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DIPLOMATIC MEANS OF PREVENTING GLOBAL CONFLICTS



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Introduction

Wars are considered to be dangerous and this is why preventive diplomacy is practised by a majority of states. Prevention diplomacy is commonly thought to be an indirect instrument for avoiding conflict and global disasters. A frequent question is raised in practice: "Is preventive diplomacy effective?". This question aims to point out its importance and its tactful applicability. Many studies have shown the essence of what prevention diplomacy means. Some of the research considers it to be an "art of conducting relationships for gain without conflict" (Freeman et al., 2022). The purpose of preventive diplomacy is to strengthen the state or the nation. In consequence, if this measure fails, then war may ensue, even though diplomacy is useful even during a war.

Different tools of prevention diplomacy

Global military conflicts have a negative impact all over the world, as they produce disorders, legislative instability, and even death. States have always engaged in diplomacy prior to conflicts whilst also encouraging dialogue, supporting other States, and conducting peacekeeping operations. All of these concepts are the vehicles for promoting peace and security. Operations such as these have won international recognition. For example, in 1988, UN peacekeeping forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, although such operations have existed since 1948 (Mingst et al., 2022).

Preventive diplomacy is often used by many actors under different tools as never before. As President of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajcak points out that prevention takes many forms, and it must be applied strategically for it to produce results (Thalif & Deen, 2018). States should cooperate to become stronger at an institutional level, develop smarter techniques of prevention, and promote rule of law and rights.

Both the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have excellent methods of preventing global catastrophes. When it comes to the EU, the community itself was created to put an end to violence or conflicts, as the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU states in Article 27. The European External Action Service of the European Union (EEAS) implements so-called Early Warning to help prioritize countries at risk of violence (EEAS, 2021). This mechanism is used by EU members and non-EU members to identify dangers and prevent them. Its scope is to fill the gap between the states and to help them to become cooperative in different fields (EEAS, 2021).

Besides the Early Warning System (EWS), the EU uses a variety of specialists in this area. A team of specialists advises the EU on disagreements between States in areas characterised by fragile contexts in policy, training, technical support, and operational issues. When it comes to mediation, the EEAS has the power to interfere and mediate the parties. Even if there is a strong disagreement between the parties, the EU can mediate. When there is discussion diplomacy in the military field, the guidelines can be different. According to the EEAS, specialists should adapt and change to every situation:

- First of all, specialists have to understand the conflict context and analyse it correctly
- Assess two methods of combining a possible unfortunate event such as war
- Limit risks to avoid harm and disorder at the national or international level
- Finally, the specialists have to adapt all their resources and act in consequence

Military conflicts can be avoided by using diplomacy under different tools (international agreements, military cooperation etc.). This field is in continuous development. Military weapons are changing, wars take different forms and prevention has to adapt to nowadays needs. In the last decades, a belief has grown among nations that an opportunity has been offered to achieve the great objectives of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. A new feature of what the United Nations is capable of doing was introduced recently to maintain international peace and security, of securing justice and human rights, of promoting social evolution and create better standards across the world. Preventive diplomacy, as a tool for avoiding global military conflicts, has for a long time been discussed as a possible solution to the issues of states.

Military conflicts, such as those in Nigeria and Malawi, are examples of the implementation of preventive diplomacy. For this reason, this paper will follow with an analysis of two such cases, namely Malawi and southern Sudan. A comparison shall be made between their strengths and limitations.

Malawi. Preventive diplomacy during war times

An unfortunate event took place in Malawi in 2011, a country in which authoritarianism, repression and corruption have existed for a very long time (Nathan et al., 2018). All these factors resulted in an increase in tensions between the governments on the one hand and civil society on the other which culminated in a mass demonstration that was met with force by the police (Ibid.). An envoy was sent to Malawi by the UN General Secretary to broker an agreement between the government and civil society. In the resulting bloody protests, many people were killed, injured and even arrested (Ibid.). The UN's goal was to prevent violence, stop a civil war between the parties, and use preventive diplomacy to bring the crisis to an²end.

The referendum in South Sudan and Diplomacy prior to the War

After 25 years of civil war, in 2005 the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed an agreement called the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). This international agreement would have regulated the independence of Sudan's people. As the CPA entered its final year in 2010, it was clear that many of its provisions were not fully implemented (Nathan et al., 2018). Moreover, the relations between the two sides were not as unified as they expected, so the secession happened after the people's vote (Ibid.).

In the years leading up to January 2011, the independence referendum raised the alarm about a possible war in the area. Many civilians raised a simple question: "Why after the CPA, could war break out?" (Nathan et al., 2018). EU member states were against secession. In order to avoid a possible war, the UN acted as it was needed. They promoted diplomatic measures to avoid any misunderstandings which could cause a conflict. Preventive diplomatic strategies can oscillate depending on the context, but their scope remains the same: to maintain peace and security.

Conclusion

Preventive diplomacy has been used for a long time as a part of wider strategies. From the perspective of international law, humanitarian law, and diplomacy, it is a necessity and crucial in these situations. Many European institutions consider that the concepts of prevention and precaution are easier to be accomplished than finding measures to stop a war. Wars and conflicts can be sidestepped with the help of diplomatic instruments. In addition, the aforementioned cases can be an example of how different diplomatic tools work in dissimilar contexts.

Footnotes

1. ART.27, TFUE (25 March 1957), JOUE.
2. Charter of Fundamental Rights (1950), Council of Europe, JOUE.
3. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Naivasha Agreement), 9 January 2005.

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