

Germany's preparations for a third world war in full swing

Peter Schwarz

4 May 2022

The United States and its NATO allies are intensively preparing for a third world war. Looking back on the First World War, the great powers were said to have “slithered” into the war, but now they are racing open-eyed into disaster.

The claim that the Ukraine war is about defending democracy and national independence is proving more specious by the day. In reality, it is about control over Russia's vast landmass and rich mineral resources and the redivision of the world among the major imperialist powers. The Ukraine war joins those in the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa with which the US and its allies have tried to secure their world domination.

The reactionary and short-sighted decision to attack Ukraine militarily by Russian President Vladimir Putin in response to NATO's encirclement of his country provided the latter with the welcome—and desired—pretext for a massive military escalation.

The US is flooding Ukraine with weapons and promising that there will be no let-up until Russia is “defeated” and its “backbone broken.” Germany is using the war to remove all obstacles that previously stood in the way of unrestrained rearmament.

What was considered a “red line” one day is crossed the next. First, the German government increased the arms budget by €100 billion in one fell swoop, without prior consultation, and abandoned the principle of not supplying weapons to war zones. Ukraine was first supplied with light and then with heavy weapons. In the meantime, Ukrainian soldiers are also being trained on German soil, although according to an expert opinion by the Bundestag (parliamentary) Scientific Service, this constitutes participation in war under international law.

The German government's preparations for a Third World War are not limited to arming the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) and providing military support to Ukraine. Economic, foreign and even climate policy are

also being put at the service of war policy.

The former editor-in-chief of finance daily *Handelsblatt*, Gabor Steingart, speaks bluntly about this in his “Pioneer Briefing” on Tuesday. Without the slightest qualms, he discusses the question of what is required to make a world war “manageable”:

“The waging of a Third World War is not just a military issue,” he proclaims. It is “first and foremost an economic issue. For without economic disentanglement along the power and military blocs, effective warfare that can be sustained over a longer period is impossible, as we can already see from Germany's dependence on Russian natural gas.”

“Whoever wants to make world warfare manageable must first unbundle world trade,” Steingart emphasises. “Economic independence is more important than billions more for the Bundeswehr. So, it is not only the soldiers and their military equipment that must be gathered into an offensive formation, but also economic resources.”

“Viewed with this economic eye,” he then states, “the preparations for making a Third World War manageable are in full swing.”

Unfortunately, Steingart is right about that. Although a third world war would mean the end of humanity, the German government is busily making the economic and geopolitical preparations for it, in addition to the military ones. In recent weeks, it has set a course to reorganise trade and economic relations for a war against Russia and China.

For example, in his first trip to East Asia after taking office, Chancellor Olaf Scholz made a demonstrative visit to Japan. Unlike his predecessor Angela Merkel, who paid twelve visits to China and only five to Japan during her 16 years in office, Scholz did not go to Beijing. At €246 billion, Germany's trade volume with China is six times as high as that with Japan. The value of German direct investment in China, at €96 billion, is also many times its

€16 billion in Japan.

But Scholz, who travelled to Tokyo accompanied by a large business delegation, wanted to demonstrate that Germany is again committed to close cooperation with Japan. He agreed on closer cooperation in the strategically important high-tech sector and in the production and supply of liquid hydrogen as an alternative energy source. Regular government consultations with Japan, previously only held with China, were also agreed.

The escalating conflicts with Russia and China played a central role in the talks conducted by Scholz and the Japanese head of government Fumio Kishida. Germany and Japan also want to cooperate more closely militarily. After the German frigate Bayern conducted exercises with Japanese forces last year, six German Eurofighters are to take part in manoeuvres in Australia this autumn, from where they will also fly to Japan.

With his orientation towards Japan, Scholz is following bad historical traditions. Japan was allied with Nazi Germany in the Second World War and, along with Italy, was one of the so-called Axis powers. While Germany waged a murderous war of extermination in the Soviet Union, Japan committed terrible war crimes in China and other Asian countries, for some of which it still denies responsibility today.

While Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Social Democratic Party, SPD) and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) are concerned with strengthening the international war front against Russia, Economics Minister Robert Habeck (Greens) has taken on the task of cutting off Europe from Russian energy supplies that date back to Willi Brandt's *Ostpolitik* of the early 1970s.

Having already imposed an import ban on Russian coal in April, the European Union is expected to decide this week on an oil embargo as well, thanks to Habeck's efforts. Because the share of Russian oil in Germany's oil consumption has fallen from 36 to 12 percent, the German government has given the green light for an embargo. Countries like Hungary and Greece, which are far more dependent on Russian oil, are to be given a transitional period.

In 2021, the EU was still buying 3.4 million barrels of oil and oil products a day, about a quarter of its needs, from Russia. How these are to be replaced is not clear. Sanctions are also in place against Venezuela and Iran, two major oil producers. OPEC, of which Russia is a member, has so far refused to increase production accordingly.

It is certain that the embargo will lead to a further

increase in energy prices, which are already at record levels and are among the main drivers of inflation. So, it is the population who will foot the bill. Even Habeck had to admit that such a measure would not leave Germany unscathed. However, he considers the embargo important "because we are relieving ourselves of some of the moral guilt of keeping the Putin regime alive with our payments."

The insane policy of preparing a third world war and making it "manageable" is supported by all parties represented in the Bundestag, up to and including the Left Party, which only expresses reservations on secondary issues.

The Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), now they are no longer in government, have lost all inhibitions. Yesterday, they published a "Cologne Declaration" advocating unbridled militarism under the title "Security in New Times."

Germany must "urgently define its national interests against the background of the new reality" and "adopt a national show of strength to implement and safeguard them," it says. "To meet this challenge, comprehensive military capabilities are needed, which will also entail many a sacrifice and burden."

In addition to a "new security strategy" that addresses not only external but also internal threats—"such as targeted disinformation campaigns and all forms of extremism"—the document also advocates a "new globalisation strategy" focussing on Europe, the US and Africa and which "reassesses dependence on other states [meaning Russia and China]."

"Globalisation strategy and security strategy are two sides of the same coin and make it clear that Germany will have to assume more responsibility in the world," it then says. Put in plain English: The global interests of German big business and the use of military means are two sides of the same coin, which Germany must use more of worldwide.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact