

# German Chancellor Scholz announces more weapons for war against Russia

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Although the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine threatens to escalate into a nuclear conflict, Germany's Social Democrat/Green/Free Democrat government—the so-called traffic light coalition—is intensifying the war. On Thursday, Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) issued new threats against Moscow in his government statement on the European Union (EU) summit. Without pausing for breath, he boasted of the massive military support from Germany for Ukraine and promised further weapons to make the “difference” on the battlefield.

“When Putin started the war in February, some people suspected that Ukraine would be defeated in a few days,” Scholz said at the beginning of his speech. However, it “turned out differently, also because Ukraine’s partners, including us, supported the country: politically, financially, with humanitarian aid and with weapons.” Artillery and air defense are now “exactly what Ukraine needs most, and that is exactly what we deliver, modern self-propelled howitzers and multiple rocket launchers, for example.”

The circular exchange of tanks, which involves Berlin sending German-made tanks to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Greece and Slovenia in exchange for these countries sending their Soviet-era tanks to Ukraine, will also give Ukraine “around a hundred tanks its soldiers can use immediately,” the chancellor continued. And Germany promised Ukraine “as one of the first countries in early June modern air defense systems.” One of these systems was “handed over to our Ukrainian friends last week,” and three more will “follow as quickly as possible.” In addition, “anti-aircraft missiles and Cheetah tanks” were delivered.

If Scholz had listed all German arms deliveries since the beginning of the war, he would have massively exceeded his speaking time. Berlin is literally flooding Ukraine with weapons and is the third-largest arms supplier after the US and Great Britain. According to the Federal Government’s official list of “military support services for Ukraine,” Berlin delivered the following items last week alone:

- 1 Iris-T SLM air defense system
- 40 armoured rescue vehicles (previously 5)
- 7 heavy and medium bridge systems
- 167,000 rounds of handgun ammunition
- 200 tents (previously 100)
- 195 generators (previously 12)
- 16,000 cold protection jackets
- 80,000 cold protection trousers
- 240,000 winter hats

The actual war support goes far beyond arms deliveries. According to information from public broadcaster ARD, the German foreign intelligence service BND provides “militarily useful data” to Kiev and is thus directly involved in warfare. Germany also plays a leading role in the training of the Ukrainian army.

Scholz informed the German parliament (Bundestag) that the EU foreign ministers “agreed on a new training mission for around 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers here in the EU” on Monday. And “one of the two headquarters will be located in Germany. By spring, we will be training a full brigade of up to 5,000 soldiers.” In this way, Berlin underlined its “willingness to participate permanently in the development of a strong Ukrainian armed forces.”

Contrary to the official assurances of the government, Germany is thus also a war party under international law. Just a few weeks after the beginning of the war, an expert report from the German Parliamentary Research Service established that the training of Ukrainian soldiers on German soil was tantamount to war participation. “If, in addition to the supply of weapons, the instruction of the conflicting party or training in such weapons were also in question, one would leave the secure terrain of non-warfare,” it stated.

At the time, Scholz himself warned against the danger of a nuclear third world war. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* at the end of April, he stated that “every effort must be made to avoid a direct military confrontation between NATO and a highly armed superpower such as Russia, a nuclear-armed power.” The issue is “preventing an escalation that leads to a third world war.”

Since then, however, Scholz and the traffic light coalition have been doing exactly the opposite and fuelling the conflict—now also on a nuclear level. Currently, German army (Bundeswehr) Tornados are taking part in the NATO nuclear exercise “Steadfast Noon.” A report by the Bundeswehr Association states: “Among other things, the scenario of nuclear participation is being practiced. In the past, the Tornados of the Tactical Air Force Squadron 33 from Büchel were regularly involved. Training is given on how to mount the US nuclear weapons stored in underground bunkers under the fighter jets.”

The WSWWS has already warned that the US-led nuclear weapons exercise in the extremely tense atmosphere of war carries the risk of a serious miscalculation. What if, after the recent nuclear threats from NATO, the Russian military assumes that the “exercise” is really about the concrete preparation of nuclear strikes? During the

Cold War, the NATO exercise Able Archer nearly triggered a nuclear war in 1983 because the Soviet leadership came to the conclusion that Washington was actually planning an attack with nuclear weapons.

Behind the war madness, which threatens the survival of all of humanity, there are several factors. On the one hand, the ruling class is confronted with the deepest crisis of the capitalist system since the 1930s. As at that time, it sees the war as a means of controlling and diverting the tensions outward—above all the explosive social opposition of workers and young people.

On the other hand, geopolitical ambitions are at stake. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy, the NATO powers have systematically encircled Russia with the aim of subjugating and exploiting the resource-rich country. Moscow's invasion of Ukraine was reactionary, but ultimately a desperate response of the capitalist Putin regime to the imperialists' wars.

In order to justify its own war offensive, the ruling class makes use of well-known propaganda techniques. The Bundestag session began with a cynical reference to the crimes of German imperialism in Ukraine. "The memory of the Shoah's crimes against humanity is and remains indispensable. This is part of Germany's historical responsibility," declared Bundestag President Bärbel Bas (SPD) as she welcomed the Ukrainian Holocaust survivor Roman Schwarzman as a guest in the Bundestag gallery. "About one and a half million Jews were murdered in Ukraine. More than 2,000 mass murder sites are located in the territory of today's Ukraine."

All this cannot conceal the fact that in the Ukraine war, Germany's ruling class is returning once again to its criminal great-power policy. Already in the First and Second World Wars, German imperialism tried to annex Ukraine and subjugate Russia militarily, committing terrible crimes. In total, about 30 million people were murdered in the war of annihilation of the Wehrmacht against the Soviet Union.

In today's war against Russia, Berlin is cooperating in Ukraine with the political descendants of the same fascist forces that fought against the Soviet Union with the German Nazis in the Second World War and supported the mass murder of the Ukrainian Jews. These include far-right militias such as the Right Sector and the notorious Azov Battalion, and also "diplomats" such as the former Ukrainian ambassador to Germany Andrei Melnyk, who is an open supporter of the Ukrainian fascist, anti-Semite and Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera.

The essentially fascist character of the German war offensive is also evident in Berlin's plan to return to Europe's leading military power after two lost world wars. In his speech, Scholz praised "the special fund for the Bundeswehr" worth €100 billion, "the refocusing of our armed forces on national and alliance defence," "the assumption of greater responsibility on the eastern flank of the alliance" and his Prague proposals on "security cooperation in Europe."

The latter aim to organize the continent also militarily under German leadership. Scholz said he was delighted that "the idea of closer European cooperation in air defence was so quickly taken up by 14 European countries who want to cooperate with us." The planned German-European missile defence system is "exactly the

kind of synergy, the kind of clever division of labour that we now need for the security of Europe."

The government statement underlined that Germany's return as an aggressive military power is also exacerbating tensions between the imperialist powers. The chancellor arrogantly rejected the demands for a European gas price cap, despite the fact that most European countries—including France, Spain and Italy—demand it. "A politically set price cap" harbours "the risk that the producers will sell their gas elsewhere and that we Europeans will not get more gas in the end, but less," said Scholz.

By "European" Scholz means Germany. In order to secure the scarce gas resources on the world market due to the war policy against Russia, the German government has put up an "economic defence shield of up to 200 billion euros" (Scholz). This not only exacerbates the social contradictions in Germany—since the bulk of the sum goes into the pockets of the big corporations and the rich—but also the national tensions within the EU. Many member states are furious over the package because, in their view, it is tantamount to a trade war measure by Berlin against other EU states.

The entire course of development confirms the historical perspective of Marxism and the Fourth International. "A halfway complete and consistent economic unification of Europe coming from the top by means of an agreement of the capitalist governments is sheer utopia," Trotsky wrote as early as 1917. "Here, the matter can go no further than partial compromises and half-measures. Hence it is that the economic unification of Europe, which offers colossal advantages to producer and consumer alike, and in general to the whole cultural development, becomes the revolutionary task of the European proletariat in its struggle against imperialist protectionism and its instrument—militarism."

The objective conditions for this struggle are developing rapidly. The current protests and strikes in France, Britain and other European countries are part of an international upswing of the class struggle. The crucial task is to provide the mass opposition to inflation, social spending cuts, war and the policy of mass infection in the pandemic with a clear political perspective and leadership. This requires the establishment of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International as part of the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe.



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