

New German defense minister plans major escalation of NATO war with Russia

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The new German Minister of Defence will be the former Interior Minister of the state of Lower Saxony Boris Pistorius (Social Democrats, SPD). He succeeds Christine Lambrecht, who resigned from her post on Monday. According to media reports, Pistorius will be sworn in on Thursday in Berlin.

The change at the top of the Ministry of Defense will initiate a massive escalation of German militarism and the NATO war in Ukraine against Russia. Before the next meeting of the so-called Ukraine Contact Group in Ramstein on January 20, the NATO powers are preparing, among other things, the delivery of main battle tanks to Ukraine. Pistorius will meet US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin in Berlin the day before the Contact Group meeting, immediately after his inauguration.

On January 6, the German government, together with the United States, announced the delivery of Marder and Bradley armored vehicles to Kiev. The decision appears already to have been taken for Berlin to send Leopard-2 battle tanks. Eighty-two years after the Nazi war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, which killed almost 30 million people, German tanks are again rolling against Russia.

As Minister of Defense, Pistorius has the task of enforcing the war and rearmament plans against the enormous opposition in the population. At his announcement of Pistorius' appointment, Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) stated: "Pistorius is an extremely experienced politician who has proven his administrative skills, has been involved in security policy for years and, with his competence, his assertiveness and his big heart, is exactly the right person to lead the Bundeswehr (German army) through this epochal shift."

This statement is unambiguous. Already under Lambrecht, the biggest rearmament program since Hitler was launched under the slogan "epochal shift" and a €100 billion special fund for the Bundeswehr was adopted. Lambrecht stated in public speeches that Germany had to become a "military leader" again due to its "size, its geographical location and

its economic strength." Ultimately, however, she was not deemed capable of achieving this goal.

The task will now be taken over by Pistorius, who, as Interior Minister in Lower Saxony, has distinguished himself above all by an aggressive "law and order" policy and extreme right-wing agitation against refugees. His demands in the past included the establishment of concentration camps for refugees in Libya, deportations even to war zones, the massive rearmament of the security forces and the deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically. The media is celebrating him as a "red general." The ruling class knows that the return of German militarism, as in the past, also requires the return of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

Immediately after his appointment, Pistorius openly stated that Germany is a party to the war in Ukraine—which the German government has always denied. "The Ministry of Defense is already a great challenge in civilian times, in peacetime," he said, "and in times when one is involved in a war as the Federal Republic of Germany, indirectly, even more so."

He promised to make the Bundeswehr "strong for the period that lies ahead." This is a "tremendous task." The troops can count on "me to stand in front of them whenever necessary," he said.

The *World Socialist Web Site* already explained in an article on Lambrecht's resignation how far-reaching the plans currently being worked out behind the backs of the population are. For example, the current *Der Spiegel* cover story, citing leading military figures, calls for a tripling of the Bundeswehr's special fund to €300 billion, an increase in the annual military budget to €120 billion, the introduction of a general staff and the elimination of civilian control over the Bundeswehr, the strengthening of the armaments industry, an increase in the number of troops and the reactivation of conscription.

Other media and representatives of foreign policy think tanks are formulating similar goals and pressing for their rapid implementation. Shortly after Pistorius' appointment, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) published a guest

contribution by Christian Mölling, the deputy director of the DGAP think tank and head of the Center for Security and Defense. His “Ten Points for the New Minister of Defense” pursues one goal: Germany's transformation into a strong war power.

Despite the “most threatening situation since the Cuban missile crisis,” the Bundeswehr is “in a desolate state,” Mölling complained. The “epochal shift” was “so far little more than lip service on a special mountain of debt.” “Germany has lost a crucial year to modernize the Bundeswehr,” he added. He went on to raise similar demands to *Der Spiegel*, “in order to get the epochal shift moving, to get the Bundeswehr back in shape in the long term and also to support Ukraine.”

All of this requires the complete militarization of society. Mölling wrote: “If one considers the defence sector as a picture, it is important to think and describe defence as an ecosystem, not as mechanical pillars. This system is open at its edges and connected to many other areas of security and public life. The more closed the system is, the more it remains a specialised organisation in life.”

This is the old, deadly spirit of German militarism, articulated in modern think tank German. The military must penetrate all the pores of society. It must not remain a “special organization in life”—it is life.

It is not merely these concepts that remind one of the darkest times in German history. The entire foreign policy is being conducted along similar lines as in the First and Second World Wars. In the statement “No tank deliveries to Ukraine! Stop the threat of a third world war!,” the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) declared:

Since reunification, the ruling class has been systematically working to organize Europe under German leadership in order to advance its geostrategic and economic interests worldwide. ... Now it is using Russia's reactionary invasion of Ukraine as a pretext to launch the biggest rearmament since Hitler and to strike again against Russia. German imperialism is concerned not only with geostrategic interests and Russia's vast reserves of raw materials, it is also driven by the desire for retribution for its war defeats in the 20th century.

The imperialist offensive increasingly raises the danger of a direct war with a nuclear-armed power, Russia. The Bundeswehr is currently relocating Patriot missile systems to Poland. A total of three squadrons with 600 soldiers will be

stationed in the neighbouring country during the course of this week.

At the Zamo?? freight yard, the Patriots are to “protect an important transshipment yard for Ukraine aid,” writes *Der Spiegel*. At the station, located 30 kilometers from the Polish-Ukrainian border, “both relief supplies and military equipment will be loaded for Ukraine.” The Air Force's task is to “protect the station from possible attacks from the air.”

In other words, the Bundeswehr will ensure that the planned tank deliveries reach the front safely. Germany is thus becoming an increasingly direct war party on the battlefield. The deputy head of the Security Council of the Russian Federation and former president of Russia Dmitry Medvedev has threatened to turn Western tanks into “rusty scrap metal.” He described NATO countries involved in the war as legitimate targets. Nevertheless, Berlin is recklessly driving the escalation.

In his inaugural address, Pistorius should explain the consequences of this policy. How many millions of people does the ruling class intend to sacrifice this time to defeat Russia militarily and put their world power plans into action? What is the Federal Government's scenario if the war escalates to a nuclear exchange? It is clear that even in a “conventional” war with Russia, millions of people across Europe would lose their lives.

It is high time to stop the war madness. This requires the building of an international mass movement against war and its cause, the capitalist system. The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) is participating in the Berlin election to give a voice and a socialist perspective to the widespread opposition to militarism and war. We call on all workers and young people in Germany to make the election a referendum against war and to register now as an active supporter and vote for the SGP on February 12!

And we call on workers and young people all over the world to support the SGP's campaign as part of the fight to build a global movement against war!



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