

German government plans global military offensive

Johannes Stern
12 November 2015

New military interventions by the German army (Bundeswehr) in Africa, the Middle East and Asia are being discussed and prepared in German defence and foreign policy think tanks, under the pretext of the “struggle against the causes of [refugee] flight”.

An article entitled “The Do-gooders” in the current issue of the news magazine *Der Spiegel* provides insight into these far-reaching plans. The projects are so massive that even the establishment *Spiegel* describes them as a “project between despair and megalomania.”

The goal of the government is “to ensure that as few refugees as possible set off for Germany,” and to “make large parts of the world a better place,” the *Spiegel* authors write. The article quotes Federal Defence Minister Von der Leyen: “We need to restore state power and stability in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya.”

The article leaves no doubt that this will be achieved by a massive expansion of German militarism abroad. “German military missions are being planned, expanded or extended from Mali to Iraq to Afghanistan—to a degree that nobody could have imagined just a few short months ago,” the authors write. The government was currently reviewing “the possibility of making Tornado reconnaissance planes available on the periphery of the Syrian conflict.”

In other words, following in the footsteps of the United States, France, Britain and Russia, Germany is preparing to intervene directly into the Syrian conflict with its air force.

Similar plans are being forged for Afghanistan. Last week, Hans-Lothar Domröse, the highest-ranking German NATO General called for the resumption of combat operations in Afghanistan and air strikes against the Taliban. Last Thursday, Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke out in favour of creating in Afghanistan

“internal alternatives to flight”, i.e., regions to which refugees from Afghanistan could be deported.

According to *Der Spiegel* discussions have already taken place at the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence “at state level” on increasing the number of Bundeswehr soldiers who deliver weapons and training to Kurdish peshmerga fighters in Iraq. The Bundeswehr is also planning “new arms shipments to the Kurds and the extension of aid to the central government in Baghdad.”

In addition, the deployment of the Bundeswehr should be extended to Mali, and the Defence Department was even considering a possible military mission in “the failed state of Libya”. According to the magazine, there “was little doubt in the German military leadership ... that the army would participate in such a mission.” An unnamed general is quoted saying: “As a leading nation within the alliance, Berlin can no longer stand aside.”

More outspoken German officers went even further. Domröse has already spoken of possible missions in Syria or Iraq. “It makes sense to militarily stamp out our neighbours’ fires. Otherwise, there is just misery and millions of people who begin fleeing to us,” *Der Spiegel* quotes Dömröse.

Of course, neither the magazine nor Domröse and the federal government explain how it “makes sense” to oppose streams of refugees with exactly the same military methods which have devastated Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria and turned millions into refugees in the first place.

In reality, the German elite is not the least interested in the “misery” of millions, which results from its own policies. Rather it is greedy for markets, raw materials, strategic influence and global power. A policy of more frequent and “dangerous military missions abroad,” as

Der Spiegel put it, is precisely the new foreign policy openly proclaimed by president Gauck and the German government at the Munich Security Conference in 2014.

At that time Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) had declared that Germany has to “lead more often and more decisively in the future” to pursue its global interests. Specifically, he listed “Syria, Ukraine, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Afghanistan, tensions in East Asia” as part of an “incomplete list of hot spots in the coming year” for German foreign policy.

This doctrine is now to be put into practice. On 18 September, at a conference of the Alfred Herrhausen Society and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in Berlin, Ursula von der Leyen declared: “Leading from the centre is no longer a vision, it is now an actual description. It is no longer a question of whether, but of how.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact