

German foreign policy circles and media react to Trump with increased warmongering

Peter Schwarz
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The reaction of Germany's leading foreign policy circles to the conflict with the Trump administration and its rapprochement with Russia is war hysteria and calls for more rearmament. Politicians, journalists, professors and other "experts" who have been promoting a strengthening of German militarism for years see their hour has come and are calling for gigantic arms spending, the reintroduction of compulsory military service and a European nuclear bomb.

On Tuesday, the editorial in leading news weekly *Der Spiegel* argued in favour of "a new vision": the vision of "a Europe that finally accompanies its gigantic economic power with credible military clout—in order to be able to survive in the emerging new world order." According to author Markus Becker, "this would not only require a European army, but probably also a European nuclear force."

Becker is not content with arming the military, he also wants to militarise on the ideological front. The "new era" in foreign policy proclaimed by Chancellor Olaf Scholz two years ago meant more "than increasing the defence budget to two or even three and a half percent of gross domestic product," he writes. It required "a completely new self-image of the Germans of their role in the world."

According to Becker, the Germans should see their country as a "middle power" that "can only assert its geopolitical interests via the EU and NATO." The German government must therefore "do everything in its power to strengthen, lead and further develop these institutions—into instruments of power for a world in which the law of the jungle increasingly applies again."

Former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green) writes in finance daily *Handelsblatt*: "In the future, peace and freedom on the European continent will have to be based above all on our own strength and deterrent capability. That is why Europe must become a power very quickly and immediately, also and especially militarily, whatever the cost."

In a joint guest article for *Der Spiegel*, political scientists Claudia Major, Carlo Masala, Christian Mölling and Jana Puglierin present a five-point "action programme with a

clear timetable." Its aim: "To strengthen Ukraine, improve its own defence capabilities and increase deterrence against Russia." Point three includes a commitment to increase military spending "to 3 percent or more."

Green member of the European parliament Anton Hofreiter calls for "a 500 billion euro defence fund" to support Ukraine and "improve the EU's defence capability promptly and efficiently."

In an interview with *Handelsblatt*, political scientist Herfried Münkler speaks of "a new world order in which there is only one currency: Power." According to Münkler, he has been arguing for years "that Europeans must build up their own capabilities in order to be able to assert themselves in this world order." The events of the past week were "a dramatic wake-up call to the European Union, perhaps the last one." The "establishment of defence capabilities" was "a question of will" and not "primarily a problem of resources." Münkler also argues in favour of a European "nuclear deterrent component."

Such reactions show that the transition to a ruthless imperialist foreign policy and authoritarian methods of rule that characterise Trump's first month in office is not limited to the US. The ruling class in Germany is also returning to its criminal traditions.

The massive military build-up in Germany and Europe is not, as claimed, defensive and to secure peace, but to escalate the war in Ukraine and prepare for further imperialist wars. Like the rearmament on the eve of the First and Second World Wars, it is a path to disaster.

NATO has always been an aggressive imperialist military alliance. Founded at the beginning of the Cold War, it was primarily directed against the Soviet Union. For their part, the European powers supported all the crimes of US imperialism or participated in them—in Korea and Vietnam, in Latin America and in Africa.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the NATO allies waged numerous neo-colonial wars against countries such as Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya, which had achieved a certain degree of independence by

manoeuvring between the imperialist powers and the Soviet Union. To this day, Berlin and Brussels continue to support the genocide of the Palestinians, even though the Israeli government is accused of war crimes. At the same time, NATO pushed further and further eastwards, provoking Russia's reactionary invasion of Ukraine.

Since then, both the US and the European powers have supported this war with hundreds of billions of euros and dollars. Their aim is not only to control Ukraine, but also to subjugate and crush Russia.

Now that Trump has left the common front, as he directs the American war machine towards China and regards the European powers as rivals, they are endeavouring to continue the Ukraine war on their own and prepare for future conflicts with the US in other regions of the world. This is the reason for the huge arms build-up.

This cannot be realised by democratic means. The suppression of resistance to militarism and to the social cuts necessary to finance it requires dictatorial methods.

A column that appeared in *Der Spiegel* on Wednesday under the headline "The time for major reforms has come" explains this with remarkable candour. In it, Ursula Weidenfeld welcomes the current crisis because it is forcing changes that no party dares to speak about in the current election campaign. She writes:

None of the candidates for chancellor voluntarily use the word "imposition." And yet all politicians probably know that soon after the election they will have to adopt a reform agenda that could affect not just a few groups, but everyone. They seem to be very afraid of this. But the good news is that the time is ripe.

The first point on such a reform agenda would be "significantly higher military spending." Weidenfeld does not hide what this means:

For Germany, that would mean less government spending on things like welfare payments, housing, pensions or wind turbines, a new special fund or even the temporary end of the debt brake. There is no question that this would demand a lot from federal politics. ... Rearmament would not be easy, nor would it be fun. But this time it is essential for survival.

Regardless of the outcome of Sunday's election, the next government will attack all social and democratic achievements in order to finance its policy of rearmament and war. There are millions of people who will not put up with this, which provides the objective basis for stopping the war madness.

The election programme of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) states:

The SGP rejects the illusion that the establishment parties can be compelled to change course through moral appeals or pressure from below. Our election campaign is directed at the working class and youth—at all those who refuse to accept the genocidal pro-war policy, the stark levels of social inequality, the destruction of health and education systems and the devastation of our planet.

The international working class is a formidable social force, comprising 3.5 billion people—55 percent more than in 1991. It creates all social wealth while bearing the entire burden of war and crisis. Only if the working class intervenes independently in political life and transforms society on a revolutionary basis—expropriating the big banks and corporations and placing them under democratic control—can catastrophe be averted.

Such a movement has already begun. From the United States to Europe, Asia, and Africa, fierce industrial struggles are emerging, increasingly coming into open conflict with the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy. Despite brutal repression, millions have protested against the genocide in Gaza. The central task is to unite these struggles internationally, arm them with a socialist perspective and build a new socialist mass party. This is the goal of our election campaign.



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