

# German media on course for war against Russia

Peter Schwarz  
18 January 2022

Following the German media over the last few days, one would be forgiven for thinking that its commentators have lost their minds. They seem hell-bent on waging war against Russia or the Soviet Union for the third time in just over a century, as if World War I and World War II had not brought enough suffering and destruction to Europe.

*Der Spiegel* appeared at the weekend with the editorial “Treat Putin as an adversary—not as a partner.” The news magazine calls on NATO to “finally deliver lethal weapons to Ukraine.” Americans and Europeans have “long tried to contain the Russian president through dialogue,” it says. “To no avail. It is time for a radical change of strategy: the West must raise the price of an invasion of Ukraine so high that it is too high even for Putin. And that is only possible by seeking confrontation—diplomatically, economically and indirectly also militarily.”

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* accused Russia of seeking “hegemony over all of Europe.” The newspaper compared Moscow’s “claim to power” with the policies of Hitler, who supported the 1936 fascist putsch in Spain and then smashed Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The answer of the FAZ is nuclear deterrence. The president of the nuclear power France, Emmanuel Macron, already offered the partners in the EU talks about a nuclear strategy in 2020, the newspaper notes. This offer is still “on the table.” It is associated with serious risks: “In the end, a conflict on Latvia’s eastern border could then lead to a strike against Paris.”

Therefore, according to the FAZ, “First of all, the conditions must be created so that all participants are willing to take this risk.” For this to happen, the unification of Europe must progress quickly. In this spirit, the Berlin traffic light coalition speaks of the goal of a “European federal state” and Macron of “sovereign Europe.”

*Die Zeit* published a guest article by Ulrike Franke headlined, “The hardships of the world are not for softies.” The 34-year-old employee of the European Council on Foreign Relations, who wrote her doctoral thesis on the use of drones in Western armies, complains bitterly that

members of her generation who are now becoming politically active in Germany struggle with “power politics.”

“A skepticism about geopolitics, an unwillingness to think in terms of power and interests, and a rejection of the military as an element that determines geopolitical influence” dominates, Franke laments. “My generation developed an almost romantic idea of international relations.”

To ensure that “our” interests are heard, she concludes, “we need to think more about Europe’s and Germany’s power and influence. We need to relearn geopolitics.” It is also “about the question of how the Bundeswehr must be equipped and managed in order to be taken seriously again as a deterrent.”

There is hardly a newspaper or news program that does not advocate something similar. The rumours spread by the CIA and the US government of an imminent Russian attack on Ukraine dominate all news as if they were established facts. They are about as credible as the false reports about weapons of mass destruction with which the US justified the war against Iraq in 2003.

The German foreign minister also sharpened her tone towards Russia after the change of government in December. Yesterday, Green Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock again threatened in Kiev that Moscow would pay a “high price” in the event of aggression. It is not to be expected that she will adopt a different tone on her inaugural visit to Moscow today.

Baerbock also said that she was striving for a diplomatic defusing of the highly dangerous situation and rejected the Ukrainian demand for German arms deliveries. But this task is currently being taken on by the US, which is massively arming Ukraine and openly threatening to unleash a bloody guerrilla war in Ukraine, as they have done in Syria and numerous other countries.

According to a report by the *New York Times*, both Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley have warned their Russian counterparts over the phone that the CIA and Pentagon

would support a bloody insurgency against a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Former NATO commander-in-chief James Stavridis also warned, “If Putin invades Ukraine with a major military force, US and NATO military assistance—intelligence, cyber, anti-armor and anti-air weapons, offensive naval missiles—would ratchet up significantly.”

The war against Russia that the governments in Washington and Berlin and the servile media are preparing is sheer madness. It is unlikely that any of the writers who now preach confrontation, power politics and nuclear deterrence have given even a second thought to the catastrophic consequences of the course they are pursuing.

In their eagerness to demonize Russian President Vladimir Putin, they completely overlook the fact that no Russian government, whoever was the leader, would be willing or able to tolerate NATO’s steady advance. In the successor state of the Soviet Union, which played a decisive role in defeating Nazi barbarism in World War II and lost 25 million people, the memory of this horrible experience lives on.

It has not escaped the notice of the Russian public that in NATO and EU member Latvia, every year on March 16, the day of “Legionnaires Day,” SS veterans who committed unspeakable crimes on the side of the Nazis are celebrated, and statues of Nazi collaborators like Stepan Bandera, who was involved in mass murders, are erected in the supposedly democratic Ukraine.

The myth of Russian hegemonic aspirations also turns reality on its head. Ever since Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin’s political mentor, dissolved the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union 30 years ago, NATO has increasingly encircled Russia, despite promises to the contrary. It is now directly on the Russian border.

It has dismembered Yugoslavia, grossly disregarding existing borders, which it now declares inviolable in the case of Crimea. It even waged an illegal war to separate Kosovo from Serbia, collaborating with elements who have since been accused or convicted of crimes against humanity and organized crime.

The US and its NATO allies have also waged wars against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria in order to defend their geostrategic hegemony. But each of these wars ended in disaster. Tens of millions had to flee, millions died, and entire societies were destroyed. The US and its allies could not even defeat the Afghan Taliban, despite investing trillions in weapons and bombs. A war over Ukraine would result in an even greater disaster, destroying much of Europe.

In Eastern Europe, the expansion of the EU and NATO has not led to prosperity and democracy. Instead, low wages and

poverty prevail, while a corrupt elite enriches itself immeasurably. The governments in Poland and Hungary are now so openly disregarding elementary democratic rights that even the European Union felt compelled to take action.

The regime in Kiev was brought to power in 2014 in a US-German-backed coup that relied on fascist militias.

On the very day that German Foreign Minister Baerbock visited Kiev, former Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko also returned to the country to face trial. The billionaire oligarch came to power as a result of the 2014 coup and remained the country’s president for five years. Now his successor Volodymyr Zelensky is pursuing him for high treason. He is said to have made lucrative deals with pro-Russian separatists during his presidency while supporting right-wing nationalists, which Poroshenko denies.

The bitter power struggle between the various cliques of Ukrainian oligarchs is another factor increasing the risk of war. Preparations for war against Russia are like playing with fire in an ammunition depot. Only a ruling class that has completely lost its head can pursue such adventurous policies.

Ultimately, the drive to war is the result of the bankruptcy of a capitalist system torn by insoluble contradictions. The pandemic has taken social contradictions to the extreme. While at least 15 million people worldwide have died from the virus and 163 million have been plunged into poverty because of the pandemic, the world’s top 10 billionaires have doubled their wealth to \$1.5 trillion, according to the latest Oxfam report. On the other hand, there is growing resistance from the working class.

The ruling class reacts to this—as in 1914 and 1939—with its insane war policy. Only a united movement of the international working class, fighting against social inequality, war and capitalism, and for a socialist society, can halt this madness.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**