

Germany's Armed Forces seeks recruits for domestic deployment through “voluntary military service in homeland security”

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On April 6, Germany's Ministry of Defence gave the starting signal for “voluntary military service in homeland security.”

Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), the State Secretary in the Defence Ministry Peter Tauber and the Deputy Inspector General of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) Markus Laubenthal presented the project at a press conference. It initially provides for “a three-month basic military training followed by four months of special training for a total of about 1,000 soldiers.” This would be followed by a “six-year basic assignment as Bundeswehr reserve service members, during which at least five months of service would be performed.”

The new military service, which is to be gradually expanded, is part of a comprehensive militarisation offensive aimed at transforming Germany into a powerful military power again after two lost world wars in the 20th century. It serves two primary goals: the massive deployment of the Bundeswehr at home and the mobilisation of additional troops for new war missions.

“There is a military need for this service,” Tauber told the assembled press representatives. The Bundeswehr has “a military need for a new supplementary reserve structure, just as the Bundeswehr needs the reserve in general. We are currently experiencing this not only in administrative assistance but also in foreign missions.” In the “contingents ... up to 10 percent of the soldiers are reservists.” This shows “the importance that the reserve already has and will have in the future. The homeland security units, which are now growing again, have a clear military mission as security forces.”

Tauber spoke openly of the fact that with the new service, the comprehensive rearmament and war plans of the grand coalition—Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and

Social Democrats (SPD)—will be put into practice. “The Voluntary Military Service in Homeland Security—‘Your Year for Germany’—is, if you will, a logical derivation from the Reserve Strategy, which is, after all, one of the founding documents alongside the concept of the Bundeswehr and the Capability Profile,” he explained.

This is unequivocal. The “Concept of the Bundeswehr,” issued at the end of July 2018, is a blueprint for Germany's preparation for “very large” military operations and a possible third world war. The “concept” focuses on “mission orientation” and preparing the Bundeswehr “for new challenges, risks and threats across the entire spectrum of tasks and intensities,” as it says at one point in the document. For “national and alliance defence,” the Bundeswehr must be able to be deployed “in all dimensions with a short lead time, with comprehensive capabilities up to combat-ready, large-scale units within and also on the periphery of the alliance area.”

The “Capability Profile” is an internal document with a concrete plan for the massive upgrading of all branches of the Bundeswehr in the coming years. By 2031, the German army, air force and navy are to be systematically made ready for war.

Since the government officially announced the return of German militarism at the Munich Security Conference in 2014, the Ministry of Defence has been working intensively under the slogan, “return to national and alliance defence” to reverse the reduction of the armed forces since German reunification and the dissolution of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. At the same time, the offensive orientation of the Bundeswehr toward global war missions since then is to be maintained and further expanded.

The “reserve strategy” published in October 2019,

which will be implemented with the new military service, is designed to train the necessary soldiers for the planned war offensive. It speaks of a “renaissance of classical power politics, which also envisages the use of conventional military means in pursuit of national goals” and derives from this the need for a comprehensive militarisation of the whole of society.

Reservists would have to “strengthen the capabilities of the active force in the entire operational and mission spectrum of the Bundeswehr at home and abroad,” it says, and “act as agents and multipliers for the Bundeswehr in society, independent of orders and reservist service.”

The new military service means these plans are now being implemented at an accelerated pace. “With the establishment of five homeland security regiments, we will further strengthen homeland security structurally by 2025. As a group, the homeland security regiments will form the core of the Territorial Reserve and lead the Regional Security and Support Companies,” reads the daily order of the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr, Eberhard Zorn. “Especially given the hybrid scenarios of national and alliance defence, we need strong homeland security forces to protect infrastructure that is important for defence.”

Also, the units are to be increasingly deployed domestically “within the framework of administrative assistance, in the event of natural disasters, in the event of particularly serious accidents or, as is currently the case, in the context of the pandemic.”

The deployment of the units is a warning in two respects. Externally, the imperialist powers are escalating the confrontation with Russia and China, which conjures up the danger of a nuclear war with deadly consequences for humanity. German imperialism is playing an increasingly aggressive role in this. Only a few days ago, in an interview that is now prominently emblazoned on the defence ministry’s website, Kramp-Karrenbauer announced a further increase in defence spending and made threats against Moscow and Beijing.

Domestically, the ruling class has already used the military as an instrument of oppression in the Imperial Empire, the Weimar Republic and under the Nazis. Now it is once again preparing to crush social protests and revolutionary developments. It is responding to the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s, which has been further exacerbated by the dramatic health, social and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

The largest deployment of the Bundeswehr in German post-war history is currently underway under the guise of

providing “administrative assistance in the pandemic.” Last April, the Coronavirus Contingent was formed, with a strength of about 15,000 soldiers. Since the last increase on March 3, the federal and state governments have had as many as 25,000 soldiers at their disposal. Only a fraction of them provide direct medical aid. Many thousands are officially deployed under the category of “security/protection” and thus ultimately assigned to the police-military control of the population and defence of the capitalist state and its institutions.

As in the past, the ruling class rests on extreme right-wing forces in its militarisation offensive. In an earlier article, the WSWS has already described the “voluntary military service in homeland security” as “an invitation to neo-Nazis and other right-wing extremists to receive military training from the state in return for payment.” Even the term “homeland security” is a code word among right-wing terrorists and neo-Nazis. For example, the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), which murdered at least nine immigrants between 2000 and 2007, was recruited from the so-called “Thuringian Homeland Security.”

At the press conference, Kramp-Karrenbauer said that the name “Heimatschutz” had been a “very conscious political decision.” It had been a mistake “to simply leave the term *Heimat* to the right-wingers in this country, who also misuse it.” It was “time to bring this term back into the democratic centre and reclaim it,” she added cynically. The Bundeswehr has nothing whatsoever to do with democracy. With the uncovering of far-right terrorist structures in the Special Forces and other units, it is a clear centre of the fascist conspiracy in the state apparatus.



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