

Military offensive against Russia: Germany inaugurates new naval headquarters in Rostock

Tom Weber, Johannes Stern
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On October 21, 2024, German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius and the state Premier of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Manuela Schwesig (both Social Democrats, SPD) inaugurated the Commander Task Force (CTF) Baltic, a tactical naval headquarters for NATO, in Rostock. The immediate task of CTF Baltic is to establish a so-called “situational maritime picture” in the Baltic Sea as part of NATO’s war offensive against Russia.

In his speech, Pistorius left no doubt as to what this concerns. Not defending freedom and democracy—as stated in the official propaganda—but about enforcing tangible imperialist interests. “The Baltic Sea has always been a crossroads of European history and is much more than just a waterway,” said the defence minister. “It is an important corridor for trade, military mobility and energy security. It is a strategic area of great geopolitical importance and a front line in our collective defence against evolving threats.”

And further: “Most importantly, the security of the Baltic Sea region is inextricably linked to the security of Europe as a whole. The region’s importance has become even more apparent in light of Russia’s ongoing aggression in our immediate neighbourhood.”

In fact, the main aggressor in Europe is not Russia, but the NATO powers. Through their long-standing military encirclement of Russia, they consciously provoked the reactionary intervention of Putin’s regime in Ukraine. Now they are escalating the conflict further and further in order to put the resource-rich country under increased military pressure and ultimately subjugate it.

“We must ensure that Putin does not get his way. We must defend ourselves and do everything we can to support our partners on NATO’s eastern flank,” Pistorius threatened. With the inauguration of CTF Baltic, “Germany has once again taken a step forward and is

ready to show responsibility and take the lead as a global trading and seafaring nation in the Baltic Sea region.”

German imperialism, which already expanded violently eastward during the two world wars of the 20th century, committing terrible crimes in the process, sees the establishment of the NATO headquarters under German leadership as an opportunity to increase its military weight in NATO and especially in Northern and Eastern Europe. Pistorius made no secret of the fact that this is about preparing an open war against Russia.

The headquarters will “play a decisive role in the preparation of military situational reports and in the response to regional challenges, including the protection of the interests of NATO member states against aggressive acts, especially in view of the proximity of Russia,” Pistorius declared. It would “also play a key role in promoting cooperation between the navies of the Baltic Sea region, improving interoperability and ensuring the rapid deployment of forces when needed.”

In several interviews at the beginning of the year, Pistorius had already stated that Germany must prepare for a direct military confrontation with Russia. Since then, this insane plan has been systematically advanced. The German government is gearing its entire structure towards war, sending combat troops to Lithuania directly on the Russian border and stationing US long-range missiles in Germany that are directed against Moscow. Now it is also supporting the Biden administration’s decision to grant Kiev permission to attack targets deep inside Russia with long-range missiles. In doing so, it is provoking a military response from the nuclear power.

In response to the inauguration of CTF Baltic, on October 22, Moscow summoned the German ambassador, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff. The ambassador was informed that “this step by the ruling circles in Germany

continues the creeping revision of the results of the Second World War and the militarisation of the country,” the Russian Foreign Ministry stated in an official press release.

It was “a gross violation” of the Two Plus Four Agreement. Washington, Brussels and Berlin must “be aware that the expansion of NATO’s military infrastructure into the territory of the former GDR [East Germany] will have extremely negative consequences and will not go without a corresponding response from Russia.”

It is obvious that the establishment of a NATO headquarters on the territory of the former GDR violates the “Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany” of September 12, 1990, the so-called Two-Plus-Four Treaty. Article 5, paragraph 3 of the Treaty stipulates: “Foreign forces and nuclear weapons or their carriers shall not be stationed or deployed in this part of Germany.”

CTF Baltic in Rostock is commanded by a German admiral. But the position of his deputy is initially being occupied by a Polish admiral, and that of the chief of staff by a Swedish officer. Subordinate leadership positions are also filled by personnel from different nations.

In addition to Germany, personnel from 11 other nations are involved in CTF Baltic: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Britain, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden. All these countries are NATO members. Even in peacetime, military personnel from these and other partner countries can fill 60 of 180 multinational posts in CTF Baltic. In the event of crisis or conflict, the staff can grow to up to 240 posts. National responsibilities are to change at least every four years.

The Putin regime’s denunciation of the breach of the Two Plus Four Agreement also underscores the reactionary character of the post-Stalinist oligarchy in Russia itself. The 1990 agreement sealed the restoration of capitalism on the territory of the GDR. The subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy ultimately created the precondition for the unbridled expansion of NATO to the borders of Russia. The Putin regime is reacting to this with a reactionary mixture of servile appeals to the Western “partners” and extreme military threats.

In September, the Kremlin responded to NATO’s plans to allow Kiev to attack Russia with long-range Western missiles by tightening its nuclear doctrine. At a meeting of the Russian Security Council, Putin warned that Russia reserved the right to “use nuclear weapons in the event of

aggression against Russia and Belarus.”

The new NATO headquarters and naval base in Rostock are inevitably potential targets for conventional or even tactical nuclear missile attacks in the event of a crisis or war.

Residents of Rostock and all of Germany and Europe should not remain under the illusion that the military build-up of the Rostock naval base will increase the security of the civilian population. Rostock was almost completely destroyed once before because it was a strategic military target. The Heinkel factories in Rostock and Rostock-Warnemünde produced military aircraft for the German Luftwaffe (Air Force) during the Second World War. From June 1940 to August 1944, British and American aircraft dropped around 4,000 tonnes of bombs on Rostock and Warnemünde during a total of 16 major attacks.

By the end of the war, 85 percent of Rostock’s residential and 42 percent of its commercial buildings were destroyed or damaged. Due to evacuations, the population was halved between 1940 and the end of the war, from 130,000 to 60,000. Between 1940 and 1944, 617 people lost their lives in the air raids on Rostock, including over 100 foreign workers and prisoners of war.

A total of over 60 million people worldwide died in the Second World War.

This war was ruthlessly prepared by the imperialist circles of Germany with the transfer of power to Hitler, the illegal rearmament of the Reichswehr (Armed Forces) and the antisemitic and racist incitement against Jews and the peoples of Eastern Europe.

The crucial question today is to warn workers worldwide of the imminent danger of a third world war with even greater destructive potential and to mobilise them against it. The plans of the capitalist governments to shed even more blood, to pour billions more into the current wars, to expand their war machines and to attack the living standards and social rights of workers in order to finance these crimes must be stopped. This requires the building of an international socialist anti-war movement in the working class against the imperialist war and its root, the capitalist profit system.



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