

Germany, France and Poland pledge to escalate war with Russia at Berlin summit

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German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk met yesterday in Berlin to declare their united support for escalating war with Russia as NATO-backed Ukrainian forces are collapsing on the front.

The Berlin summit came as the European powers' bellicose statements threaten to unleash total war between NATO and Russia in Ukraine. Only two weeks ago, at the February 26 Paris summit, Macron said the NATO powers did not rule out sending ground troops to Ukraine to fight Russia. A leaked recording of German officers then confirmed that Berlin is preparing to send long-range Taurus missiles to Ukraine for strikes on targets deep inside Russia.

In a press conference yesterday, Scholz, Macron and Tusk said they were united in support of escalation plans. Having confirmed their staggeringly aggressive position, they ended the press conference after less than 20 minutes, taking no questions from journalists.

Scholz said, "Our three states are among the greatest political, military and financial supporters of Ukraine's struggle against the Russian imperialist aggressor. We are closely and unshakably by the side of Ukraine. ... Solidarity and common action are essential to defend liberty and peace in Europe. More than ever, our unity is what gives us strength."

While cynically declaring his love of peace, Scholz laid out the three governments' war agenda, pledging to jointly buy weapons for Ukraine on the world market, set up armament factories in Ukraine, deliver long-range artillery to Ukraine and send more military trainers to Ukraine. He pledged to raise European Union (EU) financial support for Ukraine by a further €5 billion. Scholz pledged to use interest income on Russian funds from oil sales to Europe that are frozen in euro zone banks to pay for this—itsself an enormous act of international theft.

Macron confirmed his support for Scholz's proposals, declaring: "As the Chancellor has said, the three of us share the same will. We are willing, coordinated and ready to do something."

Macron did not say what they were ready to do, but in standing beside Scholz and Tusk, he took the opportunity to dispel media reports that other EU officials opposed his February 26 threat to send ground troops to Ukraine. He added: "The meeting today is for us an opportunity to reinforce our unity. We also want to say that all three of us are in agreement in the context of the Weimar Triangle [the official name for the talks between Berlin, Paris and Warsaw]."

Tusk hailed the three powers' united support for escalation, stating: "Today, we truly spoke with one voice, especially on the security of our continent, of our countries. ... I want to thank the chancellor for not hesitating. Sometimes, in politics, it happens that negotiations take a long time, and there are hesitations. This was not the case here." He called to "spend our money '*hic et nunc*', that is, here and now, so the situation in Ukraine gets better, not worse in the coming weeks and months."

Tusk, like Macron, called to "take care of the Republic of Moldova," a small landlocked state bordering on western Ukraine where Russian peacekeepers are deployed in the Transnistria region. Amid the debacle of the Ukrainian army, there is speculation that Russian troops could ultimately overrun the port of Odessa and the entire region of Ukraine around Moldova.

Tusk also obliquely mentioned the growing crisis in Poland, amid growing opposition to the war, as Polish farmers blockade the Polish-Ukrainian border to protest imports of Ukrainian produce. "We also discussed trade with Ukraine. This is now a problem in Poland, as you well know. Thank you for understanding my argument and being ready to support the Polish position," Tusk

said.

This “support” goes far beyond what Scholz, Macron and Tusk publicly announced in Berlin. Behind the scenes, far-reaching plans are being drawn up that could lead to direct conflict with Russia, a nuclear power. In recent days, the Kremlin has repeatedly threatened that it is willing to launch a massive retaliation, including the possible use of nuclear weapons, if NATO attacks Russian targets or engages with ground troops.

On March 13, in an interview for state television, Russian President Vladimir Putin commented on Macron’s remarks on deploying ground troops: “From a military-technical point of view, we are of course ready. ... As for governments who claim they have no more red lines with Russia, they must know that in this case, Russia will not have any more red lines with them, either.”

Nevertheless, the leading European NATO powers are pressing ahead with their escalatory plans. While Scholz officially rejects the delivery of Taurus cruise missiles to Kiev, the German daily *Die Welt* reports that German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius has given the order to make “all Taurus [missiles] operational.”

Although the certification of the weapon systems by manufacturer MBDA is not yet an “indication of a change of heart on the part of the Federal Chancellor,” *Die Welt* wrote, “the decision to make all of the Bundeswehr’s Taurus operational now opens up further options for the Federal Government. It could give more of the cruise missiles to Ukraine in the future without exposing its own national defence.” And a so-called swap agreement, as recently offered by the British government, is “more likely to be possible.”

Macron himself renewed his call to send ground troops to Ukraine before traveling to Berlin. On a prime time interview on national television Thursday evening, he stated: “All these options are possible. In order to achieve peace in Ukraine, we cannot be weak.” He called to “say with determination, will and courage that we are ready to use the means necessary to achieve our goal of ensuring that Russia does not win the war.”

The threats of Macron, Scholz and Tusk are accompanied by a vast NATO mobilisation against Russia. The “Steadfast Defender” exercise, NATO’s largest military manoeuvre since the end of the Cold War, is currently taking place. Over 90,000 soldiers from 32 countries are taking part. This week, 20,000 soldiers crossed the Vistula in Poland as part of the Dragon 24 exercise.

NATO military leaders left no doubt that the alliance is preparing for a direct war against Russia. The exercise is a signal of internal security and external deterrence, said German Brigadier General Gunnar Brügger, one of the officers leading the exercise. “Every ship that sails, every aircraft that flies, every helicopter in the air, every tank that rolls sends a message. ... We show what capabilities we have, and we combine that with the determination to deploy them if necessary.”

The ruling class is keeping the public in the dark about its war plans and its catastrophic consequences, including nuclear escalation, because it knows there is already massive opposition among workers and young people. According to a recent ARD-Deutschlandtrend poll, 61 percent oppose the delivery of Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine. Opposition to the deployment of ground troops is even greater, at 81 percent in Germany and 68 percent in France.

The decisive question is how to mobilize the deep opposition in the working class internationally to the war plans of the NATO imperialist powers, prevent a catastrophic escalation that could destroy civilization and end the bloody US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

The broadest organization of anti-war protests and meetings is necessary to alert workers and youth to the danger, here and now, that the war will spread across Europe and the world. The denials of various capitalist politicians of the fact that they are discussing total war between NATO and Russia are lies exposed by their unanimous support for escalation. The only way to stop this is to build a united, international anti-war movement in the working class in Europe and internationally in political struggle for socialism against the capitalist governments waging the war.



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