

As NATO doubles down on war offensive against Russia, Brussels and Berlin demand more rearmament and a war economy

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The *World Socialist Web Site* warned last year in a perspective:

The US-NATO war against Russia is evolving rapidly into a protracted struggle that is increasingly violent, bloody and global in character. The conflict has entered into the gravitational field of total war—that is, a war of unlimited destruction, complete disregard for life, and to which all social needs of the mass of the people are subordinated. Its corollary is the direct assault on the working class in all countries and the obliteration of democratic rights.

The correctness of this analysis is shown by the increasingly aggressive escalation of the imperialist war and the accompanying turn of the ruling class towards fascism and dictatorship. Leading representatives of NATO and the imperialist powers now openly demand the complete militarization of society and the establishment of a war economy at the expense of the democratic and social rights of the working class.

On December 12, the new NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte demanded in a programmatic speech: “It is time to shift to a wartime mindset. And turbo-charge our defense production and defense spending.” He continued, “We also already have committed to accelerating the growth of defense industrial capacity and production across the Alliance. Now, we must deliver—I repeat, deliver—on our commitments.”

He turned to defense spending, insisting that the vast increases needed would mean sweeping attacks on public spending:

A decade ago, Allies agreed it was time to invest in defense once again. The benchmark was set at 2 percent. By 2023, NATO Allies agreed to invest “at least” 2 percent. At least ... I can tell you, we are going to need a lot more than 2 percent. I know spending more on defense means spending less on other priorities.

This is an unmistakable threat. If the ruling class gets its way, new funds must be made available to the military and war apparatus—even if this meets with the massive resistance of the population. “Prioritizing defense requires political leadership,” Rutte warned. In

the short term, this can be “tough and risky,” but in the long term it is “absolutely essential.”

He insisted that he is telling governments, “Give our industries the big orders and long-term contracts they need to rapidly produce more and better capabilities.” NATO countries need these technologies “now” and governments must therefore “embrace risk,” “change outdated procurement rules” and “reconsider your detailed national requirements.”

German imperialism is particularly aggressive in this regard.

On December 4, the Federal Cabinet adopted the National Security and Defense Strategy (SVI Strategy). In it, the ruling elite advances its single-minded goal: to make Germany “war-ready” again (according to Defense Minister Boris Pistorius) after two lost world wars and historic crimes by rearming for total war against the nuclear-armed power Russia and the imperialist redivision of the world in the 21st century.

“It is crucial for Germany’s defense capability that we have innovative and efficient defense companies in the country. This is the only way we can develop state-of-the-art weapons systems—also together with our allies—and, above all, produce them in sufficient quantities,” Pistorius explained at the presentation of the strategy. The current threat situation requires “that we promote key technologies in Germany.” The new strategy improves “the framework conditions for companies” and opens “a new chapter in the relations between state and industry, in line with the ‘new era’” in foreign policy.

In order to build a powerful war industry on the backs of the workers, the SVI strategy defines, among other things, “Security and defense-industrial key technologies” and corresponding “legal and financial framework conditions” and praises the state as a “consumer and facilitator.” The Federal Government is not only taking “measures to ensure the diversification and resilience of supply chains,” but it is also expanding them “with regard to the supply of critical raw materials.”

This strategy makes no secret of the fact that the implementation of these far-reaching plans requires a further massive increase in the war budget and fierce attacks on the working class. “The rapidly increasing demand for military goods, services and innovations” is “in contrast to the peace dividend of recent decades.” The “challenge” for the SVI is “now to build the necessary competencies and capacities.”

In addition to the economy, academia should also be put at the service of militarism.

In order to enable “broader research,” the Federal Government, “in partnership with the federal states and the German university

landscape, as well as scientific organizations, is committed to an open discussion about the civil clauses”—i.e., for the abolition of clauses preventing universities from engaging in military research, according to the strategy. “A strict separation between application-oriented civil and military research” could “prevent spill-over effects and inhibit the emergence of an innovative state-wide ecosystem.”

The strategy is openly in favor of enabling German imperialism to wage total war worldwide. “Military capabilities and equipment for the Armed Forces as well as for BOS [agencies and organizations with security tasks] must be deployable and operational in all locations, dimensions, geostrategic spaces and climatic conditions,” states the section “Challenges of the security and defense industry.”

The SVI strategy is complemented by other laws that are intended to make Germany and the Bundeswehr “fit for war.”

Last year, the Federal Government already adopted blueprints for total war with the “national security strategy for Germany” and the “Defense policy framework.” The Federal Government is currently finalizing, in close cooperation with all parties in the Bundestag, a so-called “‘New Era’ Act—for the Further Strengthening of Personnel Readiness and the Amendment of Regulations for the Bundeswehr.”

The law aims to assemble the necessary cannon fodder for the developing Third World War. “Coping with the changed requirements requires permanently operational, reliably available capabilities as well as cold-start and sustained units, units and large units of the Bundeswehr in rapid availability,” says the draft, which is to be adopted by the Bundestag before the new elections on February 23.

The immediate aim is to permanently deploy German combat troops in Eastern Europe from 2025 as part of the “NATO Force Model.” Germany will station “a brigade, as well as other military and civilian services with a total strength of around 4,800 soldiers and around 200 civilian employees in Lithuania,” the text reads. “The war capability of the Lithuanian brigade” forms “the benchmark for an effective contribution to the deterrence and defense capability of Germany and NATO.” This presupposes, among other things, “an increased availability of military personnel as well as a growth in staff.”

A public hearing on the draft law in the Defense Committee on December 16 underlined how closely all Bundestag parties from the Left Party to the far-right Alternative for Germany are working together to advance the war plans. For the Left Party, its spokesman and chairman, Dietmar Bartsch, participated in the hearing. Like the representatives of the other parties, he thanked the experts for their comments during the hearing “and also for the written comments.”

Among the experts were leading military figures, such as the commander of Panzer Brigade 45 in Lithuania, Brigadier General Christoph Huber; the chairman of the German Armed Forces Association, Colonel André Wüstner; the inspector of the army, Lieutenant General Alfons Mais; and hired warmongers such as the Bundeswehr Professor Carlo Masala. They campaigned in unison for a quick passage of the law and used their appearances for militaristic propaganda.

The Bundeswehr is “currently ‘brighter than white’—not to mention its capabilities in the field of overall defense,” Wüstner said in his statement. Against this background, the act is of “enormous importance,” and the Bundeswehr must now “become capable of defending itself more quickly and substantially in all dimensions, ideally in full.” Not least because Germany and its allies would have to reckon with the fact that Putin “could challenge NATO conventionally at the Alliance’s borders in just a few years due to mobilization and the war economy.”

The propaganda of the necessary defense against the “Russian aggressor,” who is about to attack NATO, turns reality upside down and reminds one of the old lies of German imperialism. The aggression of the German Empire in the First World War and the war of extermination of the Nazis against the Soviet Union in the Second World War, which cost the lives of at least 27 million Soviet citizens, were also justified by the German propaganda machine with the fairy tale of “self-defense” or “forced self-defense.”

Now, German imperialism—in alliance with the other leading NATO powers—is preparing for a third time to attempt to subjugate Russia militarily in order to secure its wealth of raw materials and the geopolitical control of Eurasia. The pretext is the reactionary invasion of Ukraine by the Putin regime, which NATO had initially provoked by the anti-Russian coup in Kiev in early 2014 and the systematic military encirclement of Russia, and has since organized the largest rearmament and war offensive since the end of World War II.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) counterposes a socialist program to this madness, which raises the danger of a third, and this time nuclear, world war. “The only way to prevent a catastrophe is to mobilize the international working class against capitalism,” declares the SGP’s election manifesto. It continues:

This enormous social force is starting to move. The mass layoffs, cuts and wars put explosive class struggles on the agenda. The crucial question is to arm this movement with a revolutionary leadership and a socialist perspective. Only if the masses intervene independently in political events, expropriate the big banks and corporations and put them under democratic control can war and social catastrophe be stopped.



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