

Global Peace Enforcement: Assessing the Requirements

Members of the British Pugwash Group have asked that the following report, together with the attached commentary by Joseph Rotblat, should be made publicly available. The report originally appeared as a submitted paper for the 50th Annual Pugwash Conference: “Eliminating the Causes of War”. The views expressed in the report and commentary are those of the authors, and not necessarily of British Pugwash.

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Background and Acknowledgements

This Report arose out of a detailed resolution, entitled “International Security”, which two of the authors proposed to the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the British Pugwash Group. It was referred to the Executive Committee, which invited the authors to develop the resolution into a Report, to be submitted to an international Pugwash workshop or conference, for consideration and possible action.

The Report takes into account the discussion at the above Annual General Meeting, as well as comments received from individual Pugwash members. We thank all those who contributed. The experience of one of us (N.A.L.) with U.N. Peacekeeping Forces has proved invaluable in improving the document; so did comments received from Dr. David Horrocks (of the British Ministry of Defence’s NATO and European Policy Group), although we do not accept some of his views.

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1. The Present Situation

Since the end of the Second World War, there have been about 300 armed conflicts, mostly in the developing world, leading to the death of well over twenty million people, with countless other casualties, upheavals and personal tragedies. There are no signs of these conflicts decreasing - many are taking place to-day, and new wars break out annually.

In spite of this disastrous situation, UN “Peacekeeping Forces” cannot even be brought into existence until after a war has broken out, and then only with the consent of the

Security Council and both warring countries. Thus international law can seldom be enforced, and chaos reigns.

A recent high-level review of UN security activities (1) would retain these restrictions. Its many recommendations would improve efficiency within these limitations. (See section 5 below.)

2. The Limitations of Disarmament

In theory, universal disarmament could go a long way to solving the problem, but this remains unrealistic. In any case, even if all modern weapons could be abolished, this would merely change the nature and duration of future wars.

Some forms of partial disarmament (or developing precision weapons that minimise collateral damage) can actually make matters worse: Any measures aimed at limiting the horrors of war make it more acceptable to resort to armed action, thus increasing the probability of war. (Paradox of selective disarmament.) Such measures must therefore be supplemented by schemes designed specifically to prevent war. (See sections 3 - 6 below.)

Evidently, the relationship between disarmament and international security is complex. (2) In the present climate (see section 1 above), international law can only be enforced by the armed forces of nations acting in their own interest. This makes armament races inevitable.

3. Enforcing the Rule of Law between Nations: An Earlier Attempt

Many people believe that the only way conflict can be contained is through a permanent international armed force, equipped and trained for its role of enforcing international law. The United Nations Charter, in fact, provides for permanent UN forces. All UN members would make stand-by forces and facilities available to the Security Council. (3) The Chiefs of Staff of its five permanent members would comprise a "Military Staff Committee", with powers of co-option and of establishing regional sub-committees. (4)

The first (and only) meeting of that Committee made further recommendations for implementing these Articles of the UN Charter, and so did the Pakenham and Palme reports. (5), (6) Unfortunately, the above Articles were never implemented, due initially to rivalry between the USA and USSR.

4. A Feasibility Study

There is then an urgent need to re-examine the problems of establishing permanent and effective international forces. However, in view of the dismal record of failures in this area, it is **essential** to prepare the ground very carefully.

Our first and principal recommendation then is to propose a major UN feasibility study, specifying five aims designed to lead to a comprehensive assessment of requirements.

(Section 8 below, Recommendation (1.) Such research can be facilitated by the use of up - to - date techniques of relevant social and management sciences.

(There are, in international forces, serious problems of language and communication: (likely to increase with the advent of digitised command-and-control communication systems). This requires a separate feasibility study.)

5. The Need for Interim Measures

We acknowledge that such a feasibility study will take time, and there are likely to be further delays before its findings could possibly be implemented. In the meantime, some of the numerous current armed conflicts will continue, new wars will break out, and many hundreds of thousands of men, women and children will be killed and injured. (See section 1 above.)

The Brahimi Report (1) does not provide for a standing purpose-trained UN force. It aims at making the present set-up work more efficiently, e.g. by introducing on-call planning team officers at seven day's notice, to augment the DPKO's mission start-up team. (7) Even as an interim measure, this is not likely to be enough. It fails to address the real problem of delays in assembling a coherent force and of deploying it with adequate logistic support and clearly specified rules of engagement.

6 Can NATO play an Interim Role?

Acting within the vacuum created by UN inaction, NATO appears to be evolving towards becoming a supra-national armed peacekeeping force. However, even in an interim role, American-dominated NATO is simply not sufficiently representative, nor is it regarded as impartial enough, to be able to enforce international law globally. Indeed, it recognises its limitations. (8), (9)

Our second major recommendation is then that, as an intermediate measure, NATO should be transformed into, or superseded by, a Treaty Organisation open to all democratic UN member states that are prepared to contribute money, forces or both. [Section 8 below, Recommendation (2.)] Some such Interim arrangement, however inadequate, would be infinitely preferable to the status quo.

Unfortunately, limiting participation to "democratic" nations will exclude many countries: but this is, in our view, an essential restriction, particularly as the new organisation will also be required to foster democracy. (See below). Perhaps some such body as the International Institute for Democracy (10) could be asked to suggest criteria for "democratic" which are sound, yet might be acceptable to those politicians who will have to decide.

7. Other requirements

We attach much importance to democracy, because we note that wars seldom, if ever, take place between genuinely democratic nations. In addition to its (temporary) security role, the democratic nations' Treaty Organisation, proposed in section 6 above, could take on the task of fostering democracy (in conjunction with relevant research

organisations). This is provided for by our Recommendation (3) [in Section 8 below]. There is also a separate paper on the problems of democracy. (11)

The failure to use a competent research approach, as an aid to political decision-making, is also relevant to war prevention and the problems of enforcing international law. This too is touched upon by a separate paper. (12)

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The United Nations Organisation should initiate a feasibility study for the creation of permanent international monitoring, peace-keeping and peace-making forces which should be designed to:

- (a) reduce states' dependence on their own armed forces for security;
- (b) be capable of enforcing the rule of international law at all levels;
- (c) base their military objectives on impartial interpretation of international law;
- (d) prevent any possible misuse and inspire universal confidence;
- (e) be securely funded.

(2) In the interregnum (i.e. until the UN has some such forces at its disposal):

- (a) NATO might be transformed into (or superseded by) a more representative Treaty Organisation, admitting all **democratic UN member states** willing to commit an agreed financial contribution and / or a coherent military force;
- (b) NATO's existing committee, command and force structure to be reviewed in the light of the requirements of the new organisation.

(3) The above new Treaty Organisation, together with the UN, should also:

- (a) monitor, advise and assist the process of change from authoritarian rule to democratic government;
- (b) promote research on the numerous problems of democracy (at all levels) and foster the application of research findings to improve democratic process.

Notes and References

- (1) Panel on U.N. Peace Operations (Chairman: L. Brahimi), Report, August 2000.
- (2) Benjamin, R., "Relationships between Disarmament and Peace". 2nd Conference of Professions for World Disarmament and Development (Study Group 5), London 1983.
- (3) United Nations Charter, Chapter VI, Article 43.
- (4) Ibid., Article 47.
- (5) A permanent United Nations Force. Proposals of a Commission (Chairman: Lord Pakenham). Federal Union, London, 1957.
- (6) Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (Chairman: O. Palme), 1982, Chapter 6, Section 4.
- (7) DPKO = Department of Peacekeeping Operations.
- (8) NATO founding treaty, 1949, Article 10.
- (9) "Strategic Concept", NATO Heads of State, Washington 1999. Paras. 15, 25, 31.
- (10) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Strömsborg, S - 103 34 Stockholm.
- (11) Benjamin. R. (to be published), "Updating Representative Democracy".
- (12) Ibid., "Preparing Scientists for their Social Role".

Comments on the paper by Benjamin *et al.*

Joseph Rotblat

I share with the authors of the paper the anxiety about the dangerous trends in world affairs, and the need to seek ways to avert the dangers. But I do not go along with their proposed solutions. In particular, I have strong objections to their Recommendation 2(a), to set up a new organization of democratic states.

I fear that this would result in a greater polarization of the world community, an enhanced potential for tension and strife, and increased likelihood of war. Furthermore, it would considerably, perhaps fatally, weaken the United Nations and the role for which it was set up, to safeguard peace in the world.

Setting up an organization of democratic states would immediately raise the question: who will qualify for membership? We are not dealing here with a straightforward division into democratic and non-democratic states. There is an almost continuous spectrum of regimes. In one analysis, nine groups are recognized in respect of their political regimes: Democracy; Restricted Democratic Practice; Constitutional Monarchy; Traditional Monarchy; Absolute Monarchy; Authoritarian; Totalitarian; Colonial Dependency; Protectorate. Even within the first group there are serious doubts about some countries being included (*e.g.* Zimbabwe).

Where will the line be drawn? And what is going to happen next?

I have indicated above what is likely to happen: increased emphasis on the points of division; denying certain rights to the excluded countries; threatening those countries if they do not comply; initiating military action against them.

This scenario is not a product of my imagination. It is being played out before our eyes at this very moment. It is the implementation of the current policy of the Bush administration.

Having declared that the regimes in some states (the axis of evil) are not acceptable, it next decided that they should not be allowed the possession of certain types of weapons and means of delivery, and then threatened them with military action, if need be without the approval of the United Nations. But what this policy has achieved so far is to create a deep division *within* the democratic world.

With regard to the United Nations, I agree that - as presently constituted - it has many shortcomings, but it is still the only organization to which we have entrusted keeping peace in the world. Churchill once said about democracy: it is "the worst form of government except for all... other forms." To some extent this applies to the United Nations. We must not do anything that would weaken it even further.