

German government plans missile defence system for war against Russia

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Four weeks ago, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced tripling of the military budget, Germany's biggest rearmament offensive since the end of the Second World War. Since then, things have proceeded rapidly. The decision to procure dozens of nuclear-capable F-35 stealth bombers is now being followed by a plan to establish a national missile defence system.

On Tuesday, a parliamentary delegation from the Bundestag's defence committee travelled to Israel to explore the purchase of the US-Israeli "Arrow 3" system, which has been in operation in Israel since 2017. It is designed to destroy enemy long-range missiles in the upper atmosphere or even in space. The range of the approximately seven-metre-long missiles is put at about 2,400 kilometres.

Plans for the installation of the multi-billion-dollar system are already well advanced, apparently. The missile radar systems would be "set up at three locations in Germany" and "report their surveillance data to the National Command Post in Uedem (Lower Rhine)," *Bild am Sonntag* reported on 27 March. The radars are "so powerful that the protective screen could also cover Poland, Romania or the Baltic states."

The procurement of the system is part of the NATO war offensive against Russia and the assertion of German imperialism aiming to organise Europe under its leadership. *Bild am Sonntag* quotes the main spokesman on the defence budget committee, Andreas Schwarz (Social Democratic Party, SPD), saying, "We must protect ourselves better against the threat from Russia. To do this, we need a Germany-wide missile defence shield quickly. The Israeli Arrow 3 system is a good solution. We can also stretch the Iron Dome over our neighbouring countries. This would give us a key role in Europe's security."

On Sunday evening, Scholz also confirmed the plans.

He had "resolved not to divulge the details of a plan that has not yet been finalised," but he explained on the ARD television channel that the missile defence system was "certainly one of the things we are discussing." It was "urgently necessary that we provide the Bundeswehr [Armed Forces] with more resources, with more tanks, more air defence capabilities, and enable it in many other ways so that it can perform the task it has to perform."

As in his war speech to the Bundestag on February 27, the chancellor justified the planned arms build-up by the supposed threat from Russia. "We must all prepare ourselves for the fact that we currently have a neighbour who is prepared to use force to assert its interests," he stressed. "And that's why we have to join forces to make sure that doesn't happen."

This is the familiar propaganda. In fact, the imperialist powers use "force" all the time to advance their economic and geostrategic interests. The wars of aggression and regime change operations in Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria in the last 30 years alone, which violated international law, have destroyed entire countries and cost millions of lives.

The "turning point" in foreign policy proclaimed by Scholz was prepared for a long time. The systematic military encirclement of Russia by NATO and the imperialist powers—above all Germany and the USA—has deliberately provoked Putin's reactionary attack on Ukraine. Now, the German ruling class is using the situation to reassert itself as the dominant power in Europe and organise the continent under German leadership.

Germany was "the country with the largest military expenditure in the European Union," Scholz said. He went on to cite the NATO target of each member state's spending two percent of its GDP on the military.

“If we now meet the two percent, we will be the country in the European NATO alliance with the highest military expenditure and with the strongest defence infrastructure,” Scholz boasted on television. The Bundeswehr would play “a central role for alliance and national defence, especially with our capabilities on the ground.” Along with the USA, only Germany would have “the force that is necessary for the entire alliance. And we will have to organise it accordingly.”

Scholz repeatedly threatened Russia. Germany would “make itself so strong that no one will dare to attack us. And that is the message we are also sending to the Russian president: Don’t you dare!” He said he had repeatedly emphasised what President Joe Biden “has now also said in Poland: NATO’s mutual assistance commitment applies to us.” We will “defend every inch of NATO territory. An attack on the Baltic states, on Poland, on Slovakia or other countries would be like an attack on ourselves.”

Neither his interviewer nor Scholz explained to the television audience what these statements meant. The so-called “mutual assistance obligation,” governed by Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, states “that an armed attack against one or more” parties “shall be considered as an attack against them all” and “that in the event of such an armed attack each of them ... shall render assistance to the party or parties under attack ... including the use of armed force.”

In other words, if the Ukraine war, which is being systematically fuelled by the imperialist powers through arms deliveries and the massive build-up of NATO troops in Eastern Europe, spreads to an Eastern European NATO country, Scholz and the German government are committing themselves to going to war against Russia. The consequence would be a devastating third world war.

Unlike during the German invasion of the Soviet Union in World War II, which cost between 30 and 40 million lives, Russia today has nuclear weapons. These could be used in the event of a “threat to Russia’s existence,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and former Russian President and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, currently deputy head of the Russian Security Council, warned a few days ago. Influential circles in the NATO powers openly regard the use of nuclear weapons as a legitimate option.

An article on the *World Socialist Web Site* posed US

President Biden two questions that Chancellor Scholz should also answer: 1) When in your election campaign did you state that you would risk a nuclear war with Russia? 2) How many hundreds of millions, or billions, of people do you expect will die in the United States, Europe and throughout the world in a nuclear exchange with Russia?

If the German ruling class has its way, the working class must bear the cost in every way, as cannon fodder on the battlefield and in the form of massive social attacks. To his interviewer’s question whether he could promise “that the debt ceiling will be reintroduced in 2023,” Scholz replied succinctly, “It’s in the constitution.” That is as brief as it is clear. Every cent that flows into military rearmament will be squeezed out of the population again—even if it means impoverishing the majority of working people.

Today’s speeches by German leaders are increasingly reminiscent of the belligerent tirades during the First and Second World Wars. “Yes, there are tougher days ahead for us in Germany, too,” declared German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Sunday. “And the whole truth is: many hardships still lie ahead... Our solidarity and support, our steadfastness, even our willingness to make restrictions, will be required for a long time to come.”

The working class must reject the despotic rearmament and war plans of the ruling class as well as its demand to endure “hardships” and “restrictions” for the sake of German imperialism. Not a cent for German militarism! Never again war! There is only one way to prevent a relapse into world war and barbarism—the building of an anti-war movement of the international working class that abolishes the cause of war—capitalism—and fights for a global socialist society.



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