

German government preparing military intervention in Syria

Johannes Stern
23 November 2015

In the aftermath of the November 13 terror attacks in Paris, the German ruling elite is moving to rapidly implement the turn to an aggressive foreign policy announced two years ago by President Joachim Gauck.

Last Tuesday, Defence Minister Ursula Von der Leyen (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) announced at a meeting of European Union defence ministers that the German army was planning a combat mission to Mali in West Africa. Now, the German ruling elite is actively considering a military intervention in Syria.

According to a report in the latest edition of *Der Spiegel*, “for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic, the intervention of the German army into a combat zone in the Middle East [is] no longer ruled out.” The newspaper said that the chancellor’s office assumed that “Germany would have to participate if the United Nations Security Council adopts a resolution.” There was also no intention in the defence ministry of “ruling out” a combat intervention. They were reviewing “what would make sense”.

Although the news magazine claims that there are “likely no combat missions [planned] on the ground [and] not by the air force”, statements from senior security politicians and military figures, as well as comments in leading newspapers indicate that this is precisely what is being discussed and prepared behind the backs of the population.

CDU defence expert and chairman of the reservists’ association Roderich Kiesewetter called for the German air force to be deployed to identify ISIS targets in Syria. “Germany could significantly assist the international troops by providing Tornado reconnaissance planes”, he told the *Bild* newspaper, adding, “We provide targeting data, they send bombers.”

In an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the

head of the air force, Karl Müllner, underscored that the German army was capable in principle of a mission to take on Islamic State. “If we are asked, we could offer some capabilities”, the newspaper cited him as saying. “That would begin with support for others, for example with air transport. It could move on to reconnaissance capabilities with Tornados and includes capacities to combat targets on the ground.”

The generals clearly cannot wait to unleash the German air force to bomb countries for the first time since World War II.

“The Tornado, modernised in almost every aspect” was “currently the air force’s aircraft which [could] be deployed for air strikes.” There was an “adequate availability of precision-guided munitions, and the crews have the appropriate training.” The Eurofighter would also “probably be ready by the middle of next year to attack targets on the ground.” The “decisive step missing” was “the certification of a software modification”. This was “currently taking shape”. Then “comes the arming,” Müllner said, but this was “already approved by parliament”.

In the German media, which has been braying for war and a strengthening of the state daily since the Paris attacks, comments are now appearing that in their aggressiveness and choice of language recall the militarist propaganda of the Nazis. In Thursday’s *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Rainer Hermann called for the “military obliteration of IS”. There could be “no alternative to this, especially because this can be achieved with conventional military weapons—with air strikes and ground troops”.

The so-called Middle East expert does not even bother to consider the horrific consequences of an all-out air and ground offensive by the western powers in Syria and Iraq. Such a war would unavoidably mean

death for hundreds of thousands of residents in the region and could widen into a military confrontation with Iran and Russia, which is supporting the Assad regime in the Syrian civil war.

Hermann merely lamented that the west was not (yet) ready to wage the war of extermination he is demanding. Although the proxy forces on the ground and “the combatting of IS with western military technology from the air” was not enough, there was “no western country ... prepared to make their own forces available”.

A comment in the Berlin-based *Tagespiegel* went even further. In a piece entitled “With full force against terror”, Frank Jansen proposed in all seriousness a total war against IS and a permanent military occupation of the Middle East.

Jansen declared that it was “inevitable that the west is talking about the harshest methods possible: an expansion of the military engagement by the Americans, French, British and other allies, which has largely been confined to air strikes in Syria and Iraq, up to and including the deployment of ground troops.” The west also had to “wage a ‘complete’ war with infantry, tanks and artillery against one of its most vicious opponents.” Yet it could “take twenty years and more, the span of an entire generation, until the protection of a western military presence could be withdrawn due to the establishment of a domestic, half-way robust political infrastructure.”

The calls for military intervention by the German media must be taken as a warning. The return of Germany to an aggressive, great power foreign policy can only lead to catastrophe. Germany’s ruling class, which brought Hitler to power eight decades ago, initiated World War II and murdered millions, is preparing new crimes to defend its global economic and geo-strategic interests.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact