

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS AND THE PREVENTION OF WAR

By
Thomas Patrick Melady

The last century provided a dramatic example of the tragedy of war. The two World Wars in the first half of the century were the world's worst illustration of mankind's cruelty to mankind. Other wars were the Korean and Vietnam struggles. In between there were the Japanese-China conflict, internal struggles in the Soviet Union, and wars of rebellion and civil strife.

The horror of war is in today's world made worse by mankind's use of nuclear power, germ warfare, and numerous other methods of mass destruction. No one questions that the tools are available for mankind to destroy itself.

Desire to avoid war

Most responsible world leaders comprehend the tragedy of war. In some ways, the realization that war should be avoided was personified by Pope Paul VI when, in his historic visit to the United Nations, he pronounced the words to the General Assembly "No more war; no more war." The audience, which represented all the ethnic, religious, racial, and ideological groups in the world jumped to their feet in enthusiastic applause. I remember the event well because I was present.

Later when I served as US ambassador to The Vatican, I was with Pope John Paul II when he spoke clearly and strongly about the dangers of modern warfare. He gave specific reasons why war should be avoided. In his opinion, war was "The road of no return".

NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE FUTURE 1-2(2) 2001, pp. 13-16

It is impossible for any responsible world leader, regardless of ideology, not to understand the danger of war and the importance of avoiding it at all costs.

Not peace at any cost

On the other hand, these same leaders do not advocate peace at any cost. There are basic fundamental human rights that must be preserved. This fact was clearly set forth by Pope John Paul II when on February 13, 1991 he said: " we are not pacifist at any cost... there can be no peace without justice and justice comes from love and charity."

Every responsible world leader knows the potential horrors of war, on the one hand, and on the other, the necessity of preserving and protecting fundamental human values.

Current dangers

The challenge for leaders wanting to avoid war and preserve fundamental human rights is that the world of the new millennium is faced with dangers. In fact, the dangers to peace and security are increasing.

The rogue states are a clear and present danger. Many of them possess the military resources to harm many people. The leadership of the rogue states is unpredictable and could authorize and carry out horrible acts.

Equally troubling are the terrorists who, although not supported by government machinery, have the means to inflict death and destruction on innocent people.

Another clear and present danger is the outbreak of major epidemics. We are witnessing the havoc being caused by AIDS in Africa and other parts of the world. Intelligence agencies can help identify these epidemics and awaken the world's leadership to the dangers.

What can responsible world leaders who wish to avoid war do while still protecting their people from the dangers of rogue states and terrorists? The answer is a well-organized, effective system of intelligence agencies who both obtain information and have the means to neutralize dangers before they emerge into serious conflicts. Such agencies must be led by leaders of impeccable credentials.

Transparent purposes: High level leadership

Such agencies now exist. The CIA and MI6 of the American and British governments join similar French and German services who in peace and war have gathered the information, analyzed it and, when appropriate, taken action to neutralize potential damage to their country's interests. For the most part they have been effective. A few mistakes have been headlined as major blunders. But in essence, these major powers have been furthering intelligence networks.

I propose that responsible world leader reinforce their intelligence agencies. They now have the means to obtain all information on matters of vital concern. Their staff must be first class so that the diagnosis is absolutely correct. Once the dangers are identified, these agencies must have the means to neutralize, them so that innocent people will not be harmed. They can achieve this by working with the military and police services.

A public commitment

The new century has brought the world community to a higher level of accomplishment. Great geographic distance has disappeared; we are all next door neighbours, thanks to contemporary means of travel. Modern communications give us all the means of instant contact with one another.

The commitment of the world's largest intelligence agencies of the responsible powers should be publicly declared, and the charters declaring their commitment a matter of public knowledge. The leadership could be in the hands of known leaders of irreproachable integrity. The governments would have monitoring systems reporting to their congress and parliaments.

In the past century, the intelligence agencies of the western powers played a significant role in defending their peoples against attempts to eliminate their way of life. In the new century, the intelligence networks of the major powers can be enhanced so that they are partners in achieving the goal of all accountable leaders: to maintain peace and security in a world still full of dangers, without recourse to war.

Police action will always be necessary. Even the most peaceful societies have a police force. But the actions of such police forces are only taken after the authorization of the proper authority is given. A good example of this was the NATO police-military intervention against Milosevic.

Who carries out the action

When the analysis of information by the leadership of a responsible intelligence agency establishes that there is a clear and present danger, appropriate action should be taken to neutralize this danger. The consensual process in this case will involve the head of government. If several governments are involved in action, then these several governments must give their consent.

During the past several years, for instance, Iraq, the United States, and Great Britain publicly announced their intention to eliminate facilities that were manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.

On the other hand, there will be occasions when circumstances may not allow the operational aspects to be revealed to the world community at the time of operation.

Impeccable leadership is the key

It is imperative that the leadership of the major responsible powers' intelligence agencies in the new century be led by well known, highly respected leaders who have the public's confidence in their integrity. Furthermore, the granting of the powers to these agencies should be publicly debated in their respective parliaments.

Once so authorized, it would be recognized that they would carry out most of their operations in secret. There could be, as already discussed, a monitoring mechanism composed of leaders who have the public's respect.

It is only my intention here to set forth this public policy recommendation. I believe that major wars can be avoided. The peace and security of people can be preserved. Let us grasp this opportunity in the spirit of the new millennium and century for the sake of peace and security in the world.

Responsible leadership can lead the way for major powers to protect the peace and security of the world community without resorting to war.