

RC: 234868



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**THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN PEACEBUILDING:
REFLECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

By

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SECURITY, JUSTICE & GOVERNANCE**

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

**29 November, 2016
Copenhagen, Denmark**

Protocols;

Colleagues of the Centre for Resolution of International Conflicts (CRIC),
Danish Institute for Human rights,
Danish Council for Strategic Research,
Carlsberg Foundation,
Faculty, Staff & Students of University of Copenhagen,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Introduction:

It is a real pleasure to have been here in this very beautiful but very cold Copenhagen in the last few days to participate in the Workshop on “Creating a Conducive Space for Peace” and also a huge honour for me to lead this public seminar on the Role of the UN in Peacebuilding: Reflections for the Future.

And given the untold human sufferings and material destruction from on-going wars and violent conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, few issues remain as critical on the global agenda today. And indeed, it is only through collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches which harness the creativity and resources of diverse state and non-state actors that today’s deadly conflicts can be managed and root causes of these conflicts can eventually and comprehensively addressed and peace secured.

In my remarks today, I wish to share with you my professional and personal observations about the role of the United Nations in peacebuilding, and in particular, give special attention to the findings and recommendations of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, which I am proud to have Co-Chaired along with former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The Commission’s Report, “*Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*”, was launched in June of last year at the Peace Palace in The Hague, with subsequent presentations at United Nations Headquarters and around the world, including in Abuja, Nigeria at the Savannah Center for Diplomacy, Democracy, and Development. Before opening up to discussion, I will conclude my remarks by underscoring the potential breakthrough in UN peacebuilding achieved through the adoption last year of the

particularly relevant Sustainable Development Goal #16 on peaceful, justice, and inclusive societies.

I. The Intersection of Security & Justice in Global Governance: Just Security

First, I wish to briefly set the context in which UN peacebuilding is currently undertaken and which informed the deliberations of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance.

The context: Despite two World Wars and untold human suffering, during the 20th century humanity witnessed an unparalleled advance of freedom and justice with the defeat of fascism, the demise of other forms of totalitarian government, the de-legitimation of colonialism, the demise of Apartheid, and the spread of democratic governance and respect for human rights. In the past two decades, the world has also managed to reduce extreme global poverty by half, and to harness a range of new technologies in agriculture, communications, transport and health, the sum total of which makes our interconnected global economy possible.

On the other hand, in some parts of the world, populations growing faster than economies can create new tensions, and the concentration and diversion of wealth have left millions destitute and frustrated, contributing to militant extremism, not just in poorly governed spaces, where state institutions and the rule of law have collapsed, but among those poorly served by or unable to fit into their adopted states. According to the latest Global Peace Index, terrorism is at an all-time high, battle deaths—*fueled, in particular, by conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa*—are at a 25 year high, and the number of refugees and displaced people is at a level not seen the end of the second World War.

Furthermore, according to a most recent World Bank Report “two billion people now live in countries where development outcomes are affected by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV) and that extreme poverty will increasingly be concentrated in these areas as the rest of the world makes progress, rising from 17% of the global total today

to almost 50% by 2030 due to high population growth rate and weak economic development.

Moreover, grave human rights abuse and discrimination against women, children, and minorities continue unabated worldwide. Humanity's unplanned impact on global climate—*which is the backdrop to all other human achievement*—and the rise of new technologies offering global connectivity but also global risks, remind us daily of the need to diminish that impact and better manage those risks. But *ad hoc* groups of states—*coalitions of the fleeting*—cannot reach those ends, and our current global institutions have neither the power nor the resilience to do so either.

We can choose to manage our global affairs, in the face of such challenges and risks, in a manner that lends itself to *greater peace, fairness, and equal opportunities for all nations and their citizens*, or allow our global governance structures and mechanisms to *decay further and fail to match* the scale and complexity of present day challenges and threats.

Now, the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council simultaneously adopted in April, 2016, the most comprehensive resolution so far on peacebuilding. This action should be commended as it was the outcome of serious discussions on how to move towards a new peacebuilding architecture based on a review of the work of the peacebuilding commission almost ten years after its first meeting. There are two features of the review which should be mentioned up front; First, that beyond post-conflict phase of the organization's work, sustaining peace should span the entire spectrum of conflict cycle whereby the focus would be on “prevention, as well as on addressing continuation, escalation and recurrence of conflict” and secondly, placing responsibility for comprehensive approach to securing peace on the UN system as a whole.

Furthermore, the new peacebuilding architecture emphasis coherence between the legislative bodies of the UN (Security Council, General Assembly and ECOSOC), linking it with Agenda 2030; emphasizing human rights and rule of law, engaging regional and sub-regional

organizations; involving more closely the UN Development Group and World Bank, strengthening its peacebuilding support office, enhancing participation of women and youth and above all, adequate funding- or as I prefer to call it providing funding.

But the task of securing peace cannot be left to the UN alone, hence, members of our Commission have advocated, in our report and over the past year and a half, for the creation of better tools, institutions, norms, and networks to avoid catastrophe and build a better future. What we need most are new kinds of public, private, and mixed approaches to global governance designed to meet and master the challenges and threats and open up opportunities to thrive with dignity. We need what the Commission called “just security.”

The growing connectivity between security and justice in global affairs exhibits short-term trade-offs and tensions but can also reveal ways in which justice and are mutually reinforcing, for instance, lending urgency and fresh perspectives to long-standing climate justice concerns.

The complete scope of **governance** encompasses informal or consensual arrangements for managing aspects of human relationships, from local and customary justice to the Montreal Protocol on global atmospheric ozone and the new Paris Climate Agreement that nonetheless have some *authoritative leverage* to encourage participants’ *compliance*—maybe not as much as *government* but enough to promote collaboration, a useful concept variants of which we have been discussing at the workshop titled: Towards Conducive Space for Peace, just concluded. As then Secretary-General Kofi Annan proclaimed in a commencement address in 2004 at Harvard University:

... (I) t is in the interest of every country to have international rules and abide by them. And such a system can only work if, in devising and applying the rules, the legitimate interests of all countries are accommodated, and decisions are reached collectively. That is the essence of multilateralism, and the founding principle of the United Nations.

In today's interdependent world, global governance going forward must be collaborative, or networked, governance with a range of state and non-state actors. Its objectives are global public goods—goods that anyone can utilize without diminishing availability to others, and that no one can be excluded from using. *Just security* aims to forge a system of accountable, fair, and effective governance of global public goods, including durable peace. (It is one of the many critical elements of global government given more in-depth treatment in the companion volume to the Commission report, entitled *Just Security in an Undergoverned World*, which will be published next year by Oxford University Press.)

II. Global Governance Reform Challenges and Progress at the Intersection of Security and Justice

Applying the framework of Just Security, the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance (concluded that today's global challenges, from mass violence in fragile states, such as Syria, the DRC, and the Central African Republic, to runaway climate change or fears of devastating cross-border economic shocks and cyber-attacks, require new kinds of global tools, institutions, norms, and networks if they are to be effectively managed.)

Addressed the theme of **“Coping with State Fragility and Violent Conflict”**, and considered how multiple and recurring intrastate conflicts, exploited by international terrorist and criminal organizations, have reversed the declining trends in armed violence witnessed since the end of the Cold War. At the same time, the growing roles of women, civil society organizations, and businesses, whose voices are amplified through new communications technologies, offer new opportunities for effective peacebuilding, governance renewal, and transformational justice.

I wish now to highlight six sets of recommendations that the Commission made in response to challenges at the heart of the UN's peacebuilding agenda and to underscore how certain proposals hold

deep personal meaning for me in connection with my decades of service at the United Nations.

- First, we propose the creation of **new UN conflict mediation and peace operations capacities**, beginning with a specialized track of fifty senior mediators and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General who would be on call to serve as the senior echelon of a larger professional civilian cadre for UN mediation efforts and field missions.
- In addition, we call on UN Member States to make some military units of battalion or brigade size available for UN peace operations on thirty to sixty days' notice, and for the establishment of sizable standing and reserve policy capacity for UN operations. At the same time, greater coordination with regional actors and local civil society must be promoted. In my last UN posting, I led the innovative hybrid United Nations and African Union peace operation in Darfur. And while joining further led to many unforeseen challenges, the benefits of increased burden-sharing and increased capabilities for peacekeeping outweighed the difficulties inherent in such as large-scale, joint undertaking in a high-risk environment such as Darfur.
- Second, the Commission calls for greater **inclusion and participation of women** at all levels and all stages of peace processes, especially as senior mediators and Envoys. Toward improved implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the role of women in promoting peace and security, we recommend, in particular, aligning efforts to implement National Actions Plans for 1325 with national policy priorities and placing a premium on stakeholders cooperation, as the history of the past 15 years demonstrates that the involvement of civil society groups often determines the reach of a National Action Plan.

- Thirdly, to strengthen the **Responsibility to Prevent, Protect, and Rebuild**, we recommended investing in new early-warning capabilities, R2P action plans, and concrete goals for all international actors seeking to prevent, react to, and rebuild after mass atrocities. For example, when I led the hybrid UN-African Union Mission in Darfur—*the largest UN peace operation at the time with 27,000 peacekeepers and an annual budget of \$1.7 billion*—I was surprised and dismayed when I learned that I could allocate only *\$4 million*, via “Quick Impact Projects,” toward anything that would help the African Union and United Nations address the root causes of conflict in war-torn western Sudan- especially my initiative through an International Conference on Water for Peace. Water being one of the root causes of conflict in Darfur – not enough of it and what is available poorly managed unfairly distributed among diverse communities.

As we all know from the experience of the past decade, R2P can be invoked too late to be of major help in fast-moving atrocity scenarios. High-level discussions should, therefore, both work out an agreement on the signs and factors associated with mass atrocity events, and designate responsibility for analysis and warning to enable quicker decision-making. That capacity could be vested in the UN Secretariat and include rotating contributions from Member States.

Furthermore, R2P should be complemented with Responsibility to Rebuild – Libya being a classic example of how the two should be linked.

- A fourth UN peacebuilding related reform proposal has to do with the new UN Peacebuilding Architecture established a little more than one decade ago to prevent the occurrence of deadly conflict in fragile states and regions. Specifically, we call for **transforming the UN Peacebuilding Commission into a Peacebuilding Council**. Similar to the UN Human Rights Commission’s transformation in 2005, or possibly replacing the no longer needed Trusteeship Council, the Commission proposes upgrading the Peacebuilding Commission into an empowered Council with new coordination authorities, new financial and

knowledge resources, and a new focus on prevention, including through “peacebuilding audits.” Indeed, a common theme running through the Commission’s report is that a prevention ethos, combined with innovative approaches, must, run through the entire UN system and other global governance actors committed to transnational security and justice.

- **Turning to my fifth recommendation, on the high-profile UN reform issue of updating the UN Security Council into the 21st century**, the Commission identified three specific ways to reform and strengthen the Council including: (i) first, increasing the legitimacy of the Council by expanding its membership in line with present day realities and allowing for the immediate re-election of non-permanent members through an amendment to Article 23 of the Charter; (ii) second, instituting a formal consultative mechanism for periodic dialogues with civil society, business, and local authority representatives, in recognition of their contributions to peacemaking and peacebuilding and building on the “Arria Formula” since the early 1990s; and (iii) developing a culture of restraint in the use of the veto by having, for example, Security Council members publicly defend “No Votes” that pertain to R2P type situations, as well as allowing permanent members the option of casting a dissenting vote that does not rise formally to the level of “non-concurrence”—also known as a veto—and thus not blocking passage of a resolution.
- Sixth and finally, we recommend strengthening the prevention and peacebuilding roles of the International Courts in The Hague, including by, for example, expanding acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and making use of its authoritative advisory opinions in innovative ways. In addition, we call for a new protocol that could guide the UN Security Council when it deliberates on the referral of a situation to the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**, as well as Security Council support for sanctions, such as freezing assets, to enforce ICC arrest warrants.

For further details on these and many other global governance reform proposals, I encourage you to consult the Commission's report and to debate and challenge its ideas.

III. Strategy for Reform: Towards a World Summit on Global Security, Justice & Governance in 2020 (UN 75)

Turning now to the Commission's "Strategy for Reform": key elements of an effective way to approach global governance reform can be represented in what I describe as a "3 + 2" Strategy: *Three* critical sets of actors and *two* major reform vehicles for channeling actors' ideas and political support toward achievable, yet transformative goals.

The *first* major set of actors, **UN Member States**, remains the bedrock of the international system, despite, as noted earlier, the diffusion of power from states in recent decades to sub-national and non-state entities. Since many of the reform ideas envisaged strike at the heart of distinctly intergovernmental bodies and the very notion of "state sovereignty," the buy-in, or at the least agreement of states to not block progress, is fundamental to achieving global systemic reform.

The *second* set of actors, **global civil society**, encompasses non-governmental organizations, social and religious movements, community-based groups, the business community, scholars, and journalists. From the Coalition for the International Criminal Court and Jubilee 2000 Campaign to the Compact of States and Regions and their growing influence on matters of climate governance, substantive change in global governance rarely occurs without the active engagement of a diverse range of non-state actors.

The *third and final* set of actors is **international civil servants**, including especially the leadership of the next **UN Secretary-General**. Antonio Guterres will wield many tools and may choose among many potential courses of action to exert influence. When applied with courage, creativity, and political acumen, the Secretary-General becomes a protagonist for global governance reform, alongside governments and non-governmental actors.

Channeling the ideas and the political support of these three sets of actors toward achievable, yet transformative goals is the objective of the two proposed vehicles for reform. The *first vehicle*, what the Commission called “**Reform Through Parallel Tracks**,” acknowledges that different kind of multilateral reform ideas will require different kinds of multilateral negotiating forums and will proceed at different speeds. For example, specific UN task forces in New York—composed, for example, of a select group of Permanent Representatives from all major regions and co-chaired by PRs from the Global North and South—could deliberate on creating new bodies, such as a UN Parliamentary Network to advise the UN General Assembly or, as an example of reforming existing bodies, the example I shared earlier of upgrading the UN Peacebuilding Commission into an empowered Council. These negotiations among select PRs could precede and feed into final negotiation in the UN General Assembly or Security Council. And as I learned in creating the UN Mediation Support Unit as Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs, innovation can be introduced rapidly when a few forward-leaning Member States, the Secretary-General, and non-governmental partners come together in common cause, *with uncommon funding*.

A *second reform vehicle*, and one which I believe has the potential to capture the imagination of world leaders and millions of citizens worldwide, is to organize in the run-up to the United Nations’ 75th anniversary a series of formal intergovernmental, *yet at the same time multistakeholder*, negotiations leading to the convening, in September 2020, of a heads of state and government-level **World Summit on Global Security, Justice & Governance**—ideally, as part of the traditional UN Summit planned to mark important UN anniversaries. The 2020 Summit is expected to include a five-year review of progress toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goals – especially SDG #16 – about which I would say a few words before concluding my remarks. A World Summit has the potential to take a step back and contemplate the international system and its institutions, anchored around the United Nations, as a whole and to adopt system-wide reforms that seek greater coherence, reduce waste and duplication of effort, and encourage mutually reinforcing linkages between several,

interdependent issue areas, including global governance for improved implementation of the SDGs.

One possible model for inspiration could be the 1987 Brundtland Commission, which, through its landmark report *Our Common Future*, called for what became the 1990-1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development Conference process with four 4-week Preparatory Committee meetings, culminating in the June 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The Summit resulted in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification Conventions, and the Agenda 21 sustainable development action plan, which continue to have a lasting impact today.

IV. Sustainable Development Goal #16

Before concluding my remarks, I wish to share a few reflections on the importance of Sustainable Development Goal #16 on peaceful, just, and inclusive societies toward advancing the UN's global peacebuilding agenda.

From my and indeed the perspective of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, Goal #16 provides the foundations for achieving all sixteen of the other SDGs. For without peace and good democratic governance based on the rule of law in place, societies of all shapes and sizes cannot achieve broad-based and sustainable development.

This is why our Commission examined the root causes of protracted violent conflict and advocated innovative approaches to international peacebuilding and peacekeeping that place a premium on early warning and early action. (Indeed, in my time with the United Nations, I pursued similar kinds of innovations when, for example, the UN-African Union hybrid mission for Darfur that I oversaw diverted staff and material resources and considerable high-level political attention to finding better and more equitable ways to manage the critical and scarce resource of water, very much at the heart of the conflict.)

This past September, I had the privilege to attend and speak at a high-level meeting at the United Nations that marked the beginning of a new Global Alliance to regularly assess progress toward advancing implementation on Goal 16's 10 specific targets. As I witnessed first-hand in international efforts to facilitate peace processes in Angola, Myanmar, and elsewhere, without *concrete, time-bound, and measurable benchmarks or targets* that are assessed through associated qualitative and, where possible, quantitative indicators, key actors essential to building durable peace and effective governance cannot be held to account. Equally important is how reporting on Goal 16's targets will soon reveal the comparative, positive advantages of myriad actors in their specific contributions toward sustainable peace and justice ... in other words, the "collaborative approach to peacebuilding" as the heart of our discussions here in Copenhagen, and whether its introducing new diagnostic tools or innovating the measures and strategies for "operationalizing" theories of peacebuilding, the scholars and practitioners represented at just concluded workshop much to offer to the UN's peacebuilding agenda.

V. Conclusion: The Future of Global Security, Justice & Governance

I wish to conclude with an African Proverb: there many roads to the market place, it depends a particular road one chooses to follow. The just concluded workshop discusses several but it is the view of the Commission on Global Security, Justice and governance that as the international community seeks to forge a mutually supportive system of good, accountable governance and sustainable peace globally through the intersection of security and justice, *just security* offers a unique prism for informing a new generation of policy-makers and scholars seeking to understand and better respond to some of the most pressing global concerns of our time, including in the realm of UN peacebuilding. In employing this framework in our analysis and decision-making, the international community can face today's metaphorical crossroads for global security and justice and boldly embark on a course toward greater peace, fairness, and equal opportunities for all nations and their citizens, now and for generations to come.

Thank you.