

German parliament votes for NATO admission of Finland and Sweden to intensify war on Russia

Johannes Stern
10 July 2022

Germany's lower and upper chambers of parliament, the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, voted by large majorities Friday to admit Sweden and Finland to NATO. Germany is thus one of the first countries to formally ratify the northward enlargement of the military alliance agreed upon at the NATO summit in Madrid.

With the admission of Finland and Sweden, NATO is creating a new front in the war against Russia in Scandinavia and throughout the Baltic Sea region. This further increases the risk of an all-out war against a nuclear-armed power, which could cost millions of lives and destroy the whole of Europe.

The day before the vote, the Finnish Parliament passed a law to massively fortify the more than 1,300-kilometre-long land border with Russia. The aim of the law is "to improve the operational capacity of border guards to respond to hybrid threats [from Russia]," said Anne Ihanus, a senior adviser at the Ministry of the Interior.

In doing so, NATO is also setting into motion a dangerous rearmament spiral in Northern Europe. Should "military contingents and military infrastructure be deployed in Finland and Sweden," Russia would be forced to respond in kind, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned during the NATO summit.

Nevertheless, the war policy is supported by the entire ruling class. In addition to the governing Social Democrats (SPD), Free Democrats (FDP) and Greens, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) also backed the admission of Finland and Sweden. Only the Left Party voted against it in the Bundestag, while making clear that it also supports NATO enlargement.

In his speech, the Left Party's foreign policy spokesman, Gregor Gysi, praised Sweden and Finland. They have "done a lot in recent decades as militarily neutral states." But then Russia "attacked Ukraine in violation of international law. That is why we must respect such a need for security."

Gysi cynically added he actually wanted to recommend that the Left Party parliamentary group not reject the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO but instead abstain. "The price that Sweden, Finland and the whole of NATO ... have to pay to Turkey," however, is "too high." He therefore "advised his group to vote against." But he knew "that other deputies are also critical of all this."

This is as revealing as it is unambiguous. In fact, the Left Party supports NATO's war with Russia. The party already made this clear at its recent party congress in Erfurt, where numerous speakers spoke in favour of arms deliveries to Ukraine and even offered Ukrainian organisations a platform, whose members are fighting directly against Russia and demanding more "German military aid for Ukraine."

This is exactly what is happening now. In her speech, Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht (SPD) openly admitted that NATO's northern enlargement was part of a comprehensive military offensive against Russia.

"The further strengthening of our deterrence and defense capabilities on the eastern border of NATO has been decided and is already being implemented," she boasted. US President Joseph Biden "for the second time since taking office decided to increase America's troop presence in Europe, thereby clearly reaffirming America's commitment to Europe." After "decades of cuts and dismantling," she said, "the defense spending of the allies is increasing again." And Germany "made a very important contribution to the armed forces (Bundeswehr) with the special fund of €100 billion."

Lambrecht pointed out that last week the 30 NATO member states "gave their alliance a new strategic concept" that "responds to the Russian threat" and also "looks at the risks and challenges of the future." The accession of Finland and Sweden has to be seen "in this broad context," she continued. She said that this is appropriate "for an alliance in transition, making itself fit to continue to be the decisive

guarantor of security in the future.”

Lambrecht chose not to go into more concrete details about what NATO meant by “security” and “fit for the future”: the preparation for a nuclear Third World War.

NATO’s new Strategic Concept states: “We will individually and collectively provide the full range of forces ... needed for deterrence and defense, including high-intensity cross-dimension warfare against peer competitors possessing nuclear weapons.”

Germany is playing a central role in this madness. Immediately after the NATO summit, Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) announced that the Bundeswehr will “permanently maintain an armoured division in the order of 15,000 soldiers for the defense of north-eastern Europe, over 60 aircraft and up to 20 naval units” to push ahead with the war. This is part of the NATO Response Force (NRF), which will be increased from 40,000 to over 300,000 soldiers.

In addition, “a combat brigade,” i.e., up to 5,000 soldiers, will be prepared “exclusively for the defence of alliance territory in Lithuania” and a “regional naval command for the Baltic Sea region” will be set up in order to “be able to assume leadership responsibility in the maritime sector.”

Germany’s ruling class sees the NATO offensive as an opportunity to put long held rearmament plans into action and to re-establish itself as the leading military power in Europe and internationally after it lost two world wars. The Federal Government is working specifically to increase the German-European weight within NATO and to organise the continent under Berlin’s military leadership.

“The European footprint in NATO” will be “even greater” with the accession of Finland and Sweden, said Lambrecht in the Bundestag. For the European Union, in which Germany is already setting the agenda politically and economically, “this is an important, a good decision.” A total of “23 out of 27 (EU) members belonged to the alliance,” and the chances of “intensive cooperation” would be “a whole lot greater as a result.”

The government does not say it openly, but it is clear that German imperialism is also preparing behind the scenes for a confrontation with the US in the struggle for control and looting of Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

The honorary chairman of the far-right AfD, Alexander Gauland, praised the Federal Government’s decision to support Sweden’s and Finland’s admission to NATO as “realpolitik in the best sense.” If accession leads to “the fact that the European weight will in future determine NATO policy more than the very different geostrategic interests of the USA, which are often contradictory to European wishes, this would have an additional positive effect.”

The AfD defense politician and retired colonel of the

Bundeswehr Rüdiger Lucassen was even clearer in his speech.

“A European NATO is a necessity to free Europe from the vice of the great powers. Sweden and Finland can contribute to this. As a welcome gift, the Federal Government should finally let its many words be followed by deeds. The goal must be to build the Bundeswehr into Europe’s strongest army and to take the lead. Strategic autonomy is not given to you; you have to take it,” he declared.

It was not only the speeches of the AfD politicians that were reminiscent of the darkest times in German history. Eighty-one years after the German war of extermination against the Soviet Union, one speaker after another railed furiously against Russia. According to Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (FDP), Moscow’s foreign policy is “expansionist, revisionist and, indeed, violent.” Johann David Wadehul of the CDU accused the Kremlin of “formulating far-reaching imperial geographic claims.”

In fact, that is exactly what the foreign policy of the imperialist powers is all about. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is reactionary, but it is ultimately a desperate response by the capitalist Putin regime to the imperialist war policy of the NATO powers. They have been waging war almost continuously for 30 years and have destroyed entire countries—in addition to Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, countries in Europe itself.

German imperialism has played a central role in this from the outset. Thirty years ago, at the instigation of Germany and the United States, the recognition of the independence of Croatia and Slovenia initially triggered a terrible civil war in the former Yugoslavia. In 1999, the bombing of Serbia by NATO culminated in the violent secession of Kosovo. This imperialist offensive in the Balkans is also continuing. On Friday, the Bundestag extended the Bundeswehr’s operations in Kosovo and a return to the EU mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact