

Grand Coalition adopts plan for historic rearmament of German military forces

By Johannes Stern
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Behind the backs of the population, the Grand Coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats is planning a massive arms drive. According to a report by the Ministry of Defence, the inspector general of the German Armed Forces, Eberhard Zorn, signed off on the so-called “capability profile of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces)” on September 3. The “internal planning document” describes in detail “the needs of the Bundeswehr, as well as the essential modernization steps up to the year 2031.” As a result, “there is now a comprehensive overall concept for the modernization of the Bundeswehr.”

What that means in concrete terms was hinted at by Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen (Christian Democratic Union—CDU) on her visit to the naval operations school in Bremerhaven on September 4. “We sent the capability profile to parliament yesterday,” she announced. “This is a big modernization plan that we have been working on for the past two years. It shows in three steps—2023, 2027 and 2031—where the journey is going. After the low point in 2015, after 25 years of shrinking the Bundeswehr, soldiers feel that we are now slowly bottoming out.”

Then she added, “But there is still a long way to go, which we have to deal with. All plans are within the financial targets announced by the federal government to NATO in the summer. We will reach 1.3 percent of GDP next year for defence expenditures. In 2024, we want to reach 1.5 percent. This involves the comprehensive modernization of defence equipment, the necessary filling of hollow structures, and the development of new capabilities that the Bundeswehr will need in the future.”

A report by the military blog Augen geradeaus! (Eyes Front!) provides a sense of what this means. It concerns

not only “more and new material for the Bundeswehr, but in a number of areas the procurement of additional equipment beyond what was already planned.”

For example, “in the overview of the integrated alliance and national defence network” up to the year 2031, “numerous new light support helicopters” are planned “in addition to the Tiger helicopter gun ships.” The Bundeswehr also insists “that the already provided for larger procurements, such as the multi-purpose combat ship 180 (MKS180), the Tactical Air Defence System (TLVS) and the future heavy transport helicopter also be procured as planned.”

Based on the new paper, all branches of the Bundeswehr will be massively upgraded and restructured. In the “integrated alliance and national defence network ... three division staffs are to lead eight active brigades,” Eyes Front! reports. After 2032, “the number of German brigades” could then “rise to ten.” The network also includes “Air Force (especially with medium or heavy transport helicopters), the Joint Support Service, the Medical Service and the Cyber and Information Command.”

The air force network is concerned with the “provision of four so-called air task forces.” Together with allies, “air superiority over operational areas should be enforceable, even when faced with the efforts of the opponent for a so-called anti-access/area denial capability.” At the same time, “air sovereignty over Germany, German nuclear participation and a contribution to integrated NATO air defence should be guaranteed.”

For its part, the Navy should receive all necessary “capabilities” for comprehensive naval warfare. “At sea, the capability profile mandates the long-term simultaneous provision of at least 15 ocean-going combat and support units to operate in all ‘Maritime

Warfare Areas' (three-dimensional naval warfare)—including capability for peripheral sea warfare, underwater maritime warfare and anti-submarine combat, conventional submarine operations, naval defence and deployment, over-water maritime warfare with maritime air defence and ballistic missile defence.” The overview also concerns the “recovery of the ability for naval warfare from the air.”

The Bundeswehr is also to be enabled for cyber warfare and military interventions in space. The system networks listed in the document include “the cyber and information sphere, special forces, space and, for example, what is generally called ‘assistance.’” The latter involves “10 logistics battalions, one battalion for Reception, Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM), ABC defence, military police and special engineer forces as well as cross-cutting IT and geoinfo support, medical services and services of the defence administration.”

The “National Capability Development Priorities” listed in the document also emphasize that “in some cases, long-abandoned skills are being re-learned and built.”

The new paper from the Ministry of Defence underlines that despite its historic crimes in two world wars, the ruling class in Germany is once again preparing for the massive use of military force to assert its geostrategic and economic interests worldwide. In an interview in the current issue of the armaments magazine *European Security and Technology*, the highest-ranking German military officer, Inspector General Zorn, answers a question about Germany’s “strategic priorities” as follows: “And as you know, as a globally active market economy, we also need free lines for trade and transport and communication.”

In order to secure this, the German army’s new policy doctrine (“Konzeption der Bundeswehr”) presented at the end of July demanded that the capabilities of the German military “range from small-scale operations to an extremely demanding deployment within the framework of a very large operation both within and on the outskirts of alliance territory.” At the same time, it was necessary to conduct worldwide “highly-tensive rapid response operations and long-lasting stabilisation missions within the framework of security and post-crisis

management.”

With the adoption of the “capability profile of the Bundeswehr,” the ruling class is pushing for the agreed plans to be implemented as swiftly as possible, with the entire cost to be borne by the working class. On September 3, the Christian Democratic parliamentary defence spokesman, Henning Otte, declared: “It is necessary to provide much-needed funding for this. The plans assume that we will have to move to an annual financing requirement of about 60 billion euros by 2023.”

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