

Pistorius in Kiev: Germany arms for war against Russia

Johannes Stern
12 May 2026

Almost 85 years after the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, Germany's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, Germany is de facto once again at war with Russia. This was underscored by the visit of Defence Minister Boris Pistorius to Kiev at the beginning of the week. At the centre of the visit was the further integration of the German and Ukrainian arms industries and the joint development of long-range weapons systems with which Russia is to be attacked deep in its rear.

At his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Ukrainian Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, Pistorius announced a new stage of military-industrial cooperation. Germany and Ukraine intend jointly to develop and produce drones and other unmanned weapons systems with ranges of up to 1,500 kilometres. Zelensky declared that there were already six joint armaments projects with Germany, but that this was "only the beginning." According to media reports, Zelensky also thanked Germany for further assistance with air defence, the details of which are to remain "a surprise" for Russia.

Pistorius made no secret of the fact that Berlin views Ukraine not only as a recipient of German weapons, but as a laboratory and partner for the development of future German and European warfare. Germany could "benefit from Ukraine's experience on the battlefield," he declared in Kiev. This applied in particular to the development of long-range drones. At the same time, he pointed out that the European NATO states had "capability gaps," especially in the area of long-range weapons systems.

The political significance of this statement can hardly be overstated. In recent years, Ukraine has become the testing ground for a highly technologised positional war in which drones, missiles, data integration, satellite reconnaissance and automated battle management play a central role. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers have already been killed or wounded in this war. Now the German defence minister is openly declaring that the Bundeswehr wants to learn from this bloody experience.

For security reasons, Pistorius' trip had not been publicly announced in advance. It did not serve the preparation of peace, but the expansion of the war. In Kiev, Pistorius dismissed recent Russian statements about a potential end to the war as a "possible deception manoeuvre." He also rejected Moscow's call for negotiations without Western preconditions. In other words, the German government is not interested in a diplomatic solution. It is using the war to advance its own great-power plans and to weaken Russia militarily, politically and economically.

This puts into practice plans that had already been agreed during Zelensky's visit to Berlin in April. The "Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between Germany and Ukraine" signed at the time is a war document. It includes concrete agreements on data cooperation, the joint production of Anubis long-range combat drones and Seth-X medium-range combat drones, the delivery of drones to third countries including the Gulf states and the examination of a long-term drone agreement.

Ukraine's air defence and missile armament are also being further expanded. Following the German-Ukrainian government consultations,

the Defence Ministry announced that Germany was financing a Ukrainian contract with the US corporation Raytheon for the delivery of several hundred Patriot missiles. In addition, an agreement had been reached with Diehl Defence for the delivery of further launchers for the IRIS-T air defence systems.

German-Ukrainian cooperation has long since ceased to be limited to arms deliveries. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have been trained in Germany and other NATO states. The Bundeswehr provides training, logistics, maintenance, reconnaissance and command infrastructure. German officers and military planners are deeply integrated into Ukraine's war effort. The new "strategic partnership" institutionalises this cooperation through regular security and defence policy consultations, high-level meetings on the arms industry and a joint German-Ukrainian working group on arms production.

At the same time, German corporations and state agencies are securing access to key areas of the Ukrainian economy. The strategic partnership explicitly provides for an agreement between the State Service of Geology and Subsoil of Ukraine and Germany's Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources on the development of critical minerals, geoscientific research and advice for government and industry. Ukraine is not only a military bridgehead against Russia, but also an object of imperialist exploitation and redivision.

This has nothing to do with the defence of "freedom" and "democracy" against a "Russian aggressor." The war is the result of a long-term strategy by the NATO powers and, in particular, German imperialism, which is pursuing its interests toward Moscow with growing aggressiveness.

As early as the beginning of 2014, Berlin, in close alliance with Washington, supported the right-wing coup in Kiev, which relied on fascist forces and brought a pro-Western regime to power. This regime intensified the confrontation with Russia, integrated itself ever more closely into NATO structures and subordinated Ukraine to the economic and geostrategic interests of the Western powers. Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, the NATO states have systematically escalated the war. They are not striving for a negotiated solution, but for the military subjugation of Moscow and control over Ukraine and the entire eastern European and Eurasian region.

Berlin is thereby resuming its historic great-power plans. Already in the First World War, control over Ukraine, rich in raw materials and of central geostrategic importance, was among the declared war aims of the German Empire. In the Second World War, the Nazi regime took up these goals and radicalised them in the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union. The German invasion on June 22, 1941 opened an unprecedented war of plunder and extermination that claimed the lives of more than 27 million Soviet citizens.

Today, Ukraine once again functions as a geostrategic bridgehead of German imperialism. Similar to Israel in the Middle East, it serves as an

outpost for the enforcement of imperialist interests across an entire region—from Eastern Europe deep into the Eurasian landmass. At the same time, it plays a central role in the transformation of the European Union into an independent military great power under German leadership.

How far these plans go is shown by a strategy paper published at the beginning of May under the telling title, “The Road to European Defence Autonomy: A Guide to Overcoming Critical Dependencies,” which is being discussed in media and political circles under the name “Sparta 2.0.” The authors include Jeannette zu Fürstenberg, Moritz Schularick, Nico Lange, René Obermann and Thomas Enders—representatives of finance capital, think tanks, academia and the arms industry. The Kiel Institute published the paper with the message that European defence autonomy is “technologically feasible, fiscally affordable and politically achievable.”

The paper calls for nothing less than the construction of a European military power capable of waging war independently of the United States. Right at the beginning it states that Germany and Europe are “strategically dependent across the entire military effects chain”—from military cloud systems, air defence, command systems, communications and satellite reconnaissance to conventional and nuclear deterrence. These dependencies must be “substantially reduced” in order to achieve “European sovereignty in the area of security and defence.”

The authors put the cost of the European “sovereignty agenda” at €150 to €200 billion by 2030 and a total of about €500 billion over the coming decade. They describe the decisive factors not as money or technology, but as “political prioritisation and leadership,” industrial coordination and the willingness to overcome the previous fragmentation of European armaments. Ukraine is explicitly cited as a model: “The experiences and successes of Ukraine in recent years in particular show what is possible when clear objectives and technological priorities are defined.”

The paper’s central fields of action read like a programme for the preparation of a major European war. It calls for a sovereign European command and battle management system, the construction of Europe’s own military cloud and data structures, massive investments in drones and autonomous systems, air defence, satellite reconnaissance, long-range weapons, ammunition production, cyberwarfare and nuclear deterrence. In the section on “scaled autonomous systems,” it states that Ukraine has carried out the “paradigm shift to drone-dominated warfare,” while Europe has “so far largely missed” this shift. The systems named include Shahed-class drones, loitering munitions, FPV drones, unmanned ground vehicles and maritime autonomous systems.

Particularly revealing is the role that the paper assigns to the Ukrainian battle management software Delta. This links situational awareness, data integration, UAV coordination and interoperability with NATO systems and is to serve as a reference for a European solution. Germany’s access to Delta data since April 2026 is described as “a valid starting point.” What is formulated here in technocratic language means concretely: The experiences and data from the Ukraine war are to flow in real time into the construction of an independent European war machine.

The paper is not the fantasy of a few think tank ideologues. It corresponds to the plans in Brussels and Berlin. The new military strategy of the German government, presented in April by Pistorius and Bundeswehr Inspector General Carsten Breuer, openly declares that the Bundeswehr is to be built up into the “strongest conventional army in Europe” by 2039. With Russia defined as the central threat. The state, economy and society are to be comprehensively aligned with war readiness under the framework of so-called “total defence.”

Already at the presentation of the military strategy, Pistorius boasted: “We are the largest supporter of Ukraine, from which we also benefit ourselves, because we learn from the Ukrainians’ experiences on the battlefield for our Bundeswehr.” This statement is a warning. What the ruling class is “learning” in Ukraine is how a highly industrialised war is

waged against a nuclear power, how the population is mobilised, how the economy is converted to war production and how an entire society is subordinated to military requirements.

Enormous financial resources are being made available to implement these renewed German war and world-power plans. On April 29, the federal cabinet adopted the key parameters for the 2027 federal budget and financial planning up to 2030. According to these, the defence budget in the core federal budget is to rise to €105.8 billion in 2027 and to about €180 billion by 2030. This is in addition to special funds and further military expenditures, including war support for Ukraine.

This gigantic militarisation, comparable only to German rearmament before the two world wars, is being financed through massive social cuts that are cynically sold as “reforms.” The social logic of militarism is inexorable. Every billion for tanks, drones, missiles, barracks and war credits is cut from the working class. Hospitals, schools, universities, pensions, social benefits, housing construction and public infrastructure are being slashed, while the profits of the arms corporations explode. Nothing will remain of the social gains historically won by the working class at the end of this orgy of rearmament if the ruling class is not stopped.

All the capitalist parties stand in the camp of German imperialism. The policy of war and rearmament is being driven forward under a government of the CDU/CSU and SPD and corresponds in essence to the demands of the fascist AfD, while the Greens, the Left Party and the trade unions also support it in one form or another. The Greens have long been among the most aggressive warmongers. The Left Party helped pass the war credits in the Bundesrat and functions as an extended arm of the Merz government, and the trade unions also work closely with the government and corporations to impose the war economy and suppress resistance in the workplaces.

The working class faces the task of counterposing its own independent political strategy to this development. The struggle against war cannot be conducted through appeals to the capitalist establishment, but must be directed against it. It must expose the connection between war, rearmament, social cuts and the strengthening of the extreme right, and establish the international unity of the working class against capitalism.

The warning arising from history could not be more urgent. Almost 85 years after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Berlin is once again preparing a war against Russia. German militarism has not been tamed; it is returning with full force. This madness can be stopped only through the building of an international socialist anti-war movement of the working class.



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