

New world order emerges from chaos

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Fighting machine: Germany's new Panther K51 tank (above) is one of the most advanced in the world with three layers of protection: passive, reactive and active. Ukraine will be the first country in the world to receive a consignment.

Could Germany save peace and democracy? The conflict-averse country has announced record military spending. In the US's absence, it might become the new leader of the free world.

What's happening?

The incoming German chancellor Friedrich Merz has ended the country's strict limits on government borrowing to allow for far more spending on defence.

It is impossible to exaggerate the enormity of this move. In the 1940s, Germany almost destroyed the free world. Under the **fascist** government of the **Nazi Party**, it invaded and occupied much of Europe in **World War Two**. Since then it has largely avoided armed conflict.

Find out more

Europe has long relied on the US for military support through **Nato**, but Merz wants to achieve "strategic independence from America".

Now that Trump's America has decided to belittle its own allies and abandon Ukraine's defence, Germany could become the new **standard bearer** for peace and democracy.

Yet some think such claims are premature. Rearmament is an odd way to achieve peace.

It might also be too late to save peace and democracy in Ukraine. It will take several years for Germany to build up its industry and forces. Putin might have already won before then.

Could Germany save peace and democracy?

Some say

Yes! A rearmed Germany will give the country more power to promote democratic values in a world where the US seems to be turning away from them.

Others think

No! Building up weapons is no way to promote peace. Germany's move may well provoke Putin into attacking beyond Ukraine.

Some people say

"When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat."

Ronald Reagan (1911 – 2004), former president of the United States

Empty heading

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Are you worried the world is heading to war?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How many countries are democracies? Which countries make up 'the West'?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Would you take a job in the arms industry?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In groups, discuss which countries you think are the best and worst to be allied with.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Draw a map of the world as you think it will look in 2050.

Glossary

Fascist - Following fascism, a set of ideologies that advocates dictatorial power, political violence, suppression of opposition, traditional gender roles, and official racism.

Nazi Party - The radical far-right movement and political party in Germany led by Adolf Hitler in the 1930s.

World War Two - A global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945 and included all of the great powers.

Nato - The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was founded in 1949 to unite Western democracies in Europe and North America against the perceived growing threat of the USSR. It now has 31 members.

Standard Bearer - A leading figure in a cause of movement or, literally, a lead soldier carrying an army's flag or standard.