

THE URGENT NEED FOR UNEPS

Excerpts from

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3.3. Civil Society: Partners for Prevention And Peace

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3.3.6. The Global Action to Prevent War And the Proposal for a UN Emergency Peace Service

A US-led initiative, the *Global Action to Prevent War*, a prominent network of civil society groups, academia and advocacy NGOs based in the US and supported by an international steering committee, established a comprehensive programme for effective conflict prevention, with the UN at its centre. In 2003, the Global Action network adopted a *Programme Statement* entitled “*A Coalition-Building Effort to Stop War, Genocide, & Internal Armed Conflict*” which proposes 72 concrete actions to prevent internal war, genocide, and terrorism (Global Action to Prevent War 2003). The Global Action defines itself as a comprehensive project for making armed conflict increasingly rare. Given that the “world’s societies and governments already know how to stop the killing” (Global Action to Prevent War 2003, p. 5), they suggest a programme for sustained, integrated, worldwide application of this knowledge and the resources ranging from multilateral means of resolving conflicts, protecting human rights, and preventing armed conflicts; a phased process of disarmament to reduce national military forces and replace them with modest UN forces; for the promotion of a culture of peace and individual programmes for disarmament and conflict resolution. In particular, the recommendations include the following steps:

- strengthen ways to monitor potential conflicts, warn of escalation, prevent the outbreaks of armed violence, and foster conflict resolution;
- strengthen support for human rights and the global rule of law;
- strengthen multilateral peacekeeping capability;
- increase the responsiveness and accountability of the UN system;
- a one-third cut in military forces and spending, with deeper cuts in production and trade of major weapons and small arms;
- a trial ban on unilateral military intervention;
- a transfer of responsibility for global security from national to international institutions; and
- a limitation of national armed forces to short-range homeland defence.

According to the proponents, the Programme would step by step establish a comprehensive world system of security comprising a well-financed UN with its own

¹ The author presents his personal views.

readiness forces, pro-active in conflict prevention, and a network of universal-membership regional security organizations, each *with* its own conflict prevention and peacekeeping capability. The ultimate objective is to make war rare and save untold lives, by significantly lowering the worldwide level of armed conflict and greatly reducing the world's military forces and creating an environment conducive to the enduring elimination of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (Global Action to Prevent War 2003, p. 13). By increasing respect for human rights and dignity and saving billions of dollars for productive uses and strengthening efforts to meet basic human needs, Global Action pursues the ambition to foster the democratic institutions that ultimately replace national armed forces in achieving justice and meeting human needs.

A flagship initiative of the *Global Action to Prevent War*, in cooperation with the *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation* and the *World Federalist Movement* as well as several US institutes of law and political science, and *Pugwash*, Canada, is to promote the concept of UN rapid deployment capacities for the prevention of genocide and other grave crimes against humanity (Johansen (ed.) 2006). For this purpose, an international Working Group, with leading roles of Professor *Saul Mendlovitz*, *Robert C. Johansen* and US Ambassador ret. *Jonathan Dean*, elaborated a specific proposal for setting up a voluntary *United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS)*. It held high-level symposiums in *Santa Barbara*, California (4-6 December 2003), in *Cuenca*, Spain (5-6 February 2005), and in *Vancouver, Canada* (23-25 June 2006) to discuss and adopt a proposal for the establishment of a UN Emergency Peace Service which was also supported by Democrats in the US Congress. The proposal is based in part on the concept developed by *Howard Peter Langille* (Langille 2002) and draws on an impressive amount of research dating back to 1957 on the need for a rapid deployment capability of the United Nations based on voluntary personnel, including by former UN Under-Secretary-General *Sir Brian Urquhart* (Childers/Urquhart 1992; Urquhart 1993, p. 3-4; Frye 1957; for detailed references s. Johansen 2006b, p. 35, note 1). A United Nations Volunteer Force was also called for by the *Commission on Global Governance* (Commission on Global Governance 1995, p. 112):

“[T]he very existence of an immediately available and effective UN Volunteer Force could be a deterrent in itself As its skill, experience, and reputation grew, its need to use force would probably decrease ... It is high time that this idea – A United Nations Volunteer Force – was made a reality.”

Among UN Member States, the Canadian government took a particularly keen interest in efforts to promote rapid deployment forces for the United Nations and prepared a report on the issue (Government of Canada 1995). The UNEPS proposal provides for the setting up of a UN emergency service that would be permanent, consisting of individually recruited volunteers from many countries around the world, be based at UN designated sites, include mobile headquarters, and be able to quell an emergency within 48 hours after United Nations authorization. Its 10,000 to 15,000 personnel would be carefully selected, expertly trained, and coherently organized and commanded, offering the added value of appropriate skills and adequate equipment, cohesiveness, experience in resolving conflicts, and gender, national and religious balance. In addition, a major advantage would be its multiple functionality in diverse UN operations under one chain of command with integrated services comprising civilian, police, judicial, and military personnel. The initiators hope that, for the first time in history, the UN emergency service could thus offer “a rapid, comprehensive, internationally legitimate response to crisis” in order to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity (Johansen 2006b, p. 27), enabling it to save hundreds of thousands of lives and billions of dollars through early and often preventive action. Each field unit would be equipped with sufficient strength and versatility to provide robust security as well as the necessary range of skills and services to initiate conflict transformation and help re-establish

the rule of law within their sphere of control (for a detailed list of required units, see Langille 2002, p. 128).

A controversial issue regarding rapid deployment peacekeeping forces is whether the voluntary troops should be attached to the United Nations or to the national governments. The argument in favour of the latter option (Gledhill 2006, p. 6) is driven by the assessment that the first priority should be to overcome the reluctance in Member States to establish rapid deployment forces. The proponents of the UNEPS proposal prefer a clear attachment of a new international emergency force to the UN as the legitimizing body for coercive action, and to complement, not to replace national and regional efforts. However, the ongoing efforts to prepare more readily available national police and military units as well as regional forces, such as the EU battle groups, NATO, voluntary forms of international collaboration (e.g. Standby High Readiness Brigade), and ad hoc mechanisms (e.g. the Economic Community of West African States in Liberia and Sierra Leone), the African Union's growing capacity, and the G-8 Action Plan for Expanding Global Capacity for Peace Support Operations have still not resulted in actual rapid deployments. The salient point here is that without a permanent standing voluntary force, governments will be reluctant and meet political opposition without much political benefit in return to deploy forces from the regular military (Gledhill 2006, p. 6; see also the debate in the German parliament on 19 May 2006 regarding first ever deployment to Africa of a sizable German peacekeeping contingent as part of the EU force; Bundestag 2006). While some progress has been made to enhance UN peacekeeping capabilities (see above chapter II.2.2.3. on the *Brahimi* Report), such as the setting up of strategic stocks in *Brindisi*, Italy; the refinement of the UN Standby Arrangements (UNSAS); and the development of the multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade for UN peace operations (SHIRBRIG), the proposal by the Secretary-General to at least set up a Standing Strategic Reserve for UN Peacekeeping Operations was not endorsed at the 2005 Summit meeting. According to the UNEPS proposal, the suggested emergency service would be designed to complement but not replace existing or expanded peace operations by the United Nations, regional international organizations, and national governments (World Federalist Movement/Global Action to Prevent War/Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (2006), p. 27). UNEPS would be considered a "first in, first out" response to crisis, until other agencies have arrived to address any longer-term security and development needs. For the larger tasks, further development and implementation of the recommendations of the *Brahimi* Report and the regional efforts, such as those of the AU and the EU would contribute to the necessary overall enhancement of rapid-reaction capability of the international community. Implementation of these measures would not diminish the need for the UN Emergency Peace Service but enable it to function more effectively. So far, none of these measures ensure a rapid response to fast-breaking crises, as they still depend too heavily on long and often protracted national deliberations and decision-making often decidedly influenced by the domestic political considerations of the day, and the readiness of personnel. A new standing, dedicated force of volunteers would help overcome these inevitable delays as well as lack of political will and of operational capabilities.

At the *Cuenca* seminar, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide, *Juan Mendez*, participated and supported the proposal (see above chapter II.2.2.9.). Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees *Sadako Ogata* also lends her support with the following statement:

"The UNEPS initiative directly responds to the widely recognized need to protect people caught in deadly conflicts. While serving as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, I pleaded on numerous occasions for the rapid deployment of specialized forces ... Effective, trained and specialized

standing forces would have been invaluable ...” (World Federalist Movement/Global Action to Prevent War/Nuclear Age Peace Foundation 2006, back cover).

At a presentation of the initiative at UN Headquarters in New York, former USG *Sir Brian Urquhart* expressed his strong support for UNEPS: “This venture is of the greatest importance both to the UN as a responsible institution and to the millions as of yet unknown, innocent victims who might, in the future, be saved by this essential addition to the UN’s capacity to act on their behalf” (Urquhart 2006, p. 9).

In sum, the UNEPS initiative has the potential to become the most important step towards setting up the necessary global hard core element for operationalizing the Responsibility to Protect in cooperation with regional rapid deployment capabilities, and thus of the regime for effective prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity as part of the emerging encompassing global regime for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

9. Building an Effective And Efficient International Regime for Global Conflict Prevention And Peacebuilding

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Thirdly, effective prevention requires effective and rapid hard instruments in addition to the soft components of the regime to deal with crises. In this regard, the strengthening of the UN peacekeeping system, and in particular its rapid reaction capabilities through a rapid deployment emergency service like UNEPS, is of paramount importance. For the human protection regime to be effective such a hard core element is indispensable. Therefore, it is high time to act on the urgent need to establish a standing, permanent peace emergency force. Consensus is emerging if not on the structure of such rapid deployment forces, at least regarding the principle of the need for more highly skilled personnel to stand ready to be deployed rapidly during crises to prevent armed conflict, protect civilians, and enforce the law (see references in Johansen 2006, p. 6, note 10). Part of an effective humanitarian intervention regime also needs to build consensus on the legitimizing authority, the form of the decision to deploy, and the criteria for intervention. Building on the work of the ICISS, the High-Level Panel and the Secretary-General’s Reports as well as the Summit Outcome, the UNEPS proposal has outlined five possible ways a decision to deploy an emergency peace service could be taken. The latter two clearly go beyond the solutions so far envisaged (Johansen 2006, p. 10-11). The authorization could be given by:

- (1) The Security Council as the first, and most legitimate, and most likely body to authorize deployment;
- (2) The General Assembly: if action by the Security Council is blocked due to a veto, under the “Uniting for Peace” Resolution (United Nations, General Assembly (1950), Resolution 377A, 3 November, (V)) the General Assembly could authorize emergency deployment;
- (3) Regional international organizations for intervention in one of its own Member States;
- (4) Regional international organizations for intervention in a state not a member of the organization, especially if the conflict affects its Member States; this was the argument of NATO for its intervention in Kosovo;
- (5) The Secretary-General: the Security Council and the General Assembly could also authorize the Secretary-General in advance, under carefully defined conditions, to deploy the emergency service as a result of its own decision. The Security Council could retain its power to withdraw the emergency service by passing a resolution

following its normal voting procedures if it considers that such authorization was not warranted. A veto would prevent the passage of the withdrawal resolution, thereby leaving the Secretary-General's decision to keep the emergency service in place intact.

In addition, in order to clarify the threshold criteria that would justify deployment, the six principles proposed by the ICISS (see above chapter II.2.1.4.) are key to provide the necessary international legitimacy to the decision. Here too, the UNEPS proposal closely follows the ICISS criteria (Johansen 2006, p. 10-11): (1) legitimate authority; (2) just cause; (3) right intention; (4) immediate and evident threat of gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights; (5) proportional and consistent with the ends sought; (6) reasonable prospect of success. The fourth of these guidelines is a reformulation of the traditional standard of "last resort", which is appropriate for conventional military combat. However, regarding internationally coercive measures of law enforcement stemming from the international responsibility to protect people under severe threat, the ICISS has rightly noted that the requirement of last resort should not delay intervention, including preventive deployments, when justified. According to the UNEPS proposal, the goal is to allow the internationally authorized personnel to enforce international law against genocide, for example, to address the crisis at a moment early enough to avoid mass murder. Early intervention of law enforcers and conflict specialists could avoid later need for more large-scale and much costlier military combat. This could also limit the ethical dilemmas that less timely interventions pose, such as dividing those emphasizing human rights from those stressing peace and non-violence, thereby impeding effective restraints on the perpetrators of mass violence (Johansen 2006, p. 12). The "hard" element of a standing rapid deployment force accompanied by a consensus on its deployment criteria and authorization procedure would be a quantum leap in consolidation the humanitarian protection regime as a central pillar of the overall prevention regime.

10. The Way Forward: A Global Action Plan of the United Nations on Conflict Prevention and Human Security

"Nation-states can no longer attend to the rising international problems ...Global civil society does help, but without some kind of global authority, transnational problems will overwhelm us. The building blocks of this new order can be found in the war against terrorism, multilateral attempts at deproliferation, humanitarian interventions, and new supranational institutions ... Basic safety, human rights, and global social issues, such as environmental protection, are best solved cooperatively, ... by creating global authorities robust enough to handle these issues."
Etzioni 2004.

The proposed development of an international regime for effective prevention and peacebuilding would be greatly advanced by the adoption of rigorous and systematic measures on a practical plane. For this purpose, the UN, its Member States, regional organizations and IFI's as well as civil society – each in their own field of competence and expertise as well as in a concerted manner – should undertake comprehensive steps towards an Action Plan of the International Community for Effective Conflict Prevention and Human Security. It should be based on the results of the September 2005 Summit and taking into

account i.a. the Report of the ICISS on the Responsibility to Protect, the UN Reform Reports of December 2004 and March 2005 as well as the Global Agenda for the Prevention of Armed Conflict adopted at the GPPAC Conference in July 2005. The new Comprehensive Report on Conflict Prevention of the UN Secretary-General of 7 September 2006 (United Nations 2006c; see above chapter III. 5.4.7.) aims at operationalizing the 2005 Summit results by systematically implementing the shift from reaction to conflict prevention making it the centrepiece of the renewed United Nations. It is an important preparation for the Action Plan. On this basis, the Group of Like-minded States could endeavour to draft a new General Assembly resolution which mandates the necessary institutional, operational and structural implementation of the September 2005 Summit in the area of conflict prevention. The 61st session of the General Assembly would be an appropriate moment to adopt such a resolution. In view of the implementation deficit and the lack of formal actor coordination, therefore, to strengthen regime consistence, resilience and effectiveness, to increase its policy and institutional interlocking and to guide and formalize to the extent possible a synergetic division of labour in order to close the implementation deficit, a UN Conference to adopt a Global Action Plan on Conflict Prevention and Human Security with all the major actors should be convened. The participants should include all UN Member States, the relevant RO, in particular the AU, IGAD, EU, OSCE, CIS, ASEAN, OAU, the IFIs (IMF, WB), G8, OECD and civil society as well as representatives of the business community. As suggested by GPPAC and several authors (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict 2005b; Dress 2005, p. 149; van Tongeren 2006, p. 1), the United Nations could devote a special summit meeting in 2010 on conflict prevention and Human Security. The summit should engage in an inter-sectoral dialogue among UN agencies, Member States and CSOs and adopt a *Global Action Plan on Conflict Prevention and Human Security*. Central elements of the Action Plan/Human Security Agenda should be:

- Promote peace planning and respective resource allocation on a global level (as opposed to current military planning by the leading powers), and enhance the contribution of disarmament and arms control to effective conflict prevention and development, including through furthering the concept and practice of “preventive arms control” (Mölling/Neuneck 2004);
- Agree standards for Human Protection Operations in fulfilment of the Responsibility to Protect, as proposed by the ICISS (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001; Schorlemer 2006): the operation must be based on precisely defined political objectives expressed in a clear and unambiguous mandate; its objective is not to defeat a state, but to enforce compliance with human rights and the rule of law with maximum protection of all elements of civilian populations; maximum coordination between military and civilian actors; in cases of weak or failed states the standard for longer-term assistance in rebuilding would be to provide a minimum of state governance structures that are indispensable to allow for the provision of essential governance services; this might imply to prevent internal or transnational actors from directly targeting or at least undermining the security monopoly of the central state. In addition, the operation might need to take measures against warlords who are also heavily involved in war economies and the control and abuse of natural resources for maintaining their network and for personal enrichment. Overall, the operation should be prepared to assist weak states in providing security to its own citizens. In preparation of the Summit meeting, the PBC should set up a working group to develop such standards for the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect to be recommended for adoption by the Security Council, the General Assembly and, concerning the rebuilding phase, ECOSOC (Schaller 2006, p. 34; Wolter/Müller 2005, p. 350);

- Provide coherent financing of operational conflict prevention and peacebuilding framework strategies. The summit should review progress made by the UN Peacebuilding Commission and its \$ 250 million standing fund for peacebuilding and, if necessary, redirecting focus on conflict prevention. Much as UNHCR provides technical assistance to Member States in formulating human rights programs, policies and institutions the PBC should provide technical assistance to Member States, upon their request, in developing and implementing programmes for capacity-building in conflict prevention and dispute resolution;
- Mandate a special donor meeting on conflict prevention and peacebuilding to develop a Technical Cooperation Approach to conflict prevention and at the same time avoiding fragmentation and overly “projectized” and “donor-led” approaches; promote community funds;
- Develop conflict-sensitive guidelines to increase transparency about the source of funds and funding priorities;
- Strengthen and harmonize early-warning capacities, i. a. independent information gathering and analysis and intelligence of the UN system, and early warning mechanisms of regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular for Africa (i. a. AU, ECOWAS, IGAD);
- Promote Weapons-for-Development Programmes and Peace Education;
- Create a Standing UN Emergency Peace Force comprising both civilian police and troop units recruited on a voluntary basis. UN Secretary-General *Kofi Annan* recently again described the need for such a force, comparing the current situation of the UN with a city having to build first the fire station and recruit the fire brigade before it can deploy it in case of fire (Annan 2006c);
- Develop national infrastructures for crisis prevention and peacebuilding, including Departments for Peace;
- Broaden and formalize consultation and participation of civil society in all relevant UN bodies on prevention and peacebuilding issues, and consolidate networking and robust local partnerships for prevention and peacebuilding.

The Action Plan could give an impetus to complete the outstanding institutional reforms of the United Nations, in particular of the Security Council, as well as for an adaptation of the mandate and preventive scope of the UN Peacebuilding Commission in light of the first four years of its work. It would thus be part of the process of “political globalization” (Bertrand 2005, p. 178),² consisting of an attempt to reach a global consensus on peaceful methods of conflict prevention and resolution such as successfully practiced in the OSCE, and based on a system of just representation. Such a contextual world process has widely been viewed as a prerequisite of effective UN reforms (Bertrand 2005, p. 178; Rittberger/ Baumgärtner 2005, p. 321; Luck 2002, p. 251), and would in turn make the global prevention and peacebuilding regime fully effective, thus ensuring the effectiveness of the Action Plan on Prevention and Human Security. The Action Plan adopted by the United Nations and endorsed by the major RO and CSOs would represent a joint international framework for effective civilian conflict prevention and crisis management. It would allow the international community not only to focus on ad hoc measures to prevent the imminent outbreak of violence but to enhance on a broad spectrum the civilian conflict solution capacities of weaker states and regions on a sustainable basis. It should not be viewed as a blue print offering the panacea for all crisis situations, but as the agreed framework for individual, specifically tailored responses of the international community for civilian crisis management to be adopted for each individual situation. It would thus also ease the consensus

² Faust/Messner 2004 p. 11 speak of “fair globalization”.

on adopting preventive human protection interventions as a last resort where necessary, and ensure the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect in all three phases (prevention, reaction, reconstruction).

In applying the regime principles and standards, the new UN Peacebuilding Commission should set an example for a more disinterested role of Member States in helping other members of the international community in overcoming crises be they internal or intra-state before they evolve into armed conflicts. The Security Council should follow suit with long overdue reforms both by expanding its membership to be more representative of the current world structure and by restraining the veto power to allow the UN to become the guardian of a global humanitarian public interest. Having overcome the Cold War deadlock among the veto-yielding Permanent Members, the Security Council should work towards reaching a common understanding about both procedure and a set of substantial criteria for effective prevention, especially in dealing with intra-state conflicts (with transnational repercussions), and integrated human protection operations in particular. Such a common understanding would also enable the UN Secretary-General and DPA to overcome resistance of individual governments in allowing the exercise of necessary preventive mediation or good offices in internal conflicts.

The United Nations has rightly begun to step up its public relations efforts in the field of conflict prevention. This is of particular importance to sustain the support of Member States and the people for strengthening UN capacities for effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding on a long-term basis. The paradox of conflict prevention is that if it is successful there is little to show for it. Hence, the need to inform both Member States and the media on a regular basis about all efforts in preventing possible conflicts, to convince governments, institutions, and the public that an investment in prevention is also an investment in sustainable development and possibly disarmament, and that avoiding the costs of subsequent violence is much more cost-effective than belated intervention and reconstructions efforts from scratch of war-torn societies. The new Under-Secretary for Political Affairs, *Ibrahim Gambari*, has placed several articles in US newspapers to underline this point as well as the need for a speedy implementation of the outcome of the 2005 World Summit with regard to conflict prevention, in particular mediation and “good offices” (Gambari 2005). The public relations task is of a dimension and of such importance to the organization that a systematic effort led personally by the Secretary-General is warranted. The proposed 2010 Summit should be accompanied by an intensive media programme in preventive journalism (see above chapter III.2.2.16.; Tharoor, 2004, p. 104).

Taken together, the measures proposed would enable the United Nations, in particular both the new Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council to apply effective preventive policies. While the Peacebuilding Commission should take a proactive role in addressing also emerging conflicts, its advisory character necessitates that the Security Council as the only UN organ with mandatory powers increases its legitimacy through enlargement and reforms of its working methods including limiting and ultimately abolishing the veto to become more effective in preventing conflicts instead of only reacting to their outbreak. At the end, the effectiveness of the new policy concept and the concomitant reforms will have to stand the “power test” (Luck 2002, p. 257) and prove that Member States and the UN system make different choices and follow the new priorities (e.g. by fully financing all elements of DD&R programmes), alter the pattern and direction of their UN contributions (e.g. by pledging for the new Peacebuilding Fund) and by following through the structural innovations and new substantive operational initiatives (e.g. by setting up efficient focal points for prevention). Based on the proposed Action Plan on Conflict Prevention and Human

Security, in cooperation with relevant regional organizations, Member States, IFI's and civil society the UN and its new Peacebuilding Commission have the potential to break the cycle of violence that affect so many regions. The adoption of such an Action Plan would represent a quantum leap in building the international regime of effective prevention outlined above, and make the kind of contribution envisaged in the seminal work of *Amitai Etzioni* to complement the unique soft power of the United Nations with the necessary hard power of other powerful national, regional and international actors to provide the global governance to protect human security and prevent armed conflict so badly needed in this fractured world of new security threats and challenges (Etzioni 2004).