

Fears Growing in Germany - NATO May Not Survive Trump's Re-election

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There is growing concern among the German leadership that NATO will not survive if Republican front-runner Donald Trump is re-elected as US president and that Russia will set its eyes closer to Berlin after Ukraine, writes The New York Times. This alarmist fake news comes as German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is using "fiscal policy trickery" to ensure that his government can continue supporting Ukraine despite budgetary restrictions and the rise of the Russia-friendly Alternative for Germany (AfD).

In a speech to his supporters in Las Vegas in January, Trump said:

"We're spending - we're paying for NATO, and we don't get so much out of it," adding that "if we ever needed their help, let's say we were attacked, I don't believe they'd be there [to help]."

The former US leader has repeatedly accused NATO allies of failing to meet budgetary requirements and even proclaimed in 2017 that the military bloc was "obsolete."

Trump remains in the lead for the nomination as Republican presidential candidate in the November elections, especially after several candidates dropped out of the race. The article notes that senior German officials fear there are significant doubts about whether NATO could survive a second Trump term.

"Their immediate concern is growing pessimism about the United States continuing to fund Ukraine's struggle," writes the NYT, referring to a months-long impasse in the US Congress over the latest \$60 billion package proposed for Kiev by President Joe Biden. Republicans made the approval of more military aid to Ukraine contingent on the administration's agreement to tighten controls at the US-Mexico border to stem the flow of illegal

immigrants.

More alarming from the article is the fake news peddled by German officials who say that it is impossible to return to previous relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and that they are afraid of the consequences of Russia's win. Unnamed German officials stated to the newspaper that if American funding dries up and Russia prevails, its next target will be closer to Berlin, something which obviously will not occur as Moscow has repeatedly stated it has no interest in conflict with NATO.

The ruling German government has an all-time low approval rating, mostly related to economic issues, with many of these stemming from the reckless sanctions imposed on Russia. Nonetheless, Scholz said during a press conference on January 24 that he expects Kiev and Berlin to agree on security guarantees "soon."

According to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, sources in Berlin said the agreement between Ukraine and Germany "should be signed on February 16 during the Munich Security Conference."

Since the launch of the Russian military operation, Germany has supported Ukraine with weapons and equipment deliveries and is the second largest donor of military aid after the US.

Berlin has thrown away billions of euros to Ukraine, creating much outrage and why it took the German parliament until February 2 to approve this year's ruling coalition's budget. The approval ended a spending crisis that shook Scholz's government after Germany's constitutional court ensured a €60 billion hole in the country's finances in November, forcing the ruling coalition to cut spending. This triggered infighting among the ruling Social Democrats (SPD), Free Democrats (FDP) and Greens.

Notably, though, Germany's 2024 budget includes a fallback clause that allows a potential debt brake suspension for 2024 — should the war escalate or the US reduce their support for Ukraine, something likely if Trump is elected in November, which could prompt Germany to increase its support.

"If the situation worsens as a result of Russia's war against Ukraine, for example, because the situation on the front deteriorates or because other supporters reduce their aid to Ukraine or because the threat to Germany and Europe increases further, we will have to respond to this," Scholz told reporters back in December.

Friedrich Merz, leader of the Christian Democrats, exposed Scholz's reasoning in parliament for suspending the debt brake over Ukraine aid as "fiscal policy trickery," pointing out that it would allow the government to use the war to justify more spending in other areas. "The trick is obvious."

Germany's economy contracted in the final quarter of 2023, narrowly avoiding a recession spurred on by low global demand, high inflation, and energy costs. Yet, under these difficult economic conditions, which are hurting everyday Germans, Scholz is using "trickery" and alarmist fake news to justify his unhinged anti-Russia policies and support for Ukraine.

Scholz has sent €27.8 billion to Ukraine thus far, and all at a time when Germans are struggling, explaining why the AfD is now the most popular political party in the country. Although NATO will likely survive a Trump presidency perfectly fine, the purpose of Scholz's

fake news agenda is to create an alarm to try and justify his reckless policies. However, as the rise of the AfD attests, the Germans see his trickery.

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