

# German Foreign Minister Baerbock's war visit to Kiev

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22 May 2024

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Greens) arrived in the Ukrainian capital Kiev Tuesday for an unannounced visit. At the same time, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrats—SPD) paid a visit to the German Air Force fighter jets stationed in Latvia. He traveled on Wednesday to Lithuania, where the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) is planning the permanent stationing of 5,000 combat troops.

The trips underlined two things in particular: NATO continues to escalate the war against Russia despite the growing danger of a nuclear exchange; and German imperialism, which waged two wars of mass murder against Russia in the 20th century and pursued the goal of subjugating Ukraine, is once again at the forefront.

In a statement shortly after her arrival, Baerbock referred to the drastic military situation for Ukraine at the front. The situation has “once again dramatically worsened, with the massive Russian airstrikes on civilian infrastructure and with the brutal Russian offensive in the Kharkiv region,” she warned. Her only response was to assert that Berlin and NATO would have to massively expand their support for the war.

Among other things, the foreign minister promised Kiev more support for the defence of its airspace. “In order to protect Ukraine from the rain of Russian missiles and drones, it urgently needs more air defences,” said Baerbock. She added that, together with Pistorius, she had launched a global initiative for increased air defence. This had now brought in almost a billion euros, but more was needed, she claimed.

“We are working hard to make this even more,” she explained. “We have not left a stone unturned and have led the way with an additional Patriot unit. We must join forces now so that Ukraine can survive, so that Ukrainians can continue to live independently in the future. And so that Putin's troops are not soon standing on our own borders.”

This mendacious and absurd propaganda serves to escalate the NATO war offensive against Russia in Ukraine and prepare for direct intervention by the military alliance.

At the beginning of May, French President Emmanuel Macron told *The Economist* that he would send French troops to Ukraine in the event of a collapse of the Ukrainian front lines. Since then, there have been reports that British and French troops are already in Ukraine. At the end of last week, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Q. Brown told the *New York Times* that NATO troops would eventually be sent to Ukraine.

The plans pursued by Baerbock and Pistorius for the expansion of air defences are aimed at preparing for direct NATO intervention in the conflict. In a cross-party initiative, representatives of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Greens have repeatedly campaigned in recent days for the use of NATO soldiers for air defence purposes in Ukraine. The plans call for NATO troops to shoot down missiles over Ukraine from Ukraine's borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

For example, FDP member Marcus Faber, who is considered a candidate to succeed Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann at the head of the German parliament's Defence Committee, stated that “the airspace over the Ukrainian border regions” could in principle “be protected by air defence systems on NATO territory.” Provided that the necessary ammunition was secured for the long term, he said he believed that “this is possible.”

Baerbock's party colleagues from the Greens are particularly aggressive. The deputy leader of the parliamentary group, Agnieszka Brugger, argued in favour of “deploying air defence systems on the borders of the neighbouring states in such a way that the western parts of Ukraine can be protected.” And the chairman of the European Committee and notorious warmonger Anton

Hofreiter stated, “Air defence over Ukraine from Poland and Romania should not be ruled out in the long term.”

Apparently, these very plans were discussed in Kiev. At a joint press conference with Baerbock, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that the “partners of Ukraine” should “consider the possibility” of repelling Russian missiles from their territory. There is no legal or moral reason and no security argument that “stands in the way of our partners launching missiles over Ukraine from their territory,” he added provocatively.

In fact, the Zelensky regime in Ukraine and its NATO supporters risk a nuclear confrontation with their constant escalation of the war. In his speech on the 79th anniversary of the Red Army’s victory over Nazi Germany on May 9, Putin stated that Russia would do everything “to avoid a global conflict, but at the same time we will not let anyone threaten us. Our strategic forces are always on combat alert.”

Despite warnings from Moscow, the imperialist powers intend to escalate the war. “Germany is Ukraine’s second-largest supporter after the US, partly because it is our best self-protection,” Baerbock boasted in Kiev. “We have provided €34 billion in aid since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression not only for Ukraine, but also for our European peace order. And we know more is needed here too.”

Who does Baerbock, who as German foreign minister has been fomenting the war against Russia for more than two years and supports Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians in the Middle East, think she is kidding? In the war in Ukraine, it is not Moscow that is the main aggressor, but the imperialist powers. With the systematic military encirclement of Russia following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO provoked the reactionary intervention of the Putin regime in the first place. It is now continuing to escalate the conflict in order to enforce its predatory interests.

The imperialist powers are not concerned with “self-protection” or “peace” in Ukraine. Rather, they aim to establish an outright war regime, which, in addition to controlling Ukraine, pursues the goals of reducing all of Russia to the status of a semi-colony and establishing their dominance over the resource-rich and geo-strategically crucial Eurasian landmass.

At the same time, German imperialism, which sought in the First and Second World Wars to annex Ukraine, is aggressively leading the way. A so-called Ukraine Recovery Conference will take place in Berlin on June 11 and 12. According to the key points in a paper from the

German government, in addition to strengthening German industry in Ukraine, it should also focus on the “greater integration of Ukraine into the (raw materials) trade of the EU within the framework of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act.”

In other words, in addition to the central areas of the Ukrainian economy—the paper mentions energy and agriculture, among other things—Germany wants to seize the enormous deposits of iron, titanium and lithium, some of which lie in the Russian-controlled Donbass.

The reactionary character of the war is particularly evident in the nature of the Zelensky regime itself. Ukraine is a police state and the population is under martial law. There have been no elections. Zelensky, whose term formally ended the day before Baerbock’s visit on May 20, rules as de facto dictator. It is a far-right regime that is taking brutal action against the growing opposition among Ukrainian workers and youth to the war.

On April 25, the socialist opponent of the war and leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, Bogdan Syrotiuk, was arrested in his hometown of Perwomaisk in southern Ukraine. He is charged with high treason, although his only offence is that he fights for the unity of the Ukrainian, Russian and international working class against the capitalist policy of war.

The *World Socialist Web Site* is calling on all its readers to sign the petition for Bogdan’s release at [wsws.org/freebogdan](https://www.wsws.org/freebogdan). The political show trial against him must be stopped!

At the same time, the escalation of the war by NATO must be stopped before it leads to an all-out war of the imperialist powers against Russia and to a nuclear catastrophe. This requires the building of a socialist movement of the international working class against fascism and war.

This is exactly what the Socialist Equality Party’s current video for its European election campaign focuses on. Spread the word and register here to discuss these key policy issues and tasks with us on May 23 at 7 p.m. Central European time.



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