

It is a sort of paradox that the world capitalism, represented by USA and Western Europe, and its overpowering hegemony is nowadays so hysterical in discovering (and creating) enemies when there is, in fact, absence of any real threat for them bigger than that thirty years ago. Is it realistic for the country that spends 380 billion USD a year on its military (let alone the others from the same club) to fear a couple of thousands of Al-Quaeda fanatics, to fear “reds” where there are almost no reds any more, to fear allegedly deeply-rooted cultural/civilisational antipathy of Moslems to modernism, to fear Iraq, devastated by the long years sanctions, etc.? And moreover, to fear so much that they are ready to enter into new wars, even wars that may include nuclear weapons? And all this as a farcical play if we only remind ourselves that Islamic fundamentalism has been for a long, long time supported and created by the “modernist” West to be the frontier against communism, the “reds”, against secularist nationalism and similar. And after all, when the same “evil reds” became some time ago the largest market for westerns and when reformed Stalinist, communist etc. countries found themselves queuing before the doors of the World Bank, NATO, IMF, EU, White House and so on.

There is a room for both sides, the dominant and the dominated, to feel frustrations, anger, but there are no processes on the horizon that would bring some optimism into this gloomy picture. Instead, there are processes on the agenda that are essentially characterized by new forms of smaller “cold wars” and “iron curtains”, followed by greatly intensified old militarisation, division between western “modernists” and eastern traditionalists, democrats and fundamentalists etc.

United Nations, organization that is more and more similar to what the ill-fated League of Nations used to be, that is weak, powerless, looking rather like an extravaganza of the most powerful countries than the place of the international affairs decision making. Despite the omnipresent processes of globalisation, world inter-governmental structures did not succeed in creating one single efficient mechanism for implementation of the international law. Recent activity of the USA government to reach the bilateral agreements with other governments upon exclusive status of their soldiers, officials, experts in relation to the international law (court(s)), speaks for itself.

The fact that, in the time before decline of communist/socialist regimes, the most powerful countries restrained themselves for a long time to despise and ignore openly the UN Security Council and its mechanisms as they do today, wasn't because of the UN authority and authority of the international law. As the matter of fact, UN were the convenient framework to avoid new global, world conflicts, framework within which the world super-powers were able to reach global compromises while each of them could have done in its “backyard” whatever they wanted to, using the violence if “necessary”.

Today, we do not have this balance of mutual fear and we are witnessing the naked power. If this power is not that ruthless yet could be due to the fact that there is the democratic public opinion within at least some of the most powerful western countries. On the other hand, there's no chance for any kind of international democratic control of that power.

There is not much room for optimism indeed, as long as the same old political concepts and the same organizational structure are dominating the world politics.

The recent war in Former Yugoslavia, because it was the closest to the heart of the "civilised", democratic world, got probably much more international public attention than any other conflict, and therefore much more processes, activities, political decisions etc. have been visible with all (numerous) mistakes and (alas, very few) successes in dealing with the conflict by the international community. Therefore, I believe, we could take it as a good example for the lesson and come to some ideas on what could be done to change the situation radically.

Talking about the recent war in Former Yugoslavia, beside the whole complexity of the historical, political etc. development of FY since the World War II (there is, of course, no space here to analyse these aspects), the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina started as a direct consequence of a misleading "solution" by international mediators that irresponsibly took it for granted that the growing tensions provoked by ethno-nationalist political leaders, as well as the imminent threat of military aggression by the Yugoslav army, which backed the Serb side, could have been overcome simply by a referendum on independence. Even when the war broke out, further attempted "solutions" were based on the ethnic-territorial division (Vance-Owen plan implicitly took over the idea of "ethnic cleansing" by endorsing explicitly territorial partition as the solution; indeed, it did work, by providing favourable conditions for the second phase of the war, the one between Croat paramilitary and the Bosnian Army). The attempt of the international community to base a future constitutional, legal and political solution on an agreement of the, at that time, war-lords and suspect criminals of war (nowadays, international troops are running through Bosnian mountains to catch them and send them to The Hague) was an old political concept seen many times in other countries, particularly in South America, always ending as a complete political failure and catastrophe. Such "concept" of solving the conflict certainly could not have prevented the war in the country and after a few years of war, when enormous atrocities had been done and war crimes committed, a massive military intervention seemed to be the only thing capable of defeating aggressor(s). When faced with the complexity of conflict(s), the most influential countries (USA and Western European countries) seem to be keen on quick, "clean", short, measures of limited duration, and that is in their opinion – a military intervention. There were even arguments that any other kind of intervention would be more expensive!!!

It is quite opposite. International community must face the fact that there is no quick and short, safe and easy or cheap way to stop a war, let alone resolve a deep social conflict (especially one with strong ethnic and religious components), and, which is more important, to establish sustainable peace. The UN Security Council and other intergovernmental organizations as well as pacifist and other NGO's must forget about constructing some good-looking design of a future state and then pulling out as soon as possible. Problems of that kind, as we know, are not so simple to be solved either with cannon and tanks or by quick, well-designed, unified plans that "should" fit in any country in any part of the world.

That kind of problems all over the world require a "civil intervention", an international civil administrative assistance as a mode of transitional arrangement to remain in place for years. It should not start with construction of "future" political models (that is what politicians in the post-Yugoslavian countries and their partners from abroad were doing all the time, none of which yielding any real and sustainable solutions). Instead, it should take into account the given circumstances in the country/region and develop further politics and activities based on that. Therefore, it is certainly not enough, as we can witness today, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to rely on international surveillance combined with agreements of the warring parties, implying that there will be a pressure "from below", from "civil society" that will form a counter-balance to the militant nationalist rulers, necessary to limit and control their power to such a degree that could be called rule of law.

Mechanisms of international control and immediate intervention in order to protect human and minority rights and rule of law in any country should be established. This requires intensive involvement in what is nowadays blacklisted as "nation-building" and what is in reality a necessary reconstruction of basic conditions of normal living, including deployment of great number of civil servants, administrators, police and judges, to form a fully elaborate network of institutions that will help re-establish a civilised order. This formal level of assistance must be accompanied by elaborate network of NGO activities that would help reconciliation in local communities and neighbourhoods, as well as reconstruction of livelihood etc., but also monitoring and checking international authorities, against corruption and misuse of power.

The UN must have the power and mechanisms to establish a long-term protectorate when it is necessarily (like this was necessary in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I would say in the whole of former Yugoslavia at that time, because the country had not had capacity to solve the problem politically), or trusteeship that will have a clear mandate to oversee disarmament of army and paramilitary forces, the protection of human rights, and the administration of civil affairs. And all this as transitional measures, which should last so long as needed to create an environment for civil society institutions (civic groups, multi-ethnic political parties,

confidence building activities) as well as to restore the whole institutional system of democracy and the rule of law.

Finally, there is a question: what is the role and what is the place in such a world, where the mainstream concept of politics prevails, which a forum such as Women's Security Council may have and may take? Here we should remind ourselves about some facts that are usually overlooked in almost every political analysis. Whenever it comes to conflict(s), whether the conflict is still on the political, ideological level, or especially when there is a military conflict, women (as well as some other categories of citizens like children and people of age) are the last that are included into political decision making. At most, they can be (mis)used in political propaganda, organized by national leaders and promoting the same aggressive or nationalistic politics. Cynicism of the modern wars also excludes them (women and the other "weak" categories of a population) from the protection from the war that has significant place in the military practice (and theory). Namely, men in their best years are soldiers (whether they like it or not) and by the international military laws have some security when being arrested (to be fed, humanly treated, exchanged for soldiers of the other side, prosecuted by military courts etc.). As a soldiers, they have full logistic back-up, regular food, uniforms, weapons to fight against "enemies" but also to protect their lives, military plans of withdrawal, often negotiating with "enemies" and, cynically enough, highly respecting each others. As for women and the other "weak" the situation is incomparably worse. As contemporary politicians paradoxically work a lot on their image of "humane wars", modern wars do not take place in battlefields but all over the "enemy" territory. That is exactly what affects much more those "weak" that are staying in their places (homes), without any protection, and entirely exposed to and are in hands of aggressors. There are no withdrawal plans for them, let alone all possible logistic (food, clothes, etc.)

Women are excluded on both levels, national and international, when political decisions as well as the basic human rights (mere life) are concerned. However, in experience of all modern conflicts we witness the important fact that women are those that react immediately in such situation by restoring normal life, over-bridging the gaps between warring sides, creating inclusive social environments, social development concepts and similar. We should only remind ourselves that the vast majority of persons active in various human rights, humanitarian, NGO initiatives are women.

We should ask ourselves why it is so that it lasts only until state structures are stabilised. Then, women are again "fired" back into the privacy, and male members of societies take all positions, even in the NGO's. But, as the character in "Irma la Duce" would say, "that's another story".

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