

German politicians and the media push for new wars in Africa

Christoph Dreier
27 August 2015

Last year, the German people were subjected to unprecedented war-mongering against Russia and a campaign for the return of German militarism. Now, the propagandists are going one step further and are beating the drums for new wars in Africa. They cynically try to justify this by referring to the growing streams of refugees.

On Tuesday, the head of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*'s foreign affairs department, Stefan Kornelius, said a European refugee policy must begin with a European foreign policy.

"If Europe does not want to become a magnet for refugees from many areas of the world, if the international community does not want to break apart due to its heterogeneous understanding for its humanitarian responsibilities, then it must turn its force outward towards the epicentres of the flight", he wrote.

The editor has a pretty clear idea what this means and formulates it in rhetorical questions: "Who had also considered intervening in the Syrian civil war, if necessary without a UN mandate? On whose desk are the dossiers regarding Eritrea and Sudan gathering dust in Brussels? What possibilities for influence does the EU have over the African Union, from whose ranks states are bleeding out?"

This is the outline of a policy in Africa and the Middle East, which would result in a massive military escalation and is aimed at controlling the African continent and exploiting it economically.

On *Spiegel Online*, Roland Nelles, who heads its Berlin bureau and is a member of the Editorial Board, is even more explicit. He also takes the issue of refugee policy as the starting point for comprehensive plans for the recolonisation of Africa.

Germany must no longer "stay out of the problems of this world," he writes. He accuses the population of

keeping politicians from "dealing with the problems on the spot in the crisis regions with massive financial and political means (and if need be, military means). Germany and the other European countries must fundamentally change their attitude. We must do more outside," he summarised.

He lists regions where he would like to see German military interventions. On Syria, he writes, "We have no real strategy in the fight against the dictator Assad or against IS [Islamic State]. At least the Americans are doing something: they are bombing the terrorists from the air. And we Germans? We send a few old rifles to the Peshmerga. That's it. We don't trust ourselves to do more, we don't want to do more on the spot."

A debate about military options in Libya is also "a taboo for us", Nelles complains, provocatively asking, "but why?" He opposes withdrawing troops stationed in Afghanistan.

Last week, the chair of the Foreign Affairs parliamentary committee, Norbert Röttgen, made clear when speaking to broadcaster *Deutschlandfunk* that the government has long been working on implementing such a policy.

He also called for military intervention against IS. In order to defeat its militia, according to Röttgen, "political and military means" are required. IS is not really affected by air strikes, "but there must be more, that's certain", said the former minister.

Like Nelles and Kornelius, he sees such military intervention as part of a broad offensive in Africa and the Middle East. "We need a European foreign policy that engages with this region. We need an Africa policy in Europe," Röttgen says, relating this directly to the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

For him, a "European Africa policy" means essentially a German policy. He also speaks in favour

of Germany seeking different allies with whom it can implement its own goals. “I believe that the Europe of 28 will not respond effectively to these gigantic challenges, but will always wait until all 28 are on board,” he says.

Röttgen calls for “a predictive, preventive, proactive policy as part of foreign policy in Africa, in North Africa.”

One of the main foreign policy experts in the German parliament is advocating a preventive Africa policy—i.e., an aggressive policy based around German interests, which includes military intervention. An entire continent is to become a chessboard for German foreign policy.

This has nothing to do with the well being of the people there, or dealing with the problems forcing millions to flee their countries. It is cynical war propaganda. In reality, it was the military interventions by the NATO powers that have destroyed whole societies in the Middle East and Africa. The misery produced by these wars is now being used to further beat the drums of war.

Rather, the demand for an offensive in Africa is connected with the return of German militarism. Given the deep international economic crisis, which has now also afflicted the developing economies of South America and Asia, Africa is of special interest. The German business elite wants to secure the raw materials and growing markets there.

In May 2014, Berlin formulated its “Africa policy guidelines”, which dealt with these questions extensively and are the basis for Röttgen’s proactive plan. They talk about “Africa’s growing relevance for Germany and Europe”, due to the continent’s economic potential and “rich natural resources.”

Berlin therefore wants to strengthen “Germany’s political, security and development policy engagement in Africa”, to intervene “early, quickly, decisively and substantially” and “comprehensively deploy the whole spectrum of its available means.”

Since then, the German government has already considerably expanded its military interventions. In June, the first phase of the EU military operation “EUNAVFOR Med” was launched in the Mediterranean. Germany is participating in it with 327 soldiers and two frigates. Phases two and three will see the capture and destruction of refugee boats at sea, and

according to reports, also the use of bombers and ground troops in Libya.

Earlier this month, the United States announced that together with Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Spain it was planning a comprehensive military intervention in Libya. Thousands of mainly European soldiers will participate in the operation.

In July, Germany took the lead in the military training mission in Mali and also the unlimited extension of the operation. In the last weeks, talks have also taken place with the Netherlands to deploy more German soldiers in the embattled north of the country. In addition, Defence Minister von der Leyen is stepping up cooperation with the Tunisian military.

Now, the media is beating the drum for an expansion of this policy and for new wars in Africa. The protagonists are often the same as those whipping up incitement against Russia in recent years and who call for a military intervention in Ukraine. Stefan Kornelius, who has close ties to government-related think tanks, vehemently advocates confrontation with Russia.

Röttgen, too, is one of the rabble-rousers. He has vehemently advocated economic sanctions against Russia. When Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras paid a state visit there, Röttgen declared this to be “un-European”.

Now, they are planting their flags on the map of Africa once more.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact