



***Peace and Security vs. Economic and Social
Development:
Which holds out a greater promise for world
prosperity?***

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Introduction

Following the World War II, states recognized that the only way to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” was by committing their selves to a *collective action* on two fronts: the maintenance of international peace and security as well as the solution of economical and social problems. To this ends, states created the United Nations and agree upon devoting resources and the emerged international institutional machinery to guarantee the security and well-being of all its members. So far, the most precious resources and political will have been devoted to deter aggression and restore the peace when conflicts arise, neglecting nevertheless the fact that peace and security itself is not durable if it does not rest on a foundation on social, economic and of greatest importance to human development.

Driven by this argument, in this paper I explore the delicate balance between peace and security vs. economic and social development. To this end first I review the relevance that these principles in the U.N. Charter. Second I evaluate to what extent there has been in the world an overspending on security vs. development as well as the effectiveness of deploying the most of resources on post-conflict peacekeeping missions living aside the component of sustainable development and poverty reduction. Then, and based on the lessons of failed peace operations and humanitarian intervention, I argue that an only-security approach may help only to end violence but not to promote durable and democratic peace. Finally, I identify some of today’s threats to local, national, and international security and argue that without peace there can not be development –but without sound socio-economic development there can be no sustainable peace.

Background

a) Peace and security

In Article 1 of the U.N. Charter, the call to maintain peace and security appears as the main driver for action. To this end, the Security Council and the General Assembly take collective military and nonmilitary measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, some of these measures are: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, and peace building.¹ Even though the U.N. has achieved to prevent another world war, it has not prevented from happening more than 100 major conflicts around the world which have left some 20 million dead.²

Along with these military and nonmilitary measures to secure peace, the ideal of complete disarmament and the elimination of nuclear dangers appear as another step to save the planet from

war. Despite the fact that that complete disarmament has not been achieved and sometimes it appears impossible, the following actions are towards that intention: the establishment of an International Monitoring System for Global Ban on Nuclear Testing and the efforts to eliminate conventional, chemical and biological weapons. Regarding nuclear dangers, Latin American and the Caribbean, the Antarctic, the outer space and the moon, the African continent and Southeast Asia all have been declared as nuclear-weapon-free-zones. Additionally the U.N. is working to ban landmines and resolve the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons³. It is worth to mention that although some U.N. try to stop proliferation at the same time continue to hold on to they nuclear arsenal.⁴ Two rationales are behind this dual policy. One is that arms are the means to achieve national and international security when Articles 42 and 51 of U.N. Charter are evoked. The second is that arms possession is on the bases of deterrence.

b) Economic and Social Development

Regarding international economic and social co-operation, the second pillar of the U.N., the Charter establishes in its Article 55 that members shall promote “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development...” To fulfill this aim, the Charter charged the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with bringing the specialized agencies into a relationship with the U.N. through agreements negotiated by ECOSOC and approved by the General Assembly. It is important to highlight the fact that even though ECOSOC deals with the broad mandate of “creating conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations...” it has the power only to recommend. Furthermore, this body faces the challenge of effectively coordinate the actions of the U.N. with other organizations and individual governments in helping to achieve the development conditions for peace.

2. Analysis

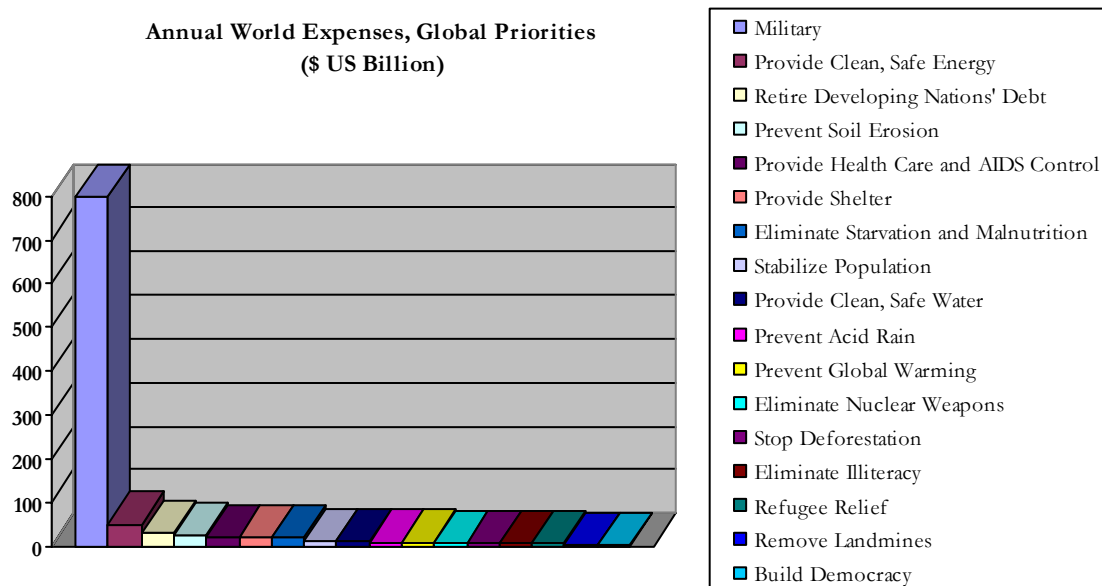
a) Overspending on Military Expenses vs. People

During the Cold War, peace and security were interpreted to mean the maintenance of the status quo without engagement of the P-5 spheres. Thus, the Security Council placed security before peace, and order before justice, leaving notwithstanding humanitarian and development issues. Following this priorities, during the Cold War, world defense spending peaked at around \$1.2 trillion in 1987, even though article 26 of the U.N. Charter envisages a system of international peace and security based on “the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”.

During this era of high defense expenditures, the idea of eliminating world poverty and hunger, and of advancing to a stage of greater satisfaction on human needs lost grounds. In poor countries the situation was one of shrinking production and recession which considerably swelled the ranks of the poor. As Latin American saw the explosion of a debt crisis, extensive poor areas of sub-Saharan Africa and the Asian deteriorated as a result of the combined impact of cuts in the aid funds allocated to the poorest countries by the major powers⁵.

The end of Cold War removed the superpower rivalry and reduced some military expenditure, but not the threats to world prosperity, neither the high world military expending, which indeed is estimated to be now around \$800 billion. The problem with this rising global military expenditures, as it has been recognized, is that: "diverting financial, material and human resources from productive to non-productive pursuits, jeopardizes humanity's common natural environment and the prospects

for social and economic development of all nations". Even more, high military spending has been both cause and result of the large number of conflicts in the developing world⁶.



b) The issue of prosperity after the Cold War

Since the end of Cold War it has been hard for the U.N. and its members to determine what constitutes "aggression" or a "threat to international security" and the reason is because the threats to peace did not lie as much on two countries rivalry, as on national internal conflicts. Therefore, the intrastate conflicts of the 1990s -which are fuelled by ethnic tensions, religious differences and socioeconomic disparities-, are now the focus of U.N. operations.

Following the same pattern as during the years of Cold War, the focus of today's U.N. operations lies on peacekeeping intervention rather than on alleviating and eradicating the roots of conflict. Indeed, it is estimated that the cost of U.N. Peacekeeping Operations now averages US\$2.6 B per year, whereas during the Cold War was approximately US\$200M.

Given these high expenses allocated in security there is a concern about how effective peacekeeping operations have been. The U.N. has come under criticism for its handling of humanitarian and conflict crisis primarily for three reasons: (1) the poor coordination among U.N. agencies and between the UN and external humanitarian agencies; (2) the organization's inability to link emergency relief with long-term development and to tie local groups and institutions more effectively to that process; and (3) the difficulty of designing and implementing comprehensive programmes that combine peacemaking with measures that strengthen economic reconstruction, good governance and human rights⁷.

Along with these criticism to peacekeeping operations, it has been recognized that peace and security operations are not necessarily equipped to deal with issues faced by societies affected by conflict, where the economic, social, political, and military legacies of conflict which minimized the effectiveness of both peace and humanitarian efforts.

c) Unresolved threats to peace and prosperity

We are in an era now where world war is not a major threat rather the failed states and economic deprivation have become more worrying than ever before to the extent that they pose dangers to peoples around the globe.

Furthermore, such threats to security and prosperity seem to permeate the Third World. At least 47 countries at the bottom of the Human Development Index are suffering from the effects of violent conflict and most of them are threatened by the kind of dangers summed up at the Millennium Summit: grow of poverty, inequality and human insecurity; exacerbation of lawlessness, random violence, corruption and organized crime; emerging threats from pandemics of the type of HIV/AIDS; and a deteriorating physical global environment. These are today's threatens to the humankind peace and security.

d) An alternative approach

If the UN and the international community are concerned with the new threats to peace and development, a new strategy has to be envisioned and deploy in order to help peoples suffering from the effects of violent conflict. One big step toward this direction is perhaps the recent report that was issued by UNDP about human development which states that to prevent conflict and build peace it is necessary to democratize security. In other words, international co-operation and UN operations have to connect short-term responses to long-term recovery. This approach rests primarily on human, economic, and social development and democratic processes, more than only reactive peace keeping operations.

3. Conclusion

The changing world environment challenges the way to fulfill both mandates of the U.N.: peace and security and social and economic development. On the one hand, peace and security can not be reactive. More attention in preventive measures is needed. At the same time, economic development does not mean only the deployment of economic resources. To be effective, this approach has to incorporate human development. As to the question of which action promise greater prosperity, without peace there can not be development, but without sound socio-economic development there can be no sustainable peace. The transition to prevention requires energy and political will and real co-operation. Developing countries should reallocate some of their scare resources from military to social expenditures, whereas developed countries could support this effort by using their surplus to increase assistance to the developing world.

***“Let us at least make sure that the next generation understands, better than ours has
done,
or at least has done,
that human security is as much governance, human rights, and social justice, as it is
about arsenals.”***

***Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General
November 2000***

Endnotes:

¹ *Preventive diplomacy* is an 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.

Peacemaking is action to bring hostile parties to agreement. Military missions include military-to-military liaison, security assistance, preventive deployment, and show of force.

Peacekeeping is the deployment of a U.N. presence in the field, with the consent of all parties concerned, to allow contending forces that wish to stop fighting to separate with some confidence that they will not be attacked in order to create conditions conducive to a political settlement.

Peace enforcement refers to actions taken when traditional peacekeeping is not sufficient to keep the peace. Measures are taken without the full consent of one or more parties of the conflict.

Peace-building refers to actions taken to forestall future eruptions between the parties to the conflict. Military mission statement includes activities to restore civil authority and rebuild infrastructure.

Source: Thomas Weiss and C. Collins. Humanitarian Challenges & Intervention. West View Press, 2000.

² An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. A/47/277-S/24111. 17 June 1992.

³ Un website: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/htm>

⁴ Jonathan Schell. The Folly of Arms Control. *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2000, Vol. 79, N. 5.

⁵ World Social Science Report 1999. UNESCO

⁶ On eve of Johannesburg forum, UN official flags links between disarmament and development.
<http://disarmament/un.org/speech/25aug2002.htm>

⁷ Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention