

German government and opposition agree on €100 billion special fund for war

Johannes Stern
1 June 2022

On Friday, as part of the budget debate, the federal government plans to pass the so-called Special Fund for the Bundeswehr to the tune of €100 billion. This is the biggest rearmament offensive since the fall of Hitler's Third Reich 77 years ago. It makes Germany the most powerful military nation in Europe.

“The decision to now equip the Bundeswehr significantly better via the special fund will have a considerable impact. Germany will soon have the largest conventional army in Europe within the framework of NATO,” Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Social Democratic Party, SPD) gloated in an interview with the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* on Monday.

In backroom talks the day before, the governing parties—SPD, Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Greens—had agreed to launch the special fund with the largest opposition faction, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU).

“We have successfully concluded our talks this evening on an amendment to the constitution to create a special fund for the Bundeswehr with the purpose of strengthening alliance and defence capabilities, as well as on a law to finance the Bundeswehr and establish this special fund,” the parties announced in a joint statement.

They “jointly ensure that the Bundeswehr will be strengthened in the coming years with 100 billion euros in additional investments.” In doing so, “NATO's so-called two-percent [of GDP] target will be achieved on a multi-year average.” At the same time, “an initiative to accelerate procurement will be launched immediately and before the parliamentary summer recess.”

The government will also “present a strategy to strengthen security in cyber and information space.” Additional measures “for cyber security, civil defence and the strengthening and stabilisation of partners”

would be financed from the federal budget. And even “after the special fund has been drawn down,” the “necessary funds would continue to be provided to achieve the NATO capability goals then in force.”

In other words, the rearmament plans go far beyond the special fund and amount to a permanent ballooning of the military budget. Even achieving the two-percent target means that the defence budget will rise from the current level of about €50 billion per year to well over €70 billion. Scholz had already announced the massive rearmament programme in a speech on February 27, presenting a long list of armament projects in the Bundestag.

It concerned the “next generation of combat aircraft and tanks,” the “Eurodrone” and “the acquisition of the armed Heron drone,” the Chancellor explained. Also, “for nuclear sharing,” he said, “a modern replacement for the obsolete Tornado jets will be procured in good time.” In any case, Germany needed “aircraft that fly, ships that set sail, and soldiers who are optimally equipped for their missions.”

The rearmament offensive is in every respect a declaration of war on the working class. The costs will be borne exclusively by workers. “I am inscribing on my banner: preserve the debt brake, avert tax increases, finance the Bundeswehr more strongly,” Finance Minister Christian Lindner told broadcaster ZDF on Monday. In a year of war and crisis, this was “a good start to continuing budget consolidation.” In 2023, for him, “the debt brake is non-negotiable.”

What that means is obvious. Every cent that flows into rearmament and war will be taken from the working class. This year, the departments of labour and social affairs and education will be cut by a total of more than five billion euros. And that is only the beginning. To get a better grasp of the dimension of the

impending slash-and-burn: The current education budget, at around €20 billion, is just about one-fifth of the planned Bundeswehr special fund.

Very directly, rearmament serves the escalation of the NATO war against Russia. In his interview with the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, Scholz bragged about Germany's leading role in arming Ukraine. He said that Germany had already “supplied weapons on a large scale from Bundeswehr stocks, for example hundreds of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, thousands of anti-tank mines and hand grenades, many millions of rounds of ammunition.”

In addition, his government had “compiled a list of military equipment that the Ukrainian defence ministry can order from the German arms industry.” This included heavy weapons such as Gepard anti-aircraft guns. And the self-propelled Howitzer 2000 was being delivered and Ukrainian military personnel were being trained on the weapon systems “so that they can also operate this equipment.” In addition, Eastern European countries “that transferred Russian-made weapons”—including battle tanks—“to Ukraine, which can be used there immediately,” would be supported by backfilling.

In the general debate in the Bundestag on Wednesday, Scholz announced further arms deliveries and promised to supply Ukraine with the modern Iris-T air defence system and tracking radar.

Representatives of the same ruling class that conducted a war of extermination against the Soviet Union in World War II are now reiterating that Germany's war aim today is the military defeat of Russia.

“Russia must not win this war under any circumstances, and that means this needs a strategic defeat for Russia,” Green Party Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock demanded on Deutschlandfunk radio on Monday. “Ukraine must be able to win,” and that was why “it is so crucial we continue to support Ukraine in this situation, continue to ensure they can push back Russian troops in the Donbass in particular.”

Officially, Scholz, Baerbock and Co. justify their “foreign policy turn” with Putin's invasion of Ukraine. But this is pure propaganda. In fact, the plans—including the €100 billion 'special fund'—were prepared long in advance.

With the systematic military encirclement of Russia,

NATO deliberately provoked the Ukraine war. Now, the imperialist powers are escalating the conflict to subjugate a resource-rich Russia. In the process, Berlin is pursuing the goal of establishing itself as the leading European power and building independent German-European military structures to pursue its global interests—increasingly, also, against the United States.

“The EU must finally give itself a foreign and defence policy that includes, for example, joint cyber and missile defence. EU states could also acquire joint aircraft carriers to become operational in self-defence or the world's crisis areas,” Manfred Weber, leader of the European People's Party (EPP) bloc in the EU, told *Der Spiegel* in a recent interview.

And regarding the United States, he added, “The role of the USA is elementary at the moment. But in the long term they may not be able to remain our protective power but will have to turn to Asia. Therefore, the EU must conduct its own foreign and security policy and get down to the nitty-gritty. This includes the question of the nuclear shield.”

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) and the *World Socialist Web Site* have strongly condemned the ruling class war conspiracy from the beginning. The task now is to organise the growing opposition in the working class by building a powerful anti-war movement and arming it with a socialist programme. The SGP event entitled “No Third World War! Billions for health and work instead of armaments and war!” was an important step in this.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact