# Germany’s defence chief warns NATO of unprecedented Russian attack threat within four years



As the geopolitical landscape becomes increasingly fraught with tension, Germany's chief defence officer has issued a stark warning about the gravity of the threat posed by Russia. General Carsten Breuer has urged NATO to prepare for a potential attack by Moscow within the next four years, characterising it as a "very serious threat" that is unprecedented in his 40 years of military experience. This alarm is echoed by the backdrop of a bold Ukrainian operation that recently struck at the heart of Russian military capabilities, targeting high-value assets at remote air bases.

The urgency of Breuer's warning is amplified by Russia's considerable military enhancements. According to his assessment, Russia is ramping up production of military hardware at a staggering rate, including projections of 1,500 main battle tanks annually and a remarkable output of four million rounds of artillery munitions by 2024. This arsenal is not solely directed at Ukraine; military experts observe a significant stockpiling that suggests preparations for actions against NATO, particularly concerning the Baltic states, which Breuer identified as particularly vulnerable. He stated, "There's an intent and there's a build up of the stocks for a possible future attack on NATO's Baltic state members."

Recent developments have further complicated the situation, including Ukraine's innovative use of kamikaze drones. Dubbed "Operation Spiderweb," these drone strikes—launched from disguised vehicles—successfully targeted crucial airfields in Arctic Murmansk and eastern Siberia, marking a humiliating setback for Russian military operations. The night of chaos was punctuated by explosions that reportedly resulted in the destruction of over 40 aircraft, including nuclear-capable bombers deemed untouchable until now. The attacks elicited fervent calls for a nuclear response from some segments of the Russian military, highlighting the escalating stakes.

In response to these shifting dynamics, Breuer has implored NATO members to revitalise their military capacities. He emphasised the critical need for increased defence spending and readiness, particularly in the face of perceived declining morale among NATO allies. Yet, while he promotes unity among member states, the reality is that gaps remain. Countries like Hungary and Slovakia have developed closer ties with Russia, complicating the cohesion of NATO at a time when strength and solidarity are paramount.

The challenges are compounded by broader concerns about NATO's internal dynamics, particularly in light of the United States' fluctuating commitment under former President Trump. Trump has often been perceived as favouring accommodation with Russia, casting a shadow over NATO's collective resolve. Recent remarks from Trump's envoy suggested that concerns about NATO's expansion eastward—including potential Ukrainian membership—are being dismissed as "fair." This has raised alarms in Europe, already fraught with anxiety over Russia's military ambitions and the potential for further conflict.

Amid these tensions, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte emphasised the necessity for a wartime mindset among European nations, urging substantial investments in defence. He underscored the importance of bolstering air defence systems, particularly in light of emerging threats from drone warfare. The growing indifference from certain EU nations towards military preparedness stands in stark contrast to the imminent needs described by military leaders.

Despite momentum to enhance military readiness, Germany—Europe's largest economy—has struggled to meet NATO's defence spending commitments. The pressure to fulfil obligations is mounting, as neighbouring countries ramp up their expenditures significantly. Breuer’s recent directive aims to address these issues, mandating the full equipping of the German military to meet NATO standards by 2029. The call for renewed attention to military funding, particularly in air defence and digital warfare capabilities, is vital as the window of preparation narrows.

As the spectre of conflict looms larger, the stakes grow ever higher. Europe faces a dual challenge: to solidify its collective defence mechanisms while navigating an increasingly unpredictable international landscape marked by Russian aggression. In this context, the upcoming years will be crucial in determining NATO's ability to respond effectively to threats against its member states. Unifying the defence strategies of individual nations and enhancing military capacities could be the key to deterring any aggressor intent on testing the resolve of a united Europe.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769917/Nato-prepare-attacked-Putin-warns-Germanys-defence-chief-amid-growing-WWIII-fears-Ukraine-drones-blitzed-doomsday-bombers-worth-billions-Russias-Pearl-Harbour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/german-chief-defence-orders-swift-expansion-warfare-capabilities-2025-05-25/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769917/Nato-prepare-attacked-Putin-warns-Germanys-defence-chief-amid-growing-WWIII-fears-Ukraine-drones-blitzed-doomsday-bombers-worth-billions-Russias-Pearl-Harbour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/8a84361c3827081da3f1308851cb19dd)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-scolds-russia-stoking-ww3-fears-after-trumps-playing-with-fire-remark-2025-05-28/), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/f268359a-7347-4285-b646-4353f7d6a865)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/d56835f4-beb8-42e6-85d2-054cf7f3e36c), [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/8a84361c3827081da3f1308851cb19dd)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/50-battle-ready-germany-misses-military-targets-despite-scholzs-overhaul-2025-02-13/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/d56835f4-beb8-42e6-85d2-054cf7f3e36c), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/german-chief-defence-orders-swift-expansion-warfare-capabilities-2025-05-25/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/8a84361c3827081da3f1308851cb19dd), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/f268359a-7347-4285-b646-4353f7d6a865)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14769917/Nato-prepare-attacked-Putin-warns-Germanys-defence-chief-amid-growing-WWIII-fears-Ukraine-drones-blitzed-doomsday-bombers-worth-billions-Russias-Pearl-Harbour.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/us-scolds-russia-stoking-ww3-fears-after-trumps-playing-with-fire-remark-2025-05-28/> - On May 28, 2025, President Donald Trump criticised Russian President Vladimir Putin over the escalating war in Ukraine. While Trump condemned Putin's refusal to engage in ceasefire talks and warned that he was 'playing with fire,' he avoided imposing additional sanctions to preserve the possibility of a peace deal. Russia proposed a new round of peace talks on June 2 in Istanbul, though Ukraine has yet to confirm participation. The conflict, now in its third year, has intensified with increased drone and missile strikes and Russian troops advancing in northeastern Ukraine, notably in the Sumy region. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy reported that Russia amassed 50,000 troops near Sumy. Meanwhile, Germany and Ukraine plan joint missile production, drawing criticism from the Kremlin. Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February 2022, currently controls nearly one-fifth of Ukrainian territory. Russian demands for ending the war include NATO non-expansion and the lifting of sanctions. Despite some diplomatic efforts, the war continues to exact a heavy toll on both nations in terms of casualties and military expenditure.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/german-chief-defence-orders-swift-expansion-warfare-capabilities-2025-05-25/> - Germany's Chief of Defence, Carsten Breuer, has issued a directive mandating the full equipping of the German military with necessary weapons and materials by 2029. This initiative responds to NATO assessments suggesting that Russia could regain enough military strength by then to pose a significant threat to NATO territory. The directive, titled 'Directive Priorities for the Bolstering of Readiness,' was signed on May 19 and leverages funding made available following the loosening of Germany's debt brake in March. Key priorities include enhancing air defense capabilities—particularly against drones—developing systems for precision strikes over 500 km, replenishing ammunition stockpiles, and expanding capabilities in electronic and space warfare. The directive also underscores the urgency of meeting NATO's standardized defense requirements, such as increasing Germany’s air defense systems. Army Chief Alfons Mais emphasized that Russia is rapidly improving its conventional firepower and could potentially test NATO’s defenses before 2029. The German Defence Ministry has yet to comment on the directive.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/d56835f4-beb8-42e6-85d2-054cf7f3e36c> - Europe is facing a significant security crisis in 2025 due to rising threats from Russia and increasing indifference from the US under Donald Trump's leadership. With Russia's economy on a war footing and Trump's administration prioritising China over European defence, European countries must bolster their defences, particularly through increased military spending. NATO's recent warnings and analyses emphasise the urgent need for enhanced defence capabilities. Germany, Europe's largest economy, is crucial in this effort but has yet to significantly increase its defence budget. Poland is notably increasing its defence expenditure, but larger Western European nations like Germany, France, and Britain are struggling to meet even the current 2% GDP target for defence spending, let alone a potential increase to 3%. To ensure European security, Germany may need to relax its fiscal constraints and lead a historic shift in defence financing, potentially through common EU debt. This transition is essential for countering the persistent threat from Russia and ensuring the stability of the continent.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/8a84361c3827081da3f1308851cb19dd> - NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte warned in Brussels that Russian President Vladimir Putin is intent on long-term confrontation with Europe, after attempts to annex Ukraine and attacks on other countries. Rutte urged Europeans to adopt a wartime mindset and increase defense spending significantly, far beyond NATO's current target of 2% of GDP. He highlighted Russia's increasing military expenditure and support from allies like China, Iran, and North Korea. Rutte stressed the importance of preparedness against potential threats like drone swarms and cyber-attacks, noting the coordinated campaign by Russia to destabilize NATO allies. He advocated for substantial investment in defense industries to ensure the production of advanced capabilities and defenses. Rutte's speech comes amid concerns about a potential unfavorable peace agreement in Ukraine and emphasizes the high costs of future conflicts if not adequately prepared.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/f268359a-7347-4285-b646-4353f7d6a865> - European leaders gathered at the Munich Security Conference grappling with threats from both an aggressive Russia and uncertainties from the US under Donald Trump. Trump’s administration pushed for peace talks with Russia at significant cost to Ukraine, including rejecting Ukraine’s NATO membership. Mark Rutte, NATO’s secretary-general, emphasized the need for Europe to prepare for war. Some nations, like Poland, ramped up defense spending, but Western Europe lags, relying heavily on US defense support. The risks are high with American disengagement, seen in Trump’s potential cuts to US military presence in Europe, undermining NATO unity. Europe remains divided, with front-line states recognizing the threat, while others seem complacent. The persistence of Russia’s military capabilities and determination poses an ongoing danger. The article urges immediate, substantial investment in European defense to avoid repeating historical mistakes and ensure credible deterrence against Russian aggression.
7. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/50-battle-ready-germany-misses-military-targets-despite-scholzs-overhaul-2025-02-13/> - The German army's battle-readiness has decreased since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, now standing at around 50% compared to 65% previously. Despite Chancellor Olaf Scholz's pledge to revamp Germany's military, the country struggles to meet NATO commitments, especially lacking in air defence, artillery, and manpower. Germany is required to provide two divisions to NATO by 2025 and 2027, but progress is significantly behind schedule. President Donald Trump demands increased European defence spending, further pressuring Germany whose special fund will run out by 2027. Defence experts highlight critical gaps like air defence and artillery, noting Germany's slow response and inadequate procurement system. The Bundeswehr is also short on personnel, needing more regular and reserve troops. Political challenges and potential election outcomes could impact future military funding, with significant implications if Europe must police a ceasefire in Ukraine as part of a potential peace deal.