

# German Green Party leader Habeck wants to arm Ukraine against Russia

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Green Party leader Robert Habeck advocates supplying Ukraine with German weapons and providing it with more military support. This demand by the co-chair of the Green Party was not a lapse resulting from foreign policy inexperience, as some media commentaries claim, rather, the Greens are deliberately intensifying the war policy against Russia that they have been pursuing for a long time.

Last weekend, amid a tense situation, Green Party leader Robert Habeck travelled to Ukraine at the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Kiev is intensifying its military confrontation with Russia, and NATO is conducting its largest manoeuvres since the end of the Cold War directly on the Russian border, under the name “Defender Europe 2021.” They will last until mid-June.

Also in Habeck’s delegation were Manuel Sarrazin, a Bundestag (federal parliament) deputy who sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee for the Greens, and the Green Member of the European Parliament Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, who is a member of the EU Committee on Foreign Affairs and has already made multiple visits to Ukraine, where she is in charge of German and European economic projects there.

After talks with Zelenskyy and deputy military chief Major General Eduard Moskaljow, who was in charge of the delegation, Habeck stated that he considered “Ukraine’s wish for arms deliveries justified given the war in the east of the country.” So-called defensive weapons would be difficult to deny the country, he said.

Habeck added that the Greens were, of course, a party that came from pacifism. Every military conflict was a misery, he said, and “when people die, that is always bad.” But “if you look into the conflict between the pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian army a little bit,” you

cannot block Kiev from at least trying to defend itself.

When media representatives pointed out this contradicted the wording of the Green Party’s programme, which rejects arms exports to war zones, and the current guidelines of the German government, Habeck replied that he had explicitly referred to defensive weapons for self-defence.

To support his party leader, Green defence politician Tobias Lindner listed so-called defensive weapons systems. He wrote on Twitter: “Let’s discuss systems that are often used in types of operations such as defence or delay, i.e., anti-tank, anti-aircraft, and in addition, mine clearance, reconnaissance.”

On Deutschlandradio, whose reporter accompanied the Greens’ trip, Habeck repeated his demand the next day. He said he understood that Ukraine felt left alone. Armoured vehicles could be used to transport injured people or to clear mines and should therefore be delivered to Kiev.

The visit to the front had been impressive, he said, “but the statements about which the whole fuss has now arisen” had not been a spontaneous reaction to the dire situation on the ground, but the result of “a political analysis that had already been made before I started my trip.”

Germany was not taking adequate account of Ukraine’s security interests, was finishing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and was trying to lift sanctions against Russia, he said. At the same time, he added, there was the Russian troop build-up against Ukraine. “Crimea has been annexed. And Germany is not supplying medivacs, night vision equipment, explosive ordnance disposal, and I made that clear once. You just have to do something so your words don’t just sound like mockery.”

Ukraine also defended Europe’s security, Habeck

said in the Deutschlandradio interview. If the country were to lose the conflict over Crimea, he said, there was a danger that Russia could act in other regions in the same way as it had in Crimea. He said that Ukraine's accession to NATO was desirable but not yet feasible in the current situation. NATO was not yet prepared for this, "not sorted out enough," as Habeck put it.

Habeck's visit and his talks in Kiev are directly related to a new initiative by the Ukrainian government to reconquer the Crimean Peninsula.

The so-called "Strategy for the Recovery of Crimea" is based on close cooperation with the US government. In early May, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Kiev for talks and assured President Zelenskyy of the "unwavering support of the United States." Blinken announced that the US government's extensive military assistance would be significantly expanded. Within the framework of a security partnership, \$300 million per year are to flow from Washington to Kiev in future for the development of the military.

Blinken was accompanied by Victoria Nuland, the State Department Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Nuland was one of the most aggressive supporters of the US- and EU-backed coup that toppled elected pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 and brought to power a far-right government opposed to Moscow.

That same year, a recorded conversation between Nuland, who was deputy secretary of state at the time, and the US ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, became public. The two bluntly discussed what composition of government they were calling for after the coup in Kiev.



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