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GENEVA, PALAIS DES NATIONS, MEETING ROOM XXIII

16th JUNE 2015

“Parallel event of the Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity and Civil Society Organizations to gather input on the proposed draft declaration on the Right to International Solidarity”

Prof. Davide Bilardi (Sophia University Institute)

Intervention on the Side Event to Human Right Council on International Solidarity

Dear all,

I am glad to offer my contribution to this panel on International Solidarity. International Relations knows very well the risk of offering a too optimistic and maybe overly simplistic contribution to such a delicate and sensible theme as cooperation among Nations.

Historically, the discipline of International Relations, is borne exactly with the aim of analysing the nature of relations among Nations.

Idealists, optimistically inaugurate the study of this discipline in the first years of the past century with the idea that the Nations would naturally cooperate between them.

Afterwards, two wars involving the whole world offers the opportunity to supporters of a Hobbesian vision on relations among States to propose a more pessimistic perspective: States always looks for the increasing of their power. In this view no cooperation could be possible if not functional to power increasing and self-defence would be fundamental for the balance among States leadership. On this basis Realism becomes one of the most followed theories of International Relations for many years.

Contesting the deterministic vision of Realism and recognising the simplistic perspective of Idealism, theorists of Liberalism propose that in the right contexts, cooperation is not only possible, but essential for the fair growth of the world. International Institutions such as the

one we are in now constitute the opportunity of a place in which common goals and perspectives can be shared and possibly faced.

But this last century clearly shows the need of overcoming the traditional vision of global arena as the place in which only States can interact as determinant of the fate of humanity.

Non-State actors, charismatic leaders (most of the time using religion as a tool), and multinational corporations enter this arena battling one another with the non conventional weapons of “ideas” passed on through social media. The final result being mutual prevarication, or in other words, the end of reciprocity and the death of cooperation. Furthermore an increasing number of items composing priority agendas of many countries starts to be “international” items such as pollution, trade, migration and so on.

I am not going now to present in detail how the end of a State-centred International order effects the role and the power of States in relations among them. It is clear anyway that the idea of interactions among Nations need to be revised.

In fact, the wider is the number of actors that affect the global word and the complexity of interaction among them, the wider must be the notion that try to describe and in some way order the complex interactions among them.

Is the idea of “cooperation” still valid for this?

The common sense of International Cooperation has been mainly examined from an economic perspective. The richest countries “cooperate” with poorer ones by transferring them sums of money that in many cases become a corruption multiplier or a self-initiative depressive for recipient countries.¹ In most of the cases funds come with such “strings attached” that the major benefit is for donors and not for recipient countries.

In this narrow sense Cooperation could easily appear as an inappropriate lens to describe the actual globalised world.

Could indeed International Solidarity reformulate the paradigm of cooperation introducing a multilevel interaction among actors of the international scene?

In my opinion this is possible . The new world order couldn't be but an “interconnected world”² order. Although it is still persistent the idea that we are facing a clash among civilisations I think this is not a correct perspective and that this common idea must evolve into something new.

In fact, we are rather facing a clash within civilisations between those answering to the evident request of justice, practicing cohabitation, promoting solidarity among people and nations, and those that, seeking blind interpretation of this request of justice, sponsor contrasts, highlight specific interests and foster hate.

A special mention must be made on Religions that appear to be the personification of this “clash of civilisations”. Religions cannot be used as monolithic cultural containers. It is a mistake to identify a specific religious belief with one of the above mentioned fundamental choices. In other words, every religion can be interpreted for the use of good or evil.

1Dambisa Moyo – “Dead aid”

2P. Ferrara – “La Politica Inframondiale” Cittanuova Editrice

A further mistake would be to fall into a geographical identification of cultures per se promoting or disregarding solidarity. (i.a. Western vs Eastern countries and so on)

The International Relations theory of Constructivism attempts to describe this transformed global scenario by introducing an integrated vision that assigns a more proactive role to international actors in determining the evolution of the globalised world. Nowadays what is “internal” and what is “international” is progressive spectrum. Each level of human coexistence is learning to take into consideration that every local choice can have global effects. And the way you decide to look at your neighbour (in the widest sense of neighbourhood) will be the way your relations develop.

The new order is not the one of empires of whatever nature, but the one of a mosaic, of a unified picture enriched by the specificity of diversity.

In this context, International Solidarity could represent the paradigm that integrates cultural integration and the need for equity, incorporating it in the economic perspective so far used to identify International Cooperation.

This would indeed be a step forward in the concept of belonging to a common human family, which as you all know is the basis of the UN charter.

The new basis of International Relations is indeed not power or self-defence but the “taking care”. Too optimistic? Are we making the same mistake as the Idealists of the past?

I do not believe so. Fraternity and Solidarity represent the only realistic perspective to build up an international order thoroughly stable and prosperous for all Nations.

(why)

The alternative would be the global disorder that we have now.

We are today at the United Nations in Geneva. In another hall, the Human Right Council is doing its important job of trying to balance relations among States between what must be regulated by legal instruments and what must be left to political choice of State Members.

My colleagues have presented the perspective of International law on International Solidarity. I tried to frame it within the International Relations discipline. The goal of proposing a declaration on International Solidarity is ambitious, but a very important goal and I hope I have given my contribution.

I strongly believe that a declaration on International Solidarity, even in the absence of legal binding elements, making it a soft law instrument, could be a fundamental contribution to the International Relations debate.

Before being regulated by law, relations among international actors are regulated by political choices. What if, also through an official Declaration, solidarity and fraternity could gradually become a paradigm taken into consideration in International Relations?

This is why I wish Ms Dandan and you all the best for this important task.