

Incoming German chancellor intends to send Taurus cruise missiles to Ukraine

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German Chancellor-designate Friedrich Merz has reaffirmed his intention to supply Ukraine with German Taurus cruise missiles. When asked on the public broadcaster ARD program “Caren Miosga” on Sunday evening whether he stood by his demand, Merz replied: “Yes, I said exactly what I meant.”

Merz’s threat is incredibly reckless and dangerous. He is planning to be elected chancellor on May 6, exactly 80 years to the day after Hitler’s Wehrmacht signed the unconditional surrender in Reims on the night of May 6-7, 1945. This marked the end of the greatest crimes in human history.

In the Soviet Union, around 27 million people—and according to more recent research, even up to 40 million—fell victim to the savagery of the German invaders. Millions of them were shot, gassed and burned alive simply because they were Jews, communists or partisans, or because as civilians they stood in the way of the German drive for *Lebensraum* (living space). The siege of Leningrad alone, which lasted 28 months, claimed 1.1 million civilian victims, 90 percent of whom starved to death. Millions more were literally worked to death as forced laborers and prisoners of war in German factories.

Eighty years on, Merz is threatening Russia with the use of a weapon that poses a serious threat to the country. The Taurus, which is launched by fighter jets, flies under enemy radar at an altitude of less than 50 meters and has four independent navigation systems that orient themselves to the terrain. It is therefore difficult to shoot the missile down or disrupt its flight path.

With a range of more than 500 kilometers, the Taurus flies further than comparable British, French and American weapons and can reach Moscow from Ukrainian airspace. Its warhead can penetrate bunker systems and then detonate a 480 kilogram charge. The programming and deployment of the complex flying machine requires the involvement of German specialists.

Merz himself cited “the destruction of the most important land link between Russia and Crimea,” i.e., the Kerch

Bridge, as an example of the possible use of the Taurus. According to Merz, most of the military supplies for the Russian army are located in Crimea.

The Russian government would see the delivery and use of this weapon as a declaration of war. No one can guarantee that it will not respond with attacks on German targets. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has already accused Merz of supporting measures “that will lead to a new escalation.” Merz’s predecessor, Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is still in office, has therefore so far rejected the delivery of Taurus missiles, although he has never completely ruled it out.

But although Merz is risking nuclear war with this provocation, there is no one in the established parties and media opposing him. The Social Democrats, Merz’s future coalition partner, has joined him in launching the largest rearmament program since Hitler, amounting to €1 trillion, in order to intensify the war against Russia. The Greens, who are now leaving the government, have long campaigned for the delivery of Taurus. The Left Party has also supported the war credits.

The same politicians and journalists, who justify every war crime committed by Israel with Germany’s responsibility for the Holocaust, have no such scruples when it comes to waging war against Russia. On the contrary, the campaign against Russia is taking on evermore openly revanchist traits. In ruling circles, the victory of the Soviet Red Army over Hitler’s Wehrmacht is once again seen as a defeat and not as a liberation. The history books are being rewritten accordingly.

Germany’s entire official political life is characterized by crazed war hysteria—which, however, finds little resonance in the general population and confronts mistrust and opposition.

Defense Minister Boris Pistorius (SPD), who is likely to remain in office, already issued the slogan last summer that Germany must be “war-ready” by 2029 in order to be able to wage a war against Russia. The new government wants to reintroduce military registration this year in order to have

enough young people available for voluntary or compulsory military service.

Inspector General Carsten Breuer has set a target of 200,000 active soldiers and 260,000 reservists in order to meet Germany's NATO obligations and its role as a logistical hub for a troop deployment on the alliance's eastern flank. To achieve this, 20,000 additional active soldiers must be recruited and 100,000 more reservists trained.

This is not enough for the Christian Democrat Patrick Sensburg, president of the Reservist Association. Since, according to NATO calculations, "in a possible war" on NATO's eastern front, it can be assumed that 5,000 of our own troops will die every day, they must be replaced, he said. Otherwise it would be easy to "calculate how long it would take for the front to collapse." In order to "defend Germany across the board with modern war material," 300,000 to 350,000 soldiers and almost 1 million reservists would be required.

Even the contradictory efforts of US President Donald Trump to agree to a ceasefire with Russia are met with blatant rejection in Berlin. Germany and other European powers are determined to continue the costly war against Russia at all costs.

Germany and the UK have now taken over the leadership of the Ukraine Contact Group from the US in order to secure the supply of weapons and ammunition for Ukraine. And France and the UK are leading the so-called "coalition of the willing," which is attempting to send Western troops to Ukraine.

After a Russian missile claimed over 30 victims in the Ukrainian city of Sumy, Merz sneered on "Caren Miosga":

I say to all those who naively ask Putin to come to the negotiating table: That's the answer. That's what Putin does to those who talk to him about a ceasefire.

The official propaganda that Russia will attack the whole of Europe if it is not defeated militarily in Ukraine is a lie. It has neither the economic and military means nor the political motive to do so. The Putin regime, which represents the interests of the Russian oligarchs, has long sought to join the circle of imperialist powers. In 2001, Putin was therefore enthusiastically celebrated by the German Bundestag.

But the imperialist powers wanted more. In Iraq, Libya and Syria, they violently overthrew governments with which Russia had good relations and expanded NATO ever further towards Russia. In 2014, Washington and Berlin supported a coup in Kiev, which—backed by fascist forces—brought a pro-

Western regime to power, began to systematically arm the Ukrainian army and thus provoked Russia's reactionary attack on Ukraine.

Now, in the face of growing conflict with the US, the European powers are seeking to continue the war against Russia on their own.

As we wrote in an earlier article, "The German ruling class has never come to terms with the fact that it had to take a back seat militarily after the failure of Hitler's war of annihilation." The real purpose of its gigantic rearmament program is to "transform Germany once again into a great military power that can free itself from American domination, dominate Europe and take on other great powers—Russia, China and the US—in the struggle for the violent redivision of the world."

Only the working class can stop this relapse into war and barbarism. It bears the cost of rearmament and war in the form of falling wages and social benefits, the suppression of democratic rights and ultimately war and destruction. And it produces all the wealth of society.

Europe is already being repeatedly shaken by violent class struggles and protests. But these struggles need a perspective. The working class must free itself from the paralysing influence of the trade unions and the pseudo-left organizations that openly support the war programme or steer resistance against it into the dead end of impotent appeals to the ruling class.

It must unite throughout Europe and worldwide and combine the struggle against social cuts and for better wages and democratic rights with the struggle against war and its cause—capitalism. This is what the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and its sister organizations in the International Committee of the Fourth International are fighting for.



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