PEACE, SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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Summary

Over the last few years the world has witnessed an increase in the number of interstate conflicts. Africa has been particularly affected. The fact that armed conflict has been present in the daily life of most Africans is just the tip of the iceberg. Direct violence is, in fact, the reflection of an existing pattern of institutionalized structural and cultural violence on Africa's societies. The near collapse of the agrarian system, an increasing debt burden, drought and famine, the rise in authoritarism, the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced people, the increasing rate of environmental degradation and discrimination all are features of African development. Thus, development in Africa instead of being linked with equity, equality and cooperation has induced marginalization, exploitation and poverty. The poor development performance of African countries and the use of violence to respond to conflicts are feeding each other at a point that is difficult to determine the end of one and the beginning of the other. Sustainable development embraces more than forestalling environmental destruction and resource exhaustion. It also implies the provision of a peaceful environment where human beings can fulfill their needs.

1. Introduction

Armed conflicts, low human development and degradation of the environment belong to the most severe problems human beings are confronted with at the end of the twentieth century. Conflicts happen everyday, everywhere and to everyone. The ending of the Cold War has raised the hope for a world that is less violent, more developed and

peaceful where conflicts can be resolved in non-violent ways. However, the 1990s have so far seen no decrease in the number of conflicts, and most forecasts predict a further increase.

Already in 1970, the United Nations Secretary-General in his Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, pointed out that, "mankind is confronted today by a critical and urgent choice: either increased peaceful cooperation and progress or disunity and conflict, even annihilation." More recently, The Rio Declaration in 1992 stated explicitly that war actually prevents sustainable development and that peace, development and environmental protection are therefore interwoven and indivisible not just as concepts but as processes, where intergenerational and intragenerational equity play a central role. Therefore, peace and sustainable development has been regarded as a universal desideratum, where the peace problematic cannot, and must not, be separated from the social, economic and political conditions.

The present paper looks at the existing relationships between peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. However, peace for whom and peace for what remains the key questions behind the present discussion. This paper does not offer a final answer to these questions, but contributes to their discussion.

2. The Key Concepts

The basic starting point for the study of peace is conflict. Conflict arises from the inequalities, discrimination, domination, exclusion and injustices, which accompanies competition among people and groups of people for scarce political, social, economic and environmental resources and benefits.

A conflict can express itself whether in violent or non-violent ways. Hence, it is important to emphasize that conflict is not a synonymous of violence. Although many believe that conflict must be avoided, conflict per se is a constructive force within the human society, being inherent in the process of change and development. It is the way human beings, and therefore states, react towards conflict that either involves violence, giving rise to armed conflict and war, or takes the form of coexistence, cooperation and development.

It is in fact in the absence of violence and armed conflict among states that peace is generally understood. The realist theory, called the Hobbesian tradition, sees war as the most typical international activity where peace is just "a period of recuperation from the last war and preparation for the next." Peace, hence, is the result of a balance practice of power among states. This theory is based on the function of states and their capacity to depend on themselves or maintain alliances as far as peace and security is concerned. This theory has led the international sphere for so many years that peace has been seen as the result of strength.

Within these assumptions, the dilemma each state strives for security and peace by arming itself is done against military aggression. However, as a consequence, other states perceive these measures as a threat against them and for which they have to protect themselves with military means. This line of thinking has supported the

development and trade of new and more destructive weapons provoking the diversion of a significant amount of the resources of many countries for socio-economic development.

The term "security" has already been introduced in this text and linked to peace. Security is a word used every day, but its meaning is more ambiguous than is often realized. In most definitions in the international relations literature, security is related to the protection against threats of fundamental values. Furthermore, where conflict is an empirical and observable phenomenon, security is a socially constructed perception. Hence, in a world with several different societies and cultures, security cannot have a universal meaning and unique interpretation.

Traditionally, security has been concerned with the understanding of the causes of war and, conversely, the conditions for peace. After World War Two a rather narrow definition came to dominate the thinking in security studies. In this view, security was based on the military capacity of states to defend their sovereignty and integrity from other states—within the leading model of the realist theory. This Western security concept is related to the concept of strong states, becoming a state-centered analysis, which had wide acceptance in making and explaining security decisions during the Cold War period. States that can count on the loyalty and support of their population are called "strong states." States who lack this support are called "weak states." The concept of strong or weak state is directly related to the strength of the relationship between the state and its political system (Van den Hoogen, 1992). This security concept stresses external threats. Many developing countries are weak states where internal problems are usually the most important determinants of insecurity. A pertinent question to ask is whether should promote security strategies in the same way.

Over the last years there has been a growing body of literature, mainly in the field of international relations, which explores different aspects of the security concept. Concepts such as human security, environmental security, political security, ecological security and economic security have been at the core of the debate. They reflect the growing need for recognizing that security is as dependent on such factors as political democracy, human rights, social and economic development and environmental sustainability as is on military stability. As a consequence, this new notion of security identifies two main challenges: first, the existence of non-military threats that demand non-military means of providing security and secondly the need for extending the concept of security from the state to the citizen. In this context the World Bank has stated: "The security sector is very much a part of the state; like other public sector institutions, it is accountable to citizens and should operate in a transparent manner in accordance with democratic principles. These concepts have dominated discussion of how to create secure environments that enable development, as expressed in good governance and human security, and how to balance state-centered and people centered approaches. Strengthening civilian institutions and their ability to oversee the security sector, as well as to provide human security, should be priority areas for the development of the community. Security reform has been correctly described as the quintessential governance issue" (World Bank, 1999:8).

But security for what? The answer can be found in a much wider concept. The Declaration on the preparation of society for life in peace (this declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the UN on 15 December 1978 (resolution (33/73)) states in its paragraph 1, numeral 1: "Every nation and every human being, regardless of race, conscience, language or sex has the inherent right to live in peace. Respect for that right, as well as for the other human rights, is in the common interest of all mankind and indispensable condition of advancement of all nations, large and small in all fields." Additionally, the United Nations declared after Nairobi Conference on Women in 1984 that "Peace includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities at the National and International level, but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equity and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within the society." Peace is therefore a much broader concept than the absence of armed conflict. The removal of armed threats is only a minimalist condition for the attainment of peace.

But then, what is peace? Two compatible definitions are (Galtung, 1996: 9):

- Peace is the absence of violence of all kinds
- Peace is not violent and creative conflict transformation

Both definitions look at peace from a positive perspective. In a strict sense, it will not be possible to eliminate all kind of violence, but they can be minimized. Peace and violence are both a form of struggle neither is an end in itself but vital interests govern each. One focuses on the well being of human beings as a species, while the other seeks for the welfare of some few.

However, when the reaction towards conflict is manifested in a violent way, it can imply more than the causation of physical pain and/or death. It also involves domination, exploitation, discrimination and marginalization. Hence, Galtung has identified three different kinds of violence: direct, structural and cultural. Direct violence enhances physical and/or psychological suffering on human beings. Torture, maim and assassination are some of its more common expressions. The structural violence comes from the social structure itself and it expresses itself mainly through repression and exploitation. At the external level, structural violence may consist of the domination-dependency syndrome. At the internal level, it consists of all those systems, which are characterized by the exploitation of people by people. Cultural violence expressed through aspects such as language or religion legitimizes both the direct and structural. These three types of violence generally feed each other.

Development is critical to overcoming structural violence, which in turn may be crucial to eliminating direct violence. Structural violence is often based on a combination of exploitation and fragmentation of the majority. Development is meant to raise the living conditions of the majority population of a society. Promotion of welfare or development ensures the more basic conditions for peace. This is the origin of looking development as a Human Right. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the right to development on 4 December 1986 (resolution 41/128). It states in its article 1: "The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic,

social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized."

Development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process that aims at the constant improvement of the well being of the entire population and of all individuals has been done as well for regional organizations worldwide. For example, the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) adopted on 29 June 1981 the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. This charter entered into force on 21 October 1985 and states in its article 22: "All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity an in the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind," and on its article 24: "All peoples have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development."

The concepts of peace, development and security form a web of interwoven relationships and processes. Peace is seen as "the condition in space for nonviolent development" (Galtung, 1996: 223). This implies non-violence not only against each other but it also involves non-violence against the ecological environment since is this one the essential precondition for all human activity. Furthermore, the existing trends of development, based just on economic growth, have been achieved at the cost of the environment. This has jeopardized the existence of every human being through increase scarcity and the degradation of natural resources. The deterioration of the natural environment is also a force, which contributes in the long term to livelihood insecurity and dissolution. Consequently, what has happened is that development and security are often pulling in divergent directions.

It is in this context that the concept of "Sustainable Development" emanated. Sustainable development is: "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony an enhancement, both current, and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (WCED, 1987: 46). This concept goes beyond to forestall environmental destruction and resource exhaustion. It involves, among others, two main challenges: social justice and equity.

Thus, if it is believed that sustainable development is the option to guarantee the survival of the human race and that this involves issues of inter and intra-generational equity, it cannot be denied that an environment of peace is not just important, but is actually necessary. Sustainable development as both an objective and as a process, embraces in the same way that the concept of peace and security does a change in fundamental attitudes to life and work in social, cultural and political institutions.

3. Issues of the Peace Problematic in Africa

The end of the Cold War has not led a more peaceful world. Despite the hope that this event has raised, it has only pointed out an already existing trend with regard to inter-state armed conflict. Whereas before 1939, four conflicts out of five were between states (interstate conflicts), since 1945 four conflicts out of five have been internal (intrastate conflicts) (Dufor, 1996). One hundred and three (103) armed conflicts have been reported during the nine-year period 1989–1997 (Wallensten at al, 1998a), among

them 61 have been classified as major. Furthermore, of the major conflicts in 1997 just one has been reported to be interstate, and that was the conflict between India and Pakistan. Table 1, shows the number of armed conflict and major armed conflicts during the period 1989–1997.
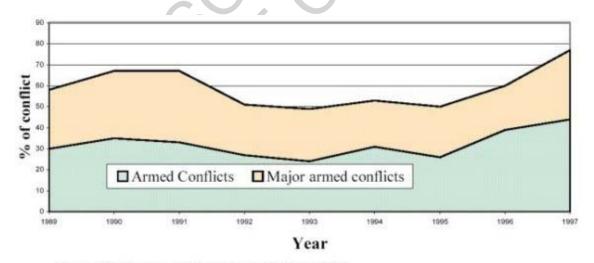
	AFRICA		ASIA		MIDDLE EAST		AMERICAS		EUROPE	
Year	MAC	AC	MAC	AC	MAC	AC	MAC	AC	MAC	AC
1989	9	14	11	19	5	4	5	8	2	2
1990	10	17	10	18	5	6	5	5	1	3
1991	10	17	8	16	5	7	4	5	2	6
1992	7	15	11	20	4	7	3	4	4	9
1993	7	11	9	15	4	7	3	3	5	10
1994	6	13	9	15	5	5	3	4	4	5
1995	6	9	9	13	4	4	3	4	3	5
1996	5	14	10	14	4	5	3	2	2	1
1997	8	14	9	14	4	3	2	2	1	0
MAC: Major Armed Conflicts AC: Armed conflicts										

Source: MAC data: Wallensten P and Sollenber M. (1998 b, 20). AC data: Wallensten P and Sollenber (1998a. 624).

Table 1. Number of armed conflicts by regional distribution 1989–1997

Two different terms are employed: armed conflict and major armed conflict. Armed conflict (AC) is understood as those conflicts in which the number of battle-relate deaths during the year is at least 25. A major armed conflict (MAC) involves more than 1,000 battle related death recorded during the course of the conflict -war is included within this category.

A striking point in all the statistics is that all the new major armed conflicts reported in 1997 were located in the African continent. Furthermore, during the period 1989–1997, it is the only region in the world in which there is an increase in the number of armed conflicts .The trend can be easily observed in the figure 1.

Source: Wallensten and Sollenberg (1998a; 1998b)

Figure 1.Trend of Conflict in Africa. 1989 - 1997

Hence, during this 9 years period the following countries, in Africa were involved in armed conflict: Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, and Congo. These countries

constitute 45 percent of Africa. Moreover, the consequences of the different conflicts affected a much more larger number of countries. This facts just arise the question "what makes Africa conflict prone? This paper examines this question in the context of development, environment and human rights performance.

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Biographical Sketch

Miss **Claudia Andrea Ramirez** is a chemical engineer graduated from the National University of Colombia. She finished a master science in Human Ecology at the Free University of Brussels. Nowadays, she is pursuing a Ph.D. at the Department of Science, Technology and Society, Faculty of Chemistry, Utrecht University, The Netherlands. She has been strongly involved in environmental issues. She worked at the Research Program on Solid Waste of the National University of Colombia for several years. However, the current conflict in Colombia and its consequences, not only social or economic but also environmental, has motivated her to work on the existing link between environment and conflict. Her interest involves, as well, their role of environmental factors in military strategy, which is the main topic of her master thesis.