

bulletin

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60 years after the end of the war— 60 years United Nations

by Dr Christoph Zöpel

In 1945 San Francisco celebrated the end of WW II and the founding of the United Nations. 60 years later ceremonies of remembrance between former enemies but also historical frictions, such as between China and Japan, mark the day. At the same time, the UN is badly in need of reform with even the Secretary-General himself offering suggestions. Two basic questions have remained open since the foundation of the UN:

What was the conceptualization of war when the Charter was drawn up? War in general or war that causes such horrors as the two World Wars in the 20th century?

Who are “the peoples” that were addressed at the beginning of the UN Charter? National citizens of sovereign nation states or all people of societies integrating themselves worldwide?

Since 1945 some 300 wars have been counted and Security Council members often were a party to them, for instance the wars of independence against Great Britain and France; the Korean War, in which China and the US were involved, the two wars in Afghanistan, with the participation of the Soviet Union and the US, the genocide and war in Rwanda, to which the Security Council mostly turned a blind eye, and the war by the US and the ‘coalition of the willing’ against Iraq—not approved of by the Security Council.

In this context the question on social theory foundations of the UN arises. They lie within the antagonism of realistic versus idealistic foreign policy theory. Both existed after 1945, however, in view of the facts of war real policy thinking was dominant compared to idealistic notions of a peaceful world order. Nevertheless, the latter were institutionalized with the foundation of the United Nations.

Criticism and reform ideas with regard to the UN ought to be measured against these two theoretical approaches. Is there really no alternative to the realization also formulated by British historian Paul Kennedy that it is always the great powers that determine world affairs? Or is humankind on its way to an integrated world society the political institutions of which are the system of the UN, as postulated by social scientists like Niklas Luhmann or David Held?

Criticism and reform of the UN can be subsumed into the following categories:

- representation of power
- weighing-up of priorities
- democratic legitimization and institutionalization.

***“... the UN is badly
in need of reform.”***

The representation of power in the Security Council was determined by the outcome of WW II; the Permanent 5 (P5) are the winners of that war. In 2005, however, national product, population figures, global possible transfers and military strength only justify the P5-position of the US and China, and by no means those of Great Britain and France, with Russia being somewhere in-between. It is scandalous that India, a nation with a population of 1 billion, is not a constant member of the Security Council. The criterion of adequate regional representation, including Latin America and Africa, already points to a world society of people with equal rights. A push for a seat for the EU, though unlikely, might be a step towards the replacement of powerful states by a well-balanced representation of world regions.

Public debate on the Security Council currently pushes the question whether the UN is adequately facing up to the really urgent social questions in the world—such as poverty, the sustainable and just development in the world, the pandemics and environmental catastrophes—into the background. The UN is by far too fragmented—between International Financial Institutions (IFIs), WTO, ILO, UNDP, etc.—to act efficiently, and the balance of power is far from equal. An effective solution may be the establishment of a

second Security Council to decide on such issues. A reform of ECOSOC will not be a solution if IMF, World Bank and WTO are not taken on board.

The idealistic school combines the ideas of peace and democracy. Transparency is one fundamental base of democratic societies. Civil society organizations have called for transparency within the UN which the UN itself has replied to with the Cardoso-Report. On a global level, democratic legitimization and control beyond institutions in international law is missing.

The political system of a world society can only be a multi-level, subsidiary system, i.e. a federal system such as the Indian federal state or the European Union. The African Union, for instance, is applying their structure as a role model. A regional system leads to a fairer representation of the individual citizens in the world than the system of sovereign national states with population figures ranging from those of countries like Luxembourg to China.

A division of power on a global level is generally discussed as utopian. However, long before governments joined—in the League of Nations in 1920—members of parliament had already joined in the Interparliamentary Union in 1889. In practice, there is nothing that stands in the way of an additional parliamentary advisory body. Its first and foremost right could be the right to information towards all institutions of the UN system—and the IFIs—through which transparency can be asserted *de jure*.

The above text was translated and edited by BICC.

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Staff Spotlight:



Svenja Bends

Svenja Bends was born and grew up in Hamburg. In March 1994, she moved to Bonn to help BICC's former Director, Herbert Wulf, set up the institute. In particular, she was involved in building up infrastructure as well as in assisting in the process of developing BICC's corporate design (logo etc.). Svenja worked as the Director's Assistant for six months before moving to a different part-time position within BICC and beginning her studies at Bonn University in October 1994. She graduated in December 2000 and holds a Master's Degree in Political Science.

In 1995, Svenja joined the PR Department where she was responsible for press contacts, organized press conferences and helped with the organization of BICC's international conferences. Since returning from maternity leave after the birth of her daughter in October 2003, she is now in charge of the publishing management of all BICC publications. She coordinates the production process of BICC's yearbook, the *conversion survey*, acting as a liaison between the research department and the layout company. Managing the production of the book series *BICC/DCAF Security Sector Governance and Conversion Studies* is also her responsibility.

Besides this, she manages the technical side of three of BICC's publication series (*briefs, bulletins and papers*) for which she also does the layout, and takes care of the outside presentation of BICC (website, image, brochures, etc.). Whenever needed, she creates posters and flyers for the various BICC projects. One of her main challenges was to create the layout concept of the commemorative publication "10 years BICC" on the occasion of BICC's 10th anniversary.

Outside work, Svenja loves to explore the world with her family and to spend as much time as possible with friends. Along with this, she enjoys gardening as a compensation for all the deskwork.

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BICC Project on Multi-ethnic Federations

Whenever multiethnic states are threatened by secessionism or undergo democratization after authoritarian rule, policy advisors have offered federalism as a panacea. Yet these proposals mostly remain a mere catchword. The fact that many multiethnic federations have actually failed should have warned advisors to be cautious. Hence the project asks whether ethnic federations—compared to alternative regimes—are an appropriate form of governance for multiethnic societies. Do they have a higher potential of regulating ethno-territorial conflicts and of more legitimacy? Or do ethnic federations just promote particularism, ethnocratic rule instead of meritocracy, and disruptive behavior by rewarding ethnic group rights rather than protecting universal individual rights? The question is not new and the ‘communalist’ versus ‘liberalist’ arguments are well established in their respective camps.

The goal of this empirical research project is to compare the institutional characteristics of stability and instability as well as conflict regulation in four multiethnic federations: Russia, India, Nigeria, and Spain. The project will categorize the institutional arrangements of these ethnic federations and identify the most pertinent conflicts surrounding these institutions. Are the federal arrangements accepted or do they become an issue of dispute themselves? Answers to these questions are sought by interviewing key politicians of the first and second chambers, the constitutional courts, of the executive and of parliamentary committees as well as the most renowned federal experts in these countries. Cooperation partners in the countries under study will be part of the collaborative endeavor. The ultimate goal of the study is identify prerequisites of sustainability, to identify best and worst practices for ethno-federal institution-building and thus to expand our empirical and theoretical knowledge on federalism in multiethnic societies. Once tested, potential further applications of the method are Ethiopia, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka or countries contemplating federalization such as Afghanistan or Iraq. The project, conducted by Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, is financially supported by the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung and began in March 2005. Heinemann-Grüder worked for years on Russian federalism and is transferring approaches and insights tested there to new cases.

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Friedensgutachten 2005

On 14 June 2005 the *Friedensgutachten 2005* was presented to the public at the Federal Press Office in Berlin. Besides the editors’ meeting with the President of the German Parliament, further discussions of the report were held with relevant parliamentary bodies. The annual *Friedensgutachten* is a joined publication of the five major German peace research institutions. This year’s edition focuses on international strategies of conflict de-escalation in countries and regions, such as the Middle East, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, or Sudan. In addition, the report deals with the control of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction after the failure of the NPT conference, and assesses recent experience in mixed civil-military peacebuilding missions in the larger context of UN reform.

English summaries of the report may be visited at www.bicc.de/friedensgutachten/index.html.

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Transboundary Waters and Crisis Prevention

In the BICC issue area “Conflict: Resource-related Violence and its Management” we are addressing the subject of transboundary water, conflict and cooperation within a special research project. First, we are aiming to identify the challenges and implications of implementing a multi-level and multi-actor approach to transboundary water governance in order to foster cooperation and conflict prevention; second, we intend to develop policy recommendations and tools for practitioners involved in such transboundary water governance.

Currently our work centers around transnational water basins in Sub-Saharan Africa where several conflict-prone hotspots—as well as promising progress in transboundary water governance—can be found. However, challenges remain and these need to be addressed if conflicts are to be prevented from escalating and dealt with in a peaceful manner. They include formulating and implementing adapted dispute settlement mechanisms, taking into account customary ways of dealing with water-related conflicts; analyzing the linkages between water-related conflicts on the sub-national and on the international level; and the question of the participation of civil society and local communities, especially in weak and failing states.

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BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey*, the BICC/DCAF *security sector governance and conversion studies* and other books, BICC publishes *briefs*, *papers* and the quarterly newsletter *bulletin*. These series analyze international aspects of arms, peacebuilding and conflict, report on projects and experience gained, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how. Further details can be obtained at www.bicc.de/publications/

BICC/DCAF security sector governance and conversion studies:

no. 11: Herbert Wulf. 2005. *Internationalisierung und Privatisierung von Krieg und Frieden*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, June 2005

brief 31:

Tobias Pietz, *Demobilizing and Retraining for the Future. The Armed Forces in Serbia and Montenegro*, July 2005

paper 44:

Lars Wirkus (ed.), *Water, Development and Cooperation—Comparative Perspective: Euphrates-Tigris and Southern Africa*, July 2005

forthcoming

brief 32:

Volker Böge and Wolf-Christian Paes, *Making Sense of Responsibility: Corporate Conduct in Zones of Conflict*, September 2005

BICC Notes

The BICC **paper 43** *To End a War: Demobilization and Reintegration of Paramilitaries in Colombia* is a result of a cooperation between the Colombian foundation “Ideas para la Paz”, the Universidad de los Andes, and BICC which started in 2002 at a conference in Bogota entitled “Voces y opciones del desarme: Enseñanzas adquiridas de la experiencia”. The paper gives an update of the demobilization efforts undertaken until the end of 2004. Researchers of BICC will continue to evaluate and monitor this demobilization process. This report fits well into BICC’s peacebuilding efforts, one of the three main topics of our work.

For further information please contact

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From 11–15 July 2005, the **Second Biennial Meeting of States (BMS)** will be taking place at the UN Headquarters in New York. Delegations from the UN member states are meeting to discuss implementation of the UN Programme of Action that was agreed upon at the First UN Conference on the *Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects* in 2001. The topics to be discussed in preparation for the Review Conference in 2006 include the collection and destruction of arms; capacity-building; marking and tracing; import and export controls; as well as the

impact of small arms on human development. Peter Croll will be part of the German delegation.

For further information please contact

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At the BMS, BICC will organize two side events: On 14 July 2005, Director Peter Croll is chairing a discussion on “**Capacity Building for SALW Control in the Regional and Subregional Context**” at 13:15h. Co-organizers are Saferworld (UK) and NUPI (Norway). On the evening of the same day, the **BICC exhibition “Small Arms—A Global Threat”** will be opened at the German House. Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and Pasi Patokallio, Chairman of the BMS, will say the words of welcome. UNICEF is a co-host of the event.

For further information please contact

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The **Conference on Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC)** will be taking place in New York from 19–21 July 2005. More than 1,000 NGOs are expected to participate in the event to determine the way forward in civil society conflict prevention. Key aims are to adopt a Global Action Agenda aimed at achieving a shift from reaction to prevention of violent conflict, to develop an implementation plan, and to increase awareness of the contributions which civil society working on peacebuilding and prevention can make.

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The **photo exhibition “Millennium Development Goals 2015—Acting Globally for Poverty Reduction, Peace and Development”** will be presented from 24 August to 16 September in the Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn, Ahrstr. 45. This photo exhibition is a co-production of BICC and the photo agency *laif* (Cologne). Photographs and texts document the impact of conflict and conflict prevention on the Millennium Development Goals.

Further information can be obtained at

→ www.laif.de/de/article/12114.html or contact pr@bicc.de

From 21 to 24 September, the **European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI)** will hold its 11th General Conference entitled “Insecurity and Development: Regional Issues and Policies for an Interdependent World” at the International Congress Center located in the building of the former German Parliament in Bonn. Within the context of this conference, BICC will be organizing a workshop on “Considerations in the Design of Small Arms Control Training Material” which is to take place on Friday, 23 September at 14:30h.

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