

# Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern!

Appendix: **20** years MSKv!



Unsere Vision ist eine Münchner Konferenz für Friedenspolitik

Our Vision is a Munich Conference for Peace Policy

Projektgruppe „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“ e.V. • Projektzeitung Nr. 19 • Februar 2024

**Dear Friends of Peace**, we have been trying to change the security conference for 20 years now. With success? Several articles in this "anniversary newspaper" (→ appendix p. 7-14) deal with this question and how we can now move forward. An anniversary to celebrate? Certainly not, but retrospection and reflection are of course appropriate, especially at a time when bellicose thinking is once again shaping public opinion and politics (→ p. 15). The conflict in Ukraine (→ p. 17) has now turned into a war of attrition and the danger of nuclear weapons being used (→ p.19) is growing. Instead of rethinking security (→ p. 5-6) and developing long-term strategies based on a logic of peace (→ p. 4) and ending wars through serious negotiations, the logic of war continues to prevail, and the production and export of weapons reach unprecedented levels. Add to that the appalling murders in the Middle East, first by the terror of Hamas and then by Israel's excessive violence, also against civilians, in Palestine. But even in this inhumane war, there are still promising signs of humanity: Combatants for Peace! (→ p. 16) And in some African countries that are hardly noticed by Europe, other ways of conflict management are also being used (→p.3). Quo vadis Europe? (→ p. 18) Hopefully towards a path to peace, which is only possible in an architecture of shared security with Russia. We look forward to your reactions!

Erwin Schelbert

## Small Portrait:

**Prof. Dr.  
Hanne-Margret  
Birckenbach**



The Göttinger Friedenspreis was awarded to her in 2023.

This is to honor her many

years of scientific work on peace research.

In particular, the concept of peace logic that she developed has not only stimulated research into this neglected area, but has also provided important impulses for practical peace work and security policy. The scientifically based justifications for a new way of thinking in security policy decisions should actually lead to military war logic being increasingly recognized as obsolete. Congratulations!

## *We have to act now*

**"We have to act now"** - climate researchers have been saying for many years and I try not to fly, not to drive a car, to eat hardly any meat and if, then only organic, to buy organic at all, to turn down my heating thermostats, to collect rainwater, to grow vegetables in raised beds - seemingly ridiculous attempts compared to the big polluters and yet somehow I'm still having a go.

**"We have to act now"**, says Rotem Levin, an Israeli peace activist at a Forum ZFD event, inviting us to take a stand against arms deliveries to his country. After three days as an observer at MSC 2023, I no longer dared to oppose arms deliveries to Ukraine, especially when I thought of the tired faces of the Klitschko brothers. Who am I to deny Ukrainians weapons so that they can defend themselves?! Don't I have to put up with the accusation that it's easy for me to talk in my country, which is protected by America? Are there good and bad arms deliveries? Are arms deliveries the problem or the fact that arms are produced in Germany? I often fail because of the complexity of issues, I can't find simple answers or any other answers - I freeze up.

**We have to act now** – I go to demonstrations for democracy and peace. I read posters that I find violent: against right-wing extremists, against Nazis,.... I don't think the "against" is helpful because it excludes people. I also find it difficult when we see ourselves as peace fighters and as the good guys, because that automatically means there must also be war-mongers and bad guys. In posters such as: "It's time to show what we would have done instead of our (great) grandparents", I read pain regarding our collective past. But is our situation comparable to that of a hundred years ago? Perhaps in the sense of "resist the beginnings" (nipping it in the bud). Nevertheless, the situation a hundred years ago was different in many ways: the 1920s after the First World War with its unrest, system changes, hunger and hardship - the 20s today after 78 years of peace, democracy and prosperity - inwardly I attack the fellow demonstrators with indignation.

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**We have to act now** - The woman at the hotel reception says to me: "It used to be much quieter here. Since all the foreigners are here, the police or the ambulance are constantly coming." I manage to empathize with her pain, that things are changing, that she perhaps feels insecure and needs stability and familiarity. At the same time, I don't manage to contradict her, my silence could be interpreted as agreement; I would have to say that I have a different perception - I flee.

Freezing, attacking, escaping, personally, transgenerationally or collectively point the way to trauma. Trauma reduces our ability to connect. One symptom of this is that we are not connected to this planet, that we do not perceive the destruction of Mother Earth as our own pain. We find it difficult or are unable to feel the pain of the Ukrainians and the Russians, the pain of the Palestinians and the people in Israel (at the same time). We ignore hardship, hunger and misery on other continents, the exploitation of others on which our prosperity builds, and we allow streams of refugees to be met with walls.

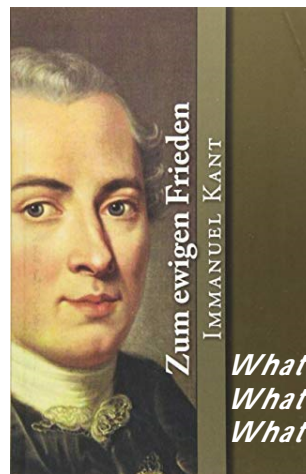
Another symptom of trauma is "othering" - the separation of "me and the others". "Othering" is heavily transported and fuelled by the media and social media, and leads to polarization and further division. However, separation is an illusion as we are stuck here together on this globe. What can I change in myself instead of accusing

others?

Due to complexity and over-regulation, we are at the end of the functional cultural stage. It is now up to us to decide whether we fall back into the dominant cultural stage (survival, autocracies, law of the jungle) or take a quantum leap into the cultural stage of caring togetherness, in which individual potentials are networked in an adaptable way.

**We have to act now** – We can react instead of lapsing into reactivity. We can slow down. We can address wounds and scars and transform enemy images. We can live a life of honesty and empathy. We can put our potential at the service of "us". We can recognize our commonalities and create new narratives and visions - seemingly ridiculous attempts in comparison to what currently prevails and yet somehow I have a grip again.

Anja Ufermann



*Kant's key questions:*

*What can I know?  
What can I hope for?  
What can I do?*

## 5. MUNICH PEACE MEETING 2023 – a space for shared reflection

The **Munich Peace Meeting** (MPM) has developed into an important non-public symposium at which

- peace science, peace work, the peace movement and MSC network,
- an in-depth exchange of experts on aspects of security and peace policy takes place,
- concrete suggestions are given for the upcoming MSC in February of each year regarding topics, guests and formats.

On 11 November 2023, we met again in person. 31 people attended the event organized by our project group at the Catholic Academy in Munich. The field of participants consisted of 6 people from church organizations, 7 from peace science, 6 from peace work, 4 from the peace movement, 2 politicians and 6 team members of the Munich Security Conference.

The Munich Peace Meeting included two large group phases, as a common space for reflection and forethought, as well as a topic-oriented small group unit. The following aspects, among others, were introduced:

The West needs to make concrete and convincing efforts to reshape relations with the countries of the Global South.



Foto: Humphrey Mulemba

- A value-oriented foreign and security policy needs to be problematized.
- The contradiction between the narrative of system rivalry and opportunities for cooperation across alliance borders needs to be broken down.
- Diplomatic options for shaping the future based on the intersection of interests need to be rediscovered.
- The numerous existing small peace initiatives need to be publicized.
- The EU's potential in the areas of risk minimization, disarmament and arms control, diplomatic containment, multilateral standing, independent escalation management and peacekeeping on the continent needs to be recognized.
- A conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East needs to be commemorated, promoted and prepared.



## Observer perspective for the Security Conference 2023

### New observer: Ralf Becker



As the coordinator of the initiative "Rethinking Security", I would first like to intensively perceive as an observer - the atmosphere, the energy, the actors and their way of operating and meeting within the space of the MSC.

For me, this is the prerequisite and the key to discovering communication possibilities that we can gradually (further) develop, build and expand after the MSC.

I first enter the MSC with a questioning attitude: How do I perceive myself in this space? What is showing itself to me? What is the scope for shaping a cooperative global domestic policy? Where and how is it possible to meet on an equal footing?

Where are chances for Western actors to let go of their usual dominance in the "great game" in favor of an encounter with actors from different cultures from a position of equality? Where and how can the effectiveness of civil security policy be perceived and experienced? What kind of

meeting spaces enable the development and expansion of trusting relationships?

### New observer: Matthias Linnemann



This year I will be attending the security conference as an observer for the MSKverändern project group. It will be my first time at the MSC. So I'm really looking forward to seeing what awaits me there.

I haven't been working at MSKv for very long. But the direct connection to the world's most important conference of its kind made me very curious right from the start: what influence can we as a small project group have on the contents of such a large and well-known conference?

Even if our work as MSKv will certainly not lead to a complete rethink, we can still provide small impulses in some places, ask the "right" questions and thus make those responsible reflect.

This year's Security Conference is likely to be heavily influenced by developments in the war in Ukraine. The signs there continue to point to escalation. There have been no negotiations with Russia for some time. Added to this are the conflicts in Israel/Gaza and in the Red Sea. Here, too, diplomacy is leading a

miserable existence. Who even talks anymore about Sudan and other African states where large parts of the population are also suffering from armed conflicts?

What role can Germany play in resolving the conflicts? What can we expect from the EU as a contribution to containing and resolving the destructive conflicts? How does the USA as the (still) leading international power view this?

It is important to take every opportunity to present and discuss an alternative, non-violent approach to conflict resolution. Because: violence does not bring peace.

## Time is Out ! – 60 years MSC: So what?

### MSC consigned to history?

Helping the military complex to take hold, giving bloc thinking and transatlantic (NATO) self-indulgence a stage is "cool", outdated. Sooner or later, all that will be left for the MSC is the discharge house. In the Global South, security and justice are recognized as an inseparable binomial based on historical and omnipresent everyday experience. Southern alliances actively challenge the global community when, for example, they abstain en masse from predetermined votes in the UN. When countries of the Global South denounce war, arbitrary killings and displacement at the International Court of Justice.

### Giving „Rethinking Security“ a stage

From our networking with the non-violent action of civil society and non-violent policy proposals in the Global South, we know what potential for positive change exists there and is growing rapidly. Civil society, religions and regional organizations across the continent are exposing the "myth of redemptive violence" in the decades-long uselessness of "peacekeepers". A "Rethinking African Security" is formulated from the successful practice of conflict politics that overcomes violence, the reconciliation of interests and conflict healing.

### "Sustainable security" as a thematic line

We distinguish between "negative peace" and "positive peace". "Negative peace" is the paradigm of the MSC and we are once again counting down the forums and panels that want to sound out how discord and war can be tamed through power, violence and flimsy diplomacy. But "positive peace" arises when security is no longer delegated to external troops, but is (re)placed in the hands of local, village communities, who build, maintain and take responsibility for it. But does an "MSC at 60" have the sense for this and the standing to give an impetus to the world and the international community? "I am not convinced".



Rethinking African Security: Embassy of the African Union in the Great Lakes Region, Nov. 2023

**Hubert HEINDL**, Regensburg, Developmental sociologist. Has been working in the (African) peace movement for decades and is head of the **non-violent crisis intervention program INOVAR** in various African countries.

## Shaping security policy to promote peace

In December 2024, SPD parliamentary group leader Rolf Mützenich warned us to take the peace requirement of the German constitution seriously and to pay attention to how we can achieve peaceful conditions. In reality, the governing parties have shown no ideas about this. If changing the peace policy of the Munich Security Conference (MSC) had succeeded, then it would have discussed how the pursuit of security can be reconciled with the UN's peace policy agendas. The concepts for this have long since been developed. They complement one another. Their common feature is that states do not seek to achieve their national security in opposition to other states and not at the expense of people outside their own camp.

Collective security emerges when states align themselves with the norms of the UN Charter. It prohibits wars of aggression and calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes in case of conflict. All UN members have committed to this. There is a lack of willingness to invest in the means of peaceful conflict resolution.

Cooperative security emerges when states, despite conflict, cooperate for mutual benefit in areas such as arms control, fossil-free energy production and medical research, and therefore develop an interest in its continuation. There is a lack of willingness to take the experience of a large number of UN organizations seriously and to make use of it.

Collective security emerges when states, in accordance with the UN Charter, develop lasting practices independent of crises, in which trust can be built through transparency and regular exchange. There is still a spark of this in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). There is a lack of willingness to adapt practices to the changed bloc formation in such a way that transat-

lantic relations do not impair pan-European relations.

Human security emerges when states take the vital interests of all people into account and work persistently to overcome direct, structural and cultural violence. The concept is mentioned in the German government's National Security Strategy. The approach of a feminist foreign policy also has the potential to increase human security. There is a lack of willingness to abandon the distinction between people who need to be protected and those who need less protection.

All four concepts were developed before the global political upheavals of the 1990s. At that time, it was still assumed that they could be implemented by a tight-knit circle of state management personnel. Today we are aware of the need for diverse civil society forms of violence prevention, conflict transformation and cross-level cooperation. This is widely recognized in development cooperation. There is a lack of willingness to open up security policy to socio-political participation.

Given the predominance of coercive, defensive and deterrence thinking, it seems very difficult for German politicians to publicly participate in considerations for the further development of a peace-compatible security policy. Thinking barriers have piled up in the parliamentary sphere that seem impenetrable to outsiders. Only a dialog can clarify which impulses would be necessary from civil society to win over parliamentarians for an enlightened, contemporary and peace-politically effective security policy. The MSC is still no place for this. The Munich Peace Conference could become one.



*Prof. Dr. Hanne-Margret Birckenbach  
Author of the book „Friedenslogik verstehen“  
("Understanding peace policy")*

## Rethinking security strategically in times of war

### Stop and overcome violence! In Israel and Palestine. In Ukraine. Globally.

We are currently witnessing a frightening increase of violence around the world. The impulse paper "Rethinking Security Strategies" of the [German Rethinking Security Initiative](#) reflects on this development, the increasing climate crisis and the German Federal Government's National Security Strategy published in 2023:

#### 1. The role of military security logic in the current multi - crisis - learning from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia and Kenya

The military security logic that continues to shape our world even after the end of the Second World War contributes significantly to the current global multi-crisis. The security strategies of NATO, Israel, Russia, Ukraine and our German government completely ignore this negative share of military security logic in the multi-crisis. We can learn from negative experiences in Ukraine, Afghanistan and Mali, as well as from positive experiences in Kenya and Somalia.

*"With a highly armed army, with more and more isolation and surveillance, there is no more security for Israel. This is the lesson of the terror of October 7,"* emphasizes a German public media commentary on October 25.

The Combatants for Peace, former fighters from Israel and Palestine, state: *"As we are part of this centuries-old violent conflict, we know its price and its futility. Today, more than ever before in the past, we claim that there is no military solution to the conflict; violence begets violence; revenge fuels revenge."*

#### 2. Helping to overcome the trauma of violence in the Middle East through a clear commitment by Germany to end the violence and enabling a Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSC)

The spiral of violence associated with the traumas of the Shoah and the Nakba can only be stopped by a clear vote on nonviolence from the outside. As Germans, we are connected to the trauma of violence in the Middle East. We will satisfy our historical responsibility by taking a clear and unequivocal stand towards all parties involved to stop the violence.

The spiral of violence in the Middle East can only be overcome by means of a joint regional fight against criminal acts of violence, including the Arab states – combined with negotiations and a political process with the aim of an equal coexistence of the Israeli and Palestinian populations.

A sustained commitment of the Arab states to Israel's security, on the other hand, is only possible in conjunction with a credible perspective for Palestinian self-determination. Germany should therefore devote its energies to the establishment of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSME).

#### 3. Resolving conflicts with peace logic instead of friend-foe thinking

We cannot prevent conflicts between states, but we can de-escalate them. And we can resolve them in such a way that security from violence increases for all sides.

A fundamental way out of violence is offered by the scientific approach to deal with conflicts in peace logic.

#### 4. Focusing on the world's No. 1 challenge: the climate crisis

As if by direct violence, our security is endangered worldwide especially by the climate crisis. The German Federal Government's National Security Strategy identifies the climate crisis as a driver of international conflict and the enormous global investments needed for ecological transformation.

But the adherence to military rearmament is preventing the necessary decisive tackle of the climate crisis, both nationally and internationally. Only if we focus our efforts worldwide and systematically to reduce CO2 emissions can we master the climate crisis together, similar to overcoming the hole in the ozone layer.

#### 5. Respecting national and planetary boundaries

It is right and important to resolutely oppose Russia's attempt to forcibly shift national borders in Ukraine. And the freedom and security of all of us is extremely threatened by the transgression of the ecological limits of our planet. These limits must also be taken into account in our security strategies.



► Continued from p. 5:

## 6. Decolonization: Overcoming Wasteful Lifestyles

The current world order ensures an excess prosperity for the rich upper class of all countries that exceeds the planetary boundaries. These privileges are also secured militarily around the world. The overall high standard of living of the Western community of states, which cannot be generalized to all people, is rightly perceived as unfair and promotes refugee movements.

## 7. Shaping international relations on an equal footing

The BRICS countries are striving for international relations on an equal footing. Most countries in the Global South have not joined Western sanctions against Russia because they see the West's behavior – including in the Ukraine war – as an attempt to maintain Western dominance.

We need new negotiations for a universally respected international security order. China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) is a suitable proposal for this.

## 8. Shaping global reconciliation and understanding

The recognition of Europe's climate and colonial debt as well as our share in the escalation of violence in Ukraine and the Middle East can open up paths to global reconciliation and understanding and enable new trust.

## 9. Respect international law and human rights

As the Western world / NATO, our governments, like others, repeatedly disregard human rights and international law – and apply double standards to war crimes committed by Russia and Israel, to the incomprehension of the Global South. Acknowledging and changing one's own misconduct strengthens international law and trust.

## 10. Participation as a democratic means of overcoming violence

Broad democratic participation promotes non-violent solutions to conflicts. We also need what is possible domestically as an international norm in the direction of a global domestic policy.

Participation as a democratic means of overcoming violence cannot be spread by means of military dominance. As a basis, it needs fair property relations in all countries of the Global North and the Global South.

## 11. Preserving open spaces for debate

It is important to maintain and create open spaces for debate.

We should resist the temptation to meet the burden of controversial debate by restricting freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

## 12. Working together instead of against each other to expand regional and global security structures

We need the priority of expanding inclusive and thus more stable regional and global security structures that are based on the concepts of common security rather than exclusive military alliances.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East (CSME) are suitable for this purpose.

Women's and other civil society organizations must be fully involved in these structures and processes.

## 13. Controlled disarmament worldwide

We need comprehensive international disarmament treaties and a shift from military to civilian security policy.

*"In a threatening time, the new impulse paper 'Rethinking Security Strategies' is quite excellent. We must stop and overcome violence where we can. We need fairness towards other parts of the world. We need to cooperate instead of rivalry!"*

**Prof. Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Honorary President of the Club of Rome**

*"Since its founding more than 60 years ago, the Munich Security Conference has always tried to rethink the topic of security and is happy about every well-founded contribution to the debate. Against this background, we welcome the new paper of the Initiative Rethinking Security."*

**Dr. Benedikt Franke, Chief Executive Officer Munich Security Conference**

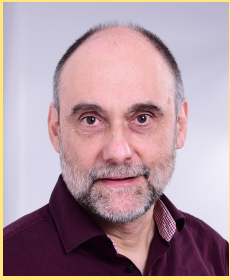


Ralf Becker  
Coordinator of the German Rethinking Security Initiative

[www.sicherheitneudenken.de](http://www.sicherheitneudenken.de)

## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

### 20 years of calls for change at the Security Conference



When I was invited in May 2004 both verbally by Sepp Rottmayr († 2014) and in writing by Isolde Teschner († 2017) to a meeting on 1 June 2004 on the topic of "Forming a working group: Changing the Munich Military Conference", I had no idea that this

activity would still keep me busy 20 years later. In January of the same year, Klaus Mittlmeier had already presented a call to change the "Security Conference" as part of the Peace Initiative Christians in the Munich region and showed it to me shortly afterwards. I was already familiar with the idea and most of the people involved from the Munich peace movement. I was glad that a group had formed here that wanted to work on a very specific peace policy issue while focusing on methods of **non-violence** and **dialog**.

From the early days, I remember lengthy discussions about the group's initial activities, the name and logo of the project, the statutes and mission statement of the association to be founded. There were also inspiring moments, such as when we prepared a workshop for the 2005 Peace Conference - where I presented my vision of a "Munich Conference for Peace and Justice" for the first time - or when we put together the first issue of our project newspaper for the Security Conference in February 2006. After a two-year preparation process, the **association was finally founded** on 7 April 2006 with eight people.

As envisaged in our project description, we sought contact with the MSC and its then director, **Horst Teltschik**. However, it never went beyond exchanging letters with Teltschik. From 2006 onwards, we began working with the sponsors of the Munich Peace Conference - the peace movement's annual alternative event to the MSC - and in 2007 we twice invited people to a "Time of Dialog" on the topics of "military" and "security".

In February 2008, **Wolfgang Ischinger** was presented to the MSC as the future conference leader. In March 2008, we contacted the German Em-

bassy in London, where Ischinger was still Ambassador at the time, and in July - shortly after he had taken up his post in Munich - the four of us were able to talk to him in his still almost empty office. Over the years, our project group has had a total of 15 meetings with Ambassador Ischinger. At the 2009 Security Conference, the first one he chaired, Ischinger offered our association the participation of an observer. In the voting process within the group, I was chosen. This not only led to accusations in the press from the Munich anti-war movement that I was allowing myself to be misused as a "fig leaf" for the conference, but also to an interview with me being published in three Munich daily newspapers the day after the conference. As well as criticizing the MSC, I was also able to publicize peace policy positions and contribute to a positive image of the peace movement. In the meantime, I have attended the MSC seven times as an observer - a kind of second-class participant. In the years in between, it was important to me to attend peace conferences and peace demonstrations. From 2012, we had the opportunity to send two observers to the MSC. In addition to members of the association, we were also able to give peace research students and personalities such as Daniela Dahn, Mohssen Massarrat and Hans Christof v. Sponeck access to the MSC.

Twenty years after the start of our efforts to change the Munich Security Conference, the question arises: What has our dialog initiative achieved? This can be summarized in 6 points: (1) **Relationship building**: We have established contact with the MSC team, are known there and work together on specific projects. We also met with the new conference leader Heusgen on his first official working day in Munich in March 2022. (2) **Knowledge acquisition**: As a project group, we have built up expertise and a reputation in the field of security conferences. Our annual on-site observation of the conference also contributed to this. For example, we were asked to write an article about the MSC for the magazine *Wissenschaft & Frieden* (Science & Peace) (issue 4/2016).

## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

► Continued from p. 7:

3) **Munich Peace Meeting:** With this annual non-public exchange of experts from peace science, peace work and the peace movement with the MSC, we have created a new format to introduce peace policy impulses into the work of the MSC. This expert discussion took place for the fifth time in November 2023. (4) **Side events:** Since 2015, we have been trying to familiarize MSC participants with active peace work through side events. Our cooperation partners: Forum Civil Peace Service, APTE and others. (5) **Public events:** Since 2018, we have organized several discussion events with representatives of the MSC on peace policy topics. (6) **Media interest:** Our activities occasionally lead to a certain amount of media attention, which we use to raise awareness of peace logical thinking and civil conflict transformation. Our website, think e-mails, social media and this project newspaper also serve this purpose.

Over the past 20 years, the former "Werkkundetagung" (military science conference) has changed several times. At the city's security conference reception on 6 February 2004, the then Mayor of Munich, **Christian Ude**, wanted the number of participants to be expanded, e.g. to include the UN, the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and UNESCO. All of these organizations are now represented at the MSC. Representatives from Russia, Iran and then Human Rights Watch were already invited to the security conference under conference leader Teltschik. Teltschik's conference motto "Peace through dialog" was thus at least given a certain justification. Conference leader Ischinger then succeeded in winning over a high-ranking Chinese representative to the MSC. The MSC thus offered more than just self-assurance for the West. Under Ischinger, the Munich Security Conference was expanded in many ways: thematically, through participants from NGOs (Greenpeace, ICAN, etc.), through side events, through publications, through further events throughout the year, also elsewhere. Ambassador **Christoph Heusgen** decided to invite on-

ly representatives of the opposition from Russia – which had launched its attack on Ukraine a year

earlier - and Iran to the first MSC in 2023, for which he was responsible as conference leader. This is in line with an increasingly moralizing German foreign policy, which apparently puts more trust in the raised index finger more than the outstretched hand.

It still seems to me that the most important aspect of the MSC is that it is a platform with a huge impact. Every year, the **message of the indispensability of military force** is proclaimed to the population and disseminated by the numerous media outlets. The 2023 conference in particular was very much staged as a war propaganda conference: Putin is evil, Putin's Russia alone is to blame for the war in Ukraine and must lose it, Putin must be punished, and the "rules-based international order" restored. Self-criticism from the West? None. A second level of the MSC is networking and backroom deals. Arms deals or peace talks can take place there, e.g. the meeting between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2023. A third level of the MSC are the sometimes quite attractive specialist events in the parallel programme at the Bayrischer Hof, offered by various companies, foundations, specialist organizations or even the Ministry of Development, accessible to MSC participants and observers after prior registration. For some years now, a fourth level is for MSC events offered specifically for the general public in conjunction with the conference.

Whether or what the annual demonstrations and the impulses of our association have contributed to these changes must remain open. It is also questionable whether the overall changes will go in the direction of our vision of a **Munich Conference for Peace Policy**. In our peace policy work, we can only hope for the long-term positive effect of perseverance. I would therefore like to conclude with a quote from Albert Camus: "We must imagine Sisyphus as a happy man."

*Thomas Mohr, Chairman MSKv*



## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

Our first appeal and thus founding text from 2004

### Aufruf

ZUR

### Veränderung der „Sicherheitskonferenz“!



MÜNCHEN

Jan. 2004

**Sicherheit, die sich auf militärische Gewalt stützt, erntet Gewalt.**

Deshalb möchten wir, daß eine öffentlich finanzierte „Sicherheitskonferenz“ über zivile Sicherungssysteme konferiert, die dem Geiste des Grundgesetzes entsprechen. Wichtige Schwerpunkte:

- Möglichkeiten und Erfordernisse ziviler Konfliktbewältigung,
- internationale Kooperation auf der Basis der Menschenrechte für Alle,
- Rechtstreue der Staaten, insbesondere der mächtigsten Nationen und Bündnisse.

Wir schlagen vor, die bisherige „Sicherheitskonferenz“ auf dieses höhere Ziel hin zu verändern und dies durch eine Debatte mit Fachleuten der Friedens- und Konfliktforschung zu beginnen.

**Wir wollen in unserer Stadt dazu beitragen, das auf Gewaltlösungen fixierte Denken zu überwinden. Damit setzen wir für viele Menschen das Hoffnungszeichen:**

**„Eine andere, friedlichere Welt ist möglich!“**

Dieses Zeichen soll unmißverständlich in eine menschlichere Zukunft weisen!

Angesichts der Not und Friedenssehnsucht aller von Krieg gequälten Völker sehen wir allein zivile Konfliktlösungen als hilfreich an für die Entwicklung von Frieden:

**„Zivile Sicherheit statt militärischer „Sicherheit“!**

Dieses Ziel soll alle Menschen guten Willens einen, keine Gutwilligen ausschließen, auch nicht Politiker oder Militärs. Wenn viele Menschen das alte, von vielen Kämpfen tief eingeschliffene Denken hinter sich lassen, kann Neues entstehen!

Mit diesem Vorschlag wenden wir uns an alle engagierten und verantwortungsbewußten Bürger unseres Landes:

**Laßt uns gemeinsam arbeiten an der Entwicklung  
eines humanen Verständnisses von Sicherheit in Gerechtigkeit und Frieden!**

Wir bitten um Unterstützung unseres Aufrufs! (an untenstehende Adresse oder per Fax: )

Ich/wir unterstützen den Aufruf zur Veränderung der „Sicherheitskonferenz“:

Name, Vorname,

Organisation:

Unterschrift

Adresse / Tel. / Fax / E-Mail:

Weitere Informationen erwünscht?

ja / nein

Name, Vorname:

Organisation:

Unterschrift

Adresse / Tel. / Fax / E-Mail:

Weitere Informationen erwünscht?

ja / nein

V.i.S.d.P.: Klaus Mittlmeier,

## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

### Peace work must not give up hope - MSKv is not in vain

When the project group „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“ (“Changing the Munich Security Conference”) was founded in 2004, I heard many skeptical voices. Will peace activists allow themselves to be taken in by the Security Conference (MSK) and serve as a “fig leaf” for an event like the MSK that is based on security logic instead of one of peace? What is the point of such a dialog, which can never take place on an equal footing in terms of the balance of power, strength and money?

As a peace officer of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, I followed the “MSKv experiment” with great interest from the start. Dialogs, exchanges and fair debates with political opponents - principles of the Fellowship of Reconciliation as well - aroused my curiosity about the specific work of this group.

The 20-year track record of the initiative, which became a registered association in 2006, is impressive. It is a testament to perseverance and the fact that those involved never gave up hope for constructive changes.

From 2008 to 2021, an annual dialog meeting was held in Munich with MSK “boss” Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger and his employees, which I attended several times as a guest.

I found the atmosphere to be open - there were no taboos. The differences in the assessment of global political conflicts and how to deal with them constructively became clear. I learned a lot of new things one could not read about in (trade) newspapers.

The MSK team noted down suggestions and also names of peace experts suggested by the MSKv group - and occasionally these names actually appeared later on the list of MSK speakers.

The group has been represented at the MSK by one observer since 2009 and by two since 2012 and can enter into dialog at the Bayerischer Hof.

Since 2015, the MSKv has been introducing MSK visitors to active civil peace work in side events u-

sing examples from crisis areas.

Since 2018, MSKv and MSK have held joint public events on peace policy topics every year.

In May 2019, those responsible at the MSKv asked me whether I would be willing to take part in a panel discussion with Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger. At that time, I was a long-standing moderator of the International Munich Peace Conference which, since its inception in 2003, sees itself as a civil alternative event to the MSK.

The fact that Mr. Ischinger, for his part, was willing to engage in a controversial two-hour discussion with me in front of an audience at the Literaturhaus München, chaired and moderated by Anja Ufermann (MSKv), on major global political issues such as Ukraine, North Korea and Syria, may also have had something to do with our previous encounters. The theme of the evening was “Differences and similarities between peace and security policy” - and we clearly highlighted these.

Since 2019, MSKv activists have been organizing the “Munich Peace Meeting”, at which nationwide representatives from peace research, peace work and the peace movement enter into a constructive dialog with MSK officials on the topic of security and peace. As a participant, I have already learned to appreciate this dialog several times - both analog and digital.

There has also already been a first meeting of MSKv activists with the

new conference leader, Ambassador Christoph Heusgen - and I wish the MSKv association continued creativity and new activists.

MSKv's campaigning for civil conflict transformation and for a reallocation of defence spending to a sustainable civilian Peace Policy is currently more important than ever.



May 2019: München, Literaturhaus, panel discussion with Wolfgang Ischinger, leader of the security conference, on the topic “Differences and similarities between peace and security policy”, Clemens Ronnefeldt, Anja Ufermann (Moderation), Wolfgang Ischinger (from left to right)

*Clemens Ronnefeldt*

*Consultant for peace issues at the German branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation*



## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?



Today.....

Permanent working group  
2022

## Stages of our project

The foundation papers  
Statutes  
Mission statement  
Project description  
Our vision



In dialog with MSC :

- Since 2009 Observers at the MSC
- Since 2015 Side Events in the MSC program
- Contacts with the visitors to the MSC
- Recommendations for and to the MSC

In dialog with the MSC :

- Since 2009 contacts and discussions with the leaders Teltschik, Ischinger, Heusgen
- Coordination meeting with the organizers of the „second“ series
- Events for the public with the MSC
- Since 2019 annual „Munich Peace Meetings“

- 2004 Initial appeal
- 2005/2006 Foundation of the project group „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“ e. V. („Changing the Munich Security Conference“)

Projektzeitung

Ausgabe Nr. 1 - Februar 2007



Zeitung der Projektgruppe „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“

Before - today - Header of the project newspaper

Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz  
verändern!

Unsere Vision ist eine Münchner Konferenz für Friedenspolitik  
Our Vision is a Munich Conference for Peace Policy



Also available in Russian and English

Cooperation and dialog with other organizations(selection)

- International Munich Peace Conference
- Pax Christi
- Kokon
- Campaign „Rethinking security“
- Peace and Conflict Research, University Augsburg
- Forum ZFD
- Friedenswochen
- Petra-Kelly-Foundation

In dialog with the interested public:

- Since 2006 flyers
- Since 2006 website
- Since 2006 project newspapers
- Since 2013 think e-mails, since 2014 newsletters
- Since 2006 public events
- 2007 continued „Time of dialog“
- Lectures by our experts upon invitation
- Interviews our experts on radio and television
- Articles in newspapers, magazines



Founding members  
2006

Then.....



Talk with conference leader  
Ischinger 2009



## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

### Inspirational people in our project

Immanuel Kant is said not so much to have presented facts about individual philosophers and their theories during his time as a private lecturer at the university, but rather to have used his lessons to teach students how to philosophize, i.e. the art of questioning and thinking. Kant was an inspiring person for those who listened to him.

Inspiration comes from people who are highly committed, authentic and modest, who have realistic self-knowledge and strong self-discipline and who encourage and stimulate others to be creative and think for themselves.

Our "Changing Munich Security Conference" project was launched 20 years ago by people who were capable of inspiring others, including Klaus Mittlmeier, Sepp Rottmayr and Isolde Teschner.

It all began in 2004 with afternoon meetings at home around a round table: the initiators passionately discussed ideas for changing security policy, shared their thoughts, questioned, disagreed, thought outside the box with joy, wrestled with ideas and distanced themselves... came together, developed flashes of inspiration and forged concrete plans. Anything was possible! The result of their intensive discussions was the first call:

„Changing the Munich Security Conference!“ The basic idea behind it was:

"Security that relies on military force reaps violence. That is why we want a publicly funded security conference to discuss civilian security systems that correspond to the spirit of the constitution. In our city, we want to contribute to overcoming thinking that is fixated on violent solutions. With this proposal, we address all committed and responsible citizens of our country: Let us work together to develop a humane understanding of security in justice and peace!"



**Klaus Mittlmeier's** deep personal concern and intelligent forethought inspired him to achieve change. He wrote in the first issue of our project newspaper: "I am particularly concerned that nuclear armaments are increasingly and apparently irrevocably threatening the continued existence of humanity and the entire biosphere. - As Albert Einstein foresaw, we face a clear choice: either live in a world of endless, unbearable mutual threat - and ultimately perish - or make an honest attempt to bring about mutual trust. Only in this way, not through threats, can lasting peace be achieved. We are all called upon to make our contribution to this, and the MSKverändern project is intended to serve this goal."

**Sepp Rottmayr** motivated others with his unshakeable confidence and his ability to conceive projects with foresight. His statement in the first project newspaper was: "The core problem of collective security is not this or that people, this or that hostile group, this economic system or that culture, but the general trust in the military potential for violence itself. Belief in this idol prevents honest conflict resolution and generates war. I would like to see a Munich Security Conference worthy of the name address this issue."



**Isolde Teschner** was the ponderer in this trio. As an experienced trainer in non-violent communication, she set the tone for the collaboration, without a single lecture, just through her calm presence. She wrote: "My concern is that on the way to our common goal of changing the Munich Security Conference, the effectiveness of non-violent communication and dialog is made known and tangible to the interested public. If we begin to dismantle enemy stereotypes, break down prejudices and take the needs of everyone into account, this attitude will be a first step on the way to human security."

What all three initiators had in common was that they were able to inspire people to get involved in the new project and that they credibly exemplified the hope for change and a peaceful world. All three were characterized by a high level of commitment, authenticity and humility, self-knowledge and self-discipline. And all three have significantly advanced the Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern (Changing the Munich Security Conference) project with their initiatives and ideas, and have repeatedly stimulated to foresee, reflect and think further.

Working with people like this is gratifying and inspiring. We are grateful for that!

*Katharina Rottmayr-Czerny*

## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

### Why participate??

#### Motives of active members....



To be honest: when I heard from Klaus Mittlmeier that he was looking for like-minded people with whom he wanted to change the Munich Security Conference into a peace conference, I thought: a crazy idea! Curious about these peace activists who attempted such an undertaking, I took part in some of the small group's working groups, but always shook my head inwardly - until I heard the convincing lecture by the now deceased Sepp Rottmayr.

Today - having been a member of these "madmen" for a long time now - I still have great doubts about the success of our project, but I hold true to Gandhi's wisdom: The journey is the goal! If you only stare at the goal, you will stumble over the stones on the way there! So I decided to concentrate on the path with the group in mindfulness and to enjoy small successes, such as the willingness of key representatives of the MSC to engage in dialog.

*Mechthild Schreiber*

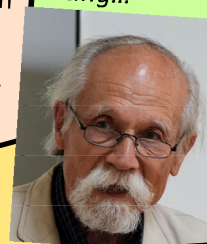
... This security conference, where mainly military officials from NATO countries met, has long been a source of annoyance for many Munich residents. Why not use such a forum to talk about ways to achieve peace? I saw this as an opportunity. I wanted to be part of making this idea a reality right from the start...

... I knew it would not be easy, but that progress is so slow, that 20 years have passed and only very small successes of change can be achieved, is disappointing...

But giving up?  
Leaving the field to the "warriors"?

... No, we must carry on!

*Erwin Schelbert*



Conflicts are a result of our human freedom. They promote development and are part of our coexistence. My motivation for my commitment to a Munich Security Conference, which is less and less military and more and more peace-oriented, is to resolve these conflicts internationally without violence, as is already the case in many other areas.

*Markus Brunnhuber*



War does not solve conflicts, only negotiations can. The solution lies in balancing interests. In my view, violence is the wrong approach. That is why I am committed to changing the Security Conference in this sense.

*Katharina Rottmayr-Czerny*



I feel peace within myself when I cultivate good relationships with my fellow human beings and when I work globally for social justice with peace. These three pillars form peace for me, mean salvation to me and are my faith. One of the ways that I see as feasible for all three pillars is my willingness to engage in dialog. That is why I am a founding member of the project group "Changing the Munich Security Conference", which engages in dialog with the MSC.

*Gudrun Haas*



... because I always want to go from "dreams" to action: together with people who have the ability and the courage to look behind the scenes, to expose the interests of militarization and to oppose them actively and non-violently. "Don't sleep whilst the stewards of the world are busy!

Be troublesome, be sand, not the oil in the gears of the world" (Günter Eich, 1951 (!), radio play "Dreams").

*Hubert Heindl*



My involvement in the project group is primarily motivated by people like Mechthild and Erwin. Their knowledge, their perspectives and their actions inspire me. Contributing to dialog, building bridges, especially where perspectives are far apart, is a personal matter of concern. Bringing impulses to the Munich Security Conference, no matter how small, gives me meaning and effectiveness.

*Anja Ufermann*



I find the indispensable commitment of the association members to the work of the MSKv (and beyond) inspiring and motivating. It is very enriching to work with such a diverse range of people from different age groups, each of whom contributes their own knowledge, experience and perspectives. You can always learn something new!

*Elena Sender*



## 20 years MSKv: our path - and now?

### Our path, a utopia?

A few days ago, I noticed an older press release: The then Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas visited Hiroshima in November 2019. His entry in the memorial book concludes with the sentence: "For a peaceful world without nuclear weapons."

The headlines the next day were based on this: "Maas pleads for a nuclear-free world during visit to Hiroshima." So far, so good. However, the restrictions followed immediately: "Maas speaks out against unilateral withdrawal", headlined Der Spiegel on 22 November 2019.

Maas was presumably thinking of the US nuclear bombs stationed at Büchel Air Base: the so-called nuclear sharing agreement prohibits the Federal Republic from possessing and deploying nuclear weapons. However, these must still be tolerated on German soil and transported by German jets and pilots on the orders of the US President and, in the worst case, deployed. To this end, there are regular maneuvers with the euphemistic name "Steadfast Noon".

#### 10 billion euros for 35 aircrafts

The military aircrafts currently available will be replaced in the near future: the German government will provide around 10 billion euros for the purchase of around 35 F35 jets. The maintenance contracts, which will run for many years, will consume billions more. One thing is certain: a very good deal for Lockheed Martin.

Why am I telling this little story?

What about the increase in security for the population of the Federal Republic of Germany? Wouldn't these very weapons be the preferred target in an armed conflict? If so, what would be the consequences for the civilian population, whose protection is the primary concern?

Or do their lives and health perhaps play a subordinate role?

#### Security and safety should not be confused

The Munich Security Conference (MSC) already has "security" in its name. Looking at the history and development of this conference, it becomes clear that security here is synonymous with military strength and the ability to act. A state or union of states is only "secure" if it has as many and as powerful weapons as possible. This logic certainly pleases the arms industry and its lobbyists (of which there are plenty among German politicians).

However, if security means the protection of human life, the use of weapons is fundamentally out of the question. And thus also the need to acquire more and more lethal weapons.

The MSKv credo is:

#### From the "Munich Security Conference" to a "Munich Conference for Peace Policy"

We abide by it. A utopia? No, a very concrete goal:

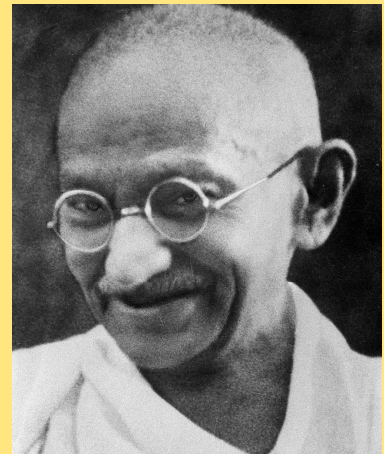
A conference where peace policy groups have the same importance as the US State Department. A conference where "security" is not confused with the amount of weapons and the number of military bases around the world.

We will continue to work towards this.

Non-violently and tenaciously.

We will continue.

Matthias Linnemann



**The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked for here and now.**

**Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi**



## National Security Strategy - Defense Policy Guidelines for a Germany ready for war

The preamble to the constitution states: "... *inspired by the will to serve peace in the world...*". Was this the government's impetus when formulating the "**National Security Strategy**" (NSS) in June 2023 and when drawing up the "**Defense Policy Guidelines**" (VPR) in November 2023?

None of this can be seen in the spirit of these policy statements; on the contrary, the bellicose furor teutonicus of **warfare** at all levels has obviously taken hold of those in power. So it comes as no surprise that armament is being used right down to the language of politics. Is this the so-called "**turning point**", in which only more armaments are to be built up, in which war-weariness is preached against and calls are made for militancy and **war training**? War training, mind you, not only for military equipment with "*special funds*" and an increase in the budget (2% of GDP), but also for the entire population mentally ("**turnaround in the thinking**") and by increasing "**resilience**", i.e. the ability to withstand times of war.

While thousands of veterans in the USA take their own lives every year because they can no longer cope with the post-traumatic stress of an inhumane war, we want to introduce a "**Veterans' Day**" to commemorate the "**heroes**" of an equally dirty war somewhere in the world. The **honor of the fatherland** is being praised again and 17-year-olds are being drafted into the Bundeswehr to enlist. To promote this, more **youth officers** are to be sent to schools again. The **civil clause** at universities is also increasingly being called into question.

With the returns on arms manufacturing increasing so immeasurably, production must also be ramped up and weapons must be modernized (including nuclear weapons and their delivery systems). **Arms exports** can then also be expanded and deliveries to war zones (e.g. Ukraine, the Middle East) and countries that trample on human rights (e.g. Saudi Arabia) appear legitimate. Never before has there been such a high level of **arms exports** (SIPRI). In such a climate of military thinking, is it any wonder that people are once again considering introducing **compulsory military service** or, because Germany's nuclear participation is apparently no longer sufficient, that there are even calls for Germany to have its own **nuclear weapons** (former Foreign Minister Fischer)? **Deterrence** through one's own defensiveness should apparently be total!

On the other hand, **pacifists** are being insulted ("traitors") and the budget for **civil peace services** and **peace-promoting development** cooperation is drastically cut. **Deserters and conscientious objectors** find it diffi-

cult to obtain asylum here. The examples could go on and on.

What is evident here as political practice is unmistakably codified in the National Security Strategy and in the Defense Policy Guidelines. Since Russia is seen as the "**greatest threat to peace and security**", the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces) must become "**one of the most capable conventional armed forces in Europe**" and Germany must be developed into a **military hub for NATO**. "*The challenge to our security extends to all areas of life*" is the justification for the total demand for "**military preparedness**".

The fact that the climate crisis, resource crisis, pandemics, refugee crisis and other problems cannot be solved nationally, but only in an international security architecture based on a policy of **peace logic** and **common security**, is largely ignored here. Instead of following the German government's guidelines from 2017 "**Preventing crises, managing conflicts, promoting peace**", which clearly express the "**priority for civilians**", the Alliance's "**deterrence capability**" is to be increased. This requires Federal Armed Forces that are ready at all times to "*fight with a claim to success in high-intensity combat*". **Nuclear sharing** is reaffirmed as a massive deterrent; not a word is said about the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**. Instead of war training, we should call for "**peace training**"!



Common security in Europe can only be achieved in a **peace order with Russia**. There is talk of "**integrated security**" without making it clear what this means for other countries and how the concept of "**human security**" is possible. For a peaceful future, the central statement of the Palme Report of 1982 still applies: "**Both sides must achieve security, not from the opponent, but together with him**". This requires a high degree of diplomacy and dialog skills that are not evident in the NSS and the VPR. But it could perhaps be practiced at the **Munich Security Conference** if there was the will to do so.

Erwin Schelbert

## Palestinian - Israeli friends

Calls for the destruction of Israel can be heard,

On the other side, Netanyahu's revenge:

the never-ending killings and expulsions in Gaza, with the aim of destroying Hamas....

We hear about protests **against this atrocious war**. Yes, but is there also a powerful movement for **positive constructive resistance**?

Yes, there is!

**Rami Elhanan** stands here on behalf of former soldiers of the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) who, together with former Palestinian freedom fighters such as **Bassam Aramin**, have come together in the **Combatants for Peace** to find a path other than that of revenge and retaliation: one of **dialog, understanding and reconciliation**! Thus they refuse to obey those responsible for the murder and expulsion of innocent children, women and men in Gaza, or for the hostage-taking and murder of Jewish Israeli civilians!

The organization offers former fighters from both sides the space to listen to each other, to try to understand each other through dialog in order to ultimately reconcile and - like **Bassam and Rami** - even become friends, "brothers".

They both lost their daughters to the hatred between the two peoples: **Smadar**, Rami's 14-year-old daughter, was killed in a Hamas suicide bombing - an act of retaliation against a new settlement in East Jerusalem - in 1993; Bassam's 10-year-old **Abir** was hit by a deadly rubber bullet from an Israeli border police vehicle on her way to school in 1997.

At their information event here in Munich, I asked them how they were able to arrive at this peaceful attitude in a society that is set on hatred towards its opponents. Here the friends took two different paths.

Bassam was in prison for 7 years, long before Abir's death, for throwing stones at Israeli tanks and had time *"to understand Israeli society and what motivates Israelis. This really shook my view of the world!"* And the thought of never seeing Abir again: *"Revenge? By killing other people's children? Does that ease the pain?"* have helped him *"to also see the victim in the shooter: of his upbringing, his society, the Israeli occupation regime."*

In the case of Rami, who had only served in the IDF as a tank mechanic, his basic attitude towards justice, humanity and peace had probably already prepared the ground on which an energy of powerful resistance could grow through anger and pain and be used against the hostile trend of the political and media elite of the state

of Israel. For him, too, it was the realization that *"she won't come back."* The vicious circle of violence cannot be broken by killing other people's children, but only by **talking to one another**. *"It's extremely difficult, but it's possible!"*

The focus of the **Combatants for Peace** is on humanity: You see the child - not the nationality; you feel the pain of the other within yourself, seek justice - not retribution; you share fear and grief, exchange stories - of loss, of survival!

It is important to them to pass on their personal experiences and those of **non-violent communication** to society as a means of **overcoming conflict** - in events at schools, universities and youth groups all over the world. And with it the conviction that the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, like any other, cannot be resolved by force of arms, but **only through dialog and understanding**.

They were not often met with approval, but rather resistance, as with Rami, for example, when he encountered a Palestinian school principal who told the children not to listen to him, otherwise the struggle for freedom would be weakened. Or hatred: he had to listen to Israeli schoolchildren saying *"it's a shame that I wasn't blown up together with my daughter"*.

Nevertheless, the cell has now become a movement, with many regional groups working successfully in their area! And in our German groups working for Israeli/Palestinian reconciliation, there was nothing but approval and warm applause for Bassam and Rami!



Finally, a statement by the Jewish Israeli Rami Elhanan:

***"Subjugating and humiliating people for years without any democratic right is not Jewish - period."***

And a question for Mr. Heusgen and his MSC:

How do you see "the values" of Germany, which unconditionally shows solidarity with Israel, which is ravaging the land of Palestine, killing, subjugating and humiliating its people, and supplying it with weapons worth 20 million euros?

Mechthild Schreiber

## Peace work in times of war

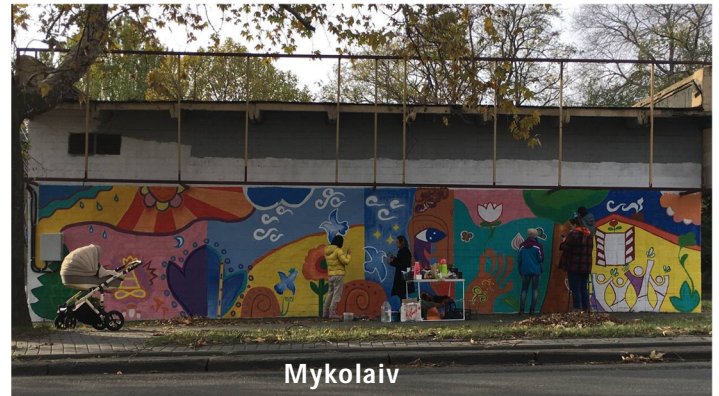
### The work of forumZFD (forum Civil Peace Service) in Ukraine

At forumZFD (forum Civil Peace Service), we have often been asked over the last two years "How does peace work work in times of war? Is that even possible?". My first reaction was always "Of course! When else are you supposed to make peace if not in war?". Now I would like to insert a pause between the question and its answer. An honest answer to this question is: "It depends on how you define peace work." Since Russia's attack on Ukrainian territory in February 2022, the word peace has suffered greatly. With the escalation of violence in the Middle East, a shift in discourse is continuing in which calls against military attacks and calls for peaceful solutions are being taken out of context and politicized. This is about peace in the sense of an absence of war, about diplomacy and negotiations for a ceasefire and an end to hostilities.

The work of forumZFD is based on a broader concept of peace. It aims to tackle the causes of violence and promote structural changes such as institutional reforms, the establishment of commissions for reconciliation work and spaces for dialog between the opposing groups at community level. That's right, many of these tasks arise in a post-war scenario. So the question is entirely justified. What tools remain for our current work in Ukraine? Together with our partners, we monitor and analyze the current needs of the civilian population, which are necessary for sustainable peace in the long term.

Our goal is clear: a more resilient, more active civil society. We want everyone to be able to get involved without fear. We transform the anger that we often encounter, as well as the omnipresent fear, into productive energy. Our projects aim to bridge the deep divides in society and pave the way for sustainable peace and mutual understanding.

Through mutual learning and authentic partnerships, we expand the understanding and methods of peace work. One example is the initiative founded by Aljona and Dmitrij called "From Heart to Heart" in **Mykolaiv**. The town in southern Ukraine is less than an hour away from the front line. It is easy to imagine the mood in the small town: Fear, anger, worry about the future, limited economic opportunities and the associated lack of help and prospects. Many people don't know how to deal with the constant stress of war. "The number of suicidal thoughts among young people has risen alarmingly," reports Aljona. Every Saturday, between 20 and 30 women, men and children come together to shake the burden of war from their shoulders through theater, painting or pottery. Thanks to the gentle guidance of the artists and therapists, participants open up to others with their worries, fears and dreams, creating a warm and caring community. It has been scientifically proven that the effects of a traumatic experience are determined less by the event itself than by the environment in which the event can be processed and integrated. That is why it is so important to create such spaces now, during the war, and thus address individual and social or collective traumas.



#### forumZFD projects in Ukraine:

##### Trauma work and psychosocial support

Our empathetic advisory services offer individual and collective support. They address the psychological stress caused by the ongoing conflict and strengthen the social fabric. We also promote artistic initiatives such as improvisational theater, in which people can creatively process their worries and fears.

##### Promoting local and virtual communities

The revitalization of the courtyards in Odessa and the support of an online parent community help to bring people together and strengthen them in difficult times.

##### Educational initiatives for peace

Our school projects and workshops, such as "Peaceful School", train young people to become ambassadors for peace.

##### Coming to terms with the past

The "War Childhood Museum" in Kiev and the art project "Past / Future / Art" are crucial for remembrance work. They offer insights into the effects of war on children and promote an inclusive and non-judgmental approach to the past.

More information: <https://www.forumzfd.de/en/ukraine>

*Ada Hakobyan, Project manager in the Ukraine team of forumZFD.*



## More armament. More "war capability". More peace in security? Where is Europe heading?

According to "Statista", the US spent almost 900 billion US dollars (USD) on armaments in 2022. China holds second place in the ranking with around 300 billion USD, while Russia is in third place with around 90 billion USD. Germany is listed in 7th place with just under 60 billion USD. Rising trend overall.

Although NATO has spent almost three times as much on armaments in recent years as China and Russia combined, even more is to be invested in the military. Looking at the current wars and conflicts, however, it quickly becomes clear that more armaments do not "produce" more security and certainly not more peace.

### Where is the diplomacy?

A recent example: When asked by a journalist whether the air strikes and missile attacks on Ansarallah ("Houthis") in Yemen were successful, US President Biden replied on 18.01.24: "No, they are not successful. But we will continue our activities anyway."

There has also been no diplomacy of any kind in Ukraine for some time now. Not only Russia, but also Ukraine and its suppliers of money and weapons in the West are relying on a military solution. But with what perspective?

"The misconception that conflicts can only be resolved by force, that we first have to win militarily, that we first have to deal a devastating blow to the other side in order to achieve peace, has once again prevailed." (Michael von der Schulenburg at a speech end of November 2023 in Berlin).

### The EU as a peace project?

The EU likes to call itself a peace project. This may also be right for the way the EU states deal with each other. French and Germans aren't shooting at each other. Belgians and Dutch people also live peacefully side by side. Looking at the EU's activities, however, the peace success story no longer looks so rosy: There was active participation in the war in Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan and - with regard to the former EU member Great Britain - in Iraq and Libya. Various assignments in African countries can be added. In addition, there have been and still are extensive deliveries of weapons, including to Saudi Arabia, Ukraine and currently also to Israel.

The EU has not acted as an active mediator in any conflict or war in recent years. When it comes to foreign policy, not only most member states but also the

EU Commission supports the US position without complaint. And this is certainly to the economic and political detriment of the EU and its member states.

Although a further escalation in the current wars would endanger rather than increase the EU's security, it supports the US course without reservation. Not only in dealing with Russia and Israel, but also with China and Iran.

### What are Western values really worth?

We like to talk about the special values that are anchored in EU policy. We are the good guys. Russians, Chinese, Iranians etc. supposedly the bad guys. The division into good and evil follows a very simple pattern: Anyone who pursues their own economic and geopolitical policies that collide with the interests of Western states in certain areas must expect threats, sanctions, and interventions. This will quickly put an end to free, mutually beneficial world trade. As a military alliance of the West, NATO helps to emphasize its own interests.

"With Nato, Western democracies have created a huge instrument of power in the world. The art of diplomacy seems to have been discredited as a weakness. After all, most wars have been brewing for years, even decades, as smouldering conflicts before they exploded into armed conflict." (von der Schulenburg, 5.7.2023)

### The EU as a peace power, not a military one

The EU must - in its own interests alone - step out of the shadow of the US. An independent foreign policy must be pursued that is not based on US geopolitics, which is

largely conceptless and often aggressive. The EU needs a language of diplomacy, of de-escalation. This applies above all to Russia and China. The order of the day must not be "war capability", but "peace capability".

On the basis of the "Charter of Paris", the EU must reflect on what it claims to be: THE European peace

project after the Second World War. This requires courageous decisions by courageous politicians. The EU as a mediator for peace in Ukraine and as a facilitator of a policy of détente with China. This would lend a great deal of weight to its standing in the forthcoming multipolar world order.



Matthias Linnemann

## "Danger of nuclear war in Europe? Risk of escalation through arms deliveries to Ukraine?"

The war in Ukraine is not just a proxy war between two nuclear-armed superpowers, USA and Russia. One of Russia's main reasons for the war was and is to prevent US nuclear weapons from being stationed on Ukraine territory. The use of nuclear weapons is possible. Deterrence is still working. Russia is limiting the war to Ukraine and the US has announced that it will not intervene with its own troops.

However, the US, Germany, the UK and other countries are supplying weapons with the declared aim of weakening Russia in the long term. The Ukrainian leadership wants to escalate the war by attacking targets in Russia, e.g. airfields or the bridge over the Kerch Strait. It is openly calling for US fighter aircraft or, for example, the German-made Taurus cruise missile. The attack on targets far behind the front line is intended to impair the Russian armed forces' ability to wage war. NATO's concepts for an expected war against the Warsaw Pact troops were similar.

The Russian leadership still seems to accept that new weapons and ammunition are constantly being delivered to the front. At the moment, it looks as if Russia has the upper hand in the war of attrition against Ukraine.

Until now, Russian policy has been that nuclear weapons would only be used in the event of an existential threat to the state. This high threshold could be lowered in the course of a protracted war. So use tactical nuclear weapons to avoid defeat on the battlefield, or even, according to

the Hiroshima principle, 100.000 dead enemies save the lives of tens of thousands of your own soldiers. The Russian forces could use tactical nuclear weapons directly at the front against attacking troops. The cities already largely destroyed by conventional warfare would then also be contaminated by nuclear weapons. Russia could use tactical nuclear weapons against the supply routes in Ukraine and also against the command structures of the Ukrainian armed forces. Even then, the radioactive fall-out is likely to kill Ukrainian and Russian civilians.

The US bases in Germany, where supplies are organized and the Ukrainian war effort is supported, are also relevant to the war effort in Ukraine. Would the USA re-

spond to a "pinprick attack" on Ramstein with a nuclear retaliatory strike? Whereupon Russia could launch another retaliatory strike. Who can present a credible scenario here? How could an escalation be stopped then? What scenarios did the various presidents and chancellors discuss during their long talks?

The governments that largely want to weaken Russia have no interest in unsettling the population by discussing escalation scenarios. There is no nuclear shield, there is only deterrence through the threat of retaliation.

There is still a high political inhibition threshold against the use of nuclear weapons. Should the war situation change to Russia's disadvantage, the use of nuclear weapons is entirely possible. After the first use of a Russian nuclear weapon, the USA and Russia have a common interest in limiting the war to Europe. Neither side can have an interest in risking a major nuclear war over Ukraine's borders. To prevent an escalation, someone would have to give in at some point and get out. Of course, I cannot make a solid prediction here as to whether there will be a nuclear exchange of blows. But one thing is certain: If the Federal Republic of Germany wants to contrib-

ute to ending the war, it must stop supplying weapons and financing the war. One concrete proposal for easing tensions could be to renegotiate the INF Treaty, which bans missiles with nuclear weapons with a range of more than 500 km. Even if the war in Ukraine is frozen on the current front



line, the next round of nuclear armament with long-range and super-fast missiles, which have long been under development, is imminent.

What J.F. Kennedy said in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis still applies:

*"Above all, in defending their own vital interests, nuclear powers must avoid those confrontations that leave an adversary with the choice of either withdrawing in humiliation or waging nuclear war. Taking such a course in the nuclear age would only be proof of the bankruptcy of our politics - or of a collective death wish for the world."*

Tommy Rödl

Managing Director DFG-VK



### To those who waver

You say:

It looks bad for our cause.

The darkness grows.

Our forces lessen.

Now, after we worked for so many years,

We are in a more difficult position

Than at the start.

But the enemy stands, stronger than ever.

His forces seem to have grown.

He has taken on

An invincible appearance.

We, however, have made mistakes,

There is no denying it.

Our numbers are dwindling.



Our slogans are in disarray.

Some of our words

the enemy has twisted

Beyond recognition.

What is now false,

of what we have said?

Some or all?

Who do we still count on?

Are we left over,

Thrown out of the living stream?

Shall we remain behind

Understanding no one and

Understood by none?

Have we got to be lucky? This you ask.

Expect no answer other than your own.

*Bertolt Brecht*

### About us

**Our vision** is a Munich Conference for Peace Policy, a forum for fair global cooperation, from which initiatives for a just, ecological and non-violent world domestic policy will be launched.

**Our path** is one of non-violence and dialogue. We provide impulses and seek dialogue with the organizers, sponsors and participants of the Security Conference as well as with the interested public.

**Our organisation:** The project group "Changing the Munich Security Conference" is a registered non-profit association whose work is strengthened by interested individuals from Munich peace groups.

**Our cooperation partners:** The project group is financially supported by the Pax-Christi diocesan office of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising and the Kokon office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. For individual events, we cooperate with the Cultural Department of the City of Munich, the Köhler Foundation, the Katholischer Fonds (Catholic fund for world-church and development-related education and public relations work) and the Petra-Kelly-Foundation. We are members of the International Munich Peace Conference and cooperate with the Munich School of Philosophy, the forum- ZFD (Civil Peace Service Forum), APTE, etc. We support the campaign "Sicherheit neu denken" ("Rethinking Security") and the call for the Anti-Siko-Demo 2024 (Anti-Security Conference Demonstration 2024).

**We and the others:** We see the various forms of action of the Munich peace movement - demonstrations, peace conference, peace prayer, dialogue - as complementary pillars that support the critical examination of the current security conference.

**Donate:** We need the support of the interested public, that is, of you. This can be done through idealistic (cooperation) and **financial support:** Your **donation to us** is tax deductible.

**Feedback:** We are pleased about your opinion by feedback, also in critical form!

**Impressum:** Projektgruppe „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“ e.V.

Vorstand: Dr. Thomas Mohr, Mechthild Schreiber, Anja Ufermann

The articles express the personal opinion of the author.

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Editorial deadline for this issue: 30.1.2024

ViSDP Erwin Schelbert

Bank: Stadtparkasse München, IBAN: DE23 7015 0000 0000 4163 70, BIC: SSKMDEMMXXX

Druck:: Druckwerk GmbH, München, 100% recycled paper, FSC seal of approval, climate neutral

### Events

**Internationale Münchner Friedenskonferenz**

[www.friedenskonferenz.info](http://www.friedenskonferenz.info)

„Quo vadis Europa?“

**Friday, 16.02.2024, 19:00—22:00 Uhr**

**Freiheitshalle, Rainer-Werner-Fassbinder-Platz 1**

**Saturday, 17.02.2024, 10:00 —12:00 Uhr**

**Hochschule für Philosophie, Kaulbachstr. 31-33**

**Workshops (u.a. Widerstand/Gefahr Rechts)**

**Saturday, 17.02.2024, 19:00 —21:30 Uhr**

**Hochschule für Philosophie**

**Alternativen zu Kapitalismus/Militarismus**

**Saturday, 17.02.2024, 13 Uhr, Stachus-Karlsplatz**

**Anti-Siko-Bündnis, Protest gegen die**

**Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz [www.antisiko.de](http://www.antisiko.de)**

**Sunday, 19.2.23, 15:00 –16:30 Uhr**

**Petra-Kelly-Stiftung, Presseclub München**

**Marienplatz 22**

**„Nach der Konferenz“ - Eine Nachbetrachtung**

[www.petrakellystiftung.de](http://www.petrakellystiftung.de)

**Sunday, 18.2.24, 18 Uhr**

**Friedensgebet der Religionen**

**Nazarethkirche, Barbarossastr. 3**

**Beten für den Frieden** during the Munich Security

Conference v. 17.2. –19.2.24, **Bürgersaalkirche**

**17.2.24, 16 Uhr Friedensgebet Pax Christi/MSKv**