

APPENDIX C6

INSTRUMENTS FOR DEALING WITH INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

The question of war and peace has always been one of the fundamental questions of human study. Many different aspects of this question have been considered: is war the result of misunderstanding?--if we understood each other better, would there be less conflict? are humans naturally aggressive making war unavoidable? does the organization of people into states lead to war? While scientists and scholars attempt to answer these questions and more, states have developed means of dealing with international conflict when it occurs. In addition, suggestions have been made, and some put to use, which seek to reduce the likelihood of conflict in the first place.

The following is a list of some of the instruments states can use to deal with international conflict:

- 1) **Accommodation:** A state might deal with a conflict between itself and another state by simply giving up its objectives and accepting the demands of the other.
- 2) **Arms Control:** Arms control refers to measures meant to control, limit or reduce the number of weapons. Those who support arms control argue that, for the near future, states will continue to rely on weapons to ensure their security. Weapons reflect states' suspicions, distrust and negative historical experiences with each other. These problems will not disappear overnight, but arms control measures can be adopted which will prevent a totally unrestricted arms race which is in nobody's interest.
- 3) **Civilian-Based Defence:** Today, many states provide for their defence by maintaining professional armies, armed with the latest weapons. It is argued that such a defence system increases the chances for conflict. There are two reasons for this. The armed forces of the superpowers, and other major powers, have grown so large and their weapons so destructive, that their very existence creates tension and uncertainty. Secondly, modern armed forces, combined with military alliances, means that conflict can quickly spread to involve many states. A system which would avoid these dangers is civilian-based defence.

The idea of civilian-based defence is based on the fact that when one state attacks and invades another, it is often for the purpose of controlling or influencing the other state. Control and influence can only be successful if enough citizens cooperate with the invader. Civilian-based defence would train the population in non-violent techniques which would make it difficult, if not impossible for the invader to take control.

Such a defence system would not physically protect a state's borders from invasion, but since an invader would be met by total non-cooperation from the population, it might be enough to deter aggression in the first place. In addition, a state using civilian-based defence would be a threat to no one, and therefore would not provoke an attack. Civilian-based defence could be carried out by states on their own and would mean they could withdraw from alliances and end any association with nuclear weapons.

- 4) **Confidence-and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs):** Confidence-and security-building measures (CSBMs) are practical measures taken to reduce the risk of military confrontation. CSBMs were established by the Stockholm Conference which was attended by the members of NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the neutral and non-aligned states of Europe. In a treaty which came into effect 1 January 1987, the 35 nations attending the conference agreed to a set of measures to increase confidence and security in Europe.

The idea behind the establishment of CSBMs is to increase openness between states about their military affairs. For example, at Stockholm, the participants agreed to notify each other of their major military activities and exercises at least 42 days before they are to begin. If states open their military activities to outside observation, military actions become predictable. By sharing their respective agendas for military action, states learn to trust that their neighbours' military manoeuvres are non-threatening. If states are confident in the peaceful intention of their neighbours' actions, they will feel more secure and will be less likely to resort to military threats or force.

- 5) **Disarmament:** Disarmament is the reduction and elimination of arms. This can be done by states on their own, or through negotiations with other states. Those who seek disarmament see weapons themselves as a principal cause of conflict. Weapons create tension and fear, and make it easier to solve disputes using violence. It is best to simply reduce and eliminate them.

It is usually suggested that disarmament be carried out through the United Nations. In fact, "general and complete disarmament under effective international control" has been an objective of the United Nations for over 30 years.

- 6) **Legal Instruments:** There are international organizations in the world which are meant to regulate activities and hear complaints when conflicts occur. For instance, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) sets out rules which are meant to improve and increase world trade, and make sure states trade fairly. Should a conflict develop over trade, a state which participates in the GATT can make a complaint to the GATT which will rule on the case. The GATT decision is usually accepted by the parties involved or a settlement is negotiated by the parties to the dispute.

Another legal instrument is the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands. The International Court, or World Court, will rule on cases brought to it by states which have a dispute. Legally, states are then bound to accept the ruling of the court.

- 7) **Mediation:** When states are unable to deal with a conflict, but still seek a solution, they may turn to mediation. Mediation is a process in which a mediator or third party is brought in to consider the conflict and propose ways to settle the problem. A mediator does not force the parties to accept his/her ideas. Instead, s/he produces ideas and strategies which ideally will lead to a settlement.

- 8) **Negotiation:** Negotiation is a process in which parties seek to reach some form of common agreement. Negotiation is used when the parties to a conflict realize they cannot settle the issue on their own, but must work out a solution together. In international relations, negotiations are carried out by many officials under many circumstances. Negotiations, however, are most often associated with the high-level talks carried out by leaders of states and/or their representatives and diplomats.
- 9) **Non-Acknowledgement:** Rather than deal with a conflict, a state may deliberately ignore it or not admit that there is any problem. Such an approach is most likely to be seen in cases where the parties to a conflict have unequal power. A powerful state may find it convenient and easy to ignore dealing with a conflict with a less powerful state, because there is little cost involved. This is becoming increasingly difficult, however, as in a more interdependent world, many problems have become interconnected and hard to separate. This means to fail to deal with a conflict or dispute now may make its solution more difficult in the future.
- 10) **Non-Offensive Defence:** Non-offensive defence attempts to deal with the problem of heavy concentrations of armed forces which can be used to launch an attack. This is particularly a problem in Europe.

It is argued that both NATO and the Warsaw Pact have tried to deter each other from attacking by building armed forces that could quickly go on the attack if conflict broke out. This emphasis on the offensive creates pressures for each side to match the improvements and growth in the other's forces, leading to an arms race. In addition, modern weapon systems are highly accurate and destructive, giving an advantage to the side that shoots first. The result is a much greater risk of conflict and escalation to nuclear war.

Non-offensive defence calls for a strategy which is defensive only and does not threaten. It would be based on professional armies with modern weapons. However, these armies would not depend on offensive weapons and would not base their planning on offensive strategies. The goal is to convince the other side with more than just words that one's armed forces are not meant for attack. Ideally, each side's defensive capability would be greater than its opponent's offensive capability. This would clearly indicate neither side is interested in aggression and would be a constructive step in reducing international tensions.

- 11) **Peacekeeping:** Peacekeeping is the use of military forces to supervise a cease-fire between warring parties. Peacekeepers usually come from small and middle-power states and they keep the peace by their presence, not by fighting. Force is used only in self-defence. Peacekeeping operations are often carried out under the authority of an international organization, usually the United Nations. It is hoped that once a cease-fire has been established, efforts will be made to find a more lasting solution.

- 12) **War:** The most violent means of dealing with international conflict is the use of war. War (and violence in general) seeks to impose a solution. It seeks to solve the problem by destroying one's opponent, or weakening him so greatly that they are no longer a threat.
- 13) **World Government:** The idea of world government is based on the view that war and international conflict is bound to occur as long as the international system is dominated by many independent states, often pursuing their own, selfish interests. It is therefore the organization of the international system that is mainly responsible for international conflict.

There have been many plans put forward for world government, but world federation is often suggested. In a world federation, states as we now know them would continue to exist. They would, however, give up some of their power to the world government which would govern over interests common to humanity. Over time, more and more power would be turned over to the world government until individual states would disappear. No longer would individual states be able to block common action and pursue their interests using violence.