



"The Use of Force in International Relations: Challenges to Collective Security"

International Roundtable Conference Marking the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations Organization

University of Innsbruck, Austria, 22 June 2005

Executive Summary

At an international meeting held to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Organization, experts from Austria, Canada, the People's Republic of China, India, the Philippines, Turkey, and the United Kingdom discussed the crucial issues the United Nations Organization is faced with at the beginning of the 21st century, in particular the threatened collapse of the UN's collective security system.

The meeting was held on 22 June 2005 at the University of Innsbruck (Austria). It was organized by the International Progress Organization in co-operation with the Department of Philosophy of the University of Innsbruck. In its basic approach, the meeting followed up on the I.P.O.'s earlier initiatives in the field of UN reform, in particular the International Colloquium on "Democracy in International Relations" held in 1985 in New York City to mark the 40th anniversary of the world organization.

In his introductory statement, the President of the International Progress Organization, *Dr. Hans Koechler*, put the question before the panel of experts whether the UN system of collective security can survive in the absence of a balance of power. He pointed to the antagonism between the multilateral philosophy of the UN Charter and the unilateral reality in terms of international power politics: "How can the United Nations Organization ... stem the tide of global anarchy when the will to and capability of collective action appear having been lost?"

In two main sessions, the roundtable conference discussed the general axiomatic aspects of the collective security system and scrutinized specific applications of national security doctrines in their relation to the UN system. The debate among the experts highlighted the dichotomy between the realist and idealist schools of thought

and the difficulty of designing a consistent theoretical framework for a collective security doctrine under the conditions of a unipolar order.

The Dean of the College of Law of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, *Prof. Honesto Cueva*, pointed to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 as major example of unilateralism threatening the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations Organization. He emphasized the need for a genuine democratic reform of the UN system and suggested, *inter alia*, that the General Assembly should be enabled to lay down specific procedures for the enforcement of decisions of the International Court of Justice by the Security Council.

The Secretary-General of the Indian Society of International Law, *Mr. C. Jayaraj*, challenged the notion of "anticipated self-defense" and emphasized that the war on terror – domestically as well as internationally – has to be conducted within the constitutional parameters, including the principles of the UN Charter. In view of UN reform – in particular the need for preserving the democratic legitimacy of the world organization –, he called for the "regionalization" of permanent membership in the Security Council.

The Director designate of Research at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (Sweden), *Prof. Lyal S. Sunga*, dealt with the ambiguities of humanitarian intervention in regard to international peace and security. He referred to cases of serious human rights violations and severe atrocities where, because of specific political circumstances, the UN collective security system does not address the problem. Speaking of a legitimacy crisis of the United Nations, he pointed to the danger that "some states may increasingly resort to invoking humanitarian intervention outside the UN collective security framework" to advance their political interests. He further spoke of the difficult balance that will have to be struck between the principles of national sovereignty, human rights protection in emergency situations and international peace and security.

Dr. Alexander Siedschlag, Professor of European Security Policy at the University of Innsbruck, explained the changes the international non-proliferation policy has undergone after the events of 11 September 2001 and the Iraq war of 2003. He stated that the co-operative and universal idea of non-proliferation policy is giving way to more realistic assumptions, questioning the effectiveness of international norms in general. In his analysis, non-proliferation in the field of arms of mass destruction "is not a means for collective conflict-prevention in the case of suddenly emerging crises that

involve strongly asymmetric actors." He gave a rather bleak outlook about the future of a nuclear non-proliferation policy in the framework of the existing multilateral treaties.

The Director of the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Contemporary International Relations (Beijing), *Prof. Zhongping Feng*, elaborated on the position of the People's Republic of China on the use of force in international relations and posed the question as to the effective alternatives to unilateralism. In pointing to what he called "the European experiment," he outlined the concept of global governance as possible framework for international relations under the conditions of the present world order. He further said that, in view of the experience in the 20th century, the balance of power theory and the notion of a multipolar order are no longer convincing. In his view, economic integration and political cooperation have proven to be effective means for maintaining peace and security in Europe; the notion of global governance may build on this European experience.

Dr. Türkkaya Ataöv, Professor emeritus and former Director of the Department of International Relations at the University of Ankara (Turkey), presented the ideology underlying the doctrine of *pax Americana* as basic challenge to the UN system of collective security. He gave a comprehensive overview of the history of United States' projection of power, concluding that, "different from the empires of the old, the United States is setting up a system of policing the entire globe." He diagnosed the incompatibility of this imperial posture with the basic principles of collective security while cautioning in regard to the long-term sustainability of such a strategy: "the greater the use of force to open the whole globe, the greater the opposition to it." He concluded by calling for an "open door" policy in American society itself.

Prof. Anthony Carty, Professor of International Law at the Law School of the University of Westminster (London), explained how the U.S. legal discourse on international affairs is embedded in a cultural tradition of a sense of "unique destiny" and special status of the U.S. among the nations. He warned of what he termed an "unsound interpretation" of Protestant theology in regard to a definition of evil and danger, threatening the acceptance of the notion of the international rule of law by the U.S.

Dr. Wolfgang Palaver, Professor of Catholic Social Teaching at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Innsbruck, gave an overview of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in the field of international peace and security. He related the just war doctrine of the Church to its support for efforts at establishing a system of

collective security since World War I. However, noting the antagonism between the biblical message of non-violence and a possible "scapegoating" aspect of the collective use of force, he called for a cautious approach to measures of collective security such as those initiated by self-interested countries within and outside the UN framework.

The debate focused on the long-term implications of the erosion of the system of collective security as described in the presentations. Questions asked were: whether a reinterpretation of national sovereignty is required under the conditions of the present world order and what the implications of the unilateralist trend will be for the future of the United Nations system as such; how to reconcile the apparently opposite principles of sovereign equality on the one hand and human rights as *jus cogens* of general international law on the other?; will the United Nations Organization be able to achieve a synthesis between these norms within the existing framework of collective security established in Chapter VII of the Charter – or will it falter under the strain of maintaining and redefining its multilateral security system under conditions of global unipolarity? There was consensus that this constellation had not been foreseen by the organization's founders six decades ago – in a constellation where the *idealism* of cooperative action had prevailed over the *realism* manifested in the dictates of international power politics.

The papers presented at the roundtable conference will be published by the International Progress Organization in the series *Studies in International Relations*.
