

# German defence minister announces domestic use of Armed Forces

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The Bundeswehr, Germany's armed forces, are being prepared to be used domestically. This was confirmed by Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen (CDU, Christian Democratic Union) on Wednesday in an interview with the newspaper *Bild*. Joint exercises will start in a few weeks.

“Yes. In late summer, we will decide at the Conference of State Interior Ministers which scenarios we need to practice. In an emergency, the alarm chain must be ready, the responsibilities clear and sufficient staff available,” said von der Leyen. “Therefore, we will first undertake a command-level exercise, which will test the interaction between the federal government and the police authorities of several states.” Three federal states had “already expressed an interest.”

The defence minister left no doubt that “in an emergency”, the Bundeswehr would not only handle logistics, but would also “provide military support.”

“In acute cases, the police will decide what is needed to cope with a terrorist situation. In principle, the Supreme Court has made it clear that in extreme cases, the support of the military can be requested.”

In an interview in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Lieutenant General Martin Schelleis, responsible for the army domestically as chief of joint support, provided an overview of the extensive measures that are being prepared behind the backs of the population.

Upon request, according to Schelleis, the Bundeswehr can provide things like “technical capabilities such as low altitude mobile air surveillance to identify fast-flying aircraft,” or advise in the event of nuclear, biological or chemical threats, “possibly even using mobile laboratory capabilities.”

In addition, the Army could assist the police with armoured vehicles. Military police officers were already undertaking some police duties in foreign

missions “which do not fundamentally differ from those in Germany,” said Schelleis.

“In various missions abroad, our soldiers have also acquired considerable experience organizing checkpoints, dealing with explosive threats or guarding buildings. They bring knowledge and skills that could be used in a terrorist situation,” the general said.

Schelleis' statements illustrate the far-reaching consequences of the planned use of the Bundeswehr inside Germany. In an emergency, the Bundeswehr also brings to the home front the “knowledge and skills” it has acquired in war operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Mali—the disciplining and violent repression of the indigenous population!

The police-military deployment of the Bundeswehr so obviously violates the German Constitution that even advocates of a strict law-and-order policy have expressed criticisms. In a guest commentary in the business daily *Handelsblatt*, the head of the police union, Rainer Wendt, warned that the next “war games inside the country” could “override what is the most valuable thing our society has to offer, our Constitution.” He continued, “The men and women who drafted our Constitution knew exactly why they imposed strict limits on the deployment of the armed forces domestically.”

Wendt, who advocates a massive upgrade in police powers and equipment, does not directly address this. But the prohibition against Bundeswehr missions inside Germany, as well as the separation of the police and army, was anchored in the post-war Constitution precisely because of the experiences under the Kaiser's Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi dictatorship. The German military, and the Nazis' paramilitary combat formations, together with the intelligence services and the police, had served as

brutal instruments of domination and oppression at home.

This calamitous tradition is now to be revived. The new “2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr” formulates Germany's official security policy doctrine. It states in the section “Deployment and Role of the Bundeswehr in Germany” that “in order to assist the police in effectively managing emergency situations, the armed forces may, in certain conditions, perform sovereign tasks and exercise powers of intervention and enforcement.”

Both the White Paper and German politicians justify the use of the Bundeswehr by citing the recent terrorist attacks in Europe. In the *Bild* interview, von der Leyen said, “Paris has opened all our eyes. For me, scepticism now is preferable to an accusation later that we were not prepared.”

In reality, measures such as the imposition of a state of emergency as in France and the use of the army domestically by no means prevent future terrorist attacks. In a statement on the massive police deployment in Munich, the Socialist Equality Party warned:

“This did not make the situation any safer, on the contrary. Above all, the wars conducted by the US under the pretext of the ‘war on terror,’ and in which Germany has increasingly been involved, have transformed countries like Iraq, Libya and Syria into breeding grounds for terrorist networks where there had previously been none. Moreover, there are numerous links between Western secret services and Islamic terrorists, which are supported and financed by the allies of Western powers like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.”

It continues: “The real target of increasing state powers in the name of the ‘fight against terrorism’ is the working class and every form of social and political opposition. Under conditions in which social contradictions are intensifying, the European Union is breaking apart and the next financial crisis looms, the ruling class is preparing for fierce class battles. Growing militarism abroad is accompanied by the militarization of domestic politics.”

The White Paper advocates a European foreign and defence policy dominated by Berlin and dedicated to defending the geopolitical and economic interests of Germany worldwide. To this end, the military budget

will be almost doubled from the current level of nearly 39 billion euros. In the section “NATO and the European Union,” the White Paper states: “The federal government has set itself the task and will work to ensure long-term and in the context of the resources available to reach the target of two percent of GDP for defence spending and at the same time strives for an investment rate of 20 percent in the area of defence.”

As in the 1930s, the German elites know they have to establish a dictatorship in order to push through, against the resistance of the population, their plans for a massive rearmament programme and for war. This is the real reason for the exercises being carried out between the police and armed forces and for the deployment of the army inside Germany.



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