

# Germany's new strategy: Preparing for war against China

Peter Schwarz  
18 July 2023

The German government adopted a China strategy for the first time on Thursday. The aim of the 64-page document is to reduce the German economy's dependence on China in preparation for war against the rising Asian economic power.

In the coalition agreement between the Social Democrats (SPD), Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Greens, before taking office, China was still described as a “partner, competitor and systemic rival”. Since then, the China strategy states, “the elements of rivalry and competition in our relationship have increased”. Embedded in deceitful rhetoric about “Western values”, “liberal democracy” and “human rights”, the strategy document develops a whole bundle of economic and political measures against China.

In order to reduce dependence on China, supply and value chains are to be “diversified” and “secured in the long term through broader risk diversification”; the German government supports “the German economy in developing diversified, sustained sources of supply” in other countries.

In order not to become dependent on Chinese technologies in “key areas”, “key technologies are to be identified at an early stage”. The German government wants to invest more money in its own “research, development and innovation” and withdraw funding from “projects with China in which knowledge transfer is likely”. The risks facing German companies active in China will no longer be covered as before.

The EU's “trade policy instruments” are to be further developed to restrict trade with China. Direct investments by European companies in China are to be reviewed and stopped if necessary. “With the investment review, we protect independence in security-critical areas and areas relevant to the supply of the population, protect the defence capability of Germany

and its allies, and strengthen the technological sovereignty of Germany and the EU”, the paper says.

Exports to China are also to be restricted. “In order to avoid longer-term security risks for Germany, the EU and allies through exports of new key technologies, the federal government is committed to the further development of the lists of goods in the international export control regimes”. This is to be applied, in particular, to the areas of “cyber security and surveillance technology”.

Fewer Chinese components are to be used in “critical infrastructures,” such as mobile phone networks. Corresponding regulations should also be developed for “non-IT products”.

“Resilience against hybrid threats in politics, business, science, and society” is to be increased. “Chinese disinformation campaigns”—for example, “in connection with China's policy on Hong Kong and Taiwan” and “Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in violation of international law”—are to be combated at all levels.

The publication of the China strategy was preceded by months of disputes within the coalition. With a trade volume (imports and exports) of €299 billion last year, China is Germany's most important trading partner. Especially for the German car industry, which employs around 800,000 people, China is the largest sales market. An abrupt break in economic relations would therefore have devastating economic consequences.

The employers' associations, in particular, warned against a too confrontational course and found an ear with Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) and Finance Minister Christian Lindner (FDP). Employers' President Rainer Dulger complained of Germany's “moral policy” in dealing with China. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Economics Minister Robert

Habeck (both Greens), on the other hand, urged a harder line.

The Greens are pioneers of a so-called “values-based” foreign policy that uses human rights issues to justify trade war measures and wars. Yet the “values” proclaimed only apply to rivals and opponents, not to allies like Egyptian butcher Abdel Fatah El-Sisi, Saudi ruler Mohammed bin Salman or Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is responsible for bloody pogroms. The red carpet is rolled out for them in Berlin. Criminal wars do not fall into this category either, if they are led by NATO, the US or other allies.

The China strategy now published is a compromise. This is the meaning of the constantly repeated formula that it is about de-risking, not decoupling.

The business associations signaled their agreement. BDI President Siegfried Russwurm said that they shared the assessment of the government, but that as the second largest market in the world, China remained an absolutely central economic partner. DIHK President Peter Adrian called the strategy a good approach and called for additional public funds to open up new sales, procurement or investment markets.

China strongly condemned the strategy. It will “only achieve the opposite of what was intended” and “create man-made risks”, said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin. “Clamouring over the so-called competition of systems, interests and values goes against the trend of the times and will only exacerbate divisions in the world.”

The formula of de-risking instead of decoupling is ultimately just a matter of pace. The confrontation with China follows an inescapable logic. After siding unreservedly with the US in the proxy war against Russia and taking a leading role in NATO’s deployment in Eastern Europe and the rearmament of Ukraine, the German government is also swinging on to the US line against China, which has declared the country its most important strategic adversary and is systematically preparing a war against China.

“German security is based on the EU’s ability to act and its internal cohesion, the consolidation of the trans-Atlantic alliance, our deep friendship with France and the close and trusting partnership with the US”, the China strategy states. “China’s antagonistic relationship with the US is at odds with these interests”.

Not only the US and Germany, but also all other

imperialist countries are swinging towards a nationalist policy of war and economic war in the face of the deepest crisis of world capitalism.

In 1933, when a similar development was taking place on the eve of the Second World War, Leon Trotsky wrote in *Nationalism and Economic Life*:

“Only 20 years ago all the schoolbooks taught that the mightiest factor in producing wealth and culture is the world-wide division of labor lodged in the natural and historic conditions of the development of mankind. Now it turns out that world exchange is the source of all misfortune and all dangers.”

And he warned, “Nationalism ... preparing volcanic explosions and grandiose clashes in the world arena, bears nothing except ruin.” This was confirmed only six years later with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Today, the same danger looms again. Trade war and war are being fought on the backs of the working class and the youth, who are paying for it with their jobs, their incomes, their social gains ... and as soldiers with their lives. Only they can stop this dangerous development by uniting internationally and linking the struggle to defend their gains and rights with the struggle against war and capitalism.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**