

# German government backs illegal attack on Syria

By Johannes Stern  
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The attack of the imperialist powers on Syria must be condemned in the strongest terms. The military strikes that were carried out by the US, French and British forces on Friday night with the support of the German federal government are a violation of international law that threatens to trigger a conflict with Russia, the world's second-greatest nuclear power.

Russia's ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, said after the attack: "We have warned that such actions will not be without consequences." On Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the US and its Western allies against further air strikes on Syrian positions. This would "inevitably cause chaos in international relations," Putin said.

The German government has backed this war crime and repeated the lies used to prepare it. The military mission was "necessary and appropriate" to "preserve the effectiveness of the international ban on the use of chemical weapons and to warn the Syrian regime of further violations," said Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) on Saturday in Berlin.

The attack on Syria, just like the Iraq war 15 years ago, was justified by lies. For the Syrian regime, the alleged poison gas attack in the city of Duma "made absolutely no sense," explained Günter Meyer, professor at the Department of Geography of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz and chairman of the German Middle East Studies Association (DAVO), speaking on public broadcaster Hessischer Rundfunk. "If there has ever been such an attack," it can be assumed that it was a "false flag" attack, he continued. The Syrian "White Helmets" had previously staged "a variety of similar incidents."

The attack on Syria marks a new stage of imperialist aggression, not only against Syria but also against

Russia. This underscores the reaction of politicians and editorialists in Germany. Immediately after the attack, Social Democratic Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called for the establishment of a transitional government in Damascus and a tougher stance against Russia.

In an interview with German new magazine *Der Spiegel*, Maas also indicated that Germany could directly participate in further military action against Syria. "I'm not a pacifist," he emphasized. From the "special German history" he had "concluded that we always have to do everything possible to avoid armed conflicts, but unfortunately there may be moments in which in the 'ultima ratio' military means must be used." Germany does not exclude itself from taking "military responsibility," he said, and the cabinet had "this week alone extended two Bundeswehr mandates."

What the German ruling class means by "ultima ratio" is underscored in a comment by Berthold Kohler in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The publisher of the FAZ bemoans the transformation of the United States under Trump "from a global power into a risk factor" and concludes that Germany must again become a military superpower to pursue its imperialist interests independently.

"The selfish child in the Oval Office" also "forces Germany to finally grow up in foreign policy," writes Kohler. "It will not happen so quickly that the German Navy gets aircraft carriers and the Luftwaffe cruise missiles. But the willingness of Germany to assume more responsibility in the world in the face of Trumpism ... cannot be limited to applauding the French and the British when they take over the dangerous work in place of the American world sheriff."

In the area of "soft power," Germany "has already developed into a superpower. But anyone who wants

Europe to become a serious security policy factor in the world ... must not in the long run shy away from the burden-sharing of the tasks which are tough in many ways. The fundamental contradiction of German foreign policy to have high moral and humanitarian standards, but only a low readiness to enforce them 'robustly' in an emergency situation, cannot be solved in any way with unarmed reconnaissance flights."

With the return of German militarism, the monstrous war and extermination fantasies of the Nazis come to life again. A comment by Jacques Schuster in the German daily *Die Welt* demands: "War against Assad should be guided by the goal and the question: Can the Assad regime be exterminated (Auslöschen) with a missile strike? Are Americans and Europeans ready to invade this country with hundreds of thousands of soldiers and at worst fight against Russians and Iranians?"

The language of the Nazis is back. With the term "Auslöschen" the Nazis had once described the extermination of the Jews. Now Kohler uses the same language for the Assad regime. And the last time "hundreds of thousands" of German soldiers fought against Russians was during "Operation Barbarossa," the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

In the 20th century, two attempts by Germany to become a major military power ended in a catastrophe. The third "Griff nach der Weltmacht" (bid for world power) will also end in disaster if the working class does not intervene. Nobody should be fooled by the propaganda of all the parties in the Bundestag (German parliament) that German imperialism, in contrast to US imperialism—or Russia and China—stands for "democracy," "peace" and "stability."

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