P@X Online Bulletin Peace Studies Group

Center for Social Studies – School of Economics – University of Coimbra

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SUMMARY

Editorial

The present international agenda evidences an excessive focus on the issue of international terrorism. As always, the hyper-visibility of a specific issue may be seen as a hiding strategy of many other issues. This is precisely the case. And this is what this second number of P@x tackles.

Based on the use of force and on the doctrine of pre-emptive war, the strategy of war against terrorism proves to be counterproductive, for two main reasons.

The first one is that, insisting on identifying terrorism as a single phenomenon, this strategy leads to generalisation and vulgarisation. It is extremely perverse: all the groups and movements that carry out a radical critique of local political regimes tend to be included within this diffuse concept. Quite differently from the cold war world, in which the "freedom-fighter" and terrorist categories were scandalously close to each other, the post-September 11th world has no longer "freedom-fighters". It seems reduced to an opposition between governments (no matter how despotic and illegitimate they are) and terrorists.

The second mistake of the war against terrorism is its cultural violence dimmension. As Mabel González claims in this number, it is a serious mistake to say that all terrorisms are alike and to qualify all Islamic options as integrationists. By large, this war against terrorism is an instrument of violent affirmation of a project aimed at restoring a lost identity between the West and the universe. It is, thus, an instrument of cultural violence, as well as an extreme physical violence and legitimation of ways of structural violence.

Meanwhile, structural realities of the contemporary world remain hidden. The development aid mechanisms' incapacity to put an end to the multiplication of collapsed states - where the terrorism that is intended to eradicate germinates - is probably the most impressive. Alexandra Miguel analyses this remarkable impasse of the contemporary international system. By assuming itself as a set of adaptation models determined from the outside to the inside, development co-operation is, increasingly, part of the problem and not part of the solution. It belongs to a wider strategy, whose premise is that, after all, the reasons for collapse are mostly domestic, therefore releasing the international system from major responsibilities.

It is, thus, at the crossroads of war and collapse that peace today emerges as a challenge.

José Manuel Pureza

P@X Theory

THE FAILURE OF FOREIGN AID IN THE PREVENTION OF STATE COLLAPSE

It is already consensual among the several actors of the international system that conflict prevention is the best strategy to face an international environment characterized by the proliferation of internal conflicts with dramatic consequences at several levels. So, there is an acknowledgement that preventing conflicts is less expensive (in financial and humanitarian terms) than coping with its consequences (humanitarian crises, post-conflict reconstruction). It is also relatively consensual that this prevention, which is mainly based in tacking the causes of conflicts, has an extremely important tool with a great potential available – development co-operation.

Many of these internal conflicts break out in the so-called "failed states" where, in general terms, there is incapacity by the state apparatus to perform the basic governance tasks (which leads to the lost of its political legitimacy and authority), accompanied by on-going internal violence. This kind of states is nowadays considered one of the main threats to international security, due to the internal, regional and international consequences of the conflicts that they trigger and to the correlation of this kind of states with terrorist groups. Since September 11th 2001, together with the vertiginous rise of the relevance given to the terrorist phenomenon, the concept of failed states also acquired an unprecedented significance and a space in security strategic documents of actors such as the USA and the European Union as one of the main threats to international security.

The acknowledgment of the threat – real or fictional – posed by these states, the concept of prevention has began to expand: in order to prevent conflicts, it is necessary to prevent state failure, since most of the new wars derive from the failure and consequent collapse of states. Furthermore, with the link made between terrorism and failed states, it also became imperative to prevent states from failing, in order to contain terrorist groups' movements and operations.

It is also in the field of state failure prevention that development co-operation has emerged as an essential tool. Yet, notwithstanding its enormous potential and some progress in the development discourse, external assistance has not only failed in prevention, but has also contributed to the weakening of recipient states and subsequent failure.

Paradoxes are known: in many countries where external aid is substantial, there is decay in public services, an increase of poverty and inequality and mounting insecurity. In some cases, external aid was even a source of conflicts, like in Rwanda that, at the precise moment of the genocide, was one of the biggest aid recipients. How can it be explained that countries such as Congo, Liberia and Somalia, which were once among the biggest aid recipients, ended up collapsing? How can it be justified that external aid is not being able to stop the failure and collapse of states and that it has, in many cases, contributed to that failure that allegedly attempts to prevent?

The answer to these questions comprises a multiplicity of explanations, which take us to the overall functioning of the contemporary aid system itself, with several ambiguities and contradictions worth of a general critical appreciation. In spite of all its potentially positive effects in recipient countries, and of some success cases, it is undeniable that external aid – tied up to geopolitics, trade and the banking world – is allocated according to a combination of interests and motivations, where the strategic, trading and political considerations overlap humanitarian imperatives (in spite of being the main justification, only rarely is poverty the main criteria for aid allocation). The reality of the aid system is then often obscure and, in certain ways, concealed by the development agenda rhetoric.

The practice of external aid can provide (as it has had in many cases) worrying elements to the eruption or worsening of conflicts. For instance, aid can contribute to conflict if it legitimates and reinforces illegitimate power structures, perpetuating client networks; if it weakens the state, reinforcing apparel structures; if it helps to reproduce authoritarian structures; if it promotes dependency and weakens local capacities; if it reinforces economic and social inequalities; if it ignores

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issues of natural resources exploration (predatory economies); if it produces disorder on the local economy; and if it helps to perpetuate war economies (military rather than social investment).

Contrarily to the benign principles defended to the recipient countries in some *fora* – such as the need for aid appropriation, so that external aid can become sustainable and create local capacities –, the aid agencies' practice has revealed several resistances and has lead to great contradictions. Beneficiaries are overloaded with top-down development goals, as well as with conditionality and centralized management processes, which tends to have opposite effects to the self-sufficiency and local ownership considered necessary. Besides, the existing pressure on donor agencies for quick and visible results drives them to accelerate the natural rhythm of development processes and to be based on the injection of massive funds and standard transplanted technical approaches. The guidance and pressures to disburse funds according to determined deadlines also weaken local participation and self-sufficiency. On the other side, the concentration of decisions and choices in the aid agencies, and the subsequent imposition and reproduction of donor's ideas and preferences on recipients (considered incapable) leads to their weakening and "disempowerment", and subverts local ownership. Furthermore, aid's characteristic fragmentation, involving a multiplicity of activities, donors and goals, complicates local governance capacity. Dividing a country with projects and overlapping national authorities with aid implementation unities, aid turns out, very often, to give a significant contribution to the marginalisation, fragmentation and lack of legitimation of the recipients' national authorities.

Aid agencies have also revealed a certain incapacity to correctly handle the inherent complexity of the failed states phenomenon and of the new wars rooted in those countries, what has been reflected on a development model based on "good practices" (synthesised in basic manuals), which imply a predictable and mechanized understanding of aid impacts on recipient countries.

Lastly, it's worth mentioning that traditional aid models have, very often, a "disempowerment" effect on the recipient's local institutions and capacities. By considering underdevelopment, and state failure, as mainly internal phenomena (discharging the international system from its responsibilities), external intervention appears as the solution, namely in the form of development co-operation which, due to the current link made between underdevelopment and conflict (the second is a result of the first), began to assume conflict prevention and resolution tasks. However, this approach ignores the contribution of external factors to the creation of underdevelopment and state failure (thus, not addressing those factors). Furthermore, it is based on the belief that internal factors are the ones responsible for the failure of development programs and, in this sense, acts with the aim of controlling, adapting and restructuring these countries' societies, including their ways of live and organisation, beliefs, behaviours and habits (considered backwards and contrary to western modernity and, as such, preventable of development and economic growing).

So that a serious view of external aid in the prevention of state failure and collapse can start (given its undeniable potential) it is needed, above all, that this aid stops being one of the factors that contributes to that same failure and collapse. Only when aid stops weakening states and local capacities, will it be possible to idealize a system that maximizes its full potential and strengthen, instead of weakening, structures, institutions and capacities of states with great weaknesses, before they end up failing or collapsing.

Alexandra Lages Miguel
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P@X Peace Observatory

Places of war and peace

COLOMBIA

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SOUTH AFRICA

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Peace builders

COMMUNITY OF SANT'EGIDIO

Philippe Leymarie, "Les bâtisseurs de paix de Sant'Egidio", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, septembre 2000 (http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2000/09/LEYMARIE/14243)

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P@X Studies

The strategy of fight against terrorism has been based in the use of strength and in a restricted perspective of military security. "Global terrorism" related to Al Qaeda – described as a transnational network of planetary range – has been designated the main enemy of world peace. A new enemy that cannot be fought with traditional methods, therefore justifying the pre-emptive and unilateral war doctrine, the violation of International Law, the restructuration of the post-Second World War multilateral system and the cutback of rights and freedoms. This is an erroneous strategy that can strengthen terrorism.

The first mistake is to state that all terrorisms are alike and to qualify all Islamic options as integrationists. Islam has supports and a strong social basis in many Arab and Muslim countries, due to the economic, social and political crisis, to corruption and to the failure of the nationalist and socialist projects born out of independence. It also expresses the denial of the wrongly entitled "moderated Arab regimes", which often hide, under a democratic cover, authoritarian and repressive practices, corruption and human rights violations. These movements exploit religious and cultural arguments because the westernising experience is perceived as a failure, but their claims are political, economic and cultural and are directed against regimes perceived as failed and close to the West. They are not always fundamentalists, nor do they always support terrorism; rather, when they can, take part in the political game (as in Turkey, where they are in the government, or with limitations, in Morocco). Sometimes exclusion leads to radicalisation, as happened in Algeria after the suspension of the elections won by the Islamic Salvation Front in 1992.

Al Qaeda and other groups that promote terrorism in the name of Islam are extreme cases that feed from the same situations. The root of violence is not religion, rather the speech used to justify it, though they also seek political power (like Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and other groups in their own countries).

The mainstream discourse created the image of a common enemy in the entire world, sustaining that Al Qaeda has branched off and is present from the Philippines to Morocco. Many militants left Afghanistan after the bombings to take their fight somewhere else, but there is also a reverse process: groups with local claims joined Al Qaeda's speech as a legitimising element before certain sectors. It is a source of inspiration that functions

A STRATEGY THAT FEEDS TERRORISM

as symbolic identification and uses the same methods. But this is the only thing they have in common: rooted in local conditions of poverty and exclusion, corruption and authoritarianism, they have their own authority and organisation and local claims. The attacks against the West are based in the thesis of attacking the "distant enemy" – that arose in Algeria or Egypt in the early nineties before the impossibility of achieving changes at the local level and to impose them. Abu Sayyaf in Philippines is part of Al Qaeda, but shares a century struggle of the Mindanao Muslims for independence; Yemaa Islamiya is only one of the several armed groups that manoeuvre in Indonesia, with political, secessionist or autonomy and resources control claims. Thus, Al Qaeda is not a structured Islamic and terrorist international organisation that attacks the West with irrational hate for its "democracy and freedom"; it is rather an idea to which many who want to force changes in their societies have joined. The war is not against the West; it is spread in the Arab and Muslim world, between different conceptions of Islam and society.

The politics of force and the "crusade" or fight of the good against the evil speech are not useful to fight Islamic rooted terrorism – as they have the opposite effect of feeding it. They reinforce extremists' perception of themselves, as well as Osama Bin Laden's legitimacy amidst several sectors. The Afghanistan bombings and Iraq's illegal occupation, the unrestricted support to Israel's policies, the attacks on the UN, the International Criminal Court or the use of International Law *à la carte*, as well as a support policy to those who became unconditional allies of the "anti-terrorist" strategy, reinforce the perception in the Arab and Muslim world that the West is hypocrite and unfair and that it uses double standards. Authoritarian and corrupt regimes are supported; development aid is reduced (and the fight against poverty abandoned, unless it assists the strategy) to increase military aid; setbacks in rights and freedoms are allowed in the name of anti-terrorism; torture and repression are extended and a systematic humiliation of the Palestinians continues, now added the Iraqis' one.

Furthermore, after the bombings and the international pledges for aid, Afghanistan is back in the hands of warlords; opium crops and violence are growing; the Taliban are reorganising and Al Qaeda has found shelter in the border area with Pakistan. Military means are not the best ones against terrorism because these groups have no

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territorial basis – instead a huge mobility – but, in this case, besides that, open space has been left to them. All in order to invade Iraq for reasons alien to terrorism. Now, this country is a new territory and a new reason to fight for.

Nothing is being done to tackle the situation of Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, the most responsible countries for the exportation of Islamic fundamentalism and where this option has the widest social support, and there aren't enough efforts in place either to stop the money laundry or to approach the political, economic and social causes that are the basis for terrorism to breed. On the contrary, in the way, multilateral institutions and International Law have been weakened and real threats to human security, such as poverty, diseases and environmental degradation, have been relegated to a second plan. According to Washington's *Institute for Policy Studies*, the US$ 151.000 million invested so far by the American government in Iraq could have reduced world's hunger to half and support HIV medicines, child immunisation and water and sanitary needs in the developing world for over two years.

To put an end to Al Qaeda and to those that use violence in the name of Islam, or to other groups that also use religious, identity or ethnic arguments, will require much more than military strength. It will be a long-term process and it demands a radical change of the strategy used so far. Some elements might be:

▪ To tackle poverty and exclusion through development aid tools, fairer trade rules and a new management of globalisation;

▪ To decriminalise Islam as a political option and to support the strengthening of truly democratic regimes, where participation is possible;

▪ To recover international consensus on International Law and International Humanitarian Law validity and legitimacy and the deepen the advances in the universal justice principle;

▪ To fight terrorism with the weapons of the rule of law, meaning to reinforce police and intelligence cooperation without restrictions to rights and freedoms in the name of terrorism;

▪ It is a priority to support a fair solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which ensures safety and rights to both peoples. In Iraq, the withdrawal of the occupying forces and a sustained international support through the UN and regional organisations must open the path to democratic processes.

If the only way to defeat terrorism is to diminish its social basis, as Europe well knows, it is necessary to conquer the "hearts and minds" to non-violent options. So far, the implemented policies are in the opposite direction, by reinforcing frustration and disenchantment. Turning this dynamic upside down will be a long-term effort and will have no spectacular results, but it is imperative to eliminate or reduce violence. There is a need to analyse distinct ways of violence, their roots and motivations, in order to find ways of deactivating it. In this task, peace and social justice movements, progressive political sectors, human rights and democracy groups in Arab and Muslim countries and the rest of the world must take the lead. Without this, it will be difficult to make the world a safer place.

Mabel González Bustelo

(Peace Research Centre, Madrid)

NEP's Attic

Book review

Pezarat Correia, Pedro (2004),
Manual de Geopolítica e Geoestratégia. Volume II – Análise Geoestratégica de um Mundo em Conflito. Coimbra: Quarteto Editora.

Building up from on an excellent first introductory volume to the theoretical and doctrinal contents of the subject, the second volume of the Geopolitical and Geostrategic Manual, published last February, presents a critical and sharp geostrategic analysis of today's world.

Like the former volume, this book is also the outcome of Major-General Pedro de Pezarat Correia's thinking and experience as a lecturer of Geopolitics and Geostrategy at the International Relations Undergraduate Degree of the School of Economics of the University of Coimbra. However, it does not aim at producing exhaustive information on each of the thematic areas addressed in the author's curricular plan. It rather aspires at guiding the study on the main contemporary geostrategic issues – by providing a valuable database to its core object, the students – and, simultaneously, offering reading suggestions for a future deepening of these topics. That is why references are a special concern throughout the whole book, and, in particular, at the end of each chapter. Extremely well structured, with a coherent organisation and a clear and comprehensible language, this manual serves its pedagogical purpose in an irreprehensible way.

Regarding contents, whilst the first volume intended to familiarise students with the conceptual basis of geopolitics as an academic field – with a critical synthesis of the main geopolitical doctrines from the late

nineteenth century until nowadays –, this second volume covers that theory's application to the interpretation and comprehension of the structural factors of world conflictuality. Through the polemological characterisation of the so-called Areas of Tension and Conflict, based in the geographical factors – physical, human, political and economic – that characterise them, the author proposes to demonstrate the logics of endemic conflictuality with a regional expression, which actually led the choice of the most sensitive regions tackled in this book.

In this sense, the volume sets off by identifying the geostrategic panorama since the end of the Second World War until today, firstly characterising the Cold War as a specific kind of conflictuality that dominated the international system between 1945 and 1991, and afterwards standing out the visible remnants and changes in the New World Order's geostrategic framework. This theme is yet explored in title II which seeks to highlight how this Washington-led unipolar system is shaped. The author looks further into the repercussions of this hegemony associated with globalisation as strategic components of this new international system, presenting the world as a global area of tensions and conflicts, given that conflicts' roots and effects have a planetary dimension and all regions rouse the interest and frequently the intervention of the only superpower. Still in this title, the role of NATO in a global scale operations theatre is emphasised, from its genesis until its restructuration and attempt to adapt to the New World Order since the early nineties.

What follows is the analysis of the several tension and conflict areas at a regional level, not with the purpose of providing a detailed description of conflicts, but to help to understand why these occur. It is a clearly structuralist approach that, nonetheless, includes a dynamic vision, since it studies as

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well certain conflicts which themselves have become structuring elements of this broader conflictuality, such as the Israel-Arab case, the Kurds, the Western Sahara and the Balkans – all of them incorporated in title III, dedicated to the Enlarged Mediterranean.

The subsequent title examines the conflictual framework of sub-Saharan Africa. Clearly influenced by the idea that the Sahara Desert marks the great division of the African continent in polemological terms, the author prefers to include the north of Africa in the Mediterranean tension and conflict area, distinguishing, within the sub-Saharan region, Western Africa, the Great Diagonal of Conflicts and Southern Africa. An interesting chapter devoted to decolonisation is also worth mentioning – a particularly special theme to the author that has several studies on this field and regularly presents them in academic conferences.

The book's fifth title focuses on the Eastern Asia, with the polemological characterisation of two distinct tension and conflict areas: a continental one, Central Asia, and an insular one, the Southeast Asia, with particular emphasis on the role of the great regional power, the Popular Republic of China.

Lastly, title VI concentrates on Latin America, namely the geographical and historical factors that determine this region to be a tension and conflict one, with a particular relevance given to the role the United States has in this area of its traditional influence.

It is important, however, to highlight that conflictuality is not perceived as a synonym of inevitability. This manual's critical reading of the structural lines of international order's most disturbed areas will allow us to be alert to the eruption and evolution of contemporary conflicts. In this reasoning, this second volume provides us precisely with the necessary tools to be able to identify the logics of conflictuality with the exact aim of preventing it. To know the war in order to be able to "prepare the peace" is, undoubtedly, one of the transversal goals of the entire book, thus revealing the militant nature of this work.

To sum up, having into consideration the way volume II of the Geopolitical and Geostrategic Manual structures and systematises information, the fulfilment of its didactic goal is exemplary. It goes, however, way beyond this primary purpose, as the author's sagacity, noticeable in his contemporary geostrategic analysis, makes this work an indispensable reading to all those interested and worried with the evolution of international conflictuality. Embracing a wide universe of readers beyond the academia, it is unquestionably a book to consult, to read and read again with profit and delight.

Teresa Almeida Cravo
Peace Studies Group

NEP's Attic

PEACE STUDIES GROUP (NEP) AGENDA

NEP's Research Projects

"Angola: Media as a Tool for Civil Society" (ongoing project, in partnership with the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA) and the Peace Research Centre (CIP)

Objectives: to obtain information on the needs and situation of Angolan NGO's and media; to train NGO's members and civil society groups in the use of journalistic tools that improve their access to the media, to communicate their knowledge and needs both internally and externally and to promote public debate on key issues for the reconstruction of Angola; to provide journalists a better understanding of the work, activities and priorities of NGO's and other groups; to provide journalists and NGO's members basic knowledge on fragile states, the international system and post-war reconstruction and reconciliation processes.

Publications

Mónica Rafael Simões, "De la prevención de conflictos armados a la reconstrucción posbelica: la búsqueda de una paz sostenible", in Manuela Mesa y Mabel González Bustelo (orgs) (2004), *Anuario CIP 2004: Escenarios de Conflicto. Irak y el Desorden Mundial.* Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 261-276

José Manuel Pureza, "Vuelve la batalla por la reforma de la ONU", in Manuela Mesa y Mabel González Bustelo (orgs) (2004), *Anuario CIP 2004: Escenarios de Conflicto. Irak y el Desorden Mundial.* Barcelona: Icaria Editorial, 47-57

Highlights

CONFERENCE ON "The Angolan Multiparty System Building Process" (organised by the Centre for Social Studies and the Angolan Catholic University, supported by the Programa Lusitânia/Instituto Camões)
Luanda, August 19th and 20th, 2004
Contact: Nuno Vidal (nunovidal@hotmail.com)
          Mónica Rafael (monicarafael1@yahoo.com.uk)
(http://www.ces.fe.uc.pt/nucleos/nep/documentos/confangola.pdf)

The New CES Newsletter – CESemCENA
June 2004 newsletter '01
(http://ces.uc.pt/publicacoes/cesemcena/cesemcena1.php)

NEP's Activities

March 27th to April 19th, 2004
Mónica Rafael (Peace Studies Group), together with the Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), conducted a training seminar for journalists and NGO's and international organisation's officials in M'Banza Congo (Zaire Province) on "**Post-war Reconstruction Processes. The case of Angola**". Further research was continued in Luanda with Mabel González (Peace Research Centre, Madrid)

April 1st, 2004
Peace Studies Group Seminar on "**Children and rights. The case of Brazil**", with presentation by Irene Rizzini (Pontifícia University – Rio de Janeiro), CES, Coimbra

April 29th, 2004
Peace Studies Group Seminar on "**The role of development co-operation within conflict prevention strategies**", with participation of David Gakunzi (North-South Centre of the Council of Europe) and João gomes Cravinho (School of Economics, University of Coimbra), CES, Coimbra

July 6th, 2004
José Manuel Pureza (Peace Studies Group) presented a communication on "**Portugal's transition to democracy: Lessons on the 30th anniversary of democratisation**", at the Conference *Transition to Democracy: Lessons Learned from South African and Portuguese Experiences*, organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and the South African Embassy in Lisbon, Lisbon
(http://www.coe.int/T/E/North-South__Centre/Programmes/5_Europe-Africa_Dialogue/b_HR_and_Democratic_Governance/Transition_to_democracy_agenda-1.pdf)