

**ONLINE-PUBLIKATION**

Jan van Aken

# **Left perspectives on civil crisis prevention**

**Between critique and concrete  
intervention**

**ROSA  
LUXEMBURG  
STIFTUNG**

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#### IMPRINT

ONLINE-Publikation 9/2018

is published by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

Responsible: Henning Heine

Franz-Mehring-Platz 1 · 10243 Berlin, Germany · [www.rosalux.de](http://www.rosalux.de)

ISSN 2567-1235 · Editorial deadline: November 2018

Editing: Mario Candeias

Translation /Proofreading: Nivene Raafat for *lingua•trans•fair*/Loren Balhorn

Layout/Production: MediaService GmbH Druck und Kommunikation

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JAN VAN AKEN

# **LEFT PERSPECTIVES ON CIVIL CRISIS PREVENTION BETWEEN CRITIQUE AND CONCRETE INTERVENTION**

As members of DIE LINKE, we are often asked what our alternative is to military deployments on foreign soil. The favoured response follows the lines of civil conflict management and crisis prevention. Although this is undoubtedly the right approach, as a succinct response, its flaw lies in its over-simplicity. This is because civil conflict management is not a left-wing concept *per se*: in some cases, it is wholly apolitical (and yet still the right course of action). We, as members of the party, must develop a more concrete idea of what form left-wing civil conflict management might take. This paper is based on our experiences in the left parliamentary group, where we have repeatedly seen our theoretical and practical knowledge concerning the possibilities and difficulties of civil crisis prevention stretched to the limits by the challenges inherent to real-life political decision-making processes. Our hope is that left-wing practitioners of conflict management and crisis prevention, as well as left-wing theoreticians, will take up and further develop the issues explored within this paper.

## **BETWEEN A CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM AND CONCRETE INTERVENTION**

When discussing a left-wing approach to civil crisis prevention, the key questions concern how the solution is conceived. Is it short- or long-term; theoretical or concrete? Is it an urgent measure to save lives or does it aim to revolutionise the world? These approaches need not be contradictory; in fact, in a best-case scenario, they can provide a field for debate in which long-term objectives can inspire specific, concrete steps.

In the research, the concept of “civil crisis prevention” generally describes specific interventions in a threatening situation. The aim is to prevent acute violence or defuse the situation and bring about peaceful conflict resolution. In this respect, the majority of “civil crisis prevention” approaches do not tackle the root causes of the conflict in question but rather initially focus on “civilizing” (i.e., making non-violent) its consequences. This should not be read as a criticism: any steps that successfully prevent violence, suffering and loss of life are undoubtedly worthwhile. However, when viewed in this light, civil crisis prevention is not a left-wing concept – but that does not mean that it does not have the potential to become one.

Our thoughts on this issue are fundamentally driven by the words of French socialist Jean Jaurès: “Capitalism carries war within it, just like clouds carry the rain.” As long as human beings and the environment are exploited, and as long as private wealth continues to be accumulated, violent conflicts over spheres of influence, resources and wealth will persist. It is therefore also the case that, given the current environment, any concrete intervention in a violent conflict will always come up short if it does not take into consideration the existing structures of power and exploitation. If left-wing peace policy wishes to be more than just a slightly more robust rejection of political interests pursued through the use of military force, then crisis prevention must entail the challenge of advocating for global justice.

However, it would be a fatal error to allow this understanding to lead to paralysis and the dismissal of every practical initiative for peaceful conflict resolution as short-sighted and futile. In the real world, with its very real conflicts and fatalities, it is vital (and correct) that we pursue real politics with tangible, short-term impacts. Simply insisting on a basic truth – no matter how valid – all too often merely leads to incapacity to act and does little to advance real positive change either in the short or long term.

When we speak of “real politics” here, we do not mean *Realpolitik* as the term is used in the classic, parliamentary sense or as it is used in Germany or by the Green movement: we are not concerned with the question of how DIE LINKE will act as part of a future ruling coalition and which compromises it should (or should not) be willing to accept. Here, “real politics” means radical, left-wing policy and stances commensurate with the current global climate, i.e. in reaction to actual events, whether it is the civil war in South Sudan, conflict over Iran’s nuclear programme, or one of the many other escalating conflicts.

As members of DIE LINKE, we cannot only demand civil alternatives – we must show where they should be used (preventatively, reactively or actively), explain their aim (to prevent or end violence, or to tackle the root cause of conflict) and who the actors are (the state, “civil society”, movements, parties, etc.), and outline how these approaches can also be part of a political strategy for a long-term resolution.

## Case study: Iran

The conflict between political convictions and actually putting peaceful solutions into practice is universal. In the ongoing dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, one area of concern where this conflict becomes apparent is civilian-use nuclear energy. As members of DIE LINKE, we reject this use for two reasons: firstly, because of the inherent environmental risks, and, secondly, because any "civilian" nuclear programme – be it in Germany, Israel or Iran – always enables the technical understanding necessary to build a nuclear weapon. The only way to put a complete stop to nuclear proliferation is to close all of the world's nuclear power stations.

In the conflict surrounding its nuclear programme, Iran repeatedly made reference to its inalienable right to use nuclear energy peacefully. As much as we may disagree with this statement, Iran does, unfortunately, have a valid argument under international law. Moreover, the nuclear weapons treaty with Iran was only possible because the West was willing to acknowledge this right.

The deal made with Iran was the right step, and it was needed to prevent the conflict from taking on violent proportions. However, the agreement also includes acceptance of the expansion of the country's civilian nuclear energy programme and is thus not in line with our political convictions.

In terms of our stance regarding this conflict as representatives of DIE LINKE in parliament, we held discussions with the German government to initiate a partnership with Iran which would oversee the country's gradual transition to renewable energy, for example by supporting the construction of solar energy plants. Unfortunately, these efforts have so far failed to bear fruit, but this approach must remain our key objective in resolving this conflict if we are to stay true to our maxim of allowing our fundamental objectives to guide our practical political approach.

## The use of escalation in civil conflict resolution

Civil crisis prevention does not aim to prevent conflict, as the latter is a constant all over the globe. Conflict is not the problem *per se*, but rather an important driver of human development. Conflicts only become an issue when they cannot be resolved cooperatively and constructively or, in the most extreme cases, end up triggering violence. Crisis prevention is thus often used synonymously with the term "de-escalation".

On the other hand, conflict also offers a space where we can discuss the very fundamental question of how we want our societies and democracies to work. Conflicts concerning power, resources, spheres of influence, and ultimately the overall political system are battles lines along which the political Left must orient itself. Although these ideological battles can be put on hold, this cannot be our aim: only when these discussions are allowed to unfold can we achieve the actual goal of removing the root cause of the conflict. That is why, from a left-wing perspective, this space for debate also requires escalation – the intensification of existing conflicts – in order to bring about an end to injustice and oppression. However, we should aim not for violent escalation but for a political intensification that – most crucially – takes place at the source of the conflict.

Mali is a case in point: yes, it is right and essential for the survival of many living in Mali that the violent conflict in the country be de-escalated. But one of the factors driving the escalation of the conflict in the West African nation is rich countries from the Global North and their interest in Mali's natural resources (in this instance, France's focus on the region's uranium deposits). The fact of the matter is that here in Europe we are not all in the same boat and we do not all have the same interest in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Mali; here in Europe, the Left must take up the baton and escalate the conflict with the atomic energy corporations and ultimately break their powerful stranglehold.

De-escalating conflicts locally, escalating them at the source: this might be one way to concurrently practice radical real politics and a fundamental critique of capitalism.

## GENERAL FRAMEWORK

### Defining "security" as "human security"

"Sated and secure" – during or post-crisis, people's basic needs are often reduced to these two requirements. Of course, it is true that human beings require adequate nourishment and security in order to (be able to) help collectively rebuild their society. However, the issue here is that "security" is often used in reference to the security of the state and its institutions. Creating security by bolstering police numbers, supplying arms or conducting military missions can only be justified if one has a very narrow understanding of "security" and thus pursues a policy that is, in our view, doomed to fail.

We therefore argue in favour of the term "human security". This is not a left-wing phrase *per se*, but it is increasingly being deployed, even in international contexts. For example, the UN General Assembly defines "human security" in resolution 66/290 (2012) as "[the] right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from

*poverty and despair. [...] Human security [...] equally considers civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights*". "Human security" thus also means protection from exploitation or state violence and can therefore be diametrically opposed to the more commonly used term.

### **Understanding the term "civil"**

In the discussion on civil crisis prevention, the term "civil" has a wide variety of interpretations. In its simplest form, "civil" is essentially understood as anything not connected to the military. Accordingly, this means the German government also understands police operations and training missions for police officers as fundamentally civil measures.

This is problematic, as in many societies police forces are often the source of human insecurity or, in extreme cases, practically interchangeable with the military. This is especially the case in post-war societies where former militia are simply given police uniforms (as part of a "demobilisation" process) but continue to wield the same power and behave in the same oppressive manner as before. In South Sudan, we witnessed this phenomenon with our own eyes. Another example is Afghanistan, where over several years the police (who were trained and equipped by the West) used quasi-military tactics in their battle against the Taliban. Even in less extreme situations, there are many parts of the world where we think the work of the police should not fall under the category of "civil" crisis prevention, for example when paramilitary forces similar to the Guardia Civil or the gendarmerie are involved.

On the other hand, we do not think that all police measures are inherently bad or that they fundamentally contradict the principle of civil crisis prevention. It is somewhat short-sighted to think, for example, that police operations in Germany should always be associated with abuses such as those that took place during the G20 protests in Hamburg. Even in a system of democratic socialism (whatever form it may take and whenever it may occur), the police will serve a necessary function in contributing to human security. It would thus be wrong to define "civil" as anything that is non-governmental. For this reason, the "civil" in civil crisis prevention is defined as non-violent: police would subsequently be excluded from this definition if they formed part of an oppressive apparatus or were involved in civil war.

Some actors involved in the debate on international policy use the term "civil crisis prevention" to refer solely to civil society. We feel this is also problematic, as this term can be used both too narrowly and too broadly. In this context, the term "civil society organisation" was initially coined by progressive forces to differentiate such entities from "non-governmental organisations" as industry associations increasingly began to define themselves as NGOs, which is technically permissible. The UN still refers to civil society as the "third sector" after government and business.

While this can initially be considered progressive, excluding the business sector is not always the right course of action from the perspective of civil crisis prevention. In Tunisia, for example, the National Dialogue Quartet, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015, played a vital role in reshaping the nation in the wake of the Arab Spring. Two of the organisations that make up the Quartet are the Tunisian General Labour Union and the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts.

On the other hand, there are organisations that are civil in name but which essentially operate as an extension of the government, for example as an organisation affiliated with a party in power. For this reason, we believe that civil crisis prevention should not be defined by whether an entity is or is not state-run; the only criteria should be non-violence.

### **Actors in civil crisis prevention**

When it comes to the question of who should be involved in the process of conflict resolution, it is crucial to broaden our outlook and reach out in different directions. In situations of conflict that have already turned violent, it is often an initial reflex to reach out to groups who are involved in the acts of violence in question. In short: if you are armed, you are invited to negotiations. Not only is such a move short-sighted, it is also extremely risky. It is inadequate because a lasting solution can only be found if all affected parties participate in resolving the issue, and some of those impacted by conflict are individuals not involved in armed conflict. It is also dangerous as it favours a culture of violence: if you want to ultimately have a say in the final outcome, you need to take up arms now in order to have a seat at the negotiating table.

But above all else, we must also turn our attention to the source of the conflict and not just focus on the scene where the violence plays out. As previously mentioned, a left-wing approach to civil crisis prevention must also aim to resolve the cause of the conflict: all too often, we have no need to venture to Mali or Afghanistan to find it – the answer lies close to home. If we wish to tackle child and slave labour in West Africa's cocoa plantations, the cause of violent confrontations in the region, we also need to take a critical look at corporations like Milka and Mars.

## **Internal and external civil conflict management**

We generally view civil conflict management as external intervention. In fact, in the majority of cases it is not international but local actors who perform the lion's share of the work. And that is how it should be: so many of the world's conflicts are caused by local issues and are thus best solved locally. However, for this to be accomplished, detailed knowledge of the local situation is needed – something international actors often lack. However, there is one major issue: the fact that the majority of the theoretical and practical expertise in civil conflict management is located in the major cities of the Global North, meaning that many such projects are launched, led and executed externally. That is why there is an urgent need to ensure the necessary capabilities and resources are sufficiently available in conflict-torn regions. To achieve this aim, DIE LINKE's parliamentary group in the German Bundestag proposed setting up specialised universities to train peacekeeping personnel in Africa and Asia so that every year thousands could be prepared for deployment in their regions (and not necessarily just in their own countries). The cost of this initiative would surely only amount to a fraction of the astronomical sums currently being spent on the deployment of foreign personnel.

On the other hand, there are also many local scenarios where external actors can play an important role. A civil peace organisation in South Sudan offers one example. In the nation's ongoing civil war, many women remain at risk of rape by militia when they leave their villages to collect wood. These women have no other option: wood is vital to feed themselves and their families. One surprising solution to the problem was sending foreign (white) women to accompany the local women when they went to collect wood. Their mere presence suggested the international community was monitoring the situation and was enough to deter the militia from carrying out attacks.

Of course, international actors play an important role in tackling issues on a much larger scale, such as brokering regional or national ceasefires and peace agreements as local or domestic stakeholders are either not neutral in these negotiations or cannot be perceived as such.

### **Do no harm!**

The first principle of civil crisis prevention is "do no harm", which encompasses both the immediate and long-term outcomes. Every intervention carried out within the scope of civil crisis prevention must focus firmly on the lasting consequences of action taken today. This may sound obvious and logical, but when faced with acute problems, it can quickly lead to conflicting objectives and painful decisions, for example when short-term conflict resolution can be reached only by employing measures that are likely to exacerbate violence further down the line.

We already gave an example of this above: in a violent conflict, it seems obvious that in order to achieve a ceasefire, only the warring parties need to be brought to the negotiating table. However, this logic only serves to reproduce the culture of violence, as all those who wish to have a say in how the post-war society will be structured subsequently must take up arms in order to have their voices heard.

## **THERE IS NO "ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL" APPROACH**

Of course, the obvious questions that arise are: What does all this mean in practice? What should we do in a given conflict situation? What should DIE LINKE advocate?

These are questions that can only be answered concretely; there is no silver bullet or one-size-fits-all approach to civil crisis prevention that can be used to tackle every type of conflict. We firmly believe that in every conflict there is the potential to halt the cycle of violence using civil means. But knowing exactly which approaches should be used requires a thorough analysis of the respective situation and specifically tailored measures if any action is to be successful.

### **Case study: South Sudan**

Shortly before the new state of South Sudan was founded, a delegation of DIE LINKE's parliamentary group visited the country at the end of 2010 to gain an idea of what the situation was like on the ground. We very quickly realised that the greatest potential for violence lay not in the old North-South divide (as was feared internationally) but in tensions within the nascent country itself. Even at that time, it was clear that violent conflicts had the potential to escalate into a full-blown civil war. This was partly driven by the population's long-term exposure to violence during several decades of civil war, which had resulted in a very low threshold for the use of violence across the entire social spectrum – in a society where almost every household owned a firearm. This was compounded by numerous long-standing disputes that had always had tremendous potential for conflict. Almost all conflicts in the Sudanese region are localised and their causes manifold: poverty, limited

access to resources, conflicts between sedentary farmers and nomads with livestock, as well as patronage and ethnic tensions.

In this situation, a sensible strategy would have been to defuse local conflicts at an early stage with the help of a large number of mediators recruited from across the social spectrum. We met with several NGOs working in the field of peace mediation in South Sudan and heard many examples of how bitter conflicts, for example over grazing land and water, were resolved cooperatively using civil crisis prevention approaches – completely free of violence or the involvement of the military.

Carrying out civil, peaceful conflict management in a society pervaded by violence every day and at every level is tough. Quick results cannot be expected: transforming a militarised society is a long-term endeavour. Still, there are a number of Sudanese and international organisations working to establish peaceful forms of conflict prevention and management as an alternative to violence. They work under extremely challenging conditions. One member of the Civil Peace Service spent five years in a small village in the Nuba Mountains, living without electricity or communication with the outside world, fostering trust with the local community over several years – a crucial step to any project. Gradually, through discussions with traditional leaders and the various ethnic groups, he was able to develop peaceful conflict resolution concepts and resolve conflicts before they escalated further.

Long-standing conflicts exist in many communities. They may be between or within ethnic groups, over land, livestock and vital resources such as water, or over power and influence in the community. War has often destroyed traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (for example agreements between village elders or negotiations over collective land use). This is where many of these organisations step in. They attempt to revive and develop existing (or previous) peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms and support their implementation within the body politic. Two examples are detailed below:

- The Brussels-based Non Violent Peace Force organisation has many years of experience in peacekeeping. A Sudanese organisation turned to the Non Violent Peace Force when disagreements between livestock farmers and the local population in the underdeveloped region of Western Equatoria escalated from a seasonal dispute to a far more violent conflict. They analysed the situation on the ground and established that violence in the existing conflict between the Mundri (sedentary farmers) and the Mundari (nomadic livestock owners) had taken on a new dimension. Within two months, representatives of the Mundri and the Mundari were brought to the negotiating table and, after a lengthy discussion, reached an agreement. They jointly stood before their communities and made the case for peaceful coexistence. The mediation was carried out by African specialists trained by the Non Violent Peace Force.
- The organisation Reconcile was called upon to provide assistance by the women of a village that had suffered an unusually brutal attack resulting in the deaths of 93 women and children. For decades, two neighbouring villages had been plagued by hostilities that would occasionally erupt into violent attacks, livestock theft or kidnappings of women and children. With the help of Reconcile, the women of both villages were successfully brought together and peace was ultimately brokered in a process that lasted over a year.

These two examples illustrate a key point: civil crisis prevention in rural areas of South Sudan requires a localised approach – and this will require hundreds, if not thousands, of specially trained personnel. At the time of our visit, there were merely five trained peacekeeping specialists deployed by the German government in Sudan, and due to cost constraints, they were removed from the country at precisely the moment when they were needed most. For situations such as those in South Sudan, there is a clear need for the mediation universities we proposed, at least to ensure the necessary specialists can be trained.

### **Case study: Kurdistan – arming the Peshmerga?**

A very different situation requiring an entirely different approach to civil intervention arose in Iraq and Syria in 2014. At the time, the German government had decided to arm the Kurdish Peshmerga in northern Iraq and to offer them training provided by the German Army, allegedly to aid them in their fight against so-called Islamic State (Daesh).

At that point in the war, Daesh was also attacking Kobane, one of the three cantons of Rojava in northern Syria where Kurdish forces had established a form of council democracy in 2013. At the time, we supported Rojava, and this subsequently led to a very controversial debate, including within DIE LINKE, about whether it made sense to supply arms to progressive forces in northern Syria. But this debate was also framed by a one-sided military perspective. Even if we supported the Kurdish people's right to take up arms to protect themselves from the despicable forces of Daesh, we still needed to consider what might have been the best course of action for the German government to support the Kurds in their struggle given the acute situation they faced in September 2014. In response, we identified two key measures, primarily because they not only would have had an impact in the long term but would have rapidly brought about a shift in the regional balance of power:



- Putting international pressure on Turkey's ruling AKP government, who at the time had fully opened the border between Turkey and Daesh-controlled territories in northern Syria. Night after night, armed foreigners determined to join Daesh's ranks were able to cross the Turkish border into the war zone. The question thus arising was how we, as members of the German government, could shift the balance of power: by arming the Peshmerga or by preventing arms and fighters from reaching Daesh? The latter may have led to a conflict with the Erdogan regime, which the German government was clearly keen to avoid. Supplying arms to the Peshmerga was thus a (poor) substitute for a far more sensible and effective political strategy.
- The same can be said of the flow of funds that went to support Daesh. In 2014 Islamist groups in Syria were still receiving millions in donations from the Arab states. During discussion with government representatives in Qatar, we came to realise that the German embassy in the country had taken no steps whatsoever to prevent assets being moved from Islamic foundations in the Gulf States to Syria. The German embassy did not even know who was responsible for such matters in the country. When asked why Germany had taken no action in Qatar despite specific UN resolutions preventing the financing of Daesh, CDU politicians tersely responded that their hands were tied because the country held a significant number of shares in Volkswagen: they had to tread carefully. Here too we see the same trend emerging: even though a more rational civil intervention strategy was available, the military strategy ultimately prevailed as the political cost of civil measures was too high.

The example of supplying arms to the Peshmerga perfectly illustrates the extent to which current German foreign policy is influenced by a pro-military agenda. When it comes to foreign policy issues, the first question is how the problem can be resolved militarily. This calls to mind an ancient saying from the Far East: "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Our approach to international policy must fully distance itself from this military logic; we must take a broader view to assessing crisis situations, such as the one in Kobane, and then carefully consider all possible options before taking action.

### **Change through rapprochement**

Sometimes, there are no short- or medium-term measures to defuse a conflict or prevent the torture and death of individuals in acute situations. In a country like Saudi Arabia, for example, the only way to effect change is by supporting the country's domestic progressive forces in their fight, promoting democracy and human rights, and aiming to shift the balance of power within the country through a lasting process of change. The term "change through rapprochement" is very appropriate here even though it has both positive and negative connotations (it also calls to mind the pursuit of capitalist interests during the Cold War). But the principle undoubtedly conveys the right approach: thinking in the long term and adopting a strategy that involves effectively championing positive values in an undemocratic society with the aim of bringing about lasting change.

Sometimes we are not in favour of such approaches because the slow pace of change means allowing many individuals to suffer, or because standing back means the "bad guys" win in the short term, as in Syria. When the country's political conflict escalated into an all-out civil war, even we were hopeful that the upheaval would bring about the end of the Assad regime. But continuing to draw out the conflict by pumping arms and funds into the region in the hope of ousting Assad was a catastrophic failure on the part of the West, the Arab countries and Turkey. The recent history of Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now Syria has shown us that a new, improved society cannot be brought about by violent intervention from foreign parties. Such actions usually have the opposite effect: the people in the country soon become victims of a proxy war with disastrous consequences. Of course, in the case of Syria, the alternative would have meant Assad quickly snuffing out the opposition in his own country, which would have entailed grim consequences for anyone opposed to the regime. For us, this outcome would have been morally indefensible. But when a country's reformers are not strong enough to upend the balance of power, then sadly this must be accepted as the reality of the situation, the result of which involves the loss of human life. While this is tragic, we must also remember that a violent intervention in Syria would cost even more lives.

As you read this, right now people are dying in Saudi torture cells – a truly appalling fact. But while it is true that every peaceful external intervention moves at an unavoidably slow pace and is unable to save these people's lives, the alternative is violent interference from outside and, as we have seen in Syria, Libya, Iraq and many other countries, such a path leads to ruin.

## GERMANY AS A FORCE FOR PEACE – TIME FOR INTERVENTION!

DIE LINKE must integrate all considerations on civil crisis prevention into a larger overall framework; the prevention or resolution of acute crises is merely a small part of a broader policy for achieving peace – not a replacement for it.

One thing is clear: yes, we want to see Germany intervene in crises abroad. Peace policy cannot mean retreating within our borders; it cannot simply be about refusing to supply arms to certain parties or to deploy German troops. Deciding not to take part in military intervention is not tantamount to refusing help to those who are desperately in need. On the contrary: we endeavour and will continue to take action wherever people are threatened by poverty, injustice or violence. But we will not allow ourselves to be led into falsehoods; we will not be duped into believing that our only two options are military intervention or inaction.

Here our approach is fundamentally driven by non-violence in international affairs, and our first demand is thus to stop all forms of exported violence. This not only means no more arms exports or military missions, but also an end to international trade deals that subject people to violence.

Within the prevailing political climate, we often hear the argument that such an approach would mean Germany's complete isolation on the international stage. This is nonsense. We need only look to Japan for proof: until relatively recently, the Asian nation had zero weapons exports and sent none of its troops on foreign deployments. In fact, the country had a moratorium on arms exports for more than forty years – and this was during a period in which Japan was considered one of the world's most successful economies. Power, it would seem, no longer only grows out of the barrel of a gun. On the contrary: one of the reasons for the extraordinarily positive image that Germany still enjoys around the globe is surely the military restraint shown by the European nation up to the 1990s, and its foreign policy approach, which was seen to be less violent, less interest-driven and less colonial.

A left-wing peace policy thus means permanently establishing Germany purely as a force for peace, i.e. a complete ban on exported violence but also civil intervention in escalating conflicts and crises. This would include long-term measures, such as training peacekeeping personnel around the globe.

### KEY POINTS

- A left-wing approach to civil crisis prevention is always a fight for a more just world – a policy approach focused on prosperity and overcoming injustice and oppression.
- Short-term *Realpolitik* and the struggle for a more just world need not contradict each other. The success of real, concrete steps towards the resolution of a conflict should be measured by whether or not they make a lasting contribution to resolving the source of the conflict.
- Civil crisis prevention not only means de-escalation where violence is taking place; it can also mean peaceful escalation of a conflict at its source.
- Our starting point is the term “human security” and our frame of reference comprises the needs and demands of the population in the affected country. When there are two warring factions or superpowers, we must side with neither. Instead, we must always fight to end people's suffering and defend the interests of those powers that are pushing for a peaceful and emancipative process.
- The “civil” aspect of crisis prevention relates to peaceful action, not just elements and organisations that are non-governmental or non-military.
- Every conflict has different possible resolutions; however, the majority are unique to the case in question. But as civil conflict management is often far more effective when carried out internally rather than externally, one of our demands – firmly in line with a strategy of pursuing realistic policies – is for the German government to finance training for 1,000 international peacekeeping personnel and support their deployment worldwide.