and distortions reminiscent of the war propaganda prior to the First and Second World Wars.

In the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Stefan Kornelius, who for months has been calling for tougher action against Russia, tries to justify NATO's war offensive with the fiction that the good guys (the West) are reluctant to defend the "peace in Europe" threatened by evil Russia.

Under the title "Calculated Deterrence" Cornelius repeats the mantra that Russia is returning to a policy of "power of the fittest." While Putin has "introduced a new form of hybrid warfare" and dreams of "a New

Russia,” thereby “unleashing fear and terror in NATO countries,” the EU and NATO are pursuing “an inclusive strategy.” Its member states are bound together by “a democratic, constitutional worldview.”

This is turning reality on its head. There is nothing progressive in Putin’s policy, but it is not the Russian president who is the aggressor in Ukraine, but rather the EU and NATO.

In February, the Western powers supported the fascists organized in Svoboda and Right Sector to overthrow the elected pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich, after he refused to sign an Association Agreement with the EU. It was the establishment of a pro-Western puppet regime in Kiev that then triggered civil war in eastern Ukraine and the conflict with Russia.

Now they are using their self-provoked crisis to militarize Europe and prepare for war. Their aim is not, as Cornelius claims, to secure “peace in Europe,” but rather to establish a new world order.

Cornelius tries to hide his message behind phrases about “peace” and “democracy,” but others are more direct. In *Die Zeit*, Josef Joffe indirectly accuses the United States and President Obama of failing to plunge Eastern Europe and the Middle East into war. Under the heading “Where is Uncle Sam?” he complains “about the disillusioned ‘world policeman’ who is no longer prepared to swing his club so casually” and has thereby created a vacuum “to be filled by Putin and the Islamic State.”

Evidently desperate about the fact that he has not got the war he wants, Joffe writes: “As we note on a daily basis the world needs a regulatory power. When England was tired, America took its place. And who is now to replace Uncle Sam?”

The outpourings of the German media are a measure of the speed and aggressiveness with which the campaign for a resurgence of militarism in Germany is being conducted. In recent weeks, a growing chorus of media voices has criticized Washington’s alleged reluctance to get its hands dirty and pleading for Germany to take a leading role in its place.

In this vein the long-standing US correspondent of *Der Spiegel*, Gregor Peter Schmitz, demands in a piece cynically titled “The price we have to pay for peace” the massive rearmament of Europe under German leadership in order to counter the “half-hearted foreign

policy” of the “‘lame duck’ from Washington.”

Although the United States has paid about three-quarters of the NATO budget, “the future of NATO lies in Europe, home to 26 of the 28 member states” Schmitz writes. Europeans must now “finally realize that after Vladimir Putin’s open aggression, their continent requires the ‘increased defense readiness’ raised by the German President Joachim Gauck at the recent commemoration of the outbreak of the Second World War. This includes finally drawing up common strategies and implementing them as a team.”

He calls for the German military to play a leading role in this and undergo a massive upgrade, even though “of course that also means it can be expensive. Above all for Germany, which has long ignored the NATO requirement for defense spending of two percent of gross domestic product, and whose military is at best capable of defense. No one wants Berlin to upgrade at any price. But Germany must ensure that it, and also Europe’s NATO members, comply to recently made commitments and secondly use existing resources more intelligently.”

“The opportunity to influence Merkel” is “favorable,” Schmitz writes. “The chancellor has just recognized in the debate on arms supplies to the Kurds in Iraq that ducking one’s head in a crisis is no longer an option for Germany.”



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