

White Paper 2016: Blueprint for a new German police and military state

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The “White Paper 2016 on the Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr [Armed Forces]” presented by the Ministry of Defence marks a new stage in the return of German imperialism and should be taken very seriously by workers and young people.

Quoted by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Tuesday, the draft dispenses with the central limitations imposed on German imperialism following its defeat in two world wars and amounts to a blueprint for the establishment of a new German police and military state.

The draft contains three central points. These include the deployment of the armed forces domestically, and extension of foreign military missions, independently of post-war allies, together with a strengthening of the Federal Security Council.

On the domestic use of the army it states: “The character and dynamic of present and future security policy threats make a further development necessary in order that the Bundeswehr can make an effective contribution to countering threats on the internal and external borders on a clear basis.”

In plain English: The prohibition of deploying the Bundeswehr at home, as well as the separation of the police and army, which is constitutionally enshrined due to the experiences under the Kaiser, during the Weimar Republic and under the Nazi dictatorship, are to be thrown overboard. Although these principles have been continually eroded ever since the 1968 Emergency Laws, a deployment of the army inside Germany has so far been prohibited.

In addition to dismantling the hurdles for the use of the Bundeswehr domestically, the draft White Paper further hollows out the previously existing legal limitations on foreign military missions. “In recent times, the number of deployments and missions has increased that call for immediate and consistent action,” the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* quotes from the White Paper. It will, however,

become increasingly more difficult “to maintain the framework of an integrated system of mutual collective security.”

The background to this according to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, are formed by “the rulings of the Supreme Court, according to which Bundeswehr foreign missions are only possible if the Federal Republic [of Germany] is part of such a system of mutual collective security.”

According to the White Paper, however, more and more deployments are happening “through ad-hoc cooperation” between states. “Given the further growth of Germany’s security policy responsibilities,” one has to “rise to these challenges.”

Since the infamous “Out of Area” ruling by the Supreme Court in 1994 it is “legal” for the Bundeswehr to be deployed de facto world-wide within the framework of armed missions, however, only as part of collective security systems such as the UN or NATO. While Germany has gone to war in Kosovo, in Afghanistan, and most recently in Syria and Mali in alliance with the US and other European powers, it is now preparing to pursue its imperialist interests independently of the other major powers.

The strengthening of the role of the Federal Security Council (BSR) outlined in the White Paper must be seen in this context. The BSR, which has so far been mainly involved in approving sensitive defence exports, is in future to be “continually involved in strategic questions,” the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* quotes from the White Paper. The BSR will be “strengthened ... as a body providing strategic impulses and control” and backed “with a working structure” as well as “extended by a subordinate coordination body.”

The planned enhancement of the BSR means transforming the “primacy of politics over the military”, also anchored in the constitution in light of the terrible history of German militarism, into its opposite. As in the

Kaiser's Empire and under the Nazis, a small circle of pro-war politicians and generals are once again to be the advocates and architects of German foreign and military policy.

The BSR is not subject to any parliamentary scrutiny and presently has nine permanent members: the Chancellor (Merkel), the Chancellery Chief of Staff (Altmeier), the Foreign Minister (Steinmeier), Defence Minister (von der Leyen), Justice Minister (Maas), Economics Minister (Gabriel) and Economic Cooperation and Development Minister (Mueller). As a rule, the Bundeswehr General Inspector, Volker Wiekert, also participates in BSR meetings.

The White Paper 2016 is a further step on the road to the revival of German militarism, announced by President Gauck and the government at the start of 2014. It has been discussed and elaborated for a year. As with the strategy paper "New Power—New Responsibility. Elements of German foreign and security policy for a Changing World", the original template for the new German foreign and great power politics, leading German journalists, academics, military, business representatives and representatives of all parliamentary parties were involved in its drafting.

The members of the four working groups—"Security and Defence Policy", "Partnerships and Alliances", "Bundeswehr" and "National Action Framework" that the White Paper establishes include, among others:

Sylke Tempel, chief editor of *Internationale Politik*; Thomas Bagger, chief of the planning staff at the Foreign Ministry; Major General Hans-Werner Wiermann, commander of the Bundeswehr's Territorial Command in Berlin; Winfried Nachwei, former security spokesman for the Green Party; Henning Otte, defence policy spokesman for the Christian Democratic Party/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) parliamentary group, Constanze Stelzenmueller, a former security policy editor at *Die Zeit* and Fellow of the American Brookings Institute; the historian Klaus Naumann from the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, and Matthias Herdegen, Professor of Law and Director of the Institute for Public Law, as well as director of the Institute for Law at the University of Bonn.

Representatives of the Left Party, who already contributed to the paper "New Power—New Responsibility", were involved in the process of drawing up the White Paper. Extensive video interviews with the defence spokeswomen of the Left Party, Christine Buchholz, and the Left Party representative on the

Parliamentary Defence Affairs Committee, Alexander Neu, can be seen on the White Paper's web site set up by the defence ministry. Buchholz had already participated in the meeting announcing the White Paper last February, and presented a lecture on the new German foreign policy at the German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP) just two weeks later.

The draft White Paper 2016 now issued by the defence ministry, due to be presented to the cabinet in June, has been praised by many Christian Democratic politicians.

For example, the chairman of the Interior Ministers Conference (IMK), Klaus Bouillon (CDU), supported the use of the Bundeswehr at home. "The Bundeswehr must be a reliable partner for internal security," he said on Tuesday in Saarbrücken. "After the awful terror in Belgium and France", he welcomed the considerations at federal level to change the constitution accordingly. In order to protect people, "all available forces" should be combined, he said.

The representatives of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Greens and the Left Party, commented on the paper in a manner that also signaled their approval of its basic thrust.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Bundeswehr, Hans-Peter Bartels (SPD), declared that he considered a debate on the possible uses of the Bundeswehr would be useful. However, in a newspaper article, he expressed scepticism over whether this required a constitutional amendment, saying, "There already exists laws concerning Internal Emergencies, national defence and official help in cases of natural disasters or serious accidents, which permit the use of the armed forces at home."

The SPD parliamentary defence spokesman, Rainer Arnold, told the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* that it made more sense to provide the police with additional resources, rather than make the already stretched Bundeswehr take on more tasks. The parliamentary group leaders of the Greens and the Left Party expressed something very similar. Anton Hofreiter (Greens) called for the police to be better equipped and Dietmar Bartsch (Left Party) said: "In order to ward off terrorists, we need a well-trained police."



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