

German chancellor announces massive expansion of military budget

Johannes Stern
16 January 2016

The *Bild* newspaper reported on Thursday that the German government intends to massively increase the military budget. Chancellor Angela Merkel made the announcement at a sitting of the parliamentary defence committee on Wednesday. Already at the end of last year, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble spoke out in *Bild am Sonntag* in favour of “more deployments, more money for the army and more soldiers”.

The newspaper’s report gives a sense of the amounts of money being readied behind the backs of the population. “The US has repeatedly demanded in the past that all NATO members should spend 2 percent of their economic output on defence,” *Bild* wrote, adding, “To achieve this, Germany would have to spend €25 billion more this year alone.”

Germany has thus far planned to spend €34 billion on the military in 2016. This is more than 10 percent of the federal budget, but only 1.2 percent of the projected GDP.

The media, which has been beating the drums for war and rearmament for months, praised Merkel’s change of course and the pronounced militarist policy of the grand coalition.

In a comment in the same edition of *Bild* headlined “Security does not come for free,” a certain Hanno Kautz enthused, “We need more: more police, more surveillance—and also more Bundeswehr [German armed forces]. The government has now apparently recognised that.” It was “a good thing” that the chancellor had finally announced “an increase in the budget for the troops”, because whoever “wants to take on more responsibility, combat terrorism throughout the world, has to draw the [financial] consequences”.

But this also means, “Whoever spends more money on combatting terrorism has to cut spending elsewhere. Everyone should remember that when the next budget

negotiations take place.”

These statements make clear what workers and young people will face in coming months. The ruling elite intends to make the working class pay in several ways for the return of an aggressive German foreign policy: as cannon fodder for wars “throughout the world” and through massive social cuts to finance rearmament. At the same time, the repressive powers of the state are to be intensified so as to impose the drive to war against the opposition of broad masses of the population.

If one studies the commentaries in the bourgeois press, there can be no doubt that the German ruling elite views war as a key policy option.

In a comment in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Stefan Kornelius proclaimed, “[T]he actual source of war, terrorism and persecution” is in Syria, only then to lament that the Western military intervention is not being led decisively enough. Although “after the attacks in Paris” the “global desire” grew to “eliminate IS and assist Syria to establish a new order”, only a few weeks later, “weak-spiritedness is again widespread.”

Kornelius provocatively asked, “What has to happen to establish a coalition of the powers? A bomb exploding in Moscow’s Red Square? Dead tourists in Times Square in New York?” He answered in the same tone, “After five years of civil war, and numerous attacks and gruesome executions by the terrorist militia, after poison gas attacks and starvation, the answer should be obvious when terrorism is attacking the civilisation of the orient and occident.”

Kornelius’ propaganda is transparent. Having in the past enthusiastically supported the US-led wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, this member of several transatlantic think tanks and foundations is now demanding that the entire political establishment aim at a massive escalation of the war in Syria, in which

Germany is already a participant with six Tornado aircraft, two warships and 1,200 soldiers.

Significantly, Kornelius also used the events in “Cologne city centre” on New Year’s Eve to justify the expansion of the war. Last weekend, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a cartoon of a white woman being grabbed in the crotch by a black hand. The *World Socialist Web Site* stated at the time, “The racist agitation against refugees and immigrants is aimed at preparing the ground for an expansion of the war in the Middle East.”

This prediction has been confirmed. Kornelius is not the only one in the editorial offices of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* who intends to win the German population over to major and permanent wars. Just last weekend, his colleague Stefan Braun wrote in reference to the foreign policy shift by the German government, “Gauck’s intervention came not a moment too soon.”

It was “real relations which are demanding a greater and more dangerous intervention.” The new world is compelling Germany to launch more international interventions.

“The Germans” must now “decide for themselves under totally new conditions, what their convictions are worth”. This applies above all to the “new military interventions” in northern Iraq, Mali and Syria. “All three examples” were “not straightforward military interventions”, but would contribute to “a change in Germany’s consciousness. Military interventions are no longer the exception, they are becoming the norm in this new period of crisis.”

The constant propaganda that Germany is being overwhelmed by crises and is thus compelled to permanently wage war recalls the fatal argumentation of the German ruling elite on the eve of World War I. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the government and the media also declared that Germany was threatened and surrounded by enemies, making “attack the best mode of defence”.

However, the German ruling elite apparently underestimates one thing in its renewed old craze. After two horrific world wars with millions of deaths and unspeakable crimes, the great majority of the population will not be prepared once again to fight for the geostrategic and economic interests of German imperialism, in spite of all the filthy propaganda.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact