

German government supports Israeli war of aggression

Peter Schwarz
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The German government has pledged its full support to Israel following its attack on Iran. Chancellor Friedrich Merz (Christian Democrat, CDU), Vice Chancellor Lars Klingbeil (Social Democrat, SPD) and Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul (CDU) have justified the unprovoked assault on the country of 90 million people with Israel's "right to self-defence."

In doing so, they not only scorn the facts, but also international law. Their support for Israeli aggression shows they will stop at no crime in pursuit of their geopolitical objectives. Having already backed the bombing, starvation and displacement of two million Palestinians, they are now defending the targeted assassination of senior Iranian military figures, politicians and scientists, the bombing of Iranian high-rises, industrial facilities and fuel depots, and Israel's attempt to set the entire region ablaze.

Merz commented on Friday's first wave of Israeli attacks with the statement: "We reaffirm that Israel has the right to defend its existence and the security of its citizens." He described Iran's nuclear program as an "existential threat" to Israel, effectively giving it a blank check to wage war.

Wadephul is touring the Middle East to bolster Israel by affirming its right to self-defence and to signal Germany's solidarity with the Zionist regime.

In a Sunday evening interview on broadcaster ZDF's "Berlin direkt" programme, Klingbeil claimed there was no doubt that Iran wanted to wipe Israel off the map. This, he argued, gave Israel "the right to defend its right to exist." If that right were at risk, he said, then given Germany's historical responsibility, he "could not imagine" a situation in which Berlin would withhold its support for Israel—even by supplying weapons.

Merz, Wadephul and Klingbeil occasionally call for

restraint and diplomatic solutions, but these appeals are solely aimed at placating public opinion and have no practical consequences.

Virtually all leading experts in international law agree that Israel's attack on Iran violates the UN Charter's prohibition on the use of force. This charter allows military action only in self-defence after an armed attack. Preemptive strikes are only permissible in narrowly defined circumstances when an attack is imminent. But "not even an attack is being claimed that would meet these criteria," as Tom Dannenbaum, professor of international law at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, noted.

Matthias Goldmann, a professor of international law in Wiesbaden, argued that even if Iran possessed nuclear weapons, that would not justify an attack: "The Israeli assault on Iran is a textbook case of an illegal pre-emptive strike."

And according to Kai Ambos, professor of international law in Göttingen, "the prohibition on the use of force—a fundamental norm of international law—becomes practically meaningless" if one were to view Israel's attack as a legitimate preemptive strike. In that case, "any state could decide to use military force on the basis of a mere sense of threat."

The German government routinely invokes this prohibition when justifying its war drive against Russia. But in Israel's case, "reason of state" takes precedence over law. The phrase "Israel's right to exist is part of Germany's reason of state," coined by then-Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2008, is also found in the new government's coalition agreement.

The term "reason of state" was coined 500 years ago by Italian political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli and revived during the Weimar Republic by Carl Schmitt, later known as the "crown jurist of the Third Reich." It

means that the law protects not democratic freedoms, but the state order—and is subordinate to it. To defend state interests, the holder of state power may disregard formal legal norms. Schmitt, who joined the Nazis in 1933, became the most important theoretical architect of Hitler's dictatorship.

When today's German government declares the defence of Israel's war crimes to be a German "reason of state," it is following this tradition. But this has nothing to do with responsibility for the Holocaust or the protection of Jewish life in the Middle East. The Holocaust does not obligate Germany to support genocide in Gaza or the other crimes committed by Netanyahu's far-right regime, which maintains close ties with fascist parties across Europe.

Netanyahu's policies are increasingly taking on suicidal dimensions. The idea that Jewish life can be protected by expelling and exterminating Palestinians, destroying Iran—a country with 10 times Israel's population—and turning the entire region against Israel is delusional. Peaceful coexistence of all nationalities and religions in the Middle East is only possible on a socialist basis.

Germany—like the US, the UK and other imperialist countries—supports Israel because it serves as a military and political bridgehead in a region of major geopolitical and economic interest.

German policy in the Middle East follows the same logic as in Ukraine and other regions of the world. After decades of enforced military restraint, Germany is now rearming on a massive scale to defend its imperialist interests—access to raw materials, markets, trade routes, cheap labour and profits—by military means.

Driven by the insoluble contradictions of the capitalist profit system, the imperialist powers are lurching toward a third world war—unless they are stopped in time by a socialist movement of the international working class.



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