

Berlin's CDU-SPD government turns German capital into a centre of war production

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On September 20, Berliners will elect the House of Representatives, the city-state's parliament. Governing Mayor Kai Wegner of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) heads a coalition government with the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Behind the backs of the population and under the banner of "innovation," a fundamental reorientation of the German capital is taking place. Berlin's ruling parties, government authorities and business elites are preparing the city for war.

In line with the federal government's military "Zeitenwende," aimed at making Germany "fit for war," and its decision to massively increase military expenditure, Berlin is being rapidly converted into a centre of arms production, drone manufacturing and military research explicitly oriented towards confrontation with Russia.

This is a deliberate and accelerating policy, pushed through largely by executive decision rather than any democratic debate and financed with the support of public development banks, private investors and international venture capital.

At a meeting on December 2, 2025, the Berlin Senate approved a joint proposal by Wegner and Senator for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises Franziska Giffey (SPD) to expand the city's security and defence industry by establishing a "defence technology ecosystem," or DefTech cluster.

The decision assigned the economic development agencies Berlin Partner and WISTA, together with the Investitionsbank Berlin and the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, the task of bringing together arms companies, technology start-ups, research institutions and investors. In April 2026, the Senate launched the "TechHub Security, Defence and Innovation East" as a further component of this strategy.

On March 18, the CDU-SPD Senate held a cabinet meeting at the federal Defence Ministry in the presence of leading Bundeswehr representatives—the first German state government ever to do so.

Although no detailed minutes were published, the Senate announced that the discussions dealt with civil defence, emergency supplies, crisis exercises and preparations for a possible state of war. Wegner declared that Berlin, as the federal capital and seat of the national government, faced a "unique threat situation" and required enhanced preparedness measures.

Although Wegner did not explicitly name Russia in this statement, the meeting took place within the framework of the federal government's military build-up against Russia and the systematic expansion of Germany's defence-industrial cooperation with Ukraine.

According to Giffey, Berlin already hosts around 130 companies working directly in the security and defence sector. They employ approximately 26,000 people and generate around €8 billion in annual turnover. A further 430 companies work on so-called dual-use

technologies that can be employed for both civilian and military purposes.

The following is a partial list of companies involved in the production of weapons and military systems that are already operating in Berlin or plan to expand their presence in the capital.

Quantum Systems, which was valued at around \$8 billion following a major financing round at the beginning of July, maintains a Berlin showroom and facilitates drone deliveries to Ukraine. The company is now expanding into unmanned ground systems that can be fitted with weapons modules.

Stark, founded by former Bundeswehr officers and backed by Sequoia Capital, Peter Thiel's Founders Fund and Döpfner Capital, is headquartered at Berlin's Gendarmenmarkt. It develops and supplies loitering munitions, commonly described as kamikaze drones, to Ukraine.

Martin C. Wolff, managing director of the consultancy Kritis & Cyber, praised the development of Berlin's arms start-up sector with the declaration: "We live in an era of aggressive peace. For that, we need weapons."

Germandrones GmbH operates from former cargo hangars at the disused Tegel airport. The company has delivered more than 500 Songbird reconnaissance drones to Ukraine and is developing an explosive-equipped interceptor version of the aircraft.

The Bundeswehr operates its own Cyber Innovation Hub in Charlottenburg, which identifies start-ups and new technologies for military use. Its annual budget has been increased to around €40 million.

The consulting corporation Accenture runs a Defence Studio in Kreuzberg that simulates military scenarios and tests technologies, training methods and procurement concepts for the armed forces.

ARX Robotics specialises in unmanned ground vehicles. The company has moved its Berlin office to larger premises in the government district, where it serves as a base for political dialogue and strategic exchange with the government and military establishment. While its industrial expansion is centred on Munich, its enlarged Berlin presence is aimed at securing government contracts and political influence.

Munich-based Tytan Technologies, which specialises in comparatively low-cost, artificial intelligence-powered interceptor drones, is opening a Berlin office for business development and government affairs. The company is financed by, among others, the NATO Innovation Fund.

The expansion of drone production also requires test sites. Wegner and Brandenburg Minister-President Dietmar Woidke are discussing joint testing facilities, including former military sites in Brandenburg and a possible location at the former Tegel airport.

A central component of Berlin's military build-up is its growing collaboration with Israeli defence and technology companies.

The clearest expression of this alliance is a memorandum of understanding recently signed by Wegner and Israel Aerospace Industries

(IAI), Israel's largest state-owned arms company. The agreement provides for the establishment of an aerospace and defence innovation centre in Berlin and an expansion of IAI's local production.

IAI produces the Heron military drones used by the Israeli armed forces in Gaza. A company whose weapons systems have played a central role in Israel's genocidal assault on the Palestinian population is thus being offered a prominent new foothold in the German capital.

According to figures published by UNICEF on February 3, 2026, at least 21,289 children had been killed in Gaza since October 2023.

The Berlin Senate's military links with Israel form part of a much wider network. Former Foreign Office diplomat Andreas Görden is now chief operating officer of Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems. The company has supplied Israel with four Sa'ar 6-class corvettes and is contracted to build three Dakar-class submarines.

Former Bundestag Defence Committee chairman Marcus Faber now works as vice president for political affairs at Elbit Systems Germany. At the International Aerospace Exhibition in Berlin, Elbit and Diehl Defence agreed on a partnership to offer the Bundeswehr the SkyStriker loitering munition and produce components for the system in Germany.

Federal Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt has also concluded a cyber and security pact with Israel covering cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, drone defence and closer cooperation between the two countries' police and intelligence agencies.

The term "innovation" appears repeatedly in the glowing reports describing these companies and the politicians who promote them. In reality, the "innovation" on offer evokes the horrors of the past—in particular the devastation unleashed by German imperialism in two world wars.

Not only has the Berlin Senate held a cabinet meeting at the Defence Ministry, it is also overseeing the return of one of the corporations that played a central role in preparing Nazi Germany's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe.

Rheinmetall, Germany's largest arms manufacturer, is converting the former Pierburg automotive-components plant in Berlin-Gesundbrunnen, in the district of Mitte, into a production site for military components.

The company plans to manufacture steel bodies and components for 155-millimetre artillery ammunition as well as warhead components for loitering munitions at the site. According to Rheinmetall, explosives themselves will not be processed there.

Rheinmetall also cooperates with the Israeli company UVision in the production and marketing of HERO loitering munitions.

The corporation was one of the pillars of the German war economy during World War II, producing artillery pieces, tank guns, anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition.

Like many major German corporations, Rheinmetall relied extensively on forced labour. Thousands of concentration camp prisoners and foreign forced labourers were compelled to work under slave-like conditions in its factories.

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, Rheinmetall's military production was initially halted by the Allied occupation authorities. In the 1950s, however, the rearmament of West Germany and its incorporation into NATO allowed the company to return to arms production. It subsequently developed into one of Europe's largest weapons manufacturers.

Now the same corporation, whose history is drenched in blood, is returning to military production in the heart of Berlin as Germany prepares for new wars—above all a direct confrontation with Russia in Eastern Europe.

Residents living near the plant, together with anti-war activists, have protested against the conversion. The site is located in a densely populated residential district near schools, childcare facilities and public green spaces.

Local trade union officials and IG Metall, by contrast, have welcomed the development, in line with the union bureaucracy's support for converting Germany's crisis-ridden automotive factories into arms-production sites.

Bernd Benninghaus, chairman of the plant's works council and an IG Metall representative, declared: "The conversion of our plant to the production of defence equipment is a positive sign for the future. The transformation is unfolding differently than we had anticipated, but there is no alternative."

His deputy, Martin Hoffmann, was equally enthusiastic: "It's a huge morale booster that Rheinmetall is investing heavily in infrastructure. ... The new machinery also brings investment in the site, and that's extremely important for the future."

No opposition to the transformation of Berlin into a vast military hub can be expected from the trade unions. They are not merely supporting preparations for future wars but actively backing weapons production for the war already raging on the European continent.

The opposition Greens are equally discredited. As a leading party in the previous federal government, they rank among the most aggressive advocates of the NATO war against Russia, the massive expansion of arms deliveries to Ukraine and the return of German militarism.

The Left Party also supports the basic framework of rearmament. In March 2025, Left Party ministers in the state governments of Bremen and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania participated in approving the constitutional amendment in the Bundesrat that exempted military expenditure from Germany's debt brake. Although their votes were not decisive for the necessary majority, their support exposed the fraud of the party's anti-militarist rhetoric.

Left Party parliamentary leader Heidi Reichinnek has declared that the Bundeswehr "must be equipped accordingly as a defence force." She insisted that the Left Party was merely rejecting a "blank cheque" and offered to "calmly discuss what the Bundeswehr needs."

The Socialist Equality Party in Germany (Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei) is standing in the Berlin state election on an explicitly socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-war programme. It opposes the transformation of Berlin into a centre of military production and fights to mobilise the working class independently against war, austerity and capitalism.



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