

ACTIVE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE:  
IS A NEW DEPARTURE POSSIBLE?

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It sounds like an eternity ago, but it is actually only fifteen years: 1967. Major things had happened in the East-West conflict process. The French President, Charles DeGaulle, had disinvited NATO from France and with it a number of military installations, and taken NATO out of the integrated military command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. At the same time there was clearly the beginning of something new called "cooperation". Détente had started, although it took some time before there was general and shared awareness that such a thing was around, not only in plans and speeches, but in reality. NATO even produced a paper, under the name of the Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel, a document from which there is still quite a lot to learn.<sup>1</sup>

In Strasbourg the Council of Europe was interested in exploring, in general terms, possible new patterns of East-West cooperation and asked the newly founded International Peace Research Association whether such a study could be made. The task fell on the present author and the document was produced the same year.<sup>2</sup> In that document there are some elements of a theory of peace, or more precisely, a list of conditions under which cooperation is seen as conducive to peace.<sup>3</sup> Five such conditions are singled out for special attention: there has to be symmetry or some degree of equality between the partners; there has to be homology or some degree of structural similarity between the partners; there has to be symbiosis in the sense that cooperation is really important for both partners; there has to be some element of institution-building at the supra-national level; and there has to be entropy meaning that the cooperation has to take place in all kinds of channels, well distributed, not only government to government and between the superpowers, for instance.

It is easily seen in retrospect that the critical condition among these five is the first one, the condition of symmetry.

The partners are relatively homologous, after all they are all countries in the Northern hemisphere, modern and industrialized with bureaucratic and corporate institutions, with professions and urbanization. They only differ as to whether capital should dominate over state, state over capital or they should be in some kind of balance; and they differ with respect to political institutions, the extent to which rulers should be accountable to the population in elections. Moreover, there was no doubt that the cooperation was symbiotic and still is: East needs technology, West needs raw materials and energy so there is at least that basis to build on, as very clearly illustrated today in the famous gas-pipeline from East to West.<sup>4</sup> But it has been equally clear all the time that supra-national institution-building has not been on the agenda beyond the very limited functions provided by the Economic Commission for Europe under the United Nations Economic and Social Council, located in Geneva; much as it has also been clear that the level of entropy has been low, cooperation has been governmental although certainly not only between the superpowers.<sup>5</sup>

The crucial condition is that of symmetry, and here five more specific points were mentioned: the gains should be about equal, the inputs should be about equal, the level of dependency on the cooperation about equal, participation about equal, and the change caused by the cooperation about equal.<sup>6</sup> The rationale underlying such conditions becomes very clear when one considers the situation when they do not obtain. Imagine that one party puts very much into it because it means so much, depends on it, participates with great eagerness and as a result exposes itself to the risk of change. It would also have to gain a lot in order to feel that the pattern of cooperation is reasonable. On the other hand, imagine a party that does not put very much into the cooperation, neither depends on it nor participates very much, changes nothing: in that case, if it does not gain very much it may not matter much;

but if it gains a lot it has certainly made an advantageous deal. And since this is politics, not simply a question of trade it is not sufficient that gains are seen as off-setting inputs. It is also important that the net balance should be relatively equal, that participation in joint enterprises of all kinds should be relatively equal and that changes should balance out. For if they do not then one party can use, or has already used, the cooperation or existence as a lever in order to, eg, make the other party more "capitalist". That certainly is politics. Either party may feel that one or both needs change more than the other, and that the other is justified in using the leverage it has. But such feelings are not very helpful in this connection. We are dealing with parties that both are tremendously self-righteous at least at the higher levels of power. Both see themselves as carriers of the message and the cause that will ultimately prevail, neither is willing to be subject to or submit to the other. And cooperation inevitably leads to change.

Hence, conditions such as these, or similar conditions, have to be taken seriously. The frequently quoted expression to the effect that cooperation should be to "mutual benefit" is a more general formulation in that same direction. It is also relatively easy, on the background of such conditions, to see what went wrong in East-West cooperation. Take the case of Poland as an example, extreme but also fairly typical. Trade relations are set up, basically exchanging raw material, semi-manufactures and agricultural products, and some finished products from the earlier phases of the industrial revolution, from the East with much more advanced technology and products from later phases of industrialism from the West.<sup>7</sup> In a sense this pattern is normal; this is what East-West trade has been about for centuries, as has been the case for North-South trade, only even more so. And that makes the results quite predictable. More particularly, there are three basic changes that will take place in the Eastern country (or the Southern country):

the people will get addicted to the type of consumer goods that become available under the deal; the elites will become addicted to the capital goods or resources in general that become available through them, since it will enhance their power, at least in their own eyes;<sup>8</sup> and the deal will in general be decreasingly favourable to the East (South). This is so because of the tendency of terms of trade between the processed and the unprocessed to develop in disfavour of the latter, with the notable exception of energy resources, since 1973. But this is not true for all types of energy resources: Poland did not benefit from improved or equal terms of trade over time with its export of coal; Soviet Union did benefit because of the export of gas and oil. The same would generally apply to agricultural products: to pay for technology with agricultural produce will tend to become an uphill fight.

Hence, the options available to the Eastern (Southern) country in the deal become increasingly limited. One measure would be to compensate for deteriorating terms of trade through increasing output, by increasing the productivity and/or the input of work in number of workers, number of hours - the latter possibly disguised as "voluntary contribution". Another possibility is to fill the gap between the imports and exports with loans that then will have to be serviced. If one engages in both at the same time the net result will be a tendency to exploit workers more and more at the same time as the country sinks into debt burdens that tend to consume closer and closer to 100 percent of the income from export;<sup>9</sup> meaning that the policy is self-defeating. In this kind of situation the addiction of the people to the life-style of the West, combined with increasing exploitation of them in order to pay for it and for the considerably higher life-styles of their own elites, not to mention for the waste in the whole process, cannot but lead to revolts, even attempts at revolution. When an addicted system has managed to paint itself

into the corner the room for maneuver for the governing elites is very limited. Whatever it grants to the population in general, and the workers in particular, in terms of consumers goods or improved working conditions (including decreased hours of work) will have to be more than compensated for by increased productivity and it is not at all obvious that that would be so high on the agenda of those who want a system-change. The rest of the story, given the case of Poland, is rather well known.

This is not to say that the system would have reacted differently had East-West trade been differently structured. There are certainly also overriding political causes for the Polish débacle, some of them located inside Poland in the struggle between the Polish people and the power elite fighting for survival as a group; and outside Poland in the fear in the Soviet Union of losing a client country or even having it turn against the Soviet Union, and the interest of the US in harms this happen. The non-symmetric way in which that trade pattern was structured certainly was one important factor in it all. Basic changes were being wrought inside the Polish social formation without any corresponding change taking place in the West as a result of the pattern of exchange. Dependency was very high, inputs equally so, the net gains more and more dubious. If the purpose was to promote security through cooperation, not only through the highly dangerous means of deterrence, even balance of terror, then the purpose was not obtained. It was simply a bad piece of social engineering at the international level. If the purpose was to wreak havoc inside Poland then the purpose was obtained, but in that case it does not belong under the heading of "active peaceful coexistence". Hence, and that is the net conclusion of this exploration so far: it has to be done in a different way if we are to attempt it again.

But before we try to say something about that it should once more be remembered how epoch-making the changes at the end of the 1960s were as a phase in East-West history. A new paradigm was being ushered in. There was to be less concern with the military, even with the military balance, and more concern with other types of relations between East and West; less concern with moralism and political conflicts in general, more concern with factors that could unite or at least serve as a basis of cooperation. After all this was the type of politics that had been started in the 1950s and formalized in the Rome Treaty, eventually leading to the European Community whereby two arch-enemies, Germany and France, were to be brought under a common roof in a pattern of symmetric, homologous, symbiotic, supra-national, and highly entropic cooperation.<sup>10</sup> Even though the situation was different could one not try what seemed to work in the case of European Community also at the East-West level?

Today, fifteen years later, the question sounds totally misplaced. The United States has an administration so bent on trying to bring the Soviet Union down on her knees, through military threats, political action and economic pressures, beyond what the US thinks the Soviet Union can stand!<sup>11</sup> That policy will not succeed; the Soviet Union is not to be blackmailed into capitulation - this may be one of the few things elite and people in that enormous country might agree totally on. But it certainly means that the atmosphere could not be much worse, short of a hot war. The five rules mentioned above are traffic rules in a gentler international climate, rules of behaviour for associative politics, building peace by coming closer to one another, yet not so close that the identity of the systems is threatened. They are rules that presuppose that both parties see their own security as somehow predicated upon the other party feeling secure, not insecure. Here it should again be remembered that if security is the

probability of keeping one's own system intact so that possible changes are truly endogenous changes, then cooperation may threaten security. It does involve the risk of change, one reason why both parties will probably prefer to keep cooperation below certain limits for themselves. But then they must at the same time also understand that there are such limits for the other party; a good example here being television cooperation by beaming TV-programs from satellites even if this is not wanted by the ruling elites.<sup>12</sup> An unnecessary provocation.

Singling out the US present administration for attention in no way means that there is not a constant underlayer of efforts by both camps to subvert the other. No doubt this is most pronounced in the superpowers; only that at present there is an explicitness, a directness and something viciously aggressive about US behaviour in this regard. But that administration is not going to last forever, for which reason it makes sense to ask the question: What would be some new departures if one should try again? In other words, if once more one should try to build security on cooperation rather than deterrence (and in addition to that build it on defense rather than deterrence), then precisely what should one do?

Assuming that there is something to the principles listed in the beginning the first conclusion to be drawn may be what one should learn from the past fifteen years: Do not give to economic relations, whether in the form of trade or joint ventures, such a dominant position in the whole cooperation picture. Of course there are exceptions to this rule: between countries at a relatively similar level of technical-economic development there should be no objection; relations between Bulgaria and Greece possibly being an example, and there are others. With the terms of trade developing the way they tend to do, and adding to this the very asymmetric spin-off effects,<sup>13</sup> inegalitarian deals are doomed to be destabilizing, not only



inside the Eastern countries, but also for the relationship as a whole.

The second major conclusion to be drawn would be something like this: Do not give to intergovernmental relations, whether in the field of economics, politics, military matters or what not, such a dominant position in the whole cooperation picture. That good, even cooperative intergovernmental relations are a necessary condition for good international relations in the contemporary world goes without saying. But they are not sufficient as a condition. Much more has to be done at the non-governmental level, and it is possible to do so. I can give a small scale testimony to this myself, having been 20 times to the Soviet Union during the 30 years 1953 to 1982. On most occasions it was for meetings and conferences, usually in a context of some type of cooperation between an organisation in the Soviet Union and an organisation in the West. All these 19 occasions were instructive, but visit no. 20 summer 1982 was by far the best one: a camping trip with the other members of the family, by car through the Western part of the Soviet Union from North to South, entering from Finland, exiting to Rumania weeks later.

Very many people have done this, and the exchanges of information and opinion at night, at the camping sites almost always tended in the same direction: once inside the Soviet Union the freedom to move around appears unrestricted (except that one should show up at night at the place where overnight facilities have been booked in advance) and that the Soviet people in general are as warm, charming and interested in talking and discussing with foreigners as it is humanly possible. That there are material shortcomings relative to the affluence still prevailing in the West is well-known, that does not have to stand in the way of a most positive experience. And the one single headline that can be written on top of that experience, in fact on top of all 20 of them would be: the Soviet people wants peace not war. It sounds like a platitude, but if so

it is a rather important platitude and it is one that, unfortunately cannot be said of all peoples in the world.

Of course, travels of that type should be reciprocal. If our individualistic tourism cannot be fully engaged in when travelling in the Soviet Union it can to a considerably extent be so in Eastern Europe, and millions make use of this opportunity every year (if one includes Yugoslavia). Most travellers, however, would be surprised to find how much latitude there is for individualistic tourism also in the Soviet Union as long as one accepts that there has to be some planning in advance and as long as one is not limited by group travel: the groups have a tendency to be "processed" with political overtones, substituting for the economic overtones in the corresponding type of processing in the West. There is stupid propaganda in both places.

Whether the Soviet Union will give this opportunity of individualistic tourism to its own citizens in the near future remains to be seen; if not group travel is also a possibility and should be much more encouraged. But I will go further than that: given the state of extremely dangerous tensions between East and West tourism as such becomes a luxury, a political dimension should be added. Discussions, dialogues should be encouraged. Informed or uninformed, critical or constructive, or all four combined, does not matter so much. What matters is that as many people as possible try to explore together what the problems are that seem to divide our countries and groups of countries and what the possible solutions might be. If in the East this would lead to the introduction of officialdom, of discussions that are more controlled than people in the West are used to then that should not be a major objection - at any rate it would be a part of contemporary reality. Imagine thousands of such encounters, not so spectacular as when Scandinavian women were marching to Minsk summer 1982 but involving many many more people: does it not stand to reason that this could increase the level of mutual concern, the number of people who would start thinking constructively of how

negative stereotypes could be counteracted, not merely by changing images of the other side but by doing something about our own side so that the other side has reasons for changing its images? Add, then, to this the dimension of people meeting within their professional or other concerns, physicians meeting physicians (as they have done, and very effectively so, in the area of warning against any faith in the health system being adequate to handle the consequences of a nuclear war), retired people meeting retired people, young people, students, womens organisations - whatever. I am thinking in terms of Europe as one great peace seminar, for people in general and for people that are somewhat similar one way or the other; if possible reporting their findings to the population at large so that it could give more people more material to consider. As is always the case it might very well be that the process is more important than the goal, that discussions of how to achieve peace may themselves lead to more peace than the proposals that come out of the discussions.

However: good feelings and understanding are important, not only at the governmental but also at the people level, but politics is also made out of harder stuff. The basic idea behind this approach to peace and security is symbiosis; that countries are mutually useful to each other. The security of a country is a function not only of its usefulness to its own citizens, so that they remain relatively satisfied, but also of its usefulness to the outside. This can only come about through interaction. Much of this usefulness will have to be economic, but it can also be political, humanitarian, ecological, cultrual to mention some. Switzerland has been mentioned above, using its banking services, its conference services and its Red Cross Organisations as examples of being useful to the world community along the first three of these dimensions. The invulnerability of France relative to any adversary may consist not only in excellent French technology that can be bought but also in the ever lasting significance of French culture. The security of Norway, on the other hand, may rest more on a humanitarian factor: the image of Norway

as a country that comes to the rescue of others in distress, including Armenians after the first world war. In short, there are so many formulas; and each country may develop its own formula. But above all of them the following has to be written: they only contribute to security if it can be convincingly shown that they are better available when the country is free and intact than when it is conquered and destroyed.

And that points to an important analytical distinction. Whenever a country has something to offer to the world community in general, and adversary countries in particular, the latter might think: "This looks nice, I would like to possess it completely, forever - a war has its risks but might be worth it if possession could be the outcome". The outer usefulness of a country hence, depends on its ability to show that the usefulness is only available under conditions of peace and freedom; if not those things will either be destroyed by the warfare itself, or by self-inflicted sabotage. Any country with important raw materials is useful to others when these commodities are floated on the world market, and this may add to its security. But it may also add to its insecurity by tempting others into conquest. To counteract that, usefulness in peace should somehow be accompanied by uselessness in war - for instance by finding a process whereby raw materials, even ores, would be destroyed in the war process. To take an example: if it is really true that the ice-free harbors in Norway constitute a temptation to the Soviet Navy then some way of making these harbors useless in war, if not blocking them on a permanent basis by artificial ice then by some other method, should be found and the results should be communicated.

However, all of this is a rather negative approach. The basic approach would have to be positive, and be based on national self-reliance. Concretely this would combine inner strength with outer usefulness in a carefully worked out balance. On the one hand there would have to be sufficient mobilization of economic factors inside

a country to guarantee self-sufficiency in times of crisis so that the country cannot be blackmailed into surrender because essential products are not produced within the borders of a country. Beyond that level, however, the country would reach out for partners all over the world, also-indeed-with potential adversaries, in the search for symmetric (equitable) trade structures.

To concretize: the gas pipeline from the Soviet Union to Western Europe constitutes a linkage between East and West of a highly symbiotic nature. That linkage, however, should never constitute the only answer to the energy supply problem of the countries in Western Europe. It should come on top of a program of energy self-sufficiency by means of the many methods that now are known in the field of energy conversion, including isolation and fight against waste. Only that way can the needs of people and the interests of countries be turned into the raw material out of which peace and security can be constructed, partly through inner strength ("independence"), partly through outer usefulness ("interdependence"). It is on top of an infrastructure of national self-reliance, combining a minimum self-sufficiency with equitable trade at the international level that much deeper webs of human interrelations can be spun, ultimately based on thousands, millions of person to person contacts.

And in that connection may be one should conclude with one little point: Eastern Europeans are so much more competent in Western European languages than vice versa. As a very minimum the level of knowledge of that beautiful (although unnecessarily difficult) Russian language should increase: there were good attempts in the early years after the Second world war that should be taken up again. The suffering caused by the intricacies by Russian grammar are considerable, but more than compensated for by the beauties of the language and the culture to which the language is the key. And the Soviet Union could contribute greatly to this by organizing summer schools in Russian (like so many Western European countries do for their languages in their many resort areas, thereby also opening their country more for meaningful tourism.

N O T E S

(1) See, for instance, the German version, "Die künftigen Aufgaben der Allianz" in NATO: Tatsachen und Dokumente, Brussels 1971.. The declaration hardly mentions weapons in general, and missiles in particular, at all - the content is focussed on peace-building. Today, 1983, the entire tone of the alliance is totally changed, in the direction of belligerence although it is hard to see that there is any objective justification for this change of basic approach.

(2) The complete report is published as a book, Johan Galtung and Sverre Lodgaard, Co-operation in Europe, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970. The theory of peace is found on pp. 9-20. A slightly different version is found in Johan Galtung, The True Worlds, New York, The Free Press, 1980, p.101, scope and domain have been added as peace factors and homology has been dropped (in addition, "symmetry" is now called "equity")

(3) The key examples in the contemporary world where these conditions by and large can be said to apply would be the Nordic countries and the European Community - in the relation among the members, not in the relation to the rest of the world which are very far from equitable.

(4) The United States are probably against not so much because it increases Western European dependency on the Soviet Union, as because it decreases the dependence on the Gulf area, and hence the motivation to engage in any rapidly deployed" action.

(5) Thus, in both books quoted in footnote 2 above I argue in favor of a Security Commission for Europe, organized like the Economic Commission, to carry the "Helsinki process" would be its task today. There is not much of a process at present, but should there be any it would be better carried by a permanent machinery than by a series of frustrating, ad hoc, "review conferences".  
**For some** further development of the theory of cooperation in Europe, by the present author, see "Europe, Bipolar, Bicentric or Co-operative?" and "European Security and Cooperation: A Sceptical Contribution", written in 1971 and 1974 respectively, and published as chapters 1 and 2 in Johan Galtung, Peace Problems: Some Case Studies, Essays in Peace Research, Vol. V, Copenhagen, Eilers, 1980.

(6) See Co-operation in Europe, pp. 9-20.

(7) The Pipe-line itself is a good example: much or most of the technology from the West; the work of laying it and the gas itself from the East.

(8) This is one of the themes in the article "A Sceptical Contribution" referred to in footnote 5 above, predicting how it would all lead to increased tension. The other article was more normative, more written in the early stage of the process.

(9) An exception, besides the giant economy of the Soviet Union, is Bulgaria, with a relatively low debt burden - a country very worth while studying as it seems to have obtained a high living standard without deviating much from a marxist line.

(10) This is explored in some more detail in Johan Galtung, The European Community, A Superpower in the Making, Allen&Unwin, London, 1973.

(11) This policy is then coupled to a theory of the Soviet Union as a giant with clay feet, failing to understand how pressures from the outside can have a very invigorating impact on giants of that type.

(12) Thus, would a country like Norway tolerate beaming of programs with a consistently anti-Christian content - commercial propaganda would be acceptable perhaps also political propaganda, but anti-Christian --??

(13) See Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism", in Peace and World Structure, Essays in Peace Research, Vol. IV, chapter 13.