

German NATO General Announces Plans for Military Maneuvers against Russia

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Seventy-five years after the beginning of World War II, which led to Germany's war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, the German general staff is once again preparing for war with Russia. This was made clear by an article published in last Friday's edition of Die Welt in which German NATO leader Hans Lothar Domröse expressed his views.

The comments by the four-star general, who is supreme commander of the Allied Joint Force Command, one of Europe's three NATO units in the operations leadership, amounted to an open threat of war against Russia.

In the article, Domröse said the Western alliance was for the first time preparing large-scale maneuvers in Russian border regions. "So far, we have conducted major maneuvers of 25,000 to 40,000 men only in Western NATO states," he said. He then added, "I am quite sure that in future we will do this in Eastern Europe and the Baltics."

Approaching 25 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO intends to mass tens of thousands of troops near Russia's borders.

Washington and Berlin orchestrated a fascist-led coup in Kiev last February to install a pro-Western, rabidly anti-Russian regime. Now the NATO powers are pursuing the military encirclement of Russia, a policy that carries with it the very real danger of military conflict with a nuclear-armed power. Even sections of the bourgeois press that have been propagandising against Russia for months describe the plan as a "provocative move against Moscow" (*Spiegel Online*).

"We will establish a NATO rapid response force of between 5,000 and 7,000 men that can be deployed in two-to-five days to a region," General Domröse said. "According to our plans, the rapid response force will participate in the major maneuver 'Trident Juncture' in September 2015 in Italy, Spain and Portugal. If everything goes according to plan, the rapid response force could be ready for deployment at the end of 2015."

Only NATO states with the necessary high-tech military equipment and trained soldiers can participate in the NATO spearhead force, according to Domröse. Germany will assume a leading role.

"We are planning," he said, "that each of the six-to-ten nations will form the spearhead for a year and then be changed. According to the current plans, each cycle will have a lead nation, which will certainly include Germany at some point. But this highly mobile force must have access to a large-scale air force in order to reach operational zones quickly." Making available the required means of transportation was the greatest challenge for the

NATO states, the general noted.

Domröse and the NATO leadership are planning a new form of Blitzkrieg. The NATO conference in Wales earlier this year approved a plan to increase readiness to deploy military forces.

“NATO recognised that we have to be quicker and more flexible, but also better equipped,” Domröse said. The previous rapid reaction force was too slow.

“We simply take far too long to reach a deployment zone within NATO’s borders,” the general said. “It depends on quickly bringing together a well-trained force from several countries at a particular time that is ready for deployment.”

The general spoke bluntly. The war plans required increased military budgets and would cost a lot of money.

“The force has to be well armed and trained,” he said. “It must always be ready to deploy, including on weekends. This won’t be cheap. Higher investment in NATO’s defence preparedness will be required.”

He added that NATO had urgently to modernize. “NATO has to be ready for a potential war in the 21st century. This includes defence against conventional attacks, but also the capability to repel cyber attacks and the ability to control local destabilisations by enemy subversive forces that are difficult to identify.”

Domröse cited Russia’s response to the Western-provoked coup in Ukraine as the justification for new preparations for war. “The annexation of Crimea and the break with all international norms came as a surprise to us,” he said. “We didn’t expect it. We have seen how President Putin has made Russia’s army more combative and that Russian troops are incredibly quick.”

These statements by one of Germany’s highest-ranking generals underscores that the German army stands in the tradition of the general staff and the Wehrmacht in World War II. Under the code name “Operation Barbarossa,” the Third Reich attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, launching a terrifying war of destruction that cost the lives of 27 million Soviet citizens. After the defeat of Nazi Germany, German imperialism was compelled to adopt a more pacifist stance for several decades. Now, German politicians, journalists, academics and military figures are issuing bellicose tirades against Russia.

Domröse’s family history makes his statements all the more sinister. His father, Lothar Domröse, fought in the Second World War as commander of a Wehrmacht company on the Eastern Front. As part of the rearming of the German military, he was accepted back into the army in 1956 and pursued a successful military career.

In 1973, he became major general and commander of the Northern Army Group. In 1975, he took over the post of head officer of the commanding officers of the armed forces. His son has now set himself the task of accomplishing what his father could not accomplish in the Second World War and Cold War—the military subordination of Russia.

The German government is conscious of the historical significance of Domröse’s statements. Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Schäfer attempted to deescalate the situation, claiming

that maneuvers on this scale in Eastern Europe were not planned for the foreseeable future. He stated, "Maintaining good and constructive relations with Russia—we take that very seriously."

What hypocrisy! The fact is that Domröse's statements correspond to the new, aggressive foreign policy of the German government and have been discussed at the highest levels.

Domröse enjoys close ties to German President Joachim Gauck, who played a leading role in the revival of German militarism. At last year's official New Year's celebration, the general demonstrably appeared for the media beside Gauck and his partner Daniella Schadt at the president's official residence in Berlin.

Only a few weeks later, Gauck, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defence Minister Ursula Von der Leyen announced the end of German military restraint at the Munich Security Conference. Since then, events have moved rapidly. The coup in Ukraine was followed by German participation in the military intervention in the Middle East, and now ever more open preparations for war against Russia.

If the German elites have their way, militarism, dictatorship and war will become the norm, as in the period of the First and Second World Wars. In a recent interview with the weekly magazine *Die Zeit* entitled "Staying Out Is Not an Option," Foreign Minister Steinmeier warned, "We have to prepare for the fact that crises will become normal in the coming years."

When *Die Zeit* challenged him and said that "unlike the political elite, German citizens were not interested in hearing about more international engagements, let alone military interventions," the foreign minister provocatively declared: "Despite that, abstention is not an option. The belief that we can live on an island of tranquility in Europe and that we will be left in peace by the world will not work."

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