

PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AS A TOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MAINTENANCE OF PEACE

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ABSTRACT: In light of constant changes generated by globalization and facing the current international political scenario, in which major nations presents quite undiplomatic leaders, a debate emerges about international conflict prevention and resolution processes as well as maintenance of peace. In that sense, preventive diplomacy is studied as a tool for social pacification and an asset to prevent disputes that threaten peace as a human right, chosen by its non-enforceable character, based on dialogue and diplomatic means. The present work intends to exam preventive diplomacy capacity to adjust to current political nuances and sucessfully prevent conflicts that can jeopardize human rights, specially, peace. For this analysis, the Missile Crisis was used as a case study, due to its relevance as conflict marked by the threat of nuclear war and considered preventive diplomacy biggest example. In the present paper it is used qualitative research conducting bibliographic and documental study about preventive diplomacy history, concept development and results achieved, in order to identify its aplicability facing conflicts and its contribution toward maintenance of peace in the present context.

Keywords: Preventive Diplomacy. Social Pacification. Globalization. Maintenance of peace. Prevention.

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization provides closer relations and interactions between States and establishes a new international framework in which conflicts and events are no longer restricted to their emergence point, being related to those several actors, each one in a level of intensity and with own interests.

This scenario implies discussion about ways to conduct international conflict prevention and resolution processes.

In this sense, action in conflict prevention field finds a great ally in preventive diplomacy, process that intends to avoid the emergence of conflicts or to stop existent conflicts from evolve.

It is presented, for better analysis of the applicability of preventive diplomacy in dispute prevention context, a study of its application over Cuban Missile Crisis, a major historic event, wrapped in high tension, that was defused by efforts of UN Secretary-General U Thant.

Nevertheless, this conflict, marked by the threat of nuclear confrontation, is considered the major example of preventive diplomacy in the annals of the United Nations, having its management extensive documentation stored by UN, allowing better analysis of the mechanism.

In the end, this paper intends to verify the capacity of preventive diplomacy acting as a tool for conflict prevention in international scenario and to assist in the process of maintenance of peace.

1. PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY: THE CONCEPT CONSTRUCTION

Preventive Diplomacy concept remains in constant improvement, adapting to local and current needs, and has been evolved since its first appearance in 1960, during the speech of then Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (UN, 2011).

The conceptual analysis of preventive diplomacy must pass by prevention notion, being, therefore, understood as a set of diplomatic measures used at first – whenever possible at the earliest sign of conflict – in order to prevent the emergence of disputes or, prevent the increase of disputes in course and its transformation into armed conflicts (UN, 2011).

This mechanism in question, presents as goal construction of dialogues channels, based in mutual trust and in ideal of cooperation, turned to the promotion, establishment and maintenance of peace and prosperity in global scale.

Preventive diplomacy, therefore, includes use of good offices, mediation, conciliation, adjudication and arbitration (MUGGAH; WHITE, 2013). It is possible to extend these mechanisms that assist the application of preventive diplomacy, in order to comprehend promotion of confidence building measures, fact finding, early warning mechanisms, evaluation system of conflicts impacts, measures to promote democracy and human rights, preventive use of peacekeeping forces, establishment of delimited zones and measures to monitor and limit arms trade (CHICAYA, 2010, p.2).

There are yet other mechanisms that - even not properly set as part of preventive diplomacy notion - act as support for its implementation, like Peacebuilding Commission, regional offices, political missions, peacekeeping operations, groups of friends and other kind of diplomatic support (SAN CARLOS, 2012), which leads to the multiplicity and mutability of its tools.

1.1 United Nations and preventive diplomacy

The good offices of Secretaries-General of UN played an important role in the development of preventive diplomacy concept and its applicability to conflicts and expectations of conflict, especially regarding to interstate disputes that took place during XX century. Those good offices have been used and improved, relying on Department of Political Affairs assistance inside the United Nations, idealized and built with purpose to assist the Secretary-General on political aspects and global responsibilities directed to maintenance and reestablishment of peace (COOK, 2012).

The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations (DPA), established in 1992, act in a discreet and effective way, developing an important role in UN efforts to prevent and solve conflicts around the world. In Denise Cook words, it would be the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs” or “UN Chancellery” (2012).

DPA’s work intends to canalize political and social tensions wherever they arise, allowing dialogue and preventing violence to take over, counting on pacification experts and mediators to support local organizations standing in the front line of conflicts (COOK, 2012).

Considering that, in light of globalization, conflicts do not impact only the surrounds of its emergence point, UN support via DPA guarantee the internalization of possible tensions, allowing confrontation and containment through diplomatic channels that enable pacific prevention and solution of disputes and aims to achieve and maintain peace.

2. THE MISSILE CRISIS

In the context of Cold War, when the world was divided between capitalism and communism blocs, under United States (US) and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) leadership, respectively, marked by an ideological dispute and indirect conflicts between these two superpowers, an event threatened to jeopardize international security and peace: the installation of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles on Cuba, known as the Missile Crisis.

Considering the discovery by United States intelligence about the presence of Soviet missiles in the Caribbean Island, President Kennedy determined the establishment of a blockade, or quarantine, by the U.S. Navy, of the island (AVILA,2012).

Regarding this controversy, it is necessary to emphasize that US did not ruled out a confrontation of devastating proportions. In this sense, the US Department of State statement acknowledged the hypothesis of a nuclear war (AVILA, 2012).

US government expected, however, a withdrawal of soviet missiles from Cuba with an American interception without a nuclear retaliation from USSR. Yet, in case of the maintenance of soviet missiles in Cuba, the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between the superpowers was not dismissed (AVILA, 2012).

In this context, then Secretary-General of United Nations, U. Thant, played a major role in prevent an immediate and direct clash involving USSR and US, by calling both nations to a dialogue attempt through preventive diplomacy.

On October 24th, 1962, U. Thant addressed the Security Council during an emergency meeting to assess the issue, claiming that the fate of humanity was at risk. He urged leaders of involved parties to negotiate a pacific solution and informed the Security Council that he had sent exhortations to President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev suggesting the establishment of a moratorium of two weeks' length (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

In the letters sent, U. Thant requested to President Kennedy the voluntary suspension of the blockade imposed on vessels heading to Cuba, and solicited to Prime Minister Khrushchev the voluntary suspension of all arms and military equipment shipments to Cuba. The Secretary-General also required the suspension of construction and development of important military services and installations in Cuba during negotiation period, making himself available to assist the parties in this process, always emphasizing the non-binding character of his intervention (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

On October 25th, 1962, the Soviet Prime Minister wrote to the Secretary accepting his offer. Likewise, Kennedy, on the same date, also wrote a response, declaring that, although he appreciated the spirit of U. Thant's message, the key, answer, to the solution of the crisis was the withdrawal of the soviet missiles of Cuba (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

President Kennedy expressed his will to seek for a deal, by state that he was ready to negotiate, but would not do it under threat. In the President of US words, the quarantine would only be over when impartial observers proved the dismantling of the missiles (AVILA, 2012).

Soviet vessels, at this point, were navigating to Cuba, heading toward the quarantine area (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

In light of these answers, U. Thant made an urgent call to both leaders motivated by the concern that soviet vessels heading to Cuba might attempt to breach the American blockade, leading to a confrontation between USSR and US vessels, destroying any possibility of negotiation (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

In his call to USSR and US leaders, the Secretary-General of UN, U. Thant, asked Prime Minister Khrushchev to instruct soviet vessels that were navigating to Cuba, to remain out of the blockade zone created by the US for a limited period. In the other hand, U. Thant requested to President Kennedy to guide American vessels located in the Caribbean Sea to do everything possible to avoid a direct confrontation with soviet vessels for the same limited period (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

The Secretary reported to each leader that, when receiving the assurances requested from one, would informed the other about it (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

Face U. Thant's new solicitation, president Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev expressed, each one, their immediate concordance, accepting, therefore, the new terms of the moratorium requested by the Secretary-General (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

In hold of the assurances offered by involved parties, U. Thant, informed, on October 26th, 1962, Fidel Castro about the terms of the moratorium accepted by the American and Soviet leaders, asking him to suspend the construction of big military installations and, especially, of those drawn for the launch of medium and intermediate range missiles, in Cuba during negotiation attempts (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

The moratorium achieved by the Secretary efforts provided a crucial period for negotiations between US and USSR, neutralizing, momentarily, the tension generated by the discovery of soviet actions in Cuba, which was essential to enable a dialogue between parties involved. In this period,

the President and Prime Minister started an exchange of opinions through letters and messengers, reaching out a deal that, ultimately, put an end to the Missile Crisis (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

Secretary's participation in the initial phase of the conflict, just after the discovery and disclosure by US of the establishment of offensive missiles in Cuba, is in accordance to the main characteristic of the tool analyzed in this paper: concerted actions under early signs of a conflict. As seeing, the confrontation was being draw, with recent acknowledge about USSR threat installed in Cuba, putting its rival under the sight of a nuclear weaponry.

The celerity of intervention and prompt presentation of a proposal directed to enable dialogue and direct negotiation among parties involved, avoiding conflict, fulfilled the prevention role that preventive diplomacy intends to develop. Though the moratorium suggested was not intended to solve the complex conflict between USSR and US, an extreme profound conflict that endured for many years after the solution of the missile crisis, it was meant to contain it, preventing the arise of the dispute to levels of direct confrontation that would impact entire humanity.

So crucial was UN's Secretary-General participation in this process of intervention and prevention of a direct conflict between US and USSR, that their own governments, through their negotiators, wrote acknowledging his efforts employed to assist their leaders in avoiding the mayor threat to peace that took place through October and December of 1962 (RAMCHARAN, 2011; AVILA, 2012). This acknowledge was already presented when the agreement was concluded and signed by President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev on October 28th, 1962. In this opportunity, Kennedy pointed out U. Thant as a great facilitator to the task that each power had to accomplish (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

In addition to the communication with President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev, U. Thant's participation embrace his visit to Cuba from October 30th to October 31st, 1962, to celebrate meetings with Cuban leaders. This visit was important because granted the opportunity to listen to Cuban leaders, not excluding them from the process of prevention and solution of the conflict (RAMCHARAN, 2011).

The exchange of messages between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev was extensive and demanded intense dialogue and negotiations, counting more than 24 letters exchanged between US and USSR from October to December of 1962 (AVILA, 2012).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The preventive diplomacy must be understood as a process that involves concerted actions since the acknowledgment of possible causes of conflict add up to analyze of tensions, as well as early intervention.

Regarding viability of preventive diplomacy, the Missile Crisis studied in his paper is the most successful experience of employment of this tool in conflict prevention.

Therefore, through the analyses of conditions that provided the employment of preventive diplomacy in that international context with reduced dialogue and high competition of Cold War, there is, as a fundamental point, the interest of both parties to avoid war for fear of its terrible consequences. However, considering the peculiarity and pression that surrounded the conflict between USSR and US, respective governments could not adopt an inert posture, fact that demanded an intermediary figure - Secretary-General of UN, U. Thant - that could reconstruct a dialogue channel between parties suggesting them to abstain each one a posture and, therefore, avoid an immediate direct confrontation, not implying from these abstentions passivity or inertia, enabling the negotiation between governments to solve the dispute.

Thus, considering effectiveness of preventive diplomacy in that context, it is plausible to conclude for the applicability of the mechanism in international context.

In favour of preventive diplomacy viability nowadays is the participation of new actors, non-governmental organizations and civil society, as well as the facility to disseminate real-time information over the internet, contributing to more transparency in foreign relations. Therefore, there are new elements as allies of preventive diplomacy compared to Cold War period analyzed that supports prevention by facilitating early identification of tension zones and acknowledgement of real causes of conflicts.

In light of the studied performed, it is concluded that preventive diplomacy is a viable tool for maintenance and preservation of peace and conflict prevention in international scenario, demanding, for that, knowledge of circumstances that involve disputes, assuring an effective intervention.

This intervention through preventive diplomacy mechanisms protect national sovereignty, thanks to its non-binding character, which enhance the effectiveness of the process considering international context nuances.

In other words, is to say that preventive diplomacy may contribute effectively to solve and prevent international conflicts in the present context, but the potential for disputes will not be completely neutralized while the international society does not become an international community based on fraternity among nations.

For this purpose, it is necessary to foster the culture of social pacification by the education of people for peace, through which new leaders will arise in consonance with the ideal of stable peace to be pursued.

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