

Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern!



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

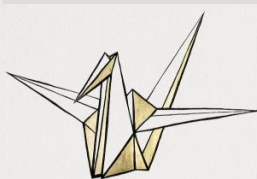
Projektgruppe „Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern“ e.V. • Projektzeitung Nr. 21 • Februar 2026

Dear Friends of Peace, what crazy times we live in, when human security is mostly seen only in terms of strength, power, superiority in weapons and dangerous threats and deterrence? Has the concept of 'common security' with each other instead of against each other (Olof Palme) been completely sacrificed to the logic of war? In addition to the editorial (→ p. 1), which advocates for an international peace movement, the other articles also highlight how dangerous the military escalation in Europe and the USA (→ p. 7), but also in Gaza (→ p. 5), is. In this almost hysterical atmosphere of arms frenzy, with many countries nearly doubling their military spending, does a voice calling for 'non-violence' (→ p. 11) still have a chance of being heard? Shouldn't we all become peace-loving instead of war-loving in order to tackle the existential problems of humanity together? Fabian Scheidler highlights this urgency in his book 'Friedenstüchtig' (→ p. 15), which is why it should be discussed in schools instead of bringing the German Armed Forces into the classroom (→ p. 6). This could also include an analysis of the extent to which our so-called 'rule-based order of the West' (→ p. 13) is built on lies and double standards. It is to be hoped that the peace movement will regain strength in order to stand up against new medium-range weapons (→ p. 14) and the militarisation of civil society. Are you with us? Your opinion is important to us!

Erwin Schelbert

Small Portrait:

Nihon Hidankyo



The 600,000 survivors of the atomic bombing of Japan are called **hibakusha**.

kusha.

For a long time, their fate was hushed up. Since then, the organization **Nihon Hidankyo** has been fighting for the social and economic rights of all and, in particular, for the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

In 2024, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its uncompromising commitment.

This is a powerful reminder that we must not allow the possession of a single nuclear weapon, even for nuclear deterrence. Nihon Hidankyo remains a symbol of resistance.

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'Lay down your arms!'

'Strange things happen in war,' said US President **D. Trump** at the end of August 2025, summarising his experiences with Russian President **W. Putin**. Every conversation he has with Putin is 'a good conversation'. 'And then, unfortunately, a bomb is sent to Kiev or somewhere else, and then I get very angry about it,' said Trump.

Pandora's box has been opened, war has broken out, and thinking is dominated by images of friend and foe. Differentiation, diplomacy and dialogue seem outdated. The prevailing **logic of war** knows only winners and losers. The willingness of one side to negotiate is interpreted by the other as an admission of weakness. Whoever is stronger is right. And as Prussian Field Marshal H. v. Moltke already knew: once a war has broken out, it develops a momentum of its own that makes it increasingly uncontrollable. Starting a war is obviously much easier than ending it.

Trump himself, however, also relies on brutality and violence. In September 2025, he renamed the US Department of Defence the 'War Department'. The kidnapping of Venezuelan President N. Maduro and his wife by US troops on 3 January 2026 seems only logical in this context. Senator R. Gallego of the US Democrats complained: 'It is shameful that we have gone from being the world's policeman to the world's bully.'



How did this situation come about?

Quelle: MSKv

Is Putin's war of aggression against Ukraine, which violates international law, to blame for everything? Or is it also the terrorist attack by Hamas on a festival site in Israel?

It's probably not that simple. In September 2024, the **Munich Security Conference (MSC)** pointed out the West's double standards regarding international rules in a remarkable report entitled 'Standard Deviation': 'The US and European countries have no choice but to take the widespread accusation of hypocrisy more seriously. If they do not adjust their behaviour and discourse, cynicism towards the rules-based order will grow.'

Continuation p. 2 ►

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However, this welcome admission came before Trump was re-elected as US President. Unlike his predecessors, he no longer even attempts to maintain the appearance of compliance with international law, as evidenced by his covetousness regarding Greenland, for example.

The shocking circumstances of our times force us to ask fundamental questions: Have we perhaps simply overlooked the wars that have been taking place around the world in recent decades? Because they took place far away or because the West was confident of its fundamental dominance? **Isn't the root cause of war inherent in human nature?** Are we doomed to war?

A widespread view! Even the founder of psychoanalysis, **S. Freud**, assumed that there was a *'primary hostility between people'*. In his encouraging book *'Good to the Core'*, historian R. Bregman examines various pieces of evidence for this human malice – and refutes them! For example, he reveals that the world-famous Stanford Prison Experiment by psychologist P. Zimbardo was manipulated. The test subjects, who allegedly became sadists as a result of their role as prison guards, had been instructed accordingly in advance! In *'Pain Threshold'*, J. Bauer, neurobiologist and psychotherapist, exposes the so-called aggression instinct as a myth. Rather, aggression arose in evolution as a means of warding off pain – and, in humans, humiliation and social exclusion. Evolutionary biologist C. v. Schaik, archaeologist H. Meller and historian K. Michel jointly examine *'The Evolution of Violence'* and come to the conclusion: *'War has become second nature to us. We consider it natural, but it is only a cultural achievement.'* *'99 per cent of evolution has managed without it.'* Human success in evolution is based primarily on our ability to communicate and cooperate.

A. Adler, colleague and competitor of S. Freud, summarised this positive view of humanity in the term *'sense of community'*. He understood this to mean both a fundamental social disposition of humans and an ethical mission with the goal of an *'ideal community of all humanity'*.

In line with this, 27-year-old podcaster O. Nymoen explains, *'my solidarity extends beyond those who live within the same national borders as me.'* In his booklet *'Why I would never fight for my country,'* he explains that he does not want to be turned into a *'killing tool'* by the state. He considers the claim that the security interests of a state necessarily coincide with those of its subjects to be absurd.

But even in Germany, which according to its Basic Law wants to *'serve world peace,'* a *'culture of military restraint,'* as defended in 2012 by then-Foreign Minister G. Westerwelle, has long since given way to demands for *'war readiness'* (B. Pistorius).

Hasn't humanity already gone further than this? In 1945, the **United Nations** was founded to *'save succee*

ding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind' (UN Charter). However, the looming Cold War prevented constructive cooperation between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. For example, the peacekeeping forces under direct UN command envisaged in the Charter were never established. However, unlike its predecessor, the League of Nations (1920–1946), the UN has at least succeeded in ensuring that none of the world's most powerful states has left the organisation to date – presumably as a result of their sole right of veto in the Security Council. And the annual UN General Assembly, in which 193 states have one vote each, uniquely represents the global public and thus offers an enticing stage even for politicians like Trump.

Ultimately, it is a political decision how much power is transferred to a global institution such as the UN. **H. Grotius** (1625) and **I. Kant** (1795) are the philosophical forefathers of this vision. The international peace movement of the 19th century brought these concepts to a wider public. The Austrian pacifist **B. v. Suttner** and her novel *'Lay Down Your Arms!'* (1889), which was the most important work of anti-war literature until the publication of **E. M. Remarque's** *'All Quiet on the Western Front'* (1929). As a peace activist, v. Suttner worked tirelessly for an immediate end to the arms race, demanding a reduction in military spending and the establishment of international arbitration tribunals. One consequence of the political activities of the pacifist movement was the two Hague Peace Conferences (1899, 1907). These led to the establishment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which still exists today, for the peaceful settlement of international conflicts: a decisive step towards an international legal order that shows that pacifist commitment is worthwhile! However, a broad shift in consciousness from nationalism (*'America first!'*, *'Make China great again!'*, *'Russia as a world power!'*) to joint commitment as global citizens to this unique planet will take generations.

As **J. Lennon** and **Y. Ono** proclaimed on posters in several major cities around the world in 1969: *'War is over – if you want it!'* Yes, there is hope if we do not slacken in our commitment to peace in the long term. Concrete civil society campaigns can have an astonishing effect, especially when they receive significant support from politicians, as in the case of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and Austria. Costa Rica has managed without its own army since 1949! Since 2003, Qatar has pursued *'the promotion of the peaceful settlement of international disputes'* as a constitutional mandate! We need more politicians – and religious leaders – who not only care for their own followers, but also take responsibility for the global community – including at the MSC!

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Today in particular, there is a need for a strong peace movement that transcends national borders, shapes public opinion and is taken seriously by politicians. The transition from a Western-dominated to a multipolar world offers great opportunities for a peaceful, fair and sustainable global domestic policy. It is important to question emerging polarisation and enemy stereotypes – e.g. towards China. The theologian **H. Küng** opened the door to this as early as 1990 with his '**Project World Ethos**' as a common ethical basis for all world religions, including Chinese Confucianism.

Our small project group 'Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz verändern' e.V. (Changing the Munich Security Conference), which has been working for 20 years to promo

te dialogue with MSC leaders and the vision of a Munich Conference for Peace Policy, is also contributing to the internationalisation of the peace movement. Through our annual Munich Peace Meeting (MPM), we have created an important (online) opportunity for peace studies, peace work and the peace movement to meet with the MSC team since 2019. In autumn 2025, the MPM took place for the first time in English and with international participation. We are convinced that such initiatives will not remain entirely ineffective. A quote attributed to A. Adler encourages me in this regard: '*Those who believe in the goodness of people make them better.*'

Thomas Mohr, psychoanalyst and chairman of MSKv

Our observers at the MSC 2026



Natalia Jagolski

As a junior lecturer for security studies at Leiden University and an advocate for the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agenda, I experience how Security is being perceived as a topic too serious to involve youth. Meanwhile, expectations towards young people to take responsibility in matters of national defence are increasing. As a youth observer at the Peacekeeping Ministerial and a young peacebuilder at the 2nd EU YPS Conference, the practical execution of youth participation and facilitating discourse on equal footing remain crucial challenges. In times in which the rules-based international order is questioned, and security is increasingly being redefined in military terms, it is important to support approaches emphasising generational justice for peace and security. As such,

I am looking forward to seeing how this paradigm shift is going to play out at the MSC and hope young people will be taken seriously as agents of peace.



Inga Blum

As Co-President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), I seek to engage in dialogue at the Munich Security Conference on the escalating risk of nuclear war. IPPNW has, since the 1980s, contributed to de-escalation and disarmament by providing evidence-based analysis of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. For this work, IPPNW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. The organization also founded the ICAN campaign, which played a key role in advancing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In the context of ongoing wars and geopolitical tensions, the renewed nuclear arms build-up by all nuclear-weapon states, and the erosion of arms control frameworks, the risk of nuclear escalation is high. To overcome the dangerous belief in security through nuclear deterrence, IPPNW's humanitarian message remains as vital as ever. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons—supported by more than 70 percent of UN member states—offers a credible alternative security perspective grounded in humanitarian principles and international law.

Our project group at the MSC weekend

On the weekend of **13 to 15 February 2026**, the members and supporters of our association will once again be involved in a variety of activities:

Inga Blum and **Natalie Jagolski** will represent us as **observers at the MSC** and report on their impressions at our **event on Sunday afternoon**.

Matthias Linnemann will represent us in the team of the **International Munich Peace Conference**, which, as an alternative event to the MSC, will once again offer a very interesting programme for the public.

Werner Heinrich took part in the preparatory meetings for the **Anti-Siko demonstration**. Although we welcome the title of the appeal, 'Let's stop the arms madness!', we feel that some of the wording is too undifferentiated, so we will not be supporting the demonstration appeal as an association this year. However, as in previous years, we have drafted our own appeal. Some of us will participate in the demonstration and the **protest chain through the pedestrian zone** as individuals. The peace demonstration on the occasion of the Security Conference highlights how many initiatives and organisations are committed to a more peaceful and just world throughout the year. The media, which has travelled to Munich in large numbers for the MSC, can report on this worldwide.

Markus Brunnhuber will once again organise a joint hour with Pax Christi for us this year as part of the **prayer chain in the Bürgersaalkirche**.

We look forward to seeing you at these activities!

Details: www.mskveraendern.de – Dates and locations: see last page!

Thomas Mohr, chairman MSKv

Munich Peace Meeting 2025 – From Peacelessness to Peace-Ability

The 7th Munich Peace Meeting with two online forums was a complete success in the opinion of all participants. Feedbacks such as: 'It gives me a lot of hope to see non-violent peace work in action,' 'I appreciate the interest and transparency of the MSC team as well as the participation of many international peace activists' reflect the essence of this intensive exchange. On the central question – how can peace-ability be strengthened at the international level of politics and diplomacy in a world of increasing conflict and armament – concrete ideas for action were presented to the MSC based on the practical experience of those involved.

Sixty participants from 20 countries in the fields of peace activism, international peace institutions and peace studies contributed to four areas of work: the role of women in peace work, the influence of religion and tradition on peace, the contribution of non-violent actions to peace promotion, and the necessity of social justice and inclusion as the foundation of sustainable peace.

What works at the grassroots level in the respective regions of the experts can serve as a blueprint for global peace work. This is how an MSC could develop further: **more peace-building capacity and international diplomacy**. Professional moderation allowed a wide range of expertise to coexist on an equal footing, resulting in concrete ideas for the 2026 Security Conference:

- **Women** should be given a place on all panels
- **Religions and traditions** should be given greater importance in conflict management
- Reorientation: How can Europe and China learn from each other with regard to peacekeeping?
- **Active non-violence** as a norm at the MSC – for a sustainable security policy.
- Strategic support for the MSC through legal, diplomatic and logistical impetus
- **Global justice** as the basis of the world economic system: social balance, sustainability and inclusion

Dunja Müller, MSKv

Report from our observer at the MSC 2025

While preparations for the 62nd Munich Security Conference are still underway, it is worth taking a look back at last year's event. Even before it began, it was predicted to be a historic conference – an assessment that was confirmed on the opening day by the speech given by US Vice President JD Vance.

Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine and Iran, as well as increasing tensions within the US, the question arises as to what the focus of the upcoming MSC will be. In recent years, the conference has pursued a broader concept of security that includes aspects of human security and environmental sustainability in addition to military issues. In February 2025, for example, discussions focused on climate-induced migration, democracy and food security. International crises and humanitarian emergencies were also addressed, such as the situations in Sudan, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

However, the debate on strengthening the EU militarily against the backdrop of increasingly unreliable US policy was particularly prominent. There were also panels on hybrid warfare, the security policy implications of artificial intelligence and the future role of nuclear weapons. On the topic of sustainability, quantitative analyses and access to critical raw materials were also the focus, while questions of responsibility, climate justice and colonial continuities took a back seat.

Which topics are given prominence and which actors are given access to the MSC determines which perspectives are heard at the conference. As in previous years, arms companies were among the sponsors and participants. Right now, however, there is an urgent need to give more space to marginalised voices, including people of colour, LGBTQI+ communities and representatives of indigenous nations. Their knowledge could provide important impetus for new security policy approaches that go beyond purely military solutions.

Alessia Neuner



Reconstruction of Gaza – determined by external forces?

New seeds of a lasting conflict?

Gaza no longer exists – it is a disfigured torso, occupied, destroyed, starved, decimated by mass killings, deeply wounded. The images that reach us and the descriptions of the survivors there exceed the limits of our imagination as to how life, especially a dignified life, can ever be possible again in such a wasteland.

Over 60,000 dead, including 30,000 children (who knows the exact figures?), a desert of rubble due to the destruction of 80 to 90% of homes, roads, educational and health facilities, an estimated 55 million tonnes of rubble – the consequences of 40,000 Israeli attacks. It is not surprising that hardly any sewage treatment plants, wells or desalination plants were spared. How can agriculture still be possible, given the destruction of the water supply, thousands of deadly unexploded bombs and soil poisoned by released chemicals? The litany of chaos could go on and on, not to mention the suffering of the population.



Foto: Phoenix-Gaza-Framework

How can reconstruction be possible? Apart from the enormous costs – estimates put the figure at over \$100 billion – under what political conditions can such reconstruction take place without the seeds of future conflict being sown once again by external forces?

President **Trump's 20-point plan** is unlikely to be suitable for this, even if it has been confirmed by a UN Security Council resolution. Not even the second point after the handover of all Israeli hostages has been fulfilled: the Israeli military continues to occupy part of the territory, and instead of a ceasefire, the fighting continues, resulting in the deaths of hundreds more Palestinians and the repeated obstruction or hindrance of aid deliveries.

Even if the US's determination to end the war in the Middle East is positive in principle, the very structure of its '**peace council**' appears unsuitable for achieving real peace. The **Palestinian Authority** is not included, democratic elections are not taken into account, and a chairman like Donald Trump, who tramples on international law, can only lead to the failure of peace efforts. Trump still harbours his '**Riviera plans**' to turn Gaza into

a neoliberal business model with a holiday paradise. The Palestinian population would hardly find a place in this, even if Trump were to abandon his resettlement plans.

The Palestinian Authority has very different plans: to unite the West Bank with Gaza as a single state. However, the Israeli government and the US are already opposing this. The future of Hamas is also unclear. The planned 'stabilisation force' – if it comes into being at all, given Arab resistance – is unlikely to find much support among the population without Palestinian self-determination.

The **Phoenix-Gaza Framework** for reconstruction appears to be a ray of hope. Unlike foreign plans, this framework is anchored in the social structure of Gaza. A multidisciplinary consortium of Palestinian experts, scientists, community representatives and grassroots organisations has developed the project, which unfortunately

has received too little international attention. The team has set itself ambitious goals: '*We are determined to rebuild Gaza through dignified, community-led processes rooted in justice and care.*' The vision states: '*The Phoenix Gaza Recovery Framework advocates for a locally anchored, credible and fully sustainable vision that will revitalise Gaza and lead it into the future...*'. Using a highly detailed methodology, a 'living framework' is presented that is not intended to be a static plan, but rather a platform that enables local ownership and continuous development in several stages. The experiences from politics, tradition, culture, law, medicine, architecture and urban planning are incorporated in a very convincing manner, taking into account the established structures in the country itself.

Let us hope that this plan will also be supported by other countries, especially Germany. Any form of external control, whether through political and military influence or exploitative investment projects, will not lead to peace in Palestine, but will sow the seeds of new conflicts.

Erwin Schelbert, MSKv

Military service debate excluding youth – a generation at arm's length

The [threat of war and armament](#) is an issue preoccupying youth and young adults in Germany and Europe on a daily basis. The current debate on the German military service points to a conflict transcending generations. It does not only showcase how one generation is being let down, but also how the peace discourse is turning into a military-dominated security discourse.

On the one hand, young people are expected to potentially commit themselves to Germany through military service. On the other hand, [“Gen Z” is being portrayed as a social problem](#), and matters that are important to this younger generation are consistently being ignored. It was already apparent during the ‘Fridays for Future’ movement, but it has become even clearer since the pandemic that young people’s concerns are falling on deaf ears. During the pandemic, [71% of children and youth](#) reported severe mental distress. But while the mental health of young people is deteriorating, funding for projects such as the demonstrably effective [“Mental Health Coaches”](#) programme is being cut. In addition, over [64% of school administrators](#) across Germany report that their schools are in dire need of renovation. Similarly, in extracurricular educational settings, funding for democracy education programmes, such as the federal programme [“Demokratie leben!”](#) in Salzwedel, is actively being rejected under the pretext of political neutrality. Such decisions explain why 79% of youth say that politicians do not do enough to address their needs.

Even in the current debate on military service, [young or critical voices are rarely represented](#). Youth organisations criticise that discussions are being held without their input. Although the media reports that there is a supposed majority in favour of conscription, a closer look reveals that [this majority is not found in the age group that actually matters](#). The Youth Strategy adopted in 2019 already pointed out that people between the ages of [18 and 27 make up only 8% of the electorate](#) and that political debates therefore predominantly address older voter groups. Despite years of dialogue and

concrete action strategies developed as part of the [National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation](#), these recommendations are not being taken into account in this military service debate. One might therefore think that existing promises made to young people are deliberately being ignored.

A Turning Point – A Military Concept of Security Instead of a Social Contract

The introduction of a civic service year is not a novel proposal. Social services such as the [voluntary social year \(FSJ\)](#) remain underfunded despite their systemic importance, yet they are cited as a positive example of social engagement. However, the [FSJ allowance of around €450](#) is not comparable to the proposed [€2,600 gross for military service](#). This financial asymmetry and the ethically questionable nature of military training clearly show that the focus is not on formulating an inter-generational social contract, but rather on a military-oriented concept of security.



Foto: © "[19](#)", Dezentrale Kassel, lizenziert unter CC BY 4.0.

It remains questionable whether the [German Armed Forces have sufficient capacity](#) to take on more soldiers. Furthermore, the questionnaires on military service are being sent out against a backdrop of further scandals that point to [structural problems and a culture of sexism and right-wing ideology](#). It is therefore irresponsible to demand that young people uphold this system in its current state.

As a result, students organised school strikes [in over 90 cities](#), and alliances against military conscription were formed in more than 30 cities, [including Munich](#).

Although refusal to perform military service remains an option, this debate is not an isolated issue. It represents a shift in the understanding of intergenerational justice and security. A questionnaire or obscure statistics cannot replace a deliberative process. Instead, Germany must take its promises to the younger generation seriously in order to make future-proof decisions.

Natalia Jagolski, University of Leiden

Militarization of Europe – dangerous escalation of the threat situation

This is how intensely the war threat narrative of politics and the media works: according to a survey (INSA and Shell Youth Study), 81% of young people are afraid of a war of aggression by Russia. When the German secret services then loudly warn, *“We are already in the line of fire...”* (Jäger BND) and politicians also add fuel to the fire with statements such as *“...the Russians are at the door”* (Jens Spahn), it sounds very threatening indeed. Populist academics also reinforce these fears emotionally with their subjective assessments of the situation: *“...perhaps the last summer we will experience in peace.”* (Sönke Neitzel). This is the best opportunity for the media to stir things up again and again: *“Putin is playing with world war”* (Bild), *“Putin's diabolical plan...”* (Tagesspiegel), *“Putin's attack on NATO territory – from 2026?”* (FR).

This stoked fear of war leads to an almost paranoid state of mind in society. The constant perpetuation of the never rationally examined threat scenario in all media channels creates an irrational fear syndrome in people's minds with a solidified image of Russia as the enemy, which is no longer accessible to fact-based, rational argumentation. (“Metaphysics of the Military”)

Undoubtedly, Russia's attack on Ukraine was contrary to international law. But does that mean that Putin is *“opposed to the rules-based world order as a whole”* (coalition agreement) and should therefore be regarded as evil incarnate? In this moralization of the conflict, the West is apparently the good guy who must wage a just war to save the world order. The fact that this supposedly good West has repeatedly violated and even trampled on this rules-based order in the past is ignored (double standards).

In the war-logical thinking of our government, led by Defense Secretary Pistorius, this view can of course only lead to one conclusion: we must become *“fit for war”*, we must rearm, we need new and more weapons and many more soldiers. Manfred Weber (CSU, EU Parliament) even calls for a switch to a *“war economy”*. If such fears of threats are truly ingrained in people's minds, then even a massive rearmament program can be cleverly financed, despite empty coffers, despite debt brakes, despite urgent climate protection and infrastructure in need of renovation, etc.!

Once the funds have been approved, euphemistically called *“special assets,”* 100 billion for the Bundeswehr, 500 billion for war-related infrastructure, a billion-dollar frenzy of *“whatever it takes,”* i.e., unlimited, then militarization will know no bounds:

Arms budget from 2% to 3.5% to 5% of GDP, increase the German **Armed Forces** by 80,000 soldiers, mobilize 200,000 **reservists**, build new **barracks**, new **arms companies**, 35 new **F35A fighter jets** (also as nuclear weapons carriers), implementation of the (secret) **Operation**

Plan Germany, making civil defense fit for war (construction of bunkers, shelters, warning systems, emergency facilities, hospitals for 1,000 victims per day, establishment of homeland security regiments), establishment of **military service**, introduction of **Veterans Day**, **Bundeswehr in schools**, cancellation of the **civil clause** at universities...

And the **peak of the arms buildup**: the planned deployment of the US's most advanced **hyper-medium-range attack weapons** in the middle of Germany. This is actually madness, because it makes them a prime target in our country (see page 14).

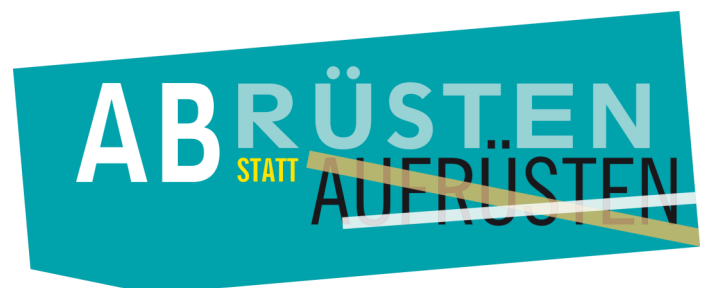
So all this tremendous armament is only intended to ward off a Russian attack on Germany? Even though all the facts clearly show that Russia is not planning such an attack and would not even be capable of it!

The 17 US intelligence agencies confirm this, and Russia also emphasizes this repeatedly. A study by Greenpeace confirms what experienced military representatives have also analyzed: **NATO, but already NATO Europe, is far superior to war-weakened Russia in military, strategic, technological, and economic terms, so that an attack on a NATO country would be downright suicidal.** Are we in Germany and throughout Europe (*“Rearm Europe”*) making these gigantic rearmament efforts solely to deter Russia from attacking us, even though this is a pipe dream?

Worse still, this formidable deterrent is actually forcing Russia to rearm and upgrade its own military capabilities in order to counter such a threat – setting in motion a disastrous escalation that doesn't bring more security, but more instability. It is tempting Russia to take preventive action to neutralize Western offensive weapons before it itself is attacked by such overwhelming superiority.

It is therefore the unchecked militarization of Germany and NATO that leads to a dangerous escalation, which then actually becomes an incalculable threat for us in Germany as well.

The only reasonable and peace-logical consequence must



therefore be: **disarmament instead of rearmament.** Contributing to this would be the most important task of the Munich Security Conference.

Erwin Schelbert, MSKv

China: A force for peace in a multipolar world?

A proposal for dialogue to the MSC

Chinese concepts of peace can be found in the Confucian classic, the "Book of Rites": Datong, or the "Great Community," aims to create people-centered politics and achieve peace through inner cultivation, just leadership, and the avoidance of unnecessary violence. The key lies in avoiding brute force when handling conflicts. Chinese philosophers are revisiting the traditional state concept of tianxia ("Everything under Heaven") as a proposal for a global order. This concept is based on shared responsibility and the common good.

Political theorist Kang Youwei (1858–1927) embraced this concept, classifying peace as a central and attainable human goal. This goal can be achieved by overcoming all divisions, including those based on nation, race, gender, and hierarchy. War can be eliminated through universal equality, justice, communal property (no exploitation), and state-organized education (no family conflicts), creating a harmonious world without discrimination or strife.



Cultural China is not on the "axis of evil."

In a 2018 speech at Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, Federal President Steinmeier emphasized the com-



mon ground with European values:

"A hundred years ago, Kang Youwei described the utopia of a 'great community' that sought to overcome the boundaries of nation, race, gender, and hierarchy. The hope for a shared future is therefore not a Western or Eastern, European or Asian, German or Chinese idea, but a human one!"

Today, China is indiscriminately characterized as part of

an "axis of evil" (along with Russia, North Korea, and Iran). Even Chancellor Merkel has argued that, when it comes to China, we should take a differentiated stance, looking not only for differences but also for commonalities. What is wrong with seeking a realpolitik based on common ground? In order to engage in dialogue about existing problems and cooperate to solve them, both sides must first refrain from further verbal escalation. They must also define their interests and differences in joint dialogues and establish guidelines for reducing conflict and promoting cooperation.

Three questions for the Munich Security Conference:

The Munich Security Conference could pioneer constructive dialogue on China by exploring common ground on an equal footing. For example, they could discuss the future shape of the world and its order. Initially, this could be achieved through a dialogue between European and Chinese academics discussing the similarities and differences between cultural concepts and ideas of peace. This format could be incorporated into the MSC as early as 2027 and focus on the following questions:

- In what ways can concepts of peace in China and the West form a common foundation for global peaceful development and a sustainable, just world order?
- What form of world order would China and the West like to rule out for the future?
- What concrete proposals for dialogue formats beyond the scientific sphere are necessary to bring relevant questions of common ground more strongly into the political arena?

Intellectuals from both regions should be involved: Those who know Europe well and those who know China well. The discussion should focus on practical, concrete proposals regarding how to translate common ground between the two worlds regarding peace, an undesirable future world order, and a future reform of the world order into joint action through cooperation and dialogue formats. The results of this consultation would also be of interest to diplomats, in line with the MSC's intention as "diplomacy service providers."

Prof. em. Dr. Thomas Heberer
Institut of East-Asia Sciences
University Duisburg-Essen



25 years – Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security

Twenty-five years ago, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, was adopted. It reaffirmed the international community's commitment to the equal participation of women as peace-makers and broadened the understanding of conflict resolution. Yes, wars directly affect women, but the agenda went further: it called for women to take a leading role in decisions that shape the lives of entire communities.



boys learn what masculinity means and what is expected of them, just as girls learn to view themselves from the outside instead of acting from within. The world's problems are patriarchal in nature and everyone is affected by them.

“Somewhere along the way, we were taught to stop feeling instead of learning to stop what hurts us.”
Prentis Hemphill

How can we all collectively “unlearn” patriarchy and develop a culture of caring togetherness?

We can stop seeing people as enemies, we can stop talking about ‘ourselves’ and ‘the others’ and create an atmosphere of cooperation, and we must understand that no one can take the place of women.

For me, peace begins when we jointly examine the patterns that operate within us and between us. We are all children of patriarchy, so this isn’t about assigning blame, but about compassionately uncovering these patterns: what is it like to constantly have to assert yourself, to be cool or strong? What is it like to constantly have to look good, to always be caring and nice? How can we draw each other's attention to this when, in a group, men dominate the conversation or make decisions whose consequences primarily affect women? Change must come from the men, who are currently the more powerful due to their privileges. Only they can open the doors for the inclusion of women in preliminary negotiations, security agreements, and implementation scenarios, for binding participation targets and gender-equitable negotiation structures.

And as for us women, Gisèle Pelicot gave us the guiding principle in 2025: “Shame must change sides.” We must stop feeling ashamed of what is being done to us and speak out loud about what is wrong. We can form a strong sisterhood, empower each other, and claim our place together.

Anja Ufermann, MSKv

The truth behind the agenda is simple and verifiable: women's contribution is essential for lasting peace: “When women lead, peace follows.”

In an era in which conflicts are once again reaching high levels, progress in women's equality is threatened with reversal due to political actors and financial cuts. Reality also reveals how difficult it remains to protect women in conflicts and integrate them into peace and security processes. In 2023, the number of women killed in armed conflicts doubled compared to the previous year. Cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 percent. Every day, around 500 women and girls in conflict-affected countries die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Despite these alarming trends, women's participation in peace processes remains shockingly low. In October 2024, none of the eight UN peacekeeping missions were led by women. Women constituted only 8.6 percent of military personnel in peace operations and a mere 9.6 percent of negotiators in peace processes. These figures reflect a profound systemic question: How can peace be secured in the long term if key decisions are predominantly made by men?

We must acknowledge that there is a profound misunderstanding of the terms “feminism” and “decoloniality.” It is not about biology or race, but rather about power structures and their perpetuation. Studies show that children display similar cooperative behavior until around the age of six. But from then on,

‘We must gear up for prosperity’

This was the headline of an article in Der Spiegel in March 2024. It went on to say: ‘[...] **The state should make a virtue of necessity and stimulate growth with spending on armaments**’ (Der Spiegel, 14/2024).

The German economy is under pressure. Comparatively inexpensive Russian LNG and pipeline gas are hardly available anymore. The struggle between China and the US for future global leadership is also having an impact on the German economy. The outlook for some key industries is mixed to poor. This includes the automotive industry.

Rheinmetall-Chef: VW-Werk in Osnabrück gut für Rüstung geeignet

Stand: 13.03.2025 16:39 Uhr

Rheinmetall-Chef Armin Papperger hat das VW-Werk in Osnabrück als "gut geeignet" für die Produktion von Rüstungsgütern bezeichnet. Zuvor hatte sich VW-Chef Oliver Blume offen für eine Umwidmung des Werkes gezeigt.

(NDR, 13 March 2025)

The Russian army's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was the perfect opportunity to review the ‘defence capability’ of the German armed forces. The result came as no surprise: additional funds must be made available for more armaments. In 2024, this amounted to approximately USD 89 billion, twice as much as 10 years ago. This has moved Germany up to fourth place, just ahead of India with USD 86 billion. (from: Statista, 2025). The German government even wants to increase defence spending to USD 176 billion annually by 2029 (Handelsblatt, 28 August 2025)

Handelsblatt

Wie die Rüstungsmilliarden zu Wachstum führen können

Deutschland will viele Milliarden Euro in die Verteidigung investieren. Wie kann die gesamte Wirtschaft profitieren? Zwei Ökonomen geben im Handelsblatt-Gespräch Antworten.

Sophia von Schwannewede, Felix Stippeler
28.08.2025 - 18:32 Uhr

Can the arms industry stimulate growth?

Experts are by no means in agreement on this. Critical voices are dampening the initial euphoria. In November 2025, the ARD magazine ‘Monitor’ reported under the headline ‘**German arms boom: more harm than good?**’. It stated: ‘Experts speak of a displacement effect that could do more harm than good to the economy because the money is lacking in other areas.’

A report by Deutsche Welle (DW) goes even further and quotes a recent study by the University of Mannheim:

"Arms expenditure is like insurance – it's not difficult to explain why. When a tank is built, it either stands somewhere or, in the worst case, it is destroyed. It does not create any economic added value. **Arms expenditure is like insurance. You take it out to have protection in case of an emergency. If the insurance is not needed, the money is gone.**

If, on the other hand, the state invests in transport infrastructure, goods can be transported to businesses on these roads, bridges and railways. There, they can be used to manufacture products that are sold. If nurseries are built, parents can work and earn money. In schools, young people are trained for future tasks." (DW, 2 July 2025)

Rüstung ohne Rendite: Warum der wirtschaftliche Effekt ausbleibt

Die geplante massive Erhöhung der deutschen Militärausgaben könnte deutlich weniger zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung beitragen als vielfach behauptet. Das zeigt eine neue Studie der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler Prof. Dr. Tom Krebs und Dr. Patrick Kaczmarczyk von der Universität Mannheim.

Pressemitteilung vom 30. Juni 2025

(University of Mannheim, 30 June 2025)

Tom Krebs and Patrick Kaczmarczyk have calculated that every euro of government spending on armaments increases GDP by only 50 cent, while every euro invested in education increases it by €3. According to the two economists, military spending is not unnecessary per se. However, the way in which it is implemented is wasteful and benefits the owners and shareholders of Rheinmetall rather than the economy as a whole.

Arms spending destroys prosperity

It is no exaggeration to describe the immense expenditure on arms as the destruction of social prosperity. **This country needs investment in education, infrastructure, healthcare and climate protection. Hundreds of billions of euros spent on arms is not only a mistake from an economic point of view.**

Matthias Linnemann, Co-Chair of MSKv

Active Non-Violence – the benchmark of civilization

Our global state of play is in a phase of whimsical regimes led by misguided, self-righteous individuals driving the world to violent chaos. All sustainable frameworks, even the UN, are under threat. This challenge can only be met with a focus on Active Nonviolence, an unequivocal message of one of the clusters of Munich Peace Meeting held to develop insights for the annual Munich Peace Conference.

"Jesus, a man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act," said **Mahatma Gandhi** while calling Christ "the most active resister known". The basis of this resistance is Truth, and the process is insistent upon Nonviolence: Satyagraha through Ahimsa.

A small and significant section of humankind has been actively nonviolent forever, and resisted injustice, pursued peace. Our past is replete with evidences of cooperative creativity, innovation and gradual improvement in human condition. Those peace-loving ancestors have left us the legacy of culture and civilization.

However, small but influential sections of humankind have been actively violent towards each other in their pursuit of power and pelf. The history of war provides no proof of permanent gain for anyone, but its momentary aggrandisement is a narcotic. Each war has left us with soulless enterprises of crafting death.

The Kleingläubigkeit of the present *might is right*

The lionising of a muscular competitive society, the Kleingläubigkeit at the root of bombastic identity politics, has taken humanity on the might is right road. Cross all continents, freedom gained through noble sacrifice is now challenged by segregated realities based on imaginary regressive narratives.

Though a handful of homo horribilis controlling our world through technology are ushering in an era of new violence, the older forms remain. Traditional wars are raging in Africa, Asia and Europe, carried on to genocidal limits.

The good news is that ubiquitous social media has made nonviolent activism equally popular. The Gen Z

protests, sit-ins, flotillas, marches, organised by resisters across the globe are leaping up from screens too! All these are valiant examples of active nonviolence in the face of unprecedented repression. It is notable that all GenZ protests have been peaceful in their inception. Unfortunately, some disintegrated into chaos after reactive State violence. Here was the weakness of unprepared activism. During India's struggle for Independence, even a minor violent reaction of an activist would make Gandhi call off the Satyagraha. He insisted that the moral compass of the nonviolent movement had to be maintained. Sacrifice and Faith are the core of active nonviolence for Gandhi.

How to upgrade MSC through attention to active non-violence mechanisms?

It would be interesting to see how the mechanisms of successful active nonviolence have been developed in contemporary societies. Ekta Parishad, a thirty year old Gandhian organisation from India, has set many benchmarks in this field. They work with Adivasis, the indigenous communities, and Dalits, the downtrodden castes of India, with a focus on land rights. Their methods are long marches from the rural areas to the seats of power, petitioning, negotiating, protesting. From a few hundred villagers walking a few kilometres in 1999 to 100,000 landless poor marching 360 kilometres to Delhi in 2018, they are a stunning example of exponential discipline and commitment. They could get government of India to enact progressive laws related to land, water and forest with no more than long Gandhi-style walks, well-drafted petitions and rousing songs.

Many such organisations have dedicated themselves to the struggle for justice. An equitable society is not just about sharing the bounty of our planet but also a life of dignity. Active Nonviolence is a key to a dialogic relationship between peoples. To paraphrase the Six Principles of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people who seek to create a community with understanding, to defeat injustice through suffering, love and faith. Believing in the redemptive power of violence leads us astray in the development of a sustainable global civilization.

Anuradha Shankar

*Former Director General of Police, Madhya Pradesh, India
Gandhi Institute and India Peace builder Forum, Board of international Montessori Association.
Participation in the Munich Peace Meeting 2025.*



From Cyberwar to Cyberpeace - overcoming the imbalances between military and peace-oriented use of AI

Globally, military budgets have increased dramatically since 2022, while civilian conflict resolution strategies, preventive diplomacy and peace infrastructure remain chronically underfunded. At the same time, rapid technological innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly shaping military strategies, information ecosystems, and geopolitical tensions. A new peace ethic that considers trends toward militarized AI, global security asymmetries, and the alternative transformative potential of technology for peace is urgently needed, based on broader and comprehensive security approach targeting human security, multilateral cooperation, and a proactive “AI for peace” agenda.

The UN has repeatedly emphasized the need for a more comprehensive security concept for peacekeeping in this world. On September 9, 2025, the report *“The Security We Need: Reorienting Military Spending for a Sustainable and Peaceful Future”*¹ was presented to the General Assembly. UN Secretary-General Guterres underscored the close link between human, social, political, environmental, and health security, noting that record military spending is not currently matched by corresponding investments in peacekeeping, peace research, social and political development, or resilience, thereby jeopardizing both state and human security. Global military spending reached a record amount that displaces and prevents much-needed investments in health, education, social protection, climate resilience, poverty reduction, and support for vulnerable populations.:*“The world is sleepwalking into a disorderly and dangerous era in which record military spending is accompanied by deteriorating human security.”* The UN's appeal is unambiguous: “budgets are choices” that must reflect the moral and political priorities of societies.

The Security We Need betrayed by disruptive AI technology

Presently the militarization of artificial intelligence (AI) is advancing, including autonomous targeting systems, the integration of cyber-AI, and data-driven battlefield optimization. The SIPRI report *“AI and New Disruptive Technologies 2025”*² notes that over 60 countries are currently developing military AI systems, with at least 20 already testing them in operational use or active battlefield trials. The global market for artificial intelligence (AI) in the military sector was estimated at US\$14.3 billion in 2024 and is expected to grow to US\$29.0 billion by 2030, representing an average annual growth rate of 12.5%. On the



Image generated by AI

other side, investment in the alternative field of AI for peace stays marginal so far. AI for peace does not even appear among the five key topics for future worthwhile investment. However, there are a number of small initiatives and programs for “AI for peace” that seek to deepen research and awareness building at the intersection of peace and security in the context of AI and to develop examples of applications in logistics, peacekeeping, conflict prevention, UN peacekeeping missions, and strengthening resilience and peace diplomacy.

Challenging Munich Security Conference

The central conclusion of such observations is that our society, world politics and diplomacy urgently need to correct the enormous misallocation of financial resources, which are spent solely on military AI. The widespread lack of technological and financial infrastructure for investments in peace must be overcome and corrected by developing a broader investment architecture for *AI for Peace*. The fact that militaries around the world are developing powerful AI systems, while no comparable investor community or ecosystem exists for the development of AI for peace, peace mediation, early warning systems for conflicts, or global risk analysis, is itself quite a significant global peace risk. The challenge for a relevant MSC platform is therefore to explore possibilities, alliances, and practical models for an investment structure for research and development in the field of **AI for Peace**.

Prof. Dr. Dietrich WERNER

Humboldt University Berlin. President of international **Globethics Foundation**, Switzerland. Former head of theological and ecumenical think tank unit in Bread for the World. Former program director of **World Council of Churches**. Member of Think Tank-Commission “Religion and Development” at BMZ. Alternatives to Peace and Security Ethics:

<https://jehe.globethics.net/article/view/8985/8719>



¹ <https://www.un.org/en/peace-and-security/the-true-cost-of-peace>

² <https://www.sipri.org/media/newsletter/2025-january>; <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2024/eu-non-proliferation-and-disarmament-papers/potentially-revolutionary-impact-emerging-and-disruptive-technologies-and-strategic-conventional>

The ‘rule-based order’ of the West and world peace

Rede des kanadischen Premiers in Davos

Die regelbasierte Ordnung ist heuchlerisch, aber keine Lüge

Mark Carneys WEF-Rede wird als rhetorischer Triumph gefeiert – zu Recht.

(Cicero, 23 January 2026)

My own morality. My own mind. It's the only thing that can stop me. I don't need international law.

(US President Donald Trump, 10 January 2026).

In the narrower sense, the ‘rules-based order’ (RBO) is linked to international law and the UN Charter, which lay down clear rules for peaceful cooperation, sovereignty and the prohibition of violence. The UN Charter forms the core of a normative framework that is intended to limit military power politics and resolve conflicts diplomatically.

‘It's ... a shift towards a world without rules, where international law is trampled under foot.’

(Emmanuel Macron, Davos, 20 January 2026)

The fact that Western states refer less to international law and more to the ‘rules-based order’ has often led to accusations that they are applying double standards and watering down international law. While its proponents emphasise that there are functioning mechanisms for conflict resolution – the RBO as opposed to the ‘law of the strongest’ – critics highlight the selective application of the “rules”. The countries of the Global South in particular see the ‘rules-based order’ primarily as an instrument of power for Western states.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney's speech in Davos attracted a lot of attention. It should be noted that Carney has held senior positions at Goldman

Sachs and the British and Canadian central banks. Carney's speech was, in a sense, a rebellion against US imperialism and, at the same time, a call to replace the unipolar world order with a multipolar one.

Unsurprisingly, the US does not like such rhetoric. US Treasury Secretary Bessent responded immediately, announcing in a statement his intention to support separatist activities in the Canadian province of Alberta (BBC, 24 January 2026).

Not only the **use of state violence**, but even the **threat of state violence** is a violation of international law. The invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops was contrary to international law. Those who rightly criticise this must not remain silent about the aggression of the USA towards Venezuela, Yemen, Iran and also Denmark/Greenland.

A return to international law and thus to the UN Charter is imperative. The continued disregard for international law by the USA, Russia and other states, such as Israel, Turkey, Sudan and Myanmar, must be condemned.

The ‘rules-based order’ must not be a ‘geopolitical fig leaf’ for individual countries that only refer to this set of rules when they can use it to denounce the policies of unpopular governments, but constantly ignore international law in their own aggressive actions.

Matthias Linnemann, Co-Chair MSKv

Further information:

<https://www.markus-schall.de/2026/01/regelbasierte-weltordnung-und-voelkerrecht-zwischen-anspruch-realtaet-und-rechtsbruch/>

Is international law coming to an end? Richard David Precht in conversation with international law expert Prof. Kai Ambos

<https://youtu.be/NT4vGWWhCBDk?si=ticDRgr1INc6RGrl>

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs' speech on 5 January 2026 to the UN Security Council on the US attack on Venezuela:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l110EFJLw4U&t=115s>

Medium-range offensive weapons in Germany – a dangerous escalation of the threat!

A supposedly crucial **capability gap** in NATO's armament concept is to be closed by **deploying US medium-range missiles** in Germany in order to make the deterrent against Russia appear massive and credible. However, no such gap exists; the enormous weapons potential on land, at sea and in the air around the globe is more than sufficient to pose a deadly threat, even without these **new types of precision weapons**.

The concept of the **Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF)** was planned back in 2017 during Trump's first presidency, long before the start of the war in Ukraine. The US wants to set up five of these systems worldwide (including in the US, Australia and Germany) in order to be capable of launching a first strike against Russia and China as part of its **multi-domain operations (MDO)** strategy. Germany is the only European country where the deployment of **US offensive weapons** is planned **from 2026** onwards in order to threaten Russia.

Former Chancellor Scholz discussed this with US President Biden on the sidelines of a NATO meeting in the US on 10 July 2024 and then made a decision. It should be noted that this was done without first consulting the Bundestag or even bringing about a resolution. This is not only completely undemocratic, but also highly problematic and extremely dangerous, because these state-of-the-art medium-range missiles (**Tomahawk, SM-6, Dark Eagle**)

1. are offensive weapons,
2. have an extremely long range (up to 2900 km),
3. are highly accurate,
4. are in some cases hypersonic weapons, i.e. they can fly at up to 17 times the speed of sound or fly very low and are therefore difficult to destroy,
5. have extremely short warning times as a result,
6. are largely controlled by AI, which means there is a risk of technical errors,
7. are deployed in Germany as US weapons under US command,
8. are initially equipped 'only' with conventional warheads with high destructive power, but can also be converted to nuclear weapons in the long term,
9. are a priority target in the middle of Germany (planned: Grafenwöhr), as they would also be attacked with the highest priority in the event of a conflict due to their dangerous nature as first-strike weapons,
10. are now being deployed without a simultaneous offer of arms control negotiations, whereas this was the case with the deployment of medium-range weapons in the 1980s (Pershing II, 'double-track decision').

Following accusations of treaty violations by Moscow, the US withdrew from the INF Treaty, which included the renunciation of medium-range missiles, in 2019

and is therefore vigorously pursuing its MDO concept. Putin already made clear in 2022 what this means for Russia: 'That's called having a knife to your throat.' **Colonel Wolfgang Richter** has written a detailed **study** for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation on the deployment of medium-range weapons and comes to the same warning assessment: *'With the direct threat to strategic targets in Russia from German soil, Germany will now become a central, time-critical and priority target for Russian missile attacks in the event of a conflict.'*

The danger posed by such first-strike weapons ultimately means that they become a threat to us ourselves. But apparently this risk is accepted in order to have the option of a pre-emptive strike. **Claudia Major** (German Institute for International and Security Affairs) has stated this quite bluntly: *"As harsh as it sounds. In an emergency, NATO countries must also be able to attack themselves, for example, to destroy Russian missile capabilities before they can attack NATO territory and to destroy Russian military targets such as command centres."* Brigadier General **Maik Keller** also expressed this in an interview with Bild: *'You have to take out the archer before he can shoot the arrow.'* Do we really believe that Russia will accept this without taking action? **Colonel Wolfgang Richter** takes a realistic view: *'The expected Russian counter-deployment of nuclear-capable missiles will expose Germany to increased danger... and seriously increase the nuclear risk in the event of a conflict.'*

In view of such **madness**, which will lead to an additional escalation of threats, there is only one conclusion: this **deployment must be prevented**. Retired **Brigadier General Erich Vad**: *'...the deployment is unacceptable from a German and European perspective.'* To date, around 90,000 people have signed the **Berlin Appeal 'Peace-capable instead of first-strike capable – for a Europe without medium-range weapons!'**, a campaign launched by over 40 peace movement groups to spark discussion about these highly dangerous plans. The Munich Security Conference should really be addressing this issue as a matter of priority, given that it has not even been discussed in the Bundestag.



PEACEFULNESS IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY

Book review

Scheidler, Fabian: FRIEDENSTÜCHTIG. How we can stop creating our own enemies. Vienna 2025

The central thesis of Fabian Scheidler's book is the idea that the Western world is developing towards a permanent state of crisis and emergency by fighting enemies that it itself has created. Politicians respond to every new conflict with a fixed pattern: draconian measures – especially in the area of public expression and cultural debate – and increasing militarisation. He illustrates this in a well-founded and detailed manner using four examples: the war on terror (after 11 September 2001), the war on the virus (coronavirus pandemic), the war in Ukraine, and the war and destruction of the Gaza Strip. He examines each case in detail, including the background and analysis of the causes, and describes the path to the sometimes self-destructive escalation. 'The rejection of diplomacy creates causes for war, just as anti-terror wars always produce new terrorists.'

Scheidler points out the danger that politicians are sacrificing fundamental democratic and social achievements to a military logic with a state of emergency and authoritarian responses, which they present as having no alternative.

The word of the year 2022, coined by Olaf Scholz with the term 'Zeitenwende' (turning point), implies the idea of something inevitable. No one asks any more about who profits from wars or their deeper causes. People are being trained to be 'fit for war'. A profitable war economy has always needed people willing to go to war. Scheidler's book is a passionate plea for recognising alternatives, which are always possible. Using the four striking examples mentioned above, he provides a compelling and concrete description of 'the era of collapses'. In all crises, the public has always been offered simplistic narratives that schematically divide the world into good and evil actors. According to Scheidler, however, it is important to recognise that the era of Western dominance with its model of 'hegemonic expansionist ambitions' is coming to an end. The global economy it controls has now taken on a 'cannibalistic character', as the American political scientist Nancy Fraser puts it. The Gaza Strip, bombed

to resemble a lunar landscape, symbolizes this in extreme form.

By creating enemy stereotypes and scapegoats, as well as fear, it is possible to repeatedly and effectively distract from the real challenges of our time: preserving the foundations of life on our planet through a socio-ecological economy, curbing the worsening climate catastrophe and creating more stable zones of peace on the continents and between countries – for the benefit of all people. Scheidler cites as a prerequisite for this the ability to 'see the world through the eyes of others' and that 'peace on earth and peace with the earth' are inextricably linked.

Scheidler rightly states that 'peace movements have historically been particularly successful when they have joined forces with other movements.' As a current example, he cites the remarkable solidarity of workers with the suffering population in the Gaza Strip: in many EU countries, port and airport workers have gone on strike against loading ships and planes that were to transport weapons to Israel. The potential of the peace movement through cooperation with people who are committed to ecology and climate justice has yet to be realised.

Reading this book is highly recommended because, using four exemplary analyses, Scheidler demonstrates in an incorruptible analysis of the times that alternative solutions have always existed. The current conflict in Ukraine in particular can be read as a chronicle of missed opportunities. Being capable of peace means consciously and politically choosing to pursue the path of creating common security. In 1990, it would definitely have been easier to break out of the self-destructive logic of war and involve all countries in a culture of cooperation through a process of negotiation. It is necessary to finally break out of this spiral of economic decline, increasing global militarisation and growing violence.

Christoph Steinbrink



Truly, I live in dark times!

*An innocent word is foolish. A smooth forehead
Indicates insensitivity. The laughing person
Has simply not yet received
The terrible news.*

*What kind of times are these, when
A conversation about trees is almost a crime
Because it implies silence about so many misdeeds!*

From 'To Those Born After' by Bert 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. We are involved in the International Munich Peace Conference and cooperate with the political network 'Rethinking African Security', the peace programmes of APTE, and others. We support the 'Rethinking Security' campaign and call for a demonstration entitled 'Let's stop the arms race' on the occasion of the Munich Security Conference 2026

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!

Events parallel to the Security Conference

International Munich Peace Conference

www.friedenskonferenz.info

Friday, 13.02.2026, 19:00—22:00 Uhr

Worldwide resistance against war

Salesianum, St.Wolfgangs-Platz 11, München

Saturday, 14.02.2026 10:00 -12:00 Uhr

Workshops (e.g. arms export), theater

Salesianum, St.Wolfgangs-Platz 11, München

Saturday, 14.02.2026, 19:00 -21:00 Uhr

Sanctions and boycotts as tools of politics and civil society

Salesianum, St.Wolfgangs-Platz 11, München

Saturday, 14.02.2026, 13:00 Uhr, Stachus-Karlsplatz

Anti-Siko alliance, protest against the Munich

Security Conference www.antisiko.de

Sunday, 15.2.26, 11:00 bis 13:00 Uhr

Book reading, Fabian Scheidler,

'Friedenstüchtig' (Capable of Peace)

Salesianum, St.Wolfgangs-Platz 11, München

Sunday, 15.2.26, 16:00 Uhr bis 17:30 Uhr

Our observers at MSC report

Hansa Haus, Brienner Str. 39, München

Sunday, 15.2.26, 18:30 Uhr

Prayer for peace of religion

Hansa Haus, Brienner Str. 39, München

Praying for peace during the Munich Security Conference, 14.2.26, 11-18 Uhr Bürgersaalkirche

16 Uhr there Peace Prayer Pax Christi/MSKv

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Vorstand: Dr. Thomas Mohr, Matthias Linnemann, Katharina Rottmayr-Czerny

The articles express the personal opinion of the author.

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