

Post-Conflict Nation Building

by Mikel Lawrence McGinley

Introduction

Sovereignty is one of the central principles of the United Nations charter. The United Nations is made up of 191 independently sovereign member states. This creates many different questions about the UN's capabilities and limitations in relation to something like post-conflict nation building.

The United Nations Peace-Building Support Office seeks to help nations emerging from conflict. These nation building operations usually take place in countries that have had some form of civil war. The Secretary-General oversees peace-building and works along with agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which contributes to peace-building in such ways as democratization, troop demobilization and reintegration, poverty alleviation, and good governance.

All post-conflict nation building situations are different. Some countries need something as simple as help with a fair election; others need as much as an interim government to rule the nation until the country can do it themselves. A major problem with nation building efforts happen when there is an attempt to nation build before the conflict has been resolved. Kieran Prendergast, The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, has said, "We must always be careful that our efforts to build peace do not restart war¹." The capabilities and limitations of the UN in nation building are based on the Security Council approved mandates for each conflict situation. Some examples of post-conflict nation building that are worth noting in detail are Kosovo, East Timor, Cambodia, Palestine, and Afghanistan.

Kosovo

The 1999 war in Kosovo created over one million refugees and internally displaced persons and left over 300,000 people without shelter, an estimated 10,000 dead, and mass graves containing bodies of up to one hundred civilians, including women and children, who had been summarily executed. In response to the harsh treatment of the Kosovar Albanian people by the Serbian government, the Security Council issued SC 1244. This resolution established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosova (UNMIK) and allowed for NATO to enter Kosovo as a peace keeping force.

UNMIK's goal is to rebuild Kosovo and allow it to operate as an autonomous province of Serbia . The main objectives of the UNMIK as called upon by SC 1244 were to:

- 1) perform basic civilian administrative functions;*
- 2) promote the establishment of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo;*
- 3) facilitate a political process to determine Kosovo's future status;*
- 4) coordinate humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies;*
- 5) support the reconstruction of key infrastructure;*
- 6) maintain civil law and order;*
- 7) promote human rights;*
- 8) assure the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo.*

The UNMIK is to operate under four pillars:

Pillar I (before June 2000): Humanitarian Assistance led by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Pillar I (after May 2001): Police and Justice, under the direct leadership of the United Nations

Pillar II: Civil Administration, under the direct leadership of the United Nations

Pillar III: Democratization and Institution Building, led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Pillar IV: Reconstruction and Economic Development, led by the European Union (EU)

The reconstruction of Kosovo has been remarkably quick. In the two years or so that the UNMIK has been in place the infrastructure has almost been completed. A democratic government is almost completely up and running, and the health of the citizens has increased. There are still problems, but things so far have been handled quite well.

East Timor

In 1975 SC 384 called on Indonesia to withdraw all of their forces from East Timor and recognize the inalienable rights of the East Timor people's self-determination. It would be another 24 years before the Indonesian forces would fully withdraw from East Timor and during this time acts of genocide and other horrible atrocities took place.

In late July through August of 1999, the UN deployed 271 Civilian Police Advisors, 50 Military Liaison Officers, and 632 international staff and volunteers to East Timor. SC 1246 created the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to ensure a free and fair vote for the East Timor people. Over 450,000 people registered to vote in the independence plebiscite, even though tactics by the Indonesian government tried to persuade the people not to. Of the 450,000 registered voters, 98.6 percent arrived to cast their vote and two days later it was shown that 78.5 percent had voted for independence. Even though the UNAMET mandate was to be increased to 460 Civilian Police Advisors and 300 Military Liaisons, it never happened and violence took over. After the death of UNAMET staff at the hands of pro-government militias, most UNAMET employees fled to Darwin, Australia leaving the East Timorese to be slaughtered. By September 15, SC 1264 had authorized the use of force and the Australian-led International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) was deployed.

On October 25, 1999, SC 1272 established the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) to administer the territory. This freed the INTERFET from their duties and placed the UNTAET in East Timor as the interim government by February of 2000. UNTAET spent \$2.4 billion and placed 9,000 peacekeepers and 1,000 Civilian Police Advisors, yet failed to place East Timorese people in decision-making roles.

After two and a half years of UN rule in East Timor, SC 1410 introduced the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) on May 20, 2002. UNMISSET gave the East Timor people independence and will continue to provide them with assistance until all operational responsibilities are given to East Timorese authorities.

On September 27, 2002 East Timor, now under the new title of Timor-Leste, became a member state of the United Nations.

Cambodia

Prior to 1998, the nation of Cambodia had been engulfed in civil wars for over 20 years, resulting in the death of over 1 million Cambodians from disease, starvation, torture and execution. On November 14, 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the first of a series of resolutions calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Cambodia.

In August 1989 the Phnom Penh Government held talks in France with the other three opposition parties: the United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), the Khmer Rouge, and the Khmer People's Liberation Front (KPNLF). These talks led to a framework agreement that was endorsed in 1990 by the Security Council and adopted by the four parties. These parties join to become the Supreme National Council (SNC) and by May 1, 1991 a cease-fire went into affect.

On October 16, 1991, SC 717 established the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC). Not only did UNAMIC help the four parties keep their cease-fire but also it provided awareness to civilians about the growing number of land mines in Cambodia. The UNAMIC mandate was eventually adopted

into the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) to reemphasize and stop any possible breaks in the peace process. The seven distinct components of UNTAC were human rights, electoral, military, civil administration, police, repatriation, and rehabilitation. This gave the UN an unprecedented level of involvement in the country's official activities during the peace keeping operation. UNTAC also wanted to form an information or education division.

The Party of Democratic Kampuchea's belligerence toward UNTAC challenged the peace plan, but still the UNTAC pushed toward the election. By late 1992 the cease-fire had been broken but in the week of May 23, 1993, voting took place peacefully without major incident. The FUNCINPEC won with 45 percent of the vote, and with the Government of the State of Cambodia (SOC) and the KPNFL, they agree to form a single national army. On December 31, 1993, UNTAC troops completed a 6 month withdrawal from Cambodia.

More recently a UN tribunal has begun to look into the actions of Khmer Rouge's massacres from 1975 through 1979. The current prime minister of Cambodia has said the UN tribunal would not help in the reconciliation process, but the UN believes that Cambodia lacks the infrastructure to conduct fair trials.

Palestine

The UN responded to Mideast violence at the end of the British League of Nations mandate by creating Resolution 181 (ii), which called for the Security Council to implement a policy which would incorporate separate Jewish and Arab states while allowing for an integrated economic structure. The UN resolution also called for an international regime for Jerusalem. Before these plans could be enacted Israel declared independence from Britain on May 14th of 1948 and was subsequently attacked by its Arab neighbors.

In November of 1948, after the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations established the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) to give aid and relief to Palestinian refugees. Soon after on December 8, the General Assembly created the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) through resolution 302 (IV). The UNRWA has contributed food, clothing, housing, education and healthcare to four generations of people in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This mandate is unique due to the UN's 50-plus years of dedication to one group of people and their nation building. Two-thirds of the organization's 22,000 person staff is devoted to education, along with half of their regular budget. The UNRWA works along side the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The financial support needed for this extended relief effort has come from the United States, European Commission, the U.K, Sweden as well as various other countries. The UNRWA mandate started May 1, 1950 and will be in affect until June 30, 2005.

Afghanistan

The territory known as Afghanistan, has for the most part been in a constant state of change. Since its conception in the late eighteenth century Afghanistan has gone through monarchs, foreign influences, and hostile takeovers. In 1973 Afghanistan was again thrown into chaos. King Zahir Shah was overthrown by his cousin and former Prime Minister, Muhammad Daud. Daud then declared Afghanistan a republic, and appointed himself president of the new democracy. Daud's form of government was opposed by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) as well as the traditional cultural leaders. In April of 1978 militants overthrew and killed Daud leaving PDPA leader, Noor Muhammad Taraki, to become president. Later in 1978 the traditional ethnic leaders of Afghanistan began an armed revolt against the presiding regime. By 1979 the traditional leaders had taken control of most of Afghanistan. Taraki was deposed and later killed, leaving his deputy to replace him. Unfortunately, he too made a futile effort to suppress the rebellion. Soon the government weakened. On December 25, 1979, Soviet forces stormed Afghanistan, and took control of Kabul. Babrak Karmal, the leader of a less hard-line faction of the PDPA, became the President.

In January of 1980 the UN held a special 5-day session in which they developed a series of “situation in Afghanistan” resolutions (resolution ES-6/2). In these resolutions, the UN noted the disapproval of armed intervention in Afghanistan, called for the complete withdrawal of all foreign forces in Afghanistan, asked for humanitarian assistance and asked the Secretary-General to keep it informed of developments.

The UN resolutions did little to stop the constant fighting between the Rebels and the Soviet Union. In the next few years over 3 million refugees fled from Afghanistan to Pakistan, and 1.5 million to Iran. By this time half of the population had been displaced. The fighting also resulted in anywhere between 700,000 1.3 million casualties due to combat. The landscape, architecture, and economy of Afghanistan was destroyed by the war.

While the UN continued to push for the removal of troops from the country during the eighties, the focus also turned to humanitarian aid. In 1985 resolution (40/137) was adopted focusing attention on the large-scale human rights violations and the purposeful military attacks on villages and agricultural areas. Things changed on October 31, 1988 when the United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the USSR signed UN resolution 622. The resolution brought about the removal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. To make sure that this process went smoothly Secretary-General Javier Perez set up the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP). By February of 1989 all Soviet forces had been completely extracted from Afghanistan. However the rebel forces, which had not signed the resolution, continued their fighting.

The UN continued their humanitarian acts for Afghanistan throughout the 1990s. The UN provided food, assistance with the reconstruction of their agricultural economy, and attempted to assist with the repair of infrastructure. The UN’s job was made more difficult by the still volatile civil war situation. By 1990 there were 6.3 million people in exile. This made Afghanistan the largest refugee crisis in the world. In 1992 fighting intensified, climaxing with the ascension of the guerilla forces to power. The now Islamic nation of Afghanistan was led by Burhannudin Rabbani. Rabbani was supposed to step down after a few months but failed to. The government was slow to develop, which frustrated the General Assembly who was trying to reconstruct Afghanistan.

In 1993 the General Assembly created the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA) The UNSMA looked to the Afghan leaders for direction on how to better assist their people. It was not long before the current government would be overthrown by the Taliban, leaving the UN back at square one. To attempt to further assist the Afghani people the United Nations enacted resolution 1076 on October 22, 1996 calling for the Taliban to end its’ drug trafficking and hostile combat. In reaction to the hostile nature of the Taliban, the Secretary-General for Political Affairs, held a series of informal meetings with the “Six plus Two” group - composed of the six States bordering Afghanistan (China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) plus the United States and Russia.

In 2001 the UN demanded that the Taliban cease their involvement in aiding terrorist activity and that they hand over Osama Bin Ladin. After rebel forces along with U.S. troops swept through Afghanistan defeating the Taliban, the UN was able to finally assist in the nation building process that it had been attempting for over 20 years. Assistance levels with food, structural reconstruction, refugees returning home and the education of women have not been this high since the 18th century. Various nations have pledged over \$662 million dollars to help Afghanistan rebuild itself and the UNSMA mandate still remains in effect.

Conclusion

Beside the five examples given, the UN has helped national development in at least a half dozen additional situations. When organized and done correctly, post-conflict nation building seems to be beneficial not only to the re-building state but also the entire world. But when poor attempts and mistakes take place, the results can be disastrous, even deadly. The duration of UN nation building missions vary according to the unique circumstances of each situation. Sometimes the length of support given to a country is based more the financial support and national interest of donor states than the humanitarian needs of the recipient state. Secretary General Annon is currently working on a Peace Building Unit that will be held within the

Department of Political Affairs in order to better coordinate nation building efforts. As Under-Secretary-General Prendergast has said,

“For peace-building to be effective, we need to act strategically, that means reconciling frequently differing agendas -- political, developmental, humanitarian, military, civilian; those agendas that are immediate and those that are long-term. We have to be responsive and flexible to seek solutions that work, even if they are not perfectⁱⁱ.”

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- 1) Is post-conflict nation building a violation of sovereignty?
- 2) When does peace building end and independent rule begin for a UN assisted nations?
- 3) Should UN mandates involving post-conflict nation building involve more heavily armed troops to reduce the risk of situations like the UNAMET faced in East Timor?
- 4) Should nation building efforts exist in nations where conflict still exists?
- 5) How can nation building efforts be more effective?

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ⁱ <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/docs/conflict/text.html>

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Ensuring the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

By Nick Matiella

BACKGROUND

The start of the 20th Century “space race” was marked on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union successfully orbited the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1. Humanity’s subsequent endeavors, from orbital space flight to [NASA’s](#) historic lunar missions, were primarily motivated by military tensions of the Cold-War era. Although space exploration now shifts more towards scientific advancement and commercial profiteering, looming defense interests still requires the United Nations to play a diplomatic role in the affairs of outer space, and the peaceful use thereof.

While developed nations commit significant resources in such pursuits, developing nations, who lack reputable space programs, have amplified their calls for increased technology sharing. In 1995, the [International Astronomical Union](#) reported that of the 189 member states to the United Nations, only about 20 countries, representing 15% of the world's population, have access to the full range of astronomical facilities and information. This does not include most of the Eastern European, Baltic, and former countries of the Soviet Union, whose fragile economies keep them from achieving their full potential, despite the excellence of their astronomical heritage and education. Dependent on the success and willingness of the developed world to share, developing nations contending they [miss out](#) when it comes to reaping the benefits of aeronautical and space sciences research.

In 1959, the General Assembly passed [resolution 1472 \(XIV\)](#) establishing the [Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space \(COPUOS\)](#). Since then, the COPUOS has sponsored three influential conferences, the 1968 UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE), the 1982 Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-82), and the 1999 Third Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). The UN administrative office for COPUOS is the [Office for Outer Space Affairs \(OOSA\)](#). From the first two UNISPACE Conferences, the UN established the [Programme on Space Applications \(PSA\)](#), an international association responsible for organizing and disseminating communal information on space technology applications. PSA conferences are organized primarily for the benefit of the developing countries and to emphasize the use of space technology and applications for economic and social development.

TECHNOLOGY SHARING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations recognizes that sharing space technology applications with developing nations can greatly improve human conditions and advance goals of sustainable development, as stated in General Assembly [resolution 51/122](#) of 13 December 1996, entitled "Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the

Needs of Developing Countries.” The use of meteorological and imaging satellites, for example, is invaluable to developing nations suffering from natural disasters. Already, most island nations assert that private and government satellite data used to track global warming and ozone depletion should be shared information regardless of political or economic conditions. It’s also believed that medical discoveries made as a result of scientific research conducted in outer space could lead to cures for diseases that decimate the developing world. As a nation concerned about starvation, China has focused a great deal on launching recoverable satellites containing fruit and vegetable seeds. Upon recovery, it appears these seeds yield better crops and sometimes grow 5 to 7 times faster than normal.

At the 1999 UNISPACE III Conference and United Nations Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, there came increased criticism from developing nations, claiming they see only a minimum of benefits resulting from the exploration of outer space. This has been due to a multiplicity of problems raging from low-level awareness on space science, to an acute shortage of human and financial resources. Some developed nations contend technology/information sharing is a difficult practice, sometimes citing national security concerns, licensing problems or the inability of the borrowing nation to meet financial obligations. UNISPACE III closed with the passage of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, calling for improvements in technology sharing policies and timetables, increased meteorological and environmental monitoring from outer space, improvements in sharing satellite communication, improvements in space sciences education, and increased categorizing and study of space debris.

THE WEAPONIZATION OF SPACE

As much as space is viewed as a source for scientific discovery, its value to the defense interests of governments is undeniable. Fundamental to this debate is the unique national security interests of each state, whether a developed or developing, space faring or non-space faring. Private and public technology sharing and trade agreements between nations play a major role in each nation’s position.

The United Nations Conferences on Disarmament are the primary multilateral instrument addressing the militarization of outer space. However, bilateral agreements such as the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile and START treaties between the United State and Russia also shape the international debate on space-based weapon systems. Commonly referenced in the debate over the peaceful uses of outer space is the 1967 UN Outer Space Treaty prohibiting weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in space, and declaring space to be used only for the common good.

Perhaps the most prominent security issue involving outer space is the possibility of a space-based antiballistic missile system by 2020. The last several years have seen a growing interest by the United States to deploy a National Missile Defense shield (NMD), commonly called Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or “Star Wars.” U.S. officials envision a defensive missile shield system using orbiting satellites to detect and track a launched nuclear missile, prompting either land or space-based arsenals to

respond by intercepting and destroying incoming warheads. Technical uncertainties have brought into question the feasibility of constructing a functional SDI system. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration received U.S. congressional approval to pursue SDI research and development.

Opponents of SDI warn that complimenting the “nuclear triad” in this manner might trigger a new global arms race. In 1999, the UN General Assembly endorsed a resolution originally sponsored by Russia, China and Belarus calling on parties to the ABM treaty “to refrain from the deployment of antiballistic missile systems for the defense of their country and not to provide a base for such a defense.” Regardless, the United States withdrew from ABM two years later. At the June 2001 Conference on Disarmament, the Peoples’ Republic of China heavily advocated for a treaty to reinforce a ban on all weapons in outer space in an effort to counter US arguments for SDI. Following the September 11, 2001 Al-Qaida terrorist attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon, the United States intensified its call for a SDI system, advancing its position that in the next few decades rogue states would likely acquire ICBM capabilities, further destabilizing global peace and security.

INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

A partnership between the space agencies of the United States, Canada, Japan, Russia, Brazil and several European nations has led to the ongoing construction of the International Space Station (ISS), also known as “Space Station Alpha” currently manned in orbit. The original concept of the ISS grew from a costly 1993 NASA program to construct a smaller US-operated research facility dubbed “Space Station *Freedom*.” The ISS is designed for a six-person crew to conduct scientific research in a near zero gravity environment. Although the ISS does not fall under UN jurisdiction, it is widely seen as a symbol of international cooperation in the quest for the peaceful use of outer space.

SPACE JUNK AND DEBRIS REENTRY

From the Hubble Telescope to random nuts and bolts, there is an estimated 110,000 or more objects larger than 1cm in low earth orbit, some of it clocked at speeds of 17,500 mph. In June 2000, the U.S. Space Command (USSC) counted 8,927 man-made objects circling the earth. Of that, 2,671 are believed to be satellites (working or not), 90 space probes, and 6,096 “chunks” of debris. In Earth’s higher orbit where geostationary satellites are maintained, scientists say objects there can linger for centuries before orbital decay. As sophisticated as USSC equipment is, at that height (22,300 miles up), objects must be larger than a volleyball to be tracked, leaving smaller harmful objects in that region virtually undetectable.

The danger space debris poses to space programs is significant. Collision between objects no larger than a baseball could seriously endanger the lives of astronauts in a space shuttle or the International Space Station. NASA once reported paint chips from a satellite indented a space shuttle window by nearly a ¼ of an inch. Most space junk can be attributed to the United States and the former Soviet Union, however an increasing number of corporations and organizations also are contributing to the total objects launched into orbit. To further complicate the issue, the UN Office on Outer Space Affairs reports many nations have failed

to abide by the 1975 UN Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space, requiring governments to report to the United Nations a registry of what they launched. Intended as a measure to prevent the placement of secret space-based weapons systems in orbit, compliance with the registration treaty may have provided a more accurate understanding of the space debris problem.

Concern is also given to debris reentry, especially when it includes radioactive material sometimes used as energy or internal heating sources for satellites. In most cases, space junk incinerates at high altitudes in the atmosphere unnoticed. Even when impact occurs, probability places most debris over ocean or on uninhabited land. The most widely noted catastrophic instances of debris reentry are the *Skylab* station in 1979 and the Space Station *Mir* in 2001. Pieces of *Skylab* surviving reentry plunged into the Indian Ocean, one segment landing in the Australian outback. *Mir* was successfully guided by the Russian space agency over South America and into the South Pacific Ocean. For a list of reported space debris discoveries made by member states within their territories, visit <http://www.oosa.unvienna.org/sdnps/unlfd.html>.

Possible solutions to mitigate the dangers of space debris have been under consideration for several years. In 1997, European space agencies urged the United Nations to create an international treaty to halt the rapid growth of space debris. Suggested plans would require anyone launching a spacecraft to retrieve it after its mission, or reroute useless equipment into designated orbits. NASA is also exploring the possibility of using specialized lasers, perhaps affixed to the ISS, to blast space debris out and away from Earth's orbits.

REMARKS

For over half a century, man's presence in space has been political as much as physical. It has been for only the past ten years that, in a unipolar globalizing world, newly fashioned partnerships have formed among all major space-faring nations. Some of this cooperation is the result of strained space program budgets throughout the international community, and the realization that no one nation can "go it alone."

In this age, the United Nations is confronted with disparities in the advancement of space science and technology, much like the disparities of the digital divide, health, wealth and development. It is hoped, especially by the developing world, that many worldly crises, like environmental degradation, natural disasters, starvation and disease might be alleviated given the proper investment in space research programs-- programs they are unable to fund or carry out themselves.

By contrast, many developed nations view space more as a means by which weapons could be delivered and military intelligence could be gathered. Consequently, national defense remains an important motivator for these countries to maintain a presence in the aerospace/space sciences enterprise. The United States, for example, spent \$14.9 billion for NASA in FY2002, while a nearly equal amount of \$15.8 billion went to space programs administered by the Department of Defense.

Given these competing worldviews of outer space, the United Nations struggles to break the impasse between space faring and non-space faring nations. Doing so is believed critical to the advancement and security of mankind.

QUESTIONS

Is the 1967 Outer Space Treaty relevant given the security threats faced in the 21st century?

Can respect for a member nation's national security be upheld if they are forced to participate in technology sharing programs?

Has there been sufficient advancement in the launch capabilities of developing nations building their own space programs? If so, is there still a need for space faring nations to make available aerospace technology?

What impact do missile non-proliferation regimes have on the ability of all nations to make peaceful use of space.

Should developing nations make greater efforts to participate and/or fund the space programs of major space faring nations?

Does the developed world have a certain obligation to share affordable satellite data and bandwidths at the demands of developing nations suffering from natural disasters?

Should the 1975 UN Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space be more strictly enforced, or does this treaty infringe on rights to national security?

Could the deployment of a missile defense system by the United States trigger a new nuclear arms race?

What should be the role of governments in encouraging private companies to pursue corporate ventures in outer space?

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Bridging the Economic Divide

By Laura Enderton

The current economy of the world shows signs of hope and prosperity for many people. However, there are parts of the world that have never and may never experience the advantages of globalization. In fact, nations that have not been able to take advantage of recent prosperity are often the ones who experience the repercussions of globalization. These nations also make up the majority of the world's population. The line commonly drawn between the developed and developing nations is somewhat similar to the equator; however it is not simple geography that divides the developed nations and developing nations. In addition to factors such as culture and environment, wealth is overwhelmingly the largest division between developed nations and developing nations. This economic division between developed nations and developing nations has increased over the last few decades, making it more difficult for those nations on the developing end of the divide and making the problem more difficult to resolve. The questions to consider now are why is there such an inequality of wealth and what can be done to bridge the economic divide?

The issue of the economic divide has been one the United Nations has been dealing with since it's founding. While the UN and its associated bodies intend to aid nations in need, sometimes their policies have a negative effect, for example the IMF's structural adjustment policies of the 1980's had a negative impact on women and children in nations subject to the policies (1). More recently, the UN has taken a very active approach to this problem, beginning with the Millennium Declaration. Signed in 2000, by all 189 member nations, this resolution promises such goals as eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, creation of universal primary education and development of a global partnership for development (2). In all, the Millennium Declaration hopes to reach eight different goals towards development of all countries, all to be accomplished by the year 2015 (3). More recently, the United Nations met at the Johannesburg Summit, also known as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which concluded on September 4, 2002. This summit not only discussed steps toward sustainable development but also created an action plan and achieved partnerships between governments, citizen groups and businesses resulting in \$235 million to start implementing steps towards sustainable development (4). While the results of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Summit will not be seen for years to come, each promise hope that the divide between the developed, developing and developing nations will be lessened or eradicated over time.

Possible Causes of the Economic Divide

There has always been a division between the wealthy developed nations, which include the United States and the European Union, and the poverty stricken developing nations, which include Sub-Saharan Africa and other developing nations. The division is evident in the pervasiveness of poverty and hunger in many developing nations. Thirteen to eighteen million people die from hunger and poverty each year and the majority of these millions are children (5). Income disparity also illustrates the division. Seventy-seven percent of the world population earns a mere fifteen percent of total income (6). This leaves twenty-three percent earning the remaining eighty-five percent. Of this twenty-three percent that earns the bulk of the world's income, the majority live in the wealthy developed nations. Literacy rates, infant mortality rates and HIV/AIDS infection rates are sure to paint a similar picture of the differences between developed nations and developing nations.

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There are a number of causes for such a disparity in wealth, some due to natural occurrences such as natural disasters, including flood or famine. One substantial cause may be policies of developed nations or lending institutions that adversely affect developing nations. For example, beginning in the 80's and 90's, some aid policies required recipient nations to stabilize their currencies and adopt austerity measures to cut spending. This led to inflation, high unemployment, and dramatic cuts in social spending. These economic policies were intended to boost the failing economy of developing countries, yet unintended negative repercussions of these policies are still felt in the developing nations today. Past economic policies have also included withdrawal of state support for economic production in developing nations and other developing nations (7). Another cause of the economic gap between countries are non-tariff barriers to free trade, such as environmental standards, labor standards, product regulations and standards, and health and safety standards. These standards have different effects on developed and developing nations, and developing nations are frequently at a disadvantage due to undiversified economies and inability to meet these standards because of low technology levels.

Another policy tool that has affected the economic divide is economic sanctions. Often sanctions are put in place to achieve a certain policy goal. However, sanctions can also cause harm to the general population of a country. Currently, the UN and other individual nations have sanctions in place against fourteen countries including Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Sierra Leone (8). Policies such as this clearly pull economic resources away from developing nations.

Economic policies can have an impact on developing, developing and even developed nations alike. These policies can foster strained relations and the perception that developing and developing nations are being exploited by already developed nations, emphasizing the need for cooperation among the developing nations to aid in balancing the differences between the developed nations and developing nations (9). As a consequence, developing and developing nations can become reluctant to work with the developed nations to rectify the situation. In addition to the tensions felt between the developed nations and the developing nations, tensions within a nation or a region can cause unrest and economic strain within a nation and its surrounding area. Examples of this can be seen in Rwanda or the recurring war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. People in these nations have suffered starvation due to the violence that has occurred within and between their nations.

In addition to suffering the consequences of policies of developed nations, developing nations have also subject to harsh restrictions or conditions on loans granted by the IMF or the World Bank. While these loans were meant to help developing nations rebuild, the conditions of the loans were so harsh that they actually contributed to the degradation of already bad conditions (10). The fact that loan conditions from the IMF or the World Bank may have contributed to deterioration in developing nations brings some the practices of the IMF and World Bank into question, especially if human welfare is affected in a detrimental manner.

Possible Solutions to the Problem

In order to begin bridging the economic divide, developed, developing and developing nations must start to ease the tensions between them, and nations suffering from economic underdevelopment must ensure peace in their nation in order to begin stabilizing the economy. Nations may also need to address social areas, such as health care and education, as well as distinctly economic issues such as national debt. Initially, resolving the economic factors such as national debt or inflation can free a nation to later put its resources into social programs. Many see debt reduction as a key factor; some third world nations are ruined by the amount of debt that they

have accumulated. For example, as of 1999, the debt in Sub-Saharan Africa was 110 percent of its GNP (11). In essence, these nations cannot even make enough money to even attempt debt reduction. This is why many advocate debt relief or forgiveness, where lenders such as the World Bank, IMF, or bilateral lenders reduce or completely erase the debt owed by these nations. With the reduction or even elimination of debt, funds are freed for social ventures such as population control efforts, education and health care.

On the other hand, there is also the belief that by first fixing the social institutions, these nations will be better equipped to be part of the global economy. Some see the neglect of social issues as a power advantage of the elite over the poor and detrimental to human welfare (12). Keeping the masses uneducated keeps the powerful in power. However, it may also keep a nation in debt and out of the global economy. More powerful is the notion that the decline in social institutions may have a damaging impact on the growth of a nation, developed or developing (13). These arguments advocate addressing the internal social issues of a nation before trying to address the economic situation. If people are better educated and healthy they will be able to contribute to the economy rather than draining the economy. Another serious issue is the HIV/AIDS crisis facing much of Africa today. There is an overwhelming amount of Africa's population that suffers from the AIDS virus, leaving the majority of the people not only unable to work but an economic burden as well.

The role individual governments play in rebuilding a nation's economy should also be considered. The government of any nation can choose what steps to take in order to become more economically stable and independent. A government can take steps towards institution building, which can include both economic and social issues such as creating tax codes, tax collection processes or taking steps to create "social safety nets" such as unemployment benefits and environmental management (14). Institution building seems to be a process that enables a nation or even a group of nations to work towards resolving many aspects of the economic problems facing them and work towards solving them in a manner where neither side gets neglected, the economic or the social aspect. Steps towards stabilizing commodity prices should also be considered. Policies towards stabilization may help prevent rapid price changes in food prices or protect farmers when the prices fall rapidly (15). Keeping stable prices allows the population of the nation to expect that they will be able to afford the necessary food to prevent hunger or malnutrition. This also allows vendors to continue to have a decent income even in a situation where the economy of a nation takes an unforeseeable crash. Realizing that not all nations will be able to take all of these measures on their own or even in a rapid fashion, any small measures that can be taken independently or in cooperation with other nations may aid drastically in the economic situation of any nation.

Regardless of whether a nation chooses to take the economic or social route to building their economy, it is clear that cooperation between the developed and developing nations is necessary to make any economic plans successful. The modern world faces a position where many feel that economic success is a competition that pits nation against nation, rich against poor. On one side of the world people suffer from disease and starvation while on the other side, the minority of the world's population controls the majority of the world's wealth. The steps taken towards economic equality must always consider this fact and take necessary precautions to constantly ensure human welfare. In addition, individual nations need to do all that they can to create an environment where economic growth is possible rather than a place where economic revision and stabilization are destined to fail.

Questions for Further Consideration:

- 1) In what ways do social factors such as health care or education contribute to lessening the economic divide? In what ways might these factors encourage the economic divide?
- 2) Can the economic problems between developed nations and developing nations be solved through focus on core economic issues or should social issues be included? Why?
- 3) Should lenders, such as the IMF, the World Bank or other nations, be able to dictate policy to the nations receiving the money?
- 4) What are some possible ways that a developing nation can begin the institution building process? What resources do they need?
- 5) Can policies toward stabilization cause more harm than good? In what way?
- 6) What can be done to ease the tensions between developed nations and developing nations in order to ensure a more stable relationship and economic building process?

Resources:

Group of 77 home page www.g77.org

Intergovernmental Group of 24 home page www.g24.org

United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research www.wider.unu.edu

All Africa Global Media www.allafrica.com

Johannesburg Summit Information Page www.johannesburgsummit.org

Global Policy Forum www.globalpolicy.org

IMF home page www.imf.org

World Bank home page www.worldbank.org

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Religious Tolerance and Diversity in the Globalized Society

Since its conception, the United Nations has been mindful of the religious diversity of its member states. The United Nations Charter repeatedly mentions the importance of respecting religious freedoms, and the organization and its agencies have consistently adopted resolutions focusing on the importance of protecting religious freedoms.

Although it is natural to point to religious diversity as a source of conflict, it is also important to stress the pivotal role that religion can play in the promotion of peace and reconciliation between nations. History has taught us that religious tolerance is indispensable in the maintenance of international peace and security.

A Precedent for Tolerance

The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations clearly states the member states agree to “practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors.”

Article 1 Chapter 3 states that a primary goal of the organization is “to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.” (1) This principal is repeated throughout the document and is found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the General Assembly with no dissenting votes and only eight abstentions. Saudi Arabia could not approve the Declaration because it affords individuals the right to change their religion, a principle the Saudi Arabian delegation found to be in violation of the Qu’uran. Interestingly, other Islamic nations did not share this interpretation and chose to approve the Declaration.(2) The principle of religious freedom was also proclaimed in the International Covenant on Human Rights.

Eventually, member states found it necessary to elaborate on the importance of religious freedom as a component of human rights. This led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 36/55, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief. The Declaration stresses that “freedom of religion and belief should contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples” and it makes clear that “the use of religion or belief for ends inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the present Declaration is inadmissible.” The Declaration enumerates the rights that freedom to religion must include and even details the rights of children regarding religion, but it also states that this freedom is subject to “limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.” This clause can become problematic when discussing laws and social orders that depend on curtailing freedom of religion.(3)

Religion and Conflict

The principle of religious tolerance that weaves its way through so much UN action and resolution is not simply based on ideology. Religious intolerance contributed greatly to the events of the Second World War, a major factor in the formation of the United Nations. Since then, religious intolerance has been a determining factor in many conflicts, including the former Yugoslavia, the conflict in the Middle East, and the recent terrorist attacks on the United States. Religion is not easily separated from politics. For example, the Vatican played an important role in guaranteeing Christian Democratic rule in Italy after World War II. The Communists that had been essential to the resistance of Hitler and Mussolini could easily have taken rule over the nation if not for the strong, US-backed Vatican support. The Vatican also played a role in the Guatemalan uprising in the 1950's and the Nicaraguan revolt in the 1980's. It must be noted that the Vatican usually worked in direct cooperation with the United States. (4)

Religion may not only be a causal element of war, it can also be an obstacle in the effort toward reconstruction. The government of Croatia continues to tackle this issue as their country rebuilds. In late 2001, the head of the Croatian delegation reported to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that religious education had been introduced in schools. Other members of the committee were justifiably concerned about what religion would be taught and what procedure was being used to determine proper religious instruction.(5)

Religion and Reconciliation

Religion is not always divisive. There are Muslims in the United States and Roman Catholics in Eastern Europe, and minority groups such as these serve as an important link between nations. Also, different religions within the same country have been known to work together for the common good. As the Central African Republic worked toward disarmament in the late 1990's, religious leaders of all denominations united themselves in this effort, which they believed would lead to national reconciliation after years of unrest. Another example is found in South Africa, where religious leaders have been central to the post-apartheid reconciliation process. The Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, called the involvement of religious groups "extremely valuable" and stated that "no tensions exist in the Central African Republic between the various faiths practiced by the population." (6)

The Secretary-General maintains that the United Nations embraces all religions. Ironically, in a speech delivered the day before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the Holy Family Church in New York, Secretary-General Annan said that the UN "is not anti-religious...it needs the support of all religions." He asked the congregation to "pray for all the peoples of the United Nations—and pray for the Organization, which is their organization." He asked that they "pray that in the coming year they find it more effective in serving their needs and protecting them from the scourge of war."(7)

Religious Organizations and the United Nations

The United Nations has recognized the need to act in cooperation with leaders of world religious bodies. In August 2000, religious and spiritual leaders from all over the world

gathered at the United Nations for the Millennium World Peace Summit in an effort to coordinate leadership in an effort to promote religious tolerance and encourage inter-religious dialogue. The Summit coincided with the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. In his opening address to the Millennium World Peace Summit, General Assembly Vice-President Arthur Mbanefo quoted the celebrated former Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld: “I see no hope for permanent world peace. We have tried and failed miserably. Unless there is a spiritual awakening on the worldwide scale, civilization is doomed.”(8) The Summit led to the creation of the World Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. The Council was established in October 2001, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Council plans to address the underlying religious and spiritual issues that lead to violence, and it is plans to be an important agent in times of crisis. (9)

Conclusion

The framework is in place for the member states of the United Nations to have a meaningful and productive dialogue with world religious and spiritual leaders. Member states face great challenges in coordinating UN efforts for international peace and security with the efforts of the World Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders and other international religious bodies. It is a great and important task, the consequences of which may serve to save or destroy the world.

Questions for further consideration:

1. How can the UN facilitate discussion among world religious bodies?
2. Should leaders of international religious organizations be involved in the UN’s decision-making process?
3. Does the international right to freedom of religion undermine nation-state’s authority to enforce laws?
4. What are the implications for closer integration between the UN and international religious organizations?
5. What steps can the UN take to promote religious tolerance?
6. Should religious conflict be approached differently than political conflict?

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Web Resources:

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Addressing the Repercussions of Colonialism

By Benjamin Carroll and Freeda Yllana

When the United Nations was established in 1945, 750 million people - almost a third of the world's population - lived in territories that were non-self-governing and dependent on colonial powers. Today, fewer than 2 million people live in such territories. During the Second World War, the major powers generally committed to the principle found in the Atlantic Charter that would give peoples living under foreign domination the right of self-government. The United Nations' founding members, wanting to ensure the well-being of dependent peoples living in territories administered previously under mandates of the League of Nations and in colonies separated from countries defeated in the war, empowered the United Nations to monitor progress towards self-determination in these and other non-self-governing territories.

The Charter of the United Nations established, in Chapter XI (Articles 73 and 74), the principles that continue to guide United Nations' decolonization efforts, including respect for the equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, without distinction as to sex, language, race or religion. These Articles bind administering States to recognize that the interests of dependent territories are paramount, to agree to promote social, economic, political and educational progress in the territories, to assist in developing appropriate forms of self-government and to take into account the political aspirations and stages of development and advancement of each territory. Administering States are also obliged under the Charter to convey to the United Nations information on conditions in the territories. The United Nations monitors progress towards self-determination in the territories.

In Resolution 1514 (XV) of December 14, 1960, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the General Assembly stated that "the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the United Nations Charter, and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation, and that steps should be taken to transfer, unconditionally, all powers to the Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories so that they might enjoy complete freedom and independence." Along with this proclamation the General Assembly passed resolution 1541 (XV) defining free association with an independent State, integration into an independent State, or independence as the three legitimate options offering full self-government to a state.

Since the UN's founding, more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence, either through treaty or armed conflict. Although national independence for these countries was achieved, the countries differ widely in the economic and social freedoms they have granted to their citizens. There remain 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories today. Although colonialism has been abandoned in the majority of the world, the effect of centuries of imposed foreign domination still impedes the development of many countries that suffered under colonial rule. The repercussions of colonialism are broad and affect societies at large, both economically and socially.

Lasting Impacts of Colonialism

Exploitation of labor and capital for single export economies created to serve the needs of the colonial power created a lasting economic dependency. Although free in principle to steer their own course, many developing countries are still struggling to diversify their national economies and create a foothold in the global marketplace. These countries lag behind because they continue to operate within the economic framework created by colonialism, which institutionalized imperial preference practices and monocrop or monomineral economic dependence. Widespread poverty and unrest due to lack of resources and economic opportunities are serious issues for a large portion of the world. Successful economies contribute to a higher quality of life and ease many societal pressures. Unfortunately, it is this desperation for improvement that leaves formerly colonized countries continuously vulnerable to exploitation by their former rulers.

Colonialism often imposed a complicated hierarchy based on race, ethnicity and gender, causing grave consequences for the subjugated classes. Colonialism also eroded whole cultures and undermined cultural identities and pride, leaving a bitter memory with the newly freed people towards their former rulers. Conflict often occurs when colonizers who still retain social and economic power after independence remain settled in the area. Discrimination towards ethnic minorities and women was a hallmark of colonialism. Racism and the purposeful division of ethnic groups supported the colonial system and continues to drive ethnic conflict in the region today. There is also harsh repression towards women in many former colonies. A large economy based on trafficking women and children is rising. Many of these societal conflicts are rooted in the flaws of lingering colonial economies and social systems leaving formerly colonized countries.

Other problems include the legacy of arbitrary national borders and corrupt governments. For example, as the modern continent of Africa began to take political form, the lines drawn were completely arbitrary. Instead of creating nations and states based upon natural demographic divisions, nations were created in accordance with European politics and Western wants or needs. In addition, colonial powers often attempted to keep the continent under their control, even after “leaving,” by putting into power a government that supported the original colonial power and treated their citizens even more brutally once the colonial power left. Many of the wars, famines, and lack of stable governments have as their roots the colonization of Africa.

Africa isn't the only part of the world that has had to deal with colonialism. Latin America, Asia, and South Asia have also dealt with brutal dictatorial colonial periods. Western powers forced themselves upon the South Asian continent due to its strategic location and cheap labor force, leading to many current social and security problems in the area. Some of the core conflicts in Kashmir are similar in cause to many of the African wars that have occurred. As a result of the way Britain drew the political lines, differing ethnicities and disagreeing religions were thrust together into one region that was not clearly defined, causing fighting and terror-like clashes between India and Pakistan.

As the 20th century world wars began, the colonial power of Japan began to impose heavy control over areas throughout its own region. The period of Japanese colonial rule and subsequent regional and global conflict caused many injustices to occur and left the area in shambles. The aftermath of this colonialism led to a massive shift in

ideological factors, which eventually led to the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese conflicts, the effects of which are still being felt in the region today.

Finally, it has been over four decades since the passing of resolution 1514, yet it remains unfulfilled. Today there are approximately sixteen Non-Self Governing Territories: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Gibraltar, Montserrat, St. Helena, Turks and the Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands, Guam, Pitcairn, Tokelau, Western Sahara, and New Caledonia. The United Nations Special Committee of 24 is closely monitoring the progress of their independence. Other territories in the world are fighting for their independence as well, such as Palestine and Tibet. It is unfortunate that colonialism still exists although it has been internationally denounced. The United Nations declared its Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in 2000, with the goal of complete decolonization by 2010.

Possible Solutions to Mitigate the Repercussions of Colonialism

Several options have been discussed to mitigate the repercussions of colonialism. The first is debt relief and economic assistance. Former colonies have accumulated great amounts of debt, often owed to their former colonial master. Debt relief is one potentially useful form of economic assistance. Other forms of economic assistance that allow the developing country to remain independent could also work to boost their economies, and they should work to become economically independent as well.

Another option is to promote assistance programs for women. Education and social programs for women and young girls in developing countries would strengthen their political and social positions within their society. This in turn raises the prospect of a healthier and higher quality of life for women and families. Discrimination based on gender in education, the job market, and at home is intolerable, and each woman is entitled to equal treatment with men. Similarly, the political position of ethnic minorities needs to be strengthened. This is often necessary in the face of majority opposition. The United Nations believes in the protection of all people and each member country has a responsibility of upholding the relevant resolutions and charters.

A more controversial option would be to consider reparations for slavery. Many world leaders have proposed increased economic assistance to the African continent as a form of reparations for slavery. Over the past summer, several suits were held in the United States seeking reparations from the U.S. government for the descendants of African Slaves for monetary compensation. Lawsuits granting compensation for Holocaust and Japanese internment camp victims opened the possibility of this avenue.

The recent Durban Conference on Racism in South Africa focused attention on the demand that the repercussions of colonialism are a major reality that have to be dealt with. The conference failed to find consensus as many member states and key global players did not attend or demonstrate a willingness to address this ever present and important issue. However, the Durban Conference played an enormous role in bringing this issue to the forefront of the debate. One key aspect that must be determined is a general definition of what colonialism is in order to specify which member states have truly been ravaged by colonialism. Humanitarian efforts will likely need to be stepped up by the former colonial powers. These efforts need to be coupled with support from the affected member states in order to ensure that the recipient nation is getting aid where it

truly needs it. Perhaps the best way to address the repercussions of colonialism would be to open up dialogue within the international community. Dialogue itself may help towards making right what the repercussions of colonialism made so wrong.

Questions

1. What actions can the United Nations take in order to achieve the second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism? What can be done to achieve decolonization?
2. Is decolonization enough?
3. In what ways can improving local economies decrease racial tensions?
4. What can be done to improve the future for former colonies? What type of economic relationships best fit the success of these countries?
5. What can be done to protect the rights of women and ethnic minorities?
6. Should reparations be paid for slavery? What should or shouldn't the reparations entail?

Resources:

UN World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance
www.un.org/WCAR

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
<http://www.un.org/depts/dpi/decolonization/declaration.htm>

Special Committee of 24 <http://www.un.org/depts/dpi/decolonization/committee.htm>

The UN Refugee Agency www.unhcr.org

Women in Peacebuilding and Governance

By: Ma. Michaela C. de Castro

“Unless women's representation in all spheres of governance reaches their equitable share, women's impact on shaping our future will remain marginal and their needs not met.”

---G. Shabir Cheema

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) stands behind the belief that the political empowerment of women dramatically increases their control over the decisions that would affect their lives within and without their households. Political leaders typically prioritize issues they can directly relate to through their backgrounds, interests and the environment they come from. Although it can be stated that women have been gaining some semblance of control over their lives by making a place for themselves in the workplace, there is still the idea that women have to be in places where political power exists so that they may be able to negotiate a better deal for themselves. UNIFEM further says that “unless women gain leadership in the state, markets and civil society or have the tools and knowledge to play a brokering role for change through partnership with governments and civil society it will be difficult to transform or shape forces of the market to work in favor of women and gender equality.” (1)

There are several UN organizations and committees that work to increase the level of women in governance, where governance deals with the empowerment of women, and the need for them to control or have a hand at that which directly affects their lives.

These efforts include a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project in Vietnam that provided training for women candidates in the election for the Tenth National Assembly in 1997. Following this election the percentage of women at the National Assembly increased from 18 percent to 26 percent. (2) In Zimbabwe, UNDP projects have supported women's access by emphasizing civic education and leadership training for women candidates. (3)

Gender equality in government is essential in development efforts. Development is more effective when the choices of people are expanded and when people are given control over their lives. Education, health, productivity, credit and governance work better when women are involved.

Progress has been made in several countries, though in only eight has the 30 percent target for women's representation set by the United Nations been achieved. These countries are Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Netherland, Germany, and South Africa (4). The slow progress is mostly due to the complexity of challenges that face women who try to achieve equality with men.

There are three factors that hinder women from entering the political arena. (5) These factors are categorized into political, socio-economic and socio-cultural. The political obstacles would include, first of all, the prevalence of the “masculine model” of political life and of elected governmental bodies and the nature of the electoral system that may or may not be favorable to women candidates. The political environment is often based on competition and confrontation, causing many women to reject or be unwilling to participate in politics. A male-dominated working pattern is also reflected by the work schedule that political leaders have. Support for working mothers, in general, is not taken into consideration, thereby further discouraging women from participating in government leadership.

Another obstacle is the lack of party support, such as limited financial support for women candidates; limited access to political networks; and the prevalence of double standards. Women have to deal with the “old boys club” type of prejudices that are prevalent in politics that hamper them from making the cut and being nominated. Although women have proven themselves important when campaigning and mobilizing support for their parties, they are rarely given the opportunity to occupy a decision-making role within their parties. This lack of support can be said to be a manifestation of the lack of contact and cooperation with other public organizations such as trade unions and women’s groups. This can be due to the lack of resources that women have to invest in these contacts, though it is necessary for them to create for themselves a way to make and cement a relationship with these groups.

The absence of well-developed education and training systems for women’s leadership in general, and for orienting young women toward political life in particular, is another hurdle to be overcome in order to achieve gender equality in politics. Training and educating more women will direct more of them towards the political arena and expand the pool of women who are qualified for recruitment. To do this, women need to have access, from an early age, to education and training, as well as work patterns that hone political leadership. This training can also help women participate in community or neighborhood based organizations, and would also allow them some access to women’s groups and organizations.

The socio-economic obstacles include poverty and unemployment; the lack of adequate financial resources; illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions; and the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations. Poverty is a particularly pervasive problem. Over 1 billion people in the world live in poverty and 70 percent of them are women. (6) Women contribute largely in the workplace—whether for their paid or unpaid labor—but the input that they give often goes unrecognized. Once poverty is eradicated women will be able to increase their participation in government, as along with economic empowerment, the women would have more access to training and education which would take them from the limitations of the household towards full participation in politics and political elections.

The socio-cultural obstacles include the gender ideology and cultural patterns, as well as pre-determined social roles assigned to women and men. Due to the “masculine model” of politics, women may feel the need to choose between “womanhood” and politics. This is due to the belief that if a woman is a politician, she is less of a woman and that as a woman leader, she must be asexual in her speech and manners.

Many other issues also affect women’s participation rates in politics. Women’s lack of confidence to run for elections is one of the main reasons for their under-representation in political institutions. Also, in some countries women perceive politics as a “dirty” game. Although corruption may not be as widespread in some countries as some may believe, it does have an impact on women’s attitude towards having a political career.

One proposed solution is a quota system where the government itself imposes a certain number in which they must fill that will be held by women in government. Some governments have implemented the quota system in the hopes that this will increase the level of participation of women in leadership roles in the government. This raises several issues, though, one of which is that it would be difficult to give priority to a female candidate simply because she is a woman, as it gives special preference to her. At the same time, one cannot discount the incumbent male candidate only because he is a man, and a quota for women in the government needs to be filled.

Other strategies have been proposed to increase the participation of women in government. These include the reform of parliamentary procedures and sitting hours, supporting

organizations, support by women in parliament for each other, the need for a “critical mass” of women, and proportional voting systems. (7) Another solution which has worked well in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom is supporting organizations. The role of these organizations would be to bring together the networking needed to successfully campaign. Support given would be anything from financial support to professional support needed by the women candidates.

Despite the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other conventions brought about to ensure equal rights between men and women, the right of women to vote and participate equally in the political process is still not one practiced universally. It is necessary to ensure commitment to equality by laws and national policies if we want to ensure gender balance in political life.

Former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated, “without progress in the situation of women, there can be no true social development. Human rights are not worthy of the name if they exclude the female half of humanity. The struggle for women’s equality is part of the struggle for a better world for all human beings, and all societies.” (8)

QUESTIONS:

1. How would the UN ensure proper representation of women in leadership roles in the government?
2. What programs can the UN offer or promote to further the cause of women in governance?
3. Where should the funding come from and be focused on to ensure women’s representation in leadership?
4. Would quotas be beneficial for the promotion of women in leadership roles, or would it be a hindrance as it would show preferential treatment?

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Assessing the Beijing Platform

by
Maria Cecilia Marzan

The Fourth World Conference on Women

The Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China from 4-15 September 1995. This Conference provided the venue for the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with the primary objectives of equality, development and peace. The Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment.¹ It aims to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and reaffirms the fundamental principle set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights. The governments, the international community, civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector were called upon to take strategic action in the following critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment and the girl-child.² The failure to achieve all of the above-stated would perpetuate the inequality between women and men with women's concerns still given second priority and the persistence of gender disparities and unacceptable inequalities in all countries.

Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century, also known as Beijing + 5

The year 2000 marks the fifth anniversary of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing.³ In resolutions 52/100 and 52/231, the General Assembly (GA) decided to convene a special session to appraise and assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), five years after its adoption.

The stage was set for the twenty-third special session of the GA on "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century" that took place at the UN Headquarters in New York from 5 June to 9 June 2000. The GA adopted a Political Declaration calling for a recommitment to the goals and objectives of the BPFA and an outcome document entitled "Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action." Towards ensuring women's advancement, the outcome document recognized that the efforts need to combine a focus on women's conditions and basic needs with a holistic approach based on equal rights and partnerships, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, it recognized that policies, programs and budgetary processes should adopt a gender perspective based on a clear research based knowledge on the situation of women and girls and sex disaggregated data and defined in terms of short and long term time-bound targets and measurable goals and follow up mechanisms to assess progress.⁴

Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Platform for Action

A review of the national reports reveal that significant changes in the status and role of women have occurred in the years, some more evidently since the FWCW: women have entered the labor force in unprecedented numbers; women, individually and collectively have been major actors in the rise of civil society worldwide; the role of NGOs, especially women's organizations in elevating the concerns of women and gender equality on the national and international agenda was acknowledged by many governments. In a growing number of countries, it was observed that women's groups have been instrumental in pushing their governments to fulfill their promises at Beijing. Some of the progress made since the Beijing conference are as follows: 64 countries have adopted legislation or policies to address women's rights; 28 countries, a number of them in Latin America and the Caribbean, China and New Zealand have passed laws to curb domestic violence. The Supreme Court in Egypt has issued a landmark ruling prohibiting the practice of female genital mutilation in state-supported and private facilities. In Thailand, a new law strengthens penalties and speeds trials to prevent and suppress the trafficking of women and children. In Pakistan and Iran, girls' school enrollment has increased due to gender segregation policies and the introduction of co-education respectively. A new inheritance law has been drafted in Zimbabwe to favor neither sons nor daughters.⁵

The importance of gender mainstreaming in all areas and at all levels and the complementarity between mainstreaming and special activities targeting women was reaffirmed at the Special Session. The Special Session identified certain areas requiring focused attention, which included education; social services and health, including sexual and reproductive health; the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic; violence against women and girls; the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; vulnerability of migrant women including exploitation and trafficking; natural disaster and environmental management; the development of strong, effective and accessible national machineries for the advancement of women; and the formulation of strategies to enable women and men to reconcile and share equally work and family responsibilities. The governments, the UN system, international and regional organizations including international financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society agreed to take 199 actions at the national and international levels reconfirming existing ones such as the closure of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and free and compulsory and universal primary education for both girls and boys by 2015; the achievement of a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 especially for women through creating and maintaining a non-discriminatory and gender sensitive legal environment through reviewing legislation by 2005 and the universal access to high quality primary healthcare throughout the life cycle with sexual and reproductive healthcare not later than 2015.⁶

Violence and poverty continue to be major obstacles to gender equality worldwide. Speakers during the Special Session pointed out that domestic violence remained a global problem, a violation of women's rights and the worst expression of male dominance.⁷ Governments agreed to establish or strengthen legislation to handle all forms of violence against women (VAW) including marital rape and sexual abuse of women and girls. The delegates held a common belief that VAW and girls was a human rights violation.

Although there is increased recognition of the gender dimension of poverty, there is also a widening economic inequality between men and women. The outcome document states that governments are called upon to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development and adoption and execution of all budgetary processes and undertake socio-economic policies promoting sustainable development and ensuring poverty eradication programmes mainly formulated for women.⁸

Globalization has added new dimensions to both areas of violence and poverty creating new challenges for the implementation of the Platform such as trafficking in women and girls, the changing nature of armed conflict, the growing gap between nations and genders, the detachment of macroeconomic policy from social protection concerns.⁹ While globalization has brought greater economic opportunities and autonomy to some women, it has marginalized others. The governments have agreed to take effective measures through the enhanced and effective participation of developing countries in the international economic policy decision-making process in order to guarantee the equal participation of women particularly those from the developing countries to address the challenges of globalization.¹⁰

Despite much progress, the participants recognized that the goals and commitments made in the BPFA have not been fully implemented and achieved. The analysis of the national reports on the implementation of the Platform showed that there had been no major breakthrough with regard to equal sharing of decision-making in political structures at the national and international levels. In most countries of the world, there remain a small percentage of political leaders who are women. To address the issue, the outcome document calls the governments to create favorable conditions to encourage the entry of women into politics and to increase their share and contribution in the formulation of public policy. At the international level, it was agreed to ensure and support the participation of women in development activities and peace processes including conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building and to support the involvement of women's organizations and community-based organizations.¹¹

Moreover, responses from Member States identified a lack of genuine political will to implement the Beijing commitments and allocate required resources, as full implementation would incur significant financial, political, and social cost.¹² NGOs had hoped for a stronger, forward looking outcome document with more concrete benchmarks, numerical goals, time bound targets, indicators and resources aimed at implementing the Beijing Platform.¹³ These would have made it easier for NGOs to hold governments accountable for the implementation.

Recognizing that the commitments of the Platform for Action had not been fully implemented, the participants of the special session agreed upon further actions and initiatives at local, national and international levels to accelerate its implementation. In other words, much work was left to be done. Regardless of mistakes and frustrations, women took part in this special session in record numbers as they did during the FWCW

for Beijing+5 had provided one more opportunity for public discussion on diverse issues that affect and concern women.¹⁴

Beyond the Special Session

Through UN-sponsored initiatives, the following were carried out after the Beijing+5 Conference. At the 55th session of the GA, resolution A/Res/55/71, “Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and Full Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the GA” was adopted. Recalling the outcome document of the 23rd special session, the Assembly decided to address the issue of HIV/AIDS, especially on women and girls by adopting draft resolution A/Res/55/13, “Review of the Problem of HIV/AIDS in all its Aspects” and convened a GA Special Session from 25-27 June 2001. On 31 October 2001, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. The Commission on the Status of Women at its 45th Session in March 2001 adopted a new multi-year work programme for the years 2002-2006. Two thematic issues were considered at this session: women, the girl-child and HIV/AIDS and gender and all forms of discrimination particularly racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Division for the Advancement of Women held expert group meetings on HIV/AIDS in Namibia on 13-17 November and on gender and racism in Croatia from 21 to 24 November.

Questions for further consideration:

1. How can the UN influence the political will of states to fully implement the goals and commitments of Beijing Platform?
2. How can the governments address the issue of globalization when it already has pervaded all the structures of society?
3. Who should take responsibility in the creation and monitoring of legislations penalizing VAW? Is it the UN or the states?
4. How can the UN encourage states to adopt measures or policies to implement the Beijing Platform if it defies their cultural beliefs, customs or traditions?
5. How can the governments affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic address this problem when it is inextricably linked to poverty and globalization?

¹ United Nations (UN), *Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration* (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1996), 17.

² UN, 33.

³ “General Assembly Special Session Women 2000 at Headquarters, 5-9 June, to Review Progress since 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference,” Press Release of the Beijing+5 Conference, New York, 2 June 2000 GA/9713 WOM/1198.

⁴ UN, Beijing+5 Process and Beyond, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup.

⁵ Bharati, Sadasivam, “The Implementation of the Beijing Platform—how are we doing?” *Mapping Progress* 2 (1998).

⁶ UN, Beijing+5 Process and Beyond, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup.

⁷ A quote from the Minister for Gender Equality of Sweden, Margareta Winberg, “Persistence of Violence against Women should be matter both of shame and concern, Beijing+5 Special Session told,” in GA/9716 Press Release.

⁸ “GA Reaffirms Commitment to 1995 Beijing Conference Goals as Women 2000 Special Session Concludes at Headquarters,” Press Release of the Beijing +5 Conference, New York, 10 June GA/9725.

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¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Maeve Taylor, “Promises made, Promises broken. The Beijing Platform for Action,” *Women’s News* 112 (2000): 21.

¹³ Asa Frostfeldt, “Beijing Plus Five-Much Work Left to be Done,” *Tribunes Des Droits Humains* 7(2000):34.

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Gender Violence: A Struggle for Women of the 21st Century

By Joanne Carmela B. Barriga and Ringo Feliciano M. Cendaña

“To protect, promote and realize women’s human rights is the responsibility of all of us—
wherever we may be, whichever gender we belong to.”

--Kofi Annan

Widespread violence and armed conflicts continue to plague both the international and national arenas at escalating figures. The acceptance and tolerance of violence by states, non-states and individuals as a legitimate means for resolving conflicts, controlling society and ensuring social stability have fired up the influence of these patterns of behavior at the onset of the millennium. The majority of the world’s population exists and suffers in a state of force, aggression and domination---with women and children as the most vulnerable victims. Gender violence that beset millions of women worldwide takes shape across race, cultures, religions, and socio-economic classes and is the result of gendered power relationships, determined by the social roles ascribed to males and females. Many cultures have beliefs, norms, and social institutions that legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women. Perpetrators may be family members, community members, and/or heads of cultural, religious or state institutions. Even with the factual grave consequences of gender violence on women and society, Historically, international humanitarian law treaties omitted, trivialized or mischaracterized gender and sexual violence¹. This was due to a myriad of reasons, such as the belief that rape is a natural part of every war or that these crimes are of secondary importance to other crimes. As a result, the mass rapes and other forms of sexual and gender violence, which have been a pervasive part of almost every war, have historically been under-investigated and under-prosecuted. The Statute adopted in Rome for the establishment of an International Criminal Court (ICC) goes a long way to redressing this imbalance by recognizing a broad spectrum of sexual and gender violence as crimes of the most serious nature.

Gender is a much-contested issue by its mere definition that further exacerbates the dilemma faced by policy-makers for and advocates of gender equality. Gender is a socially constructed pattern of behavior for men and women. Gender crimes are thought to focus on violence in which the recipients are men and women. Although gender crimes are done through sexual violence, these also include non-sexual or psychological attacks on women, men and children. It should be understood that gender refers to both sexes, which is the reason why it was included in the Rome Statute. Thus, the Secretary General to the Beijing Platform for Action recognized the definition.

Violence against women and girls is often referred to as "gender-based violence" because it evolves in part from women's subordinate gender status in patriarchal society. In most cultures, traditional beliefs, norms and social institutions legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women especially with the fundamentalists. The use of the term gender-based violence provides a new context in which to examine and understand the long-standing phenomenon of violence against women. It shifts the focus from women as victims to gender and the unequal power relationships between women and

men created and maintained by gender stereotypes as the basic underlying cause of violence against women.²

In 1993 the United Nations provided the first official definition of gender violence when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. In Article 1 of the Declaration, violence against women is “any act of gender violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether in public or private life.” The definition is given further specification in Article 2, which distinguishes three specific areas in which violence commonly occurs: (1) physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs in the family, including battering; sexual abuse of female children in the household; dowry-related violence; marital rape; female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; and violence related to exploitation; (2) physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the general community, including rape; sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution; (3) physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.³

Violence against women takes a variety of forms from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. The identification of specific crimes, gender and sexual violence, is essential in recognizing its nature and severity and for the acknowledgement of the aggravated infliction caused to its victims.

There are many kinds of violence against women, including domestic violence which includes wife-battering, burning or acid throwing, sexual abuse, including rape and incest by family members, emotional abuse such as coercion and abusive language and neglect; female feticide and infanticide; traditional customs and practices oppressive to women such as honour killings; female genital mutilation; son preference; dowry-related violence and early marriage; rape; sexual assault in marriage; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; prostitution, trafficking and sexual slavery; violence against women migrant workers; pornography and the oppressive personification of women as sexual objects; state custodial violence against women; gender-based persecution, which may be motivated by religion, ethnicity and/or politics; violence against refugees and displaced women; violence against women in situations of armed conflicts such as mass rape, forced pregnancy and cases of comfort women. All these are violations of the most fundamental of human rights. All of these violations are linked primarily to the disparity of power between men and women, alongside with broadening economic inequalities within and between countries.

In 1981, The Convention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) entered into force with 169 States parties. It is often depicted as an international Bill of Rights for women for it illustrates the various discriminations against women and establishes an agenda for national action to end these discriminations, including gender-based violence.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 was a milestone for women's human rights. One of the key objectives of the Platform for Action was to eliminate all kinds of violence against women. No less than three of the twelve strategic objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action (Violence Against Women, Women and Armed Conflict, The Girl-Child) are directly related to the elimination of open, physical violence against women and girls. The need to recognize and eliminate economic, structural, social and cultural violence against women threads through the entire Platform for Action.⁴

As the International Criminal Court comes into being, there are existing threats to its independence, neutrality and effectiveness. It must make sure that the processes adopted by the Assembly of States Parties are transparent and accountable and that the parity of women and men on the Court is assured. Only then can the ICC be truly competent in its mandate to protect, uphold and give justice to all.

The recognition and promotion of these international mechanisms by the international community are crucial to the implementation of laws in the domestic policies of states. With these principal instruments---CEDAW, Beijing Platform For Action 1995 and the International Criminal Court---the struggle of women in the past will not be their struggle in the coming millennium. But, then again, states that have not recognized the documents have to respect and sign in good faith the declarations to protect their own citizens.

Questions:

1. What kinds of workable approaches to gender based-violence are employed and how are these approaches enhanced?
2. What needs to be done to confront gender based-violence?
3. Which international, regional and national institutional mechanisms protect civilian women against violence in armed conflict situations?
4. Why do women have difficulty getting access to an effective legal recourse procedure?
5. What improvements are necessary to prevent and protect women against state violence?
6. How do policy-makers for and advocates for gender equality reexamine and restructure norms, customs and practices that contribute to gender violence?
7. How will the creation of International Criminal Court be effective in eliminating all forms of gender violence?

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² Ibid.

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN COMBAT

by

Stephanie Hampton

The United Nations was established after the Second World War with the express mandate of maintaining peace in the world. The suffering of civilians during this last great global war enlivened the nations of the world to draw up the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1950) and later added Protocol 1: Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflict (1979) and Protocol 2: Protection of Victims of Non-international Armed Conflicts (1978). Since the end of the Cold War, the United Nations has become more involved with human rights abuses during combat and has established the International Court of Law as a step toward enforcing international humanitarian laws.

In the half century since the Geneva Convention, the nature of war has changed from one of professional soldiers killing each other on battlefields to one of overwhelming civilian casualties. It is estimated that there are now ten civilians killed to every one soldier—a direct inverse to the death toll of World War I. (1) War is being fought in the landscapes of the people—in their homes, businesses, schools, agricultural lands, and sacred spaces—as whole populations of civilians—men, women and children—are engaged in the daily struggle to survive in battle conditions.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) commissioned the comprehensive “People on War Report, a Consultation on the Rules of War” to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. This report focuses on war as experienced by people on the ground in twelve countries (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Columbia, El Salvador, Georgia/Abkhazia, Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, Lebanon, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, and South Africa) over the last two decades. Five states (France, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States) were included in the report as well. This report was designed to stimulate and inform international and local debate about the humanitarian aspects of war, involving all the major political players, as well as international and nongovernmental organizations, aid specialists and, through this program of research, the amplified voices of the people.

No longer cast as “victims,” people in war are demanding greater involvement in the planning and evaluation of humanitarian operations, higher standards of accountability of military and political decision-makers, and a more equitable allocation of available resources. Accordingly, the 2002 International Humanitarian Forum (IHF), which was sponsored by the ICRC on May 23 and 24, 2002 at Wolfsberg, Switzerland, took as its theme, “Accountability in War.” This meeting follows three previous forums (1997, 1998 and 1999), all concerned with the rights of civilians under combat conditions. The Forum brought together leaders, specialists, academics, and policy-makers from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities on an informal basis, to engage in purposeful, high-level dialogue in the hope of improving the humanitarian response to people caught in war.

Human rights abuses in combat have far-reaching effects upon social institutions that support the society, such as medical services systems. During the Israeli incursion into Jenin, for example, Israeli soldiers allegedly delayed ambulances carrying Palestinians at checkpoints, essentially denying these civilians medical service access. The UN requested Mary Robinson, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to prepare an initial fact-finding on the incursion into Jenin to discover any evidence of human rights violations. (2) This report, recommending that an independent commission of inquiry be made, prompted the UN to name a committee for this; however, the effort was politically resisted by Israel. Time is of the essence in investigation of war crimes, as not only can evidence be saved that might otherwise be lost, but the presence of humanitarian witnesses can have a protective effect on other civilians. (3)

During combat there is no safe passage for non-combatants, and the movement of people is strictly curtailed so income from employment is lost. Food, electricity, communication, transportation and water services can also be lost either due to destruction of the infrastructure secondary to combat or deliberate manipulation of these essential services as a weapon of war. Internal displacement secondary to combat causes massive dislocation of whole communities and often families become separated from each other. (4)

One obstacle to the solution of these problems is the existence of an entrenched international economy, based on war, which supplies arms to all sides, fueling wars around the globe. The West, notably the United States, is the largest supplier of arms and munitions. (5)

Politics also plays a role in humanitarian aid organizations because donor nations are becoming more interested in the actual operations of the agencies, which injects a political conditionality into their actions to the point of withholding aid from certain civilian groups. This removes the humanitarian ethic that holds that essential humanity is enough to qualify for aid; now it must also be politically expedient. Political agendas are reinforced worldwide in this way. Globally, media attention can also add to partiality of aid access by highlighting one war-torn region at the expense of another.

The observance of human rights during and immediately after combat has deteriorated. It is on the ground in the most intimate face of war where human rights are violated and war crimes occur, so it is on the ground where prevention of crimes against humanity can be effective. In order to accomplish this, the common soldiers need to be educated and trained to respond as a conditioned reflex to protect civilians lives and property; and the military command and political superiors need to fully support legal behavior, to educationally and ideologically promote knowledge of the international human rights laws in war and to swiftly and surely punish any abridgement of the these. Once the armed conflict is underway, the opportunity for successful training intervention is lost. All military personnel, from all nations and ranks, should be given training in basic human rights in war as a matter of course in their basic training, like any other skill of war. The International Institute of Humanitarian Laws has a program of this kind. (6)

One of the findings of the ICRC report was that the major cause of continued violations of human rights in war was due to the lack of accountability in all ranks, from the common soldier to the decision-makers. When human rights are abridged and not punished, war crimes continue to be committed with impunity.

Humanitarian agencies working in areas of combat have increasingly come under fire by soldiers. Their operations have also been hampered by decision-makers and soldiers who refuse aid agency workers access to areas of civilian casualties. It is clear that these actions are taken to deliberately target the civilian populations. Complicating this picture is the changing face of the enemy in modern warfare, who is no longer a uniformed, easily identified combatant.

In the People on War report, humanitarian agencies were criticized as being large, unregulated corporate entities, carrying their own set of values and objectives, which act upon the people without their input. Further, there is often no coordination or communication between agencies, which results in competing efforts. Questions of ethics, professionalism and transparency of donors have been raised.

Accountability of military/political forces and humanitarian organizations for the protection of human rights during combat is seen as a central issue. (7) The people who are affected by war are no longer viewed as helpless victims but as people who have rights. They demand inclusion in plans and decisions that are made on their behalf by others. To ensure that the values and real needs of the people are being met, inclusion needs to begin immediately and be continuous to take into consideration changes in the field.

QUESTIONS

1. How can we achieve greater universal acceptance of agreed upon values and existing humanitarian laws in combat regions?
2. How can the involvement of the victims of war be secured, under combat conditions, in order to guarantee them a voice in any humanitarian effort?
3. How can accountability of military and political decision-makers be obtained?
4. What kind of international effort would it take to assure effective training in humanitarian rights for all ranks of soldiers of all states?
5. Should humanitarian actions move beyond emergency response to incorporate prevention of conflicts? Should they be involved in post-conflict reconstruction?
6. How can the multitudinous humanitarian organizations and agencies be organized to best protect and serve the human rights of the people affected by war?
7. Human rights inquiries in situations of conflict can have a protective as well as preventive effect. How can this be maintained in the face of states which wish to have no witnesses to incursions?
8. Does the international community have the authority and/or moral imperative to investigate civilian rights violations alleged by humanitarian organizations when the country where they are alleged to have occurred refuses access? Is violence a legitimate tool when it is used to stop violence?
9. Should an attempt be made to promote an alternative economy in place of a war economy, much like programs used in Afghanistan to curtail the opium trade? How much accountability do arms manufacturers, marketers, and governments carry?
10. Should non-governmental organizations develop a mechanism to report war crimes since they are most often in, or very near, combat zones?
11. What role do the media play in the apportioning of available resources of humanitarian aid?

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The Impact of Sanctions

By

Lucia Eleen

Introduction

A sanction is succinctly defined by Webster's Dictionary as a "coercive measure adopted usually by several nations acting together against a nation violating international law." They are used as an alternative to using military force and are regarded as less violent means to compel targeted governments to meet UN demands. Under Article 41 of the UN Charter, the UN has the power to impose sanctions against any nation declared a threat to peace. More than half of the Security Council and all five permanent members must agree on the decision to impose a sanction.

Although this voting structure may inhibit the actual use of that power, economic sanctions have greatly increased over the past decade. Recently sanctioned countries include Iraq, Libya, Haiti, Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, and the Sudan. During this time, the UN has imposed multilateral sanctions as a tool of international policy a total of 12 times. It had done so only twice in the preceding 45 years. (1)

The Recent Impact of Sanctions

The UN has experienced modest success of sanctions since the surge began in 1990. Sanctions imposed against the apartheid regime in South Africa contributed to the isolation of the Pretoria government, resulting in the emergence of an inter-racial democracy. In Cambodia, sanctions helped to isolate the Khmer Rouge and helped result in a democratic transition. During the war in Yugoslavia, sanctions helped establish an effective bargaining leverage to convince Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic to moderate his war objectives in Bosnia and to pursue negotiations that led to the Dayton Peace Accords. The sanctions imposed after the war in Kosovo also contributed to the dwindling support of the people for Milosevic. Sanctions in Libya contributed to a settlement of the dispute over the trial of two terrorists suspected of bombing Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland by persuading the Quaddafi regime to reduce its support for international terrorism. (2)

Adverse Impact of Sanctions

Although statistics demonstrating the impact of UN sanctions cannot be fully determined, there is little question that their impact on humanity has been devastating. (3) Prior to sanctions, primary health care was accessible to over 90 percent of the people living in Iraq, but now is much less available. The Iraqi people have also suffered a 90 percent drop in their average household income since the placement of UN sanctions. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has reported dramatic increases in mortality among children under the age of five. The infant mortality rate has doubled since the Gulf War, where nearly 30 percent of children are suffering from major malnutrition. Since the sanctions, there has been almost a 70 percent drop in the number of calories per capita supplied by Iraqi government food rations. Iraq had previously imported nearly 70 percent of its food. The World Health Organization (WHO) also maintains that Iraq's population has subsisted on a semi-starvation diet for years. (4) Children's and general public health also suffered in Haiti during the UN embargo of 1993-1994. Similar results were evident by sanctions imposed in Cuba and Nicaragua. UN sanctions imposed during

the 1991-1995 war in Yugoslavia severely limited the availability of media broadcasting and printing equipment that human rights groups might have used to collect international support. These sanctions inhibited an entire population's ability to seek assistance from or communicate with the international community. (5)

Major Factors that Influence the Success or Failure of Sanctions

Today, the prevailing opinion remains that sanctions are generally symbolic and have little practical impact. The world has witnessed Saddam Hussein sustain his position after more than a decade of UN-imposed sanctions. Fidel Castro has also remained in power through decades of the U.S. embargo against Cuba. Despite elevated expectations on behalf of governments of what sanctions can accomplish, sanctions have rarely been effective in lessening military efforts or altering the approach and planning of the target country. (6)

Obtaining international cooperation before imposing sanctions is a very important factor. In cases involving high policy goals, there is a far less chance of success without substantive cooperation from its allies. However, if a country finds it necessary to actively solicit support from other nations to pursue a difficult objective, then the chances of that sanction being successful are not very high. Sanctions directed against countries that have long been adversaries, or that have little trade with each other, are also usually less successful. Relief assistance given to the target country by other sympathizing countries can offset the chances of success. (7)

The Decision to Impose Sanctions

Countries should carefully examine their objectives and backing before resolving to impose sanctions. A government should avoid imposing sanctions when its own economic costs are too high. The higher the costs a country spends in deploying sanctions, the less probability there is for success. The country imposing sanctions almost always has an economy larger than that of their target. Therefore, it is also important to consider the economic and political stability of the target country before considering the use of sanctions. Sanctions that are least costly to the sender are usually those that make use of financial leverages. Financial sanctions may also be used more often and more effectively than trade controls alone. These include denying credit, manipulating aid flows, and freezing assets in place of trade controls. Denying credit or finance may also compound the cost to the target country by interfering with its own ability to trade, even without a formal sanction being imposed.

In making the decision to impose sanctions, wisdom holds that the unintended cost or consequences should be carefully considered before any sanction is deployed. In general, economic sanctions are most effective when aimed against former allies or partners in trade. Although economic sanctions are generally the first choice where taking immediate action is necessary, not just any type will suffice. Leaders in the sender country should be confident that their goals are within reach. The type of sanction chosen must be befitting to the particular circumstances, and tailored carefully to the objective they are genuinely intended to achieve. Sanctions that administer heavy costs are generally more successful if they are imposed in a comprehensive manner so they will not be easily offset by other governments. Sanctions that are imposed gradually allow the target government to be progressively strengthened while fostering a sense of nationalism by its people. The slow application of pressure allows the target an

opportunity to mobilize its efforts by finding alternative suppliers and forging new alliances. Sanctions imposed swiftly and which catch their target off guard achieve the greatest odds of success. (8)

The Question of Ethical Sanctions

Humanitarians question whether the cost of using sanctions outweighs any benefits received. Although the actual effectiveness of sanctions is unclear, they are responsible for reducing the dispersal of food and sanitation products, and interfering with the operation of basic health and education systems. Sanctions have also caused the reduced availability of pharmaceuticals and access to safe drinking water to the target country's citizens. (9) Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited. Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, 1977 Part IV, Section 1, chapter 111, Article 54.

Article 41 of the UN Charter does not specify requirements for how sanctions are to be implemented, and many member states of the UN, as well as UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, have emphasized the need for sanction reform. (10) To measure the effectiveness of sanctions, they must be balanced not just by the political impact on the targeted governments, but also in terms of UN efforts to minimize the humanitarian consequences. Such measures will help sanction authorities to develop and monitor a more integrated approach for targeted sanctions that will help reduce their overall social impact. This balanced approach will help ensure that more objective information is provided on the humanitarian impact of sanctions. (11)

Toward Sanctions Reform

For the UN to act responsively in international crises that are presently rising, it is necessary to have options that create a comfortable medium between the use of military force and mere public objection. Sanctions are an important means to respond to international threats to peace. If sanctions are to remain a common tool of international policy, the practices and standards for their use require major reform. Greater efforts are needed to assuage the high potential for humanitarian consequences. UN officials are currently attempting to reevaluate sanctions to increase their efficiency while reducing the social impact by proposing of the use more targeted or "smart" sanctions. These targeted sanctions include freezing financial assets, arms and military embargoes, and travel sanctions. Efficient monitoring must occur at the time sanctions are in place to ensure a more practical and ethical outcome. (12) Such specific models for developing targeted sanctions may improve the impact of sanctions on targeted governments, while reducing their impact on civilian populations. The effective management of sanctions will result in their becoming better designed and more sustainable in the future.

Questions:

1. Are the costs to humanity worth the benefits derived from deploying sanctions?
2. What should the UN do to minimize the humanitarian impact of sanctions?
3. Should the UN allow a third party government to undermine the impact of sanctions? What tools can it use to prevent this from happening?
4. What can be done in lieu of sanctions?
5. Should more countries be involved in decision making process for imposing sanctions?

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Additional Resources:

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The Elimination of the Threat of International Terrorism

by Chris Morin & Dong Choi

Introduction

Terrorism has its roots back as early as 70 A.D. when the Sicarii, a highly organized religious sect active in the Zealot struggle in Palestine, provoked the Jewish revolt against Rome. However, since its birth, terrorism has evolved into a powerful tool small organizations may use to make a large statement. Terrorism has long been a problem plaguing the international community. Therefore, solving the problem of international terrorism must involve these three steps: the definition of terrorism, understanding the causes of terrorism, and proactive movements needed to eliminate the cause of terrorism.

The first problem of definition is evident in the variety offered by different nations. According to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, a terrorist incident is “a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, in violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any other state, to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social goals.” In contrast, Arab nations seek to make a distinction between acts of terror and acts of national liberation, arguing that the latter are justified given the legitimate aims and power discrepancies involved. The United Nations’ Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing defines a terrorist bomber as “a person who unlawfully and intentionally delivers, places, discharges or detonates a bomb, explosive, lethal or incendiary device in, into or against a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system or an infrastructure facility, with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury or the destruction of such a place resulting in major economic loss.” Whether it is with measures of intent, damage or severity, most definitions of terrorism come to the general consensus that terrorism is an act of public violence against people, institutions, or infrastructure designed to cause fear, damage, and policy change. Because the definition of terrorism may vary from one individual to another and one country to another, establishing a clear definition is a daunting task in its own.

The Causes of Terrorism

Different causes drive terrorist organizations to endanger civilian life as well as their own. Terrorism can be divided into two categories, domestic/foreign and religious/political. Al Qaeda, for example, illustrates the rise of religious-inspired terrorist groups that have become the predominant form within recent years. Many sociologists believe Al Qaeda and other religious-inspired terrorist organizations possess fewer constraints about taking civilian lives because all nonbelievers are viewed as the enemy, and religious terrorists are less concerned about possible backlash. The significance of religions, and the conflicts they produce in volatile areas such as the Middle East, may explain the sharp increase in religious-inspired terrorist groups.

Although religious terrorism has become the major form of terrorism today, numerous political and ideologically motivated terrorist groups are still active. These groups do not fight over religious beliefs or territorial disagreements, but for other

purposes. One of the most long-lasting political terrorist groups has been the Greek leftist Revolutionary Organization 17 November (N-17). Formed in 1975, N-17 has attacked U.S., British, Greek, Turkish, NATO and European Union targets over the years. Currently N-17 is stronger than ever. One major concern for security planners for the 2004 Summer Olympics Games in Athens is the possibility of terrorist attack by N-17.

The Effects of Terrorism

As demonstrated on September 11, 2001 a terrorist act can bring about a devastating blow to its adversary's social and economic well-being. The jumbo jets crashing into the World Trade Center not only provided Americans with disturbing images of attacks on U.S. soil, but the economic loss was substantial. In New York City, damages totaled \$83 billion. An estimated 125,000 jobs will be lost in the fourth quarter of 2001. The U.S. economy has suffered greatly because confidence in the stability of the economy, along with consumer spending, decreased dramatically, causing the U.S. economy to spiral downward. Moreover, terrorism is an effective tool because the media attention it gains for a cause is reason enough to take lives. For example, before the 9/11 attacks most Americans had never heard of Al Qaeda, the Taliban, or even Afghanistan. However, now cable news networks deluge individuals with everything from the history of Al Qaeda to its present Islamic ideologies; facts that otherwise may have never reached the western world. This not only aids terrorist organizations to recruit potential members, but the publicity it gains alone is worth risking civilian lives. Extended coverage of such events may only attract further attacks.

Possible Solutions

As the leader in globalization, modernization and secularism, the United States has generated tremendous amounts of anti-American sentiment. The economic growth during the 1990's, the relative lack of economic growth in other parts of the globe, and America's failure to share more of its economic wealth has further intensified anti-Americanism. Most terrorist organizations originate in economically deprived nations, where such services as health care and education are virtually non-existent. In Pakistan, a third of the population still lives on less than a dollar a day. In the 1950's, per capita income in Egypt was similar to that of South Korea. Today it is less than one fifth. A half century ago, Saudi Arabia's per capita income was higher than Taiwan's. (2) Today, Saudi income is only half that of Taiwan. Economic frustration and oppression may prompt an individual to engage in extreme activities such as a terrorist act in revolt against the wealthy western world.

Although the United States is racially and ethnically diverse, many Americans are uninformed and naive about other cultures. Perhaps Americans need to understand that others do not necessarily share the values they hold as universal truths. For example, idealists argue for the spread of democratic values and globalization, especially in Islamic nations. However, further intrusions by the western world may only amplify anti-Americanism.

Dealing with terrorism is a daunting task. The punishment of a terrorist can lead to the creation of a martyr, further attacks in the name of retribution, and increased public sympathy and support for terrorists. Therefore, prevention or deterrence is the most widely popularized method of battling terrorism. Although it may seem insignificant,

educating the world population as to the reasons behind international terrorism may provide a stepping-stone to the eradication of terrorism. Citizens should acquire knowledge regarding economic and social conflicts, the history of various cultures, and the ideologies behind governments. Because ignorance only blinds an individual to other ideologies, being better equipped with such knowledge can only help in combating terrorism.

Deprivation from economic, social and political well-being will further breed extremist ideologies. Thus, to prevent such extremism substantive economic initiatives should be implemented. Establishing foreign aid programs that promote economic growth, social development and political stability will benefit both the host country and the international community. Scholars also argue that domestic education can decrease the rate of international terrorism. Ignorance, not just poverty, is a fertile ground for extremism. In Arab nations, such as Pakistan, public education is very scarce. In its place are Islamic religious schools that train students to their brand of Islam. Most of these academies concentrate only on radical religious instruction, ignoring math, science and other important subjects related to modern society. However, in some countries, religious education seems to be less popular. In Egypt and Jordan, where the state controls education, *jihad* cannot be taught. Therefore, its educational institutions can produce graduates who are ready for the job market instead of being bent on destroying an "enemy." One obstacle this change faces is demonstrated in a recent survey in which a number of people in Muslim countries strongly believe that religion should have greater influence over education, not less. Nonetheless, using foreign aid as a means to persuade Arab nations to reform their educational systems can be seen as an alternative to reduce terrorism.

In December of 1997, the General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. The 24 article Convention made no distinction between terrorist acts and the activities of national liberation movements, which had been a point of debate. The 54th General Assembly was deeply disturbed by the persistence of terrorist acts. The Assembly strongly condemned criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror for political purposes. It urged all States to become parties to relevant anti-terrorist conventions and protocols, and enact domestic legislation necessary to ensure the prosecution of perpetrators of terrorist acts. Also in 1997 the General Assembly passed a resolution from the third committee that "unequivocally condemn[s] terrorism." The General Assembly would have "the General Assembly condemn violations of the rights to life, liberty and security and would reiterate its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism. . ."

In 1999 the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural) approved a resolution that "declared the methods and practices of terrorism to be activities aimed at destroying human rights." (It was approved with a recorded vote of 93 in favor, 0 against, 63 abstentions). In December of 1999, the United Nations recognized that a significant measure against terrorism would have to come from a reduction in the financing that was supporting the international terrorist community. The Assembly adopted "An international convention designed to cut off funding for terrorist activities." Adopted on the recommendation of the sixth committee (Legal), "states would be required to make the provision of such funding a criminal offense under their domestic laws, and to confiscate assets allocated for terrorist purposes." The Assembly called upon all states "to

enact legislation to implement the provisions of the specified anti-terrorism conventions and protocols to ensure that perpetrators of terrorist acts were brought to trial.”

On 28 September 2001, in response to the September 11 terrorist attack on the United States, the Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1373, condemning terrorism as a threat to international peace and security and detailing a list of counter-terrorism policies and procedures. It also created the Counter-Terrorism Committee within the Security Council and all member states were required to implement these policies and notify the committee of their completion. This represents the most significant step to date by the international community in addressing the threat of terrorism. But much remains to be done.

Conclusion

To many, terrorism can be seen as meaningless and ineffective, only causing horror and havoc to innocent civilians. However, some find it a very powerful tool in winning political influence. In a logical sense, it is an effective means to an end, however ruthless. Terrorism succeeds in the sense that terrorist acts generate tremendous amounts of attention. Perhaps taking the glamour out of terrorist acts may diminish such threats.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What steps should be taken to create a global definition of terrorism?
2. What role(s) does religious belief play in terrorism?
3. Is UN intervention necessary? If so, what are the limitations of intervention?
4. How will state sovereignty affect the eradication of terrorism?

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Global Literacy

by

Mik'Ael Beckham

Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines an illiterate person as someone who cannot, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his or her daily life. There are 880 million adult illiterates in the world today. Two thirds of them are women. Out of more than 110 million children who are deprived of basic education, two thirds are girls. (1) Yet access to education is a right granted to them in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The statistics, however, show a different story. Enrollment in primary education for all children regardless of gender in less developed countries is as low as 65 percent, while in developing countries the rate is 98 percent.

Adult literacy rates, for those 15 years of age and older, range from 96 percent in industrialized countries to 67 percent in developing countries, to a low of 43 percent in least developed countries. Illiteracy is both a cause and effect of poverty that contributes to and reinforces long-term underdevelopment in many countries. (2) Without literacy people cannot better themselves. Poor countries do not have the resources to pull themselves out of debt without the help of educated leaders who can critically examine the state of the situation. Without the initial push of literate and educated citizens, countries could become stagnant and democracy is impossible.

UN Actions

The UN has declared 2003-2012 the literacy decade. In January of 2000 A/RES/56/116 was adopted by the General Assembly and will be coordinated by UNESCO. According to the Assembly, basic education for all requires literacy for all, and literate environments are absolutely necessary to eliminate poverty, create sustainable development, and to establish gender equality. (3)

The fact that the United Nations has devoted more than one decade to literacy training affirms the fact that a high literacy rate across the globe will not happen overnight. Literacy training will probably never be over because for such training to be effective it must be refreshed over the course of a lifetime. (4)

UNESCO has made literacy training one of, if not its top, priorities for the coming decade. They feel that, without the support of a large international group, they will not be able to achieve their goals. Without a global front against illiteracy, nations and cultures will be left behind or forgotten. (5)

As final preparations are made for the United Nations Literacy Decade, lessons from the past must be remembered. For example, broad standard programs do not work for every situation. Instead more customized approaches are needed. Women and men

sometimes have different needs and the programs must reflect the differences in the content and processes used. People learn more and retain information better when the experience is enjoyable and are surrounded by others. Literacy is best accomplished when related to practical everyday uses. For example, solving problems and accessing new information are ways in which a people can change both themselves and their culture. (6)

Obstacles to Literacy

A review of past policies and practices in literacy work indicates that a number of problems have been endemic. The first problem is that literacy programs have presented literacy as a cure-all for a variety of social troubles and as a passport to social and economic development. The downfall and dismantling of literacy education is due to too many empty promises and unfulfilled claims. (7)

Second, a general lack of motivation among teachers and learners, due to a misunderstanding of the definition of literacy, has thwarted literacy programs. As a consequence of the misunderstandings of the definition of literacy, literacy programs have not been perceived as having immediate, relevant and direct benefits to offer that would offset the opportunity costs of participation. (8)

Third, in many developing countries, adult literacy classes are often taught in indigenous languages, but children in primary schooling are taught in the official or cosmopolitan language.” (9) These conflicting languages have created a gap between formal and non-formal systems of education and created problems such as lower learning ability and lack of teacher motivation. (10)

Finally, statistics regarding the outcomes of literacy programs are questionable. They are often measured only in terms of the number of those who have participated in the programs, rather than the number of people who successfully complete the programs and obtain literacy.” (11)

Solutions for Obtaining Literacy

In the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Reading Literacy Studies (IEA/RLS), the highest scoring country on overall reading literacy in the categories of ages 9 and 14 was Finland. Other countries with high scores were the United States and Sweden in the age 9 category, and France, Sweden, and New Zealand in the age 14 category. Finland performed higher than was expected in relation to its social and economic circumstances. This may be due to a number of factors such as the relative wealth of the country (reflected in low student-teacher ratio), the linguistic homogeneity of Finnish schools, the importance attributed to literacy in Finland and the implementation by teachers of student-centered approaches to assessment. (12) These factors may suggest some solutions, which could be implemented in other countries, given the right conditions.

Latin America has also seen progress towards literacy. At the Summit of the Americas in 2001, the hemisphere's leaders, having previously pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2010, promised to have at least 75 percent of each country's youngsters completing secondary school by the date set." (13) As a result, two-thirds of Latin American children now get at least some secondary education, an increase from 50 percent of children who received secondary education in the mid-1980's. Young Mexicans now receive, on average, 7.7 years of schooling, up from just 1.7 years in the 1940's. Chile and Venezuela are trying out a new spin on the school-voucher idea. The state will fund education, but independent, often church-run institutions implement the schooling. (14)

Solutions can also be found in addressing the growing 'feminization' of poverty and its persistent burden on the status of women in the developing world. Literacy programs that focus on learning skills and strategies aimed at redressing the gender imbalance offer a variety of practical solutions for the empowerment of needy women and are built around income-generating activities and productive employment, credit management skills, good parenting and child-rearing practices. (15)

Conclusion

Literacy and education are the foundations upon which all our ventures to create a better world must be built. Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated at the 'Learning Never Ends' Colloquium in September 1999 that:

Education is quite simply, peace building by another name. Education is the most effective form of defense spending there is. Education is an investment, which yields a higher profit than any other. For it yields promise for those who have known only poverty; progress for those who have known only privation; peace for those who have known only pain. (16)

The Secretary-General requested at the International Literacy Day 2001, "Let us pledge that this new century will witness the eradication of illiteracy." (17)

Questions

1. What are some programs that should be established to increase worldwide literacy?
2. Why do programs succeed? Why do programs fail?
3. Where should the funding for literacy programs come from?
4. How can addressing the needs of women in poverty be coordinated with addressing the literacy needs of women and their families?
5. What roles can NGOs, IGOs and other agencies outside the UN play in addressing the literacy needs of countries and regions?

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Drug Trafficking:

Are We Losing the Fight against Drugs?

by: Leslee Moore

In this rapidly globalizing world, the drug menace knows no boundaries. It is restricted to no social class and is exclusive to no one region. It is a global problem with staggering economic and social costs. Many of the most pressing problems afflicting our societies feed off the drug trade. The huge sums of money generated by drug trafficking fuel a culture of corruption and violence, which tears at the fabric of civil society.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

The United Nations, along with many individual nations throughout the world, has fought for years to eliminate drug trafficking. The primary agency involved in combating drug trafficking is the United Nations of Drug Control and Prevention (UNODCCP). The United Nations has created three UN Drug Control treaties: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances in 1971, and the Convention on the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988.

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs aimed to combat drug abuse through international cooperation. Through this convention, the international community created two ways of intervention and control that work together. The Convention's objectives are to limit the possession, use, trade in, distribution, import, export, manufacture and production of drugs exclusively to medical and scientific purposes and to combat drug trafficking through international cooperation to deter and discourage drug traffickers. The Convention on Psychotropic Substances established an international control system for psychotropic substances. Psychotropic drugs cause the individual taking it to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior. This Convention is designed to respond to the diversification and expansion of the spectrum of drugs of abuse by introducing controls over a number of synthetic drugs according to their abuse potential while still considering their therapeutic. The Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances provides for widespread measures against drug trafficking. The convention also offers provisions against money laundering and the diversion of precursor chemicals. (1)

Today, drug trafficking accounts for nearly 8 to 10 percent of global trade of all commodities. This amount is about the same percentage of trade in oil and gas. Drug trafficking is estimated to yield from \$400 billion to nearly \$1 trillion in profits per year. Worldwide, there are approximately 200 million users of illegal drugs.

Drug abuse is also a global phenomenon; 134 countries and territories reported a drug abuse problem in the 1990s. The United States contains 5 percent of the world's

population and consumes 50 percent of the world's drugs, even though demand for drugs in the United States has decreased over the last 25-30 years. Although drug use and expenditures are down, there are many concerns for several different reasons. There is more hardcore drug use. Since 1994, heroin use has more than doubled. Another reason is that drugs are much purer and deadlier. For example, 30 years ago, marijuana had 2% THC content, and today, it has more than 30%.

Drug production remains a problem as well. Throughout the latter half of the 1990s, global illicit production of opium remained stable and the production of coca leaf declined. The global area under poppy cultivation was at its lowest level since 1988 and coca cultivation at its lowest level since 1987. In 1999, almost 95 per cent of opium production was concentrated in just two countries: Afghanistan and Myanmar. U.N. crop experts reported on August 18th, 2002 that, Afghanistan is currently the world's leader in production of the raw material for heroin. When the Taliban banned poppy cultivation in 2000, there was a 96 percent reduction in acreage devoted to the crop by the following year. After the defeat of the Taliban, however, Afghan farmers once again planted over tens of thousands of acres of poppies and the 2002 crop is close to the high levels of 1990. (2) Colombia and Mexico are the two major processing areas for cocaine. The U.S./Mexico border sees the transport of the most cocaine, an estimated 70 percent supply of U.S. supply. Colombia currently provides 80 percent of the world supply of Coca.

Unilateral efforts have been made to tackle the problem of drug trafficking. One is pressure by economically stable nations on those less economically stable. This unfortunately has resulted in many human rights violations throughout the years. Such instances include, for example intense pressure by the United States of America's government on Bolivia and Colombia.

The Bolivian government, receiving intense pressure from the United States, began an effort to eliminate coca. This effort was strongly resisted by coca growers. Chapare, the sub-tropical region, the region that consists of the poorest farmers who produce the majority of the Bolivian coca, refused negotiations to stop growing. The Bolivian government, in its efforts to suppress the opposition by Chapare, engaged in severe human rights violations, including disproportionate use of force and suppression of peaceful demonstration.

At a press conference on October 29, 1996, William Schulz, the director of Amnesty International USA, declared the cause for concern in Colombia is even greater. In suspicion of the US military anti-drug aid, they discovered many human rights violations in Colombia are occurring and a list was accumulated of military units of current violations adding to previous violations.

The sovereignty of individuals and nations are extremely important in this situation. Sovereignty is complete independence and self-government, as well as supremacy of authority or rule as exercised by a sovereign or sovereign state. When looking at drug trafficking from a sovereign standpoint, it is in the right of the producer to produce

whatever they prefer. On the other hand, the receiving government in which drugs are being trafficked into their country has the sovereign right to protect the land from drug flow.

In order to combat the ever-growing problem of drug trafficking, solutions must address both the supply of and the demand for illicit drugs.

Many campaigns have been created to solve the problem of demand for drugs. In the late 1980's the United States started a campaign against drugs titled the "Just say No" campaign. Education provides information about the dangers of drugs, health risks, and stability risks of each Member State. Another solution could be "Drug Courts" which have been used to find a creative way of sentencing drug offenders. Drug offender sentencing can include counseling, drug testing and most importantly getting clean. Treatment has proven to be most effective. "The Rand Corporation study in 1994, showed that treatment is 7 times more cost effective than arrest, 10 times more cost effective than interdiction and 23 times more effective than focusing on the out of country source." (3)

Examining the supply side is just as important as the demand side.

One of the more challenging solutions could be interdiction. Interdiction is stopping the flow of drugs into a country. Stronger border control between nations is imperative. Providing aid to other governments is a possibility as well. The money allotted would fund helicopters, border patrol agents and other tools for more increased and more effective border patrol. Crop eradication and crop substitution are other solutions.

Two major efforts in the process of eradicating drug trafficking have been the Dignity Plan and Operation Purple. In December 1997, the Government of Bolivia launched its drug control campaign, "Dignity Plan". Its aim was to free Bolivia of the coca-cocaine industry by the year 2002. Today, the overwhelming majority of Bolivians no longer question whether or not illicit drug crop elimination is feasible. They know it is. The program in just three years had 78 per cent of the coca crops eradicated. Income derived from the illicit activity dropped significantly from \$400 million in 1995 to \$183 million (US) in 1998. In 1999 there was a further 50 per cent reduction and alternative development spawned \$87 million, a 26 per cent increase over 1998, for farmers and private sector entrepreneurs. "Operation Purple", involving 28 countries, has a main purpose of restricting the supply of potassium permanganate and is thought to have an impact on the quality of cocaine base in the Andean Region. It is an intensive international tracking program, involving Governments of major manufacturing, exporting and importing countries and territories in all regions. Operation Purple targets illegal diversion of chemicals used in processing cocaine and other illegal drugs.

The growing death rate from drug use will never cease until governments come together to find possible solutions to global drug trade. Member States of the United Nations need to break down barriers and come together to find a way to begin saving lives and stop the flow of drugs.

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Questions for Discussion:

1. Can the UN build upon efforts such as Operation Purple and the Dignity Plan and find ways to curb illicit drug trafficking? If so, how and what?
2. Who is to blame for the trafficking problem, the producer or the consumer?
3. Should economic incentives to reduce drug crop production be used for nations that are economically unstable? If so, what incentives and to what regions?
4. What should be the balance between human rights and the elimination of drug trafficking?
5. In what ways can member states control its borders to better protect their country internally from drug trafficking?
6. Is punishment the answer to illicit drug trafficking? If so, what should be the punishment? Should punishment be meted out to farmers, traffickers, dealers and/or users?
7. What responsibilities do the governments of member states have in the reduction of drug trafficking?
8. Is the UNODCCP working effectively? If not, how can it be improved?

Web Resources:

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Child Labor

by
Christopher Wheeler

Introduction

Worldwide, 250 million children – one child out of every six – are involved in work that is detrimental to their development. The practice of child labor deprives children of their childhood, hampers their personal and social development and causes lifelong physical and psychological damage. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has long been the champion for protecting and helping children. It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. Joining UNICEF in its effort to eliminate child labor are non-governmental organizations (NGOs), inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), governments, individuals, and other entities within the UN, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO). Unfortunately, such efforts have not been enough to curtail child labor throughout the world, as the number of working children increases.

History of Child Labor

Child labor is not a new phenomenon. It existed before the rise of capitalism, the introduction of the Industrial Revolution and urbanization. Children have been working within their family units for centuries. Families have always used child labor as a way to augment the family earnings. In some families, a working child extended the chances of a family's survival. Often times, skills acquired through work were seen as the only educational opportunity offered to or needed by children. For some, work also ensured social mobility for the child and his/her family. Despite social and economic achievements made over the centuries, millions of children find themselves being forced into labor for similar reasons mentioned above.

When examining the history of child labor it is important to understand how the definition of a child continues to change and continues to be a source of controversy. Without properly defining what exactly a child is, the endeavor to eradicate child labor becomes impossible. Economic, social, political and religious factors must be taken into account to reconcile differing definitions of who is a child. For example, in some cultures, boys start taking on adult male responsibilities as young as seven; and by fourteen can be seen as adult males and treated as such within their community. In other cultures, at seventeen boys can enlist in the armed forces and are generally considered adults at age 18.

Current Global Facts on Child Labor

The ILO estimated that 250 million children between 5 and 14 are economically active. Of that estimate, 73 million working children are less than 10 years old. Boys make up a slight majority of working children. Domestic work is the largest employment category for girls under 16 in the world. A disheartening 73 percent of child laborers are exploited in the worst forms of child labor every year. Around the world, children face dangerous and unhealthy conditions, working in factories, fields, and sweatshops, or as domestic servants. 171 million children are exposed to work that is hazardous to their immediate and long-term health. Approximately 8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography, and illicit activities. The trafficking of children for forced labor, prostitution, and pornography is a growing and lucrative business. Child labor creates many other detrimental effects on children. In many cities large numbers of street children lack shelter, food, education, and support and are vulnerable to many forms of abuse, despite the best efforts of governments and NGOs. Child

labor is a perpetual problem that has depressed sustainable development in various regions of the world. Poverty is directly linked to the continuation of child labor. It is a global issue that exists in developing and developed countries alike.

Action Taken to Combat the Problem

The most effective attack against child labor has occurred over the past 15 years as UN member states began viewing the issue as a violation of the principles and ideals of human rights. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted and ratified by virtually every country, has paved the way for further action to be taken against child labor. Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, provides for two types of measures to be taken with regard to child labor. States must recognize the "right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development" (1) and should adopt legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to combat child labor in accordance with the Convention. While the Convention outlines the minimum measures States must take, it also leaves room for States to develop their own programs based on consideration of both the current situation and the projected future of a country's society.

Every other article within the Convention focuses on issues that are also related to the effects of work on children, including education, protection, exploitation, health, nutrition, rest and relaxation, play, social security, economic well-being, and the responsibilities of parents. Thus to effectively curtail the growth and continued use of child labor, it becomes necessary to have multifaceted responses to the problem.

The member States of the ILO, for example, have adopted two major conventions on child labor to address the complex problem at different levels. The Minimum Age Convention, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1973 (also called Convention No. 138) sets forth the guidelines to establishing minimum ages for differing types of employment. For any time of employment or work in any occupation, the general minimum age is "not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years"(2). The Convention further allows for a general minimum age of 14 years initially for countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. The second minimum age established by Convention No. 138 is 18 years old for work "which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons", with few exceptions (3). The Convention also establishes guidelines for the nature of and allowable industries for child labor, working hours and safety conditions and penalties for enforcement of the Convention.

Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour calls for immediate action to eliminate slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts, prostitution, pornography and illicit activities and work that threatens the physical, mental or moral well-being of children. This Convention calls for governments, employers, parents, NGOs, trade unions, international corporations and civil service organizations to equally take part in the eradication of child labor.

In 1992, the ILO set up the International Program for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). IPEC offers financial and technical assistance to governments in designing and implementing programs aimed at working towards the progressive elimination of child labor by strengthening national capacities to address child labor problems. It is also trying to create a worldwide movement to combat the issue. IPEC will work in conjunction with UNICEF and NGO programs currently in place.

Finally, at the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), the International Community declared that "basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults...the poor, street and working children should not suffer any discrimination in access to learning opportunities" (4). As a follow-up to this Conference, UNESCO launched the World Programme for the Education of Street and Working Children. The main objective the Programme is to facilitate access to basic education and vocational training for children and young people by addressing their survival and educational needs through awareness-raising, advocacy work, financial support, networking of country- and region-specific projects and programs and special projects in joint cooperation with NGOs and Member State governments

Future Solutions

To combat the problem of child labor, a multifaceted strategy of elimination, curtailment and prevention must be implemented at the grassroots level. In order to successfully evaluate the effects of programs to eliminate child labor, improving data collection, analysis and dissemination of information is vital. As such, the ILO works with regions and countries to support data collection and research efforts.

Education and training is also essential to the elimination of child labor. Promoting primary education and providing support to families so that children have the opportunity to attend school can improve a child's chance of remaining outside the workforce until adulthood. Education of the population regarding the harmful effects of child labor will also help combat the problem.

Another area of concern is the rehabilitation of children that have already experienced the exploitation of working at too young of age, especially if those children suffer from physical, emotional or other damage due to the work. For example, street working children and children in prostitution need special assistance and programs to address their education and vocational training needs are just as important as addressing the physical and emotional damage resulting from their work.

Individuals, companies and governments must claim ownership of their respective violations of the rights of the child and address the issue with the utmost urgency and diligence. When evaluating the necessity to address child labor throughout the world, its linkages to issues of poverty and sustainable development must be considered. Defining what a child is based on religious beliefs or economic situations should factor into any comprehensive solution to the problem. Governments, corporations, NGOs, trade unions, universities, the media and individuals all need to equally take part in any solution to effectively eradicate child labor.

Questions for further consideration:

1. Is there a universal definition of "child"? What limitations do social, cultural and economic factors place on finding a generally accepted definition of "child"? What is the most/least restrictive definition of a child?

2. Child labor exists in every country. What forms are child labor exist in different countries and different regions? Are there acceptable forms of child labor?
3. How should governments, companies, employers and individuals be encouraged to not use child labor? Can the UN be justified in taking action against those who exploit child labor?
4. Can existing programs be rearranged to more effectively to combat the problem?
5. How can NGOs, civil service organizations, companies, individuals, etc. be more involved in combating child labor? What can universities and the media do to help handle the problem? Can or will organizations like the WTO help implement anti-child labor policies?
6. How can trade unions help eradicate child labor?
7. What innovative incentive programs can be designed to dissuade parents from allowing/encouraging their children to enter the world of work at too young an age?

Web Resources

International Labour Organization
www.ilo.org

United Nations Children's Fund
www.unicef.org

Global March Against Child Labour
www.globalmarch.org

Child Labour News Service
www.childlabournews.info

Child Rights Information Network
www.crin.org

Free the Children Child Labour Campaign
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Building Up the Global Health Infrastructure

Annie Roepke

Introduction

The health problems that plague today's world, and especially developing nations, are by and large not caused by any void in the body of scientific and medical knowledge. In fact, the world's leading cause of premature death is infectious disease, which kills approximately 50,000 adults and children every day. Most of these diseases are extensively researched, well-understood, and easily preventable—from a medical standpoint. However, problems and solutions are seldom as clear-cut in the political world as they are in the medical field. Health issues often take a backseat to other concerns when political priorities are formulated. This is especially true in periods of economic crisis, in which social programs are frequently the first to be scaled back or cut, while the number of people living in poverty simultaneously increases. Thus, diseases previously under control break out; malnutrition problems are exacerbated; infant mortality rates increase; and so on. Governments of developing nations are seldom equipped to adequately handle these crises independently, so the issue of global health is entrusted to a voluntary collaboration between non-profit organizations, insufficiently funded governmental programs, and international organizations with increasingly tighter budgets. The players in this cooperative effort collectively constitute the global health infrastructure.

Historical Background

Although the earliest traces of a global health infrastructure can be seen in the health-related work of the League of Nations, it was not until the Post War period that these efforts shed their bilateral nature and began to take on the truly international aspect that characterizes modern work in the field. At this time, relationships between supranational organizations, philanthropic groups, autonomous scientific and professional actors, and nation-states were pioneered. These connections are crucial to the success of the global health infrastructure that has arisen since and functions today.

The primary (and most adequately funded) international player in this infrastructure is the World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized UN agency that was created on April 7, 1948. It has declared its main goal to be the attainment of complete physical, mental, and social well-being for all peoples of the world. To accomplish this goal, its 191 member states govern its activities via their representatives in the World Health Assembly, which convenes annually to approve the programme and budget for the WHO for the coming year. The programme is then carried out under the supervision of an elected Director-General and health professionals acting in six major regional offices as well as individual countries. To further coordinate health affairs worldwide, the WHO strives to negotiate and sustain partnerships with relevant players (corporations, non-profit organizations, etc.) on the national and global level.

One relevant player we must not omit in our discussion is the World Bank Group. Established in 1944, the World Bank is one of the world's largest sources of financial assistance for development (which is inextricably linked to the subject of health). Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), created in 1945, works to promote international monetary cooperation, development, and economic growth. Both of these institutions have come under fire and charged with opening the economies of developing nations to foreign investment at the expense of the health and well-being of the nations' citizens. A hotly contested point is the use of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which state the policy and priority changes to which a nation must commit in order to receive financial development assistance.

Because of the multi-faceted nature of global health, several other international bodies can be considered active in efforts to ensure global health, including the World Food Programme (which strives for food security); UN AIDS (formed to combat the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa and elsewhere); and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, charged with the coordination of the efforts of the international/UN bodies to help those subjected to human suffering). What follows does not purport to be a comprehensive summary of the challenges and efforts relevant to a discussion of global health, but merely serves to provide a more detailed background on a few of the many issues worthy of the attention of individuals and the international community.

TeleMedicine and TeleHealth

Worldwide, national health sectors have been facing the same problem: a lack of resources sufficient to meet the health care needs of the population. This has resulted in reduction of health insurance coverage by governments of industrialized nations, and a significant decline in the quantity and quality of health services in developing nations that traditionally provide free services. Unable to allocate more funding to health care programs, governments have also tried to make more efficient use of existing personnel and equipment. However, efficiency can only be increased to a certain point at which productivity plateaus. Yet with the incorporation of new or existing technologies, a health service infrastructure's capacity for productive use of resources is enhanced. Health-related technologies are being rapidly developed, marketed, and utilized worldwide, overcoming (and stumbling down upon) obstacles to deliver a number of benefits—and problems.

Telecommunications technologies that have arisen in the past thirty years, and especially in the past decade, have the potential to be a universally accessible and cost-effective means of educating about disease prevention, training human resources, connecting isolated medical research personnel, helping to develop and run surveillance of diseases and services, providing a means for fast diagnosis and treatment, and promoting equitable access to health services between and within nations. Additionally, after the requisite telecommunications infrastructure is developed, more advanced technologies such as TeleMedicine (defined by the WHO as “the practice of medical care using audio, visual, and data communications; this includes medical care delivery, consultation, diagnosis, treatment, education, and the transfer of medical data”) and TeleHealth (which encompasses the use of technology for TeleMedicine in addition to

non-clinical aspects of health care such as surveillance, management, and literature) can be obtained. Developing nations could benefit immeasurably from these technologies, as TeleMedicine and TeleHealth enable sophisticated training and treatment over long distances, and allow for the shared use of pooled, centrally located equipment that would otherwise be unaffordable. These benefits have been made manifest in a number of studies and experiments conducted within and between nations, including Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Norway and Russia, Japan and Cambodia, and France and North Africa.

However, examples of developing nations fortunate enough to be utilizing such technologies are far too difficult to come by. The main problem is that the nations and individuals most in need of development of health services are the least likely to have access to, or the infrastructure to support, communications technologies. Many nations have few roads and insufficient clean water, let alone full connectivity to the Internet—and the possession of sophisticated technology like fast broadband access or the medically-focused Internet 2 appears even further off.

Other obstacles relating to TeleHealth require attention as well: How will common technological standards be established? Will it be possible to provide the staff necessary to maintain new telecommunications infrastructures in countries that lack properly trained experts? How will tariffs and payments for TeleHealth services be negotiated? Will TeleHealth technologies result in a revenue drain from developing nations to the Global North? How will insurance programs be harmonized? How will privacy and confidentiality be protected? Is it possible to achieve consistent legislative guidelines governing aspects such as licensure? Does high technology lead to high costs that are so prohibitive as to make ubiquitous TeleHealth programs a mere dream? All these questions must be satisfactorily answered before needy individuals can enjoy the benefits of modern health technology.

Genetic Engineering

Unlike the aforementioned types of technology, which are generally agreed to be ethical, other technologies currently being researched and tested meet a much more hostile reception. While it is argued that practices such as stem-cell research and cloning hold great potential for the future of human health and well-being, many countries have exploded with debate over these hot issues. Current standards and legislation span a wide range of degrees of acceptance, from the UK's pending complete ban on cloning, to Russia's five-year moratorium, to many countries that have no laws whatsoever concerning the topics in question. Some of those opposed to the practices of stem-cell research and therapeutic or reproductive cloning have undertaken efforts to secure an international ban. So far, the closest agreement to resemble such legislation is the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine's 2001 agreement banning human cloning, generally regarded as the first of its kind. So far, over half of the Council of Europe's member states have signed the measure, called the Protocol on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings.

Some of the same questions raised by the implementation of TeleHealth can be applied to the discussion of these bioethical health issues. How can the international community handle the pressing need for coherent, consistent legislation concerning an

issue that is of national and international concern? What—and whose—ethical standards will take precedence? And how can international policy keep up with technologies that rapidly develop?

Mental Health

Concerns about the mental health of the world's population often take a backseat to concerns about physical health. Unfortunately, this is one of the reasons that mental disorders are a silent epidemic, afflicting approximately 400 million people globally. Schizophrenia, alcohol use, bipolar and obsessive compulsive disorders are among the diseases responsible for the highest disability ratings in the world. In some nations, suicide is the leading cause of death of young males. Poverty, loss of economic productivity, and physical ailments are also tied to mental illness. And because of the shame caused by affliction with a mental disorder in many societies, those suffering often do not seek help. Many others cannot seek help due to the fact that 40 percent of the world's nations have no mental health policy and 30 percent have no mental health programs. Despite the beginnings of discourse on this topic in the international community in the last few years, and the WHO's devotion of 2001's National Health Day to mental health, little action has been taken to assist the estimated 20 percent of the world affected by mental health disorders.

Women's Health and Sexual & Reproductive Health

Women's health needs to be addressed distinctly from general health concerns for several reasons. First, a direct correlation has been proven between women's generally lower levels of education and power and their health status. Second, due to mere anatomy and physiology, they are subject to unique health risks, such as complications during pregnancy (which lead to long-term and debilitating problems for 18 million women each year) and childbirth (which cause 585,000 deaths each year) and higher risk of contracting diseases such as HIV. Third, unhealthy and unsafe practices such as female genital mutilation (which have been performed on 130 million girls to date and continue to be performed at a rate of about 2 million per year) are exclusive to the sex. Fourth, because women provide 70-80 percent of health care in developing countries, head 20 percent of African and Latin American households, and are often primary caregivers for children, their health often greatly impacts the lives of their family members and community. Despite international efforts like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, health care problems still fall disproportionately on the world's women and call for further attention.

Women also have a unique experience in matters of sexual and reproductive health, though these concerns are relevant to all people. Due to societal reluctance to openly discuss sexual matters, and to conflicting cultural values concerning sexuality and family planning, reproductive and sexual health is another area that has not received sufficient attention or resource allocation to halt the 333 million annual cases of non-HIV sexually transmitted disease diagnoses, 2-3 million unsafe abortions each year, or lack of access to family planning information for 120 million married women in the developing world.

Conclusion

Clearly there are many opportunities for expansion and improvement of the global health infrastructure. Whether the issue at hand is health technology, mental health, women's health, or family planning, the key concern is not necessarily to develop new products and services, but rather to promote equitable access to the care and services that are already scientifically and medically feasible, and in use in much of the world. It is only through addressing the inequalities that exist between and within nations that the global health infrastructure can be utilized and expanded to achieve the WHO goal of the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.

Questions

1. How can international concordance with regard to trade in health services, TeleHealth, and genetic engineering be achieved?
2. How should priorities for health issues be formulated? And by whom?
3. To what degree should investment in health technology supplant investment in basic health care such as clean water and infectious disease control?
4. How can equity in access to health care best be promoted?
5. When in conflict, should rights to health care or cultural sovereignty prevail?

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Preparing for and Preventing Bio-terrorism

Aaron Okin

In the post-September 11 world, governments and their citizens have become acutely aware of the threat that terrorism poses to the stability of nations and the lifestyle of the individual. The awareness is primarily a limited one, however, with specific aspects of the broad idea of "terrorism" being overlooked. Although certain nations have acted against terrorism and have concluded that the results of such action have been successful, it is unrealistic to think that a sustained fight against terrorism will be effective in achieving its aims if it leaves un-addressed crucial issues contained within the realm of terrorism. It is also unrealistic to believe that success can occur if the fight is not coordinated among the many nations that compose the diverse international community collectively threatened by terror. While the United Nations' membership rose in condemnation of terrorism in September 2001, and the United Nations has in the past condemned and taken action against both general and specific aspects of terrorism, there have yet to be substantive measures enacted against the bio-terrorist threat.

At present, the vast responsibility for bio-terrorism preparedness and prevention lies on the shoulders of Member States. World Health Assembly (WHA) actions relating to the whole world have generally been limited to the co-operation of member states in the monitoring stage. Regional groups have been encouraged to create databases that record illnesses that occur in individual states and the steps taken to combat that illness, if any. Such a co-operative set-up would allow for nations who have similar illnesses occurring within their borders to see if it is an isolated incident and if steps can be taken to combat a potential outbreak that may have resulted from use of a bio-terrorist agent. The WHA has made it clear that national programs should be the foundation of these international databases, with the national surveillance programs providing information to the regional groups for the use by other nations in certain circumstances. The most important goal that can be reached is the development of an effective, in-depth global surveillance system that gathers all known information from developing and developed countries alike into one accessible database.

In order to achieve this goal, however, there is much work to be done. A unified front must be established within each nation between the public health infrastructure, law enforcement agencies, and national intelligence services—three distinct branches of the government that in many nations of the world do not work in concert. Without effective information sharing amongst these groups, as well as co-ordination on the different stages of prevention and response, the citizenry of a nation can be placed at risk because of government inefficacy, and in turn, citizens of neighboring states can be put in harm's way since information that would be known and shared if an efficient system existed in one nation would be unavailable. The lack of cooperation within nations that do not have a solid infrastructure poses a great challenge to effective prevention and response and finding a way to enhance this cooperation is one of the UN's major priorities on this issue.

Beyond bringing different parties together in a unified cause, another stumbling block exists that must be overcome. The problem that is facing the world from the bio-terrorist threat is a highly complex one, and in order to adequately respond to it the parties responsible for safeguarding the public's well-being must be trained. This is true even in many nations where a public health infrastructure exists. In nations where such training is inadequate, there needs to be a focus placed on the establishment of training programs that are tailored to the needs of that specific nation. For instance, should a nation that has not been fully able to meet the public health needs of its citizens expend scarce resources to formulate a system focused solely on bio-terror, or is there some way to build up an integrated program? The focus of efforts to build a successful response system must not be allowed to get out of hand in terms of cost because the supplying of medication for use in a potential attack can be highly expensive and, in the end, useless or obsolete if an attack never comes. Such unaffordable costs bring about another obstacle in the need for specific guidelines that define the kind of spending that a nation takes part in. One of the ways that costs can stay low, especially for developing nations, is for analysis of outbreak cases that require lab tests to take place at one of 270 WHO clinics throughout the world, which again emphasizes the usefulness of co-operation and information-sharing.

There is much worry on the part of the United Nations that some states may be able to acquire the capability of using biological agents in powerful weaponry. This concern has evidenced itself most clearly when the situation of Iraq is examined. The UN Security Council has placed economic sanctions against Iraq as a tool to encourage the Iraqi government to allow UN weapons inspectors to tour and analyze suspected weapons sites for biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. Since 1998, however, UN weapons inspectors have not been permitted to carry out their task. Such an inhibition could prove to be harmful to the security of the volatile Middle East region, as well as for global security. The potential for nations to be attacked by biological agents via missiles or other delivery should be evaluated and taken into consideration by the committee when developing response mechanisms, as well as the security procedures that should take place at laboratories in order to ensure that harmful agents that can wreak widespread havoc do not fall into the hands of those who would use them for hostile purposes.

While there are some nations that possess samples of harmful biological agents like smallpox and anthrax for use in research, there are others that may develop these kinds of agents for use in harming citizens of other nations, or even in some cases its own citizens. What should be done in those kinds of situations is a topic that can be very contentious, yet must be focused on because of the potential effects of trying to limit the possession of such substances. For example, would limiting the possession of anthrax inhibit the abilities of some nations to do productive research on combating the harmful effects of it? If so, how can the United Nations ensure that such blocks to scientific progress do not take place?

The threats that are being faced are those that cannot be countered by one state alone, but will require a major focus by many nations together, unified in their cause. This unification must take place at the national level, with the co-ordination of various different national agencies, at the regional level with the sharing of information between member states, and at the global level with the assistance of the United Nations and the

linking together of regional monitoring databases and programs. There are various problems that need to be dealt with like how to provide widespread training for members of public health infrastructure, especially in developing nations, as well as overcoming financial difficulties and decisions that nations may face. The UN has a great role to play in providing for the security and health of future generations of global citizens, and that specific role still needs to be defined in order to overcome the problems that are in our midst.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the resources and programs of individual member states be coordinated through the United Nations to better combat bioterrorism?
2. How can member states be encouraged to share information regarding bioterrorism agents, including their treatment and detections, without fear of compromising security of individual nations or regions and without compromising intelligence efforts?
3. What resources are needed to combat bioterrorism and prepare for a bioterrorist attack, including health infrastructure, vaccination programs and stockpiles, emergency response training and equipment, etc.?
4. Considering the cost of combating, preventing and responding to bioterrorism, what resources are needed and where can those resources be obtained?
5. Should countries that have, or are suspected of having, bioterrorist agents within their borders be forced to disclose or destroy such agents?

Web Resources

U.S. Government Resources:

Center for Disease Control www.cdc.gov

Food and Drug Administration www.fda.gov

National Science Foundation www.nsf.org

Center for the Study of Bioterrorism, St. Louis University <http://bioterrorism.slu.edu>

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons <http://www.opcw.org/>

The Department for Disarmament Affairs <http://disarmament.un.org/index.html>

World Health Organization, Biological and Chemical Weapons Page
http://www.who.int/emc/deliberate_epi.html

United Nations, Global Issues, Terrorism
http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/m-terror.htm

United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee
<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/>

Addressing the Crisis of Contagious Diseases in Africa

Jonathan Brown

Though contagious disease is a problem around the world, it is perhaps most prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV/AIDS infects on average over 8 percent of the adult population, nine of these countries are over 10 percent and seven are more than 20 percent. The country with the highest rate of infection is Botswana, where 36 percent of the population is HIV-positive. AIDS is killing Africans in the police forces, the military, and the skilled work force faster than they can be replaced, and it accounted for nearly 75 percent of all the deaths in Kenya's police force over the past two years. Also, many of the Africans dying of AIDS are parents, leaving thousands of African children orphaned each year. A study carried out by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has warned that about 70 percent of the 267 million children under 15 in sub-Saharan Africa will, in less than 10 years, lose one or both parents if nothing is done to stem the spread of AIDS. The war in Sierra Leone left 12,000 children without parents, but AIDS has orphaned more than five times that number.

HIV/AIDS is a disease that specifically targets the working age population with predictably devastating results on the effected economies. With people dying at such a rate, Africans do not think about the kinds of investments people usually make in a normal society and the consequences on long-term economic growth are devastating. The response to this crisis by the various involved African nations has varied in method and success. As a result of education efforts by the Ugandan government, it has become socially unacceptable for anyone who is HIV-positive to marry. The result of this policy is the sharpest drop in the infection rate of any country in Africa, from 30 percent to 6.1 percent today. Other nations have not been nearly as successful. The minister of health in Swaziland said she was not going to allow the use of nevirapine because she thought the medicine caused serious side effects despite all the testing that has proven it safe. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa continues to insist there is no connection between HIV and AIDS, and the government of Zimbabwe continues to deny there is any problem at all. HIV/AIDS is threatening the stability of the whole continent of Africa and is therefore a threat to global development and international stability, so resolution of this crisis is in the interest of the entire global community.

HIV/AIDS has lead to the development of several other problems. HIV/AIDS increases susceptibility to clinical malaria and tuberculosis, Africa's other great killers, resulting in greater frequency and severity to these afflictions, and dangerously increasing the rate of transmission between communities. The World Health Organization estimates that malaria contributes to more than 300 million infections and more than 1 million deaths of children every year, almost all in sub-Saharan Africa. Tuberculosis is projected to continue rising by about 10% per year in the African countries most severely affected by HIV. HIV infection increases the risk of both reactivation of latent tuberculosis infection and the risk of rapidly progressive disease soon after infection or reinfection of

tuberculosis. This has, unfortunately, led to the infection of many healthy, HIV-negative adults because the infection is easily spread in its early stages. It is one of the most frequent serious HIV associated infections, and the most common cause of death in HIV positive Africans. This is largely because the mortality rate of patients receiving treatment for HIV related tuberculosis is very high when low cost methods are used. Perhaps one of the only comforts in this situation is the fact that drug-susceptible tuberculosis is still very common among these populations, and these remain vulnerable to current drug treatments.

On the forefront of this battle is the World Health Organization. Employed by the United Nations, they are the world's disease police. Partnered with governments and NGOs, the WHO is dedicated to destroying existing diseases, alarming the world about new ones, and dispensing grants and expertise to poor countries. During the mid 1990's it became apparent that the HIV/AIDS epidemic was too enormous for the WHO to deal with alone. A far greater level of coordination would be needed in order to deal with this issue effectively. In response, the UN formed UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS), an organization that would take the helm in the war on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The goal of UNAIDS is to catalyse, strengthen and orchestrate the unique expertise, resources, and networks of influence that each of these organizations offers. Working together through UNAIDS, the Cosponsors expand their outreach through strategic alliances with other United Nations agencies, national governments, corporations, media, religious organizations, community-based groups, regional and country networks of people living with HIV/AIDS, and other nongovernmental organizations. Working in conjunction with the WHO, UNAIDS also collects and disseminates the information about the AIDS pandemic that is so vital to combating it. They offer one of the best and only chances for many across the African continent. Their job however, is daunting. In addition to a poor preexisting medical infrastructure, the nomadic nature of many African peoples make the acquisition of medical statistics and information difficult and large scale treatment nearly impossible.

Although the difficulty of the situation will no doubt impact the policy concerning its resolution, having such formidable resources arrayed against HIV/AIDS give promising scenarios for the future. Though a world without disease is unheard of, the WHO works tirelessly to contain and destroy epidemics and ease suffering around the globe.

Questions

- 1) Are the incidences of tuberculosis, malaria, STDs, and other infectious diseases increasing in HIV-negative Africans because of HIV?
- 2) To what extent, if at all, is HIV progression affected by frequent concurrent infections?
- 3) By what means can public health organizations increase their ability to assess infection rates?

- 4) What can be done to improve the impoverished and imperfect nature of the health care that precedes the epidemic?
- 5) How can disease related information be spread throughout populations more efficiently?

Web Resources

<http://www.unaids.org/>

<http://www.who.int/en/>

<http://www.epidem.org/>

<http://www.aids.org/index.html>

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