

After G7 summit, Merkel calls for European rearmament

Johannes Stern
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Following the collapse of the G7 summit in Charlevoix, Canada, the German government has intensified its campaign for trade war and military rearmament.

Only a few hours after US President Donald Trump announced via Twitter his refusal to agree to the G7 communique, Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democrats, CDU) was a guest on the Anne Will talk show on Sunday evening. She described Trump's decision as "sobering and depressing," and appealed openly for a more independent German-European militarist great power policy.

"We, as Europeans, have to take our fate more into our hands," Merkel said. We can "no longer hope as we did somewhat carelessly for decades that the US is already taking care of it." For Germany and Europe, this means "that we must promote our principles and values in Europe, potentially in alliance with Canada or Japan."

Behind the German government and European Union's propaganda phrases about "principles" and "values" are concrete economic and geostrategic interests. Merkel left no doubt that Berlin and Brussels will respond to the US' aggressive measures with essentially the same nationalist and militarist offensive as Trump. The German-European response to Trump's paradigm of "America first" is "Germany and Europe first."

The Transatlantic partnership could no longer be relied upon, stated Merkel. Instead, the question has to be posed, "Where must we be able to intervene alone?", and this would "of course mean new tasks for Europe." The "first loyalty" always belongs "to one's own country," but "the second, including in issues of foreign policy, should belong to the European Union."

The "foreign policy decisions" reached by Germany

and the EU are the further intensification of the trade war spiral and the transformation of the EU into a veritable military union. Merkel proclaimed that the government has already "prepared our own counter-measures" to the "unlawful" tariffs on steel and aluminium adopted by the US President. The American measures would be reported to the World Trade Organization on July 1. If Trump responds with further tariffs, for example on German cars, "we will think again about what to do." Germany and Europe "will not be pushed around, but we will also act" added Merkel.

That Merkel should speak so openly against Washington underscores that the breakdown of the post-war Transatlantic order has deep objective roots and is very far advanced. Just 15 years ago, when US President George W. Bush was preparing his illegal invasion of Iraq, Merkel wrote an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* criticizing then Chancellor Gerhard Schröder for not unconditionally backing the United States. For Germany, the partnership with the United States is "just as fundamental an element as the European Union," she wrote at the time.

Merkel now advocates a Europe under German-French leadership to be established independently of the US, Russia, and China as a military power bloc. She also supports "the intervention force proposed by French President Emmanuel Macron." It is now necessary, Merkel said, "to develop a common strategic culture," and "build our own capacities so we are able to implement our own approach—political solution, development aid, plus military action." Time is pressing, but there have already been "remarkable successes," Merkel said. They "only needed a year to initiate cooperation in defence policy with a defence union."

The essential issue is, Merkel declared, “will the European Union be able to advocate a joint foreign policy? Or will one always have one discussion with the United States, one with China, and perhaps another with a third country?” If Europe fails to become a “strong pole bound by loyalty,” it will be “crushed in a world where there are very strong poles: China, Russia, and America,” stated Merkel.

The German bourgeoisie is well aware that as in the past, it can only act as an independent great power if—to use Trotsky's words—Germany “organizes” Europe. At the same time, the push to emancipate oneself in foreign and military policy from the United States is intensifying the centrifugal tendencies within Europe which plunged the continent twice into bloody wars during the 20th century.

This was expressed most clearly in a lead article published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by co-editor Berthold Kohler on Tuesday: “Europe, never mind the world, will certainly not be healed by the German essence if the European Union falls apart, because one does not want to be 'ruled' by the others and the others no longer want to be 'excluded',” he warned. The “process of decay” has already begun with Brexit and will “only be stopped when the people (again) recognize that things work better within the EU and that when combatting the Trumps and Putins of this world, they are stronger together than alone.”

The last time the German bourgeoisie employed the slogan “The German essence will heal the world,” it sought through Hitler's Wehrmacht to seize control of Europe. Now they once again demand the subordination to German dictates. “In such a community, a minimum degree of solidarity and loyalty is required, as the Chancellor stated, but also loyalty to treaties and commitment to principles,” wrote Kohler. This is a reference to the austerity policies backed by Berlin and Brussels, which have plunged millions of workers and young people into poverty and unemployment across Europe while consolidating German hegemony over the continent.

What the war-mongers are discussing behind the backs of the population and presenting publicly as a supposed response to Trump is a monstrosity that cannot be allowed by the working class to come to pass. “The European powers will have to make their own efforts to overcome the security deficit, for which

they are not entirely free from blame, including in the area of nuclear capabilities,” wrote Kohler.

While all of the parliamentary parties—from the Left Party to the far-right Alternative for Germany—support the strengthening of German and European imperialism against the US, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei opposes these measures from the standpoint of the working class and fights for a socialist strategy against social inequality, militarism and war. The SGP counterposes to the war-mongers around the world the international unity of the working class. In a new era of trade wars and military conflicts, this is the only perspective capable of averting the outbreak of a third world war.



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