

ON DIRECT AND STRUCTURAL RESISTANCE TO ILLEGITIMACY *

By Johan Galtung
Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
Wallotstraße 19
1000 Berlin 33

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1. Illegitimate power: the NATO "double track" decision

The NATO "double track" decision of 12 December 1979 can only be understood in the light of the change in US strategy that took place after the Final Act of Helsinki was supposed to usher in a period of more solid detente. The change has been described in various ways, here it is sufficient to say that the focus seemed increasingly to be on weapons that were counterforce rather than countervalue, weapons useful for fighting and winning a war rather than weapons useful for deterring a war because of the retaliatory capacity. Throughout the Carter administration the picture became increasingly clear, particularly through presidential directives 58 and 59. However, it was only during the Reagan administration that it sounded as if counterforce weapons were not only seen as the best strategy - obviously counterforce are also countervalue weapons and vice versa, it is a question of emphasis. It also looked as if the US was not only increasing its capacity to fight and win a war but actually could be seen as contemplating launching that war. Moreover, the focus on intermediate nuclear forces upgraded considerably the role of Europe as a nuclear battlefield, possibly with the hope that this might deflect the attention of Soviet rockets from the US heartland.

The criticism of the US drive to deploy a new generation of INF weapons on European soil can now be simply formulated:

- (1) Cruise and Pershing II Missiles are qualitatively new types of weapons; their production and deployment, hence, constitute "Vorrüstung", not "Nachrüstung", in a qualitative sense. By saying this it is not disputed that the Soviet Union may have a quantitative excess of weapons of earlier generations, to which I would here count SS 20. Being mobile and "mirved" they are less vulnerable and more destructive than

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non-mobile, land-based and non-mirved weapons. On the other hand, the nuclear missiles on board French and British submarines have a much higher level of invulnerability, and can be compared with the SS 20s. What can not be compared are the GLCMs and Pershing II: they are qualitatively different because (a) they have a very high level of precision and (b) they are practically impossible to defend oneself again - in the case of Cruise because of the tricky trajectory, in the case of Pershing II because of the very short warning time.

- (2) The experience so far is that any Western qualitative "Vorrüstung" is followed by a Soviet "Nachrüstung" of the same kind after a period of about two to five years. Production and deployment of this type of weapon system, hence, will lead to the same on the Soviet side. Since the US decision to produce them seems to have been taken in 1976 it must be assumed that the Soviet decision came not long after, and that the Soviet counterparts should now be approaching readiness for deployment. Since the US systems have two characteristics (a) to be stationed in Europe and (b) to be stationed within a short time distance from the Soviet heartland, it is to be assumed that the Soviet Union will do the same. This, however, as Europe is far from the US heartland means that the Soviet Union will have to think in terms of two types of deployment: one in Eastern Europe (such as DDR and CSSR), and one within striking distance of the United States, probably not in Cuba since that has been tried before and then is possibly a pledge not to do it again (and by implication probably not in Nicaragua or Grenada either), probably on surface ships outside the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ). With that obvious and predictable move the tension will have become even much higher, given the nervousness of the United States when something is "on their doorstep", "in their courtyard", etc.

- (3) An arms race can logically lead to one out of three possibilities: a negative arms race (disarmament), continued arms race, or to war. The likelihood of the arms race leading to a negative arms race would seem to be minimum, not only because of the negative reports coming from Geneva in connection with the negotiations that started November 1981 on this particular issue, but because of the overwhelmingly negative data and theory that can be held against the "Geneva process". There is no need to repeat all the arguments here, suffice it only to say that there is absolutely nothing on the horizon indicating that a truly negative process will take place. The only thing that might come as a result of the Geneva process would be a reduction in the number of deployed missiles on the Western side against a freeze or reduction in the number of the SS 20s. But since these two weapon systems do not really correspond to each other any deployment at all of the Western systems is likely to be countered in kind from the Soviet side. And if they are not technically sufficiently able to do it they might assure invulnerability of their weapons by such unconventional measures as launching them from submarines based within Swedish territory (so that any preemptive attack would have disastrous implications for Sweden). In other words, the arms race continues and it then becomes merely a question of when in the near or distant future it is transformed to a war. The mechanism will probably be through a confrontation, and since the correlation between arms races and war is extremely high, with confrontation as the connecting link, the prospects are very bleak in deed.
- (4) The whole process of Cruise/Pershing II deployment is not only harmful but also totally unnecessary given that there are alternatives that are not only acceptable but superior. One such alternative program would look as follows, taking as a point of departure the situation late spring 1983:

- (a) a freeze on intermediate nuclear forces, with non-deployment of the new generation from the West and reduction on the Eastern side, for instance down to the level of British and French nuclear forces (under condition, then, that they remain stationary for a reasonable period of time
- (b) adoption by the Western side of a no-first-use-doctrine, in response to the Soviet declaration made June 1982, combined with (c), (d) and (e) below.
- (c) withdrawal of all foreign nuclear forces from all countries in Europe, leaving on European soil only British weapons in Britain, French weapons in France and Soviet weapons in the Soviet Union.
- (d) changes in military doctrines so as to reduce the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence from the heartlands of the superpowers (later on their reduction could be negotiated), changing to completely conventional weapons systems in Europe.
- (e) within this framework pushing towards defensive military forces, building down as quickly as possible offensive components, or withdrawing them (for instance withdrawal of Soviet tanks in combination with a Western no-first-use-declaration).

There is nothing particularly utopian about this kind of proposals, which now have behind them some of the world's top politicians and military experts - as is well-known. They would have an overwhelming public approval, and political approval in most governments or at least parliaments in almost all countries of Europe. Hence, when things like this are not happening it must be because the forces moving in the other direction are extremely strong - as indicated above. And as a consequence, the population, caught between an arms race that obviously has gotten completely out of hand and an alternative that looks reasonable also for those who are neither pacifists, nor neutralists, becomes utterly frustrated. What, then, would be the reactions?

2. On Direct and Structural Resistance to Illegitimacy

Given this enormous display of illegitimacy currently engaged in by governments in the NATO countries, governments that pride themselves of being democratic, the question of course arises: what to do when/if the missiles are deployed? My point of departure for answering that question has already been indicated: rational arguments do not seem to have any effect. There may even be a widespread sharing of the intellectual, political and military evaluation of the whole complex; nevertheless the deployment of these qualitatively new counter-force weapons seems to go ahead just according to schedule - incidentally also regardless of what happens or does not happen in Geneva. Only one argument seems to remain: "what we have once decided has to be implemented, we are not yielding to anything but parliamentary votes and possibly not even to that since they can be manipulated. NATO has to remain credible, credibility means rigidity, no yielding to any kind of pressures. Public opinion does not count, convincing studies of that public opinion do not count, mass-demonstrations do not count. We alone count."

But there are nevertheless two arguments that do count, two things to which governments in these countries will nevertheless pay some attention - and on those two factors important types of resistance can be built. They are:

- (1) If resistance is extremely widespread (quantity) and very deeply held, to the point that people are willing to sacrifice in order to resist (quality) then the weapons become less credible. Of course, the owners of the weapons (the United States) can fire them since they have the power to do so, regardless of population reactions before and after, so can a callous government.

But they may be less likely to impose such sacrifices on a population so outspokenly in total and utter disagreement with the policy. One reason for this is very simple: the difficulties in handling such a population after a war. It does matter whether the population sees its own suffering as only due to actions by the adversary or as also, or even more, due to action of "one's own".

- (2) A really massive resistance is an indication of a house divided against itself, a divided population. A divided population is not only dangerous to the functioning of society because of internal strife. It also means that the party that feels it has been run over, the party against the policies of the government, will feel extremely alienated from that government, and more so the more deeply held the conviction that the policy pursued is entirely wrong. The logical conclusion is withdrawal, which may take the form of apathy - one's body is in the country, but one no longer gives mind or spirit to the social functioning the way wanted by the government. But it may also take the form of actively working for alternative societies. Neither the house divided against itself, nor passive or active withdrawal are perspectives any government would contemplate with any pleasure, and much less so the more the country is ridden by a deep economic, social, cultural, political crisis - in short a system crisis.

The problem now is how to build on these two points, not in the spirit of saying "these are the weaknesses of the government, let us hit them where they are weakest", but in the spirit of understanding social functioning better, and particularly understanding the changing nature of the implicit or explicit contract between government and people. Very basic, then, is the following element:

the cowardice of the governments, the way in which they will be hiding in bunkers when the missiles start flying, leaving to the people to be consummated, incinerated, evaporated. How different from the political elite of former periods! One may be thinking of the princes, the kings and the emperors of the Middle Ages, riding in front of their troops, not hiding in some cave, waiting for the people to do their job, in order for the "system" to survive. Populations betrayed by their leaders, even by leaders to some extent elected by these populations, that is what we have today in our countries. And that has to have some impact on how the contract between government and population is to be understood: it can only mean that resistance is legitimate. And by resistance is here meant "non-violent resistance", which is not necessarily the same as "legal resistance", as the government that makes the laws has in its so-called power to outlaw any kind of activity they don't like, violent or non-violent.

Then, two types of resistance, "direct" and "structural".

By direct resistance is meant, here, very explicit and articulate actions, characterized by a clear identity of the actors. It is known to everybody who the actors are: they sit in front of the trucks with the rockets, in front of the bulldozers, they are the women around the missile sites in England and in Sicily, they are the millions in the streets, they are the "prominent people" giving their names just as others in demonstrations give their numbers. There are countless forms, all of them important in the situation in which we are today, some of them more important than others.

At this point one should introduce the distinction between "symbolic" direct resistance and "functional" direct resistance.

Symbolic resistance may last for a short or a long time, but it does not in any real way affect the operation of the military war machines. Even when sitting in front of bulldozers it is perfectly well-known that it will uphold the operation only for a short period, and that the major value is the symbolic expression. The same applies to signature campaigns, to mass demonstrations with or without torches. Any government today in a democratic country knows how to handle them without becoming too nervous - signatures are to be stored (only to be burnt after a decent period of waiting time), demonstrations are to be cycled and recycled through appropriate streets, possibly guided by the police, until the demonstrators are sufficiently exhausted. Both parties will be watching out for extremists, both parties know the significance of extremists who engage in violence as a pretext to outlaw the demonstration and delegitimize it in general, both parties know the possibility that agents provocateurs will be made use of by the governments.

From the symbolic to the ritualistic, even when a general strike is enacted, the road is relatively short. The resisters have done their job, success is measured in numbers of participants (quantity), in the fame of the prominent people (quality), in the perfection with which the whole thing was enacted. The measures are expressive, not instrumental. And the government has done its job: it may even praise the population for its quietism, for the dignity with which the actions were carried out. But the government's assumption is clear: "now, children, you had your time - we are happy it all went so well because if it hadn't we are sorry to say that we had had to have been somewhat rough - let us now forget about it, the world goes on, history moves on, the missiles are there, you lost, we won". And, although the resisters will never say so, deep inside themselves they know that the government is right.

Hence, functional direct resistance. By that is meant a type of resistance, again with total clarity as to who are the actors, aimed at slowing down, if possible even incapacitating the war machine. And this is where conscientious objection re-enters: a major form of resistance, to be stepped up to as high levels as possible, with the double aim of withdrawing support from an illegitimate regime and of incapacitating that machine itself. Of course, the government may cut the connection between these two purposes in a very simple way; by making the war-machine even less labour intensive, ever more capital, research and administration intensive. War becomes a question of codes and of launchers, not a question of soldiers doing or not doing what they are supposed to do. A relatively low number of highly "reliable" people, hiding in their cowardly manners down in the silos, or the submarines in the deep seas is all that is needed.

More effective from a functional point of view, possibly, would be to reach some of those people themselves. And of course, when great fractions of the population become resisters then it is usually safe to assume that there is also a fragment of resistance, meaning doubt, inside the minds of those who do not resist (although the opposite is also true: the more resistance, the more stubborn, the more recalcitrant the wielders of power). The logical conclusion from that is nuclear pacifism, within the army itself; a total refusal to carry out any orders that in any way involve the use of nuclear arms. But again the government can cut the connection by making for a vast grey zone between conventional and nuclear armory, and by putting power only in the hands of those whom they think they can trust completely, ultimately meaning robots, some of them made of hardware, nuts and bolts, adequately wired, others made of human flesh and bones, also adequately wired.

But this goes further than the military sector of society, also into civilian society. It becomes a question to be discussed in any profession: how do we resist functionally, in times of peace, in times of war. The campaign by physicians against nuclear war is very clear in this regard: refusal to participate in preparation for catastrophe, pointing out clearly that it will be of no avail, possibly refusing certain types of participation even during the catastrophe (which would not mean not helping people in distress, but possibly giving first priority to innocent civilians, only the very very last priority to those people hiding in the bunkers).

Let us then move onto the second category, structural resistance. What could that possibly mean - resistance has to be made by human beings, not by structures? This is true, but it makes very much difference whether the resistance is clearly directed against something very specific or not, clearly motivated or not, and whether or not there are distinct actors, individuals or groups that stand out as the subjects of these resistance actions. It also makes a difference whether the resistance takes the form of action, including counter-action, or non-action - in other words whether it is active or passive. Hence, by "structural resistance" we shall mean resistance engaged in by masses of the population, or at least by the overwhelming majority in certain organizations, taking the form of performing just the minimum necessary, with none of one's soul into the work; motivated or not, directed or not, but done in such a way that it is practically speaking impossible to detect. There is not necessarily any declaration, any program. No individual or group actors stand out as performing particularly badly. The impact of the resistance is seen only statistically, things function below, even much below the normal level. Output is low because input is low, but it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where, when, by whom, how. If it had not been for the circumstance that this form of resistance is non-violent,

one could refer to it as "structural counter-violence", symbolized by such words as "go slow", "passive resistance", etc. But the terminology that will be used here is "structural resistance": resistance because the will of those on top is resisted, counter-acted through low performance, structural because it takes the form of the whole structure rather than individual actors resisting. Government illegitimacy leads to resistance legitimacy.

At this point it might also make sense to use the distinction introduced above between symbolic and functional resistance. Structural resistance may take the form of a prolonged, even infinitely protracted general strike of the "go slow" nature although that expression is a little bit too concrete, it refers to the moods of the body rather than to the inputs from mind and spirit. Needless to say, if this takes place in the fields of economic activity the production machinery in general simply fails to perform adequately, and the same would be the case for the military production machine in particular. A more symbolic form would be to move agonizingly slowly in the traffic. This might also uphold the social machinery if done effectively, but could also be a more symbolic movement. Moreover, it makes a lot of difference exactly where in the production or communication - transportation machinery of a society this kind of resistance makes itself felt. And again it should be pointed out how different it is from direct resistance where the actors are communicating "come and get me, I would rather expose myself to your repression than submit to your illegitimate rule." Under structural resistance there might be a careful adjustment to keep the resistance below the threshold above which all that repression sets in. Needless to say that would require some training and coordination.

So far the only negative aspect of structural resistance has been emphasized, the things that a population stops doing or at least does less than before. But there are also positive

aspects. Structural resistance could also take the form of starting doing something else. And in this connection there is not much doubt as to what that something else would be; continuing building an alternative society, meaning a society that is more locally based, more horizontal, more self-supporting and self-reliant, autonomous, network-based. In economic terms this would mean a society with a higher percentage of economic activity being in the informal or "green" sector; production for own consumption ("own" meaning family, commune, network etc. - but always some basic social unit); production for exchange with other goods and services not with money; and production for exchange against money but then in local, more limited economic cycles. This is not the place to develop that theme further; it is well-known.

However, this is the place to develop the theme of what positive structural resistance, known in gandhian terminology as "constructive action" would mean at the local level. And in putting the question that way one important point is already clear. The idea of structural resistance would not be to make a country "ungovernable". It will actually be to make a country more governable, but then in the form of self-government, auto-gestion, for basic social units, at the local level, rather than from the top, by an illegitimate government imposing unwanted weapons that constitute an almost foolproof guarantee for total destruction in case of war, and without even having the courage - not to mention the courtesy - of asking the population about its opinion in a referendum.

Concretely, positive structural resistance could mean the following:

- (1) Transarmament from offensive to defensive defense; only meaningful if it has a local basis. Whether it takes the form of conventional military defense (CMD), paramilitary defense (PMD) or non-military defense (NMD) the reasoning

is the same; small groups, autonomous, mobile if that is needed, locally based and supported. Even to discuss such an alternative on the local level is already a new departure. It will not be appreciated by central authorities because they will immediately sense - and not quite without justification - that a defense of that type might not only be against the enemy as defined by the governments, but sometimes against an illegitimate government itself. For citizen groups to discuss such matters would be essential. And who would be better discussion partners than exactly people and government? To single them out, not for abuse but for dialogue about such matters, at all levels - with people in the armed forces, people in the foreign services and in all government agencies that might come into the picture for security - in public meetings if that is a good setting, privately if that is a better one. This, however, would be a less anonymous activity and hence shade over into direct, positive resistance, unless massively engaged in.

- (2) Non-alignment; gradual decoupling from super-powers. Again this also has to be done at a local level. Of course, like for transarmament there has to be a government level decision, even many of them - but local reaction is necessary, if not sufficient. In this particular field it means the following: banning nuclear arms and activities from local areas, in other words the tremendous grassroots movement that has been going on now for several years. To that could be added a parallel movement: banning foreign troops from local areas. The resolution could be followed up with direct and structural resistance. Governments can press their governmental will through, but only at the expense of causing resistance levels of both kinds so high that arms become less credible. Some withdrawal of super-power nuclear arms and troops may ensue, and should of course be seen as a process parallel to the transarmament process

mentioned above. Only if this is to some extent worked out at a local level will it be meaningful, weaving networks in a conscious population, conscious about the values it stands for and ways of defending them against any kind of transgressor, from without or within.

- (3) Social change, towards less vulnerable societies. This can in practice mean only one thing, a local society as self-reliant as possible, a local society that from an ecological point of view is a stable eco-system or at least not too far away from it. The implications of this are today well known within the theory and action referred to with the color "green". This is not the place to go more into detail, except to say that a country that is self-reliant at a national level is considerably less easy to blackmail and also less likely to engage in offensive practices. And local level self-reliance would have the same implications at that level, relative to a national government that behaves in an aggressive manner. It would also make that local unit less likely to be aggressive relative to other local units. Again a local level task.
- (4) Active peaceful coexistence, a new departure. With the terrible pessimism now closing in on the Western European populations on the eve of the deployment of war machines - that are not only devastating but also completely unnecessary - it should be remembered that active coexistence means two things. It is no longer a question of having dialogue and exchanges between East and West. It means just as much having dialogues and exchanges between government and people in the Western countries. In general, it may be fair to say that to large segments of the Western population their own governments and the superpowers behind them constitute more of a threat, of a real menace here and now than the officially appointed enemy, the Soviet Union. There has been a little

bit too much shouting of "wolf" for that latter threat to be credible: the threat emanating from one's own government is being demonstrated every day, confirmed every day. Hence there would be a call for two types of dialogues with possible reconciliation as a goal - each local level inviting its opposite number on the other side of the European fence (or the East-West divide in general in a world setting) for dialogue and exchange and at the same time inviting people from the national level for similar exercises. They should be planned by both sides, prepared by both of them, nobody should monopolize the agenda setting, everybody should be free to talk. It should be clearly admitted that there now is a conference crisis in both settings, perhaps deeper than ever in postwar history.

Thus, the point has now been made that structural resistance as well as direct resistance could also clearly have positive sides. The transition from the direct to the structural would take place the moment sufficiently many people engage in new types of activities at the grassroot level, and also start withdrawing, passively or actively, from activities of the central level; private as well as public (governmental). However, active withdrawal should only be practised to a limited degree. Passive withdrawal is better, because then the position is still occupied by somebody who is not in tune with governmental malpractises - the moment the position is emptied the danger would be that somebody more in tune would fill the empty hole.

Taken together this means that there is an enormous spectrum of forms of resistance. At the extreme end would be highly individualistic, or perhaps better personalistic, forms where there is not the slightest doubt who the actors are, some of them can easily be picked out, arrested, punished etc. They are the heroes of resistance, but they are neither

necessary, nor sufficient.

After that come the large population demonstrations, even so large that one can start talking about structures on the move - but since they are for a limited time only, perhaps even only one day, they are classified as direct resistance. They are directed, the choice of point in time itself in most case carrying a message: it could be linked to the deployment schedule, to something that happened the year before, and so on.

This form, then, slides over into structural resistance of the negative kind - difficult to pinpoint, only evident when one sees how society performs. And the basic argument that can now be made is that we are already in this phase. When production levels are so low as they are in our societies it is not merely because of the "economic crisis", but also because of that deep pessimism which itself is an expression of confidence crisis. People will tend to contribute just the minimum necessary to keep the job, nothing beyond that. Why should I? If we are all going to be consumed by a nuclear war not of our own wish in any sense, why should I produce more than necessary, why not rather consume as we are in this waiting room in history, waiting for something terrible to occur? Why should I produce more children, when even if I should escape they will definitely be the victims of that kind of holocaust? And so on, and so forth - these are just two examples that easily show up in the statistics of decreased productivity, decreased production, decreased production of children.

Then, there is the phase which we definitely have not yet really entered: positive structural resistance. It is a difficult phase because it calls for political action of a very concrete nature, for leadership, for mass involvement. It will start as direct resistance, but as it catches on it could become a new part of ongoing social structure. In other words, it would itself simply be a part of social change, and the most evident part is perhaps the increasing role to be played by the local level in a population governing itself more, because the government is unable to govern in a legitimate way.

3. Conclusion: Resistance, at the right time

To repeat: if these "Euro-missiles" are really going to be deployed, then the time for resistance is now. The basic point is the broken contract, the contract social between the government and the governed, with the former exposing the latter to a genocidal danger from which the former may be saved, through their own acts of egoistic cowardice, hiding in their bunkers - not daring to ask the government in a referendum.

At the same time it is to be expected that the "governments" will step up their measures to push through the first track of the "double-track" decision, having organized the whole thing in such a way that the second track never was serious anyhow. More particularly, there is always the threat of a military take-over particularly in countries like Spain and France, Italy and Greece (in Turkey there is already that take-over), organized or not by the United States, the US governments using threats or promises or both. "If you do not accept the missiles we no longer have any alliance obligations to you", would be one; "if you accept the missiles we shall offer you good economic contracts" would be the other. Only strong governments, backed by a strong people stand up against such bullying tactics, more likely the superpower will find the weak links, paying on their bridge-heads, on those particularly receptive to US ideology and/or bribes of various kinds and/or threats of withdrawal.

Governments of this kind, not only that of the superpower but also one's own, do not deserve the support of their people when alternatives are available. There will be, there should be, an enormous surge of inner resistance, a feeling of detachment and distance from governments of that kind. That feeling will, and should, express itself both in direct, open resistance, and in the slow, almost imperceptible but much more effective structural resistance. Four very concrete fields in which this can be done have been indicated above. They even form a package, with a certain internal consistency. And on that package one may write two labels, not only one:

- resisting a society made for war
- building a society made for peace