Germany supplies Kiev with more Patriot systems, rearms for war as it did under Hitler

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The German federal government has announced that it will deliver two further Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine in the coming days. In a second step, the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) intends "within the next two to three months to hand over further system components in order to strengthen Ukraine's air defence with additional Patriot batteries."

With a total of five batteries delivered, Germany is now by far the largest supplier of Patriot systems to Ukraine. "Germany is by far the strongest supporter of Ukraine in the field of air defence," boasted Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrat, SPD) on Wednesday. According to official figures, Berlin has provided military support worth around €28 billion since 2022—including deliveries of weapons, ammunition, heavy equipment, training programmes, as well as financial resources from various budgets and direct industrial contracts.

The official narrative that these deliveries serve solely to repel Russian missile and drone attacks is pure war propaganda. Russia's reactionary invasion of Ukraine does not alter the fact that the imperialist powers have systematically provoked this war for years. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, NATO has expanded its borders ever further eastwards, in violation of all assurances given to Moscow, encircling Russia militarily. Eighty years after the end of the Second World War, Germany once again finds itself at the forefront of a confrontation with the nuclear power Russia.

As in the two world wars of the 20th century, German imperialism is once again pursuing predatory economic and geopolitical interests: control of resource-rich Ukraine, the subordination of the whole of Eastern Europe to a Berlin-dominated EU, and the subjugation of Russia itself. In a government statement, Chancellor Friedrich Merz (Christian Democrat, CDU) described the Russian leadership as a "criminal regime" that threatened Europe, declaring: "The means of diplomacy have been exhausted." This amounts, in effect, to a declaration of war—when diplomacy is said to be exhausted, the hour of the weapons has arrived.

Pistorius had already demanded in the autumn of 2023 that Germany must become "fit for war." With the €100 billion "special fund" for the Bundeswehr and a further long-term military spending plan amounting to around €1 trillion, the coalition government of the CDU and SPD has launched the largest rearmament since the Nazi era. The declared aim is to make the Bundeswehr "the strongest conventional army in Europe."

These plans are now being implemented aggressively. According to a report by the Reuters news agency, the government is planning a procurement wave worth several tens of billions of euros:

- 20 Eurofighter combat aircraft, costing €4–5 billion;
- up to 3,000 Boxer armoured vehicles from KNDS and Rheinmetall, costing around €10 billion;
- Up to 3,500 Patria infantry fighting vehicles, costing around €7 billion.

As early as July, Bloomberg reported that the Bundeswehr is to receive around 1,000 additional Leopard battle tanks over the next ten years. This would represent a historic multiplication of the German tank forces, which currently comprise about 320 Leopard tanks and 500 Boxers.

Other large orders already confirmed include:

- 1,400 military logistics vehicles from Rheinmetall for €770 million, including 963 vehicles with interchangeable body systems and 425 unprotected transport vehicles;
- a framework agreement with Rheinmetall for up to

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6,500 lorries worth €3.5 billion;

• 35 nuclear-capable F-35 fighter jets (around €10 billion) designed to deliver US nuclear bombs to their targets in the event of war;

• 60 Chinook transport helicopters (€7 billion);

• the Israeli Arrow 3 missile defence system (€4 billion).

A spokeswoman for the Ministry of Defence stated that further investments are planned in the fields of long-range precision weapons, ammunition, unmanned systems, digitalisation and artificial intelligence. Rheinmetall alone has received Bundeswehr contracts worth €12 billion in the field of digitalisation since the end of 2024. Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems is reporting growing orders for conventional submarines, frigates and unmanned mine countermeasure systems.

The parallels with history are as striking as they are deadly: the same corporations that armed Hitler's Wehrmacht (Army) in the 1930s are once again rubbing their bloody hands together and raking in billions. The turnover of Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems rose by 16.7 percent in 2023/24 to €2.1 billion. Rheinmetall reported the highest turnover in its history at €9.8 billion, an increase of 36 percent on the previous year, and expects an order potential of more than €300 billion in Europe alone by 2030.

Particularly dangerous is the nuclear component of the rearmament. The F-35 jets will be stationed with Tactical Air Wing 33 in Büchel, which will take over the role of "nuclear sharing." This means that in the event of a war with Russia, the approximately 20 US nuclear bombs stationed there—each many times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb—could be delivered to their targets by German pilots.

The government is currently mobilising additional funds to make Büchel Air Base operational for the F-35 as quickly as possible. At present, the Ministry of Defence is reckoning with additional costs of more than €640 million, according to a confidential document for the parliamentary Budget Committee obtained by Reuters. This increases total costs to just over €2 billion.

Under conditions of growing tensions with the United States, calls for Germany to have its own nuclear weapons are becoming louder in parallel. At the beginning of the week, leading finance daily *Handelsblatt* published an article entitled "Strange … must we learn to love the bomb?" discussing the idea of an independent or Europeanised nuclear force. Nuclear expert Fabian Hoffmann of the University of Oslo was quoted as saying: "In theory, Germany could close the entire nuclear cycle, both industrially and technologically."

Handelsblatt's "conclusion": "It is not the technology that is lacking. The decision for or against a European and, in the final analysis, also a German nuclear force is a political one."

Such nuclear war-gaming and the overall rearmament frenzy must serve as a serious warning to workers and young people. The ruling class is determined to impose the costs of rearmament on the population not only in the form of historically unprecedented social attacks. In Gaza, they are supporting Israel's genocide against the Palestinians. "Amid a mortal crisis of the entire capitalist system, they are prepared to resort to any crime, including using nuclear weapons," as stated in a recent WSWS perspective. And further:

> Eighty years after the dropping of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, human civilization is threatened by annihilation through imperialist war. It is necessary to build a mass, international anti-war movement in the working class, armed with a perspective to take power out of the hands of the capitalist oligarchy and overthrow the capitalist system that is the root cause of imperialist war.

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