

Germany's civil defence plan: The government prepares the country for war

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Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt (Christian Social Union, CSU) and the federal government are driving forward the transformation of Germany into a military state. Under the cynical pretext of “civil protection” and “civil defence,” the Interior Ministry is planning a 10-billion-euro programme designed to mesh the whole of society more closely with military war planning.

In reality, this is not about protecting the population but preparing for war. Germany is to be made fit for war as a central NATO hub for deployment against Russia.

According to media reports, the cabinet is to debate a corresponding position paper this Wednesday. By 2029, 10 billion euros are to flow into civil defence. Plans include the acquisition of 1,000 special vehicles, 110,000 camp beds, a construction programme for buildings and facilities of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW), the establishment of a federal medical task force at 50 locations to deal with “mass casualty” events, and a nationwide register for public shelters, such as bunkers, tunnels and underground car parks, which is to be integrated into the official public warning app (NINA).

The military character of the project becomes even clearer through the planned establishment of a “Civil Defence Command” within the Interior Ministry. This new staff unit is to coordinate cooperation with the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) in the event of a crisis or defence situation. Dobrindt declared openly: “We are rearming in civil protection and civil defence.” At the beginning of May, he had announced that the new “Pact for Civil Protection” would be closely coordinated with the plans of the Defence Ministry; the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) is to be expanded, and its budget will be increased from over 600 to around 800 million euros by 2029.

This spells out what is at stake. Civil defence is the domestic and social arm of military rearmament. It is intended to align infrastructure, authorities, businesses, hospitals, transport routes, municipalities and the population itself towards the event of war. Dobrindt's programme is a building block of “total defence,” which is being developed in the central strategy papers of the government and Bundeswehr.

The framework is formed by *Operationsplan Deutschland*, which the Bundeswehr describes as an “essential military component of the total defence of Germany.” It brings together the military components of national and alliance defence with the “necessary civil support services.” The secret document, more than 1,000 pages long, lays down how Germany will act in the event of an extensive war, including as a staging area for NATO.

The Bundeswehr itself makes clear what this means. Its geostrategic position means that Germany plays an outstanding role as a “hub” for

NATO. In the event of an alliance defence scenario, up to 800,000 soldiers and 200,000 vehicles would have to be moved through Germany within six months and supplied within the framework of “Host Nation Support.” This includes traffic management, transport and handling on roads, rail, sea and airports, accommodation, catering, refuelling, maintenance, medical care and legal support. The operation of this hub is a “task for society as a whole” that would bring “restrictions for the population.”

In other words, the population is not to be protected but integrated into the military deployment. Roads, railways, ports, airports, hospitals, administrations, companies and civil aid organisations are to be made usable for the transport, supply and security of gigantic troop movements. The Bundeswehr is already conducting talks with state governments, authorities, companies and associations. Administrative agreements for military transport on roads have been concluded and framework contracts agreed with, among others, defence contractor Rheinmetall, national rail operator Deutsche Bahn, logistics and transport companies, and Autobahn GmbH, the government-owned company responsible for managing, maintaining and operating Germany's federal motorway network.

Dobrindt's civil defence programme provides the civil component of this plan. The camp beds, special vehicles, medical task forces and shelter registers are not neutral disaster control measures. They are part of a war mobilisation aimed at preparing the German state and the entire society for a direct military confrontation with the nuclear power Russia.

Only a few weeks earlier, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democratic Party, SPD) and Inspector General Carsten Breuer had presented the first German military strategy plan since the Second World War. It stipulates that the Bundeswehr is to be expanded into the “conventionally strongest army in Europe.” The plan envisages a rapid maximisation of defence and endurance capabilities in the short term, a massive increase in capabilities in all dimensions in the medium term and technologically superior armed forces in the long term. Germany, as Europe's largest economy, is also to take over the military leadership of the continent. The permanent stationing of a German combat brigade in Lithuania underlines the aggressive anti-Russian orientation.

The official justifications for this unprecedented rearmament programme are a lie. An aggressive campaign is running in politics, the media and the top brass of the Bundeswehr, claiming that Russia could attack Germany or NATO as early as 2029. At the Catholic Day celebrations (*Katholikentag*) in Würzburg during the weekend, Breuer repeated this propaganda. “The threat is real,” he declared. 2029 was the “decisive year.” Although he added that this did not mean Russia

would actually attack in that year, one could see from “analyses” that Russia would then be able to wage war, he claimed. In an interview shortly beforehand, Breuer said all indicators were running “towards one point: 2029,” and added, “Could it happen sooner? Yes.”

These propaganda lies serve to terrify the population and push through a programme that faces massive opposition: the tripling of armaments spending, the reintroduction of conscription, making infrastructure fit for war, the militarisation of schools and universities, the dismantling of democratic rights and the subordination of the whole of society to the requirements of the military.

How far leading circles are already going is shown by the debate on the so-called “state of tension” (*Spannungsfall*) under Article 80a of the German constitution. A recent commentary in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* by Konrad Schuller demanded that the *Spannungsfall* be declared in order to accelerate war preparations. Christian Democratic Union (CDU) foreign affairs politician Roderich Kiesewetter had already demanded this step. The *Spannungsfall* is the preliminary stage to the “state of defence” (*Verteidigungsfall*) and would trigger central emergency and mobilisation mechanisms.

The demand to declare a *Spannungsfall* therefore means nothing less than the attempt to place Germany in a quasi-martial law status. Conscription would take effect immediately. State responsibilities would be streamlined, domestic military interventions expanded, and the entire society oriented towards a state of emergency. That such demands are already being raised in leading bourgeois media and by leading politicians is a serious warning.

Parallel to the preparations for war, the government is beefing up the apparatus of repression. Dobrindt wants to expand the Secret Service (*Verfassungsschutz*) into a “genuine intelligence service.” He demands “operative capabilities” to enable it not only to collect information during cyberattacks but to disrupt attacks, manipulate deployment tools or destroy an attacker’s infrastructure. He is also seeking “operative powers” in the analogue sphere. In addition, a Joint Defence Centre for Hybrid Threats is to be located at the Secret Service, in which intelligence services, police authorities, operators of critical infrastructure and, if necessary, the Bundeswehr will cooperate.

This is a frontal attack on democratic rights. Under the catchphrase of a “hybrid threat,” foreign policy war propaganda and domestic repression are brought together. Every strike in a workplace vital to the war effort, every protest against weapons deliveries, every blockade of military transports, every opposition to social cuts and conscription can be vilified and criminalised as a disruption of “resilience” or as a danger to “critical infrastructure.”

The context is clear. The government knows that its rearmament policy is meeting with broad rejection among the population. The billions being spent for war and militarism are financed through massive attacks on social rights, wages, pensions, education, health and public infrastructure. The ruling class is therefore preparing not only for war abroad but also for class struggle at home. The stepping up of the powers of the Secret Service, the militarisation of disaster control and the debate about the *Spannungsfall* are different sides of the same process.

The historical parallels are unmistakable. As before the First and Second World Wars, aggressive war plans are now being sold as “defence.” Back then, the Kaiser’s Empire and Hitler’s Nazi regime justified their wars of conquest and annihilation with the lie that Germany was under threat and had to protect itself. Today, German imperialism seamlessly links up once again with its old foreign policy

objectives: the drive to the East, the subjugation of Eastern Europe and confrontation with Russia.

The NATO powers, above all Germany, are not the victims but the aggressors. For decades they have expanded NATO up to Russia’s borders, carried out regime change operations in Kiev, systematically armed Ukraine and transformed it into an outpost for war against Russia. They literally provoked Russia’s reactionary invasion and have used it ever since for the constant escalation of their own war offensive. Berlin plays a leading role in this. With the permanent stationing of a combat brigade in Lithuania, the massive arming of Ukraine, the development of long-range precision strike capabilities, the new military strategy and the *Operationsplan Deutschland*, German imperialism is openly preparing for a major war against Russia.

The working class must take this warning seriously. The same parties that provide billions for tanks, missiles, drones, bunkers, the intelligence services and war infrastructure now declare that “no money” is available for schools, hospitals, wages, pensions and affordable housing. They demand a readiness to make sacrifices, to accept discipline and demonstrate “resilience,” while securing the profits of the armaments manufacturers, banks and large corporations.

The struggle against militarism and war cannot be based on appeals to the government or to the so-called opposition parties in the Bundestag (parliament). They all support the war policy or demand even more aggressive measures. What is necessary is the building of an international socialist anti-war movement in the working class that connects the struggle against war with the struggle against capitalism.

The looming catastrophe can only be prevented if workers and youth in Germany, Europe, Russia, Ukraine, the US and internationally intervene into the struggle independently of all bourgeois parties and build their own political leadership to this end—the International Committee of the Fourth International and its affiliated Socialist Equality Parties.



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