

# German politicians and media promote military intervention in Syria

Johannes Stern  
17 September 2015

The German elite are using the refugee crisis in Europe to intensify their campaign for militarism and war. Since the government sealed the borders to stop the flow of refugees into Germany, politicians and the media have been pushing for a military intervention in Syria.

Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) led the way on Sunday. On the same day he announced Germany would reintroduce border controls, telling the German newspaper *Die Zeit* that Europe has “not acted decisively enough in its foreign and security policies.”

Although “the West bombed Libya,” they had “ended engagement as soon as the dictator was gone,” complained the interior minister. He added that “The fight against Syrian dictator Assad and the so-called ‘Islamic State (IS)’ was also not being carried out with the necessary determination.” One cannot stand by and “watch the killing any longer,” he added.

De Maizière exemplifies the militarist turn of German foreign policy during the last two years. In 2012, when he served as minister of defense, he criticized proponents of military intervention in Syria as “coffeehouse intellectuals” who “call for the deployment of soldiers without having to be accountable for it.” Now he raises the possible deployment of ground troops in the fight against IS in order to defend the interests of German imperialism in the Middle East.

To quote de Maizière: “We need a security strategy. One cannot defeat IS out of thin air. One cannot rely on the fight of the Kurdish Peshmerga on the ground alone.”

Wolfgang Ischinger sang the same tune in an interview with the *Münchner Merkur* Tuesday. The leader of the Munich Security Conference also called

for military intervention in Syria and even sending in German ground troops if necessary.

A “comprehensive political strategy” (Ischinger refers to the proposal of Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier to establish a large Syrian Contact Group, taking Moscow and Tehran into account) would “only be credible [...] if it is backed by credible military options.”

The EU would have to “be able to talk seriously about questions like protection zones in Syria for the millions of refugees” and “speak with the US and other nations about possible flight bans in and around Syria.” According to Ischinger, anyone who could not commit to that, should not “be surprised when hundreds of thousands or millions of refugees land here.”

The use of the German military was, therefore, “obvious.” While Germany had “wrongly looked away” before, it has now learned “with difficulty and somewhat late, that looking away does not free us from responsibility,” he said. “Inactivity” has consequences and the Syrian conflict had now “come crashing on our doorstep.”

The entire Middle East is “on the verge of a great explosion” and the “threat of instability spilling over” is enormous. With regard to ground troops, he would “not rule anything out.” For that, however, one would also have to “engage Syria’s neighbors in the region.” What was not permissible, according to Ischinger, was “the planning of crusade-style events”.

The war and propaganda strategies of the German elite are as repugnant as they are transparent. In reality, the “great explosion” of the Middle East, with its dramatic consequences, is not the result of “looking away” or “inactivity.” It is the result of the neo-colonial war policies of the West, which de Maizière, Ischinger and Co. now want to massively expand.

The rise of IS and the suffering of millions of refugees, which the German elite now uses as a pretext for direct military intervention in Syria, are direct results of previous interventions that left entire countries in ruins and cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Among them are, above all, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the NATO bombardment of Libya in 2011 and the civil war in Syria instigated by the West.

If anything is “explosive,” it is the offensive of the German government. While it did not, officially at least, participate in the wars in Iraq and Libya, it is now using the consequences of these illegal crusades to secure its piece of the pie in the redistribution of the Middle East and to promote the return of German imperialism on the world stage.

An interview with Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) in the Monday edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* underscores just how aggressive Berlin has become. Schäuble, who embodies more than anyone the role of the German “task master” of Europe with his brutal stance toward Greece, now demands, under the title “We cannot duck away,” proceeding with the drive to war despite the anti-militarist sentiments of the majority of the population.

According to Schäuble, Europe will naturally have to engage more strongly in Syria, and “in Germany we will have to get used to taking on even more foreign policy responsibility.” That the German population is “skeptical, even hostile” was “no badge of honor for Germany.” The government will have to “take note of it” but must “not be content with it.” Germany “cannot duck away.”

Then he threatens: “I know that especially in foreign policy we’ve come a long way since 1990. But we are far from finished. We must adjust to that. Our policies must show that we have the courage to lead, even when the opinion polls seem to speak another language.”

That is the voice of war and dictatorship! A further comment in the weekend edition of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* made clear how far German ruling circles are prepared to go in carrying out their reactionary plans. Under the title “The Order of the Day,” reserve officer Reinhard Müller argues not only for “an intervention” in Syria and a “robust” deployment for the “home front protection” of refugees, but also for the deployment of the military within Germany.

After noting that the military was until now on call only “as a kind of armed, technical aid organization,” he dresses up further demands in the form of questions: “Or must the military be used for the defense of housing accommodations? Or should it enable or prevent right-wing and left-wing extremist demonstrations, in case the police force is too weak?”

“Necessity knows no law,” concludes Müller.

It should be recalled that Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg justified the invasion of Belgium by Reich Defense on August 4, 1914 with precisely these notorious words. “We are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law,” said the Reich Chancellor. “Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, perhaps already entered Belgian territory. Gentlemen, this is a breach of international law [...] the wrong that we are committing we will endeavor to repair as soon as our military goal has been reached.”



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**