

German Foreign Minister Baerbock presents “feminist” war policy

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German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) and Development Minister Svenja Schulze (Social Democrats) presented their 'Guidelines for a Feminist Foreign Policy' to the media on Wednesday. The project, as absurd as it is reactionary, has two goals: it is intended to obscure the real character of Germany's war policy and mobilize better-off sections of the middle class, who are fixated on questions of identity politics, for German imperialism.

At the heart of the guidelines is the claim that the world is “more peaceful and stable” when women and feminist principles play a greater role in foreign policy. The guidelines advocate increasing the proportion of women in the Federal Foreign Office and appointing “an ambassador for feminist foreign policy,” to which an entire “feminist foreign policy” staff will be assigned. “The aim is to integrate the principles of feminist foreign policy into all foreign policy strategies,” the document declares.

The paper never really explains what this means in concrete terms. But the best proof of the project's reactionary nature is Baerbock herself. Since she became the first woman to head the Foreign Office, German foreign policy has not become more peaceful, but even more warlike and militaristic. Last year, the German army's €100 billion special fund launched the largest German rearmament programme since Hitler. 82 years after the Wehrmacht's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, German battle tanks are once again rolling against Russia.

Baerbock is one of the figures within the federal government most aggressively advocating an intensification of the war. Beating the drum incessantly for more and even deadlier arms shipments to Ukraine, she openly states that Germany and NATO are at war with Russia, a nuclear-armed power. “We are fighting a war against Russia and not against each other,” she told

the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe at the end of January.

Hundreds of thousands, including many women and children, died in the course of the US and NATO wars in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia, which the Greens vehemently supported. The same applies to the German-European refugee policy. Thousands of men, women and children fleeing war, poverty and oppression are dying on the external borders of “Fortress Europe” every year.

Significantly, the guidelines boast that women already play a central role in the framing of these murderous policies. “When we negotiated the strategic concept in NATO last year, it was again and again a supra-regional group of committed female foreign ministers who coordinated and exchanged views, so that the focus on human security in particular was strongly anchored,” the paper states.

Precisely what “human security” is involved remains Baerbock's secret. Specifically, the new strategic concept was where NATO declared its preparations for a nuclear third world war against Russia and China. “We will individually and collectively provide the full range of forces ... needed for deterrence and defense, including for high-intensity cross-dimensional warfare against equivalent competitors who possess nuclear weapons,” it stated.

All “feminist” phrases and concepts in the guidelines – such as “gender budgeting,” “gender mainstreaming,” and “equality, diversity, and inclusion” – are merely the accompaniment to an imperialist foreign policy enforced by military means. Baerbock and Schulze admit this in their document de facto themselves.

“A feminist foreign policy has no magic formula to deal with immediate threats,” they write. “Russia's war against Ukraine” shows “that in the face of brutal violence, human lives must also be protected by military means.”

“A feminist foreign policy is not synonymous with pacifism.” Rather, it recognizes “foreign policy realities” and faces “the dilemmas that arise from them. It has both the values and interests of German foreign policy in mind.”

In other words, it is ultimately all about the enforcement of geostrategic and economic interests. And, if the “foreign policy realities” demand it, the “dilemmas” also require close cooperation with the most reactionary regimes in the world. A selection follows:

Last July, Baerbock, together with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD), rolled out the red carpet to the Egyptian military dictator Abdelfattah al-Sisi in Berlin. If the term “mass murderer,” which the Greens regularly use against Russian President Vladimir Putin, applies to a head of government, it is to the butcher of Cairo.

Al-Sisi, who seized power almost exactly 10 years ago after mass protests against Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, is leading a terror regime supported by the West. Tens of thousands of political prisoners are rotting in the country's torture prisons, protests and strikes are banned by law, and media and organizations critical of the regime are suppressed.

Al-Sisi's bloody dictatorship began with a massacre that Human Rights Watch described as the “worst event of unlawful mass killings in Egypt's modern history.” In August 2013, army and police forces commanded by al-Sisi stormed two protest camps of opponents of the coup in the Egyptian capital Cairo, killing more than a thousand people, including numerous women and children. Since then, protesters continue to be killed by security forces.

Other important allies of the German federal government are the ultra-reactionary Gulf monarchies, in which women, migrant workers and minorities do not even have elementary fundamental rights on paper. Just a few days ago, Baerbock met with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal al-Saud at the Munich Security Conference to discuss “security issues” in the region.

The Saudi regime has been waging a murderous war in Yemen for years, which has already cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Public executions with the sword are the order of the day in Saudi Arabia, and opponents of the regime are eliminated on orders from the government. For example, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was directly involved in the brutal murder of Saudi journalist and regime opponent Jamal Khashoggi.

It fits the picture that the guidelines do not utter a word about Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Yet, there is a detailed

section on Iran. As always, human rights violations are only mentioned in relation to the countries that are in the crosshairs of German imperialism. “Alliance partners,” on the other hand, are courted and praised to the skies.

In Baerbock's document, this takes on absurd forms. Thus, the sheikhdom of Qatar, which is notorious for its murderous exploitation of migrant workers – thousands died in the construction of the football stadiums for the 2022 World Cup alone – is in all seriousness portrayed as a champion for women's rights. According to the guidelines, the “humanitarian donor conference for Afghanistan jointly organized by Germany, Great Britain, Qatar and the United Nations in March 2022 ... focused on the humanitarian situation of women and girls.”

When the document makes “feminist” demands or talks about “implementing at least 100 percent of our humanitarian aid in a gender-sensitive manner ...,” this has nothing to do with the fight for women's rights. It is about misusing women and minorities in the countries targeted by the federal government to push through imperialist goals and suppress the class struggle.

“In crisis prevention, stabilization and peace-building measures” – the well-known euphemisms for waging wars of aggression contrary to international law, the subsequent brutal occupation and the establishment of proxy regimes – “we systematically involve women and marginalized people, taking into account gender-specific risks and intersectional vulnerabilities,” the guidelines state.

German imperialism has a long and dark history of cloaking its criminal foreign policy in high-sounding phrases. In World War I, the imperial government and the belligerent middle classes that supported it justified the German war machine in the name of defending German culture. Today, they justify it, among other things, in the name of “feminism.” The predatory interests behind this are one and the same.



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