

Germany's war Chancellor Scholz visits Kiev

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If anyone still needs proof that Olaf Scholz is not the “level-headed peace chancellor” he claimed to be during Germany’s election campaign, his surprise visit to Kiev on Monday morning provided it. Scholz arrived in Kiev by night train to promise Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky further arms deliveries and a deeper commitment to the war against Russia.

Upon arrival, Scholz declared, “For more than 1,000 days, Ukraine has been heroically defending itself against the merciless Russian war of aggression.” Framing the war in these terms, Scholz pledged Germany’s solidarity and boasted that it would remain the “strongest supporter of Ukraine in Europe.” He then announced another €650 million (\$682 million) in armaments, set for delivery in December.

According to Scholz, the German government has provided or pledged €28 billion (\$29 billion) in military aid to Ukraine—a staggering sum that includes 106 Leopard 1 and 2 battle tanks, 140 Marder infantry fighting vehicles, and hundreds of additional tanks and armored vehicles, alongside howitzers, anti-aircraft systems and vast quantities of ammunition and equipment.

The ever-expanding list of military support services for Ukraine provides an overview of other military equipment Berlin wants to deliver immediately: 47 Leopard 1 battle tanks, 15 Cheetah anti-aircraft guns, 9 recovery tanks, 15 IRIS-T air defense systems, 4,000 armed drones, 876 reconnaissance drones, 6 Sea King Mk41 multi-purpose helicopters with spare parts and numerous other war equipment.

Scholz’s visit and Germany’s arms deliveries are part of a coordinated imperialist offensive to escalate the war against Russia, bringing the world closer to nuclear catastrophe. On Sunday, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced that the outgoing Biden administration plans “massive arms shipments” in the 50 days before Trump assumes office, aiming to “strengthen [Ukraine’s] position on the battlefield.”

The European powers are exploiting the re-election of Donald Trump and the uncertainty as to whether he will

cut US military aid to Ukraine by intensifying the war in pursuit of their own imperialist interests. Following the decision to permit Ukraine to attack Russian territory with Western cruise missiles, preparations are underway for an even greater escalation.

The alarm must be raised! Politicians and media outlets now speak openly of war with Russia, including the potential use of nuclear weapons. A November 21 report in the *New York Times* revealed that the Biden administration is discussing allowing Ukraine to deploy nuclear weapons.

According to the *Times*, “Several government officials even hinted that Mr. Biden could allow Ukraine to have nuclear weapons again, as was the case before the fall of the Soviet Union.” The *Times* added, “That would be an immediate and enormous deterrent, but also complicated and would have serious consequences.”

A headline in the British *Guardian* over the weekend reads, “Would you survive 72 hours? Germany and the Nordic countries prepare citizens for possible war.” The newspaper reports, “Apps and booklets are offering advice on how to build a bunker, stockpile food and live without electricity in case the worst happens.”

It continues:

Germany is developing an app to help people locate the nearest bunker in the event of attack. Sweden is distributing a 32-page pamphlet titled *If Crisis or War Comes*. Half a million Finns have already downloaded an emergency preparedness guide.

If the prospect of a broader conflict in Europe seems remote for many, some countries at least are taking it seriously—and, in the term used by Germany’s defense minister, Boris Pistorius, taking steps to get populations *kriegstüchtig*: war-capable.

No one should have any illusions about what this means. The ruling elites are planning nothing less than the total militarization of Europe. This includes the reintroduction of conscription, the deployment of combat troops in Ukraine, a massive increase in defense spending at the expense of wages and social programs, as well as the establishment of a war economy and fascist police state regimes to suppress popular resistance.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has described Trump's presidency as "a violent realignment of the American political superstructure that corresponds to the real social conditions in the United States." The ruling class relies on the fascist Trump to advance the policy of social counterrevolution and world war, which is diametrically opposed to the interests of the vast majority.

The same processes are at work in Europe. In Germany, the parliamentary elections are being used by the ruling class to pave the way for an extreme right-wing government capable of brutally enforcing the interests of German capitalism and imperialism, both at home and abroad.

With the election campaign in its early stages, the politicians and media outlets are already outdoing each other in a war frenzy, with calls for a more aggressive war course and massive cuts to finance it. Christian Democratic Union candidate Friedrich Merz and Green Party candidate Robert Habeck have both pledged to supply Ukraine with Taurus cruise missiles if elected—missiles with greater range than their US and British-French counterparts, capable of striking Moscow directly.

While Scholz has thus far declined to deliver Taurus missiles, he constantly boasts of being the chancellor of the *Zeitenwende* ("new epoch") and of arming Ukraine to the teeth. Alongside Defense Minister Pistorius, Scholz is rushing to finalize rearmament projects, including submarines, warships and the modernization of Taurus missiles. This demonstrates that the Social Democrats are moving in the same direction as the other parties.

Just as on the eve of World War II, powerful objective forces are propelling the ruling class toward war and fascism. The emerging Third World War—encompassing the offensive against Russia and the ongoing genocide in Gaza and its expansion throughout the Middle East—is not a "defensive war" for freedom and democracy, but a predatory conflict for the imperialist redivision of the world.

Germany's federal foreign trade agency, GTAI, openly acknowledged in early 2023 that "the war in Ukraine is

also a battle for raw materials." The country has "large deposits of iron, titanium and lithium, which are now partly controlled by Russia," it said. And, of course, there are even greater riches of critical minerals and oil and gas in Russia itself, which the European powers, and, above all, Berlin want to secure for themselves.

The ruling class is reviving its imperialist policies from the 20th century. In World War I, Germany aimed to establish a Ukrainian vassal state under the Reich. This policy was expanded by Hitler during World War II, with Ukraine's subjugation forming a cornerstone of the Nazi war of annihilation against the Soviet Union. Today, Berlin collaborates openly with the heirs of Ukrainian Nazi collaborators. Significantly, in a picture Scholz published of himself and Zelensky on X, the insignia of the fascist Azov battalion can be seen in the bottom right corner.

Another factor that is driving the escalation of the war by the German and European bourgeoisie is the intensification of the class struggle. On Friday, workers in Italy went on a one-day general strike. A few days earlier, a general strike took place in Greece. These are harbingers of fierce class struggles that the trade unions are desperately trying to control. In Germany, tens of thousands of Volkswagen workers protested on Monday with strike action against mass layoffs and plant closures, which are being worked out by the trade unions. Similar opposition is brewing in other large automotive companies and industries.

For the ruling class, war is always also a means of deflecting class tensions outwards and criminalising and forcibly suppressing any internal resistance. The situation is extremely dangerous, but the developments taking place now will lead to an enormous explosion of class struggle.

"The crucial question is to arm this movement with a revolutionary leadership and a socialist perspective," the *Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei* (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) declared in its election statement. "Only if the masses intervene independently in political events, expropriate the big banks and corporations and place them under democratic control, can war and social catastrophe be stopped."



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