

Germany's National Security Strategy: A blueprint for total war

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In a perspective at the start of the Ukrainian counter-offensive, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned:

The US-NATO war against Russia is evolving rapidly into a protracted struggle that is increasingly violent, bloody and global in character. The conflict has entered into the gravitational field of total war—that is, a war of unlimited destruction, complete disregard for life, and to which all social needs of the mass of the people are subordinated. Its corollary is the direct assault on the working class in all countries and the obliteration of democratic rights.

The National Security Strategy for Germany, underscores how correct this assessment was. The document, entitled “On guard. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany,” is a blueprint for war abroad and the establishment of a police state at home.

It was presented on Wednesday by Social Democratic (SPD) Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Green Party Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, Free Democrat Finance Minister Christian Lindner, and Defence Minister Boris Pistorius and Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (both SPD) at the Federal Press Conference Centre in Berlin.

Even if the rhetoric, at least when it comes to some phrases about freedom and democracy, is somewhat different from that of the German Empire under the Kaiser or the Nazis' Third Reich, the goals are basically the same. The ruling class sees the Russian invasion of Ukraine provoked by NATO and the current struggle for the redivision of the world as an opportunity for German imperialism to reassert itself as a military leader despite its historical crimes.

In his foreword, Scholz writes: “Russia’s brutal war of aggression against Ukraine fundamentally challenges the European security order. At the same time, the global order is changing: New centers of power are emerging, the world of the 21st century is multipolar.” Germany is prepared for “such strategic changes” and sees the “new epoch” as an opportunity “to finally equip our Bundeswehr (German army)

appropriately.”

Already, with the Bundeswehr special fund totalling €100 billion, the government has begun the largest rearmament offensive since Hitler. This is now being intensified. “In the light of the new epoch, we must invest particularly in our resilience and ability to defend,” the document states. The costs are to be borne by the working population in every respect.

The government is pursuing the declared goal of increasing German military spending to 2 percent of GDP, excluding the special fund, and enabling the Bundeswehr to wage permanent war. “The German government, while meeting NATO’s planning goals, will make the Bundeswehr one of the most powerful conventional armed forces in Europe in the coming years, capable of reacting and acting quickly and sustainably,” the document declares.

The scenarios extend to nuclear war. The document continues: “In the transatlantic alliance, we must be able and determined to confront all military threats—nuclear, conventional, but also in cyber defense and in view of the threats that are directed against our space systems. ... Germany will continue to contribute to this in the context of nuclear participation and will provide the necessary carrier aircraft without interruption.”

At another point, the National Security Strategy commits to “implementing NATO’s Strategic Concept of June 2022 in all its aspects.” This means nothing less than preparing for a nuclear Third World War. NATO’s Strategic Concept states: “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.”

Even if the German rearmament and war offensive is currently taking place within the framework of NATO and in close alliance with Germany’s imperialist allies—in many places there is talk of close “friendship” and “partnership” with France and the US—the ruling class is systematically working to pursue its economic and geopolitical goals independently in the future. The old aim of German imperialism to “lead Europe to lead the world,” which spawned two world wars and fascism in the 20th century, is back.

The document states: “Independent European capacity for

action is increasingly a prerequisite for the security of Germany and Europe. This includes EU Member States with modern, high-performance armed forces as well as a high-performing and internationally competitive European security and defence industry, which creates the foundations of the military capabilities of the armed forces.”

Elsewhere, the strategy states: “We want to make the European Union a geopolitically capable actor that guarantees its security and sovereignty for future generations. The Federal Government is committed to the further integration of the EU, its cohesion and to the enlargement to include the states of the Western Balkans, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and, in future, Georgia.”

The unification of Europe under German leadership itself becomes a military project. “The German government will continue to expand and strengthen its military presence in the alliance area to protect our allies, also in order to be able to serve as a reliable military partner for our allies.” In addition, Germany will assume “special responsibility for the deployment of the EU’s rapid deployment forces.”

The National Security Strategy differs from previous foreign policy strategy papers in that it formulates more explicitly what is at stake. Not human rights and values—even if these propaganda phrases repeatedly appear in the document—but concrete imperialist interests.

“When deciding on new projects for the extraction of raw materials, we will increasingly incorporate security policy considerations,” says the section entitled “Increasing economic and financial resilience and raw material security.” The Federal Government will “strengthen crisis management for critical raw materials” and “advocate for the creation of adequate framework conditions for the promotion of raw material projects in the strategic interest of Germany and the EU.” In total, the term “raw material” or “raw materials” is found 29 times in the document, and the word “interests” 22 times.

German foreign policy is increasingly developing along similar lines as in the First and Second World Wars and pursues the same predatory interests. The same applies to domestic politics.

The National Security Strategy subordinates all areas of economic and social life to the concept of “security” and de facto declares them to be war-relevant. These include climate, health and fiscal policies, science, education and child care, the country’s “critical infrastructure” and the “regulation of cyber space”—a euphemism for the control and censorship of the Internet.

“The coming geopolitical confrontations will not only take place between states, but increasingly also at the social level,” the document states. And a box highlighted in blue says: “Due to the strong interactions between external and internal security, the ability of the German state to act externally increasingly also depends on its internal resilience. This is the joint responsibility of the state, the economy and society.”

In other words, the external war policy requires the militarist co-option of society internally. This includes the domestic deployment of the Bundeswehr. The Federal Government is striving to “further develop the cross-country and cross-departmental exercises on crisis management (LÜKEX) conceptually.” Since 2018, the army has been involved in these exercises. Against the background of German history, this is a serious warning. The ruling class used the military as an instrument of oppression during the German Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich.

The National Security Strategy makes clear what confronts workers and young people. The NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, which is constantly escalating, is part of the development towards a Third World War, with all the consequences such a conflict would entail. While the SPD and the Greens in the government are organizing the war offensive and are supported by the Left Party, the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) has fought against the return of German militarism from the outset. The SGP warned in a resolution as early as 2014:

The propaganda of the post-war era—that Germany had learnt from the terrible crimes of the Nazis, had “arrived at the West,” had embraced a peaceful foreign policy, and had developed into a stable democracy—is exposed as lies. German imperialism is once again showing its real colours as it emerged historically, with all of its aggressiveness at home and abroad.

This assessment has been confirmed in every respect. A similar development is taking place in every imperialist country. This means that the working class and youth worldwide are facing the same revolutionary tasks. In order to prevent a Third World War and the destruction of the planet, they must fight capitalist war policies and advocate an international socialist program.



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