

# **PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT**

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## PEACE, CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT

### I. Introductory Remarks

These preliminary remarks will serve to explain the reason why the three separate topics are being addressed together, and also to introduce the subject in general terms, in anticipation of more detailed discussions in later sections. War and peace have been ever-present conditions of human existence. It is customary to consider peace as the normal, and war as the abnormal, condition, because most societies experience war as the aberrant event, disturbing normalcy in human relations. And although there have been instances in history in which war acted as the spur to technical innovation, for the most part, peace has been an essential precondition for human progress. The inventor, the artist, the thinker, and all people who act, as agents of human progress need peace to concentrate on their work. It is, therefore, not inappropriate to treat the subjects of war and peace together in considering sustainable development. Similarly, a discussion of conflict in relation to development is relevant simply because conflict situations draw resources away from development.

We also need to explain the difference between development and economic growth? The earlier debate of whether economic growth is different from development (what later became known as sustainable development) is now moot. There is a general consensus that, whereas economic growth is quantitative—the volume of goods produced—sustainable development adds a qualitative dimension to the process so that the end result will enhance the quality of life of the objects of the growth—people in general. In the words of a Filipino philosopher, it involves “not only having more, doing more and knowing more, but also *being* more.” More on this below in the appropriate section.

Different societies have evolved different ways of dealing with war, both in terms of preventive measures and in managing its effects. These different approaches are crystallized in proverbs, maxims or other sayings. In this respect, no society has done better than the Romans as borne out by several Latin maxims. A good example is the maxim *si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war). The Latin word for peace, *pax*, is related to *pact* or *agreement* as in *pacta sunt servanda* (agreements or treaties must be observed). This idea underlies the normative framework that binds nations to a common approach towards peace—common values and attitudes in the prevention or resolution of conflicts. The theory that peace is a contractual relationship entered into between members of a given nation or between nations is the basis of modern international law, developed in Western Europe over the last three and half centuries. The alternation between war and peace is expressed in the Latin maxim noted above that if you want peace you need to prepare for war.

But peace as a universal value needs to be universal. To paraphrase a famous dictum of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu we must work to universalize the conditions of access to the universal. The condition for peace anywhere is the assurance of peace everywhere, a point expressed by the old maxim of international law that peace is indivisible. Simply put, this means that peace in one corner of the world may be affected by war in other parts, just as any infected part of the human body will affect other parts of the body. The principle of this maxim has been extended to justice—

justice is indivisible. An emerging consensus on the indivisibility of justice explains the incessant demand in our times for the equitable distribution of the wealth of nations, both at the domestic and the international levels. For justice for one segment of humanity that denies justice to others, or prosperity of one at the expense of another is likely to invite rebellion. Indeed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lends support to rebellion of oppressed peoples in clear terms.

## **II. Geographical and Historical Context**

As the constant variable, *par excellence*, geography determines much of human history—the evolution of societies, economies and cultures. From Scriptures to scientific treatises, and from our own observations, we know this to be so. “A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever.” [1. Ecclesiastes 1:4]

The geography of Africa—the entire landmass stretching from Cape to Cairo and from Djibouti to Dakar, encompasses varying physical features, climatic conditions and flora and fauna. Its inhabitants have evolved different cultures and speak several hundred different languages. [2] This enormous size and the great geographical divide caused by the Sahara desert have posed difficult questions of unity of purpose and common efforts, particularly in the post-colonial history of the continent. The combined effect of history and geography is reflected in the continent’s demographic make-up, culture, national identities and religions.

Historically, Africa’s proximity to Europe and the Middle East, in particular, drew the attentions of the peoples of those regions of the world, with far-reaching consequences, both negative and positive. Following the fall of the Roman empire, which embraced a major part of North Africa, the next period during which a significant historical movement occurred affecting Africa’s history concerns the advent of the Arabs and Islam, which they brought. Then came European colonial rule in the nineteenth century.

The main European colonial powers—Britain, France and Portugal—played crucial roles in the penetration, exploitation and spoliation of the continent, with Belgium, Italy and Germany playing not insignificant roles to the same effect. The post-colonial history of Africa has been shaped, to a great extent, by European colonial history involving the violent manner through which these powers colonized and occupied the continent, and the legacy of their occupation, notably the economic and political institutions they foisted on African peoples in pursuit of their imperial purposes. The burden of this history manifests itself in the artificial boundaries the Europeans created which have determined the nation statehood of present day Africa. Perhaps more importantly, the market economy was introduced as an essential part of the imperial purpose, and much of the political structures, public laws and institutions established in support of these structures as well as the market system are of colonial origin. These legacies, which served the imperial purpose, then, serve similar purposes now, in the age of globalization.

From the Middle East, Africa received two of the world’s great religions, Christianity and Islam. Although the majority of African Christians were converted to that religion as a result of the activities of European missionaries (and later American missionaries) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christianity reached Africa much earlier. The Eastern Orthodox version had found footholds in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia during the first three centuries of the Christian era. It had taken deep roots in Ethiopia and Egypt. In Ethiopia, it became a state religion and contended with Islam for much of Ethiopia’s history, while in Egypt it was overwhelmed by the advent of the Arabs who

came in large numbers, bringing Islam with them. Islam became the religion of the majority of the population while Coptic Christianity held its ground as the religion of a strong minority of Egyptians. [3] In the Sudan, Islam practically displaced Christianity, leaving a very small number of adherents. [4]

The history of North Africa and parts of Northeast Africa has been dramatically affected by the coming of the Arabs and their religion. This history of massive population movement and the imposition of the religion of the new, dominant group reinforced the geographical dividing line, a fact that dramatically illustrates the impact of history (the dependent variable) on geography.

Today's global market, inheritor of the colonial legacy, has integrated Africa's economy with even more dire consequences. It is the task of theory and scholarly endeavor to analyze the nature and extent of these consequences, sorting out the negative from the positive, and to map out strategies for attenuating the negative effects and reinforcing the positive. The darker side of global trade as the agent of economic integration includes unequal exchange, unfair terms of trade, exploitation of "Third World" cheap labor, repressive legislation leveled at labor unions which denies working people the power to bargain for fair wages and better working conditions. The ultimate implication of global integration is the decline of the national sovereignty, as we have known it, nations with open borders facilitating the free flow of goods and services and free movements of peoples.

Meanwhile, in Africa at least, the legacy of the nation states continues with their built-in tension that explode from time to time into inter state and intra-state conflicts. To be sure, the artificial boundaries are by no means the only causes of conflict in Africa. It is a task of scholars and policy makers alike to know whether, and to what extent, global economic integration will help resolve such conflicts and contribute to sustainable development. As an integral part of such analysis, we need to review the record of the post-colonial state in terms of the topic under discussion—peace, conflict and sustainable development.

The end of the European colonial era, accompanied by the rise of the Nonaligned Movement, occurred against a backdrop of a divided world of East-West rivalry for global control. The protagonists promoted their contending ideologies of capitalism and socialism, turning Africa into an ideological battleground. The West, led by the United States, backed its ideological war with ample material aid. In the propaganda war for "the hearts and minds" of the African masses, the West had a distinct advantage over the Soviet Union due to the preexisting Western European presence—economic as well as a cultural presence, with English and French serving as the languages of communication in much of Africa.

In this ideological contest, each side sought advantages, at times using internal and inter-state conflicts for its purposes, and supplying arms to boot to the side that it supports. This is the origin of the arms infusion to Africa that has plagued the continent and complicated conflicts, and both the former Soviet Union and the Western countries bear equal responsibility for this problem. The crisis in the Congo in the early 1960's and the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia over the Ogaden may be cited as examples in this respect.

Post-colonial African politics was primarily concerned with the idea of nation building. Enclosed within the walls of artificially created borders, Africans of different ethnic groups were left to fend for themselves as best they could in all matters, including the matter of forging a united nation state out of diverse groups. Nation building thus became the primary guiding ideology and the most

frequently voiced slogan of the new African governments. Nation building is a progeny of the nationalist sentiment that inspired and mobilized Africans in their struggle against colonial oppression. Thus in the heady days of early independence era, nationalism's seductive appeal was compelling and all-embracing; it acted as a mobilizing and unifying force. "Tribal" division was rare and, here it occurred, short-lived. The millennium seemed at hand. The leaders appeared to be invincible with their messianic aura, and the jubilant masses cheered and spurred them on. And this eventually became part of the problem.

Differences began to emerge, manifested along different axes of division—personal rivalry, ethnic hostility, factional feuds and ideological rifts. In several cases, internal (intra-state) strife was followed or accompanied by inter-state conflicts. Before long, people began to see the distinction between state and nation in the post-colonial situation. The state and its visible manifestations (the police, the judge, the tax collector and the bureaucrat) and their increasing alienation from the rest of the society soon created the notion of "Them" and "Us." The gap between the promise and the performance in government affairs was reflected in a widening gap between rich and poor. "Class consciousness" and "class struggle" suddenly became part of the lexicon of African political discourse, and as the international connection (with the West) reinforced the post-colonial reality of an emerging business class and its bureaucratic ally, public alienation from the state deepened. Discontent began to flare up in the form of complaints and open protests. Clearly, leaders needed a binding ideology to hold their nations together, an ideology transcending ethnic and class divisions.

Enter socialism.

Socialists of different stripes, from Soviet-style Marxists and their Chinese counterparts, to democratic socialists (and a few propagating "African socialism" preached the gospel of national unity under the banner of socialism. Some used it sincerely, if not effectively, others used it as a fig leaf for naked power. Many of them used national unity as an overriding reason or pretext for repressing public protests that were made on different occasions for different reasons. But questions remained. Unity for what, and for whose benefit? What has independence brought the ordinary African? What about democracy and human rights? And social justice, which was promised but not, delivered?

In the post-Cold War reality of today, there is an emerging consensus that conflicts cannot be avoided and nation building cannot be achieved in the absence of a clear vision of what it means and how it can be achieved. It can be achieved only with the creation of a political framework and social environment that ensures the participation of all members of the nation. Political inclusion and equitable distribution of resources should be the key ingredients of national policy. In other words, the problem nation building is linked to the problems of democracy and sustainable development.

### **III. Peace and Sustainable Development:**

#### Normative Framework

Peace, which is a precondition to sustainable development, does not mean only the absence of war. It must include the absence of the threat of war. The avoidance of war—securing peace between and among states—remains a necessary condition for the security of people. The threat of inter-state war, while less frequent in our times, continues to be a source of concern. However, armed conflicts are increasingly being fought within, rather than between states, particularly since the end of the Cold War. With technological advances and the proliferation of weaponry, if present trends

continue, the future promises wars that will be more horrendous, and will exact much heavier toll on civilians. Small arms are often the weapons used in conflicts within states and civilians account for eighty percent of the casualties. [5. See *Safety For People in a Changing World*, a Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Publication, 1999.]

There has thus been a reexamination of the relevant part of the post-World War II normative framework that was designed by the world community for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. A new thinking has emerged from such reexamination that may be summed up in the phrase “human security.” The term is of recent origin, but the ideas underlying the concept are not new. The concept is implicit in the UN Charter and was expanded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions. But as a compelling policy issue to be adopted by national and international bodies, human security appeared for the first time in the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report. That Report and its ambitious policy recommendations reflect an evolving, post Cold War, international ethos that seeks to redirect resources of the post-Cold War “peace dividend” towards the development agenda. The UNDP Report defines human security in terms of a multi-faceted development agenda, embracing seven dimensions of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political.

The essence of this broad definition may be simply summarized as security of people from both violent and non-violent threats to their lives and/or well-being. Such security or peace is dependent on the existence of certain conditions and is impeded by certain practices. A critical condition is sustainable development. Sustainable development needs sustainable peace, and sustainable peace involves the commitment to, or general consensus on, certain values that reject violence as a way of settling dispute. The normative framework that underpins national and international relations and politics is founded on commitment to values and principles that reject violence as a way of settling dispute in favor of peaceful settlement.

The above-stated definition of human security is based on an assumption that people can be secure in the knowledge that they are free from threats to their rights, their safety, or their lives. This represents an expansion of the traditional notion of security, which is state-oriented. The new conception of security takes people as its point of reference, instead of focusing exclusively on the security of territory or government. Put another way, the absence of any one of the dimensions of human security is an indication of the potential for future conflicts. This is one sense in which the UNDP definition is ambitious as it is very hard to achieve the stated objective implied in the definition. But it is not unrealistic, anymore than a constitutional framework that provides for government powers and responsibilities and for citizens’ rights and duties is unrealistic. It goes beyond the conception of peace as the mere absence of war. For, although armed conflict presents more danger to the safety of people, there is a wider range of potential threats to human security that may be masked by a calm exterior. The concept of human security underscores the need to address the root causes of human insecurity and to help ensure people’s future security. In a subsequent section we will see in more details some of the root causes of conflict and some means devised to address them.

### Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development embraces two seemingly contradictory goals—economic development and environmental conservation. It proceeds from the assumption that economic growth in terms of mere production of goods and services is not synonymous with development, which is economic growth plus something else. This something else includes the quality of life

associated with healthy environment as well as the fulfillment of the cultural aspirations, or preservation of the best of existing culture, of a given nation or community. The emergence of the environmental movement provided an organizing principle that prompted a refining of the meaning of development. This movement challenged the global problem posed by mindless growth, driven by the profit motive, in utter disregard of the damage to the environment and often to peoples' health and general well-being caused by such growth. Sustainable development, as an organizing idea goes further than what the earlier challenges of the environmental movement had envisaged. It addresses the deepening global environmental crisis as well as the increasing social and economic imbalances that divide the world. Unlike the earlier approach, the new concept of sustainable development analyzes the underlying political and economic structures causing environmental degradation—multinational corporations organizing the logging of old-growth forests, for example, or automobile companies lobbying for more roads and lower pollution standards. [The violence implicit in these kinds of industrial/commercial activities involves what Johan Galtung calls structural violence. The examples Galtung cites are related to avoidable poverty and mass starvation. “Concretely, structural violence takes the form of economic exploitation and/or political repression in intra-country and inter-country class relations...Another form of violence is violence to nature.” See, Oxford Companion to Politics of the world, page 640-641.]

In 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and development in Rio (also known as the Earth Summit), governments agreed on sustainable development as the leading concept to guide development policy.

Consider two facts: Fact number one is the exponential growth of the world's population, and that the majority of these people live in poverty. Fact number two is that the share of the planet's resources being used by the affluent minority is also growing. The combined effect of these two facts—poverty of the majority and the excessive consumption of the minority—is driving forces of environmental degradation.” The sustainable development approach suggests a solution to this double crisis. Sustainable development is an idea offering a normative framework summed up by the now famous sentence of the Brundtland Report (1987): “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” [See, for example, the essay of Jens Martens and Klaus Schilder on sustainable development in the Oxford Companion to Politics of the world, pages 813-815. I am indebted to these authors; I have drawn from freely from their paper for this section of my essay.]

Unfortunately, the wonderful achievement of Rio and its Agenda 21 with its elaborate plan of action to achieve sustainable development worldwide, the world situation has not improved. According to UNEP, at the turn of the millennium over 80 percent of the world's forests had been destroyed or degraded and 25 percent of the approximately 4,630 mammal species in the world stood at risk of total extinction. Moreover, if present consumption patterns continue, two-thirds of the world's population will live in conditions of severe water shortage by the year 2025. With the exception of the Montreal Protocol on the ozone layer or the Cartagena protocol on biosafety adopted in early 2000, little has been achieved on an intergovernmental basis to implement an effective sustainable development strategy. [ibid.]

The current disagreement between the United States and its European partners on the terms and conditions of the Kyoto Treaty is indicative of the obstacles that have to be overcome. Meanwhile, global warming, changing patterns and increasingly severe weather events, drastic declines in fish

stocks, pollution of drinking water, new diseases—these and more signs of crisis have evoked urgent protests from scientists, environmental activists, and an increasing number of members of the informed public.

[ibid.]

As a slogan or a rallying cry, sustainable development was useful in drawing global attention to the problems facing humanity. At the same time, some have begun to view it as an empty slogan that can be interpreted differently by different interest groups. The debate arising of such variety of interpretations; Martens and Schilder have analyzed the subject in terms of four categories representing four main positions that offer substantially different levels of sustainability. They are:

1. Pseudo-Sustainability,
2. Weak Sustainability,
3. Strong Sustainability, and
4. Ultra-Sustainability.

### 1. Pseudo-Sustainability.

Strongly backed by the majority of the business lobby, this is the weakest level. It assumes that the market will come up with solutions to resource depletion, pollution, or other disruption of the ecosystem. According to this view, any change in the natural system of the planet can be “sustainable” as long as equivalent research and investments serve present and future generations. Insistent on sustained economic growth and minimum interference in the market, this view reduces nature as an object of ceaseless intervention on the basis of cost-benefit analysis only. It thus stakes the future of life on the planet on a dubious theory and a blind belief in impersonal market forces. Another word for the latter is financiers and corporate executives whose only goal is profit. We need to go no further than our present crisis to see where such theory and belief is taking us.

### 2. Weak Sustainability

The advocates of this concept belong to what Martens and Schilder call the “enlightened wing of the business community and its allies in government and universities.”[ibid]

They admit the limits of the ecosystem’s carrying capacity but believe in the primacy of economic growth. Sustainable development, they argue, will be achieved by a market-driven, “efficiency revolution” resulting in a much more cost-effective production process and management of resources. These include the production of more energy-efficient motors, new kinds of buildings and lighting fixtures, and so on. Advocates of who naively believe in technological progress do not think that fundamental economic change is necessary. The fact of the matter is that quantitative growth in the motorcar industry, for example, overwhelms efficiency gains and continues the over-consumption of resources. [The automobile industry now produces more fuel efficient, low-pollution vehicles than it did in 1950. But the world’s automobile fleet has grown tenfold in the same period, from 53 million to 530 million, increasing net pollution and resource use. Ibid.]

The concept also largely ignores the social dimension of growth.

### 3. Strong Sustainability

Supported by the majority of environmentalists and scientists, this begins with the firm belief that the existing stock of natural resources must be maintained for future generations. Tradeoffs for present use and conservation for future generations can be made, for example, by substituting renewable energy sources such as wind and solar-generated electricity for fossil fuels like electricity from coal or oil-fired generating stations. Advocates of this view also insist on a distributive justice not only within and between generations but also between countries. They insist on zero economic

growth in the industrialized nations and increasing the sustainable development of the countries of the “South.” They emphasize the social dimension, pleading for structural changes in the patterns of production and strengthening opportunities for political participation of the largest number of people possible. In their view, humanity must develop a new concept of wealth and well being that goes beyond materialism and consumerism. Having more is not necessarily being happier, as borne out by different forms of human dissatisfaction in industrialized societies.

#### 4. Ultra Sustainability

This is the opposite of pseudo sustainability. It is ecocentrism in the extreme. It stresses the primacy of resource conservation and the intrinsic values of all natural objects within the ecosphere. Proponents of this approach, also known as “deep ecology,” believe that natural resources must remain unused and nothing can be substitute for them.

Critics of this approach, including committed environmentalists, consider this approach to be extremely simplistic and opposed to rational progress. The proponents of Strong Sustainability criticize it for not promoting equality and distribution principles that countries of the South need to improve their standard of living.

These different concepts of sustainable development reflect the limits of the issue of sustainable growth in terms of the absence of a coherent working consensus. Of the four approaches summarized above, the first and fourth are clearly not acceptable. The first, business-driven approach will lead to further deterioration of the global environment and human living conditions. The fourth approach is extremely simplistic and opposed to rational progress, as its critics, including committed environmentalist have stated. [ibid.]

Strong sustainability appears to represent the best potential for the concept of sustainable development. Its twin goals are environmental sustainability and social justice, i.e. equitable distribution of resources at national as well as global levels. Economic development (growth) is only the means to achieve these goals. Its proponents’ demand for zero growth in the “North,” while admirable in principle, is not realistic. The consumption habits of the millions of inhabitants of these regions has to be altered or adjusted for the idea of zero growth to be applied. No government of the United States, Western Europe or Japan can survive if it reverses, or drastically reduces the standard of living to which their populations have been used. That is the nature of the beast, as they say.

#### **IV. Conflict and Intervention**

Although globalization has brought with it increased concerns over new security issues of global implications such as transnational terrorism, and the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, this section of my paper is not concerned with those issues. Rather, I will limit my discussion to what were called “low intensity conflicts” during the Cold War era. My discussion will also essentially deal with Africa. Of course, there are times when global security can impact regional security and vice versa, and most nations depend on the cooperation or assistance of other nations or on international organizations to meet the challenges of peace and security. To give a recent example, the recent war between Ethiopia and Eritrea might not have ended in peaceful settlement without the concerted efforts and intervention of the UN and the OAU, as well as the governments of the United States and the European Union.

Africa's conflict areas