Articoli

Security in Our Time*

It is with humility and gratitude that I receive this honorary degree in international relations from the University of Perugia.

One cannot but be impressed by the rich 700-year history of this distinguished institution. Having trained as a lawyer, I was delighted to note that law was one of the first two degrees offered by the University of Perugia at its inception. Perugia produced some of the most distinguished jurists of mediaeval Europe, such as Bartolo da Sassoferrato, who was a pioneer in the development of the science of law which we now call jurisprudence. I am a strong believer in the rule of law as one of the basic tenets of human civilization and it is therefore a special privilege for me to speak to you here, the home of some of the finest legal minds in European history.

The rule of law, properly understood, is now practised in many countries in various parts of the world. It is no coincidence that such States have governments that are recognised as legitimate by their citizens and that they therefore tend to enjoy a high degree of stability. Law, rooted in equality, fairness and justice, provides the framework that allows people to secure their basic needs, achieve their potential, and resolve their differences in a peaceful manner. But at the international level, regrettably, the process of applying universal norms or a 'law of nations' is still a challenge.

Let me elaborate on this. In September this year, I spoke at a special summit meeting of the Un Security Council on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, chaired by President Barack Obama. It was a historic occasion – the first time a Us President has ever chaired the Security Council. Heads of State and government from the 15 countries on the Security Council spoke eloquently about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. They adopted a resolution «[...] resolving to seek a safer world far all and to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons». It was especially heartening to see nuclear disarmament finally back at the top of the international agenda after two largely wasted decades since the end of the Cold War.

But I was conscious of the fact that those fine words and the resolution agreed that day will be no more than a footnote in history un-

[1] Mohamed ElBaradei, *Lectio doctoralis* (pronunciata all'Università di Parma durante la cerimonia di conferimento della Laurea Specialistica *Honoris Causa* in Relazioni Internazionali, 17 novembre 2009).

less world leaders follow up with concrete action to strengthen non-proliferation and simultaneously move towards a world free of nuclear weapons. I was also aware that this gathering reflected the world of 1945 rather than that of the XXI century. Something is surely wrong when major powers such as India, Brazil, South Africa and others do not have a seat at the Security Council table. Even more worrying is the fact that the Council is in many cases paralyzed and almost dysfunctional. The point I am making is that we need effective international institutions and we need international security norms that are universal and equitable – a system, common to all nations and peoples, which ensures security not just for me, but for my neighbour. And in today's world, we are all neighbours.

Just as the world is divided economically into haves and have nots, it is also divided in terms of security. While some countries enjoy the shelter of a 'nuclear umbrella', provided either by their own nuclear weapons or those of an ally, others do not have this perceived privilege. This is clearly not sustainable in the long term.

International rules on armed conflict and the use of force have been in place for generations and are at the heart of the United Nations Charter. But some countries still appear to feel the rules are optional and that they can use force unilaterally if they so choose. There have been too many distressing examples of this over the last few decades, but I will single out two recent examples in which the international Atomic Energy Agency has played a central role.

The first was the immensely tragic war in Iraq, launched without authorization from the Security Council, despite clear declarations from Agency and Un inspectors that they had found no evidence that Iraq had revived its nuclear weapons programme, or programmes to acquire other weapons of mass destruction. Hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians lost their lives on the basis of false assumptions and pretexts.

A second case, less tragic but equally disturbing, was Israel's destruction two years ago of a facility in Syria which Israel claimed was a nuclear reactor. The Iaea, which has a mandate to verify nuclear facilities, was not informed until six months after the attack, making it almost impossible for our inspectors to determine the nature of the facility. The international verification system has been seriously undermined in the process.

I believe force rarely solves problems and that it should only be used when all other options have been exhausted – and then only within the bounds of the Un Charter. Countries which use force unilaterally in violation of the United Nations Charter erode the international security system, taking us back to the Middle Ages, when differences were settled on the basis of who had the biggest club. My second point, therefore, is that rules must be respected by all.

So what would a more effective international security system look like?

Well, let us start by looking at the main threats to our security today. In 2005, a United Nations High-Level Panel identified five categories of global threats. The first category includes poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation. The second, organized crime. Third, terrorism. Fourth, armed conflict, both within and among States. And fifth, weapons of mass destruction. It is clear that all of these are 'threats without borders', which cannot be solved by any country alone. They require global responses and multinational cooperation.

It is also obvious that these threats are all interconnected. Poverty is rife in countries where human rights abuses are common and where there is a lack of good governance. That combination results in a deep sense of injustice, marginalization and humiliation, which in turn provides a breeding ground for violence of all types. It is no coincidence that it is in regions of long-standing conflict where countries are most frequently tempted to enhance their standing or seek greater security through the pursuit of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. Regrettably, we still live in a world in which the possession of such weapons is seen as giving a country power, prestige and an insurance policy against attack.

It is clear from all of this that the current approach to security is not sustainable. We need a new approach which deals not only with the symptoms, but also with the causes, of the threats we face. We must acknowledge the inherent linkage between development and security. The fact that two billion of our fellow human beings – one third of humanity – eke out a miserable existence on less than $2 per day not only shames us all. It is also a threat to our security. Poverty, as I have said many times, is the ultimate weapon of mass destruction. The right of every individual to live in peace, freedom and dignity must be our central goal.

With respect to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, it is essential to take a similarly broad approach, to understand and address what I call the 'drivers' of proliferation. Unresolved longstanding conflicts, such as in Palestine, Kashmir and the Korean Peninsula, have been a key driver of instability in these regions. These and other conflicts could be resolved if the international community mustered the necessary resolve and made the required investments of time and effort. But too often, for those of us privileged to live in the developed world, these are «[...] far-away countries of which we know nothing», to paraphrase a British prime minister on the eve of World War two. The world falls to engage fully in conflict resolution, conflicts fester and ultimately we all pay the price. This represents a

colossal failure of imagination on our part, as well as a lack of human solidarity with victims of these conflicts.

Some of the most horrific recent examples include Rwanda, Congo and Darfur, where millions of innocent lives were lost while governments engaged in little more than hand-wringing. In addition, the international community's 'responsibility to protect' against genocide and war crimes is too often notable by its absence and we continue to witness repression and denial of the mast basic human rights in many parts of the world.

If this sorry state of affairs is to change, we need a new global security system that depends, not on weapons of mass destruction, or on sanctions which often hurt the vulnerable and innocent, but on conflict prevention, peace making and peacekeeping. Global military spending was almost $1.5 trillion last year – 12 times what the developed world spent on official development assistance to the poor. The budget for all Un peacekeeping operations in the current year is about seven billion dollars. In other words, the world spends 200 times more on weapons of war than on keeping the peace. These ratios should be reversed.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime has been undermined by the double standards of the weapon States, which insist that nuclear weapons are vital to their security, but that no-one else should have them because that would be destabilising. The Strategic Concept of Nato, to which Italy belongs, states explicitly that nuclear weapons «remain essential to preserve peace». As I pointed out to Nato leaders when I was invited to address them last July, if we take this argument to its logical conclusion, we should be encouraging all countries to acquire nuclear weapons. We need to move away from this outmoded way of thinking. Fortunately, President Obama and other leading statesmen have begun to realize that nuclear weapons threaten, rather than enhance, the security of the whole world. This is due not least to the risk of extremists obtaining nuclear or radioactive materials, which in my opinion is the greatest threat facing the world today. Nuclear technology is 'out of the tube' and knowledge is not amenable to export controls. By demonstrating their irreversible commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, the weapon States can greatly contribute to the legitimacy of the non-proliferation regime and gain the moral authority to call on the rest of the world to curb the proliferation of these inhumane weapons.

Stronger institutions and greater adherence to the rules of international law are important in creating a more effective global security system. This, naturally, should include an overhaul of the Un Security Council in terms of both its functioning and representation. But this alone will not be sufficient. We need to change our mindset. We

must stop thinking that we need to protect ourselves against people who are a different colour, nationality or religion from us and recognise our common humanity. Instead of being intolerant of difference, we must cherish it and see it as a source of strength. We should, rather, have zero tolerance for a world marked by inequality and insecurity. The tragedy of needless loss of human life should be the same wherever it occurs.

When I talk about building a common security system, about adversaries overcoming mistrust and about establishing new communities based on shared values, there are always sceptics who say it will never happen. To them, I reply: Look at the European Union. Out of the rubble of a terrible war far-sighted statesmen built a community of States focussed on what unites them rather than what divides them. And they made war between European Union countries unthinkable.

The challenge for this generation is to make this model a global reality. Your parents and grandparents have shown how it can be done on the continent of Europe. I hope the young people of today will rise to that challenge and help build what President Woodrow Wilson called «[...] not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries but an organized common peace».

ISTITUTO ITALO-LATINO AMERICANO (IILA)

L'Istituto italo-latino americano (Iila) è un organismo internazionale con sede in Roma di cui fanno parte l'Italia e le venti Repubbliche latinoamericane. Fondato nel 1966 su iniziativa del senatore Amintore Fanfani, esso ha come obiettivo istituzionale il rafforzamento delle relazioni economiche, scientifiche, culturali e di cooperazione dei paesi latinoamericani con l'Italia e, tramite l'Italia, con l'Europa. Fra le tante iniziative, di particolare rilievo sono:

- l'organizzazione delle *Conferenze nazionali Italia - America Latina e Caraibi*;
- l'allestimento del padiglione dell'America Latina presso la Biennale di Venezia e la presenza alla manifestazione di Roma *Più libri, più liberi*;
- la pubblicazione di volumi dedicati all'approfondimento delle tematiche di carattere economico nell'ambito della *Collana di Studi latinoamericani*;
- l'organizzazione del *Corso di perfezionamento in Affari europei per diplomatici latinoamericani e per funzionari in servizio presso organizzazioni latinoamericane*, in collaborazione con il Centro internazionale di formazione dell'Oil di Torino e con il sostegno del Ministero degli Affari esteri, della Regione Piemonte e di altri Enti economici piemontesi;
- l'organizzazione del *Corso di alta formazione in Studi latinoamericani*, in collaborazione con gli Atenei di Roma Sapienza, Roma Tre e Tor Vergata e di altre Istituzioni italiane e straniere.

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