

German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* demands military deterrence against Russia

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In the lead-up to the NATO summit in Poland in early July the professional warmongers in the German media are stepping up their rhetoric. They support NATO's current military build-up in Eastern Europe and call for a hard-line approach towards Russia.

A typical example of this was Thursday's lead article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* headlined "Back to Deterrence" by Daniel Brössler. Together with his colleague Stefan Kornelius, he is an editor of the paper which since the outset of the Ukraine crisis has been agitating aggressively against Russia and spreading militarist poison.

Brössler's comment culminates with the statement that NATO must "reckon with an opponent in the east ... which is building on the erosion of the West." The military alliance had to "prepare to be tested in the future. Whether it passes will depend not least on how it prepares now."

In other words, NATO must massively arm itself in Eastern Europe and prepare for a potential war with Russia, which it can also win!

Brössler writes, "The NATO which in the more than two decades since the end of the Cold War searched for its purpose beyond the alliance's territory is history. Its most important job is now to be found once again on its own borders. One result of the Warsaw summit is already clear: that NATO soldiers, even in modest numbers, will strengthen the armed forces of Poland and the three Baltic states."

The major NATO military build-up in Eastern Europe, including significant German involvement, obviously does not go far enough for Brössler. The three Baltic states had been "reassured ... again and again: which arises out of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: assistance in the case of a Russian attack." However, they "still confront the military reality. The Baltic states, easily separated from the rest of NATO territory, could hardly

be defended in a serious situation."

Brössler endorsed the "rotating deployment of a few hundred soldiers to each Baltic state and Poland" planned by NATO, but spoke out against the Polish proposal to "cast aside" the NATO-Russia Pact. This would be "irresponsible." The alliance must instead agree on a "double strategy of a dose of deterrence and targeted communication."

As the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*'s NATO and EU correspondent, Brössler is familiar with the debates being conducted by Western politicians and military personnel behind the backs of the population. Last Tuesday he cited in his article "Desire for deterrence" a current strategy paper titled "Closing NATO's Baltic gap." It concludes: "The Alliance is returning to the dual-track approach of deterrence and dialogue."

Jointly authored by former commander of the US Armed Forces in Europe and Supreme Commander of NATO Wesley Clark, former Supreme Commander of NATO's Allied Joint Force Command in Brunssum, Egon Ramms and other high-ranking military personnel, the strategy paper reads like a blueprint for war against Russia.

"The Alliance must act with a sense of urgency when it comes to reinforcing its deterrence posture in the Baltic states, where NATO is most vulnerable," Brössler cited the paper as saying, before going on to state, "It describes Russia's military predominance in the region in general as a particular problem, as well as the 'Suwalki gap' (the narrow land border between Poland and Lithuania near the Polish Suwalki border post) in particular. The spearhead (VJDF) created after the annexation of Crimea is neither quick nor large enough to be of potential assistance to cut off Baltic states. A credible presence in the area is necessary."

Brössler remains silent about the fact that, within the framework of "effective deterrence," Clark and Ramms

appeal not only for the build-up of conventional armed forces in Eastern Europe, but also for “strengthening” its “nuclear deterrence” and “offensive cyber capabilities”.

In a previous article, the *World Socialist Web Site* compared the paper to the detailed plans drafted by the generals of the imperialist powers prior to World War I. Clark and Ramms bluntly write, “NATO must signal to Russia that, in case of aggression against any NATO ally, there is no such thing as a limited conflict for the Alliance, and that it will contest Russia in all domains and without geographical limitations.”

Brössler is well aware that these preparations for a new “total war” against Russia are meeting with broad-based opposition. He referred to the “mistrust of citizens in the member states,” who “ask if this [NATO’s build-up in the east] does not increase the risk of war.” The question was “justified, but should always be linked to the question of Russia’s intentions.” Ultimately, a “threat” does not disappear “by ignoring it.”

Brössler attempts to justify NATO’s war preparations. He writes, “A few facts: Russia marched into a neighbouring country in 2014 and annexed part of that state’s territory. President Vladimir Putin has declared himself the protector of Russians outside of the Russian state’s borders. Despite economic difficulties, Russia is investing large sums in new weapons and the modernisation of the army. Russian jets risk clashes in daredevil manoeuvres with NATO planes and ships.”

He then cynically adds, “None of this means that Russia will one day inevitably violate the border of a NATO state.” If one considers “the facts as a whole, it rules out the blind assurance that Russia would not do so under any circumstances.”

Brössler speaks of “truths” and “facts.” Let us briefly examine these. Putin is a reactionary, nationalist representative of the Russian oligarchy. But in the Ukraine conflict, it is the Western powers who are the aggressors. Before Russia “annexed” Crimea, Berlin and Washington, in close alliance with fascist forces, organised a coup against Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovitch, after he had refused to sign an association agreement with the European Union.

They are now supporting the corrupt regime of billionaire oligarch Petro Poroshenko, which is waging a bloody civil war in the country’s east, collaborating closely with NATO and politically and militarily confronting Russia. Since the NATO summit in Wales, the alliance has massively built up its forces in Eastern Europe and is thereby provoking an outright clash with

the Russian military, which could quickly expand into a nuclear war among the great powers.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union 25 years ago, NATO has been systematically encircling Russia, with the US pursuing the goal of politically and militarily subordinating the country to its interests. With its support for the coup in Ukraine, German foreign policy also turned towards confrontation with Russia. Exactly 75 years after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, broad sections of the German ruling class are gripped by an aggressive, anti-Russian war fever.

In a recent comment, the political editor of *Die Welt*, Richard Herzinger, demanded measures to counter “Russian bayonets” and “aggressors” in the “stolen territory” by Moscow. “In its own interest,” it was “high time for Europe to support Ukraine much more decisively in its defensive struggle against the Russian invaders.”

Coming from the pen of a German journalist, such demands recall grim memories of the past. When in the summer of 1941 the German Wehrmacht marched into the Soviet Ukraine, the broadcaster Donau, Breslau and Krakow broadcast a daily appeal “to the Soviet population” at 11:15 a.m. In it, it was stated, “Ukrainian people! The great hour has come. The time you have longed for is here! The unbeatable German army has under the orders of its commander Adolf Hitler marched into your territory to help you break the chains of the Jewish-Bolshevik oppressors.”

Like most of the prominent warmongers in politics and the media, Herzinger and Brössler are not Nazis. But minus anti-Semitism, their propaganda stands precisely in that tradition. The Nazis also attempted to sell their long-planned war of extermination in the east, which claimed the lives of at least 27 million Soviet citizens, as a “defensive war” and a “war of liberation.”



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