

Carrot and Stick: Germany's Green Party Is Advocating Arming Ukraine against Russia

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German Green Party: Climate protection is "historic opportunity" for the business location Germany. Retired general: Green foreign policy lowers "threshold" for military interventions.

The German Green Party (Alliance 90/The Greens) is preparing for the election campaign of its chancellor candidate Annalena Baerbock by advocating arming Ukraine against Russia and proposing support for important branches of the German industry. One cannot refuse the delivery of alleged defensive weapons to Ukraine, according to Green Party Chair Robert Habeck. At the same time, the Party calls for close cooperation with the Biden administration and insists on a commitment to NATO membership, as a prerequisite for future coalition negotiations. While German business circles are increasing their pressure on the party by warning against an alleged "dirigiste concept of government" by the Greens, the party is depicting the climate protection, it promotes, as a "historic opportunity" for German industry, one that will ultimately boost the competitiveness of the "business location Germany." A retired Bundeswehr general warns that the Green Party's foreign and military policy concepts significantly lower the "threshold" of future military interventions.

"Bans, Quotas, Technology Requirements"

Because of their high ratings in the polls, even placing them, at times, ahead of the CDU, the Green Party is seen as a likely governing party following federal elections in September. Its popularity boost is already prompting business associations and business-related institutes and the media to discuss the option of a federal government headed by the Greens – and to put pressure on the Party's leadership through criticism and demands. Referring to statements by the Federation of German Industries (BDI), leading conservative media write that the Green Party's election program still shows a "basic distrust" toward "market forces." [1] The BDI warns against a "green planned economy" resulting from the ecological restructuring of society intended to combat the climate crisis and describes the "numerous bans, quotas and technology requirements" in the Green party program as "building blocks of a different social order" and an indication of a "pronounced dirigiste concept of government." The lobby association is thus particularly criticizing the demand for

higher CO2 prices and for climate impact assessments for companies. Business-related research institutes also criticize the call for a faster phase-out of coal-based power generation (2030 instead of 2038); the abolition of the internal combustion engine as of 2030; for a higher CO2 price of 60 euros per ton by 2023; and the intended reduction of CO2 emissions by 70 percent by 2030, compared to its 1990 levels.[2] Other points in the program coming under criticism include a higher hourly minimum wage of 12 euros, the equal treatment of temporary workers, the right to home office and the scrapping of Hartz IV sanctions ("Hartz IV has basically proven itself"). The announced promotion of innovations in the industry within the framework of the "Green New Deal," however, has met with approval.

"Farewell to Social Market Economy"

Economists occasionally warn that once the Greens are in government, they could actually bid "farewell to the social market economy." [3] They deplore the planned promotion of local public transportation, expected to double the number of passengers by 2030 and the proposed conversion of the "transportation infrastructure in favor of rail and bicycle" at the "expense of the car" and air traffic. They also criticize the "complete shift to electric vehicles" pursued by the Greens, which ignores the development of alternative "fuels for the internal combustion engine." The party, they note, is increasingly striving to reshape Germany's entire economic policy,[4] by investing "considerable sums in the transformation of the business location Germany" – financed by a wealth tax and abolishing the debt brake. (Top representatives of the Greens have, in fact, advocated supplementing the debt brake with an "investment rule" to finance the modernization of infrastructure.[5]). This would appeal only to "some companies," it was noted. Skepticism prevails within the business community in regards to the promotion of government sponsored innovation, because it "has repeatedly gone wrong in the past." One should ask the question, who is going to determine the allocation of billions and decide "which innovation is particularly worthy of promotion."

Tame, Affable, Friendly

The leadership of the German Green Party, on the other hand, depicts climate protection as the German economy's "historic opportunity," whose realization would even enhance the competitiveness of "business location Germany." [6] The German industry now has the opportunity to "develop into one of the future global players in the areas of energy, mobility and infrastructure," chancellor candidate Annalena Baerbock had declared during a meeting with business representatives back in 2019. This narrative now meets with the approval of sectors of Germany's business community. The Greens' strategic objective – which is encountering resistance in the old fossil-fuel based industrial sector – to confront the climate crisis with a boost in capitalist modernization in the ecological sectors, is consequently reflected in the "ecological party's" increasingly closer ties to business-related lobbying associations.[7] The road to power in Berlin passes "through these lobbies," wherein party members are, in the meantime, "holding important positions at points of contact between business and politics," and therefore improve "prerequisite conditions for entering a government coalition," it was noted. The "will to shape things" is characteristic of the party. The Greens have become "tamer, more affable, and friendlier." Former Green functionaries have long since taken on posts at Daimler or Germany's Federal Association of Energy and Water Industry (BDEW). Even their "relationship to the chemical and steel industries" – which, only a few years ago, was characterized by mutual aversion – is today "constructive." Representatives of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW) insinuated that, should

the party participate in government, the intertwining of “Green” politics and business would create “clear advantages for the companies.” It would be very helpful “to have stakeholders” with “high credibility” in questions of ecology and climate protection, while also having an “understanding of economic relations.”

The EU – a Global Power Factor

In their foreign policy, the Greens are clearly committed to developing the EU into an independent power factor at the center of the capitalist world system. Top representatives of the party have emphasized that the EU must “conduct itself with much more self-confidence” – especially in “defense of free and fair competition.”[8] At the same time, a rapprochement to the USA under the Biden administration should be sought. This is accompanied by an aggressive confrontation course toward the “Eurasian” great powers – Russia and China. The Greens unambiguously opposes the German-Russian Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, also opposed by the Biden administration.[9] The Green parliamentary group sees Biden’s taking office as an opportunity for a new “transatlantic climate policy.”[10] However, the party leadership couples the option of a “reset” with Washington to the demand for “more strategic sovereignty” for the EU.[11] The Greens are now not even shying away from making a plea in favor of the “nuclear sharing,” as indicates an initiative taken in early 2021 by the Green-affiliated Heinrich Böll Foundation.[12]

“Burden Sharing within NATO”

Besides climate policy, the Greens see a potential for cooperation with the Biden administration in digitization, in the struggle against the US internet monopolies, in the promotion of “democracy and rule of law,” in foreign and military policies and in questions of trade. For example, a concerted “strategy with the USA for dealing with China” is under consideration. The party criticizes the investment agreement concluded between the EU and the People’s Republic of China, which the current German government had “expeditiously pushed through.”[13] Given the fact that “the focus of US security policy” will be oriented on East Asia rather than Europe, the EU must itself “assume the responsibility for foreign and security policy.” This particularly applies to its eastern and southeastern neighborhood, where “Russia, Turkey or China are expanding their influence.” In this context, the EU’s eastern periphery should be given additional geostrategic significance within the framework of the “Eastern Partnership Security Compact” program. Here also interests overlap with those of Washington. A “strategic orientation” and a “new, broader concept of burden sharing within NATO” could be discussed with the USA. Green foreign policy experts also see a potential for cooperation between Berlin and Washington on questions of reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as on “salvaging” the nuclear deal with Iran.[14]

Arming against Russia

In the meantime, approval of NATO membership – in addition to the preservation of the “industrial core of the republic” – has become Green preconditions for any coalition negotiations with the Left Party.[15] This geostrategic commitment will, in fact, lead to sharper confrontation with Russia, as recent initiatives taken by the Green Party leadership demonstrate.[16] The Chair of the Greens, Robert Habeck, declared that delivering weapons to Ukraine is conceivable. Since the 2014 putsch by nationalist and fascist forces – actively flanked by the West [17] – that country has been pursuing a virulently anti-Russian course,

which due to its “stalelated” civil war with the Russian-oriented eastern part of the country, could suddenly escalate into a hot armed conflict. Following his consultations with Ukraine’s President Volodimir Zelensky in Kiev, Habeck now alleges that Ukraine could hardly be refused “so-called defensive weapons.” Only on the NATO membership question, will this civil war country have to exercise “patience” awhile longer.

Low Political Threshold for Interventions

A retired German general considers that the Greens’ plans in foreign and military policies can be achieved only with increased financial expenditure for the Bundeswehr, in other words, a higher military budget.[18] With its demand to abolish veto power in the UN Security Council and its approbation of global interventions to “defend human rights,” the former peace party has significantly lowered the “political threshold for the engagement of the armed forces in international interventions,” warned Erich Vad, Chancellor Angela Merkel’s former military policy advisor. Military interventions would therefore become more probable – not least of all, because even rescuing refugees will have to “serve to legitimize global military missions.” The Greens’ party program still contains demands for stricter arms export controls, as well as for banning “autonomous lethal weapons systems.” However, their decisive course resides in their demands for the “modernization of the Bundeswehr” and for a “strategic realignment of NATO.”

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Notes

[1] Die Industrie warnt vor grüner Planwirtschaft. faz.net 07.04.2021.

[2] Teils konstruktiv, teils nichtssagend. iwkoeln.de 19.03.2021.

[3] Die mutlosen Grünen. wiwo.de 19.04.2021.

[4] Die Grünen drängen ins Wirtschaftsministerium. wiwo.de 19.03.2021.

[5] “Wir wollen die Schuldenbremse durch eine Investitionsregel ergänzen”. gruene.de 23.05.2021.

[6] “Der Klimaschutz ist eine historische Chance für unsere Wirtschaftspolitik”. gruene.de 13.06.2019.

[7] Die Grünen und die Wirtschaft – Der Weg zur Macht führt über die Lobbys. handelsblatt.com 10.01.2021.

[8] “Der Klimaschutz ist eine historische Chance für unsere Wirtschaftspolitik”. gruene.de 13.06.2019.

[9] Nord Stream 2 stoppen! gruene.de.

[10] Chance für Neustart in der transatlantischen Klimapolitik. gruene-bundestag.de 22.01.2021.

[11] Blick nach vorn – Europas Angebot für eine neue transatlantische Agenda. gruene.de 25.01.2021.

[12] Grüne verärgert über Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. sueddeutsche.de 22.01.2021. See also [Der Kern des](#)

[Westens.](#)

[13] See also [“Ein Sturm zieht auf”](#).

[14] USA/Europa: Neustart in den transatlantischen Beziehungen. [gruene-bundestag.de/](#) 19.02.2021.

[15] Grünen-Chef Robert Habeck schließt Koalition mit den Linken nicht mehr aus. [fr.de](#) 08.05.2021.

[16] Grünen-Chef Habeck spricht sich für Waffenlieferungen an die Ukraine aus. [deutschlandfunk.de](#) 25.05.2021.

[17] See also [Vom Stigma befreit](#) and [Testfeld Ukraine](#).

[18] Erich Vad: Wer soll das bezahlen? [cicero.de](#) 28.04.2021.

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