

British Defence Chief: NATO Absolves Germany Of Nazi Past

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While British Defence Secretary Philip Hammond was in Berlin earlier this week touting global NATO ahead of the military alliance's summit in Chicago two weeks from now, he urged Germany to overcome its "historic reluctance" to waging military aggression in Europe and around the world. Regarding the West, a case of what oft was thought, but ne'er so - candidly - expressed.

After meeting with his German counterpart Thomas de Maiziere, Hammond told the British press that World War II "was quite a long while ago" and as such Germany must cast off whatever residual misgivings it may harbor about reassuming an international military role within NATO, as "it is self-evident that there is still huge potential in the German defence structure to deliver more useful firepower to the alliance." Germany must "significantly increase its military capability," Hammond advocated.

As Europe's major economic force, it must also be its main military contributor.

The deadliest war in history is yesterday's news, old hat. Time to get over it and move on. To new wars. Concerns about the 1945 Potsdam agreement on the demilitarization of Germany, the Nuremberg principles and the German constitutional ban on preparing wars of aggression are, to use contemporary colloquial language, like so 20th century.

Hammond's remark about Germany's hesitance to get back into the war business, though, is outdated, as the country did so thirteen years ago in support of NATO's air war against Yugoslavia in 1999.

The United Kingdom's defense chief also delivered an address at his country's embassy in Berlin on May 2, co-sponsored by the German Council on Foreign Relations, entitled "Shared Security: Transforming Defence to Face the Future," which reiterated the common Western position of internationalizing NATO for a broader range of missions outside of the Euro-Atlantic area.

His comments included these unequivocal assertions:

“The responsibility of European nations to defend their citizens can no longer be discharged by a strategy of homeland defence and a Fortress Europe.

“The threats we face are no longer territorial, so a passive defence of national territory is no longer adequate protection for our citizens.

“Our security requires that we do not sit back and let threats come to us – but that we project power to meet them – wherever in the world they are forming.”

Global NATO, led by its major, its only significant, powers – the United States, Britain, France, Germany and sometimes Italy – will unilaterally and arbitrarily define threats that must be confronted; will practice alleged defense of its territory by going on the offensive half a world away if desired, as the reasons for war are “no longer territorial”; will not let largely chimerical dangers present their calling cards in Brussels, London, Washington, Berlin and Paris, but will anticipate them before they even exist, if they are even capable of existing, and “project power” to preempt them, whether the threats are real or fancied, imminent or remote, latent or without foundation either in the present or the future.

Hammond further stated, “we need to take that final step up from the defensive posture of the Cold War, to respond to a future in which threats can originate thousands of miles away...”

As such, “the NATO Alliance, and the European part of it in particular, must continue to develop together the capability and the political will to act when necessary – to project power, including, but not limited to, military power, and to deploy it rapidly when we must.”

And where. And against whom. And under whatever contrived rubric it chooses. Hammond was disabusing Germans of any lingering, antiquated illusions that their armed forces are designed to protect their nation’s borders and population.

Hammond applauded the six-month NATO bombing campaign against Libya last year as “a coalition success” within the context he discussed. For as “it is in Europe’s interest that the United States rises to the challenge that the emergence of China as a global power presents and we should support the decisions the US has made,” then the inextricable correlate of that is Europe’s “Shouldering the major burden in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, but also being prepared, if necessary to take a bigger role in relation to North Africa and the Middle East.”

The major NATO powers divide up the world.

But even the alliance of 28 European and North American nations, consisting of three members with nuclear weapons in Europe (which include American tactical nuclear bombs in Germany) and most of the world’s largest and most lethal armed forces, are not enough for

Hammond and for NATO.

The bloc must expand its already existing partnerships around the world, to date with no less than 40 countries in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, the South Caucasus, the South Pacific and Central, South and East Asia, to yet broader stretches of the planet.

In Hammond's words, "Both Libya and Afghanistan have shown how agile NATO can be in incorporating the contributions of outsiders." In the second instance with troops from 50 nations.

He also cited "The new Northern Group of nations, which includes Germany, the Baltic and Nordic countries (including Sweden), Poland and the Netherlands, as well as the UK," in reference to the initiative of Hammond's superior, Prime Minister David Cameron, last year to launch an Arctic-Baltic "mini-NATO" aimed against Russia.

<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2011/01/22/britain-spearheads-mini-nato-in-arctic-ocean-baltic-sea/>

German F-4F Phantom II fighter-bombers were deployed for NATO's Baltic air patrol in a four-month rotation ending on April 25, where they were within a three-minute flight from Russia's second largest city, St. Petersburg.

The British defence secretary praised the role of Germany in Afghanistan, where with 4,900 troops (and another 400 held in reserve), exceeding parliamentary limitations on the number of soldiers permitted to be deployed abroad, it is the third largest troop contributor for NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

He also hailed German military deployments to the Balkans, where the nation has the largest number of troops serving with NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), almost twice as many as the next biggest contributor, the U.S. The last three KFOR commanders - Erhard Drews, Erhard Bühler and Marcus Bentler - are German generals.

NATO has sent reinforcements to Kosovo, 550 German and 150 Austrian troops, ahead of Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections because the few remaining ethnic Serbs there intend to vote in the elections of what they (and most of the world) still consider their country.

According to Kosovo Force spokesman German Major Marc Stümmler, KFOR is "preparing for...a higher level of tensions."

Germany reentered the world of war in 1999 when it provided Tornado warplanes for the 78-day air assault against Yugoslavia, marking the first time the nation's armed forces

participated in a combat mission since World War Two. That the Luftwaffe was deployed over the skies of a country it had extensively bombed in 1941 confirmed with a vengeance, and no shadow of ambiguity, Germany's reemergence as an aggressive military power.

For Serbs and other Balkans peoples Germany's role in World War Two is not forgotten, if it is by Philip Hammond.

Immediately following the latter's visit to Berlin, on May 4th NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen arrived in the city to meet with Chancellor Angela Merkel, to visit the NATO-Mission for Freedom permanent exhibition at the Mauer Museum at Checkpoint Charlie and to lavish praise on his host for, to quote the NATO website, "Germany's steadfast support for the Alliance and its missions, notably in Afghanistan, Kosovo and off the coast of Somalia."

When Germany was reunited in 1990, contrary to the George H.W. Bush administration's pledge to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, NATO immediately moved not only "one inch" but over 200 miles to the east, beginning the process of absorbing all the Soviet Union's former partners in the now defunct Warsaw Pact.

Germany has aided NATO's expansionist and expeditionary designs in the past thirteen years and NATO has rewarded it: Germany is now the world's third largest weapons exporter, its arms sales abroad increasing with each succeeding year.

Britain and NATO insist its leaders demonstrate, to quote Hammond, "the ability to generate the political will and public support for the deployment of military resources more widely in the future in support of Alliance operations beyond our borders."

Post-Cold War NATO has attempted to re-legitimize war as a method of advancing geopolitical objectives. Nations whose constitutions explicitly prohibit the practice - NATO members Germany and Italy, NATO partner Japan - have troops and other military personnel serving under the Atlantic Alliance in Afghanistan. So do NATO partners Finland, which had not engaged in combat operations since the Second World War, and Sweden, which had not done so in two centuries.

But according to Defence Secretary Hammond nations like Germany are not sufficiently involved in the wars of the 20th century and must play an even more pronounced role in them, present and to come.

There is no "quite a long while ago" when it comes to wars of aggression. There is only "never."

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