

What is German Chancellor Scholz hiding in the debate about sending Taurus missiles to Ukraine?

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The question of delivering Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine has dominated the domestic political debate in Germany for days. The handover of this high-precision weapon, which can reach Moscow from Ukraine and destroy well-protected bunkers, would mean a massive escalation of the war.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz (Social Democratic Party, SPD) has so far rejected sending Taurus missiles to Ukraine. His reasoning is that due to its long range, it would be irresponsible to relinquish control of the weapon. Its deployment in Ukraine would therefore require the deployment of German soldiers. This he rejects on the grounds that it would be tantamount to Germany's direct involvement in the war.

The Christian Democratic (CDU/CSU) opposition, leading members of Scholz's governing coalition, in particular, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats (FDP), a large part of the media and numerous self-proclaimed "war experts" are up in arms at Scholz's refusal to send the missiles. What he presents as prudence and deliberation they denounce as weakness and cowardice.

Typical is a joint guest article published by the foreign policy experts of the Greens and the CDU, Anton Hofreiter and Norbert Röttgen, in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* on March 11, under the title, "The Chancellor's Catastrophic Defeatism." They seek to outdo each other in war rhetoric, and do not shy away from any risk. "Scholz's rhetoric makes us weaker than we are," they write, adding that "nuclear war, escalation, war party" are just some of the buzzwords coined by the chancellor, signalling to Putin that he need not fear any serious consequences.

The CDU/CSU parliamentary group has twice tabled a motion in the Bundestag to supply Taurus missiles to Ukraine. Both motions failed because, with a few

exceptions, the Green and FDP deputies adhered to party discipline, and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Left Party and Sarah Wagenknecht's BSW party also voted against.

The CDU/CSU openly justified its motion by arguing that Ukraine must be put in a position to take the war deep into Russia. "The Ukrainian forces lack the ability to attack supply lines, command and control facilities and logistical structures in a targeted manner in order to create the basis for further successful offensives," the motion reads. For this reason, it continues, Ukraine has already expressed its desire for stand-off precision armaments on several occasions and requested delivery of the Taurus cruise missile.

In reality, both Scholz and his opponents are deceiving the public. They know much more than they publicly admit and are working closely behind the scenes to escalate the war. This became clear on Wednesday when the dispute over Taurus was at the centre of a parliamentary questions session in the Bundestag.

After Norbert Röttgen (CDU) fiercely attacked the chancellor, Scholz dropped the mask. Breaking with protocol, he switched from the formal "you" (*Sie*) to the familiar form (*Du*) and accused "dear Norbert," as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, of knowing the reasons why Taurus could not be delivered at the moment. He was hiding behind the fact that this information was secret, Scholz said.

"But what annoys me, dear Norbert, dear Member of Parliament," Scholz continued, "is that you know everything and are engaging in public communication based on the fact that your knowledge is not public knowledge. I don't think that should be the case in a democracy."

What do Scholz and Röttgen know that the public is not

allowed to know? The public has a right to know, because nothing less than the danger of a devastating nuclear war is at stake.

The recklessness, risk-taking and ruthlessness with which the government, opposition and media are inflaming the war against Russia and playing Russian roulette with nuclear weapons is breathtaking. A commentary in *Der Spiegel* called it “fatal” that Scholz was allowing himself to be portrayed in public as a “peace chancellor” and thus “triggering the social democratic pacifist dreams of past decades.”

This is said in Germany, which is responsible for the greatest war crimes in human history!

Calling Scholz a peace chancellor is, however, a fairy tale. He never tires of emphasising that “Germany is by far the largest supplier of weapons” to Ukraine among European countries and insisting that and he will not let up until Russia is militarily defeated.

Scholz’s differences of opinion with Röttgen and other Taurus supporters are purely tactical. Scholz does not want to expose Germany prematurely because he does not trust the promises made by the US, France and the UK. As the war against Russia escalates, the rivalries between the NATO powers are increasing, rather than decreasing.

There were similar disputes in the autumn of 2022 because Scholz opposed the delivery of Leopard tanks. Even then he warned against the use of Russian nuclear weapons. It is now known that he knew more than he said.

On March 9, 2024, under the headline “Biden’s Armageddon Moment: When Nuclear Detonation Seemed Possible in Ukraine,” the *New York Times* reported that the CIA in the fall of 2022 estimated the possibility of a Russian nuclear strike at 50 percent or more if Russian forces were pushed back further. The US government had prepared for a counterstrike. Never since the 1962 Cuban missile crisis had the danger of nuclear war been so great. Scholz, who was on his way to China, was briefed by the US administration. He was supposed to convince President Xi Jinping to publicly warn Russia against the use of nuclear weapons, which he did.

When the crisis eased somewhat and the US made heavy tanks available to Ukraine, Scholz agreed to the Leopard delivery. Today, not only Leopards, but also German-made Marder and Gepard tanks, rocket launchers, self-propelled howitzers, air defence systems, assault rifles and grenade launchers are in use in Ukraine. The delivery of Taurus missiles is being prepared despite Scholz’s official veto. According to a report in *Die Welt*, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (SPD) is having all

Taurus missiles upgraded for possible export. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) is also looking for ways to facilitate the delivery of Taurus missiles.

Scholz’s pose of “prudence,” as he himself calls it, serves to deceive and reassure the population. Unlike the sentiment in the political establishment and the media, there is enormous popular opposition to the arms deliveries in Germany.

According to a recent survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of the dpa press agency, only 28 percent are in favour of the delivery of Taurus missiles, and 58 percent are against. Thirty-one percent are fundamentally opposed to supporting Ukraine with German weapons. Opposition to the delivery of Taurus missiles has grown in recent weeks, despite the fact that the propaganda in favour has been in full swing.

The only party a majority of whose supporters welcome Taurus deliveries—48 percent in favour to 36 percent against—is the Green Party. The survey found that 72 percent of all respondents are in favour of ruling out the deployment of ground troops to Ukraine once and for all. Only 16 percent want to keep this option open. While 43 percent think that too many weapons have already been delivered to Ukraine. Just as many consider the quantity to be either right or too low.

In any event, the German government will not allow itself to be swayed from its pro-war course by public opinion. What is driving it and all other imperialist powers to war is the deep crisis of capitalism on a global scale. Since 2014 at the latest, when it supported the coup in Kiev that brought a right-wing, pro-Western regime to power, it has based itself—as in the First and Second World Wars—on the violent subjugation of Russia.

Only the independent mobilisation of the working class, which bears the cost of crisis and war, on the basis of an anti-capitalist, socialist programme can stop the danger of war and nuclear annihilation. This mobilisation must demand the disclosure of all secret agreements, plans and information.



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