

Greens back deployment of German ground troops to Syria

Peter Schwarz
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The Green Party supports the deployment of German troops to Syria, the parliamentary leader of the party, Katrin Göring-Eckardt, told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Monday.

The Green Party justifies its call for German military intervention by referring to the fighting over control of the Kurdish town of Kobani, which is under siege from the jihadist forces of the Islamic State.

“Germany needs to take the initiative at the United Nations,” declared Göring-Eckardt, the former chair of the Synod of the German Evangelical Church. “There should be a robust mandate. ISIS can be fought only militarily.”

The Green Party leader added that if the United States agreed to a mandate, Germany had to, “if necessary, be ready to participate with a Bundeswehr [Armed Forces] deployment.”

The international community can no longer “look away,” Göring-Eckardt continued. “We need a common strategy. If it emerges that action is needed on the ground, we would support that.”

With their call for the deployment of ground troops, the Greens are going much further than the government of Prime Minister Angela Merkel. The German government is helping to arm and train the Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq, thereby making clear it wants to actively participate in the war in the Middle East, but has so far rejected sending German ground troops to Syria.

During a visit to Saudi Arabia, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the government had decided that “under the given circumstances, we will be sending no ground troops to Syria.” The other European states and the US have issued similar statements.

Steinmeier is aware that a military intervention in

Syria could end in a disaster if not thoroughly prepared politically.

Several parties are clashing in the present conflict: the jihadists of the Islamic State, who had previously been supported by Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the US; the Syrian Kurds, whose leadership collaborates closely with the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey; the Turkish government, which wants to prevent a strengthening of the Syrian Kurds and the PKK while focusing on bringing down the Assad government in Syria; numerous other regional powers such as Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia; and, finally, the US and the European great powers, which want to bring the region and its wealth of raw materials under their control.

The Greens will not let the risks deflect them from pressing for military intervention. Their talk of a “humanitarian” imperative to prevent a massacre of the Kurds in Kobani is a threadbare cover for the pursuit of imperialist interests.

The Greens argued in a similar manner in 2011, when they attacked the German government for refraining from participating in the war against Libya. They then declared that military intervention was necessary to protect the Libyan population from “serious human rights violations.”

In reality, the aim of the war was to overthrow the Gaddafi regime and gain direct access to Libyan oil. Today, marauding gangs terrorize the Libyan population and violate human rights on a daily basis. This does not prevent the Greens from justifying another war with the very same lies.

Unlike Göring-Eckardt, the longtime ideological mentor of the Greens, former foreign minister Joschka Fischer speaks openly about the real aims of the Green Party. In his new book *Will Europe Fail?*, due out today, Fischer bluntly argues that Germany should

revive its tradition of great power politics.

In a selection from the new book published in the latest issue of *Die Zeit*, Fischer accuses Russian President Vladimir Putin of seeking “no less than a restoration of the world power status of Russia.” To achieve this goal, Fischer contends, Putin is seeking to “regain” not only “those regions lost after 1991,” but also “Russia's direct access to Europe and the restoration of its influence there as a great power.” Fischer warns it is “only a matter of time before Russian policy extends to the Balkans, based on its Eurasian Union.”

Without providing evidence to back up his claims, Fischer justifies the efforts of Berlin to strive once again for world power with the help of the European Union. He calls for a “fundamental realignment of Europe and the West” and “a new round of containment policy against Russia.”

The EU is “not only a common market, an economic community,” but also “a political force,” Fischer writes. Despite the economic consequences, he argues for the inclusion of Ukraine in the EU. The EU's enlargement policy, he writes, is “not just an annoying extra that disturbs the tranquility of the EU and Europe, and is expensive at the same time,” but rather “its decisive projection of power outwards into its geopolitical neighborhood.”

In the context of this “projection of power outwards,” Fischer writes of German policy in the Middle East. After its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, “a morally and financially exhausted America is turning back on itself,” he states, against its own better judgment. Europe must therefore take up “more and not less responsibility for its own security, above all in its geopolitical neighborhood....The time of just tagging along on security issues has come to an end.”

Fischer has no illusions about the impossibility of uniting all 28 EU member states behind the imperialist foreign policy of Germany. He therefore advocates that a “core” or “vanguard” take the initiative and win over other EU members with intergovernmental agreements. His policy amounts to the establishment of an imperial Europe under German leadership.

On its web site, the Greens still claim their policy is “stamped” by the fact that they “emerged from the peace movement.” In fact, there is no other German party that so bluntly pushes for war and military

operations as the Greens. They speak for those layers of the middle class that acquired considerable wealth at the expense of the working class and link their destinies inseparably to the fortunes of German imperialism. Former street agitator Joschka Fischer, who now lives in a luxurious villa in Berlin's exclusive Dahlem district, is the living embodiment of this social type.



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