

European powers respond to Trump's annexation threats with calls for rearmament

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The responses by the German and French governments to US President-elect Donald Trump's plans to annex Greenland and Panama through military force make clear that they are taking his threats seriously.

After Trump refused to rule out the use of military force to achieve his goals at a press conference on Tuesday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz made a statement to the press on Wednesday, which was streamed live from the Chancellery. Scholz reported that he had consulted with a number of European heads of state and governments, as well as the European Council president.

The German chancellor invoked the "inviolability of borders" as a "fundamental principle of international law," referring to the 1975 Helsinki Accords of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. "Borders must not be shifted by force," he emphasized and castigated the "Russian ruler," who had "violated this principle with his brutal war of aggression against Ukraine." Scholz thus indirectly put Trump on par with Putin.

At the same time, he avoided mentioning Trump's name or Greenland even once, even though everyone knew what he was talking about. He was obviously keen to signal to Trump his willingness to continue working together, so long as the US president does not harm German interests.

Instead, Scholz explained in very general terms that in talks with his European partners, "a certain lack of understanding has become clear with regard to current statements from the USA." The principle of inviolability of borders applies to every country, "regardless of whether it is to the east or west of us, and every state must abide by this, regardless of whether it is a small country or a very powerful state,"

he added.

France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot also condemned Trump's threats of annexation. "Greenland is a territory of the European Union. It is out of the question for the EU to allow other nations to attack its sovereign borders," he told the broadcaster France Inter. Although he could not imagine the US actually invading Greenland, he added that the world is entering a time in which the "law of the jungle" dominates international relations. Europe must not allow itself to be intimidated and must strengthen itself militarily, economically and diplomatically, he said.

Mette Frederiksen, the prime minister of Denmark, to which Greenland has belonged since the 18th century, told TV2 that she did not have the fantasy to think that Trump would realize his plans for Greenland. "Greenland belongs to the Greenlanders," she added. Mute Egede, the prime minister of Greenland, which has had autonomous status since 1979, already rebuffed Trump in December.

"Greenland belongs to us. We are not for sale and will never be for sale," he emphasized.

The European powers' opposition to Trump's plans is not fuelled by concerns about international law and the inviolability of borders but by their own imperialist ambitions. For three decades, they have supported all US imperialist wars in order to share in the spoils. In 1999, NATO bombed Yugoslavia in order to force its breakup and the separation of Kosovo from Serbia. For the first time since Hitler's defeat, Germany took part in a war of aggression.

Only the attack on Iraq in 2003, which violated international law, was briefly opposed by Germany and France because it affected their own interests. But when Washington threatened to split the European Union, they relented. The attack on Libya in 2011 which

bombed the country back to the status of a colony was initiated by France.

The war in Ukraine against Russia, as well as the Israeli genocide in Gaza, the Israeli terror bombing of Lebanon and Syria and the preparations for war against Iran are jointly supported and financed by the US and Europe.

If Berlin and Paris are now protesting against Trump's plans to annex Greenland, it is because it directly impacts their interests.

The European Union is not prepared to give up the world's largest island (2.2 million square kilometres, or 836,000 square miles), which is rich in valuable raw materials and is of strategic importance due to its location in the Arctic.

In his outstanding analysis of imperialism, which is once again highly topical today, Vladimir Lenin demonstrated that imperialist alliances "are inevitably nothing more than a 'truce' in periods between wars. Peaceful alliances prepare the ground for wars, and in their turn grow out of wars; the one conditions the other, producing alternating forms of peaceful and non-peaceful struggle on one and the same basis of imperialist connections and relations within world economics and world politics," he wrote.

The objective significance of Trump's return to the White House is that the crisis of US and world capitalism has come to such a head that under capitalist conditions it can only be "solved" through a violent redivision of the world—through the conquest and destruction of rivals. Just as Hitler once annexed Austria and the Sudetenland, subjugated Czechoslovakia and finally invaded Poland, France and then the Soviet Union in order to create "living space" for German corporations, Trump is pushing for conquests and annexations.

His government is a cabinet of oligarchs, in which the most parasitic elements, the representatives of finance capital and the monopolies, multi-billionaires like Elon Musk and open fascists set the tone.

The European powers are reacting to this by pursuing their own imperialist interests all the more aggressively, arming themselves massively and helping fascist politicians to power in order to violently suppress resistance to rearmament, war and its social consequences.

In his press statement against Trump, Scholz boasted

that he had "brought the Bundeswehr [German Armed Forces] up to scratch" and more than doubled the German defense budget in the last seven years. His Vice Chancellor, the Green Party's Robert Habeck, is calling for the current defense budget to be tripled to 3.5 percent of economic output.

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the organ of the German stock exchange, described Trump as a "criminal, financed by a multi-billionaire [Elon Musk] who promotes right-wing extremists worldwide."

The newspaper's conclusion: "Germany must lead" and hold Europe together, German inaction is more dangerous than German power.

American pressure is also bringing the historical conflicts in Europe to a head again. Fascist and ultra-nationalist parties are increasingly coming to the fore, encouraged by those in power to agitate against migrants and suppress social opposition. They already dominate governments in Italy with Giorgia Meloni, in the Netherlands with Geert Wilders and in Hungary with Viktor Orbán. In Austria, Herbert Kickl has been given the task of forming a government; in Germany the AfD is the second strongest party; and in France Marine Le Pen is on the cusp of becoming president.

Only an international offensive by the working class that combines the fight against war and fascism with a socialist program to overthrow capitalism can stop this development and prevent a catastrophe. This is what the International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections, the Socialist Equality Parties, are fighting for.



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