

German Greens on the war offensive in the Middle East

Johannes Stern
10 January 2024

The current trips to the Middle East by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Economics Minister Robert Habeck (both Greens) underline two things above all: German imperialism is playing a key role in Israel's genocide in Gaza and the preparations for a wider war against Iran and its allies in the region. And the former pacifists of the Greens are among the most aggressive warmongers. In addition to supporting the genocide, Baerbock's trip focused on the announcement that Eurofighter jets would now also be delivered to Saudi Arabia.

When the Green Foreign Minister arrived in Tel Aviv on Monday, she first made it clear that the German government continues to fully support the brutal slaughter of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. At a joint press conference with her Israeli counterpart Israel Katz, she declared: "Your country can firmly count on our solidarity in the fight against the blind terror that wants to wipe Israel off the map. You can be sure that Germany will defend Israel's legitimate right to self-defense within the framework of international humanitarian law everywhere internationally."

Baerbock knows full well that Israel's actions against the Palestinians have nothing to do with self-defense and in fact break all the rules of international humanitarian law. The genocidal character of the war is so obvious that Baerbock herself could not completely ignore the terrible situation in Gaza. At one point she stated:

"Over half of the houses in northern Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Almost two million people have had to flee their homes—almost all of them. Most are without shelter from the rain and cold, without beds or medical facilities. Hunger and thirst are an appalling part of everyday life and epidemics are spreading. All of them—small

children, pregnant women, old people—are not adequately cared for."

And even this is only a very partial description of the barbarity and mass murder that Israel is perpetrating in Gaza with the full support of the imperialist powers. Since October 7, more than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli army—including more than 12,000 children and more than 6,100 women. In addition, almost 60,000 people have been wounded in the non-stop attacks. Even schools, hospitals and refugee camps are being bombed en masse and healthcare workers and journalists are being deliberately killed.

When Baerbock now calls for the Israeli army to "do more to protect Palestinian civilians in Gaza" and pleaded in Tel Aviv for "less intensive operations," this is the height of cynicism. If the imperialist powers were really interested in protecting civilians, they could stop the war immediately. Instead, they are multiplying arms supplies to Israel and supporting the far-right Netanyahu regime. In Tel Aviv, Baerbock explicitly declared her support for the destruction of Hamas, Netanyahu's war aim, which he sees as the elimination of the Palestinians.

Behind the call for a "less intensive operation" in the Gaza Strip, which is also being made by the US and parts of the Israeli regime, lies the plan to focus the war more strongly on Iran and its allies after the extensive destruction of Gaza. German imperialism is also playing a central role here. In Tel Aviv, Baerbock threatened Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and the Iranian government. At the same time, she praised Saudi Arabia and held out the prospect of massive arms deliveries to the reactionary Gulf monarchy.

With the Saudi air force shooting down Houthi militia missiles aimed at Israel, Riyadh was "making a significant contribution to Israel's security these days,"

said Baerbock. Saudi Arabia was also “helping to contain the danger of a regional conflagration.” And “precisely for this reason,” the German government could no longer “oppose the British plans for further Eurofighters for Saudi Arabia.”

In reality, the delivery of fighter jets to Riyadh, which the parties comprising the German government—the Social Democrats (SPD), Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Greens—explicitly rejected in their coalition agreement, serves to prepare for an all-out war against Iran, which would turn the entire region into an inferno. It is becoming increasingly clear that the imperialist powers are not only interested in destroying the Gaza Strip, but in controlling the entire Middle East.

Berlin in particular is developing an almost feverish activity to secure its predatory economic and geostrategic interests in the region. While Baerbock paid her respects in Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and to al-Sisi’s military dictatorship in Egypt, Habeck, who began his Middle East trip on Tuesday, is visiting Israel, the West Bank, Oman and Saudi Arabia. When he arrived in Riyadh on Wednesday, it was announced that the Federal Security Council had already approved the delivery of German-made Iris-T air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia at the end of December 2023.

The close alliance with the Saudis is also in line with the genocidal logic of imperialist policy. If any war in recent years has assumed genocidal proportions, it was the Saudi actions in Yemen. The exact number of people who have lost their lives as a result of systematic bombing and starvation blockades is not precisely documented, but it is in the hundreds of thousands. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimated the death toll at 377,000 in a report published in November 2021.

In Saudi Arabia itself, people are being executed non-stop—170 in the past year alone—and opponents of the regime are being taken aside at the behest of the government. For example, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was directly involved in the bestial murder of Saudi journalist and regime opponent Jamal Khashoggi. Khashoggi was lured to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, on October 2, 2018, where he was dismembered, and his body subsequently dissolved in acid.

The German government is aware of all of this. After the murderous details became known, Omid Nouripour, the current co-chairman of the Green Party, as his party’s foreign policy spokesman at the time, demanded: “Germany must make it clear to the House of Saud that

normalized relations with it are not possible as long as a murderer who has his critics dismembered is crown prince of the country.”

The same House of Saud and its crown prince are now among the government’s closest allies and brothers in arms. On Monday, government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit emphasized at the federal press conference that Baerbock’s push to deliver Eurofighters to Riyadh was supported by the entire federal government.

“Yes, the Chancellor shares this assessment,” Hebestreit stated for the record. The government had “reassessed what has become known as the Yemen clause in the light of developments in the conflict in Yemen in recent months and years.” The role of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia had also been “reassessed.”

That is unmistakable. The “reassessment” consists of the fact that, after a brief phase of public distancing, the German government is openly giving its blessing to the Saudi terror regime and its mass murderous war in Yemen. So much for Baerbock’s “feminist foreign policy,” “which in the light of day turns out to be nothing more than an identity politics cover for the nefarious pursuit of imperialist interests.

In its New Year statement, the WSWS wrote that the escalation of imperialist militarism had raised “the adoption of genocide as a legitimate instrument of state policy.” This applies above all to the ruling class that already committed the worst crimes in human history during the Second World War in the form of the Holocaust and the war of extermination against the Soviet Union.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact