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: Programme

International sef: Expert Workshop Achieving International Peace and Security: Towards a New Normative Consensus

House of the EKD Berlin

8-9 December 2015

Conference language

English

BACKGROUND

70 years after the establishment of the United Nations (UN) as *the* organization to maintain international peace and security, the world finds itself in a state of turmoil. The institutional setting of the UN – representing the power relations after World War II – has met with substantial criticism for quite some time. But much more fundamentally, some of its underlying norms – such as sovereignty, sovereign equality and non-intervention in internal affairs – and principles such as the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the protection of fundamental human rights and the promotion of social progress remain heavily disputed. To be precise: it is not so much the norms and principles as such that are contested, but their hierarchy in cases of conflict and the consistency with which they are being applied. In a bi- or unipolar world, conflicts between norms were generally solved by the rule of the powerful, but in today’s multipolar world, this has become much more difficult. A substantial number of emerging powers as well as new country groupings are raising their voice and calling for their right to participate in defining and interpreting norms – ultimately leading to a clear limitation of the UN’s capacity to (re)act.

Finding a new consensus on the balancing of basic norms will be key to strengthening international activities towards a more peaceful world and to revitalizing the UN and its Security Council. And only with such a consensus might the international community be able to find answers to the fundamental questions of *why*, *when* and *how* to intervene in a conflict situation. This is a challenging task, however, as was recently shown by a Security Council open debate on “Maintaining International Peace and Security: reflect on history, reaffirm the strong commitment to the purpose and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations”, which took place at the invitation of China in February 2015. Nearly 80 countries expressed their views in this debate, showing the many nuances in the interpretation of the Charter’s basic principles.

Three lines of conflict proved to be predominant in this debate: 1) the absoluteness of national sovereignty vs. the protection of human rights, 2) the universality of norms vs. selectivity and double standards, and 3) the significance of rule of law and democracy vs. economic development for achieving and sustaining peace. None of these lines of conflict is in any way new, but they all seem to be emerging with more emphasis and – more importantly – a greater variety of voices, offering an opportunity to break up old frontiers and ultimately reach a new consensus.

This workshop will therefore search for possible bridges to overcome these lines of conflict in today’s multilateral world and to identify potential elements of a new consensus on the very foundations of international cooperation with regard to peace and security. For this purpose, the workshop brings together a small group of experts from different world regions and professional backgrounds for an informal sharing of thoughts and ideas.

: Tuesday, 8 December 2015

- 13.00 hrs Registration and light refreshments
- 13.30 hrs Welcome
Professor Lothar Brock
Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)
Senior Professor at Goethe University Frankfurt
Visiting Fellow at Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF/HSFK)

SESSION I

THE 2015 DEBATES ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE UN

In 2015, the UN has put its peacemaking and peacekeeping capacities under close scrutiny. The fundamental normative questions of *why* and *when* to intervene in a conflict were mainly left to open discussion fora such as the above-mentioned debate in the Security Council. Another broad debate took place during the formulation of the post-2015 agenda (now the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development), when many countries opposed the inclusion of a goal to promote peaceful societies, rule of law and accountable institutions – inter alia fearing that this might open another door for intervention in internal affairs.

Moreover, review processes were initiated, focusing on the practical and systemic challenges of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, notably the question of *how* the international community should intervene. Three reports were commissioned to examine a) the UN's peacekeeping operations, b) its peacebuilding architecture and c) the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. So where do we stand at the end of this eventful year? Was there enough room to discuss the underlying normative challenges? And is there any evidence of progress towards a new and truly universal normative consensus?

Chair

Professor Lothar Brock

- 13.45 hrs Opening speeches
Addressing the underlying conflicts of norms: Key to a more peaceful world?
Professor Nicole Deitelhoff
Member of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)
Professor of International Relations and Theories of Global Orders
Goethe University Frankfurt/Main

The year 2015 from a normative perspective:

Beating about the bush or advancing towards a new normative consensus?

Sebastian von Einsiedel

Director

UNU Centre for Policy Research, Tokyo

- 14.45 hrs Questions & Answers

15.30 hrs

Coffee break

SESSION II

RESPONSIBLE SOVEREIGNTY:

ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE COMMON DEFINITION

As the Security Council debate on the principles of the UN Charter in February 2015 has shown, the countries arguing for absolute priority for the respect for national sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs seem to be diminishing in number. But with China and Russia in particular, they still have very strong advocates – with the power to veto. At the other end of the spectrum, countries like the US, but also many European, Latin American and African and even Middle Eastern countries have made it very clear that sovereignty also entails responsibilities such as accountability, rule of law, respect for human rights and the willingness to cooperate.

At the beginning of this century, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) tried to find a solution to the dilemma of preventing and halting massive violations of human rights while respecting national sovereignty, by introducing the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Although developed by representatives from different world regions and adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly at the World Summit in 2005, this concept has often been perceived as a Western one. Considering the differing notions of sovereignty prevalent today, how can a universal concept of responsible sovereignty be achieved? And should “irresponsible sovereignty” be declared as a threat to international peace? What would the failure to reach a consensus on this crucial norm mean for the UN?

Chair

Dr Lars Brozus

Research Associate

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)/German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

16.00 hrs

Input

Professor Andreas von Arnould (tbc)

Walther-Schücking-Institute for International Law

Kiel University

Comments

Professor Li Dongyan (tbc)

Institute of World Economics and Politics

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing

Dr Xymena Kurowska

Associate Professor

Central European University, Budapest

H.E. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti

Ambassador of Brazil to Germany, Berlin

17.15–18.30 hrs

Plenary debate

19.00 hrs

Informal dinner

: Wednesday, 9 December 2015

9.00 hrs

Welcome coffee

SESSION III

NORMS UNDER PRESSURE:

IS THERE A WAY TO REDUCE DOUBLE STANDARDS AND SELECTIVITY?

An important area of critique during the February debate in the Security Council was the issue of double standards and selectivity. Many speakers put a great deal of emphasis on the universality of norms and the equality of all states with regard to national sovereignty and respect for human rights. Medium and small states particularly underlined the importance of these fundamental principles for their own security. At the same time, it was broadly criticized that many countries, above all the Permanent 5, often prioritize short-term national interests over the observance of these principles and norms. Such behaviour, widespread across all world regions and also beyond the P5, causes damages to any future norm of responsible sovereignty. Is there a way to limit cases of double standards and selectivity? Do we need a new norm to respect norms, a norm of reliability and mutual trust?

Chair

Professor Nicole Deitelhoff

Member of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

Professor of International Relations and Theories of Global Orders

Goethe University Frankfurt/Main

9.15 hrs

Input

Dr Matthias Dembinski

Project Director, Senior Researcher

Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)

Comments

Dr Jakkie Cilliers

Executive Director

Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria

Lotte Leicht

Director

Human Rights Watch, Brussels

10.15 hrs

Plenary debate

11.30 hrs

Coffee break and light refreshments

SESSION IV

TOWARDS A UNIVERSAL NORM ON HOW TO SUPPORT CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

When dealing with conflict and post-conflict countries, the international community is confronted with opposing norms on how to intervene, reflecting different state-building and development paradigms. So far, neither the expectation that economic development will be followed by societal peace and stable governing structures nor the concept of liberal peacebuilding with a focus on the rule of law and accountable institutions has proved to be a panacea for long-lasting peace. In particular, many developing countries fear that the concept of liberal peacebuilding is mainly used as another justification for external intervention and for the imposition of a Western ideal. While purely economic cooperation – as practised particularly by China – might be politically less sensitive, in the long run its success is threatened by a lack of stable institutions and a reliable legal framework. How then to react to the shortcomings of these two concepts? What are the answers given by the three review reports mentioned in Session I? How much weight do they give to local ownership? And is there any prospect of reaching a truly universal norm on how to support conflict-affected countries also beyond UN missions?

Chair

Marc Baxmann

Policy and Communication Officer

FriEnt - Working Group on Peace and Development, Bonn

12.00 hrs

Input

Dr Susanna P. Campbell

Post-Doctoral Researcher

Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) at the

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva

Comments

Dr Helder da Costa

General Secretary

g7+ Secretariat, Dili

Dr Daniel Large

Assistant Professor

School of Public Policy, Central European University, Budapest

13.00 hrs

Plenary debate

14.00 hrs

Wrap-up and future prospects

Professor Cord Jakobeit (tbc)

Department of International Politics

University of Hamburg

14.20 hrs

Closing remarks by the organizers