

German government plans to more than double military aid for Ukraine

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Germany's coalition government fully supports Israel's genocide in Gaza and rejects any ceasefire. At the same time, it is aggressively pushing ahead with the war offensive against Russia.

The German government—a coalition of the Social Democrats (SPD), Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Greens—is planning to increase military aid for Ukraine by six billion euros next year, more than doubling it. The original estimate was four billion euros. Now, four billion euros in additional cash funds and a further two billion euros in commitment appropriations are to be made available. This is according to a document from the Ministry of Finance obtained by newsweekly *Der Spiegel*.

The paper serves as the basis for the government's final consultation with the parliamentary Budget Committee. This will finalize the budget for 2024 at the end of the week in the so-called adjustment session. The entire budget is a declaration of war on working people. It includes massive cuts in healthcare, education and social services and aims to launch the biggest rearmament offensive since the end of the Second World War.

The latest increase in war aid for Ukraine means that military spending will reach the 2 percent target set by the German government as early as next year. In relation to the gross domestic product (GDP) of €4,309.5 billion expected for 2024, the NATO quota would be 2.07 percent, writes news agency Reuters. In absolute figures, the government's current planning puts the expenditure at around €89 billion—of which €51.8 billion comes from the regular defense budget, €19.2 billion from the “special fund” for the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), around €14 billion from other departments and the remaining billions from the additional Ukraine aid.

And all this is just the beginning. In his speech at the Bundeswehr conference last Friday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) assured the assembled military leadership that the rearmament offensive would be stepped up in the coming years. “The special fund” of €100 billion was “a reality.” And “my statement that we will continuously increase the defense budget to two percent of gross domestic product also applies! You can plan with that.”

The Chancellor then presented a list of “capability gaps” that needed to be closed “very quickly.” Priority would be given to fighter aircraft, heavy transport helicopters, Eurofighters, the successor to the Marder infantry fighting vehicle and warships such as the 130 corvettes and 126 frigates, but the inventory and the areas of ammunition, spare parts and maintenance would also be “quickly and effectively strengthened in order to finally put an end to a shortage economy.” The “billion-euro dimension of the challenge” was “extremely visible,” but things were “on the right track.”

Speaking to broadcaster ARD on Sunday, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius repeated his mantra of Germany needing to be “ready for war.” The government would now press ahead with rearmament at a “German pace,” he said. Regarding the procurement of new Leopard main battle tanks, “the time it would normally have taken to sign the contracts has been reduced from twelve to six months and from six to three months for the self-propelled howitzers.” We were procuring “much faster than we used to” and would continue to increase the pace.

Addressing the additional billions for Ukraine, Pistorius said, “The additional funds are the right signal, especially now that Ukraine has to continue its fight and at the same time some of the public attention

worldwide is being directed more towards Israel. It is also a strong signal to Ukraine that we will not abandon them.”

In other words, after the debacle of the Ukrainian offensive, which did not result in any significant territorial gains despite tens of thousands of dead soldiers, Germany and the other leading NATO powers are increasing the war effort further and further in order to defeat Russia militarily.

The list of “military support services” for Ukraine published by the German government gives an impression of the massive arms deliveries planned for the immediate future. The following items can be found in the “Armored combat vehicles” section alone:

- 5 All Terrain Tracked Vehicles Warthog ambulance
- 105 LEOPARD 1 A5 main battle tanks
- 40 MARDER infantry fighting vehicles
 - 4 tracked multi-purpose vehicles Bandvagn 206 (BV206)
- 50 Armored Personnel Carriers (APC)
- Ammunition for LEOPARD 1 main battle tank
 - Ammunition for MARDER infantry fighting vehicle

Additionally, there will be further air defense systems such as Patriot and Iris-T, Gepard anti-aircraft tanks, recovery, bridge-laying and mine-clearing tanks, drones and tankers. And for “sustainability,” 8.3 million rounds of small arms ammunition, 18,000 anti-tank small arms and 264,501 rounds of 40mm grenade launcher ammunition, among other things.

Clearly, the “new era” invoked by politicians and the media—Scholz mentioned the term six times in his speech—is not only directed against Russia. The ruling class is using the Russian invasion of Ukraine provoked by NATO and now also Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza to arm Germany, militarize the whole of Europe under German leadership and re-establish itself as a central war power after two lost world wars.

“As the most populous nation with the greatest economic power and a country in the middle of the continent, our army must become the cornerstone of conventional defense in Europe, the best-equipped armed force in Europe,” demanded Scholz in Berlin.

The associated militarization plans are becoming more and more concrete. For example, the new defense policy guidelines declare “war-readiness” to be a “maxim for action” and call for a society and army that

are “always ready to fight”—“with the aspiration to succeed in high-intensity combat.” Germany “not only wants to win a confrontation with an “at least equal opponent,” but “we must.”

The German ruling class has identified the enormous opposition among the population as the main problem for their megalomaniac—but therefore no less dangerous—war plans. For example, the ARD presenter confronted Pistorius with a survey showing that even in the event of an attack on Germany, only 5 percent would “volunteer for military service.” More than half of the population would want to “continue their normal lives” or “leave the country” in such a situation.

The defense minister’s response was to threaten: “Consciousness must change and will change.” In fact, anti-militarism is deeply rooted in the working class after the terrible crimes of German imperialism in the last century. To stop the current war offensive and avert a relapse into world war and barbarism, this must be transformed into a conscious socialist movement of the international working class—against war and its cause: capitalism.



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