

ANNEX 14

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION THEORY

APPLIED TO AGHANISTAN, IRAQ, IRAN AND TERRORISM

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(as presented by Dr. Johan Galtung, CPSC Conference, April, 2007 – Ottawaⁱ)

“The USA is involved in many conflicts. The focus here is on possible solutions for four of them: Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Terrorism.

There is a basic problem from the very beginning: US goals, and the means used to realize them. The goal “national interest” is as such legitimate, but to realize it at the expense of other nations’ interest, human interests, nature’s interest and world’s interests is not. It is at best counter-productive because of the resistance it creates, at worst illegitimate, even in the sense of illegal (like the attack in and on Iraq).

But that does not imply that goals like human rights and democracy in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and the Middle East in general are illegitimate, even if the way of realizing them, through war and violence in general, are. If democracy implies decision-making by everybody affected by the decision, then to go to war is the epitome of being anti-democratic. And, if the most important human right is the right to life, then killing indeed infracts human rights. This applies to terrorism as much as to state terrorism, to guerrillas as much as to wars. There is the idea that in an imperfect world a small war may settle big problems, but that clearly does not apply to the four cases. There are other ways, and they also pass through deep dialogues about the meaning of all these goals in non – Western societies.

From this it does not follow that quitting; pulling out of one, two, three or all four wars is the solution. That is only de-escalation, a useful necessary condition. To be against the wars is morality, no policy, not conflict resolution. It only changes the goal from winning to not losing. Stay vs. Quit is a very poor conflict menu. More than quitting is needed, some X. What follows are efforts to spell out X, all based on extensive dialogues with many parties.

1. **AFGHANISTAN.** Pull out and facilitate such processes as:
 - a) A ceasefire with no winner and a coalition government, with Talibans, after a process of negotiation.
 - b) A high level of autonomy to all major parts of Afghanistan, possibly as an Afghan federation.

Anatomy of Conflict and Conflict Resolution:

Dr. Johan Galtung: **Conflict dynamics:**

Conflicts have a tendency to broaden in domain by adding more actors, and deepen in scope by adding more goals. Conflicts align actors by **polarization into blocs (alliances)** pitted against each other, and **align goals by fundamentalization under labels like freedom, faith.** Conflicts escalate, broadening and deepening the violence. Thus, **terrorism (civilians killing civilians)** and **state terrorism (military killing civilians)** are added to **wars (military fighting military)** and **guerrillas (civilians fighting military)**. These are awesome processes that should be met with peace-building, depolarization, humanization of the other side, de-escalation.

But even more crucial is solving the conflicts, or at least transforming them into conflicts that cover basic aspects of the original conflicts. Toward this end conflicts must be understood in terms of the actors (almost never only 2!), their goals and the clashes among goals and actors. Then comes the sifting of illegitimate from legitimate goals, and – the difficult part – the efforts, through dialogue, to bridge the gaps between legitimate goals: Constructively, Concretely, Creatively. The 3 Cs.

- c) Priority to the basic needs of the people, food, housing, clothing, health and education.
- d) A conference, later and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Central Asia, OSCCA, with all neighbouring Muslim countries, in the longer run as a Central Asian Community, possibly as a confederation.
- e) All belligerent foreign troops out, basing security on the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in cooperation with the UN Security Council (UNSC) with its legitimacy deficit having four Christian and one Confucian country as veto powers.
- f) An ongoing dialogue on gender between Qur'anic readings, as opposed to tribal and fundamentalist practices.

2. USA-UK/ IRAQ. Pull out and facilitate a) to i) below:

- a) a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East, CSCME, modeled on the Helsinki conference 1973-5, with Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, Israel/Palestine on the agenda; all inextricably linked. A ceasefire is not a condition to get started, but would be helpful.
- b) the UN Security Council alone cannot keep Iraq secure and stable given the absence of Muslim veto powers, and inhuman sanctions against Iraq. OIC, parliamentary democracies like Turkey and Indonesia, European non-belligerents – France, Germany, Spain, Belgium – and India might help.
- c) Iraq is fact and fiction, with centripetal and centrifugal forces. Iraq as a unitary state is not a goal in itself. A federation, or even confederation, an “Iraqi Community”, would be more realistic.
- d) Iraqi Kurds should be free to develop their relations with Kurds in Syria, Turkey and Iran, with human rights and some autonomy in all four, and as open borders as possible. The totality of these autonomies could be “Kurdistan”. Guarantees for Turkmen are essential, with Turkish cooperation.
- e) Iraqi Shia Arabs should be free to develop their relations to Shia Arabs in Iran (Khuzestan, with a similar flexible model.
- f) Iraqi Sunnis (4 out of 18 provinces, but all are mixed) might be supported internationally, given insufficient oil revenue and deeply rooted conflicts with both Kurds and Shias.
- g) Self-determination serves better than borders imposed by foreigners, and autonomy forces will only grow if resisted.
- h) A process of Truth and Reconciliation, with a fact-finding commission broadly composed, not only USA-UK and Iraq.
- i) The USA-UK should summon the decency:
 - a. To apologize unconditionally for the attack and its aftermath;
 - b. To compensate for civilian and military, coalition and Iraqi, human and material, damages due to the war. Waiting for this miracle, the task passes to the decent elements of the world.

To stay the present course in Iraq and Afghanistan exacerbates the situation at great costs to US national interests. The costs to change the course are minor relative to the gains. To call that “unrealistic” because the USA disagrees is like calling the advice to quit smoking unrealistic because the smoker objects.

3. USA-UK vs. IRAN:

The keys are in subtexts rather than texts.

- a) Texts highlight uranium enrichment and IAEA inspection might be helpful. But why should Iran submit when Israel, India and Pakistan have enriched up to weapons grade

and gotten away with it? Unless USA reverses its Israel-India policy, demanding inspection also of itself, like it did during the 1962 Cuba crisis by the tit-for-tat of taking US missiles out of Turkey.

- b) The spiritual poverty of the West shows up in Bush and Blair not acknowledging the CIDA-MI6 1951-53 overthrow of an elected prime minister with 25 years' support of Shah autocracy; calling for a fact-finding historical commission to prepare an apology. Nor did Bush-Blair accept the invitation by then Iran president Khatami to a high level open dialogue, also using the Spanish-Turkish-UN Alliance of Civilizations. Recognition of some truths is needed to clear the past before turning to the pragmatics of a cooperative future, e.g. about alternatives to fossil fuels.
- c) Exchange (1) FOR (2), and negotiations might also open for what kind of Israel Iran might recognize, like the Israel of 4 June 1967, like the present tit-for-tat with North Korea.

The onus is on the West. Only the weak cannot admit mistakes. Is Anglo-America strong enough? “.

Galtung: earlier part of presentation, before above:

First: Anglo-American diagnosis of conflict: It has bad behaviour and probably bad attitudes. The basic assumption here is that violence is due to unresolved conflict. Where you have violence, underneath you have unresolved conflict. Don't try and pin conflict on one party. Pin it on the relationship between the two parties. For example, 9-11 is based on something in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the States. It could be many things. Fundamental are US access to Saudi oil and the obligation of the US military to come to the assistance of the Saudi royal family in case they are attacked by their own people. Now why should they be attacked by their own people. Interesting. The Sunni are something corresponding to Protestantism vis a vis Catholicism, or Puritanism versus Anglicans. In a marriage, people take sides. They say, it is his fault, or her fault. I say, I like both of them. They haven't worked out their relationship. The need to get outside themselves, through mediation.

In the same way, Column III of the chart, the column in between, is the crucial column.

Anglo-Americans stop at column I and II. Column III is about changing society. If you think you live in the perfect environment, why should you change it? It is so easy to say everything was ok until that guy came along. Looking at the relationship is more abstract; So, more difficult.

I saw a CNN program after 9-11 in which the psychologist being interviewed was asked, "What shall parents answer when children ask difficult questions? Like the 5 year-old who asks: "Mum what have we done since they did a terrible thing like that to us?" The psychologist's suggestion was to answer: "In the world are good people and evil people. And evil people don't like good people." After the show, I wrote to the American Psychological Association and suggested they take the license from the 45 year old psychologist and give to 5 year old.

Endnotes – Annex 14

ⁱ "Peace as a Profession in the 21st Century Conference", Sponsored by: Civilian Peace Service Canada (CPSC), in Cooperation with CICR – Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution; Conflict Studies Program, Saint Paul University; CIAN – Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation; McMaster Centre for Peace Studies; TRANSCEND International Institute, held at St. Paul University, Ottawa, April 3-5, 2007.