

German defence minister presents new military strategy: Berlin prepares for major war against Russia

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On Wednesday, German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius and the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), Carsten Breuer, presented a comprehensive military strategy for the first time in the history of the Bundeswehr. Even though key parts of the document remain classified, the excerpts that have been released leave no doubt as to its nature: Germany is systematically preparing for a major war—particularly against Russia.

The secrecy itself is politically revealing. It shows that the measures, capabilities and specific war plans actually being devised go far beyond what is communicated publicly. Yet even the official summaries make clear that the German government is taking a qualitative leap forward in military rearmament and preparations for war.

At the centre of the strategy is the declared goal of expanding the Bundeswehr into the “strongest conventional army in Europe” and making Germany the leading military power within the EU and NATO. While this objective ties in directly with the National Security Strategy and the 2023 Defence Policy Guidelines, the strategy goes significantly further in its concrete elaboration.

The military strategy follows “the idea that Germany, as the largest economy in Europe, must and will take on a leading role in NATO in a complex and increasingly acute threat situation—also militarily. It is a sign of a paradigm shift and underpins our claim to shape things,” Breuer said.

The “Overall Concept of Military Defence” consists of two parts: a military strategy and a capability profile. Until now, according to Breuer, the Bundeswehr had struggled to clearly define security policy goals and then explain how it wanted to achieve them. “The answer to this is given by the military strategy—and the answer to the means for it is given by the capability profile.”

In other words: German imperialism is once again clearly defining its predatory goals and at the same time creating the military prerequisites to enforce them. At the centre is the war offensive against Russia, which was further escalated in

recent days with the signing of a new “strategic partnership” between Germany and Ukraine, and the summoning of the Russian ambassador.

At the presentation of the strategy, Pistorius boasted: “We are the largest supporter of Ukraine, from which we ourselves also benefit, because we learn from the experiences of the Ukrainians on the battlefield for our Bundeswehr.” This statement can only be understood as a warning. Hundreds of thousands of lives have already been consumed in the war against Russia in Ukraine. The Ministry of Defence and the military leadership envisage similar “experiences” for the Bundeswehr and young conscripts.

The new strategy openly defines Russia as a central threat and orientates all military planning towards a comprehensive war against the nuclear power. The hitherto known contents of the military strategy and the associated rearmament plans include, among others:

- Massive personnel growth: The Bundeswehr is to be significantly enlarged. A troop strength of at least 260,000 active soldiers and a considerable expansion of the reserve are being discussed. In total, the force is to grow to at least 460,000. To achieve this growth, which is only the beginning, the reintroduction of conscription is being prepared.
- Building up fully equipped large formations: Germany is committing itself to providing several fully operational divisions for NATO, including heavy mechanised forces for the war in Eastern Europe.
- Permanent stationing and frontline presence: The deployment of a German combat brigade in Lithuania is part of long-term forward stationing on the Russian border.
- Accelerated rearmament and modernisation: Massive investments in heavy weapons, air defence systems, drones, cyber and space capabilities. Projects such as the serial production of modern weapon systems are being expanded.
- Logistics and mobilisation: The building up of a

comprehensive military logistics structure for rapid troop deployments through Europe (“military mobility”) as well as ensuring supplies in the event of war.

- Integration into NATO and EU structures: Germany is taking on a central leadership role in multinational command structures and operational planning. Germany will “increase cohesion between Eastern, Central and Western Europe from the centre of Europe and maintain the connection to North America,” the published part of the strategy states. Thus, Germany will become “even more of a military anchor partner for its European allies” in order to “improve European ability to act.”

- National command and control capability: “The capability for national planning and command of operations is to be ensured at the operational level,” the document demands. This also includes “the command of multi-domain operations as well as the task contained therein for the cross-dimensional command of deep precision strikes.”

- “Total defence”: The military strategy is explicitly interlinked with civilian structures. State, economy and society are to be orientated towards the event of war.

Even the title of the strategy “Overall Concept for Military Defence” makes clear that its implementation is not limited to the military, but encompasses the whole of society.

This was formulated unmistakably by Pistorius himself at the Hanover Trade Fair. There, last weekend, he openly called on German business to orientate more strongly towards the needs of “total defence.” Companies are to increasingly convert their production to military requirements and cooperate more closely with the Bundeswehr. Pistorius linked this demand directly to the enforcement of German great power claims.

“Due to our size, our economic strength and our geostrategic role, Germany has the responsibility to do significantly more than before. And, of course, not only for our own security, but for the security of Europe as a whole,” Pistorius called out to the assembled business representatives. And this included “not least, resilient value creation.” “Industrial strength” was “a mandatory prerequisite for defence” and therefore “security and defence policy aspects must always be considered alongside all conceded business value creation.”

This prepares the transition to a war economy. In an emergency, industry, infrastructure and workers are to be placed directly in the service of military operations. In its logic, this is reminiscent of earlier phases of German war preparation on the eve of the First and Second World Wars—with the difference that today it takes place under conditions of a highly developed globalised economy.

The necessary financial means for this have already been created. The “special fund” and war credits amounting to

hundreds of billions of euros, supported by all the establishment parties, including the Left Party and the Greens, are financing the largest rearmament programme since the end of the Second World War.

At the same time, the militarisation of society is being pushed forward. The reintroduction of conscription, the forced integration of schools and universities into military programmes, and the expansion of powers for the security authorities are integral components of this development.

The new military strategy makes clear that German imperialism has drawn the conclusion from its historical crimes and catastrophic defeats in the two world wars of the 20th century to assert its interests once again with military force. Under conditions of growing geopolitical conflicts—between the imperialist powers themselves, above all between Europe and the US and economic crises—the ruling class is driving forward a policy that inevitably leads to catastrophe.

For workers and youth, this means they are confronted with a reality that is being systematically downplayed by official circles: The preparation for a major war is not an abstract possibility, but concrete government policy. It has nothing to do with the defence of “democracy” and “freedom” against a Russian, Iranian or any other aggressor, but, as in the past, is aimed at enforcing imperialist interests by means of destructive violence.

The decisive political question is therefore how this development towards a Third World War can be countered. The militarisation of society and the transition to a war economy can only be stopped by a conscious political movement of the working class directed against the capitalist system, from which war and rearmament emerge. Under these conditions, the building of an international socialist anti-war movement is not an abstract perspective, but an immediate necessity.



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