

Fabian Scheidler:

Welfare or Warfare?

Why the West Has to Choose between Reason and Self-Destruction

For years, the Western world has been moving towards a permanent state of emergency. With every crisis and every conflict a new round of frenetic militarization is ushered in. In his new book, Fabian Scheidler, author of the international bestseller “The End of the Megamachine”, warns that this path leads to a spiral of economic decline, political chaos and escalating wars. Fundamental democratic and social achievements are threatened to be sacrificed to a military logic that is presented as having no alternative.

Scheidler interprets the state of emergency as an attempt to control an increasingly chaotic world by authoritarian means. At the same time, the enemies deemed to be existential threats to the West are to a large extent created by Western politics itself. Unilateralism, expansionism and the refusal of diplomacy incite conflict and war, just as anti-terror wars produce more terrorists. The spiral of war ultimately becomes a tool of destroying the welfare state in favor of the military-industrial complex.

However, the descent into the self-destructive logic of war can still be averted. In the face of major geopolitical shifts, an accelerating destruction of the biosphere and social upheaval, the book points to new ways of dealing with the challenges of our century. To survive, Western societies must learn to come to terms with the end of their hegemony, abandon their centuries-old policy of dominance and develop a new culture of cooperation.

The German edition “Friedenstüchtig. Wie wir aufhören können, unsere Feinde selbst zu schaffen” is published by Promedia, Vienna, in October 2025.

About the author

Fabian Scheidler writes on international affairs for *Le Monde diplomatique*, *Berliner Zeitung* and many other media. His book “The End of the Megamachine: A Brief History of a Failing Civilization” has been translated into numerous languages (www.megamachine.org). Other books include (in German language): “Chaos: The New Age of Revolutions” (2017), “The Struggle for Global Justice” (2019) and “The Stuff We Are Made of. Rethinking Nature and Society” (2021). In 2009, he received the renowned Otto Brenner Media Prize for critical journalism. He also works as an author for theatre and opera. www.fabianscheidler.com

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