

The confusion between peacemaking and peacekeeping

An attempt to identify the various types of action by the United Nations in the field of peace and security has been made in the report published in July 1992 by the UN Secretary-General, entitled *An Agenda for Peace*.

The definitions of the concept of peacemaking and peacekeeping given in Chapter II of this document are the following:

- peacemaking is action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.
- peacekeeping is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well.

The other concepts proposed to classify the possible actions of the United Nations in this chapter of the Agenda are preventive diplomacy (« action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur ») and post conflict peace building (« action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. »)

Another notion is proposed in Chapter IV of the Agenda for Peace, i.e. peace enforcement, which means « restoring and maintaining cease-fire by force, » (the « peace enforcement units, » more heavily armed than peacekeeping forces, placed under the command of the Secretary-General « should not be confused with the forces that may eventually be constituted under Article 42 to deal with acts of aggression. «)

These definitions seem clear. In fact, the successive chapters of the Agenda show that, even theoretically, the distinction between these different forms of actions is blurred, and that there is confusion among them, particularly between peacemaking and peacekeeping and between preventive and corrective action. The practice followed by the Security Council has, equally, shown that permanent confusion existed.

I will try, first, to demonstrate the existence of this confusion, and second, to explain the reasons for it and draw some conclusions from this situation.

THE CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION

The conceptual confusion between peacemaking and peacekeeping in the Agenda for Peace seems to be due to the following reasons. First, the conception of peacemaking itself is not clear and not very convincing. It is very difficult to find a distinction between peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. Both refer to preventive action, either before or during existing conflicts, and to chapter VI of the Charter. It is very difficult to understand why the two notions have been singled out as different types of action. Both concepts imply the use of diplomatic skills only. This kind of intervention does not seem to have been efficient in the past when used on actors who had already decided to enter into a war. No indication is given of the methods through which the traditional impotence of these attempts could be overcome. Paragraph 34 of the Agenda says:

« If conflicts have gone unresolved, it is not because techniques for peaceful settlement were unknown or inadequate. The fault lies first in the lack of political will of parties to seek a solution to their differences through such means as are suggested in chapter VI of the Charter, and second to the lack of leverage at the disposal of a third party if this is the procedure chosen. »

This quotation shows:

- first, that the authors of the Agenda still believe in the possible efficiency of interventions on actors like those enumerated in chapter VI of the Charter, i.e. a total illusion....
- second, that, despite the mention of the notion of « leverage » there is no indication of the type of leverage that would be needed. The only one in this chapter concerns sanctions and use of military force, and amelioration through assistance to displaced persons, with the regret that resources are not available. There is also, in paragraph 40 of the Agenda, a reference to the « collective efforts of the United Nations system » that could « improve its contribution

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to the peaceful resolution of disputes » by reinforcing coordination in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (i.e. wishful thinking about the capacity of the agencies to help in this regard and about the possibility of better coordination).

Despite the fact that paragraph 15 of the Agenda says that the aims of the UN must be « to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression, » there is absolutely no indication of the possibility of acting on the situations which lead to conflict, for example through economic assistance. The reason for this fundamental lacuna could be that the Security Council has no economic leverage at its disposal. But in these conditions, it is difficult to understand why in the chapter on post conflict peace building the Utilisation of economic and social assistance for building peace is so precisely envisaged. For example, paragraph 56 says: « in the aftermath of international war, post conflict peace building may take the form of concrete cooperative projects which link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial undertaking that can not only contribute to economic and social development but also enhance the confidence that is so fundamental to peace, » and paragraph 57 says « only sustained cooperative work to deal with underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems can place an achieved peace on a durable foundation. » It remains to be explained why it seems possible to use economic assistance after the end of a conflict and not before, in order to avoid the conflict itself.

The conception of peacekeeping in the Agenda is even less clear than that of peacemaking. Its first definition is perfectly correct. Paragraph 50 of the Agenda enumerates the basic conditions for success and says that they « remain unchanged »: i.e. « a clear and practicable mandate; the cooperation of the parties in implementing that mandate; the continuing support of the Security Council; the readiness of member states to contribute the military police and civilian personnel, including specialists required; effective United Nations command at Headquarters and in the field; and adequate financial and logistic support. »

But if this conception, including in particular the « cooperation of the parties in implementing the mandate, » has been applied, it can be said without exaggeration that, with the exception of Namibia and El Salvador (and perhaps Cambodia), none of the so-called « second-generation peacekeeping operations » undertaken after 1988 would have been started. By insisting in paragraphs 50 to 54 on the « new array of demands and problems » that « has emerged regarding logistics, equipment, personnel and financing, » the Agenda shows that the new type of operations is directed more at peace building than at a strict peace keeping, and that, in fact, the operations would have to take place even if the « settlements negotiated by peacemakers » have not obtained the full and serious cooperation of the parties. It is this ambiguity that makes it difficult to find exactly where to situate the dividing line between peacekeeping and peacemaking. This is even clearly acknowledged in paragraph 45 of the Agenda, which states that « there may not be a dividing line between peacemaking and peacekeeping. Peacemaking is often a prelude to peacekeeping, just as the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field may expand possibilities for the prevention of conflict, facilitate the work of peacemaking and in any case serve as a prerequisite for peace building. »

This is a candid acknowledgement that the philosophy which has inspired the majority of the new operations has been that the display of military force (either traditional peacekeeping units or forces close to the notion of peace enforcement) was the main instrument for establishing and stabilizing peace in situations where the acceptance of the conditions for peace by the various parties was in fact non-existent. This military approach toward peacemaking, which the Agenda for Peace has helped to develop, has proven to be a mistake.

The practice of the Security Council has shown that this philosophy has also been adopted by its members and that this confusion has led to failures.

PRACTICAL CONFUSION

It would be very difficult to find numerous examples of peacemaking by the UN during its first four decades. Every Secretary-General has attempted to play a role and to make available his « good offices, » but the cases in which they have been used are very rare and their successes even rarer. This is not the

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place to recount the history of the UN, but it seems important to note that, in general and for the main problems, diplomatic activities aiming at the establishment of peace have been monopolized by politicians and diplomats of the great powers. To give only some examples, peacemaking in the conflict between Israel and the Arab states has been, at least since the 1960s, the domain of the US Secretaries of State or even of the Presidents (Rogers in 1970, Kissinger in 1974, Jimmy Carter in 1979, Baker in the 1980s, etc.), the role of the UN being limited to establishing the various peacekeeping forces around Israel. The more recent examples of this tendency to reserve peacemaking for the great powers and to call upon the UN only after a settlement has been reached are Cambodia (for which the Paris agreements were negotiated by four powers), Namibia (where the American negotiator obtained the departure of the Cuban troops and the cease-fire), Nicaragua, etc.

The most important role of the UN in peacemaking until the end of the 1980s was to carry out the preparatory work. It should be recalled that in the Iran-Iraq war, the good offices of Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar and the Olof Palme mission began very early, and that Security Council resolution 548 of 20th. July 1987, which was immediately accepted by Iraq, was finally used by Iran when it decided in 1988 to put an end to the war. In the same way, the negotiation of the Geneva agreements concerning Afghanistan lasted eight years, but Mikhail Gorbachev found them very useful when he decided to withdraw Soviet troops from the country. Finally, for Namibia, it was the Secretary-General's plan, ready years in advance, that was used to facilitate the accession to independence of this country, when the US-led negotiations succeeded. The UN work in all these cases offered some pretext for adopting a solution. It is not a useless role, but it is not the most glorious or the most important one.

However, the role attributed to the UN has become different since 1990. It is an absolutely new one, since this type of utilisation of the organisation was occasionally practiced before, but, it has become generalized.

The practice consists of referring to the UN problems which are considered insoluble or at least very difficult. Examples of this practice can be found in the case of the UK giving up its mandate on Palestine in 1947, in the case of Congo in 1960, and in Cyprus, at least since 1974. Since 1990, this kind of quasi-insoluble problem has developed in Western Sahara, Angola, Yugoslavia, Haiti, Somalia, Mozambique, etc. The UN interventions requested by the great powers are still called peacekeeping operations. But to be kept, peace should already exist, and in all the cases mentioned, this was and still is not the case.

The first practical confusion is due to the title given to these operations. In fact, they are not peacekeeping ones. They should be called « peacemaking undertakings through the use of the blue helmets. »

This could be easily shown by considering the interventions. I will limit my examples to Somalia and Yugoslavia, without entering into a detailed analysis.

In Somalia, the intervention was belated: the civil war was already going on in 1986-1987 and it developed into a full war in 1988-1990, followed by the secession of Somaliland in 1991. The Security Council was requested to react only in 1992.

Moreover, the first resolution, 733 of 23 January 1992, decided on an arms embargo which was too late to be effective, but was obviously intended to facilitate peacemaking. The other resolutions of 1992 on humanitarian activities, the sending of observers, the creation of UNOSOM, and the various actions undertaken in the following years cannot in any way be called peacekeeping operations, but rather clumsy attempts at peacemaking through the display of blue helmets, peace enforcement through American intervention, and humanitarian relief accompanied by numerous unsuccessful appeals to the parties to stop fighting.

For Yugoslavia, a similar analysis can be made. Peace has not existed there since 1990. All of the efforts made, here again far too late, and without any use of economic assistance, have, since the first resolution (713 of 25 September 1991), attempted « to restore peace and dialogue » through the sending of observers, the use of numerous blue helmets and the convening of various conferences and meetings. They have been accompanied by humanitarian operations. But the display of the blue helmets has not in any case been able to keep peace; no cease-fire has been respected. Again, it would be better to qualify the

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UN intervention since its origin as « a clumsy peacemaking operation using humanitarian activities, military display, and diplomatic negotiations. »

CONCLUSION

The existing confusion between peacekeeping and peacemaking leads to questions more far-reaching than the simple problem of definition. It is the very conception of these UN interventions that needs to be questioned, in the following ways:

1. Are the policies followed by the UN Security Council based on a thorough analysis of the underlying causes of intrastate conflicts? Has the UN an explanation for the multiplication of these conflicts?
2. Is it possible to establish peace in intrastate conflicts by using a military display, plus diplomatic negotiations, plus humanitarian activities ?
3. Would it be possible to try to influence the situations which lead to conflicts rather than trying to influence, without any leverage, the actors in the conflicts?
4. What kind of leverage could be used in this regard? Is it possible to mobilise enough economic and financial resources to modify the situations which lead to conflicts ?
5. How would it be possible to use these resources before conflicts arise ?
6. Is the present structure of the UN and are the powers of the Security Council sufficient to permit more efficient peacemaking interventions ?

These questions are very difficult to answer. It seems obvious that the methodology which is now applied to these situations of conflict is not the right one; that there is room for a thorough reflection on the causes of these intrastate conflicts; that it is time to give serious consideration to the necessity of developing preventive action (not only so-called preventive diplomacy); that, to give only one example, the question of doing something to stop the development of a civil war in Algeria should be carefully studied now and an answer given to it as soon as possible. But at the same time it is necessary to acknowledge:

- that this does not seem to be the main concern of the governments and of the public of the great powers;
- that it is easier to obtain resources for humanitarian relief or for military interventions after conflicts have arisen than for economic interventions of the « Marshall Plan » type to avoid conflicts;
- and, finally, that the UN is not equipped to deal with the use of economic resources, these types of interventions being in the domain of the International Monetary Fund, which is not in charge of security problems. A structural reform of the UN system would be necessary to correct this situation, and such a reform is not under consideration.

But the apparent impossibility of correctly solving these problems seems to me to render it indispensable to give thorough consideration to them.

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